

Chapter 511

Acting Cool

From Planet Golden Gate to Planet Aquamarine, the entire journey had taken Han Xiao two days. Even when he passed by Juberly Hub, Han Xiao did not personally fetch Frenzied Sword and the others. Instead, he had sent a spaceship under his charge to pick them up so that he could save as much time as possible and quickly return to Planet Aquamarine.

The forums that he had missed were opened once again, and he was extremely clear about the players' actions. When the spaceship reached Planet Aquamarine, the scene of the large virus breakout happening in Sanctuary Three had been posted onto the forums. For the players to face a sudden crisis, this was a piece of good news for the Great Mechanic Han, and he realized that this was an opportunity. After leaving Planet Aquamarine for so many years, it was best for him to appear in an unforgettable manner. As such, he had resolutely dropped down from the sky with all of his mercenaries. This was the most classic way for mercenaries to land.

During Version 1.0, he had left behind the majestic name of 'Black Phantom' on Planet Aquamarine. At that time, his name had resounded throughout the entire planet, and he naturally could not come back silently. This was not because Han Xiao wanted to act in a high-profile manner but because this was beneficial to him for his next plan.

A stunning return would fulfil the 'promise' that he made when he left the planet and also reveal how he was closely related to Version 2.0's storyline. This was a way to build up his own image and attract the players to join his faction. Apart from his own strength being powerful enough to provide them with benefits, his image was also extremely important. It was just like a luxury product. After the accumulation from Version 1.0, Han Xiao was extremely clear that he had the advantage of being familiar to the players.

Most importantly...

Acting cool did not need any money!

Upon seeing the crazed looks of joy on Bennett and the surrounding players' faces, it was obvious that his plan was a complete success. Han Xiao was extremely satisfied.

"You..." Bennett opened his mouth but did not know what to say.

"We'll talk later. Let's first take care of things here."

"Alright." Bennett could only bear with his stomach full of doubts. He was extremely curious about Han Xiao's encounters in the galaxy. After all, he could not watch Bun-Hit-Dog's videos.

"Don't worry, I have handled situations like this plenty of times before. Just hand it over to me." Han Xiao patted Bennett on the shoulders and said with a smile, "I am a professional now."

This was not the first time that Han Xiao had dealt with a beast tide, with the beast tide on Sunil being the most memorable.

Han Xiao was extremely clear about the situation before him. As long as he could get rid of the beasts, they would have more than enough time to knock those refugees out. The problem was that the players

were not able to stop the beast tide. However, to his mercenaries, stopping the beast tide was a piece of cake.

One time, he had not been powerful enough and had felt that the wilderness of Planet Aquamarine was extremely dangerous. But after spending a long time in the galaxy, his sights had been set higher, and those beasts on Planet Aquamarine were nothing to him. His strength was sufficient to roam unhindered on the planet.

The Black Star Mercenary Group unleashed their full strength, and a few hundred light cannons swept through the beast tide. Large fireballs exploded all around like missiles being dropped from an airstrike. With every wave of their weapons, the beasts would be cleaved in two and fall under their blades. The commotion of the battle had even covered the miserable groans of the beasts.

Whoosh!

Herlous waved his ten-meter-long Battleship Slicing Blade and spun it around like a cyclone. Any beast that came near him would immediately be cleaved into two, and he was like a meat grinder.

Whoosh!

Sehrinde's speed gave him more than ten after-images, and both his daggers were covered in darkness. Sehrinde was like a flying snake as he weaved through the beast tide, leaving behind a small wound on the surface of the beasts' hides. However, his weapon had already penetrated the beasts' hearts, and while it was only a small wound, the single stab that he made had already caused severe internal bleeding within the beasts.

Every beast that was stabbed by him would collapse to the ground the very next moment. His attacks did not have the slightest trace of killing intent but were extremely violent.

Bang bang bang!

The sound of cannon fire rang out from Ginette, who was like a fortress that had unleashed all of its firepower. All the firearms on her body were extended out, and a full twenty to thirty barrels could be seen. A barrage of cannon fire shot down like rain and destroyed everything in front of her. Her face was already flushed red from the excitement.

To her, the joy from opening fire was one that did not lose to s*x.

“Roar!”

On the other side, Harmon let out a roar, and his entire body swelled up. His muscles enlarged like a sponge being injected with blood, and his originally dense hair was split up by his muscles. Arteries could be seen protruding out from all over his body, and he looked like a mini giant wearing a beast fur battle robe. His body was even slightly larger than those beasts. In front of him, the elephant-sized beasts suddenly seemed like slightly larger dogs.

He held onto a black axe that was the size of a door. He launched violent attacks one after another and fought just like a warrior. Very soon, his entire body was covered in blood.

Boom boom boom!

Beast after beast was sent flying by him before crashing onto the ground heavily.

Harmon's battle technique was extremely mature. His actions were violent but also had a strange sense of beauty. It was the perfect combination between strength and beauty. A body strengthening Esper ability and subclasses belonging to warriors. It could be said that he was another kind of Pugilist that was even more violent and brutal.

Many of the players did not have the ability to interfere with the fight and hurriedly began recording the battle instead. They watched to the point that their blood boiled with their excitement being raised to the peak. The strength of those Grade B officers far exceeded the standard of Planet Aquamarine, and it was just like watching a film. Black Star's sudden arrival was too big a surprise, and his method of appearing with drop pods was far too cool! He had literally descended from the sky like the bearer of justice!

Han Xiao observed the situation for a moment before deciding that he did not need to take action. With his current strength, he would be able to give the players an even greater mental shock. However, after some consideration, he decided to give up on that idea. It was better for him to give the players some room for imagination and maintain a mysterious front. Only then would his coolness factor break out of the atmosphere.

A sudden crisis that was extremely difficult to deal with had easily been taken care of by the Black Star Mercenary Group. The beasts had all been killed, and their meat could be dried up to solve the current food crisis. Without the crazy beast tide, the players could easily subdue the refugees who had broken out in illness. After some calculations, less than 100,000 people had died, which was far better than the worst-case scenario. At least, if they were only considering the numbers...

Looking at the small mountain of corpses before him, Bennett could not feel the slightest bit of joy.

...

The outside of the Sanctuary was in ruins, and Bennett temporarily ignored Han Xiao to command the guards to clean up the battlefield. His personality of dealing with the important matters first was something that Han Xiao admired.

The urgent mission was finally over, and the reward was over 100,000 progress points. All the progress that had previously been lost was recovered. Millions of players surrounded Han Xiao and the others excitedly. Ever since Han Xiao left the planet, only the professional players could enjoy interacting with him, and they had truly been too envious of that. Now that Black Star had finally returned, all the players were even tempted to go forward and touch him.

The players were not foreign toward the Black Star Mercenary Group. After all, Bun-Hit-Dog's videos had plenty of viewers. However, the current mercenary group was obviously different from the last video before the update. Who knew what had happened during the update period? The Black Star Mercenary Group clearly had a few new officers. The players only recognized a few of them such as Herlous and Aroshia. They could not help but study the other mercenaries curiously.

"Their armor is so suave."

"So many Sunils! Are they all working for Black Star now?"

Some players immediately noticed Sylvia. "Woah, that girl is so young and pretty. I give her a 9.5."

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"There are so many hairy creatures..." Some of the players felt like puking the moment they saw the Luhan Beastmen, who were much taller than the others. However, Harmon looked over at them with a strange look in his eyes filled with desire and excitement. These players immediately felt their butts tighten and their scalps turning numb as they hid in the crowd.

In truth, whenever Harmon saw someone, the first thought that came to his mind was to pull the other party into his War League. Thus, he would be filled with desire whenever he saw someone. He did not have any strange fetishes.

Many of the mercenaries were pretty repulsive, and in comparison, the presence of attractive men and women was magnified. For example, Feidin immediately attracted the gazes of over half the female players.

"That man is so handsome..."

Feidin noticed the gazes of the female players and looked back at them with a warm, sunny smile. In the eyes of those female players, the world suddenly seemed brighter, and their hearts melted.

"Oh my goodness, he is inhumanly handsome!"

"I... I think I'm in love."

"This old man's maiden heart is about to explode!"

Han Xiao turned around to take a look and felt as though bubbles could be seen above the female players' heads as they overflowed with love. He had never imagined that Feidin would have such a use.

The majority of the female players were more emotional, and their views were different from those of the male players. Between practicality and beauty, they preferred the latter. Thus, the gorgeous Feidin was the Achilles heel of all the female players.

Letting Feidin attract the female players will make my faction more attractive. Bringing him was right indeed. Han Xiao nodded and suddenly felt as though he was like a pimp with Feidin being the most popular courtesan under him.

He usually would not think so much, but after seeing the players, Han Xiao was overjoyed. They were walking wallets after all!

While all the female players were looking at Feidin, Han Xiao did not mind in the slightest. As long as it was beneficial to his plan, Han Xiao would not let his confidence in his own charisma get shaken.

Because Bun-Hit-Dog's 'Black Star' series was done like a television drama, the players of Planet Aquamarine were extremely concerned about the development of the Black Star Mercenary Group. They were excited to find out the stories of these new officers, and their hearts were itching with curiosity.

At the same time, the mercenaries were also observing the players.

“Why are the people in my teacher’s hometown looking at us with such strange gazes?” Sylvia’s whispered softly. “Do any of you have such a feeling?”

“No, isn’t it very normal?” Feidin said.

The players who surrounded Han Xiao opened up a path, and they entered the Sanctuary.

After entering the Sanctuary, Han Xiao observed his surroundings and lamented, “Everything is the same as before I left. I truly miss this place... Wait a second, why is there such an ugly statue here? Who is this statue? Why is it placed in my Sanctuary? Huang Yu, Huang Yu! Come out and give me an explanation!”

Not too far from the main gate of the Sanctuary was a tall statue of a human figure. Everyone who walked into the Sanctuary would be able to see it. Han Xiao noticed it the moment he walked in and immediately felt disgusted. This was his Sanctuary, how could there be a statue of someone else in this place? Furthermore, the statue was so ugly.

Huang Yu walked forward with sweat all over his face. While he was the current Supervisor of the Sanctuary, in front of Han Xiao, he subconsciously reverted to his assistant attitude and said carefully, “Your Excellency Black Phantom... that is your statue. It’s been too long since you left, so I got people to build it in remembrance.”

“It is actually pretty nice.” Han Xiao’s tone changed drastically in an instant.

The mercenaries looked at the statue before looking at Han Xiao while shaking their heads. *What is this? It doesn’t look like Black Star at all. This is obviously a statue of an ordinary human. We don’t even know what species our captain is.*

“Teacher, are you very famous in your hometown?” Sylvia asked curiously.

At this moment, Bennett finally had some time. Hearing that question, he could not help but shake his head. “Black Phantom isn’t just famous. He is a legend on this planet.”

The mercenaries looked at each other. Legend? They were a little curious about the past of their captain.

“Black Phantom?” Sylvia’s eyes widened, and she turned around to look at Han Xiao. “It turns out that your nickname has always been so horrible. I thought that it was an exception.”

“Do you think that I have been too lenient with you recently? If you want to copy theory books, you can let me know directly. I can ensure that your next year will be extremely fulfilling.”

Han Xiao rolled his eyes and pinched Sylvia’s cheeks, causing her to cry out in pain.

After the casual chat, Han Xiao would not forget about the important matters. He then turned around and asked Bennett, “What’s the situation now?”

“The calamity that you predicted has happened indeed. Jeez, let’s continue this in the conference room.” Bennett then looked at Han Xiao and asked, “Right, how did you return?”

Han Xiao then seemed to have remembered something. “You reminded me of something. Wait a moment.”

He then took out his communicator and pressed a few buttons.

Boom!

Wind pressure suddenly descended, and a large dust and sand cloud was kicked up.

Shadows began appearing on the ground, which expanded rapidly, covering over half the Sanctuary.

Ten or so spaceships hovered over the Sanctuary and covered half the sun. It was truly a majestic sight.

This was the fleet that Han Xiao had brought with him. He did not want to park them outside the atmosphere and thus summoned and parked them above the Sanctuary!

This commotion was a hundred to a thousand times greater than the drop pods!

The players on the ground looked up with their jaws dropped in shock!

Chapter 512: Reunion

The spaceships floated above the Sanctuary silently like a flying fortress. As those on the ground looked up to the skies, they could only see the enormous base of the spaceship and the light blue glow of the ringed-shaped, anti-gravity stabilizer.

This was not the first time that the players on Planet Aquamarine had seen a spaceship. When Han Xiao left Planet Aquamarine, they had also witnessed a spaceship descending. History had repeated itself. However, this time, it was not a single spaceship but an entire fleet of spaceships!

While spaceships could be seen all around in Bun-Hit-Dog's videos, the visual impact of seeing them in person was vastly different.

The players all raised their heads with looks of excitement, and some of them began recording the scene.

Han Xiao's strength was definitely far greater than before. While he did not take action personally, his ability to command so many powerhouses meant that he must be even stronger than them. The question was, just how strong was he?

The players all tried their Detect on Han Xiao, and the interface was still filled with question marks. The danger level was still [Fatally Dangerous], and it was as though there was a feather tugging on the heartstrings of the players, with the itch seeping deep into their bones. They were all extremely curious about Han Xiao's strength.

Ah ah ah, I really want to know!

Han Xiao turned around to look at the dumbfounded Huang Yu and asked with a calm expression, "You don't have any problem with my spaceship stopping above the Sanctuary, right?"

Huang Yu shook his head vigorously as he wiped away his sweat. It was not that he did not have any problems, but he did not dare to have any problems!

Han Xiao looked at Bennett and said, "Let's go. We can talk as we walk."

“Th—This...” Bennett had a face full of shock. After two years of not meeting Han Xiao, Han Xiao had given him far too many surprises. Just what did Black Phantom go through in the universe?

A sense of hope was lit in his heart. Black Phantom had said that he was entering the universe to find a way to resolve the calamity. Since Black Phantom was back, this should mean that the solution had been found, right?

The large crowd then entered the core district of the Sanctuary.

Han Xiao first settled Bennett’s problem and chose to leave the players hanging. There was no need for him to be anxious at all. Anyway, they were not able to run anywhere.

He would first let the impact of his return brew in the players’ hearts first. This was like the logic of allowing a bullet to fly for a distance. The Great Mechanic Han had never been an impatient person. Impatience would not allow him to catch worthwhile prey.

...

Han Xiao got the other mercenaries to wait on the outside and only brought the officers into the conference room.

Emerald Grass was already waiting inside the conference room. She sized up Han Xiao with a complicated expression and asked, “You saved me from Bell of Death Island back then, but I don’t believe that the reason you gave me was real. I am not the only Pharmacist, but you chose me out of all the Pharmacists. Did you predict that I would be able to develop the suppressant with my abilities?”

“Make a guess,” Han Xiao replied.

Emerald Grass frowned. She did not mind being used in exchange for her freedom, but she disliked the feeling of being kept in the dark. She had originally wanted to continue interrogating Han Xiao, but the moment her gaze met Han Xiao’s eyes, she felt an immense pressure from his gaze like a large rock being pressed down on her chest.

Han Xiao’s aura was far more powerful than before. She could only bite her lips and swallow the words on her tongue.

Bennett cleared his throat before changing the topic. “Just as you’ve seen, the calamity that you predicted has come true. We call it the Mutation Disaster. I hope that you have returned because you found the solution to this calamity. With Planet Aquamarine’s technological level, it is impossible for us to solve this calamity. We aren’t even able to detect the virus.”

“Describe the situation to me.” Han Xiao nodded. Because of his influence, the exact process of the Mutation Disaster was different from his previous life. For example, his previous life did not have Sanctuary Three. While the storyline was different, the core of the matter was the same. As long as the core was the same, Han Xiao was not worried about the storyline being changed.

After spending ten minutes, Bennett briefly explained the current situation on Planet Aquamarine.

“The situation is still optimistic, and I came back in time,” Han Xiao said.

Bennett paused for a while before asking, “Just what did you go through in the universe?”

He finally had a chance to ask that question. He wanted to know how Han Xiao had built his own organization, the events that he encountered, his current status and so on. He had a stomach full of questions.

"I am currently a mercenary, and these are my comrades." Han Xiao pointed at his officers who were playing Wayne Cards out of boredom.

That bunch of mercenaries truly could not be serious. They could not be bothered about the situation of the calamity at all. In any case, since their captain was there to deal with everything, there was no need for them to worry at all.

Han Xiao briefly described his experiences, but Bennett was still full of shock when he heard the description. The sheer size of the universe was truly out of his expectations.

While he stayed behind on Planet Aquamarine because of his responsibility, Bennett could not lie to himself. He truly wanted to visit the universe deep down in his heart.

Bang!

At that moment, the door suddenly burst open, and Aurora dashed into the room. Her gaze swept past all the officers and immediately fell upon Han Xiao, who was seated beside the door. With a face full of surprise, she pounced straight into Han Xiao's embrace and hugged his waist tightly.

"You're finally back! I really missed you!"

Aurora was like a little kitten lying down on Han Xiao's chest as she revealed a calm expression. Apart from Hila, she was the closest to Han Xiao and relied greatly on him.

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Feeling the warm body in his embrace emanating a mild fragrance, Han Xiao could not bear to push her away and smiled helplessly. He could only allow her to hug him as he stroked her hair and said with a warm smile, "You became... cough cough, you grew up."

Aurora's appearance was extremely different from two years ago. Two years ago, she had been weak and skinny with her skin extremely pale, and she had to move around in a wheelchair. Today, her skin was glowing with radiance, and she was extremely healthy. Her entire head was covered with shiny, golden hair, and she was taller than before. She had charged over like a lively tiger and did not even need a wheelchair anymore.

Her Esper abilities granted her a vigorous life force.

This scene attracted the gaze of all the officers as they stared in shock.

Who is this girl? She is actually so close to Black Star. Could it be that our captain is already married?

Han Xiao let Aurora hug him for a few more seconds before grabbing her up and asking, "Where's your sis?"

"I brought her along. She originally didn't want to come." Aurora giggled.

Ta, ta, ta!

Hila walked into the room. Looking at Han Xiao, she said expressionlessly, "You are finally back?"

"I am back because of things I miss."

Han Xiao could feel a sense of grievance from Hila and was a little surprised.

Hila did not say another word and threw something over at him.

Pa!

Han Xiao grabbed the key and took a glance. It was actually the key to his secret hideout, which he had passed to Hila before leaving.

"Your key," Hila said.

"No, it's your key." Han Xiao threw it back.

Hila caught the key before throwing it back at Han Xiao. "Since you are back, I don't need this key already.

Han Xiao had given this key to Hila so that she had a hiding place in an emergency. For her to say such words, she obviously meant that she would not face any danger now that Han Xiao was back. While she did not say that directly, that was what she felt.

"Do you truly trust me that much?" Han Xiao raised an eyebrow. "Then why didn't you leave with me?"

"That was my choice." Hila's lips twitched. Her gaze then swept past the officers, pausing slightly when she saw Aroshia, Sylvia, and Ginette.

"I thought that you would be pretty happy when you saw me," Han Xiao said helplessly.

"Who are you to me? Why do I need to be happy?" Hila asked.

At that moment, Sylvia said with dissatisfaction, "Teacher is back to save all of you, how dare you talk to him like that?"

As those words were said, everyone looked over with a strange expression.

Sylvia did not understand what was going on and shrunk back with her voice becoming soft. "Why are all of you looking at me? Did I say something wrong?"

"You can keep quiet." Herlous rolled his eyes. "Come, let's continue playing."

This lass is must be blind. The captain is talking to an old acquaintance from his hometown, what has this got to do with you? It is obvious that this red-haired lady is whining to the captain. Why can't you just remain in the background silently? No one will say that you are mute if you don't say anything.

Knock knock knock...

Bennett knocked on the desk with his fingers and said with dissatisfaction, "Hila, don't create trouble for a moment. We are talking about something important."

"Humph." Hila sat down beside Han Xiao.

She then sent out a faint red colored energy toward Bennett's face. She was dissatisfied with his use of the words 'create trouble'.

The moment she sat down, she began playing with the black mask that Han Xiao had placed on the table. This mask reminded her of the previous Germinal Organization leader. Hila would no longer lose her temper whenever she thought about that man. It had already been two years, and she was far calmer than before. She would not be so easily agitated by past events.

"Cough cough, back to our main topic..." Bennett rubbed his slightly numb face and said with a serious expression, "Do you have a way to resolve the Mutation Disaster?"

Han Xiao knocked on the table slowly, and looking at the expectant gazes of those around him, he smiled. "Yes."

Chapter 513: The Truth of the Mutation Disaster

Bennett's eyes lit up, and he was overjoyed.

"However, I will take time, and I need to invite others over. We can only take things slowly," Han Xiao said. "I have investigated the truth of the virus and its theory.

"While you guys call it a virus, its official name is the Mutation Source. It is a special biological weapon and is extremely rare. The reason for it being on Planet Aquamarine is that someone intentionally placed the Mutation Source on the planet."

As these words were said, Bennett was startled.

The Mutation Disaster was actually created by men!

It was unbelievable!

Just what kind of an organization would want to do such a thing to Planet Aquamarine? With such strength, they must definitely be a powerful organization in the galaxy, and Planet Aquamarine was no more than a backward planet to them. Why must they place such a biological weapon on the planet?

"I know what all your doubts are, and the reason behind it is pretty complicated. It's impossible to explain the reason in a few sentences. You only need to know that Planet Aquamarine has become an innocent chess piece between the battle of two galactic organizations."

Han Xiao then paused for a while and allowed Bennett and the others present to absorb that information fully before continuing.

"I know that the appearance of the mutation virus has led all of you to believe that the mutation source works in the minds of the individuals. All of you are completely wrong. The Mutation Source isn't an ordinary virus—it has a consciousness. It can even be considered a special life form that has only one ability: to influence microorganisms."

“Microorganisms?” Bennett was stunned for a moment. Han Xiao’s explanation of the mutation virus was truly out of his expectations. All of the infected individuals showed a change in their personalities and actions, but it was actually unrelated to their minds?

Han Xiao pondered for a moment before asking, “When you want to eat, are you the one who wants to eat, or is it your body that wants to eat?”

“It should be my body. Why would I eat if it isn’t hungry?” Bennett then fell into a short daze and seemed to have understood something.

“This is the logic. Often, the source of your thoughts is actually the needs of your body, not what you want. It is the microorganisms in your body telling you what they want. The microorganisms in your body perform certain actions to send out hormones, and your brain receives the signal. This is where the desire to eat, breathe, and all other basic desires come from.

“You think that your thoughts are controlling your body but many times, it is the microorganisms in your body that is controlling your thoughts.

“Many physiology conflicts that happen in our body is due to the conflict between the needs of microorganisms and bacteria in our body. The health of one’s body is also dependent on the reaction of the bacteria in our body. If they are alright, then our bodies will be alright. However, microorganisms do not have any consciousness. Our actions will also influence the microorganisms. We can choose to suppress the desires of our body and end up being unhealthy. While we seem to be an individual, we are actually a complete system.

“The Mutation Source controls the microorganisms in our body, thus controlling our basic desires. It secretes dozens of times the normal amount of enzymes to give our brain an intense stimulus. It is completely unrelated to our thoughts and isn’t able to control our thoughts. However, it can influence us on a biological level by using the desire to destroy, s*xual desire, hunger, grief, and many other emotions to direct our thoughts and cause a huge change in personality. You may even end up thinking that these thoughts belong to you as you are still your ordinary self during the outbreak of the virus.

“The reason that the virus can’t be detected from the infected individual is because the virus doesn’t exist! The so called ‘virus’ is the microorganisms that are necessary for one’s survival!”

Han Xiao understood the Mutation Source. After all, he had gone through this mission in his previous life and had a deep impression of the event. At his current level, his consciousness could already exist independently, but the organs that were used to control his consciousness would be affected. What if he wanted to be immune to the Mutation Source? Very simple. He just had to transfer his consciousness into a machine and give up his body and senses. With his consciousness being separated and living in the brain of a machine, it would be impossible for the machine to be affected by the Mutation Source.

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Including Hila, those from Planet Aquamarine were shocked.

“So, this is theory behind the mutation virus,” Emerald Grass muttered. “What are its exact parameters? For example, how is it spread? What is the strength of its control? Also, what is special about the Rhodes Fan Leaf? Why is it immune to the mutation virus?”

Han Xiao snapped his fingers and called the Volga brothers over. "Show a picture of that leaf to them."

Emerald Grass flashed a picture, and after taking a look at it, the eldest Volga brother replied with a calm tone, "Isn't this the Serene Grass? This is a raw material for Focus Medicine."

Emerald Grass was stunned. "What does he mean?"

"What he means is, this Rhodes Fan Leaf is an ingredient used by Mages. Only a Mage will be able to bring out the effects of this leaf. The effect of Focus Medicine is to let a Mage enter a special state of extreme calmness. All of their emotions will be suppressed, and the various parts of the brain relating to emotions will be temporarily cut off. This is the reason for its immunity. Regardless of how the mutation virus tries to send hormones, the brain will not feel any desire. That is the theory behind your suppressant."

Everyone immediately came to a realization. After a while, Aurora suddenly asked in a strange tone, "Is there really magic in this world?"

Han Xiao had a face full of helplessness but did not want to roll his eyes. This was considered an extremely ordinary piece of information in the galaxy. The ability for a technological civilization to accept new things was truly weak. Their view of the world was far too narrow, and they really needed to broaden their horizons.

After pausing for a moment, Han Xiao continued his explanation.

"In truth, the Mutation Source will not be spread. It has a main body and could be hiding anywhere on the planet. With the main body as the core, its consciousness will be able to cover a large region. In this region, it is able to detect any life forms and control their microorganisms. It is just like a wide-range Esper ability. Apart from the living beings on land, even the living beings in the ocean will be controlled by it. Also, Supers are resistant to its control and won't be affected easily. However, its range and control strength will increase as the Mutation Source grows.

"The control region of the Mutation Source is actually a new living system. The entire control region is like a large body!

"It has only been a month or so since the first outbreak of the virus. The Mutation Source has only just entered its toddler stage from its infant stage. The messy violence in the entire world is only its subconscious action without any purpose or motive. When it matures, it will also become more intelligent, and its actions will gradually have a purpose. That will be the true calamity, and I will be helpless as well. Thus, time is tight."

Han Xiao did not say another word. Those words had already allowed everyone to understand the seriousness of the problem. Bennett's expression was solemn, and he said with a grave tone, "Then what should we... no, what are you planning to do?"

He knew that he would not be able to solve the problem with his own organization, and the only choice would be to place his hopes in Black Phantom... ah, he should be called Black Star now.

"I have my own plans, but before I set my plan into motion, there is something that I have to do first. I will first bring my subordinates to the place where the materials of the suppressant are grown. Let the Mages under me replace all of you in growing the materials. They will be able to increase the yield

greatly.” Han Xiao smiled. “We also have to deal with the refugees who were knocked unconscious. Furthermore, there may be more coming in the future. I understand you and know that it is impossible for you to ignore them.”

“I knew that you would understand me. We are the same kind after all.” Bennett smiled and felt a heavy rock being lifted from his heart. The familiar feeling of chemistry between the two had returned.

On the other side, as Han Xiao was explaining the Mutation Disaster to those in the Sanctuary, his return had been detected by the satellites of the Six Nations. All the images of his return were sent back without anything being missed out.

The upper echelons of the Six Nations were shaken!

They were thoroughly shocked!

Chapter 514: Time to Harvest

Because of the Germinal Organization incident, information relating to Black Phantom was of high importance, and everyone in the various intelligence organizations recognized Black Phantom. The very first intel officer who received the satellite image almost thought that he had seen incorrectly. Han Xiao, who had gone to the galaxy two years prior, had suddenly returned. Furthermore, he had returned in such a shocking manner. Just what was going on?

While over half of the Six Nations’ strength had been diminished by the calamity, they had maintained their intelligence networks. The intelligence was sent quickly, and not too long later, a complete recording was being played in the meeting between the upper echelons of the Six Nations. After seeing the recording, all of the upper echelons present remained silent with a heavy atmosphere in the place.

They had always thought that only Godora would come to their rescue. However, Han Xiao had actually brought a fleet and descended out of nowhere. Han Xiao had appeared without the Six Nations making any preparations. The upper echelons of the Six Nations were truly at a loss for words.

“Black Phantom is back, and he’s brought an entire fleet with him!”

After going to the galaxy two years ago, they had not heard any news about Black Phantom. However, they had never imagined that Han Xiao would still be alive and actually have such an amazing strength in his hands. The mercenaries under Han Xiao had truly shocked the upper echelons of the Six Nations. With their limited view of the world, they felt that the strength that Black Phantom had once displayed was already at the peak of the world. However, they had never imagined that Han Xiao would bring back a few hundred experts from outside the planet to refresh their understanding of the word ‘strength’. Furthermore, he had even brought more than ten spaceships with him!

With just this strength alone, it was more than enough to sweep their entire Six Nations away.

When Han Xiao went into the galaxy back then, they had already been stunned once. The Six Nations also wanted to enter the galaxy, but they did not have the technology to do so. They were not able to construct a spaceship, and Godora would ignore all of such requests. As such, they could only grit their teeth and watch with envy.

They did not know what Han Xiao had done in the galaxy. However, the upper echelons of the Six Nations were extremely clear on one point! Black Phantom's realm had far exceeded theirs!

While the Six Nations had placed great importance on the past Black Phantom because of his contribution to the destruction of the Germinal Organization, they still felt that Black Phantom belonged to the same level as them. Using an analogy, it was like how they were all classmates in the same class. The Six Nations were like students who consistently scored above 90 marks, but Black Phantom was a top scorer who always scored full marks. However, they were still in the same class.

But now, Black Phantom had already become a little genius student who could skip grades. He was like a carp who leapt through the dragon's gate and no longer belonged to the same level!

A few days ago, they had been hesitating over whether they should make a move against Sanctuary Three. Now, they no longer needed to contemplate over this matter. In truth, the upper echelons of the Six Nations heaved a sigh of relief instead.

Thankfully, this fellow had come back in time. If they had not been able to control their temptations and he returned, they would probably have been eradicated.

The upper echelons of the Six Nations no longer dared to have any thoughts about the suppressant, but another thought came into their minds. What if they sought Black Phantom's aid?

Godora still had not arrived, but Black Phantom had returned with a fleet. In the eyes of the Six Nations, both Han Xiao and Godora were galactic organizations that were far superior to Planet Aquamarine. Furthermore, Planet Aquamarine was his hometown, and it was likely that he would help.

Since they could not rely on Godora, why not try Black Phantom?

...

At the same time, the players in the Sanctuary were excitedly sharing their recorded videos on the forums. The Planet Aquamarine board was refreshed rapidly with Black Star's name being one of the most popular keywords.

There were many different versions of the recording, and they came from all different angles. When the other players who were not on Planet Aquamarine witnessed the majestic appearance of Han Xiao, they were immediately drawn into the video and experienced the feelings of the players in the Sanctuary.

The benefits that Han Xiao had brought in Version 1.0 were still fresh in their minds. With the new version being launched and Han Xiao returning from the galaxy, he would probably bring resources from the new version. This was something that they needed. What kind of new benefits would Black Star bring them? Just thinking about this made all the players excited.

The players who went online in the other regions immediately threw down the missions on hand and rushed toward the Sanctuary. All those who were already on the way to the Sanctuary sped up even faster.

As Frenzied Sword and the others who were travelling saw all the posts, they hated the fact that they could not return to Han Xiao's side immediately and were extremely helpless.

We all followed Black Star from Version 1.0. We were supposed to be the first.

Bun-Hit-Dog's videos were immediately shared rapidly throughout the forums, and the players from other novice planets also came to watch the show.

"His appearance truly makes my blood boil. I feel that there is a chance for this scene to be chosen for the advertisement of the new version."

"The Galaxy Times report was right. There are more storylines for this character, and he has indeed appeared in Version 2.0."

"I wonder if others are able to join the Black Star Mercenary Group like the professional players."

As the players discussed the recent events on the forum, someone then made a guess.

"In Version 2.0, every novice planet will be connected to the galaxy. Could it be that Black Star is the NPC to guide us into the galaxy?"

A couple of people pondered over that possibility and realized that it was extremely likely.

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The ten or so spaceships in the air would be the best transport to take plenty of them off the planet.

This guess immediately received great approval from many, many players, who thought that Han Xiao was the key character to take them into the galaxy.

...

In the core region of Sanctuary Three, Han Xiao got the mercenaries who knew magic to aid the growth of the suppressant's raw materials. With their help, the production of the suppressant was greatly increased.

Currently, the Mutation Source was still young, and the effects of the suppressant were able to last for about three months. When the Mutation Source entered its next phase, a few servings of the suppressant would be required in order to achieve the same resistance. Thus, they greatly lacked resources.

Saving refugees would contribute toward the total mission progress, and Han Xiao's mission also enjoyed the mission progress that the players accumulated. However, if they allowed too many people to stay in Sanctuary Three, not only would the place become crowded, the place would descend into a large mess the moment the suppressant lost its effect.

Han Xiao did not want to let too many refugees to stay in Sanctuary Three, but Bennett definitely would not be at ease. The way Han Xiao saw it, the Six Nations had a large territory and would definitely be able to take care of many refugees.

The Six Nations is definitely aware of my return. Since the Godorans have not arrived yet, it is very likely that they will contact me to seek my help. They should be contacting me over the next few days, Han Xiao guessed to himself.

Sharing the suppressant with the Six Nations was beneficial to the bigger picture. While he did not like the other five nations apart from Stardragon, there were benefits to him protecting the nations of

Planet Aquamarine. In his previous life, there had only been a single Emerald Grass. With many subordinates under his charge being able to grow the raw materials of the suppressant, Han Xiao could allow them to aid the Six Nations in concocting the suppressant. This would prevent Sanctuary Three from standing out too much and ensure its safety.

Of course, he would only offer them aid if the Six Nations sought his help. It was too well beneath his status to approach them to help them, and it would lower the respect that the Six Nations had toward him. This was not in line with his plans, and he was confident that the Six Nations would try to approach him.

However, Emerald Grass' suppressant was not the only method to resist the Mutation Disaster. Godora was also a magic civilization, and they had their own medicine. However, Godora's medicine was also in short supply. After all, wasting medicine to protect billions of irrelevant backward planet inhabitants was a waste of their resources. Furthermore, Godora had to take care of more than one planet.

In the storyline of his previous life, Godora only handed out limited quantities of medicine, and the majority of the refugees were not able to enjoy it. Players could also earn money through Godora's missions and use the money to purchase the medicine. From there, they would be able to fulfil the requests of some refugees and raise the total mission progress.

However, with Han Xiao's influence, the supply of Emerald Grass' suppressant was greatly increased, and it was pretty much handed out freely. Thus, Godora's medicine would not seem so important anymore. While this did not seem too important, it was an integral factor in Han Xiao's plans.

Because this was related to the exchange of currency.

The players of Planet Aquamarine were currently using the local currency, which was not recognized in the universe, and Han Xiao needed Enas. The players' money was all earned from NPC missions, and since they were not connected to the galaxy yet, they did not have any Enas at the moment. Thus, Han Xiao's target was actually Godora.

Godora would issue missions to the players, and the reward would be in Enas. Since the players did not need to spend their money to purchase Godora's medicine, this money would be saved. When the players saw the many machines and Advanced Knowledge in Han Xiao's store, together with the fact that spending money would increase their relationship with his faction, it was very clear where these players would spend their money.

Thus, Han Xiao did not plan to sell any machines before Godora arrived, and he would only teach skills and knowledge to earn experience.

Godora still isn't aware that the Mutation Source is actually part of DarkStar's schemes. As long as I reveal that fact, Godora will immediately place more importance on this matter and send people over immediately...

He watched the Mages craft the raw materials while pondering over his next step.

DarkStar planted the Mutation Source because of some strategic plan. As long as Godora doesn't show up, DarkStar will not make an appearance. If I inform Godora now and they rush over, the battle between both their camps will break out, and they will become competitors to snatch the players from

me. If I do not inform Godora for now, I will have the initiative and make use of this time to increase the attractiveness of my faction to the players...

The moment that both parties were involved, a battle would definitely break out. The period before this was most beneficial to Han Xiao. He had also witnessed the commotion on the forums. Just as he expected, the influence of his return was slowly brewing among the players, and it was extremely beneficial to him.

Han Xiao thought for a while and decided not to reveal his own information and wait for Godora to make their way over on their own. He had the truth of the Mutation Disaster in his hands as well as a copy of the original Mutation Source. He needed to find the right time to hand it over to Godora so that he received the greatest benefits. This was not the best time, and there was no need for him to be so anxious.

My goal is to let as many players join my mercenary group as possible. However, I cannot let anyone join as they wish. I need to set a barrier to entry. If not, I will look like I am desperate. Things that are too easily obtained won't be treasured.

However, if I want to have enough players, I need to set a suitable entry requirement. The only thing that I can be sure of is that many players want to join my faction at the moment. It is best if I can create some competition. After all, the victors are usually envied, and I will be able to make joining my faction a privilege that only the victors can enjoy. This is the best way to make the players take this chance seriously.

After thinking for a while, Han Xiao came up with a pretty good plan. With Version 2.0 being launched, he had many more things to do.

However, before implementing all of these measures, there was one more important thing for him to do. He needed to harvest a large amount of experience to rapidly increase his strength.

Han Xiao was currently level 116, and the experience on his interface was less than 100,000,000. It had been a year since he last increased his level, and the number of blueprints on his skills interface had increased by a few hundred. He truly had a great need for experience at the moment.

It had been too long since he last harvested the players, and he was itching with excitement.

Chapter 515: With a Single Slash, Your Wallet Will Be Dried Up

All of the players were gathered in the plaza with their heads bobbing up and down excitedly. Just an hour ago, the Sanctuary had announced that Black Star was about to give a lecture in the plaza. Because of this, Bennett had set up a temporary stage in the middle of the plaza.

The influence of his return was still blazing, and the response was overwhelming. All the residents in the Sanctuary had arrived, and the surrounding few streets were also completely congested with people. The area surrounding the stage that had the best view was naturally dominated by all the players.

All of them wanted to hear what Black Star had to say after returning from the galaxy.

Ta, ta, ta!

Han Xiao walked out from the core region with the mercenaries following behind him. The eyes of the crowd lit up and burnt with excitement. Wherever the group went, the crowd would open up the path, and it was like the legendary parting of the Red Sea.

Han Xiao walked up to the stage, and the mercenaries waited by the side. Han Xiao looked around him for a while only to see millions of eyes staring back at him. All of his actions were being captured by those many eyes.

Han Xiao's expression was calm. With his thick skin, he did not know what it meant to be anxious. Raising one of his hands, a compressed orb rolled out from his sleeves and landed in his palm. He then threw it out casually.

Buss!

A blue electric bolt flashed.

Under the gazes of the crowd, the compressed orb transformed rapidly and turned into a mechanical throne. He sat down on the throne slowly, which then floated into the sky, hovering ten meters in the air. Underneath the throne was the blue light being emanated by the anti-gravity stabilizers.

Following which, three identical Void Mirror Images facing different directions appeared behind him.

Up in the sky was the circular formation of the spaceship fleet, and the plaza was right in the center of the circle with Han Xiao in the middle.

His coolness factor was immediately maxed out!

“Holy sh*t! Too handsome!”

“Truly the appearance of a bigshot! I think I have seen the second Dragon Emperor!”

“He is truly too cool!”

With his gaze sweeping past the crowd, Han Xiao cleared his throat, and his voice was spread far and wide with a mini loudspeaker.

“I've returned.”

Boom!

Just those simple words of his immediately attracted a large wave of cheers from the residents. As the creator of this Sanctuary, his prestige in this place was extremely high, and he was ridiculously popular. The players were also affected by the atmosphere, and Han Xiao's image was elevated a few notches.

He raised his hands to signal for the crowd to remain silent. Very quickly, the crowd fell to pin drop silence and waited for him to continue his speech.

“Two years ago, I foresaw this calamity and headed into the galaxy resolutely in search of the solution. I promised that, for my hometown, I will return to face this calamity with all of you. Today, I have fulfilled my promise.

“The galaxy is a very dangerous place, and I have only obtained this strength after going through many tribulations. You do not need to know the dangers behind it as that is a pain that I bore willingly in exchange for the ability to face this crisis with all of you...”

Han Xiao selected his words very carefully, and he very simply summarized his experience in the galaxy, looking as though he did not wish to talk more about his experiences. This immediately drew out the imagination of the residents in the Sanctuary.

However, the players began snickering in their hearts. They had already found out about Black Star’s galactic experience through Bun-Hit-Dog’s videos. Even if he did not want to say it, they were all extremely clear about his experience. Furthermore, they all thought that Black Star was not aware of that.

Many players began looking at each other while raising their eyebrows or winking with a ‘we already know’ look.

Han Xiao glanced at the players, and the corners of his lips curled up slightly.

He purposely chose to say those words to let the players have a sense of superiority because they thought that they understood him well. The moment that they had such a thought, they would have fallen into his trap. The players would not only recall the videos and have an even deeper impression of him, it would be helpful to conceal his future actions as well.

“We are all in the middle of this calamity, and no one will be able to stay out of this calamity. I am willing to share the knowledge that I have gained in the galaxy to aid everyone’s growth so that we can go through this calamity together!”

The eyes of the players began glowing. After waiting for so long, they had finally waited for these words.

We can finally learn some new skills!

After saying a few encouraging words, Han Xiao stowed his throne away as a signal that his speech was over.

The residents of the Sanctuary all dispersed, but the players charged forward to surround Han Xiao.

“It has been a long time, Inhuman warriors. I can feel that all of you are stronger than you were two years ago,” Han Xiao said with a serious look, acting as though he really did not know that they were players.

Many of the players could not help but think to themselves, *You are obviously the one who had the greatest change!*

After saying a few words to make himself look like an NPC, Han Xiao began selling the skills. After such a long time, he could finally harvest those adorable players again, and the joy in his heart was overflowing.

After Version 1.0, the players had become extremely familiar with the interface in Han Xiao’s skill shop. Now that they could see his interface again, they truly missed it.

Selling his own skills and knowledge was akin to a teacher imparting skills, and he could set his own price to obtain the player’s ‘tuition fees’. The skills that Han Xiao took out for sale were mainly Mechanic

skills. Furthermore, they were skills that the players would be able to learn on their own as long as they reached a certain level. Since the players' levels were still low, it gave Han Xiao the opportunity to teach them those skills earlier than they should have learned them.

However, Han Xiao would not teach the players skills that were too important such as compression technology, mass production, and so on. The majority of the skills that he taught were to increase their Machinery Affinity, foundational skills, and some unimportant low-level blueprints. Blueprint skills had always been extremely popular.

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As for Mechanic Knowledge, apart from the entire set of foundational knowledge—after all, the majority of players had not even learned all the foundational skills—Han Xiao also chose a few not-so-important Advanced Knowledges to teach the players. In the past, he did not wish to teach too many Advanced Knowledges, but now that they were in the new version, Han Xiao naturally did not have as many concerns.

Of course, he was not entirely conning the players by allowing them to learn their future skills early. It was a sort of win-win situation for them. After all, the earlier they learned them, the earlier they could use them. It was the same logic as using a skill first so the cooldown would end earlier...

Since the players wanted to learn something and he provided a full package service that was both cheap and convenient, was it not best for him to monopolize the entire market? There were no antitrust laws to restrict him in this world, and it was truly blissful.

“Woah, there are so many Mechanic skills that I have never seen before.”

“Heavy Machine Modification, Advanced Radar technology... There is also more Advanced Knowledge than before!”

The players looked at the interface that was full of skills, and excitement could be seen spewing from their eyes.

It was the new version, and there were so many skills that they had never seen before. After Black Star made a trip to the galaxy, not only did his coolness level increase, the benefits that he provided also increased!

Because the players had reached the max level toward the end of Version 1.0, they could only increase the levels of their skills. Thus, many of them had a large amount of experience in their pockets, and Han Xiao was targeting the large savings in their hands!

With the launch of the new version, the players would not be stingy with their experience for sure, and they were all like wealthy tycoons. The Great Mechanic Han would not rest until he sucked all of their wallets dry!

After setting up shop for just a short while, the experience points on his interface swelled up rapidly with notifications popping up every second. The players began learning the new skills without any hesitation, and they spent their experience generously allowing Han Xiao to earn a hefty sum.

Looking at the experience points being constantly refreshed on his interface, Han Xiao smiled in satisfaction. After working hard for half a year, he was like a farmer who was reaping his harvest.

He had been looking forward to this moment!

The experience points brought about by the players was like an overflowing river, nourishing the dried-up land that was Han Xiao's experience. His experience, which had been less than 100,000,000, shot up rapidly as though it was on a rocket.

200,000,000... 300,000,000...

This was even more efficient than in Version 1.0!

Because of Han Xiao's hard work in Version 1.0, the proportion of Mechanic players in the Sanctuary exceeded thirty percent at the moment. This number was far greater than his previous life, and he had a huge market with powerful purchasing power. Han Xiao would not set the price of his skills and knowledge too high, but it definitely was not low either. As compared to the price in Version 1.0, which had been in the thousands, the current prices would be in the tens of thousands at least. Because he was the only 'company' in this market, there was no need for him to lower his prices and compete in the market. This was the advantage of a monopoly.

As long as a hundred people learned skills from him, it would be a few million experience points for him. From the roughly 200,000 Mechanics, the benefits that he could gain would definitely be far greater than Version 1.0. At the very least, it would be 1,000,000,000 experience points. However, at Han Xiao's level, his expenditure of experience points was also extremely high, and his expenditure in the future would be even greater. As such, there was no such thing as too many experience points.

Only someone like Han Xiao would be able to power level in one go. When the players reached his level, they would need to do plenty of missions before receiving enough experience to level up once. Furthermore, they would still be overjoyed because of that single level up. In his previous life, the tender and young Great Mechanic Han had also been like that. In the end, he had gradually become an old, salted fish. Alas, he had once been an energetic youth but aged as he entered the pugilistic world.

With the current speed, I should be able to obtain sufficient experience to get to level 120 by today...

Once he reached level 120, he would have another Promotion Mission to complete. Thankfully, he still had another Mission Completion Card in his hands, and if the mission was too difficult, Han Xiao was prepared to just use the Mission Completion Card. After all, he had to stay on Planet Aquamarine for the time being and did not have the time to do a mission.

He would need an enormous amount of experience to get to level 140, and harvesting once would probably not be enough. Teaching skills and knowledge was not a one-off event. If a player learned the same skill a second time, it was equivalent to finding a teacher to increase the level of the skill. Thus, Han Xiao would be able to gain benefits for the foreseeable future, and he was extremely patient.

He did not only want a single abundant harvest. He wanted a long-lasting harvest that even his children and grandchildren could enjoy.

His personal skills would naturally cater to the Mechanic players, but Han Xiao naturally would not forget about the other two classes on Planet Aquamarine. Ensuring profits from all avenues was the way to go.

...

“All the skills belong to the Mechanic class. How depressing!”

Black Star was a Mechanic teacher, and the happiest crowd was naturally the Mechanic players. Their faces flushed red from their joy, and they would burst out in chuckles randomly. The Pugilist and Esper players could only watch from the side enviously. Who told them not to choose the Mechanic class back then? How wonderful it would have been if Black Star was the teacher of their class!

Since they could not learn Black Star’s skills, the players from the other two classes opened up the shop interface only to realize that they were actually able to open up the faction store of the Black Star Mercenary Group!

“Isn’t this the faction store in Bun-Hit-Dog’s videos? It is actually open to us too!”

“Right, I wonder if we can join the Black Star Mercenary Group and become one of them? Maybe we can even be featured in Bun-Hit-Dog’s videos!”

“All of these items are grayed out. We can only see them but not buy. Oh, I understand, we can only check on the goods in the faction store but can’t purchase them if we don’t join.”

“Wait, look at this!”

As the players viewed through the faction store carefully, they were immediately overjoyed. In the interface of the faction store, apart from the various equipment being sold, there was actually Pugilist and Esper Advanced Knowledge!

However, the faction store could only be browsed at the moment, and they could only purchase the items in the store if they joined the faction. Furthermore, the requirement for purchasing the Advanced Knowledge of these two classes was a favorability of [Friendly] with the faction. This required 1,000 points of Faction Favorability.

“Black Star, we want to join your mercenary group!”

“How can we join the group?”

The players all began to squeeze forward and bombard Han Xiao with questions. Because Han Xiao had always tried to build his image up together with the videos that Bun-Hit-Dog produced, they all had a good impression of the Black Star Mercenary Group. Seeing practical benefits being placed before their eyes, they immediately wanted to join the mercenary group and could not wait any longer.

“Want to join my mercenary group?” Han Xiao acted as though he was extremely surprised.

After ‘thinking’ for a moment, he said, “This isn’t impossible, but... my members are all elites who have been chosen through strict screening. If your strength can meet the requirement, I welcome all of you to join.”

Chapter 516: Feelings Are Not Enough—One Has to Employ a Routine

Elite? Selections?

The moment this statement came out, many of the players immediately thought of the Thirty Second True Men Group that had followed Black Star when he left and immediately felt discouraged.

Could it be that this is another test from Black Star? But your subjects here cannot achieve it! If we could, then we would have gone along with you to the galaxy outside during Version 1.0!

“As long as you can prove your strength by passing through the warriors under me, the doors of the Black Star Mercenary Group will be open to you,” Han Xiao simply explained before throwing out the mission that he had prepared beforehand.

Selection of Mercenaries

Mission Introduction: Black Star Mercenary Group has been on numerous campaigns everywhere in space, and all their members are strong experts. So long as you can successfully pass their test, one can join Black Star Mercenary Group, becoming an elite mercenary.

Mission Objective: Battle against an arbitrary mercenary.

Reward: 1 Experience, Black Star Mercenary Group Faction unlocked, +100 Black Star Mercenary Group Relationship

After frantically reading through, the players burst into discussion.

“Turns out, Black Star is not personally selecting this time.”

“The mission does not describe what sort of battle test it will be. Do you think it would be a one on one PVP like before?”

Han Xiao signaled with his eyes, and the mercenary behind carried out a translucent screen that had been prepared beforehand, erecting it at the side. Pointing to the screen, Han Xiao announced, “If you wish to participate in the selection, enter your information here. Phillip will assign a number to each applicant, and this will determine your batch in the selection battles. Pay attention to which one you will be participating in.”

The screen lit up, and a blue circle appeared in the middle, surrounded by little particles floating around. It gently bobbed, and the AI started to speak.

“Black Star Artificial Intelligence Phillip, hum... Very glad to be of service, hum...”

Many of the players let out an expression of surprise and moved to input their information such as name, profession, and other particulars. They received a number, which represented themselves, and very quickly, a new interface was soon displayed on the screen. It displayed a new selection process and invited a few hundred numbers onto the arena to take the test.

The screen also displayed the mercenary who was hosting this current selection—Herlous.

After studying it, the players understood the selection mechanism involved. This was not a one on one PVP but one against many. A Black Star mercenary would pit himself against a few hundred players, and all they had to do was persist for a period of time. Once the time was up, if one was not dead and still alive in the arena boundaries, they would have passed the test and could join Black Star.

At the same time, more than one selection would be taking place. The number of people in each selection would also differ, together with their opponent. It was up to chance as to which mercenary of Black Star one could meet. The most important point was, even if one failed the challenge, they could reapply through Phillip. There were no restrictions, and challenges could continuously be handed out.

The players were not suspicious of him at all. All of them felt that this was an interesting challenge, and their fighting spirits were stirred, causing more and more to apply.

Han Xiao was the one who had decided on this challenge method. This was to allow the hundreds of mercenaries under him to help in evaluating the players, since the mercenaries were idling by anyway. Instead of allowing them to play with cards every day to while time away, it would be better to use the time efficiently and save his strength.

This selection was actually just a formality. He was, of course, aware of the current standard of the players. While the more the merrier, he could not just accept every Tom, Dick, and Harry that walked over to greet him. That would be too easy. After all, for the elite factions, which one of them did not have any criteria? As such, setting up a selection was a clever way, which would make players feel that there was a threshold for joining the Mercenary Group. It provided a feeling of exclusivity.

He had thought about it the day before and decided to make this challenge into a daily activity for the players. A mercenary would select dozens to hundreds of players at a time—the specific number would be controlled by Phillip depending on the mercenary's strength. This ensured that the strength of the players would be in an acceptable range for the mercenary, allowing them to easily handle any situations. Phillip, who was in charge of the data of every mercenary, would not make a mistake in this regard.

Each arena had thousands of players, and it resembled a battle royale. In addition to dealing with the Boss—or rather, Mercenary—they also had to prevent themselves from being schemed against, ensuring that they could stay till the end and be among the final survivors. This became a sort of competition.

In actual fact, Han Xiao's original idea was not to have the mercenaries participate but rather to simply allow the players to select among themselves in a grand battle royale. However, the efficiency of recruitment would be terribly low because there would be no one with an overpowered strength like the mercenaries. Thus, every battle would last for a long time. Furthermore, they would not have been able to showcase the strength of the Black Star Mercenary Group.

Moreover, that sort of beast style selection would have raised a sense of dissatisfaction within the players as if they were being looked down on. Thus, Han Xiao finally settled on his current model, using his mercenary group to host a test. Not only did it improve efficiency, it also acted as a lubricant, reducing the probability of player dissatisfaction and making the selection less savage.

The participation of players did not consume any resources, and if they failed, they could wait for their number to be drawn again. This ensured that the threshold to accept players would not be high, which allowed a large pool of players to participate. In addition, the current stage of the mutation disaster only gave the players missions to rebuild a refuge. Therefore, this would bring more flavors to the players' lives. This could be treated as a side dish to the main mission.

As for the selection venue, it was naturally the arena that Han Xiao had built in his Sanctuary. The Pro League had been held there, but now that it was vacant, Han Xiao had claimed it back for his own use. Bennett and Huang Yu had naturally not objected to it.

...

Ten minutes later, players numbering in the thousands flocked to the arena. This was the first selection battle, and even if it did not concern them, everyone chose to head over to spectate, to observe the specific process.

Herlous stood in the largest central ring while hugging his Battleship Slicing Blade, staring hungrily at the players surrounding him. He seemed to be surrounded by howling winds and icy coldness.

The spectating players began to discuss fervently.

"The limit is two minutes. After two minutes, so long as we don't fall out of the ring and aren't dead, we can then join the Black Star Mercenary Group."

"With a few hundred here, holding out for two minutes should be simple task..."

"Simple? Stop joking. Didn't you see the video series from Bun-Hit-Dog on Black Star? This guy is Herlous. He's an extremely strong mercenary from the Black Star group. I think just a slash of his blade can pulverize this arena! Even if you have never seen his videos, you should have experienced the war yesterday, right? Didn't you see him mowing down the beast horde?"

"Nope, didn't see anything. I was dead at that time."

Herlous surveyed his surroundings. Han Xiao's instructions to him were to attack appropriately as he saw fit. If he put forth his full strength, two minutes would be more than enough to wipe the floor with them. Most of the players were still at Grade D, with some having only hit Grade C, a far cry from his current standard.

Seeing the insane throng of Supers, a blaze of fighting spirit was kindled in Herlous' heart. Black Star was indeed not lying to him—this place really held tens of thousands of Supers!

With Planet Sunil currently suffering from a catastrophe, Han Xiao had once sworn to him to bring a human wave more frightening than the current horde from their catastrophe, to solve the Sunils' problems once and for all. Herlous had always believed Han Xiao's words, and upon seeing his promise in the flesh, he was moved to the point that he found his emotions hard to suppress.

Silently, Herlous grasped his Battleship Slicing Blade tightly, lightly nodding.

"The selection starts now, hum..." Phillip's sound droned.

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Boom!

The next moment, the majority of players rushed toward Herlous from all directions. A variety of attacks were let loose along the way. The huge numbers on their side gave them assurance, and they decided to tackle Herlous like they would a Boss, outputting as much damage as they muster.

Only a small portion of players did not advance and instead retreated, hiding behind those rushing forward.

Seeing the mass of players rushing at him from all directions, Herlous' expression remained impassive. He raised his blade and spun it around him like a whirlwind, releasing a ring-shaped blade waves around him that shot toward the players, covering almost half the ring. It annihilated all the long-range attacks, and as it approached the pugilists, they could not block the attack, directly being sent flying toward the edge of the arena. Their HP instantly fell about forty percent.

"F*ck me, this AOE is too scary!"

"That was too risky. I almost fell off the ring."

The vanguard players suffered a huge setback, and their facial expressions greatly changed. The small portion of the players who had stayed outside from the beginning and thus escaped the attack were secretly relieved.

Thankfully, we didn't have a hard head and managed to endure the urge to rush forward.

For the players currently, Herlous' strength completely outclassed them. Han Xiao had long guessed that the players would have the mentality of attacking a Boss when they approached this selection battle. Thus, he had chosen to let Herlous handle the first round, giving off an image of invincibility in his Mercenary Group. As for the next few matches, all those mercenaries involved were also in his elite team.

There was no suspense regarding the result. Even if Herlous went easy, this group of players was still cut down effortlessly, one knife for one person.

The players could only change their thinking of clashing head on, instead frantically scrambling in all directions, roaming at the fringe of the arena to try and survive. This appeared to be extremely stimulating.

Then the two minutes were up, less than ten players remained alive. Only when Herlous sheathed his blade did the surviving players realize, as though they had just woken up from a stupor. Expressions of joy colored the faces of the survivors.

"We... we won?"

The defeated players had expressions of envy and anger. To actually allow such sneaky b*stards to win the prize, was there no justice in this world?

Out of the hundreds of participants, not even ten people had succeeded. The percentage was low, but this was deliberately done by Han Xiao. He wanted to push down the success rate, to give off the impression that winners would be rare, before gradually allowing the success rate to increase over time.

“Congratulations to those who have passed. Black Star welcomes you. When we go back to space, we’ll register you in the Mercenary Alliance. At that time, you will be actual mercenaries.”

Herlous extended his hand, shaking it with all the survivors present. This was another of Han Xiao’s requirements, to reflect the differential treatment between the two parties.

The survivors were exhilarated as they found out their faction interface had come to life. They no longer needed to find Black Star to browse the faction store, and the items within were no longer grayed out. While they did not possess any Enas to purchase the products, the world of colors was definitely better than one of monochrome gray.

Only the mission [Selection of Mercenaries] for this group of survivors was counted as complete, and they obtained 100 Faction Contribution Points. Having seen Bun-Hit-Dog’s videos, they understood that for Faction favorability at the [Friendly] Reputation or below, 100 points could only be bought using 50 Enas. All of them felt that they had technically earned 50 Enas!

The few of them turned ecstatic with joy.

The onlookers were envious, and they keenly noticed a key point in the conversation, which was Herlous mentioning, “Go back to space”.

“Does this mean, as long as we pass the test, we will be able to follow Black Star and leave Planet Aquamarine when this storyline ends?”

“We didn’t guess wrong; Black Star is indeed the interstellar travel guide that was sent to bring us in Version 2.0!

The eyes of the players lit up, and they all suddenly felt eager to move, unable to wait to participate in the next selection.

The next selections were carried out step by step, and Han Xiao no longer bothered to keep a watch.

Because of the large quantity of players, Han Xiao’s timetable showed a great many selection battles each day. A selection battle would be carried out roughly every twenty minutes, and in the numerous rings around the arena, there would be multiple selection battles being carried out. A rough estimate showed that around four to five thousand people would participate each day, with the pass rate maintained at around five percent.

There were over a hundred thousand players in the Sanctuary, and with every player having a chance, this activity could be carried out for a long period of time. A thin stream would allow the water to flow for a longer period. After all, not only was this challenge novel and interesting, the majority of players held on to the mentality that they would be lucky. The Great Mechanic Han had always believed that this sort of mistaken notion greatly helped in his plan, as it allowed the players to willingly jump into his pit.

In another few days, the players will adapt to the selection battles. When they get on the right track and the success rates increase, I won’t need to worry about it anymore.

Regarding the plans for his faction, Han Xiao had prepared many methods. However, it was not the time to utilize them—this selection was merely an opener.

Furthermore, the difficulty of this selection process would also create a demand for players to get stronger quickly. This would also allow for an increase in his own sales, killing many birds with one stone.

...

From dawn to dusk, the square was crowded with people. After drowning in sounds for the whole day, Han Xiao prepared to pack up.

In just one day, his experience gained broke past the billion mark.

A total of 1.29 billion experience, I haven't felt this refreshed in such a long time... Han Xiao comfortably breathed out, feeling extremely satisfied in his heart. The last time such a large-scale harvesting had happened for him was two years ago before he left Planet Aquamarine. It felt as though a dry desert was welcoming its first rainfall in a long time.

This amount should be enough for me to level up to 120, with some surplus left over.

Opening his interface, Han Xiao was prepared to level up. At this time, a rumbling sound echoed from the sky.

When he raised his head, he saw a new spaceship descending slowly. This was the spaceship that he had sent to fetch Frenzied Sword and the others. They had finally arrived.

Whoosh!

The hatch opened. Frenzied Sword, Bun-Hit-Dog, Hao Tian, and the other players carried jetpacks on their backs as they descended to the square.

The majority of players present recognized this batch of high-levelled players. They all glanced over, with faces of amazement.

"Hey, you guys are back!"

Many people greeted them warmly. This group of players had performed brilliantly in the Pro League and had garnered a lot of fame. Furthermore, they had also gone off the radar for a long time.

Chapter 517: Six Nations Seek Aid

Frenzied Sword and the others responded to the players' enthusiasm before pushing their way through the crowd and walking up to Han Xiao.

These players were the ones who had first followed him into the universe, and the majority of them had been god-level players in his previous life. Han Xiao had always treated them differently. At this moment, he did not exchange any pleasantries with them but said directly, "You guys are late."

The players were stunned for a moment. From Black Star's tone, it was obvious that he treated them as one of his own, and they had a special feeling in their hearts.

When they were on the spaceship, they had found out that the other players were also able to join the Black Star Mercenary Group, and they were no longer the only ones who enjoyed such a privilege. They had all felt extremely helpless toward that matter. But at that moment, they all realized that 'old birds' like them still got special treatment.

Now that they had returned to Black Star's side, they immediately felt at ease.

"Actually, expanding isn't entirely a bad thing," Hao Tian said. "The Black Star Mercenary Group is a faction with the potential for growth. Only when the members of the faction increase will the growth of the benefits that the faction can provide be rapid."

The other professional players agreed. Indeed, with more players, the faction would be able to grow quickly, and this was not a bad thing for the professional players in China.

However, while they all understood this logic, they still felt miserable that they were not able to have Black Star solely for themselves!

During Version 1.0, Han Xiao had made use of Bun-Hit-Dog's videos to plant a concept in the players' minds. This concept was that his faction would continue growing as they completed more and more missions. This made the players feel as though they are able to contribute to the growth of the faction and gain more benefits from it.

Currently, this concept was not deeply ingrained in the hearts of the players yet. When the players entered the galaxy and more players personally experienced this point for themselves, not only would they fervently complete missions, they would also call their friends to join Black Star. Conning one would recover his costs, and conning two would allow him to earn double.

Furthermore, as the players toiled away for the faction, their sense of belonging toward the faction would also grow, and this was a part of the Great Mechanic Han's plans.

Those professional players did not delay and also found Han Xiao to learn new skills. They were looking forward to seeing Han Xiao again because they realized their advantage; only they had Enas!

The few of them had already gone to the galaxy and had the initiative in their hands. Han Xiao allowed them to be wealthy, and while the players on Planet Aquamarine could only stare at the items in the faction store and drool, they already had the capability to purchase those items.

"There are quite a few new items in the store and also a lot of Advanced Knowledge."

"There is new Sunil armor? The simplified version of the Commander Class armor has much higher specs than the NCO Class armor. A pity there is a level restriction."

"Electromagnetic Shield. This item isn't too bad either. I don't remember seeing this item before the update."

Everyone had a face full of curiosity. There were many new products in the faction store, and they were truly spoilt for choice. After discussing for a while, they all bought the items that they wanted with the bulk being Advanced Knowledge. In any case, they definitely would not lose out if they bought knowledge. They had seen the market price of the Advanced Knowledge in the galaxy before, and it was no different from cheating them from their money. The benefits of the Black Star faction store were still

the best. A single Advanced Knowledge only required around 10,000 Enas, which was almost half the market price.

The criteria to purchase Advanced Knowledge was to spend 1,500 Faction Contribution Points. All of these players only had a few hundred Contribution Points. Below 1,000 Contribution Points, 100 Contribution Points could be exchanged with 50 Enas. From 1000 Contribution Points to 3000 Contribution Points, 100 Contribution Points needed 500 Enas to exchange. But even so, spending a little more than 10,000 Enas to purchase an Advanced Knowledge was far cheaper than the market price in the galaxy.

Before the update, these players had followed Han Xiao for six to seven missions. Taking away the repair fees and expenditure on new equipment, they still had twenty to thirty thousand Enas. Thus, they immediately contributed a large sum to Han Xiao the moment Version 2.0 began.

In less than five minutes, he earned more than 600,000 Enas!

Han Xiao felt a warm and cozy feeling in his heart.

Only if the players were rich would he be able to harvest them. This batch of players that he had taken into the galaxy was his first batch of crops. Han Xiao had already verified the feasibility of his plan, and this harvest was within his expectations.

For him to have Frenzied Sword and the others back, apart from letting them spend money and sucking their wallets dry, Han Xiao had another target. It was for them to become an example.

The other players did not have any money, so let them watch the rich people from afar and feel the difference.

Intentionally creating different social classes to create conflict. This move of Han Xiao's was truly a dirty one. As Han Xiao observed the surroundings, he saw many players with faces full of envy and longing.

Originally, all of them had been poor peasants who did not have any money, but now that they saw Frenzied Sword and the others buying the items that they could not afford like a bunch of nouveau riche, a more intense desire was immediately ignited in their hearts. Even though Han Xiao had already whetted the appetites of the players to the point that they were drooling, Han Xiao did not mind taking out a few new dishes for them to see.

He was the most proficient in making them drool!

After settling the requests of Frenzied Sword and the others, the sky was getting dark, and the sun was setting.

Han Xiao did not continue to stay behind and gave Frenzied Sword and the others a mission to help the Sanctuary before leaving the plaza. He still had other things to do and would not stay there from day to night.

I should increase my level first. After the slight delay, I almost forgot about this matter.

Opening up the interface, Han Xiao threw all of the experience which he had just earned and finally heard the sound of him leveling up again.

[War Mechanic] leveled up to Lv.20 (max).

+300 Energy, +3 DEX, +3 END, +5 INT.

You have received 6 Free Attribute Points.

You have received 1 Potential Point.

Your total level has reached 120. You have triggered the next phase of the Promotion Mission.

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Level 120 Promotion Mission [Energy Secret]: Energy Level reach Level 10.

Eh? It is actually this Promotion Mission.

Han Xiao's brows were raised, and he was pretty surprised.

[Energy Secret] was not a common mission. It was not a difficult one since he did not need to battle, but it needed quite a bit of time. It required the character's Energy Level to reach a certain standard, and this standard would definitely be higher than one's current level.

Now that he was level 120, Han Xiao's energy was at 8,360 points, and it was still level 9. This meant that his energy would give him the level 9 bonus stat. The concept of Energy Level could also be understood as something similar to the internal energy cultivation realms.

Whenever his energy hit a certain number of points, he would receive a new level of bonus stats. When he used his skills and exhausted energy, causing his energy to fall below a certain level, he would temporarily lose the bonus stat of that level, and his overall stats would temporarily be lowered. It was akin to him being exhausted in battle and causing his combat ability to decline.

One's stats would be at their peak only when one's energy was the most abundant.

Level 10 Energy Level required 9,000 points of energy, and Han Xiao was still a few hundred points away. This small gap was not difficult to fill. As long as he found one to two Energy Training Techniques and trained them up to the maximum, he would be able to complete the mission.

In his previous life, increasing one's energy level had been a way to increase one's strength after reaching max level. Many players would find NPCs to learn new Energy Training Techniques, hoping to reach a new Energy Level so that their stats would receive a great boost.

This Promotion Mission isn't too difficult. Bennett, Herlous, or Harmon should have different Energy Training Techniques, and with our current relationship, the three of them shouldn't reject sharing it with me...

Han Xiao nodded. Since the Promotion Mission was not difficult, he would save his Mission Completion Card to use later.

Apart from the Promotion Mission, there was also the Class Advancement Mission for his Mechanic class.

Class Advancement Requirements: Learn any one of the following three High-End Knowledges and increase it to the maximum level: [Huge Duplex Machinery Technology], [Super Nanotechnology], or [Advanced Artificial Intelligence Technology].

Note: Your choice of knowledge will determine the outcome of your Class Advancement.

This mission was within Han Xiao's expectations. The next Class Advancement requirement of [War Mechanic] was fixed, and every Mechanic class player would have the same mission.

During the first Class Advancement mission of a Mechanic, they would face the choice between three different routes: Cannon Master, Mechanical Pugilist and Machinery Master. At this current phase, Mechanics faced another new choice. They would have to choose between the Armed, Control, or Energy branches to specialize in.

[Huge Duplex Machinery Technology] would be to walk down the path of large sized machinery, [Super Nanotechnology] walked down the path of nanotechnology, and [Advanced Artificial Intelligence Technology] would walk the path of virtual technology. All three paths had their own advantages and disadvantages, and one would still be able to learn the knowledge from the other subclasses after the Class Advancement. It was just that they would place an emphasis on different skills.

Just like how the knowledge of Cannon Masters, Mechanical Pugilists, and Machinery Masters was the same, but the skills that they obtained were different.

Furthermore, the biggest difference would be the number of Potential Points required to learn knowledge. For example, if one leaned toward the Armed Branch, the final two levels of High-End Knowledge of the other two branches would be thrice as much.

As for which branch he should choose, Han Xiao did not even need to hesitate. He wanted to pick the path of Virtual Technology.

There were a few reasons for that. First, he would definitely meet high ranked Mechanics in the future, and Virtual Technology would allow him to prevent his own machines from being controlled by the opponent. If not, his machines might end up being infiltrated and snatched by his enemy. In his previous life, he had suffered plenty of losses because of this. While the Armed and Energy Branches seemed extremely cool, they were not as important as the insignificant looking Virtual Technology. Regardless of how powerful his machines were, the moment his enemy infiltrated his machines, they were no different from scrap metal, and they might even end up attacking him.

Second was because Han Xiao was not afraid of the high cost of Potential Points. An ordinary player would find it impossible to learn all the knowledge of a class as the sky-high prices would cause them to despair. However, this was not impossible for Han Xiao.

As long as he had the huge experience farm called the players, his speed of collecting experience would be many times quicker than the players. As long as he increased all of his skills to their maximum levels, he could slowly save up Potential Points.

Thus, the negative impact was not that great for him.

I still have another 200,000,000 experience points. I won't rush to complete my Class Advancement. I'll first complete my Promotion Mission and accumulate more experience. At that time, I can level up in a single go.

Han Xiao looked at his level 120 stats and threw all of his Free Attribute Points into Intelligence. He had finally broken the barrier of 900 points. Following which, he closed the interface and returned to his residence.

An independent sector was carved out in the core region of the Sanctuary for him and the mercenaries to stay in.

Pa!

After making the last corner, Han Xiao suddenly stopped his footsteps. Bennett was waiting outside the door for him.

"Black Star, the Six Nations want to talk to you." Bennett got straight to the point.

"They couldn't keep still."

Han Xiao's eyes flashed. After waiting for a day, the Six Nations had finally made a decision. It was now time for him to extort them.

The Six Nations in the past had sided with Godora, but now, he had the initiative in his hands and arrived before Godora.

His status today was different from before. Whether or not he could convert this novice planet into a long-term base would be determined by the outcome of this negotiation!

Chapter 518: The Bargaining Chip Is the Future

When the two of them entered the secret conference room, the upper echelons of the Six Nations had already been waiting for a while. The gigantic screen in the conference room showed the images of the Six Nations' leaders. This was a long-distance video conference.

The moment that Han Xiao walked in, the upper echelons of the Six Nations began to size him up. Han Xiao then turned around and gave Bennett a look, and Bennett retreated to the side to indicate that he would not be participating in the negotiations.

"The leaders of Stardragon, Hesla, Raylen, Theseus, Maple, and Ordina, I believe that this should be our first meeting. Good evening, gentleman," Han Xiao said with a calm tone.

"Hello, Black Phantom. More accurately, you should be called Black Star now. We noticed you a long time ago, and we are very happy to have this conversation."

The leader of Stardragon replied with an amiable smile. Because Han Xiao had once worked for Stardragon's intelligence agency, their relationship was the best, and the leader of Stardragon was the representative for this conference.

Han Xiao raised his brows. "I know what all of your intentions are. Just be straightforward."

"Bennett understands our intentions, but we would like to have a personal conversation with you. Bennett said that the purpose of your return is to protect this planet and its inhabitants from being destroyed by the Mutation Disaster. You are a person of class, and we truly admire you. Just as you have observed, our citizens are living in threat and worry every day, and we hope to seek your aid through this meeting."

The Stardragon leader did not beat about the bush and got straight to the point.

"What are your requests?"

"We hope that you can help restore our fractured social system and save our citizens who are in danger."

"How do you want me to achieve that?" Han Xiao said patiently.

"After some discussion, we all hope that the Sanctuary can share the recipe of the suppressant and its raw materials with us, and send people to instruct us on the concoction process. At the same time, we hope to obtain a large amount of completed suppressant to solve our countries' immediate needs. We will need to first recover our government building and army before trying to quarantine and save our citizens. As long as we can regain our strength, we will be able to prevent the situation from worsening. In this process, we hope to borrow the strength of your warriors and fleet. We will inform you again of our detailed plan."

"Doesn't sound too bad. You guys delayed contacting me for a day to discuss this plan, right?" Han Xiao said calmly without giving a reply. "Then, what kind of benefits will I gain?"

The leaders of the Six Nations were stunned for a moment. *Didn't you come back specially to stop the calamity? Didn't you help the refugees unconditionally? Why are you talking about benefits now?*

"Why are you so surprised?" Han Xiao raised his brows. "Isn't this a trade? If there aren't any benefits, don't waste my time."

"This... no one will be able to avoid the calamity, and fighting the calamity is everyone's responsibility. Why would this be a trade? Didn't you return to save the inhabitants of this planet?" The leader of Ordina interrupted.

"Indeed, but that isn't what we're talking about now." Han Xiao folded his arms and continued. "All of you want to borrow my strength to restore your control over your nation. I help you restore stability to your nation, and you give me benefits in return. This is a fair trade. If not, why should I help all of you?"

"Helping us will allow more refugees to be saved. Isn't this a reason?" the leader of Hesla said.

"Everyone has to die eventually, and it is a pipe dream to save everyone on the planet," Han Xiao said. "You've all read my file before and know that I am not an idealist. My goal is to stop this calamity so that this planet will not be destroyed. Regardless of how many people die, I will be able to accept the

outcome. Don't make use of this to hold me hostage. I am not Bennett and am not as kind as him. This isn't a chip that you guys can use to get me to do whatever you want.

"The life and death of your regime has nothing to do with me. I can just guard the Sanctuary and wait for refugees from all over the world to seek aid from me. They would not foolishly wait for their deaths in your nation. When all of your regimes are destroyed, I can then support the Sanctuary to become the new and sole ruler of the planet."

Bennett opened his mouth and wanted to say something. He did not have the ambition to rule and did not agree with this point. However, after some hesitation, he decided to watch from the side and trust Han Xiao.

"I don't deny that all of you do indeed intend to save your citizens. However, your biggest motive is to borrow our suppressants and my strength to prevent your regime from collapsing. This is something that you cannot deny." Han Xiao shook his head and said coldly, "Since all of you are pleading for help, make sure you look like you are seeking aid. The one who has the right to make demands is me, not you guys."

The leaders of the Six Nations were both angered and shocked. They had never imagined that Han Xiao would be so straightforward.

"No, I think you are misunderstanding something. You are not as important as you think," Theseus' leader said. "We have already sought aid from Godora, and they will arrive quickly. We are only seeking your aid so that we can save more people. Since you are so impolite with us, we cannot do anything. I hope that you remember that your rejection has caused many people who could have survived to die. They were all killed by you."

Black Star was not their only hope, and the Six Nations were only testing Han Xiao's attitude. In their hearts, they still trusted Godora more.

"We are all wise individuals, so don't bother using such words as a threat. It is no more than a joke. Since you guys talked about being impolite..." Han Xiao shook his head and smiled. "Godora should be very polite with all of you, but apart from providing the knowledge required for the awakening of Supers, what other aid had they given to you?"

"Not only did they not give all of you any aid, they even shook the order of society. It was Godora's appearance that caused the war of hundred nations a few decades ago, causing the deaths of millions. Furthermore, the rescue force of Godora still has not arrived, am I right?"

The Six Nations' delegates fell silent.

Han Xiao raised his brows and suddenly changed topics. With a teasing tone, he said, "A few years ago, I helped all of you win against the Germinal Organization. At that time, I did not participate in the meeting between all the upper echelons, but today, you took the initiative to contact me. Why is there such a drastic change in our status in just two short years? Why is there such a huge difference?"

The faces of the Six Nations' leaders darkened, and they felt their hearts being stabbed.

They were only having a negotiation, and they could forget the matter if a consensus could not be reached. But why did he have to pour salt in their wounds!

What a cruel guy!

“All of you can only hug Godora’s thighs as though they are your ancestors. Even if all of you don’t understand the other party, you still have to coax them with an amiable tone and humble yourselves like their grandchildren. As for me, not only do I understand their civilization, I have even worked together with them before. We have a good working relationship, and I can even contact their upper echelons. Can any of you do that?”

The faces of the leaders were completely black. This was a truth that they all understood. As leaders, how could they be willing not to hold any authority in their hands? However, the gap between the two civilizations forced them to lower their heads.

They did not know about Black Star’s achievements in the galaxy, but if Han Xiao was speaking the truth, then Black Star’s strength was far more powerful than they had imagined.

Han Xiao knocked on the table and said, “If Godora helps you to deal with the Mutation Disaster, they will definitely depart on their spaceships the very next moment, leaving behind the aftermath of the disaster. All of you will still be citizens of a backward planet, and nothing will change. Hope that Godora will take all of you into the galaxy? You know that this is impossible.”

The gazes of the leaders changed, and they all knew that what Han Xiao said was the truth. Godora would save them from the calamity but would definitely not help them to develop. They were all extremely clear about this. It was just like how Godora gave them a Galactic Communicator but locked more than ninety-nine percent of its functions. They could only contact Godora unilaterally but would not be able to understand the galaxy.

Even if the Mutation Disaster was resolved, they would have to clean up the mess on their own. Not only would they be unable to advance, their weak civilization might even regress.

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Han Xiao did not stop there and continued, “If you want to talk to me on equal grounds, all of you have to enter the galaxy at the very least. However, your technology is a few hundred years lacking before you can become a member of the galaxy. Are all of you going to place your hopes in a technological boom that would take a miracle to happen? Are you resigned to such a fate?”

“What exactly do you mean?” the Stardragon leader said.

“Don’t you understand? Only me. Your only hope is me!” Han Xiao slapped the table hard as he raised his voice. “I am your only choice because I am the only person from Planet Aquamarine who is in the galaxy. Only I am willing to help you develop!”

The leaders of the Six Nations were dumbfounded.

“You, what you mean is...”

“Accept reality. I am not negotiating about disaster relief but about the future!”

Han Xiao placed his arms behind his back as he pressured the leaders of the Six Nations with his charisma.

In his previous life, while the players had managed to complete the Mutation Disaster Main Storyline Mission, they had dragged the mission for too long. When Godora solved the Mutation Disaster, the Six Nations had already collapsed, and there had only been darkness left behind in the civilization. The citizens who had lost their homes could only struggle on for their lives.

Because Godora discovered the player's special potential through the process of fighting the disaster, Godora had set up a stronghold in the almost destroyed Planet Aquamarine to receive the never-ending stream of new Inhumans.

Han Xiao leaned toward protecting the Six Nations. No matter what, it was much better to have a mature regime rule over the place as it would make it much easier for any organization to function on the planet. Planet Aquamarine was a novice planet, and if Han Xiao could construct a base there, he would be able to have an endless stream of players.

Those words of his immediately stirred up a storm in the hearts of the Six Nations' leaders. They all fell silent and began thinking about the pros and cons.

Han Xiao's words had truly moved them. While Godora was powerful, they were aliens after all and not their kind.

Black Star, who was from Planet Aquamarine, was truly one of them!

Even if they did not want to admit it, their rationality told them that this was the only chance for them to change the fate of their civilization.

"What do you want?" The tone of the Raylen's leader was hoarse.

"My words are already very clear, and all of you know what I want. Even if you don't wish to give it to me, I can take it myself."

"Your ambitions are too large..."

"Trust me, the vastness of the galaxy is worth this little sacrifice. You will not regret your choice of purchasing this ticket. You will only regret it for life if you miss this opportunity."

Buzz!

The screen suddenly turned black.

Bennett was still in a state of shock as he asked, "Did they reject?"

"No."

Han Xiao's lips curled up slightly. "They are discussing."

Bennett looked at Han Xiao and said with a complicated gaze, "You have changed."

"I haven't changed." Han Xiao shrugged and casually said, "It's just impossible to understand every side of a person."

Bennett did not reply anymore with his heart in a complete mess. Black Star wanted to become the ruler of the entire planet! Could it be that the motive for his return was not to save people but to rule over the planet?

He did not know whether Han Xiao's actions were right or not. History had proven the tragedy of gathering authority in a single person's hands many times. He had seen the desolate outcome of far too many ambitious individuals. The source of a disaster was very often an inflated desire.

Time seemed to have passed by very slowly, and after waiting for ten minutes, the screen finally lit up again.

The leaders of the Six Nations appeared and looked at Han Xiao with a complicated gaze.

"As long as you are able to fulfil your promise, we are willing to satisfy all of your requests. We will use all of our strength and listen to your orders.

"We accept your conditions!"

The Six Nations truly did not have much of a choice in this matter. As long as a single regime accepted Han Xiao's proposal, the other nations would fall behind if they did not accept it. Stardragon was the first to display their willingness to submit, and after some discussion, the other five nations also agreed. Black Star had already entered the galaxy, and it was not embarrassing for them to submit to him.

One party was always high up on their thrones and treated them like dogs. The other party was one of their kind and promised to help them. Since they wanted to hug someone's thigh, they would definitely choose the latter.

They did not ask Han Xiao in detail what he could give them because they were extremely clear that they did not have such rights. This was not a fair trade as they did not have any chips in their hands. It was just as Han Xiao had said. Even if they were not willing to give, he could take it himself!

This was just Han Xiao pitying them!

Han Xiao heaved a sigh of relief in his heart and was pretty happy. However, he maintained his calm expression and said with a smile, "My men will land in your territories soon and aid you in restoring order."

The leaders nodded.

"Since we have come to a consensus, tell me a small nugget of intelligence first." Han Xiao's eyes narrowed. "Where is the Bell of Death Island?"

Chapter 519: Bell of Death Island (1)

Bell of Death Island was a secret base built jointly by the Six Nations, and they managed it together. Its coordinates were an absolute secret, and one could only enter but not exit. The criminals locked up in it were all special criminals. Some of them were their political enemies, some were traitors of the nation, and some were Supers who broke the law. While the people who were locked up were different, one

thing was common among all of them. Their crimes were not simple, and they definitely would not be simple serial killers.

Without having a particular talent, they would not have the rights to be locked up in Bell of Death Island.

Many of the criminals in this place had committed innumerable crimes, and the only reason that the Six Nations had kept them alive and locked them up in this god forsaken place was because of their talents. The Six Nations hoped to wring them dry for all they were worth.

It could also be understood that the Bell of Death Island was a place where the Six Nations kept their talents; the place was brimming with talents.

A small portion of the criminals came to an agreement with the Six Nations and used themselves in exchange for better treatment. However, the majority of the criminals refused to submit and would mock all the negotiators sent by the Six Nations. They were extremely brutal and cruel with even the prison wardens being afraid of them. Many of the criminals had a complete ban to prevent people from even approaching them.

Just yesterday, the Six Nations had lost contact with the Bell of Death Island. With the entire planet being swept up by a calamity, the Six Nations were not able to protect themselves, let alone the Bell of Death Island.

The Six Nations did not know that the Bell of Death Island was also affected by the Mutation Disaster. The prison wardens had broken out in illness and thrown all of their responsibilities to the back of their heads.

There were some prison wardens who had even opened up the metal gates of the criminals, and it was as though they had just released a ferocious beast.

...

Puchi.

Human blood was sprayed all along the grayish metal corridor, and the large lightbulb in the middle of the room was covered with a huge blotch of blood on it, causing the entire walkway to be covered in a red eerie light.

A two-meter-tall Sharnuk threw the corpse of a warden that had been cleaved in two onto the ground.

The burly Sharnuk was half naked with his muscles bulging out, covered in scars from battle and the natural vein lines of a Sharnuk. He was a baldie. More accurately speaking, all the male prisoners had been shaved bald.

The burly man flicked away the blood on his hands, and looking back, the corpse of more than ten prison guards could be seen, including the prison warden in charge of the region. A few hundred empty golden cartridges were littered all over the ground, and there were a few rifles that had been crushed. A bloody stench had filled the entire room.

The prisoners were all locked up in individual cells, and the distance between each cell was a few hundred meters. At the end of both sides of the metal corridor was a thick metal door, and every cell was located in a sealed-up corridor.

There was not a single window in the corridor, and as the burly man tried to ram his fists into the walls, he was only able to leave a slight dent on the wall. He only had two options before him—he could either walk forward or walk back.

Ever since he was locked in this place, he had never left his cell before and naturally did not know how to find his way around the place. He could not be bothered to change into the tight clothes of the prison guards and looked at the camera in the corner of the corridor.

“Suddenly opening up my cell, and there isn’t anyone stopping me even now. Hmm? There is a trace of danger in the air. Just what has happened in this place?” the burly man muttered to himself.

Being locked up in the Bell of Death Island, none of the prisoners had access to any information and naturally did not know what was going on outside.

Without any hesitation, the burly man decided to walk forward. After a few hundred meters, he was stopped by a metal door. After feeling the thickness of the door, he took a deep breath and pulled his right fist back.

With his muscles bulging out, he smashed his huge fist on the door.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

After twenty or so heavy blows, a deep circular dent was created on the metal door. As the man rammed into the door with his shoulder, this metal door was immediately shattered, and the corridor was opened for him.

Walking forward for a short distance, he finally saw the prison cell in this corridor. In front of the cell were the corpses of a few prison guards, and the prisoners had already escaped from the cell. There was pretty much no chance for anyone to get to know the other inmates, and the burly man was no exception. He did not know who his ‘neighbor’ was either.

He did not think any further and continued to walk forward. Very quickly, he saw another metal door, but this door already had a large hole in it. It had obviously been created by his neighbor, who had also met with some good luck.

The burly man did not stop there and continued walking past a few more cells. There were some cells without any corpses, but all of the doors to the cells were opened. They were obviously saved by his neighbor. The doors along the way had been smashed through, and he was able to pass through without any obstructions.

Very quickly, he began to pick up his pace so that he could catch up to the person in front of him.

After running for a short while and passing through a door, the never-ending walkways finally ended, and there was a large hall in front of him instead. In the middle of the hall was a grayish black metal cylindrical tube that connected the ground to the ceiling. This was an elevator well that was currently surrounded by inmates. Upon hearing the footsteps of the burly man, they all turned behind to take a look.

“Another lucky one. One who escaped on his own.” A skinny, middle-aged man walked out from the crowd of prisoners and sized the burly man up before saying, “If you are not one of the prisoners that I

missed along the way, you should be my neighbor on the other side. Let me introduce myself, I am called Shijake, a high-level Executive Officer of the Germinal Organization. I was caught eleven years ago.”

“A member of the Germinal Organization? No wonder you were caught.” The burly man nodded. “I am called Tyne, and it has been four years since I was caught. What happened in the prison? Why did they release us all? Furthermore, there isn’t anyone coming forward to stop us.”

“I don’t know either, but since there isn’t anyone to stop us, this is the best chance for us to escape.” Shijake pointed at the prisoners behind him. “They all have various abilities, and there are even some who know the geography of the Bell of Death Island. They can lead us out of here.”

A skinny man then walked out and pointed at his head. “I once hacked into the top-secret database of the Six Nations and saw the blueprints of the Bell of Death Island. Even though it was only a few seconds, I have memorized about sixty to seventy percent of the information and can put it to good use now. Humph, this is also the reason I was caught.

“In any case, the Bell of Death Island isn’t a small island in the seas, and its name is extremely misleading. Its true location is beneath a mountain range. The Six Nations made use of a natural underground cave to build this underground prison. There is a total of thirteen levels, and every level has a circular walkway with many cells along it. The exterior of the cell is covered with a thick layer of steel and cement, and even a nuclear missile would not be able to blow it up. Neither the top layer nor the bottommost layer is the exit, and the only exit is located on one of the middle levels. Furthermore, its location is extremely concealed, and the underground walkway is extremely long.”

“Since everyone wants to escape from here, why not you work together with us?” Shijake suggested.

Tyne nodded and said, “What are your plans?”

“The prison guards have not reacted to the escape of prisoners from our level, and it is extremely likely that something special is holding them back. If the other prisoners have also broken out, it is extremely likely for them to go to the top level.” Shijake revealed a cruel smile. “After being shut in for so many years, it is time to regain some interest from the prison guards.”

Tyne frowned but did not say a word.

All of them took the elevator up to the top floor, and the moment the lift door opened up, a dense, bloody smell assaulted them. The lift was surrounded by the corpses of the prison guards. The old prison warden of the region was lying in the corner with his abdomen cut open and all of his intestines pulled out. His intestines had tied up his neck, and he had actually been strangled to death in an extremely cruel manner.

However, Shijake and the others remained unfazed. There was not a single friendly character among the prisoners, and none of them were fazed by the cruel sight.

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Another group of prisoners covered with blood were currently waiting for the lift. It was obvious that the situation before them was their handiwork.

“There are actually others who had escaped?” The other group of prisoners were being led by a man who was disfigured by a burn mark. Licking his lips, he sneered, “Hehe, you guys have missed out on the fun. Apart from us, no one else is still alive.”

Shijake’s eyes narrowed. He knew the origins of this disfigured man. This disfigured man was an extremely cruel Super who had committed many crimes that made one’s hair stand on edge. Even he did not dare provoke the man before him for no good reason and thus said, “How about we work together? We know how to escape.”

After thinking for a while, the disfigured man reluctantly replied, “Humph, alright.”

The two groups quickly came to an agreement and began to sweep the prison level by level to clean up all the remaining prison guards and save the other prisoners.

The group of prisoners grew larger and larger, and their group already had a few hundred people. With all the prisoners being released, the entire prison was very quickly soaked with blood, and all the prison guards were extremely vulnerable before them.

Originally, the Bell of Death Island had many defensive mechanisms, and they even had a self-destruct switch to prevent the prisoners from escaping. However, when the prisoners arrived at the control room, they realized that the entire control room was a complete mess. The prison guards who were supposed to be keeping watch had broken out in a fight, and the dozen prison guards were all riddled with bullets with all of them perishing together.

No wonder no one had stopped them.

“Did all of these prison guards break out in internal conflict?”

All of them had a face full of doubt and felt as though they were dreaming.

After being locked up for so long, they had regained their freedom in such an odd manner.

Why would the prison guards fight each other?

This matter was filled with oddities!

Due to the lack of information, the prisoners did not know about the Mutation Disaster. It was only because many of the prison guards had suddenly broken out in illness that they had been able to escape so successfully. Regardless of how strong a castle was, it would be easily destroyed from within.

After getting rid of all the prison guards, the few hundred prisoners rested in the large hall of the elevator well. Only then did they have the time to size each other up.

Many of them had once been infamous criminals with their notoriety spreading all across the world. Many of them had heard about each other’s fame and were wary of each other.

Not a single one of them could be easily provoked.

There were also a few new criminals who had been caught recently and thus were not recognized by the rest. The majority of the prisoners had been locked up in the Bell of Death Island for many years, with a

decade or two being extremely common. They had been blocked off from the world for far too long and were not up to date on the changes in the outside world.

Tyne was one of these 'newbies', and no one knew of his origins.

Because they were all wary of each other, many of the hot-tempered prisoners had reined in their tempers. In this environment where the powerful reigned supreme, even the most arrogant criminals would lower their heads. After all, while they were cruel, they were not stupid and did not have any intention of creating trouble for themselves. They only wanted to escape from prison before going their own ways and never seeing each other again.

After fumbling around for a moment, the prisoners finally found the tunnel to escape. This was a man-made tunnel that cut through the entire mountain range.

After walking for about two hours with all the prisoners growing impatient, they finally saw the light at the end of the tunnel and could smell the fresh air of the outside world.

"We're out!"

All of them were overjoyed and sped up toward the exit of the tunnel.

They were currently at the edge of the mountain range, and the exit was an extremely insignificant looking cave. The surroundings of the cave were filled with thick vegetation, and the leaves rustled in the wind.

The sky was clear, and they felt the warmth of the sun shining down on them. The feeling of freedom filled their hearts, and many of them took in greedy breaths of air. They all felt as though they were reborn at that moment.

They had finally escaped after remaining in captivity for such a long time, and their suppressed anger and ambition exploded like a volcano. While they did not understand the changes in the world, many of the criminals were eager to revert to their old ways and cause chaos in the outside world.

Right at that moment, a foreign voice was heard.

"What a coincidence, meeting all of you right after my arrival. I thought that you would have escaped by now."

Han Xiao was leaning against a tree as he looked at the prisoners.

The prisoners immediately looked over with cautiousness as they sized Han Xiao up. They all felt that Han Xiao was extremely foreign, and the majority of them did not recognize him.

"Who are you?" the disfigured man growled.

"You can call me Black Phantom. That was my past alias." Han Xiao raised his brows.

"Black Phantom?" the disfigured man sneered. "Humph, which hole did you jump out from? I've never heard of a character like you."

Bang!

A thick light flashed.

The next moment, everything above the neck of the disfigured man disappeared, and the headless corpse collapsed onto the ground.

Han Xiao gestured with his finger, and the Floating Cannon Array circulated around him like an obedient pet. When facing those vicious criminals, he did not feel like talking to them slowly.

“Have you heard of me now?”

Chapter 520: Bell of Death Island (2)

“What?”

“Impossible!”

The dull thud of the headless corpse collapsing onto the ground was like a hammer on their hearts. All the prisoners present were in a state of complete shock!

This disfigured prisoner was a ferocious individual who had killed countless individuals before. He was extremely cruel, and his powerful strength made it such that all the other prisoners dared not provoke him along the way. He was a top expert on Planet Aquamarine. However, to think that he had actually been killed in the blink of an eye without even a chance to fight back. All of them looked at Han Xiao with shock.

How could there be such a powerful person in the world?

Upon witnessing this scene, Han Xiao frowned and said with disappointment, “That can’t be right. Do none of you baldies know my name?”

Your name... Black Phantom?

All of the prisoners stared at each other in silence. They had been locked up in prison for too long and truly had not heard of this name before. The prison guards definitely would not reveal any news about the outside to them, and only a small number of prisoners who had been locked up recently had experienced the destruction of the Germinal Organization.

Tyne came out from the crowd and said with a solemn tone, “Black Phantom, real name Han Xiao. A traitor of Germinal Organization and also the key reason behind the Germinal Organization’s destruction. You are the most famous individual who incited war in the past five years and also the person who created the situation of peace in the Six Nations. Furthermore, your strength is above that of all the famed warriors, and you are at the peak of Planet Aquamarine. Your strength is above the three traditional realms, and your strength represents the fourth realm!”

He knew about Han Xiao. However, his knowledge was limited to the news before Han Xiao left the planet.

“At least there is someone with eyes...” Han Xiao then turned around, but before he could say a word, a gasp of shock sounded.

“What? Germinal Organization has been destroyed?”

Shijake had a look of disbelief.

He was an Executive Officer of the Germinal Organization who had been imprisoned for eleven years and one of the leader’s right-hand men. Before he was caught, Germinal Organization had still been at the peak of its strength, and he had always believed that the leader would lead Germinal Organization to completing their goal. However, he never could have imagined that after being locked up for over ten years and finally regaining his freedom, he would hear about the Germinal Organization being destroyed.

Not just him, there were a couple of other prisoners who were extremely shocked.

My goodness, just what happened while we were locked up?

“Since someone knows me, I shall not bother wasting my breath.” Han Xiao was gratified. His gaze then swept past the prisoners before him, and he found many familiar faces.

In Han Xiao’s previous life, Shijake had returned to Germinal Organization after his escape, which had not been decimated by a nuclear bomb in that timeline. He had created a great deal of trouble during the Mutation Disaster, and in order to fight against Godora, which the Six Nations leaned toward, he had stood on the side of DarkStar.

With Germinal Organization being destroyed, it did not only affect the storyline of Version 1.0 but also affected Version 2.0. Originally, the players in the Germinal Organization had been granted a channel to enter the galaxy, but this path had been cut off by Han Xiao. There was no Germinal Organization camp anymore, and DarkStar had also lost the cannon fodder that they should have had.

Tyne was an important character in the Mutation Disaster of Version 2.0. He had been the first to find the Mutation Source in Han Xiao’s previous life and had been possessed by the mutation source. Because he shared the intense desire that the Mutation Source had for energy, he had not been able to control himself and sucked up energy from wherever he could. This had resulted in the Mutation Source growing rapidly and speeding up the progress of the Mutation Disaster. He had been a large enemy of the players and the main antagonist.

The Mutation Source had a great desire for energy, and while it could move around on its own, its movement speed was too slow. Thus, it would possess a human body to gain a tool to harvest energy. While the Mutation Source was capable of affecting an individual’s actions through hormones, it was not able to control the thoughts and actions of an infected individual. Thus, the Mutation Source was not able to make use of the infected individuals to transfer a large amount of energy over to it.

Apart from the two of them, the other prisoners had also set off storms in Planet Aquamarine and become new targets for the players exterminate.

Han Xiao had gone to Bell of Death Island early just so that he could get rid of this wildcard to ensure that his plans would not be affected. Hiring them was only something that he was doing in passing. The strength of Planet Aquamarine’s Supers could no longer keep up with him, and only a couple of prisoners who had some special traits were worth anything to him. Just like Emerald Grass.

According to his understanding of the prisoners in Bell of Death Island, they were an unruly and untamable bunch, so he did not plan to subdue them with reason. After arriving, Han Xiao had used a large life force radar to scan the place and noticed a large number of living beings moving underground. As such, he had decided to wait at the entrance and catch all the prisoners in one fell swoop. The anti-surveillance device of the Six Nations was full of loopholes and like a weak sheet of paper before his equipment.

“What are your motives?”

The prisoners displayed looks of wariness.

“Don’t talk so much cr*p. A calamity is sweeping over Planet Aquamarine, and every talent is extremely important. I found out the location of the prison from the Six Nations, and I am here to give all of you a chance to redeem yourselves and contribute to society.”

“Impossible! The Six Nations would never reveal the location of this secret prison!” someone cried out.

Han Xiao raised his brows and added, “Oh, the Six Nations are now under my command.”

Everyone was speechless.

How could the Six Nations listen to an individual’s commands? This fellow was definitely trying to scare them. Even if he wanted to brag, he should be more realistic in his bragging. Did he think that they were idiots?

“Who cares about you? This daddy here isn’t interested at all!”

“I am not requesting for aid.” Han Xiao stretched his arms and said emotionlessly, “Taking into account all of your destructive capabilities, in order to prevent the situation from becoming worse, I will not allow those who reject me to leave alive. Thus, you either submit or die.”

“Hehehe... what a braggart. What a frightening threat. However, I am not afraid of you.”

At this moment, a man with a spider tattoo walked out from the crowd without a trace of fear on his face. “Kill me if you have the ability.”

The eyes of the other prisoners lit up. This fellow was Black Spider, who was extremely famous for being difficult to deal with. He has a type of doppelganger Esper ability, and the moment he was killed, he would be revived in a doppelganger hidden somewhere else.

Black Spider had always felt that he had an undying body, so he was extremely arrogant and unafraid of danger.

“It’s you.” Han Xiao nodded. He had dealt with Black Spider before, and this fellow had been sent to Bell of Death Island because of him.

Without waiting for Black Spider to continue acting arrogantly, Han Xiao used his Hila Character Summon Card straight away and launched a mental attack without saying a word.

Black Spider's body shook, and blood oozed out from his mouth and nose. Collapsing on the ground, he raised his head with great difficulty and said with a malevolent smile, "Hehe, I am an undying being. Just you wait. I will find you again one day, and I will be your eternal nightmare!"

The next moment, he took his last breath and passed away on the spot with a malevolent smile on his face.

Black Spider was not afraid of physical death as his living state was a ball of mental energy. As such, mental attacks were his Achilles heel. In Han Xiao's previous life, he had died by Hila's hand, and today, he died due to Hila's abilities again.

Black Spider did not know that he was truly dead this time.

Even at the point of his death, he had thought that he would still wake up but did not know that his consciousness had already fallen into darkness. It was impossible for him to open his eyes again.

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"This is the first time I've heard such a request. I destroyed his soul, so he won't be able to revive again." Han Xiao shrugged.

Huuu!

Before waiting for the prisoners to react, Han Xiao shot out a couple of compressed orbs, and they opened up into a large silver mechanical palm that was seven to eight meters big.

[G75-Type Claws], a blueprint of the Mechanic Class. A large mechanical arm like this was very commonly used, and it was controlled through the nerves, thus allowing the user to operate it as though it was his own limb. There were many different models, and they all had different configurations. Boosted by a Mechanic's Mechanical Force, the stats and the might of the claw were not to be underestimated. Apart from being used as a combat ability, it could also be used as a large assistant tool. If a mechanic wanted to build a spaceship, his own two hands would be far too inefficient, and the aid of such machines would be extremely important.

In the past year, Han Xiao had been left with more than enough time to forge equipment and had prepared a large stock of equipment.

The bottom of the mechanical claw suddenly spewed out flames, and it flew out more than a hundred meters before slamming down on an empty plot of land like a palm descending from the heavens.

Boom!

The earth trembled, and a thick layer of soil and dust was kicked up into the air. A crater in the shape of a palm could also be seen in the ground with cracks expanding out in all directions like a spider web.

The mechanical hand then grabbed a large handful of soil and threw it in front of the prisoners. Apart from the sound of the soil falling onto the ground, a large thud of a heavy object landing could be heard with the smell of blood assaulting their noses. While the prisoners could not see anything apart from the soil, all their faces blanched.

They knew that there was an invisible fellow in their group—the Invisible Demon!

“You can’t escape from my eyes even if you are invisible.” Han Xiao controlled the mechanical arm to float above his head. “Don’t even think about trying your luck.”

Han Xiao had already spotted the presence of the Invisible Demon, which he had not expected to find. The Invisible Demon had fought Han Xiao before and was extremely wary of Han Xiao. Thus, he had planned to make use of the opportunity when Han Xiao’s attention was fixed on the prisoners to discreetly leave. However, he had ended up being crushed by a mechanical palm instead.

With Han Xiao’s current strength, getting rid of the Invisible Demon was as easy as swatting a fly.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was able to wipe out the entire Planet Aquamarine with the strength of a single person!

Those powerful criminals in the eyes of ordinary folks were no more than third rate galactic wanderers in his eyes.

“Alright, alright. Hurry up and give me an answer. My time is very precious.”

Han Xiao snapped his fingers. The Floating Cannon Array instantly surrounded the prisoners, and the fingers on the mechanical claw turned into five large barrels, accumulating energy for an attack.

The prisoners had unreconciled looks on their faces. After finally managing to escape, they had actually met someone powerful enough to send them into despair. They had just come out from the wolf’s den but entered into the tiger’s cave the next moment. With Black Phantom’s strength, even if all of them attacked together, they would surely be wiped out.

The situation was not within their control, and the prisoners had no choice but to swallow their anger and submit. However, not a single one of them willingly submitted, and they were all planning their next move.

Pretend to submit to him and escape when we have the chance. Many prisoners had such a thought.

After doing a headcount, Han Xiao said, “The number of fatalities is fewer than I imagined. Looks like all of you know what the right decision to make is. Follow me back to the Sanctuary. Board the ship.”

Board the ship? What ship? Shouldn’t we be taking a plane?

The crowd was stunned.

Hum!

The sky then began contorting, and a gigantic spaceship appeared in the clear sky. Han Xiao had arrived there on a spaceship, but it had been in stealth mode. The stealth mode had just been deactivated, and thus, the prisoners were only able to see the gigantic spaceship at that moment. It was akin to a castle floating in space!

The jaws of all the prisoners dropped, and they fell into a daze.

My goodness, the ship that you were referring to is a spaceship?

While they knew that Han Xiao was extremely powerful, because of their lack of information and preconceived notions, they had thought that Han Xiao was still a member of Planet Aquamarine and had

never considered the galaxy. At that moment, the appearance of this spaceship had shattered their world view and was completely out of their expectations!

They originally did not believe that the Six Nations would submit to Han Xiao, but upon witnessing the scene before them, that belief wavered.

All the prisoners no longer had any thoughts of escaping as they boarded the spaceship with bitter expressions. In front of Han Xiao, the ferocious criminals had become docile sheep.

When the final prisoner walked up to Han Xiao's side, he suddenly stopped by the hatch of the spaceship and looked at Han Xiao with hesitation. "Do you remember me?"

Han Xiao paused for a moment and studied the prisoner before him carefully before gasping. "Hannes?"
"That's right." Hannes laughed bitterly.

"What are you doing here? Bennett and I thought you went missing!" Han Xiao had a face full of shock. He had a hidden mission that had been issued by Hannes called [New Era—Origin], and his job was to dig out the secret behind Planet Aquamarine's history.

Before Han Xiao left Planet Aquamarine, he had reached the third phase of the mission. However, because of Hannes' sudden disappearance, there had been no subsequent clue. Since the mission had not failed, Han Xiao had a feeling that Hannes was still alive.

Hannes being locked up in the Bell of Death Island was completely out of Han Xiao's expectations.

"It's a long story." Hannes shook his head helplessly. "I found a shocking secret, and this secret brought me into grave danger. The others are dead, and I am the only one alive."

Han Xiao frowned and guessed, "Since you were locked up in the Bell of Death Island, is the culprit the Six Nations? You found a secret that they wanted to hide?"

"No." Hannes shook his head. "While the Six Nations did catch me, I was on the verge of death at that time. They saved my life instead."

"So, why are you locked up?"

Hannes laughed bitterly. "Perhaps it is because of a dead Godoran beside me."

"What?" Han Xiao was stunned. "Why would you meet a Godoran?"

"Sigh, let's talk on the ship. You already have a spaceship now, and you are truly different from before. Perhaps only you will be able to make use of the clue that I found..."

Hannes clenched his fists with a suppressed fury in his voice.

"My guess is, there is indeed a mastermind behind the war riddled state of Planet Aquamarine, and Godora is the source of the war!"

Tracing Back to Origins, One Final Link

Bell of Death Island was on another continent, and it would take about an hour to return to the Sanctuary. While a spaceship had to limit its speed within the atmosphere of a planet, it was still much faster than an airplane.

After Han Xiao settled all the little b*stards of Bell of Death Island into a guest room, he found Hannes and continued the previous conversation.

Hannes began to narrate what had happened after he went missing. After the end of the Germinal Organization battle, he had led the groups of archaeologists on a journey to seek out new secrets. Because Han Xiao had let the players complete a large number of missions, Hannes had managed to receive a fair amount of new information. He had then found a suspicious point in the large sea of record scrolls, and the evidence had actually pointed to the battle of a hundred nations on Planet Aquamarine.

In the past, Planet Aquamarine had housed over a hundred nations, and while there had been small skirmishes, they had been largely peaceful. They had all been curious about the universe, and Godora's appearance had brought about news of the universe. Knowing that the large number of nations on the planet would only slow down the development of the civilization and waste a great deal of resources, the state of the planet had begun to shift.

All the nations had taken a different stance, but none of them had been willing to give up their authority. Even if they knew that choosing to do so would result in a tragic future, before the tragedy truly arrived, they had all chosen to be short sighted. In the end, the friction between the nations had grown, and war had become the only way out.

As such, this theory had caused a world war to break out, and many nations had been eradicated in the war. Finally, only Six Nations had been left behind, and they had all begun to reorganize the resources of the entire planet. However, the negative effects of the war still had not worn off.

Hannes did not think that a single theory would result in a war between over a hundred nations. He was very certain that there must have been someone controlling the situation from behind the scenes. After much searching, he had finally made new progress in his search, but it had also resulted in a tragedy.

"The evidence led us to an underground cave in the Somar Desert. There was a large golden statue in the cave, and you will never believe what I saw. That golden statue actually began moving and launched attacks on us. Its strength was unrivaled, and our attacks weren't able to harm it in the slightest."

"And then?" Han Xiao asked.

"We fought a long battle with the statue, but it was indestructible and could even shoot lasers. My comrades all died in battle. The war didn't reap their lives, but they actually died there..."

Hannes grit his teeth and continued, "I was also severely injured and thought that my death was certain. However, the statue suddenly stopped, and the entire cave suddenly turned golden. Only then did I find out that the rocky walls of the cave were actually a disguise. On the golden wall was an oval shaped container the size of a human being. A Godoran then walked out from the container and squatting in front of me. He asked how I found the place."

“Continue, I’m listening.”

“At that time, my breathing was weak, and thus, the other party was extremely close to me. I acted as though I was severely injured and tried to communicate with him. I asked him who he was and why a Godoran would be left behind on Planet Aquamarine. However, he seemed to disdain giving me an answer and wanted to stand up and leave. The statue then moved again, and it was about to raise its arms up to smash me to death.

“I didn’t have a choice. I could only take a chance and attack with all of my strength. However, I never expected that the Godoran would not dodge my attack and was killed by a single fist. He was actually an ordinary person. After he died, the statue stopped moving, and I fainted from my injuries.

“After who knows how long, a special agent squad arrived at the cave and found me on the verge of death. They seemed to have found the cave by following my tracks, and everything inside the cave was seized by them. Because the matter involved Godora, I was sent to Bell of Death Island for interrogation.”

“Why do you think that Godora is the one behind the scenes with just this information?”

“It isn’t a wild guess, of course. Prison is the best place to think, and I have been connecting the dots in my mind. Furthermore, there must be a reason for a Godoran staying behind on Planet Aquamarine. I suspect that while Godora isn’t interfering with Planet Aquamarine on the surface, they have always been monitoring us and interrupting the progress of our civilization. While I do not understand Godora, I know that only benefits are absolute, and they definitely have some reasons to do so.”

“It may not be as you think. A single person cannot represent an entire civilization. Besides, Godora also have another golden skinned enemy force,” Han Xiao said after pondering for a moment. “I have a pretty good relationship with Godora, and I may be able to find some people to investigate this matter. Can you give me any clues?”

“I remember the appearance of that Godoran and everything in the cave.” Hannes took out a few pieces of paper and began drawing.

The appearance of the Godoran was very clear, and Han Xiao took a picture of it with his communicator. With his relationship with Godora, it was extremely simple for him to ask them to check on a portrait.

He then looked at Hannes’ sketch of the statue. It was the shape of a humans but had four arms and no facial features. Instead, it had two lines of three holes where one’s eyes would be, which were glowing with a golden light.

Upon seeing the drawing, Han Xiao let out a gasp.

“This is a type of Mojo Puppet, a product of Godora’s mages. It is easily purchased, but the price to forge it is pretty expensive. If you aren’t a mage, you can only destroy the puppet by smashing the statue. With your strength, it would be extremely difficult for you to smash a combat machine of the galactic level. This Mojo Puppet should be the Godoran’s guard, and the place where the Godoran was staying should be a life sustaining chamber. It is likely that the chamber was connected to the web. If I have time, I will ask the Six Nations if I can study that item.”

Hannes grabbed onto Han Xiao's hands and pleaded, "This is the only clue, and it will only be of use in your hands. I can only count on you. I no longer have anything to repay you with and can only hope that you will help me based on our old friendship. I really want to get to the bottom of this mystery and find out who is the source of the calamity!"

A notification popped up on Han Xiao's interface indicating that the third phase of [New Era—Origin] was completed. The mission gave him a few million experience points, and he successfully entered into the next phase. The interface also showed that this was the last phase of the mission, and there was only a single mission requirement, which was to find the truth. However, the only clue that they had was the Godoran's portrait.

No wonder this is a hidden Grade A mission. It's linked to two different versions, and one would have to be on friendly terms with Godora to follow up on this clue. Thus, this mission can only be continued in Version 2.0. Han Xiao's eyes glowed.

The reward was naturally plentiful, giving him a few million experience points. However, the Great Mechanic Han had the large market of the players and needed experience the least.

Apart from experience, there were a few Free Attribute Points, Potential Points, a chance for a Random Reward, and a unique Medal of Honor, which only Grade A missions had. This item was able to strengthen all of his attributes. Because he had handed this mission over to his contract workers who would work without complaints, all the mission requirements of every phase had been completed. His mission evaluation would definitely be very high, and he would definitely be able to get the Medal of Honor.

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This would be his second Medal of Honor.

Han Xiao began planning his next move in his heart. If the one who started the war in Planet Aquamarine was truly Godora, information of this individual would definitely be top secret. Recklessly trying to fish for information would only alert Godora.

"I should just wait for the Godoran troops to reach Planet Aquamarine before planning my next step. The one leading the team should be Nagakin, and it will be much easier to talk to someone I know."

Han Xiao shook his head and was not too bothered by the outcome. After all, the struggles of a civilization were not right or wrong. It was only a matter of interests.

Even if Godora was truly the one behind the scenes, the current Planet Aquamarine still required Godora to save them. With so many lives at stake, being hard headed was not the solution to things, and it was best to be flexible.

Compared to harping on about the past, he was more interested in the food before him. Just like how a person ignored the source of their food when eating. Just like how growing crops required feces as fertilizer and pigs ate swill. When drinking milk, no one would bother thinking about what the person who discovered milk had been trying to do.

When marrying a wife, unless you were extremely lucky, you would have to selectively ignore the fact that your wife might have been your best friend's ex...

Thus, the way Han Xiao saw it, regardless of what the truth was, the most important thing was the value of its creation.

...

After returning to the Sanctuary, Han Xiao got the mercenaries to watch over the prisoners from the Bell of Death Island. While those unruly prisoners had been caught by him, they still had to be properly trained before they could be used. Han Xiao felt extremely at ease to hand them over to the mercenaries.

While those prisoners all looked extremely arrogant and haughty, compared to the galactic mercenaries who had traveled through various Star Systems and killed countless different species, they were no different from tame sheep.

In the following ten days, Han Xiao gradually set his plan into motion. The mages under him largely increased the yield of the suppressant, and the suppressant was handed out in large quantities to the refugees of the Sanctuary, thus stabilizing the situation.

At the same time, even more refugees flooded to the Sanctuary, and the entire Sanctuary was extremely crowded. As such, Bennett began to expand the Sanctuary, and with the aid of the players, the construction proceeded smoothly.

The refugees flooded over without stopping, and if things proceeded at that rate, the Sanctuary would probably have to be expanded into the size of a gigantic city.

Han Xiao did not forget about the Six Nations. Since the Six Nations had agreed to his conditions, he sent some mercenaries together with some raw materials to the capital of the Six Nations. All the citizens of the Six Nations who were not aware of the situation fell into a daze.

Some of the mercenaries stayed behind in the Six Nations to aid them in producing the suppressant, and the experienced Six Nations also advertised the news of the suppressant greatly to stabilize the hearts of their citizens.

The Six Nations naturally would not only pay lip service to Han Xiao, and Han Xiao had the authority to mobilize all of their military forces. Han Xiao only needed to say the word, and he would be able to control all these things. However, there was no need for him to do so. It would be best that he left those armies to the Six Nations so that they can help share some pressure with the Sanctuary.

The Sanctuary and the Six Nations already had some experience in fighting the Mutation Disaster, but the number of refugees that they were able to save was a small fraction of the entire planet. However, they were not able to take care of the beasts and plants in the wilderness, and the most frightening thing would be the underwater sea creatures. Their numbers were a couple of times greater than that of the land creatures, and they were also affected by the Mutation Disaster. There were even some amphibious beasts who came onto land and destroyed a few cities near the sea.

In places where they could not see, the situation of the Mutation Disaster was still extremely terrible and was getting worse by the second.

The majority of Planet Aquamarine's players were currently in the Sanctuary, and this was actually not beneficial to the big picture. However, this was extremely beneficial to Han Xiao as he was able to

harvest a large amount of experience. Through the Black Star selection process, he had hired a full thirty to forty thousand players as well.

The selection trial had already become a daily activity for the players, and it was fervently discussed on the forums. The players shared their experience on the forums and came to a conclusion. A valiant warrior was no more than a shooting star quickly fading off into the night sky. Only by choosing a sneaky path would they be able to lead an eternal life.

Because it was a group-based selection trial, the players gradually began to form groups. Casual players tried their luck while professional players flaunted their skills. The core members of the large guilds would usually be protected by a thick layer of players on the outside.

All those who had not been able to pass the thirty second trials would not miss this chance again. Every time they saw Frenzied Sword, Hao Tian, and the others walking around the city with their bodies clad in high quality armor, all the other players could not help but be filled with envy. There were even a few who wanted to try their luck and see if killing them would cause the equipment to fall out of their inventories.

With the cooperation of other players, the success rate of the players increased significantly. The players still thought that it was because they had found the trick to the trials, and Han Xiao truly loved it when the players thought this way.

Han Xiao had prepared for a long time, and everything was currently going according to his plan. However, there was a scene that he had not expected.

The players had actually learned how to play Wayne Cards from Herlous, and many of them were actually addicted!

After hearing about this matter, Han Xiao almost had the urge to strangle Herlous to death! All he did was play cards every day and lead the excellent players astray!

How incorrigible!

Chapter 522: New Combat Mode (1)

After joining the mercenary group, the players took the initiative to interact with the various activities that the mercenary officers were involved in. Mercenaries were also a resource for them, and the good-looking ones such as Aroshia, Feidin, and Sylvia were swarmed by the players like bees to flowers, making them uncomfortable as they were not used to the enthusiasm of players.

However, toward their 'new companions', the mercenaries felt a little impatient.

Some of the players were attracted to the Wayne Card game that Herlous played and immediately grew addicted to it. The Wayne Card game was full of charm, with each card possessing simple enchantments on it. When played, they would display various effects, which was not only interesting but also a display of the influence of characters present in the universe. All of this made the players extremely interested in the galaxy.

To think that playing a card game could actually boost their knowledge!

With the presence of the forums, anything novel would always catch the attention of the players. There were stickied posts about the various playstyles of the Wayne Card game as well as introductions, attracting the curiosity of players from all over the world

To be able to play a mini-game within a game, this was equivalent to adding two happy matters together, double happiness!

In his past life, the Wayne Card game had also been popular among the players. Right now, having been introduced to this card game in advance, the trend of the Wayne Card game was thus brought forward.

The Shattered Star Ring deck, which Herlous proudly showed the players, was also photographed and uploaded. The cards were all famous characters of the Shattered Star Ring. While the majority still went unrecognized by the players, there were a few that they knew, such as Dragon Emperor Ames. More than a few still remembered the long, white legs that filled up their entire sight.

One player even discovered the card of Black Star and was stunned silly. He did not expect Han Xiao to be a part of the deck as well!

To be made into a card, this was naturally a symbol of status. Was this not saying that Black Star had some fame within the Shattered Star Ring?

The players could not help but feel a pleasant surprise. The stronger their faction was, the happier the incoming players would be!

However, all this caused Han Xiao to feel extremely helpless. To him, the players were capable of generating value for him every minute, and for them to spend their limited time and energy on playing cards, was this not reducing his income?

Diligence pays off, while leisure serves no purpose, men!

A great man once said that there was no problem that could not be solved through playing cards. If it existed, then just play another round!

Hearing the players' laughter and joy, Han Xiao could not restrain them. He could only silently bear with the heartache. This was because his overall goal was to attract all the players to his camp, so the strength of the players would be equivalent to the strength of his influence.

After agonizing over it for the whole day, Han Xiao thought of a new idea.

"Since the players love to play card games, I should just take the opportunity to organize a playing card competition and put up prizes and such. Such a large-scale collective leisure activity could also enhance the players sense of belonging to the camp..."

Han Xiao felt that this idea was plausible. This way, it would not cause any trouble to the players who fell in love with playing cards earlier than usual.

However, even if he wished to hold such an event, this was not the appropriate time. He had to at least wait till he led the players into the interstellar base. At that time, he could also take the chance to sell a bunch of card decks to the players.

...

Version 2.0 had already been out for more than ten days. The players were slowly adapting to it, moving back on the right track. The previous version's level limit was up to sixty, the watershed before the first Race Evolution. Now that the upper limit of the level in the game had been lifted, the players started to complete their advancement, which led to many feeling surprised at the effects.

This topic quickly spread across the entire forums, causing the entire planet to boil.

The players started to pick apart the details behind the Race Evolution. This had been the same in his past lifetime, so Han Xiao did not bother paying any attention to it. He went to look for his officers, with the intention of learning a new Energy Training Technique.

The Energy Training Technique was nothing unique, with the majority of it being general skills without any restriction in occupation. After going around asking once, Herlous's favorability toward him was high enough to simply give him a new technique without any additional conditions.

Sunil Energy Training Technique: Foundation technique in training energy for Sunils.

Overall Effect: +20 Energy

0/100 Cycles. Each cycle depends on STR, DEX, or END (Select highest attribute). Every cycle will exhaust 50,000 experience and 1,500 stamina.

Han Xiao was currently not lacking in experience, and his stamina recovery rate was also high. Within the span of two to three days, he finished learning this technique. Each cycle would add 3 Energy, for a total of 320 Energy. However, he was still a few hundred short of his target of 9,000 Energy, so he had to learn another technique.

The more of such Energy Training Techniques one learned, the more the consumption of experience would increase. However, with Han Xiao's current experience reserves, he was not worried about such an issue.

Harmon also promised to share an Energy Training Technique with him, but he had a request, which was to go all out to fight him, and he would only obtain the technique if Han Xiao defeated him. This madman was a main character build but also an addict for combat. In order to form a War League and temper himself, he would not give up on any opportunity.

Han Xiao was helpless about it. When he first recruited Harmon, they had exchanged blows. His own abilities were at the top of the list for the Grade B Supers, and he would not shirk away from a fight from anyone of the same grade as him.

The duo went to the training room within the spaceship.

They deliberately avoided the players for this battle as Han Xiao did not wish to display his abilities so early in the game. Furthermore, at their level, the arena would be too weak to withstand their blows. It would be too troublesome if they needed to repair the place after their battle.

However, Han Xiao still had certain plans. He called the mercenaries to bring all the prisoners over so as to allow them to feel the combat capability of the interstellar mercenaries.

Hannes was not included within the prisoners as Han Xiao had already given him his freedom, allowing him to stay in the Sanctuary. When Bennett saw his missing friend, he had received a good shock, and after learning about Hannes hypothesis, his mood had also grown heavy. However, Han Xiao was not bothered by it.

“Come whenever you’re ready.” Han Xiao nodded as he spoke toward Harmon.

Bang!

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Babbling was not Harmon’s style. One only saw his muscles swelling exponentially, his body shape becoming several times larger than Han Xiao. With a burst from his legs, he shot forward like a cannonball, hefting up his axe and hacking straight at Han Xiao.

Ka ka ka!

Two giant mechanical hands rapidly unfolded on top of Han Xiao’s head, seizing the axe. Flames burst out to propel the hands forward as they begun a wrestling battle with Harmon, pitting strength against strength. A wave of air billowed out from their point of contact, knocking all the prisoners surrounding them away.

The group of prisoners could not even withstand the aftereffects of their collision. They crawled up, bedraggled, all of them wearing expressions of surprise on their faces.

While they had seen Han Xiao act before, their strength had been insufficient for them to comprehend the actual battle strength Han Xiao had. Standing by the side and watching the battle, they finally understood that, in front of these interstellar mercenaries, they were as good as commoners.

Han Xiao’s hands shook, and another two mechanical hands unfolded beside him, striking out.

Boom! Boom!

With two heavy blows, Harmon was sent flying. His legs hit the ground with a loud thud, and the metal flooring was actually dented by him.

The four mechanical hands pursued triumphantly, continuously sending out blows. The force unleashed by the machinery was in no way light, and Harmon could not evade in time, only able to use his tomahawk to directly withstand it. The tomahawk constantly clashed against the metal hands, the resulting sound deafening.

Clank!

The metallic clashes echoed continuously in the room.

Han Xiao remained in his original spot, without even bothering to don his armor. In the past year, he had improved on his fighting style, adding a few new elite machinery systems. He no longer needed to

employ third-rate tactics such as the Army Style, for he had many more means to deal with people his level.

For example, this enhanced melee tactic originated from the combination of High-End Knowledge [Huge Duplex Machinery Technology] and the Advanced Knowledge [Heavy Machine Modification]. With the giant mechanical hands as the core of this system, in addition to melee battles, they could also be equipped with other weapons, combining attack and defense.

The material used for the [G75-Type Claws] was the strongest alloy that Han Xiao could currently produce—his current material crafting was still stuck at the Advanced Knowledge [Advanced Material Synthesis], as he did not manage to learn the High-End Knowledge of material studies.

The four giant mechanical hands suddenly disintegrated, the various parts akin to butterflies weaving around flowers as they scattered. This caused Harmon to cleave down on empty space, resulting in a flaw in his defense. At that moment, the parts once again reformed, and the four palms combined together from front to back, forming a circle that trapped Harmon in the center. Only his head remained exposed.

The mechanical fingers of each hand tightened, gripping Harmon's body and restricting his movements.

Hum!

The four palms simultaneously released a sonic blast, causing even the ground to shake. One could see with their own eyes the surrounding air distort, and the shock wave radiated outward in the limited space of the training room.

While the prisoners had attempted to retreat, they were still caught up in the aftermath. The pressure of the shockwave forced all of them up against the walls, much like human paintings. The skin of everyone present undulated, like ripples on a water surface, and all their expressions looked more distorted than someone in the process of diving.

A string of damage values popped up from above Harmon's head. Because the shock wave penetrated directly into his body, Harmon's rigid muscles immediately loosened in shock, and he entered a temporary [Weakened] status

Taking advantage of this opportunity, Han Xiao jumped forward, giving a vicious kick toward Harmon's head. Numerous mechanical parts expanded in an instant around his leg, unfolding into a black mechanical foot. It viciously stomped on Harmon's face with a dull thud.

This foot landed hard, and the huge force behind the leg caused the metal flooring below Harmon's feet to distort and warp into a concave shape.

Not waiting for Harmon to be free of his negative status, the components within the mechanical leg once again let out clanking sounds as the mechanical parts came to life. The alloy casing at the bottom of the mechanical leg opened, revealing a huge cannon nozzle, completely plastered on the face of Harmon. An eye piercing glow lit up from within the cannon.

Boom!

Harmon ate a light ray cannon shot right in his face!

The duo violently ricocheted off each other, and a bulky body emitting black smoke plumes bounced heavily on the floor whilst Han Xiao landed gracefully. The mechanical hands and feet disintegrated at the same time, turning into tiny components before regathering together as a compressed orb, returning back to its original position.

This set of combo moves was a common form of combat that Han Xiao currently favored.

Xiu!

Suddenly, Harmon threw out his tomahawk while he was still tumbling. The ax spun, bringing with it a sharp whistling noise.

Han Xiao did not budge, instead the halo array deployed behind him, spraying out motes of light to form a golden light shield in front of him. The ax head violently slammed into the shield, leaving behind a large crack. Another 10 cm, and the blade would have touched Han Xiao's forehead!

After prying out the tomahawk, Han Xiao turned over to look. Harmon had just stood up, and although he had suffered from a series of blows, with black patches all around his body, he was still as ferocious as ever, bringing out a war hammer next.

"Heh, how exciting!" Harmon wiped the corners of his mouth. His tone was rough, panting, but full of fighting spirit.

"How tough can you get?" Han Xiao was helpless against him. Harmon was an organism with a single brain cell, only knowing how to solve problems using his fists. He was unlike Herlous who knew when to retreat. Instead, one had to knock him out to end the battle.

While both were proficient in close combat, Herlous could serve as a damage dealer and meat shield, while Harmon was an MT ¹ through and through, extremely fleshy!

Han Xiao could see Harmon's attribute panel, which showed two overpowered specialties. There was [War God's Tenacity], whose effect was that every time Harmon's HP fell below twenty percent, there would be a chance for him to recover his HP back to fifty. The other was [Desperate Straits], where he would obtain a +2 Buff to his Strength, Dexterity, and Endurance attributes for every one percent of HP lost. In a battle, there was no cap to the limit obtained.

In theory, if Harmon was lucky, his strength could be improved infinitely—and with his Luck Glow, it was as good as him being the darling of the Fortune Goddess. These two specialties that he possessed were akin to a 'Last Stand' plus 'Bloodbath Berserk'. Thus, there was actually a high probability for the 'theory' to become reality.

This was a true genius made for battle!

As for Harmon's shortcoming, it was that all his attacks were toward a single target, without any long-range attacks. He was not a Pugilist, so he had no way to utilize the Shockwave Blast skill. He was a purebred warrior!

Chapter 523: New Combat Mode (2)

Initially, when Han Xiao discovered traces of Harmon, he had been overjoyed, immediately going over to recruit him without hesitation. Harmon followed the tribal traditions and was a pure warrior without any guile, strictly keeping to his promises. Or, one could say that his brain was packed only with muscles. In terms of difficulty for recruiting, he would probably be rated as one star.

Harmon had just left his mother planet and needed to form a War League of his own. Thus, the strength that Han Xiao displayed was enough to win the approval of Harmon, and they agreed to a cooperation. He would join the War League whilst Harmon would join his mercenary group. A mercenary would have sufficient opportunities to exercise his muscles, and this was also what Harmon needed.

As such, Harmon could not strictly be considered as one of Han Xiao's officers but rather an ally on level ground.

Han Xiao had researched the main character model archetype. Other than the standard luck glow, a main character would more or less have some form of commonality. For example, some characters would have the ability to prolong the plotline and events, caused by their personality and ideas. Some could do so purely out of their own strength and ability, and Harmon was precisely one of those latter characters.

The Luhan Beastmen believed in the way of the warrior. In the collapsed tribes where Harmon used to reside in, he had long been renowned as the 'Roaring Beast'. This was a form of extreme praise from the Luhan Beastmen toward Harmon. Harmon was one of the favorites competing for the seat of the Chief, a protagonist who was strong from the very beginning.

Han Xiao's relationship with him was currently neither warm nor cold. Because Harmon was someone who maintained the old tradition of a War League, he was not stingy with fighting for Han Xiao. A true warrior would never go back on his word.

Of all the officers in his mercenary group, Harmon had challenged every single one of them, and they were aware that the longer the battle dragged on, the stronger he got. It was as though he was an unkillable cockroach. None of Han Xiao's officers had managed to defeat him, save Aroshia, whom Harmon could not damage due to her pure energy body. This was also his weakness.

Han Xiao was not interested in pitting his endurance against Harmon's—he would rather end the battle as fast as possible.

"Roar!"

Harmon let out a snort, his powerful lung capacity causing the surrounding air to vibrate as he charged forward again, this time holding onto the war hammer. His every step caused the metal flooring to groan in protest as he drew close at the quickest possible speed.

Clank!

Facing his charge, Han Xiao remained unmoved. Two compressed orbs dropped from his sleeves, and the moment that they landed on the ground, a ray of light was seen as they transformed into two mechanical humanoids warriors, solemnly flanking Han Xiao on both sides.

The mechanical warriors were coated in an alloy shell that gleamed bright yellow, white, and black. Their four limbs were designed with the likeness of humans in mind, their height around two meters.

The armor was not overly swollen, but it could not be considered elegant and light. The helmet had two wings on the sides of the visor as decoration, whereas their backs had two slots that looked like they could be fitted with wings. Both hands had four fingers, and from the outside, it was unknown as to what weapons they possessed.

At the same time, Harmon had already arrived before Han Xiao. With a ferocious twist of his waist, the war hammer that was as long as a door grew a fast curve as it swept across. The force behind this was much larger than before, generating a howling gale!

Hu!

Even before the hammer landed, the wind caused Han Xiao to be unable to open his eyes!

This hammer strike was obviously done with the intention to blow both Han Xiao and his robots away. If hit by this, Han Xiao estimated that it would trigger a suppressed state for him, where he would experience a short period of dizziness. After all, Strength was not his strongest stat, and even if his HP was especially large, it would not be a good feeling.

However, Han Xiao showed no sign of panic, a gleam instead shimmering within his eyes.

“Phillip, load the data.”

Hum!

The two robots, which had been motionless before, suddenly jolted and began to move. Their actions flowed smooth like running water, without any stiffness expected of mechanized warriors.

The robot on the left speedily extended both its hands. The mechanical arm split open, and many components popped out. In an instant, the entire arm was remodeled into a sturdier version, and as its palm caught the hammer, the inbuilt propulsion device on its back was fully activated, erupting with a disorderly airflow.

Clank!

The war hammer was forcibly blocked and was scarily not suppressed by Harmon in the slightest!

The other robot locked its arms together as a seam appeared in the middle of its arms, with blue light flickering within. A huge amount of air was drawn in, as a sharp whistling sound was heard. The next moment, both fists punched out, and from the tips of the fists, a compressed air cannon shot was released, akin to a compressed hurricane.

Harmon took the cannon blast directly to his chest, and he appeared to be a tree that had been uprooted amid a storm. He flew back over a hundred meters, finally slamming hard against the opposite wall of the training room.

Bang!

The wall was dented, and the entire figure of Harmon was trapped inside.

“The actual battle statistics are not half bad!” Han Xiao looked at the two robots flanking him.

Other than the mechanical beasts used in his mechanic army, the Great Mechanic Han was not lacking in elites. If used for comparison, the mechanical beasts would be akin to the foot soldiers, while the elite machinery would be the mini bosses. The two mechanical warriors could be considered elites.

[Oathkeeper], the elite mechanical warrior in his mechanical army. With the autonomous control from Phillip, the huge amount of data it possessed allowed for the execution of highly complex combat patterns. Its weapons and armor were top-notch with high costs. Even with Han Xiao's current manufacturing speed, he could only construct a Protector once a day.

Their individual combat capabilities were outstanding, and even if faced with Grade B Supers, they could still hold their own. These were the hired guns that Han Xiao was using when fighting against someone of the same level.

Every Oathkeeper was an independent unit with its unique code name. The current two Oathkeepers that had been released concurrently were labelled 'Warrior' and 'Gunner'.

Harmon's muscles swelled as he forcefully pulled himself out from the hole. However, Han Xiao did not bother giving him the time to move and instead clapped his hands, deploying the Halo Array to congregate together, releasing an integrated laser cannon blast.

Boom!

The laser hit directly at Harmon once again, driving him deeper into the wall. A violent explosion occurred, with waves of heat and black smoke filling the room.

Taking this chance, the two Oathkeepers moved out, restricting Harmon as they tangled with him.

Because the Oathkeepers were not designed to be mechanical suits, there was no need to leave a space within to contain a person. Thus, they possessed many different kinds of weapons, such as compressed air cannons, gravitational and repulsion devices, laser rifles, lightsabers, photon cannons, electromagnetic shields, and more. Be it close or long range, everything possible was included.

Harmon was completely suppressed by the two Oathkeepers. He kept trying to rush toward Han Xiao, bellowing angrily, his fighting spirit growing ever stronger.

"This fellow is indeed powerful, but his single target attacks are his fatal flaw. A warrior not in possession of any spells in this version can already be considered obsolete."

With a thought from Han Xiao, another compressed orb flew out, unfolding a fan-shaped structure behind him. There was a coil of sorts on the structure, and if looking from the front, it resembled a disk. It bore a similarity to a radar disk, with the patterns on top forming concentric circles like a labyrinth.

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Han Xiao put his hands behind him, and the energy from within him constantly flowed. The mechanical force travelled along the designated patterns, constantly spiraling as it let out a hum of high voltage electricity.

Ohm!

The blue glow grew more intense, and the high-speed rotation gradually blurred the coil into a single continuous piece, fuzzy and yet piercing to the eye.

This was a large-scale electromagnetic acceleration amplifier, which was specialized for a Mechanic's usage. The raw materials consisted of an electroactive polymer, which utilized the [Mechanical Force Combat Technique] to release an electromagnetic force. This electromagnetic energy would continuously increase within the amplifier, equivalent to allowing it to be primed much like a bomb. The longer the primer, the stronger the effect.

Because Han Xiao had sufficient funds in his hands, he bought the High-End Knowledge [Advanced Electromagnetic Forcefield] in the last year, using it to unlock the [Mechanical Force Combat Technique]. Even with the usage of machinery, the Mechanic could still unleash the strength of a certain weapon.

Compared to the original Trap Style, this move not only had higher crowd control but also had the advantage of being an active skill.

Buzz!

The speed of the electro-optical rotation rose non-stop, filling the entire field with a piercing white glow. Han Xiao's figure had long been covered by the light—even the free ions in the air were affected by the electrical charge. The prisoners that were huddled in a corner were all terrified as they felt their hair stand on end, and a numb feeling coursed around their skin.

On the other side, the hairy Harmon saw all his hair sticking out like a hedgehog. He felt something amiss and immediately threw out his war hammer toward the piercing white glow. However, one of the Oathkeepers' heads split open to reveal a ring-shaped purple attachment. It shot out a beam akin to gravitational pull, and the war hammer that was flying in midair suddenly halted before being brought back toward the robot.

"Have a taste of this. Yang Clan's Electrotherapy!"

Dong! Dong!

The next second, six metal pillars shot out, embedding themselves around Harmon. With a point of a finger from Han Xiao, the electromagnetic energy accumulated by the amplifier was like a flash flood as it morphed into a piercing lightning beam. It struck one of the pillars, and the next instant, electromagnetic lights swirled around the six pillars akin to a lightning tornado, forming an electric cage.

The six metallic pillars were actually release devices, and all the power was directed toward the content within them. Following the pathway of the electro-optic rotation between the columns, thousands of lightning bolts smashed within the sealed area, and Harmon resembled a lightning conductor at this point, with all the bolts aiming for him. On average, he was struck with a few hundred bolts per second.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!" Harmon was electrocuted to the point that his eyes rolled backward into his head. His whole body turned motionless, only letting out uncontrollable moans from time to time.

The electrical lights continued to flash for a good few seconds until the accumulated charges were consumed. The training hall then quieted down, with a few charged sparks lingering within the air, resounding with a buzzing sound.

Within the metal pillars, Harmon swayed and tottered before falling to the ground with a loud thud. He was completely charred and releasing black smoke, as though he was a steak that had been overcooked.

Since he had been electrocuted unconscious, his Esper ability was automatically lifted, and his inflated body slowly shrunk.

“Phew... while this guy has an insane amount of HP and defense, with an additional specialization bonus, his resistance attributes fortunately aren’t too perverted.”

Han Xiao spat out an electric charge, recalling all his machinery. Having electrocuted Harmon till he fainted, the match was considered his victory.

“For my current combat modes, other than the Artillery Style, the Beast Style, Trap Style, and Mechanical suit, I have the foundations of the Army Style, which I’ve built in the past year. However, this will only show its effectiveness in a large-scale battle.

“As for the elite fighting style used for battles within the same Grade, my mechanical hands, the Floating Cannon Array, and the Oathkeepers are all representative of this elite style. Compared to when I was in Noriosse, the number of styles I have to use on my enemies has increased.”

Han Xiao then moved forward to rouse Harmon. After that blockhead regained consciousness, he looked around sluggishly for a while before fulfilling his promise to teach Han Xiao the Energy Training Technique. While he had lost, Harmon was not angry at all. He would not dwell on his failures but instead take it as valuable experience to prepare for his next battle.

When the battle ended, the prisoners finally heaved a sigh of relief. Everyone was sweating profusely even though they were the spectators. They felt even more tired than having gone through a battle, their hearts palpitating in fear.

These interstellar people are truly monsters!

You have acquired [Luhan Hammer Technique]!

After obtaining the skill, Han Xiao hid his joy and nodded toward Harmon.

“Good fight.”

“If there’s a chance, we’ll exchange blows again.” Harmon snorted before walking away.

Due to the restraint brought about by specializations, Han Xiao did not feel much pressure throughout the whole thing. Instead, he took it as experience to test out his new styles. Compared to Herlous, Harmon was more like a live target.

After sorting out his equipment, he walked out of the training room to find Herlous standing outside.

“What are you doing here?”

"I caught wind of news that you and Harmon were sparring and came over to take a look. I wanted to see your bedraggled look." Herlous laughed.

"I've let you down, I guess." Han Xiao rolled his eyes. "Anything else?"

Herlous kept his smile and cleared his throat before slowly asking, "This.... I want to ask. About the thing you promised me, when can I cash that in?"

"I've promised you many things. Which one in particular?"

Lifting up his prosthetic limb, Herlous spoke with an expression of expectation. "You told me in the past that there was someone in your hometown that could allow me to regenerate my arm. While your prosthetic is really comfortable... I still miss the original goods."

"Oh, so it's this." Han Xiao came to a realization. Herlous' arm had been disintegrated by Ember, and Han Xiao had told him that Aurora's ability could actually help to treat his disability.

Rubbing his brow, Han Xiao felt a headache coming on. While Aurora had that kind of strength, this matter was a little sensitive. With Aurora being so enthusiastic in aiding others, she definitely would not reject being of assistance. The main problem was the Hila who went around with a black face as though she was angry at the world. Han Xiao did not dare guarantee that she would not be as protective of Aurora like the past.

"Let me bring you to consult them."

Chapter 524: Hila

The environment of the wilderness was harsh, with some refugees choosing to remain cowering within their own homes. They had the mentality of leaving everything to fate, choosing to bear the potential problems caused by the mutation virus rather than leave the safety of their homes. As for other refugees, they did not wish to sit and await death, choosing to brave the danger to cross the desolate wilderness filled with beasts to reach the only Sanctuary left.

With Bennett's temperament, he naturally would not be able to disregard them. Even if the Sanctuary was overcapacity, saving one more would be another gained. Thus, the current refugees accepted by the Sanctuary had already surpassed tens of thousands. The entire city was packed to the brim, with the land outside the original walls having been cleared to create a larger square to facilitate the sea of refugees.

Before they flowed endlessly in, even with the increased production of suppressants, it was still in short supply. Fortunately, there were the players present to maintain law and order. They willingly bore the burden, enjoying themselves in the process.

Due to the high number of people, Aurora was always busy as she had to play the role of a human virus detector. She constantly scanned each wave of infected, practically without any proper rest.

At a particular checkpoint of the Sanctuary, there were over a thousand dirty, unkempt refugees awaiting the virus check. Fully armed soldiers were present all around to maintain public order, and the

eyes of the refugees betrayed their unease and panic. This disaster had stretched their nerves to breaking point.

“When will we be allowed to enter?”

“Do you know that in order to reach the Sanctuary, I braved countless dangers along the way! A physical search can be explained, but why are we still being kept here!”

Many of the refugees were getting emotional.

“Everyone, before being allowed into the Sanctuary, we need to run a virus check. Please cooperate,” a commander shouted. While the refugees looked unsatisfied, they could only endure the anxiety.

At this point, Aurora walked in front of the crowd, closed her eyes, and felt the life signs of all the refugees present.

After a long while, she finally opened her eyes and spoke with an expression of apology, “There’s an infected among you. Please follow the soldiers to the quarantine area when I indicate to you.”

As the soldiers walked into the crowd to pull out the infected, their actions roused the anxiety of all the refugees present.

“What are you doing! Let go! I’m not infected!”

“Let go of my kid!”

“Scram!”

The emotions of the refugees were akin to a powder keg, easily ignited by just a small spark. Even if the majority initially intended to stay obedient, with a small portion of rebels, everyone quickly turned chaotic to resist and attack the soldiers.

Shouts, pleads, grumbles, and even the sound of things being thrown on the ground could be heard. The entire place was a mess.

In such an extreme period, the methods employed by the guards were naturally as extreme. They employed kicks and punches, forcefully dragging out the infected to handcuff them and throw them into a corner. A few of the infected children were even forcefully snatched from their parents’ hands, causing them to cry nonstop.

Bang!

A gunshot was heard.

The entire field fell dead silent. Everyone saw a male refugee with a face of insanity, holding onto a handgun with the barrel emitting smoke. The gun was held up toward the sky, causing the refugees around him to immediately scramble away. In an instant, the man’s surroundings were devoid of human life.

The expressions of the soldiers greatly shifted, with a dozen over rifles immediately pointed at the man.

“Dammit, how did those searchers in front do their jobs? How did he sneak this gun into the city?”

“Put down your weapon, or else we fire!” the commander bellowed.

The man holding onto the gun was trembling in both legs, but he mustered his courage to reply, “Don’t... don’t be fooled by them! I heard that those who are quarantined were actually all executed. They cannot be believed!”

“You’re mistaken. We actually have a way to save these infected. Don’t be rash!” The commander immediately stepped out to placate the man while signaling with his eyes toward his gunmen.

The moment that the armed man’s attention was shifted, they would immediately fire and put him down.

At this time, one of the infected that had been pulled out screamed in an ear-piercing voice.

“Dad!”

An eight-year-old child struggled free from the hands of the guard, stumbling as he made his way in front of the man. He hugged tightly to the trouser leg of the man, his eyes wide open in fear as he stared around him in shock, his tiny figure trembling.

The commander immediately cursed inwardly, hurriedly covering the muzzle of the soldier near him. Nobody was willing to kill the father in front of his child. If only the child was not present!

“Please consider for your child and put down your weapon. We can attest to the fact that we have the means to save the infected!”

“How... how can you save them!” the armed refugee shouted in return.

The commander kept his patience and explained, “We have produced a drug that can suppress the virus. The reason we quarantine the infected is to ensure that they are easily identified so that we can give them the drug.”

“Then immediately bring the drug over for my child. I want to witness the whole process!”

“This...” The commander hesitated. “The production rate of the suppressant is extremely low. There are still several people within the quarantine zone waiting for the drug. The rough wait till your turn will be around three days. I have no authority...”

The gunman immediately grumbled, cutting into the commander’s explanation, “I don’t care! You had better bring the medicine over immediately, or else... or else, I’m gonna fire!”

As he spoke, the gunman pointed the muzzle at the worried Aurora, who was standing at a distance witnessing the scene. He had previously noticed that Aurora was the person responsible for identifying the virus and should be someone important. Only by threatening her could his demands be fulfilled.

Every soldier present lost color in their faces as their fingers almost depressed the triggers on their rifles.

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“Don’t shoot! She’s the only person who can identify the virus now. The whole world needs her!”

“I don’t care! I want the drug!” The man’s eyes were bloodshot, his emotions highly unstable.

At that moment, a dark red energy bubble suddenly surrounded Aurora. Hila walked out from the side, her expression frosty with anger.

The armed refugee immediately fired, but the bullets were all deflected by the dark red shield. Hila waved her hand, and the energy turned into a beam, shooting directly toward the forehead of the assailant.

When Aurora worked, Hila would always make sure to accompany her as her bodyguard to prevent any misfortune from falling on her little sister. This move of hers was made to kill. She would not be lenient when removing any threats to her sister's life.

"Sister, no!"

Hila's brow wrinkled, and the energy beam that was en route to blowing the man's head off changed course, shattering the firearm in his hand instead. The guards immediately swarmed to arrest the man while prying the kid who was still hugging onto his father's leg to the side.

"You should have let me kill him," Hila said impatiently. "Kindness is the natural enemy to survival. You need to change—stop being so naive."

Aurora, however, smiled and replied, "That's not the case. I know that with my sister present, he cannot hurt me. He was just impulsive, and we should not deprive him of his life just for that. We should be working to save the refugees instead."

"Sigh, my silly little sister..." Hila narrowed her eyes, as all those bloody memories flashed through her mind. She shook her head to clear them. "Don't be reluctant in viewing people from their worst side."

In her black, skintight combat suit, Hila's long legs enabled her to quickly reach the arrested man. Looking down from where she stood, she coldly snapped, "If you do not trust us and do not wish to quarantine your son, leave this place. We lack everything except refugees. No one will stop you from leaving. Guards, release him and the child."

The guards did as instructed and let go of the man. The latter immediately scooped up his child, staring angrily at Hila. However, he instead got ferociously stared back at. From her glare that was full of killing intent, a cold feeling surfaced in the man's heart, and he could only slowly retreat in anger.

He swept the remaining people a look, hugging his child tight as he took heavy steps toward the outside. He did not wish to be separated from his son, so he was not willing to stay.

At this time, Aurora suddenly opened her mouth.

"Please don't leave."

The man paused, turning his head back to look at the petite Aurora, his face an expression of shock.

Aurora said in a sincere voice, "While we will not restrict you from leaving, I implore you to stay. The wilderness is honestly too dangerous, and only by staying in the Sanctuary can you both obtain safety. Please believe in my sincerity."

"Then immediately bring the drugs over and save my son!" Hearing her words, the man immediately interjected.

However, Aurora shook her head in response. “To resist and retaliate just to protect your kin regardless of the danger, trust me, I’m also deeply aware of such an impulse. I’m sorry, we will never give you suppressants in advance. That would be unfair to others, and making trouble will definitely not be exchanged for special treatment. But I hope that you can trust us. With patience, your child can definitely get healed.”

Even if she believed in kindness, she would never let it sway her principles. After experiencing such a long period of darkness, the naivety in her had long vanished.

Her words brought upon a sense of strength and reliance, and the man seemed to hesitate. At this point, his son suddenly wiped his tears and spoke out, “Dad, I believe her. Let me go to the quarantine area. I will protect myself well.”

The man gritted his teeth, finally letting go of the child. The commander came forward to hold onto the kid’s hands, and while the man looked as though he wanted to intervene several times, he eventually refrained from any rash movements.

After this short episode, the emotions of the refugees also calmed down. They obediently accepted the quarantines, and order was restored.

The two sisters left the site due to the huge size of the bear tagging along behind Aurora, mild and docile.

Hila stroked Aurora’s head as she frowned, saying, “Did you forget what I said? There is no meaning in helping others. To be selfless to others is to allow them to be selfish for themselves—there is no point extending your goodwill to strangers as they do not have the qualifications to obtain your help.”

Aurora pulled on Hila’s hand as she softly replied, “Since we have the strength to help others, if we keep it hidden and don’t help them, aren’t we being selfish?”

“Helping others is considered a noble affair, but helping yourself is considered a repulsive matter,” Hila coldly replied. “This sort of hypocrisy makes me disgusted. The majority of morals are just scams to trick those who are stupid.”

“But Uncle Black Star once saved me out of goodwill. We’re people who have obtained help. Don’t say that you aren’t happy because of it.” Aurora chuckled.

“...” Every time they touched on this topic, Hila would become speechless. “In any case, this favor of his will be repaid one day. I don’t like owing others.”

While she said that, Han Xiao had already entered a new state, with a huge change in status. When they first met, Han Xiao had merely been a weak, pale test subject receiving training. However, he now had this sort of achievement, making Hila wonder if all of this was actually reality. Life was truly too fickle.

Thus, Hila had always been torn over how to face the current Han Xiao. He seemed to no longer need her strength, and she did not know how exactly she could return this favor.

“Sometimes, I really have no idea how to chat with you.” Aurora pretended to be an elderly, sighing. “If you could be less eccentric, the number of people giving you recognition would be a thousand times greater than the current number.”

“Humph, a person that requires the approval of others is merely so-so.” Hila frowned.

Aurora could only shake her head in response.

While I've always been protected by my older sister, sometimes, I feel as though she is actually the child instead!

...

Not far away, Herlous and Han Xiao had just arrived, and after listening to the talk between the two sisters, they looked at each other.

“Let’s go back, I feel that there’s nothing that can be done for you.” Han Xiao narrowed his eyes.

Herlous was shocked. “D*mn your mother, you haven’t even asked! Could you play a more practical role?”

Chapter 525: Aurora

“You heard her. Even if you are my friend, they may not show you any face.” Han Xiao shook his head. Aurora was a kindhearted girl and would naturally be willing to help, but the same could not be said for Hila. This lass had a cold character and did not like bothering about other people’s affairs. Furthermore, she was extremely protective of her sister and would probably stop her sister from agreeing.

Even though Hila owed him a favor, with her obstinate temper, she would not let her sister pay him back.

“That can’t be right. It isn’t too much to just get her to use her Esper abilities.” Herlous became anxious.

“There is a historical reason for this. Whenever her sister uses her Esper abilities, she has to exhaust her own life force. She once suffered from some miserable mishap before and thus is extremely sensitive to this matter.”

“You promised me.” Herlous refused to give up.

“Alright then, I shall ask for you.”

Han Xiao shook his head helplessly and walked forward to stop the two ladies.

The nose of the gigantic bear twitched. It could smell a familiar scent, and its green bean sized eyes were fixed on Han Xiao, unsure if Han Xiao was his former owner. Only when Han Xiao waved did the bear charge out excitedly and roll around in front of Han Xiao, revealing his belly for Han Xiao to rub.

“This bear has been brought up well by you.” Han Xiao stroked the bear’s chin, and the bear’s furry feeling was much better than Harmon’s.

In this past, this bear could still be called a baby bear. Now that it was a few meters tall, Han Xiao could not call it a baby anymore.

“That’s right, it grew up extremely quickly. Being by my side, my Esper abilities caused his life force to flourish.” Aurora smiled.

Stroking the bear's chin, Han Xiao suddenly mused, "If that's the case, its meat quality should be great."

The bear that was rolling on the ground suddenly froze in place as its ears shot up, feeling that something was wrong.

"Why did you stop us?" Hila asked.

Han Xiao then dragged Herlous out and said, "This is Herlous, my comrade. In one of the battles, he was accidentally injured. If your eyes are sharp enough, you should be able to tell that he has a mechanical arm..."

Hila was completely speechless. "Have you been using the standard of a blind person to judge others' eyesight?"

"I promised to treat his broken limbs and wish to ask Aurora for help."

"Don't even think about it." Before Aurora could even reply, Hila rejected Han Xiao.

Han Xiao's mouth began to twitch. "You should at least pretend to consider..."

"You understand my sister; she is only able to restore the injuries of others at the expense of her own life force. In this world, I will only allow my sister to save a single person... that person is you."

Hila suddenly paused for a while before adding, "Don't think that our relationship is extremely good. It is just that we owe you a favor. Apart from you, we will not save anyone."

Aurora's [Dawn of Life] gave her an incomparably exuberant life force, and her cells were capable of producing a special life force. The life force that Aurora had was just like a bucket of water, and healing a severe injury would only require a single drop.

However, it was still her 'life force' being exhausted...

While Aurora was currently healthy, Hila would never allow her to waste her life force in such a manner.

Before Han Xiao could reply, Aurora interrupted, "Sister, this is an extremely easy task for me, and I have always been the one being helped by others. I wish to do something for Black Star as well."

"No," Hila rejected flatly.

"Sister, you can't always make my decisions for me," Aurora said helplessly.

"Why aren't you willing to listen to what I taught you? The kind will only be bullied in this world!" Hila said with exasperation. "That was the case just now, and this happened again now. When will you be able to grow up a little? As long as there is a first time, all the injured people will come and find you. Are you going to always exhaust your life force to help them?"

Han Xiao immediately became displeased. Why did it feel like this lady was scolding him?

Han Xiao immediately got Phillip to view through the surveillance record and briefly explain to him about the previous commotion outside the Sanctuary. The daily activities of the Sanctuary were controlled by Bennett, and Han Xiao could not be bothered to interfere with such small affairs. He only wanted to know the reason behind the two sisters' conflict.

In the past, both the sisters had been living in challenging conditions and could only rely on each other. Now that they had spent a couple of years living in peace and seeing each other every day, even if they were biological siblings, their characters could not be completely compatible. Thus, conflict was inevitable.

“Sis, why are you always exaggerating matters? I will naturally reject them when I don’t wish to help,” Aurora said. “Besides, Uncle Black Star helped us so much, and I want to repay him...”

“No means no!” Hila then glared at Han Xiao and growled, “You are our benefactor, and we will definitely repay this favor. However, I hope that you will not think about touching my sister.”

Han Xiao was speechless. These words of hers made it seem as though he had some unscrupulous motives. She was truly too overprotective.

Looking at the two quarreling sisters, Herlous looked at Han Xiao and said helplessly, “You were right. It is hopeless indeed.”

“Let’s go.”

Just when the two of them were about to leave, Aurora suddenly raised her voice and said with a solemn tone, “Sister, you will not be able to protect me forever, and I cannot be a little child who is forever protected. I sincerely request that you do not make my decisions for me.”

“No, your thinking is far too childish, and you don’t know how to protect yourself at all.” Hila refused to budge.

“Why do you always want to change me?” Aurora was angered for the first time, and a golden light flashed in her eyes. “The kind of people I look down on the most are those who don’t need help but mock those who are willing to help others. Only someone who went through despair will understand how much you hope for help during times of hopelessness. I know this feeling extremely well. During the nights when I needed help the most, I prayed for someone to save me time and time again, but the needle pierced into my veins over and over again without anyone ever stretching out their hands to me. Do you understand such hopelessness?”

Hila had a face full of guilt. It was her carelessness that had resulted in Aurora being captured by the Germinal Organization and going through so much suffering. However, she had not been able to provide much aid and had only been able to save her sister because of Han Xiao’s unexpected aid. Hila had always felt that she was a failure of a sister.

In the past, Aurora would never talk about the pain that she had gone through in front of her, and this was the first time that Aurora had blamed her. Hila was completely caught off guard and did not know how to respond.

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“I know that you have a strong-minded personality, and to prevent you from facing pressure, I pretended to be extremely optimistic whenever I met you,” Aurora said. “However, how happy do you think I could have been?”

"I suffered inexplicable pain, and I know how cruel and violent humans can be. I know the despair of being in a hopeless situation without anyone to help you. The only thing I can do is fight and not submit to the darkness. I refuse to have my personality contorted by the pain and be filled with hatred. Believe me, this is far more difficult than bearing with the physical pain that I had to go through.

"Han Xiao helped me during my moments of hopelessness, and thus, I am willing to help others."

She then looked Hila in the eye and said softly, "We cannot live in the past forever, and we all have to grow. Sister, I love you, but I cannot be your toy doll. I have my own thoughts and wish to become the kind of person I want to be."

Hila opened her mouth and did not know what to say.

Han Xiao raised his brows and was a little surprised. He had not expected the two sisters to actually end up quarreling. It seemed like the two sisters had built up plenty of frustrations over the past few years when he was not around.

Even if they had gone through plenty of things together, it was impossible for them to always be so loving. When there were no enemies, they would definitely end up arguing because of their incompatible characters. This was something that Han Xiao had found from the couple living next door in his previous life.

However, having an argument might not be a bad thing. At least it would allow the two sisters to get to know each other better.

Han Xiao shook his head. *Women...*

Everyone fell silent, and Aurora rubbed her head embarrassedly. The atmosphere that she had taken so much effort to build instantly crumbled. She then asked carefully, "Sister, I am going to help treat him, okay?"

"You have already said so much, what else can I say? You can just take it that you don't have this older sister. Go go," Hila replied.

Aurora broke out into a smile and gave Hila a hug.

Upon seeing that, Han Xiao took the few of them to his machinery modification room. Taking off Herlous' mechanical arm, Aurora pointed her palm at Herlous' stump. A dense golden light shot out from her palms and entered Herlous' body. The broken limb then began to grow out like a sprouting plant.

In the past few years, Aurora had also begun to develop her abilities, and she no longer needed to use her blood to save others. Instead, she was able to release the life force within her body.

By the side, Han Xiao and Hila stood together and watched the scene.

Suddenly, Hila asked with a complicated tone, "Do you think that I am wrong?"

"Hmm?"

Han Xiao turned around to look at her, only to see her biting her lips with her brow furrowed. She was obviously still frustrated over what had just happened.

“There isn’t a right or wrong; everyone is different. But if you want my opinion, I think that you make more sense. This world is very dangerous, and enemies are all around. The most rational thing to do is to put your own safety first.”

“You would actually agree with me...” Hila had a strange look on her face. Han Xiao had returned from the galaxy when the planet was in danger. With his ‘selfless’ character, she had thought that Han Xiao would support Aurora.

Han Xiao then shrugged and added, “But if you really ask me to make a choice, I would be more willing to be friends with a kind person.”

If not for Aurora’s insistence, his request would have been rejected by Hila. To him, he liked those who were more obedient.

Both the sisters were full of potential. A Grade S Esper ability was extremely rare, and if Hila was able to grow to the heights of her previous life, she would be able to crush a dozen ‘Herlous’s with a single finger. Furthermore, Aurora’s abilities were also extremely useful, and she was just like a walking HP potion.

As for their contrasting characters, Han Xiao did not mind it at all. As long as they were talents useful to him, all of that was no more than small details. Just like how Ames was extremely playful but there were not many who dared criticize her—strength was the most important.

...

Not too long later, Herlous’ arm had regrown. Give it a few test waves, he cried out with excitement, “Haha! My arm is back!”

Aurora wiped the sweat off her face and said with glee, “I’m glad I could help you.”

Rubbing Aurora’s head, Han Xiao gave her a series of praise before leaving with Herlous. Herlous was extremely satisfied with his new arm and skipped away happily.

Returning to his room, Han Xiao sent Herlous away before taking out his Galactic Communicator and turning to the local channel of the Garton Star System.

The plan to hire the players was already on track, and the skills to reach the next Energy Level had also been obtained. It was now time for him to see when Godora’s rescue squad would arrive.

Version 2.0 had been launched for half a month, and it was about time for Godora to arrive.

The Garton Star System was part of Godora’s administrative region, and with so many planets being plagued with calamity at the same time, it was truly too much of a coincidence. Godora would naturally have their suspicions, and the first party that they would think about would be their arch nemesis, DarkStar. Because they felt that this may be a trap, Godora did not make any rash moves and investigated the situation first.

Just a few hours ago, Han Xiao’s communicator had received a district message regarding this matter.

Many galactic media outlets had noticed the situation in Godora and had begun writing articles on it. As such, the calamity had attracted the attention of many, with the Godoran media being the most interested in the matter. After all, this was happening within the Godora region.

After a series of reports, more and more Godorans were informed of the calamity that their allied civilizations were facing, and they found out that their own civilization had not sent out any rescue troops. The voices of the citizens immediately sounded to push for their civilization to send aid.

After watching the local news of the Garton Star System, Han Xiao raised his brows and came to a conclusion.

“DarkStar has begun their plans...”

At this moment, Godora had not intervened in the matter, and news of the calamity would naturally be sent out by DarkStar in secret. Through some manipulation and stirring, this resulted in the entire event blowing up, causing Godora to become the center of everyone’s attention.

Apart from Han Xiao, the entire Star System thought that this was a sudden, unknown calamity, but no one knew that it was actually part of DarkStar’s plans.

“If my guess isn’t wrong, DarkStar’s forces should already be hidden on Planet Aquamarine.”

Han Xiao’s eyes glowed as he mused to himself.