

L Hero

Chapter 1001 First Battle Victory

A fog of purplish-black blood spewed out from every single pore of his body as he seemed to simultaneously explode into fireworks. The forbidden technique was directly cancelled.

Shua!

The next instant, Tolaen flew out from the blood fog before quickly retreating. His expression was one of horror, and he was dripping blood everywhere, looking extremely tragic.

In that instant, he had felt the shadow of death.

Ever since he entered the Beyond Grade A realm, Tolaen had never felt his life being threatened so strongly. However, this attack seemed to have awakened his memories, allowing him to feel the taste of fear again.

Just that one attack had evaporated almost twenty percent of his HP. A Beyond Grade A's total HP was usually around two to three million, so this was a heavy blow. There were even negative status effects, as the explosion of death energy almost made his cells completely collapse. This terrified Tolaen to no end.

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Hila's Esper Ability was far beyond his wildest imagination!

At this moment, Tolaen looked at Hila from afar, full of trepidation in his eyes.

[Death's Erosion] had resulted in him obtaining heavy injuries, but with the detonation, the stacks of Death's Erosion had also been cleared, so Tolaen's regeneration went back to normal. The injuries covering his body gradually healed, and his HP increased.

However, his max HP had dropped by about ten percent, and it was an irreversible decrease.

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Hila would not sit back and let her opponent recover, so she borrowed the chance while Tolaen was in a confused state to stun him, stopping his retreat, before launching a storm like barrage, her death energy sweeping across the sky.

Tolaen could not understand how Hila's Esper Ability worked, so he could only play a cat-and-mouse game, retreating whenever Hila approached. He did not dare advance aggressively like before, opting to only throw spells from a distance while brushing up on his shields, not willing to be hit by the death energy once again.

The situation instantly reversed, the pursuer becoming the pursued. Tolaen ran away while Hila chased after his butt.

The power of this move also gave Austin a nasty shock.

"Such a fierce newcomer? Eh... what can I say..."

He had worried that Hila would be tainted by the Polluted Blood, but he did not expect the tides to turn in just a moment.

“If it was me...”

Austin could not help but substitute himself in the battle and found that he would probably not have gotten off easily. Although he had various spells to remove any negative statuses, the erosion of the death energy was endless, and no matter how many times it was purified, the energy would still be attached to his body. The only solution was to not get hit by her Death’s Erosion.

In this case, while some Beyond Grade As would not lose to Hila, they would fear the repercussions of their actions, and this would affect their performance.

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Tolaen was currently in this state. After being frightened by Hila’s burst attack, he became extra careful, choosing to be more defensive.

If he forced a close combat, he would expose his body, so it was better to kite her. However, his range would not outstrip hers; thus, there was no way to win at all, placing him in a difficult situation.

Tolaen secretly cried. This time, he had really kicked a metal plate!

Hila, however, did not care about her opponent’s psychological tricks. Since Tolaen was defending, she took the chance to attack and use Tolaen as a human target.

Boom boom boom!

Magic shields continuously shattered, like layers being peeled off an onion. It looked as though Hila was single-handedly thrashing Tolaen.

But it seemed that despite his ragged state, this Beyond Grade A mage Tolaen was not just for show. Supported by his massive mana reserves, magic shields continued to appear, barely blocking Hila’s frenzied attack.

This has become a war of attrition. Whoever’s strength is greater will win! Although I’m in a passive state, it’s not as if I have no chance of winning. I’ll see if her energy is higher or mine!

Tolaen felt his spirits being boosted.

The True Liberation of the Demon Race allowed one’s cells to generate more energy, and with both of them being new Beyond Grade As, he believed that his species had the advantage and could hold out for a longer period.

Hila’s brows furrowed as she also realized this point.

“Hmm... the expenditure in battle is not on my side.”

With her death energy being so powerful, the expenditure was naturally huge as well. Hila did not have many energy regaining skills, and her main recovery method was to recover her energy through killing. Because it was a spar, there were no soldiers to turn into her nourishment.

She had not entered Beyond Grade A long ago, so she did not have the time to learn many Energy Training Techniques. Thus, her energy limit was her restraining factor.

With a thought, Hila changed her tactics, and the death energy gathered in her palm, turning into a vortex-like shape. She exhibited a new skill.

[Abyss of the Dead!]

A weird spiritual wave suddenly spread out, and all the people around saw stars as their vision swam.

Their surroundings disappeared, replaced with only themselves, trapped within darkness with only a small beam of light at the top, as though they had fallen into a deep well.

“Argh!”

From below, countless screams pierced the ear. When one looked down, all they would see was translucent gray faces, containing all sorts of creatures and possessing all shapes and sizes, packed together.

Every face was contorted in pain and horror, screaming in different tones. The sea of faces was endless like the ocean, and this lent a strange type of horror to the scene. This would give most people a shock to their mental states, maybe even causing insanity.

These faces were all from the soul fragments of people killed by Hila. Their essence was integrated into her powers to help her grow, and the residue of the soul fragments would be deposited, forming this Abyss of the Dead.

At this moment, the faces suddenly stopped screaming, their eyes staring straight ahead. They all repeated a single sentence in uniform, forming a grand sound wave, much like an ethereal everlasting echo.

“Merge with us... be one with us...”

The next instant, countless hands stretched out from the sea of faces like tentacles. They were connected to each other like links in a chain, and they continued to extend and thicken, clinging to everyone’s legs as they grabbed them and pulled them down.

“Let me go!”

“Help!”

“Don’t grab that place!”

A sense of falling could be felt, and many screamed as they struggled.

The next moment, the scene in front of their eyes shattered like glass.

Many of the people who had covered their eyes hurriedly opened their fingers, observing the surroundings through the gaps between their fingers. They discovered that they were back to where they had been originally, as though everything that had just happened was an illusion.

Everyone broke out in cold sweat.

However, these spectators were all only affected by the aftereffects, and Tolaen was the true target. It was unknown what horror he saw, but his entire figure was frozen stiff, and he had halted all actions, just as though his Sanity[1] was completely depleted.

Upon getting a closer look, everyone was shocked to discover that there was actually an ethereal shadow coming out of Tolaen. This was his spiritual body, and he was being pulled out and struggling madly in midair.

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If the onlookers could see his status bar currently, they would discover that he was being spammed by [Chaos], [Fear], and [Stunned] statuses.

The death energy naturally came with a spiritual attribute, and Hila had obtained a unique attacking method for the spirit. The [Abyss of the Dead] skill was a mind control technique that could pull out the soul of a target. Both sides would wage a war of mental states, causing the other party to temporarily lose control of their body.

As such, his magic shields were not replenished, and the countless death energy rays directly bombarded Tolaen's body, smashing his body into a bloody mess.

"Stop!" Tolaen's spiritual body was still struggling to get rid of the [Abyss of the Dead], and seeing this scenario, he could not help but feel his heart breaking.

That was his own body!

Being unable to control it, he could only watch his opponent ill-treat it. Seeing that he was about to turn into meat paste, he got anxious.

Hila, however, turned a deaf ear, as though she had made up her mind to make some Tolaen meat sauce this very moment.

Seeing this, Tolaen felt his heart chill. He immediately screamed, "Stop! Stop! I surrender!"

He only wanted a good battle record and was not willing to risk his life to this extent!

Hila narrowed her eyes before twirling her body. A burst of death energy burst out, directly knock Tolaen away and cancelling the effect of [Abyss of the Dead].

Tolaen's spirit got rid of the restrictions and returned to his body.

The next moment, he was completely wracked with pain, and his spirit was even weaker, obviously having received heavy injuries.

"With such injuries, it might take me several years to recover..."

Tolaen's expression was ashen, and he immediately retreated while glancing warily at Hila, as though afraid she would pursue him.

Seeing this, Hila took in the death energy back into her body before glancing at Tolaen and transmitting her thoughts in an icy tone.

“Scram.”

Hearing this, Tolaen was furious, but he was afraid of Hila and dared not attack.

“Hila, right? I’ll remember you!”

He gritted his teeth and flew back to the Arcane Church’s fleet.

To say that he was not frustrated would be a blatant lie. Tolaen actually wanted to earn some accolades for himself and use Ames as his stepping stone, but he had ended up as someone else’s stepping stone, giving them a glowing battle record.

This trip was nothing but a pure waste, and his mental state even got injured, which would take a long time to recover.

Since he had already lost, and in front of Black Star at that, he did not dare say anything. If Black Star actually took his arrogant words seriously, then he would definitely not be able to live.

“You’re not stopping him?” Ames threw Han Xiao a glance.

“He already lost. Let’s not make things difficult for him.” Han Xiao shrugged.

Tolaen was a strange combination of reckless arrogance and cautiousness. Since he did not make things difficult for Han Xiao, his serious injuries from Hila were enough. Just the reduced life span would give Tolaen endless regret in accepting her challenge.

Since the other party was on the receiving end of bad luck, Han Xiao was in a good mood and could not be bothered to pick a fight.

Glancing at Hila, who was slowly flying back, Han Xiao laughed as he spoke to Ames.

“The news of today’s battle will soon spread out, and other forces will soon know that there’s another new Beyond Grade A in the universe.”

“It’s finally time for you to experience a headache.” Ames smiled.

“What headache?”

“Hehe, remember how you wanted to create an independent group right after you reached the Beyond Grade A realm? Do you think that Hila will stay by your side?” Ames’ mouth curled up. “Do you think that a Beyond Grade A will willingly follow under you?”

“50/50.” Han Xiao did not deny it. “Even if she chooses to be independent, our relationship will still exist, and we’re still allies. The worst scenario is still good news.”

At that moment, a portal appeared beside them, and Austin flew out with a smile.

“Congratulations, Black Star. Your officer has risen to Beyond Grade A, and there are now six of us in the Shattered Star Ring. I think Psyker is going to shut himself in this time.”

“Hasn’t he already shut himself in for a long time?” Ames laughed.

As they chatted, Hila slowly landed on the dock and walked over. Austin's eyes lit up, and he went up to introduce himself and converse. He loved meeting new people.

Hila and Austin could be said to be acquainted, but due to the difference in power levels, they only had an impression of each other. Now, they were finally communicating on equal footing.

She responded with a few cursory words, still maintaining her cold attitude, but Austin did not mind, and after laying his foundation of friendship, he bade farewell to everyone.

Han Xiao gazed at the closing portal and could not help thinking to himself, The movie watcher is finally gone...

At this moment, Hila turned her head over to see Han Xiao's avatar. Pausing for a moment, she commented, "I'll come to you for a talk when I return."

"I'll wait for you in the headquarters." Han Xiao nodded.

He knew that Hila wanted to discuss her future. For an old friend like her, it was unsuitable to talk about such a matter with his avatar.

Hila nodded and turned to leave. She felt that there was nothing worth discussing with the avatar; a hunk of metal could not compare to the hunk in real life.

At the same time, Bennett received the report that the enemy had been repelled by Hila and heaved a sigh of relief.

Reading the report, the ease on his face turned into gratitude.

Hila has also become a Beyond Grade A?

That means there are two Beyond Grade As that appeared on Planet Aquamarine....

What are the odds?

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This is the fortune of Planet Aquamarine!

Bennett could not help but sigh. Thinking of the old enemy he had spent half his life fighting against, he felt complex.

While you certainly did many wrongs, to have someone like you responsible for nurturing two good seeds for our planet, your merit is incalculable...

Chapter 1002 Spectate

Because of the Flickering World, countless organizations were gathering in the Shattered Star Ring. This star field was currently the liveliest place in the universe, attracting the attention of every corner of the known universe.

Tolaen's battle was not kept secret, and the intelligence of this battle spread rapidly along the all-encompassing quantum network channel. In just a few hours, the entire Shattered Star Ring exploded in commotion!

The birth of every Beyond Grade A was a big event in the universe. After Black Star, the Shattered Star Ring had finally ushered in its sixth Beyond Grade A!

The news came too abruptly, and none of the organizations were prepared. Everyone started to urgently collect information about Hila's past in order to understand the new Beyond Grade A.

Before this, due to the long period she spent in cultivation, she had few records in the universe and did not receive much attention. Her most representative identity was that of the Captain of Black Star Guards, and even then, she had disappeared from her post for twenty years. Now, she had quietly stepped into the Beyond Grade A realm and returned, showcasing her strength to the entire universe and leaving a convincing record!

Tolaen, who joined the Arcane Church a few years prior, was no weakling. He had taken the initiative to earn fame but ended up as a stepping stone for the other party's rise.

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To beat another Beyond Grade A newcomer meant that her immediate combat capabilities were considerable for her level, and while her promotion speed did not match up to Han Xiao's, it was still much higher compared to the average time taken to promote to the Beyond Grade A realm. This meant that she had high potential, and her achievements would not stop there.

The location of Shattered Star Ring had always been remote, and it was the bottom level in terms of Beyond Grade A standard in the major star fields. This situation had improved somewhat with the birth of Black Star, and the promotion of Hila to Beyond Grade A had improved its status once more.

However, compared to the birth of a newcomer Beyond Grade A, the major organizations were more concerned about her identity.

Her identity and statuses were both unordinary!

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Intelligence reports stated that not only was she a member of the Black Star Army, she was also the disciple of Ames. She was related to two big shots and was even born on Planet Aquamarine, the same place as Black Star!

Upon seeing her birthplace, everyone was stunned.

Planet Aquamarine...

Decades ago, this was still a backwater surface civilization, and it suddenly gave rise to two Beyond Grade A supers just like that!

What sort of mysteries did this planet contain, to be able to produce so many outstanding people!

This is no dogsh*t luck!

Even if they were to count all those in history, these two would probably be the only pair of Beyond Grade As that belonged to the same hometown!

Her unique status and identity were the reason all the organizations were shocked. Everyone's primary concern was how this birth of a new Beyond Grade A would affect the current situation.

Given that Hila's identity as an officer of the Black Star Army, the other organizations were all aware that the Black Star Army would undergo a new round of personnel shuffling and might even split, with Hila choosing to go independent. What would Black Star do?

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With this mentality, everyone was watching where this situation would lead.

...

On Planet Heber...

"What, that Hila has stepped into the Beyond Grade A realm?"

The Chief Vanguard Official Fosters jerked his head back as he dumbly looked at Jorde, who was reporting the news.

"That's right. It was just yesterday when she defeated Tolaen of the Arcane Church. The news source has confirmed this."

Jorde smiled bitterly.

It happened too quickly, so when the news was delivered to him, Jorde got a shock as well, leaving him speechless for quite a while.

"How could this be?" Fosters muttered to himself irresolutely, his expression a mask of incredulity.

Several decades ago, the two of them had represented their respective factions in a duel but were called to a stop before they could determine a winner. He had always treated Hila as his opponent but did not expect that the person he had once again identified as an opponent would throw him far behind.

The first was Black Star, and then it was Hila. Fosters could no longer hold in his depression and began to wonder... Could it be that the Black Star Army had a secret method to raise Beyond Grade As?

The threshold for him to step into the Beyond Grade A realm was still far away, yet his opponents had all already crossed it. This sort of feeling was not good at all, and Fosters only felt a sense of powerlessness.

At the same time, with the Tyrant's palace hall, Heber was discussing the same topic with Sorokin's consciousness.

"An important officer of the Black Star Army has risen to the Beyond Grade A realm, and the greatest possibility is that they will now have an additional ally. This will cause Black Star's power and influence in the Shattered Star Ring to expand once more, which is not good for us." Sorokin had a resigned expression. He had not planned for such an unexpected scenario at all.

"Another person related to Black Star."

Heber was a little unhappy, feeling sour in his heart.

How was it that Black Star had such good luck to be able to recruit such good talents?

I'm obviously also a Beyond Grade A, but why don't I have any powerful officers under me?

"I don't have enough intelligence on my hands on how to restrict Hila. I need to spend some time looking for her weaknesses. I'll send my men to work on this." Sorokin spread his hands out. "Let's wait and see."

"Suit yourself," Heber nonchalantly replied.

...

Among the Star Pupil Holy Race...

"Another one?"

After seeing the news, Psyker gritted his teeth, his seven eyeballs looking as though they were about to explode from anger.

After the incident at Planet Lighthouse, the standing of his race within the Shattered Star Ring had not been good, but now came along another Beyond Grade A ally of Black Star!

Black Star served the dynasty, so he stood on opposing sides to him. While Heber was not a friend of Black Star, his position remained the same for this matter. In addition, the other three Beyond Grade As were more or less related to Black Star. No local Beyond Grade As were on his side, and the number of enemies had increased from four to five.

F*ck your mom!

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How can anyone continue to stay in this broken place?

Psyker's mentality was on the verge of collapse.

...

While the outside world was in chaos, Hila left Floating Dragon alone, heading toward the headquarters of the Black Star Army.

This time, Ames did not accompany her. She was forcibly stopped by Jenny to stay on Floating Dragon Island and complete her administrative duties.

Planet Aquamarine was quite close to the army headquarters, so she did not require much time to arrive there. Han Xiao, who had returned from the Flickering World not too long ago, was already waiting for her.

The moment she entered, Hila felt a difference in atmosphere.

Everyone in the Black Star Army knew that she had hit the Beyond Grade A realm, and everyone focused on her along the way, staring in awe and curiosity.

Her eyes did not deviate however, first going over to find Aurora. She walked straight into the officer's resting room, where many of the older officers awaited her.

“Congratulations on reaching the Beyond Grade A realm.”

The moment she stepped in, everyone smiled as they congratulated her.

“Thanks.” Hila nodded. While she was cold by nature, she was not someone impersonal.

The atmosphere in the room was harmonious, and at this moment, a deep voice suddenly boomed, suppressing all the other voices.

“Captain, you’re finally back! I really missed you!”

Hadavy stepped out from the crowd, immediately stepping forward toward Hila with a sycophantic expression.

“You... missed me?” Hila looked suspicious. She did not remember her relationship with Hadavy being so good.

“Not just me. In the past twenty years, everyone in the Black Star Guards has missed you. Without your leadership, we were lost! It’s been a tough journey for you, and you’re probably tired, so why don’t you sit down for a while? Don’t tire yourself out.” Hadavy appeared extremely passionate, and one could imagine a dog wagging its tail at the place where he stood.

Everyone was stunned by his performance.

I swear this isn’t what you used to say...

This abrupt change in expression was even better than that of the face-swap operas!

Feidin raised his brows and spoke in a joking tone. “Is that so? Why do I remember that you seemed to have said that you wanted to challenge Hila to resign from her position the moment she returned so that you could take her position as Captain? In fact, your chance is here!”

“Nonsense! I never said such words!” Hadavy put on a righteous expression. “Hila, don’t listen to such rumors. They’re trying to create a rift between us. Whenever I mentioned you during this period, when wasn’t it to praise you? Don’t listen to those people who are envious of our relationship!”

He got a big shock when he found out that Hila had risen to the Beyond Grade A realm, and he immediately wished he could take back all the words he had spoken in the past few years.

The other party is already a Beyond Grade A. Snatch her position? Do you think I’m insane?

What? You say I’m a coward?

Bullsh*t!

How could this be called being a coward! This is called tactical retreat!

Everyone was stunned. To lie like that without even blinking, his skin was indeed the thickest!

“Is that so? How come I don’t seem to believe any of that?” Hila snorted.

As they were chatting, Aurora walked into the room and called out in joy, “Sis, you’re back!”

Hila turned to look at Aurora, and her eyes immediately softened. She walked up to Aurora, sizing up her sister, before releasing a barrage of questions.

“How have you been? Have you been eating well, sleeping well...”

While she knew that Han Xiao would definitely take good care of her, after the Germinal Organization was destroyed, she had not separated from Aurora. She could not help over imagining things every day, fussing over Aurora.

The sisters talked for a while before Hila reluctantly separated with Aurora for the time being. She knew that Han Xiao was still waiting in his office for her.

Upon reaching the Army Commander’s office, Hila pushed the door open and saw Han Xiao seated behind his desk and smiling at her.

“You’re here.” Han Xiao nodded. “Congratulations.”

“I’ve fulfilled my promise, not returning until I’ve reached the Beyond Grade A realm.” Hila nodded, sitting opposite Han Xiao.

“I knew you’d achieve that. I never doubted you.” Han Xiao sized up Hila, discovering that she had become more perfect as a whole.

“And I know that you would definitely believe in me.”

They smiled at each other.

“I would be glad to listen to you talk about your experience, but we can put that off first. Now let’s talk about formal matters.” Han Xiao pointed toward the table as he stared at Hila. He slowly said, “Now that you’re a Beyond Grade A, tell me, what are your future plans? Do you wish to become independent?”

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“If I choose to be independent, will you support me?” Hila turned the question back.

“We’re friends, so I will not force you to work for me. If you choose to be independent, I’ll support you to the best I can, helping you to develop your own Beyond Grade A organization.” Han Xiao knocked on the table as he smiled.

Hearing this, Hila did not immediately reply, but a hesitant look crossed her face.

The room descended into silence.

1003 Double Beyond Grade As

As time passed, Hila pondered in silence. Han Xiao waited with a smile on his face; he was in no hurry.

After quite some time, Hila slowly breathed out.

“I choose to be independent.”

Han Xiao’s brows rose. “Alright, then I shall have Sylvia...”

Before he finished, Hila cut him off and added, “But not now.”

Han Xiao's face twitched. Seeing the teasing look in her eyes, he felt funny and speechless.

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Kiddo, you dare tease me?

If you enjoy not finishing your sentences, why not go write a book?

Hila sighed before speaking from the bottom of her heart.

"In the past, I lacked a sense of security. I always wanted to keep up with you, so my only goal was to become stronger and stronger till I had enough power to protect myself. Now that I'm finally a Beyond Grade A and can protect myself in most situations, I haven't really thought about what I should do next. So, I might as well stay in the army for now. If I change my mind in the future, I'll think about it by then."

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Hila had already thought about this matter on the way back. What should she do after she had the power of a Beyond Grade A? She had no idea.

In the past, in order to become stronger, most of her time was spent in battle; she never stopped to appreciate the beauty of the universe. At least for now, Hila did not want to form her own organization.

Furthermore, thinking back on the path she had taken to get there, Han Xiao had given her way too much help. Without his referral, there was no way Ames would have taken her as her student. God only knew when would she have been able to become a Beyond Grade A.

After owing Han Xiao so much for so long, feeling like what she did in return was almost trivial, she absolutely did not want to split off as soon as she became a Beyond Grade A. Her personality would not allow her to always owe Han Xiao so many favors.

Back then, Black Star did indeed form his own organization as soon as he became a Beyond Grade A, but he had already made huge contributions to Floating Dragon, so he was in a good position to do so. Hila felt like her contribution to the army was far from what Han Xiao contributed to Floating Dragon in the past, so she could not shamelessly do the same as Han Xiao.

Most importantly, Hila knew how to kill and how to fight, but not how to form and operate an organization, nor did she want to waste her energy on such things. She had really inherited Ames' 'talent' in this respect. She would rather use these times to strengthen her power. She was not interested in forming an organization right now.

From the way she looked at it, with her strength and her close relationship with Han Xiao, her position in the Black Star Army would basically be above all but one. If she wanted a force of her own, staying in the already enormous Black Star Army was better than spending time building a new organization. Furthermore, the Black Star Army was now at the top of the organizations in the Shattered Star Ring, so it was not suitable for her to create a new Beyond Grade A organization since she would not be able to obtain too many resources.

After hearing Hila's explanation, Han Xiao laughed and said, "Okay, then stay in the Black Star Army for now. My promise will always be effective. If you want to split off and become independent one day, I will still help you."

“Hmm.” Hila nodded.

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“You’re already a Beyond Grade A, so it’s no longer suitable for you to be one of my Black Star Guards. Let’s see, I shall officially make you the Vice Army Commander of the Black Star Army. Your position will only be below mine and no one else, including Lagi. You will be involved in the most important decisions made in the army, and you will manage some of the daily functionalities such as mining of resources, arming the divisions, and so on. You will be given the power to command part of the army’s fleet, as well as have the position of the Commander of the Black Star Guards. However, you will not be part of my personal guards.”

With just a few sentences, Han Xiao promoted Hila and gave her a lot of power within the Black Star Army.

After all, her value was now different. Even if Hila did not need it, he had to give it to her. One reason for this was to show that Hila was very important to him and to emphasize the relationship between her and the army. Another was to prove to the outside world that he followed the rules of this industry.

Han Xiao was very content about keeping Hila.

He had thought of multiple scenarios, and Hila choosing to stay was the best outcome.

This was the first Beyond Grade A Officer in the army. Having one or two Beyond Grade As in one organization were two completely different concepts.

In the past, the army only had me to hold the ceiling. With Hila, she will be able to take care of many things for me, and it’s also beneficial to increasing the influence of the army...

“Vice Army Commander? Whatever.” Hila did not care about positions much. Suddenly, she pressed onto the edge of the table, leaned slightly forward, and said with a passionate look in her eyes, “We’ll talk about these things next time. I have a request. Let’s have a fight.”

“Sure,” Han Xiao agreed. “But not today. You have only just returned to the headquarters. Let’s get to that after you rest. Spend some time with your sister. I’ll need to take care of some matters too. In a few days, I will beat... ahem, fight with you.”

“Okay.”

Hila nodded and suppressed her heart that was filled with anticipation for the time being. Ever since she became a Beyond Grade A, she had been eager to discover how large the difference between the two of them was.

After chatting for a while longer, Hila left the room and went to see Aurora—the two of them had endless things to talk about after not seeing each other for quite many years.

Watching Hila leave, Han Xiao smiled. This time, the communicator suddenly rang.

He looked at it, and it was from Urranrell.

For the dynasty to contact me now, it's probably about Hila... Han Xiao pondered for a moment before picking up the call.

"Your Excellency, what made you call me with your extremely busy schedule?" Han Xiao smiled as Urranrell appeared on the screen.

"I heard one of your Officers became a Beyond Grade A. Congratulations." Urranrell nodded.

"Haha, her name is Hila. She's not just my Officer but also an old friend. Her and I..." Han Xiao raised his brows and said, "Oh, almost forgot, you guys definitely have her information."

"Hmm, have you spoken with Hila?"

"Coincidentally, I was just done speaking with her."

"And how did it go? What's her plan?"

"She doesn't want to form an organization because she thinks it's too troublesome, so she's decided to stay here and assist me."

"I see..." Urranrell paused, stayed silent for a moment, before slowly saying, "I have something to ask of you."

"Go on."

"If possible, I hope you can convince Hila to join the dynasty."

As expected... Han Xiao smiled and did not speak.

His relationship with Hila made the dynasty feel that they had a very high chance to obtain a new Beyond Grade A ally, so they looked for him directly to make the first move.

Seeing that Han Xiao did not reply, Urranrell then asked, "What do you think?"

"No problem, I will try to convince her, but I can't promise I'll succeed," Han Xiao replied.

"I understand." Urranrell nodded. She would not force it.

This time, Han Xiao changed the topic and said, "By the way, since you contacted me, I have something to report to you. You asked me to maintain the order of the Shattered Star Ring, and I have an idea that can be used during such times. However, it's quite an impactful one, so I need the dynasty's support."

"Tell me about it."

"Due to the Flickering World, the Beyond Grade As of the various Star Fields will gather in the Shattered Star Ring, which will make up to at least ninety percent of all the Beyond Grade As in the entire universe," Han Xiao slowly said. "Since that's the case, I might as well take the lead and invite these people to gather in one place, hosting an enormous party for the Beyond Grade As of the entire universe and having a chat with everyone. This way, I can come to an agreement with all of them at once to not cause problems in the Shattered Star Ring."

Hearing Han Xiao's idea, Urranrell started thinking.

This would basically be equivalent to inviting all the Beyond Grade As in the entire universe, which would indeed be way too impactful. These people were all symbolic individuals of their various Star Fields. If this succeeded, it would be more than enough to cause a sensation throughout the universe.

It might even be written in history as a memorable major event.

As for what Black Star would gain from it, it was rather clear. First, it would save him time and energy to resolve the matter of Star Field stability at once, be it with negotiation or showcase of power.

Furthermore, if he could really gather all the Beyond Grade As together, as the host, Black Star's influence would increase tremendously. It would be proof that all these Beyond Grade As were willing to give him face.

"How confident are you in being able to gather all of them?" Urranrell asked.

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"About fifty percent."

"Really?" Urranrell somewhat doubted him. "Most Beyond Grade As are smart; they know very well that answering your invitation means they're indirectly helping you make an even bigger name for yourself. The dynasty's Beyond Grade As are no problem, but can you ensure that the federation and the church are willing to give you face?"

"I can't promise, but..." Han Xiao chuckled. "I think my face should be somewhat useful. As for those I'm not able to invite, I'm going to need the dynasty's help."

"Alright, it's worth a try. I'll have some people assist you." Urranrell thought about it and approved of this plan, expressing that she would provide assistance.

"Then I shall thank the dynasty in advance." Han Xiao smiled. He then suddenly said, "Other than that, I have something else to say."

"Go on."

"About the Evolution Cube, I've already thought about it." Han Xiao shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I don't plan to use the Evolution Cube to exchange for something else for the time being. The truth is, I've read through the list the dynasty gave me many times, but sadly, there's no Universal Treasure in the list I'm really interested in. I'm very appreciative of the fact that the dynasty is very sincere in this matter, but I've made up my mind."

Urranrell stayed silent for a few seconds before slowly saying, "No problem, we won't force you. If you changed your mind, contact me anytime."

The two of them then chatted for a while more before ending the call.

Han Xiao played with the communicator, thought back about the conversation, and nodded.

After thorough consideration, he had decided to decline the dynasty's proposal and keep the Evolution Cube.

The dynasty wanted ownership of the Evolution Cube to completely control the business of the Evolutionary Totems, which just so happened to be exactly what he wanted to control as well. This was a conflict of interests. Even if the dynasty would not be happy about it, he had to keep this crucial business in his hands.

Instead of relying on others, he preferred to rely on himself. His good relationship with the dynasty was not because of sentiment but because he was useful to the dynasty, and that was the foundation of the army.

Declining the proposal might make the dynasty unsatisfied, but there was absolutely no chance it would destroy their relationship—the dynasty still needed him.

The act of first mentioning the plan to gather all Beyond Grade As before his decision about the Evolution Cube was also a small test to see the change in attitude of the dynasty.

In order to control something, he had to have enough strength to match up to it. Indeed, the dynasty was undoubtedly a giant, but the current Black Star Army also had enough power to keep this profit in its hands, even more so with Hila's return.

The root cause of the pressure from the federation and the church was the dynasty forbidding the sale of the totems to outsiders. However, if that was no longer the case, the answer to whether the federation and the church would want the dynasty or the dynasty's allies to control the cube was extremely clear. They would rather have the dynasty's ally to have the profit made from the totems than have their direct competitor control the business.

Although, on paper, both these cases would still mean that the dynasty was the one benefitting from it, the ownership of the profit was completely different.

"The dynasty will definitely make some moves privately. Let's see what they're going to do."

Han Xiao shook his head.

...

The next day, an announcement was made in the Black Star Army.

"The sixth Beyond Grade A of the Shattered Star Ring who defeated Tolaen, Hila, will become the Black Star Army's Vice Army Commander."

Not splitting off and forming her own organization but continuing to stay in the Black Star Army!

Countless organizations were paying close attention to the matter. As soon as the news was out, the entire Star Field was shocked!

Everyone knew that since the Black Star Army had double Beyond Grade As, their influence would surge drastically.

Although Black Star could easily thrash multiple ordinary Beyond Grade As alone, to the galactic residents all around the entire universe, it was a world of difference.

Many organizations with ulterior motives were looking forward to Hila splitting off, but things went the complete opposite direction from what they hoped. They could not help but feel disappointed.

You're a Beyond Grade A, yet you are satisfied with being below Black Star and working for him?

Can you have some backbone?

Why not learn from your seniors and form your own organization!

Damn it, there must be a way to split them up!

On the other hand, to the partners and members of the Black Star Army, this was undoubtedly good news.

Knowing that Hila was staying, the entire army was thrilled!

With one more Beyond Grade A behind their backs, the army members were so much more confident that even the way they walked became prouder.

The influence showed very quickly—the army's appeal to high standard talents became much higher.

Seeing that Han Xiao seemed to really have cultivated a Beyond Grade A, many Supers could no longer sit tight and only watch. Among which, the most affected ones were the neutral Beyond Grade A seeds, as the chance of becoming Beyond Grade As was lethally attractive to them.

...

Somewhere in the Shattered Star Ring, in an Arcane Church fleet...

The conference room of the main fleet was filled with projections of the Arcane Church's allies. Tolaen was the only one present and sitting in the middle.

"... You're saying that Hila's Esper Ability has extraordinary damage to living things, and when it exploded, you were heavily injured in one hit?"

"That's right. It was really painful. Also, she could even damage my mind. I'll have to rest for at least a few years." Tolaen clenched his teeth.

Tolaen was furious about losing to Hila. Not only did he lose, he even suffered damage that he could not easily recover from. It was mainly the damage caused to his mind, which needed to be dealt with slowly. Before he recovered, his control of spells would be reduced, and he would not be able to fight at his peak power.

After resting for a few days, he had contacted the others today and reported Hila's ability.

Kasuyi slowly shook his head. "The Black Star Army has obtained a new Beyond Grade A with extraordinary potential. His organization has become stronger again."

Many people were frowning because of this.

Among the three Universal Civilizations, the Arcane Church was the one that did not want the Black Star Army to become stronger the most. After all, they had suffered a huge loss during the Planet Lighthouse battle, and many people there held grudges against the Black Star Army.

At this time, Sun Hunter suddenly looked at his communicator. "Hmm? Black Star sent me a message."

"What did he say?" Kasuyi turned and looked over.

"Er, he's sent an invitation to us, asking us to go to his place as guests," Sun Hunter said with a strange tone.

"Us?"

"Yes, he's inviting... all the Beyond Grade As of the Arcane Church."

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Other than Kasuyi, the expression on everyone's face changed, filled with shock and confusion.

Inviting all the Beyond Grade As of the Arcane Church?

What is Black Star doing? Is he itching to get beaten up?

If it were others, they would think that this was basically suicide. But since it was Black Star, the people there believed that he could really just be itching to get beaten up.

Chapter 1004 Face

"Your Excellency, do you think we should go?" someone asked.

Kasuyi kept silent for a few seconds before slowly saying, "Since Black Star invited everyone, this isn't a private matter, so it depends on the Arcane Church... I'm guessing we'll have to accept the invitation."

"Why should we? The Arcane Church and the Black Star Army are not friends, so why does Black Star think he's worth this much respect?" Tolaen complained.

Kasuyi shook his head. "I can somewhat guess what method Black Star is going to use. His reason is to maintain the stability of the Shattered Star Ring, and if we don't go, he'll target us afterward..."

"And we're scared of him?" someone said furiously.

"We're not, but the Black Star Army has an enormous force in the Flickering World, so the church won't want to mess with him. Furthermore, the church has to think of Psyker. He lives in the Shattered Star Ring and has nowhere to run. If Black Star wants to find someone to settle the issue, he's going to get it," Kasuyi said calmly.

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Sun Hunter squinted. "But if we all respond to his summon, it will increase his reputation and influence drastically, and he's not even hiding the fact that this is his goal. There's no way the upper echelons don't know about this. Furthermore, will the Beyond Grade As of the other organizations be willing to be used by Black Star?"

"The dynasty is definitely giving their full support to this, and the federation might agree to it too," Kasuyi said.

"The Federation of Light might agree?" Tolaen doubted.

Kasuyi looked at him. "The Shattered Star Ring is, after all, the Federation's territory."

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...

At the same time, the Federation of Light has received Han Xiao's invitation and immediately gathered their various allies to discuss it.

"Black Star wants to host a large Beyond Grade A meeting. His intentions are clear. Do we have to help him build his reputation?"

With his two arms crossed and two other arms placed on the table, Sierron said with a cold and disdainful expression, "Although he's a peak Beyond Grade A, isn't he overestimating himself too much? What, he thinks that everyone else has to give him face?"

He was a crucial ally of the Federation of Light, a member of the elderly celebrity group who held a very high position in the circle of Beyond Grade As. His position was equivalent to the dynasty's Milizaus or the church's Sun Hunter.

Another Beyond Grade A turned to look at Bader, the President of the Federation, and asked, "What are your thoughts on this?"

"Maintaining the stability of the Shattered Star Ring isn't a bad thing to us," Bader said slowly. "Even without the dynasty leading this, I wasn't planning to cause trouble. The development of the Flickering World is about to start, so there's no need to cause unnecessary conflict."

"So, since we never wanted to cause trouble, there's no need to respond to Black Star, right?" someone asked.

"I'm still considering it," the Chief Elder said. "From the way things are looking now, there's indeed no need to give Black Star face and help to increase his influence. This contradicts our strategy to pressure the dynasty for the past few decades."

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"I think that we can help Black Star a little." This time, someone actually spoke for Han Xiao. "From what I see, the pressure we've applied all these years has been quite effective. In addition to some special reasons, the dynasty opening up the purchasing right is just a matter of time..."

Everyone turned to look at this person with different expressions on their faces.

This person's name was Hades, a relatively new Beyond Grade A. He had joined the Federation rather recently and never had any notable achievements, so his position was plain. No one expected him to suddenly express his opinion. It seemed like he had a source of intelligence unknown to others.

"You said that there are special reasons that are going to cause the dynasty to open up the purchasing rights of the totems? What inside information do you know?" Bader questioned.

"Just some trivial pieces of intelligence." It was clear that this was a perfunctory response, and Hades did not want to say anything.

Seeing this, Bader was a little unsatisfied. Knowing that continuing to ask would not result in anything, he asked, "Then, why are you saying we should help Black Star?"

"Simple," Hades said. "The Evolution Cube is the core of the Evolutionary Totem business. If the dynasty opens the totem purchasing rights one day, our demand will be met. In that case, if the dynasty is the side who own the cube, not only will we not have any chances, but the dynasty will also receive the most of the profit made by it. Comparatively, it's better to continue letting Black Star keep the cube.

"Therefore, we can help Black Star to increase his position and reputation, preventing him from breaking under pressure and giving the dynasty the Evolution Cube."

"Sounds logical, but since the totem purchasing rights are not open yet, whatever you're saying won't make a difference. Helping Black Star now is going against our strategy to pressure the dynasty and will only cause more trouble for us. If you can prove that the dynasty will definitely open the purchasing rights for the totems, tell us the inside information you have. Only then will your proposal be meaningful." The Chief Elder's thoughts were very clear.

"I have reliable sources. The information is definitely trustworthy." Hades shook his head and still did not plan to explain.

This time, Manison, who had been watching from the side and not saying anything, turned his head and calmly said, "Do what you guys want, but I'll accept Black Star's invitation."

The others were shocked. They all looked at him, many confused.

"Don't you have conflicts with Black Star that are yet to be resolved? Isn't your relationship with him not good?" Sierron asked.

"That has nothing to do with you." Manison casually waved. "I think that this is a festival, and I want to make it happen. Usually, the Beyond Grade As are all staying in their own territories. Since this rare opportunity has come up for us to gather in one Star Field, we should all meet."

Everyone sized Manison's expression up but could not see through his thoughts. They were all confused and did not understand what Manison's intentions were.

Logically, Manison and Black Star were competitors, so Manison should want to suppress him as much as possible. Why would he help him? No one knew what he was thinking about.

Looking around at the others, Manison shook his head in his mind.

He was not worried about this matter increasing Han Xiao's influence, as an increase in regular reputation would not impact their position in the Machinery Faith. The believers only cared about mechanical abilities and the result of battles between mechanics, nothing else. Therefore, he did not care if Black Star became more famous.

However, this was also not because Manison wanted to help Han Xiao. His main goal was to indirectly increase the position of all the Beyond Grade As in the universe through this event.

Beyond Grade As were already at the top of the universe, but he felt that it was not enough. In the eyes of the advanced civilizations, their value was more focused on strategic intimidation and killing each other. It had been like this for many years, and Manison wanted to improve this situation.

If all these Beyond Grade As were gathered because of this opportunity, once the advanced civilizations thought about how much power they had if they came together, the advanced civilizations would be more fearful to them. Thus, they would be more important to the advanced civilizations. This would cause some implicit impacts, but overall, there were both pros and cons. Nonetheless, there were more pros than cons to Manison—he had already looked beyond what he had now and planned to bring more benefits to the standard that the Beyond Grade As represented.

In other words, Manison was consciously increasing the ceiling of the entire industry. Of course, it was mainly for his own benefits.

He also did not mind that Han Xiao was the one leading this festival. Although they were competitors, they also had similarities with both being Mechanics. With Black Star gaining more fame, more people would be attracted to becoming Mechanics, which would be beneficial for the Machinery Faith. This way, as the man at the top of the Mechanics, Manison would also benefit from it.

Of course, if he was the one leading it, he would benefit even more. However, Manison was not a petty man. Since Black Star was the one who suggested it first, he did not bother taking that away. Furthermore, Black Star had the excuse of maintaining the order for the Star Field, while he was in no position to gather all these people.

...

Compared to the church and the federation, the Beyond Grade As of the Crimson Dynasty reacted much more positively.

Milizaus tutted. “Black Star’s ways of obtaining profit are really superb.”

Everyone shook their head and chuckled.

All these Beyond Grade As gathering in the Shattered Star Ring was initially a bad thing that would impact the stability of the Star Field, yet Black Star saw an opportunity and turned it into a good thing.

Everyone knew Han Xiao’s goal in doing this. Not only was it to increase his reputation and influence, but it was also to confirm his position as the head of the Beyond Grade As in the Shattered Star Ring.

Also, it just so happened that the Black Star Army recently revealed a new Beyond Grade A, so Black Star could ride this wave to further solidify the position of the Black Star Army.

Another clearer and more direct influence of this would be that the Bloodshed Land’s competitiveness would be reduced. The Limitless Financial Group would also be heavily affected and would no longer be able to cause any trouble to the Black Star Army in the short term.

“Black Star’s methods really are creative. He must be having fun.” Kant smiled. He had turned into an adorable little black pig the size of a palm. He was sitting right up with his two back legs split like a man sitting with legs closed. His two short front legs were barely crossed.

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“The dynasty is publicly expressing their support. I wonder what Heber thinks about this.” Beyoni chuckled.

“It’s not that the dynasty doesn’t care about him; he just isn’t strong enough,” Clotti calmly said.

...

In the Bloodshed Land, Heber and Sorokin’s doppelganger sat opposite each other.

“With the Black Star Army obtaining a new Beyond Grade A, Black Star made his move as expected. He wants to completely solidify his position in the Shattered Star Ring. Sigh, this is an open and direct move. I can’t do anything about it. If he succeeds, more than half of the results we achieved all these years will be lost.”

Sorokin shook his head with resignation.

He knew that Black Star was not one to easily let go of opportunities. As he expected, Black Star used the heat brought by the new Beyond Grade A in his army to make a move. Due to how sudden this was, he did not even have enough time to complete the investigation on Hila, so of course, he could not counter this.

Furthermore, Black Star had invited all the Beyond Grade As this time, so the result was not something he could interfere with. The only thing he could do was watch.

Heber did not reply immediately. He stared down at the invitation envelope in silence.

“Your Excellency Heber, are you planning to reject Black Star’s invitation? I don’t recommend it.”

Heber looked at him before slowly saying, “Reason.”

“The dynasty’s stance is very clear. They’re supporting Black Star. If you refuse, you’d be going against the dynasty, and that’s not a good choice.” Sorokin shook his head. “If everyone else in the dynasty goes and you don’t, you’ll stand out way too much. By then, it won’t matter if you go; not going will be even more embarrassing.”

“I don’t need you to teach me.” Heber snorted. “What about you? Are you going?”

“Of course.” Sorokin smiled. “After all, Black Star and I are just business competitors. We have no hatred for each other. Furthermore, I’m in no place to insult him.”

He did not like to stand out; following the crowd was more beneficial to hiding himself.

Your skin is so damn thick... Heber could not help but complain in his mind.

“Sigh, it’s a shame. If only you and I were the ones to lead this festival.” Sorokin sighed. “Maybe us Beyond Grade As know the reasoning behind this and won’t think it’s a big deal, but to the outside world, it’s like we all basically responded to Black Star’s call. If the Black Star Army was listed, just this one event will make his market capital rocket.”

As for now, me joining this festival should increase the Limitless Financial Group’s market capital a little too, Sorokin thought.

Not caring about Sorokin, Heber looked at the invitation envelope again. He was not willing to watch Black Star solidify his position as the head of the Star Field.

Sadly, after the lesson he learned last time, he knew that he was no match for Han Xiao, so there was nothing he could do.

...

Among the Star Pupil Holy Race...

“He even invited me?”

Psyker was shocked and confused.

Honestly, he did not want to accept Han Xiao’s invitation at all.

But the problem was, he did not dare reject.

Black Star was too strong now. Psyker’s race was right in the Shattered Star Ring. If he made Black Star lose face, what if he found a reason and charged right over there?

Even though the hatred between the two of them was immense, Psyker had lived on with the shame and grown low profile without doing anything. He did not dare to mess with Han Xiao.

For a Beyond Grade A, this is way too shameful!

Move! I have to move house!

Psyker roared in his heart. This was the second time he had experienced a break down this month.

...

Han Xiao sending out invitations was not announced to the public, but rumors of it still surfaced.

Usually, things happening between these Beyond Grade As hardly ever got leaked. However, the various media outlets of the Shattered Star Ring somehow got the news from somewhere and sent people to the Black Star Army to ask around, wanting to follow up on the story and make it into a huge deal.

The clearest indication of that was the new scenery at the Black Star Army headquarters—a group of extremely persistent reporters who were chasing after army members to ask questions.

Han Xiao did not stop it. It was clear that the dynasty had secretly leaked this. Since they were hosting a festival, building it up was unavoidable. Only then would the impact of it be maximized.

He initially wanted to do it himself, but the dynasty did it for him and saved him some trouble.

There were still some days till the day of the meeting, and most of the Beyond Grade As had yet to arrive. Han Xiao told Sylvia to prepare for this while he paid attention to the responses of the Beyond Grade As from all organizations.

Originally, he prepared some methods to convince some Beyond Grade As. However, unexpectedly, it went smoother than he thought. Most people agreed, and it seemed like he did not have to use those methods at all.

“It turns out that without me knowing, my face is already this valuable...”

Han Xiao was pleased.

After so many decades in the universe, my face has ascended to a new realm!

Since things were going so well, he had nothing to worry about. Other than the benefits everyone knew he would get from hosting this festival, he had another goal that no one knew about.

Legendary Point!

The sources of Legendary Points were extremely complex, and one was doing all kinds of major things. Han Xiao estimated that this would most likely give him a Universe Legendary Point, and even Political Asset was possible.

Furthermore, he could use this opportunity to find out all about these Beyond Grade As and memorize the Attributes Interface of everyone!

As he thought about the plan, his room door suddenly opened. Hila walked in and immediately cut to the chase.

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“It has already been five days. I’ve rested enough. Let’s do it.”

It had been five days since Hila returned. She had been looking forward to the spar, and she had gone to his room again.

“Alright, let’s have a fight but not in the headquarters. Let’s head into space.”

Han Xiao then stood up. He had agreed to this before, and he had no reason to decline today.

Chapter 1005 Trounce

As a new Beyond Grade A and the new Vice Army Commander, Hila had been receiving a lot of attention recently. The more famous she was, the more it would benefit the army. Therefore, Han Xiao was not going to damage her reputation.

Hence, the spar between the two of them was completely private, and Han Xiao did not need to improve his reputation by beating Hila anyway.

The two of them quietly left the Black Star Army headquarters and found a desolate planet. Han Xiao then used some anti-detection devices to draw out a battlefield.

“Here will do.”

The two of them landed on the lead gray surface. Han Xiao raised his hand and opened the secondary dimensional army box. Groups of mechanical soldiers swarmed out and machines spread like a tide.

With him there, he could use all his troops, which was an enormous amount. Even though he did not summon his whole army, it still quickly filled up the ground and the sky.

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Psionic Prime and some of the Apostle Weapons who had returned from the Flickering World stood in a row at the front of the army.

Han Xiao then summoned a Lord's Avatar and shifted his consciousness within before sending his original body away from the battlefield.

Sparring was one thing, but he had no plan to cut his lifespan. Going there himself was to express his seriousness, and changing into an avatar was being cautious.

Hila squinted, not saying anything as she approved with silence.

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Although she hoped that Black Star could use all of his strength to fight her, she knew that there was something strange about her ability, and she did not want to cause any unknown damage to Han Xiao. Furthermore, Black Star's avatar was difficult enough to deal with, as well as those Apostle Weapons on the side.

After stepping into the Beyond Grade A realm, despite the fact that Hila was very confident, she knew that the chance of her beating Han Xiao was extremely low. She mainly wanted to see how vast the difference between her and Han Xiao was.

Hila took a deep breath. Her eyes suddenly glowed like rubies as masses of blood-red death energy flew out from her body and up into the sky continuously, painting the sky scarlet. The red energy continued to expand and seethe violently like a roaring sea, matching the size and impact of the mechanical army.

"Are you ready? I'm coming."

Hila entered combat mode, and her expression became calm and indifferent.

Han Xiao closed the secondary dimensional army box, stretched the neck of his avatar and released his Mechanical Force to enhance the entire army. He then looked down at the ground he was stepping on and shook his head with resignation. "Another planet gone to waste."

As soon as his sentence ended, Hila pushed both her hands forward and attacked without saying a word!

Boom!

The death energy condensed in the air slammed down violently like the sky falling, including all the machinery at the front in its attack range!

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The exterior armor of all the mechanical soldiers reflected the bloody red tide. Psionic Prime looked up, slightly raised the Psionic Prime Spear, and tapped the ground softly.

Pa!

With him as the center, a light blue psionic barrier expanded out extremely quickly and instantly shrouded the mechanical army.

The tsunami-like death energy slammed onto the psionic barrier, creating a wave of earth trembling impact!

With a blinding flash, an energy wave mixed in both red and blood swept out!

Rumble!

The earth split open, ashes shot up like fountains, rifts were created, tectonic plates slammed into each other, and mountains appeared out of nowhere. The terrain within hundreds of miles changed extremely quickly!

Hila's expression changed—she did not expect Psionic Prime to be able to fight her head on.

She thought that Han Xiao would be using strategies, tactics, and the quantity of the army to win, but she never expected Han Xiao's Apostle Weapons to have already become this strong.

Hila's eyes concentrated as she flew up the sky. She then pressed her hands down. The power of the death energy that was eroding and impacting the psionic barrier increased once again. Large cracks immediately appeared on the psionic barrier that was only barely holding on in the first place.

Suddenly, with a deafening blast, the barrier shattered into pieces of light!

After all, Hila was nothing like Kohler or Beyoni; the Apostle Weapons were still not strong enough for her.

The mechanical army suddenly split up and activated their own psionic shields, preparing to defend the impact of the death energy while raising their barrels to counterattack.

Countless energy cannons focus fired on Hila. The scorching light seemed to have slashed open space, leaving only light trails behind. Not many Beyond Grade As would be willing to take on such a powerful bombardment head on, and Hila was no exception.

Her body moved extremely quickly in midair to dodge the attacks as seemingly infinite death energy flew out from her body, forming layers of protective shields that shrouded her. Attacks from energy cannons landed on her shield occasionally, blasting open cracks after cracks.

Her death energy could be used to attack and defend—there were hardly any Beyond Grade As who had no methods to create shields.

Using the power of the [Power of the Dead] to fight a mechanical army actually placed her at a disadvantage, as most mechanical soldiers were objects and Hila's 'life steal' attribute could not be triggered, which cut off one of her crucial methods to regenerate health.

Furthermore, the psychological damage of the death energy had no use on the mechanical army, which meant that she lost another advantage.

Her Esper Ability could only live to its fullest potential when facing opponents with life.

Defense was not Hila's strong suit. After being enhanced so many times, the power of the mechanical army's attack was already completely different from the past. As soon as the army was fully utilized in the battle, Hila felt an immense sense of pressure. Han Xiao's attacks kept penetrating her shield and landing on her body. Her health bar lowered continuously, and her injuries started to build up.

However, Hila's regeneration ability was strong. Although it could not be compared with Aurora, it was still quite impressive. When her level was extremely low, she already had the [High Speed Regeneration] talent, which used the Power of the Dead to nourish her flesh. In terms of stats, it increased her usual regeneration speed by five hundred percent and her regeneration speed by one to two thousand percent when using energy.

Upon entering the Beyond Grade A realm, she had received even more regeneration type abilities. Even though her 'life steal' attribute could not be used, her regeneration speed was still extremely fast. She was one of those who looked very paper but was actually very tanky—in this respect, she was quite similar to Han Xiao.

For the time being, she could still stand the focus fire of the mechanical army.

"Not bad. Looks like she won't lose very quickly." Han Xiao smiled with satisfaction while continuing to farm his distance travelled.

As soon as the battle started, he had made his avatar activate [Charge—Endless Potential] and started to keep moving around to farm the distance moved.

As the ability would only activate on his next melee ranged attack and the distance travelled would be reset to zero once he stopped moving, he could still use his army to attack while easily farming his distance travelled all the time.

As his level was above Hila's, the combat information on the interface showed all of Hila's attributes, which Han Xiao browsed through while keeping himself at a distance from the battle between his army and Hila.

After looking for a while, even Han Xiao was jealous of how amazing these attributes were.

Compared to a 'fake genius' like him who kept obtaining talents from here and there, Hila was truly one with extraordinary talent. She had a ton of talents, and most of them were exclusive personal abilities.

After becoming stronger in the future and her basic attributes got higher, the effects of these talents would become even more overpowered. Now, however, she was far from the peak she reached in Han Xiao's previous life. Even if she finally became a Beyond Grade A, she was still no match for Han Xiao.

As Han Xiao expected, Hila's Beyond Grade A Talents were [Supreme Power], which largely increased her Esper Ability strength, and [Cell Reaction Furnace], which largely increased her energy value.

Although Han Xiao had to go easy on Hila to protect her confidence, he did not want to go too easy on her and did not want to drag this out.

Despite the focus fire of the army being powerful, Hila was not threatened by it for the time being. What really gave her danger was the group of Apostle Weapons led by Psionic Prime.

Each and every one of the Apostle Weapons was very strong individually; they were much stronger than when Han Xiao fought Ames. They were ganging up on Hila and forced her to make a lot of mistakes.

Boom!

Numerous waves of death energy beams were shattered half-way. Scarlet Flame, whose body was an artillery cannon, fired nonstop, shooting out countless dark energy beams and stopping more than half of Hila's ranged attacks directed at the Apostle Weapons.

Heaven-Suppressing Banner charged forward, swapping his weapons continuously and slashing open the occasional death energy beams that got to him, none of which were able to stop him for even a second. His body was equipped with countless high technology melee weapons. He was a weapon master, and he also took the position of the head drill sergeant of the combat tactics in the machinery civilization.

As he successfully entered melee range, he immediately rolled and jumped up, swapping smoothly between all kinds of weapons and using a set of combos like a Mechanical Pugilist. His mechanical body was extremely mobile and swift; his attacks looked so appealing to the eye that it was as if he was dancing.

Hila had no choice but to concentrate death energy on her own body and turn her body into a weapon to deal with the pressure from Heaven-Suppressing Banner. Sadly, her melee combat ability was no match for a weapon master who was proficient with countless weapon styles. It was not long before she could no longer match up to the skills of Heaven-Suppressing Banner and was only getting beat up.

Clank!

Hila's hand blocked the alloy vibrating war axe, leaving a shallow red mark. She suddenly raised her leg high and kicked the axe down. She shot a highly condensed beam of death energy from her hand and blasted Heaven-Suppressing Banner far away.

Before she could take a break, the space before her rippled, and Mad Sky Hunter appeared using teleport. He opened his mouth full of metal sharp teeth and pounced at Hila's neck.

"Go away!"

Hila reacted quickly. She lowered her head and raised her hand before turning around and elbowing behind herself.

As the tip of her elbow landed on Mad Sky Hunter's chin, death energy exploded, creating an impact wave and blew this mechanical beast away.

At that moment, a purple shadow arrived from above, covered in a special twisted force field and dragging a lightning-like energy trail. It slammed into Hila and pushed her toward the ground.

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This was a muscular purple mechanical soldier filled with nano-biological muscles, covered in lightning-like energy. It was indeed Purple Sky Spirit in overclocking mode.

Hila spun like a gyroscope. She tried to stabilize her body while spraying death energy to force the Apostle Weapons back, hoping to catch her breath.

However, at this time, a little dot penetrated the red curtain and glowed before Hila's eyes.

Swoosh!

Hila hastily turned her head. This dot slashed past her cheek, leaving a shallow bloody mark.

This dot came from the tip of a spear, and the one holding the spear was Psionic Prime.

Among the Apostle Weapons, Psionic Prime was the strongest, and Hila did not have an easy time dealing with him. Furthermore, with the other Apostle Weapons also taking part in the battle, she became more and more passive.

The two sides fought intensely for a very long time. The surface of the planet had a completely new look, like an egg with a cracked shell. Lava flew within rifts, and countless plates clashed toward each other, causing violent earthquakes.

“Hu... hu...”

Blood dripped from the sky. Hila was covered in blood and looked exhausted. Her specially made battle suit had holes everywhere, showing large portions of white. Melee weapons were plugged on her shoulder, abdomen, and leg. The intensity of the battle could be seen just from the state she was in.

“How unflinching.” Han Xiao tutted internally.

Hila was used to going all out when fighting. Even if it was just a spar with Han Xiao, she still fought with her life.

Han Xiao had gone a little easy and told his mechanical troops to hold back, so as to give Hila a chance to go all out. She would only be satisfied if he still beat her in an overwhelming manner in this kind of situation.

This time, Hila pulled out the weapons stuck in her body. The open wounds slowly closed up and recovered. She looked around at the group of Apostle Weapons and suddenly took a deep breath before snapping her finger.

After such a long fight, all the Apostle Weapons including Psionic Prime had fifteen layers of [Death’s Erosion], and they all exploded simultaneously!

Boom!

Red light exploded from the Apostle Weapons, and they were all heavily injured.

Detonating the energy had nothing to do with life force, since at its core, [Death’s Erosion] was about the highly erosive death energy. Therefore, unlike her ‘life steal’ attribute, this ability was effective on any target, including machines.

The death of mechanical lives meant that their tinder was extinguished, which the erosion of death energy could definitely do. However, Hila did not lose her senses during the battle, so she would not kill Han Xiao’s important combatants. Hence, she did not trigger the possible death effect, only the basic effect, which wiped out a ton of health from these Apostle Weapons.

Being heavily injured, Psionic Prime and the various Apostle Weapons showed flaws. Hila took the opportunity and immediately escaped, heading directly toward the Lord’s Avatar like a red meteor, blowing away all the mechanical soldiers in her path.

“This is the last attack, I see.”

Han Xiao could see the combat information. He knew that Hila’s health was close to zero.

Knowing that Hila could weaken regeneration, Han Xiao did not let his avatar take any of the attacks and heavily injured Hila with just his Apostle Weapons and the mechanical army. Now, however, he controlled his avatar to turn around and charge right toward Hila.

Above the demolished earth, a black and a red meteor crashed into each other!

Han Xiao did not hold back at all. [Charge—Endless Potential]’s power fused entirely into his fist and slammed onto Hila’s chest.

Bang!

It was as if the sky cracked open!

A powerful impact wave exploded and blew away all the dust around.

An enormous hole appeared on Hila’s chest, penetrating right through. Her organs were shattered into pieces, and all the blood had splashed out together with pieces of her flesh.

Hila’s eyes lost focus. She fell straight down and landed on the ground, creating a huge crater.

“Target no longer has any signs of life.” Psionic Prime looked over and was a little shocked. “Lord, y-you killed her? Wasn’t it just a spar?”

Han Xiao glanced at him and deactivated Lord’s Descent. His original body slowly landed beside Hila.

“D-did we go overboard?” The various Apostle Weapons quickly followed and exchanged looks. They all looked down with guilt like kids who had done something wrong.

Han Xiao did not say anything. At this time, waves of gray energy suddenly gathered from all directions and fused into Hila’s ‘corpse’. Her eyes immediately regained life, but the dark red glow became gray.

The next moment, her broken body recovered at a visible speed. Flash grew out, organs reappeared, and wounds healed.

Her pale face slowly became red. Hila sat up and gasped for air. The glow in her eyes suddenly disappeared, and she started coughing severely.

“Cough cough cough...”

Han Xiao had expected this. With a smile on his face, he patted softly on her back. “Does it hurt? Take deep breaths, slowly.”

Hila had the [Ignore Sudden Death] talent, which he had witnessed long ago and was also clearly shown on the interface. He knew that Hila would not completely die after dying once, and she would be fine no matter how heavily injured she was. That was why he decided not to hold back and used [Charge—Endless Potential] to beat her into the state of close death.

He knew all about Hila’s personality, and beating her up with full force would actually make her satisfied. She had quite the potential of having the masochism trait.

After resting for a while, Hila finally stopped coughing and had a speechless look on her face.

“You really didn’t hold back at all. I was even killed.”

Han Xiao raised his brows and shrugged. “Isn’t this what you wanted. Don’t you like it?”

Hila snorted and did not object.

Having almost been beaten to death once, Hila was not unhappy at all. Since she had gone all out, this kind of battle was exactly what she wanted. She was very satisfied with the fact that Han Xiao did not hold back.

Furthermore, through this spar, Hila had a clearer understanding of Han Xiao’s strength among Beyond Grade As, and she was secretly impressed.

She did not expect to still be completely overwhelmed even after becoming a Beyond Grade A. The difference was still so huge.

Hila did not become disappointed or despondent because of this. Instead, it motivated her.

Hoping to catch up to someone like him... it isn’t that easy to succeed. No matter, it’s only fun when it’s challenging. Hila encouraged herself in her mind.

She had always respected the strong, and she could not help but admire Han Xiao even more.

“I’ve lost, but it was an amazing fight. It was worth it.” Hila smiled from the bottom of her heart. She did not have many hobbies; fighting was one of the few.

“Tsk, what a fighting maniac.” Han Xiao shook his head and laughed. He rubbed her head and said, “Can you still walk?”

“Don’t touch my head. Let’s go back.”

Hila tilted her head and avoided Han Xiao’s hand. Then she tried to stand up. However, having just recovered from close death, she was not in a good state, and her stamina was completely drained. Seeing this, Han Xiao wrapped his arm around Hila’s shoulder and helped her up.

Hila glanced at him and did not reject it, letting him help her into the spaceship. She even actively nudged into Han Xiao’s arms a little.

...

After this fight, the two of them became even closer.

In the past, although they were close, they were on completely different levels. Now that both of them were in the same realm, they had much more common language. The relationship between the two of them quickly improved, and the awkwardness and distance from not seeing each other for twenty years disappeared immediately.

Hila enjoyed this a lot.

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In the past, I could only look at your back. Now... I can say that I'm standing beside you, right?

Information about the private spar did not leak, so it did not stir up any storm.

One phenomenon that attracted the most attention in the Shattered Star Ring was that more and more Beyond Grade As were arriving without any signs of trying to hide themselves, leading their fleets and heading toward the Black Star Army's headquarters.

The local galactic residents of the Shattered Star Ring all focused their attention on these Beyond Grade As and the Black Star Army. They could all smell a gigantic piece of breaking news coming.

Chapter 1006 The Hidden Bloody Rule

As more and more bosses from various places arrived in the Shattered Star Ring, this Star Field became increasingly boisterous. Each and every Beyond Grade A attracted attention from countless galactic residents and organizations. They could be considered a type of idol.

Other than the things they had done, one of the other important sources of their fame was Wayne Cards. Every one of them had their own set of cards, and there were way too many people who played Wayne Cards in the universe, so they knew these bosses all too well.

On this day, spaceships circled around far away from the Black Star Army headquarters. Most of them were media reporters who had heard about the event, and about ninety percent of all the media reporters in the Shattered Star Ring were there.

The reporters had camped there for many days, witnessing the fleets of Beyond Grade As enter the Black Star Army's headquarters one after another.

"How many are already here?"

"Twenty-seven! And there are more Beyond Grade As on their way."

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"So many Beyond Grade As gathering, something big is definitely going to happen!"

"Are they planning a coup d'état?"

They were tempted by curiosity and wished they could rush into the Black Star Army headquarters to uncover the truth.

As soon as the first Beyond Grade A, Ames, arrived, these reporters were all chased out and not allowed to enter the Black Star Army headquarters. They had no choice but to linger outside and watch.

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Without their curiosity satisfied, these reporters seemed to have become raging monkeys—they could not sit tight even for a second.

Although the dynasty had leaked some information, it was only ambiguous so that the sense of mystery would still remain. The reason that these Beyond Grade As had gathered in the Black Star Army was not explained so that the outside world would speculate and discuss the topic more.

It was clear that creating this kind of suspense was extremely effective. The Shattered Star Ring had already received a lot of attention from the outside world due to the Flickering World in the first place, and this became the hot topic immediately.

Everyone was filled with doubt.

About eighty percent of all the Beyond Grade As in the entire universe had suddenly gathered, why?

The circle of the Beyond Grade As was too distant for ordinary people. Without any source of inside information, there were too many questions that remained unanswered.

Among which, Black Star was mentioned the most. The interest the entire universe had in Han Xiao increased once again.

Why are all these bosses choosing the Black Star Army as the location to gather?

Why can Black Star summon all of them?

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In the past years, Han Xiao had kept a low profile and did not attract much attention. Only recently did he suddenly do something this sensational. Many people wrongly assumed that Black Star had done something secretly over the years that caused his reputation to suddenly skyrocket.

It was not long ago that the Black Star Army acquired a second Beyond Grade A, and now, they were gathering about eighty percent of all the Beyond Grade As in the universe. They were definitely planning to do something big!

Almost everyone thought the same.

At this time, two more fleets arrived with hyperdrive from afar, one in front and one at the back. The exterior armor on the ships had symbols of the Mechanic Emperor and the Void Overlord. It was Manison and Kasuyi's fleets.

"Quickly, record it!"

"Even Manison and Kasuyi came. Black Star's face is so valuable!"

The two fleets passed by these media ships and headed toward the Black Star Army's headquarters. The various reporters quickly recorded this process.

Since they could not enter, the only thing these reporters could do was record the Beyond Grade As who came and waited outside for the news to be announced.

...

The two fleets flew into the army's dock. Manison and Kasuyi's avatars disembarked from their spaceships. The two of them had known each other for a very long time, so they quickly started chatting.

"You're here too. Looks like the church is also going to give Black Star face this time." Manison smiled.

"Aren't people from the federation here too?"

Kasuyi's tone was calm. His voice sounded ethereal, as if it came from the void.

"The federation is one thing, and me coming is another. My goal here is different," Manison said with an indifferent tone.

"Drawing the line so clearly, you really aren't afraid of the federation being unhappy about it." Kasuyi shook his head. "Then, what's your goal?"

"Do you remember the last time this many Beyond Grade As gathered?"

"I forgot."

"I'm thinking the three civilizations have forgotten too, so I'm helping them remember." Manison's tone was casual.

Kasuyi paused, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. "This might not be a good thing for us. The more seriously we're taken, the more we're feared. If things go wrong, it might be another Tragedy of the Pinnacles."

"The good and the bad have always coexisted. Although us Beyond Grade As belong to different organizations, we're all in the same Grade, and we've always been separated. Now that we've gathered, we've attracted the attention of the entire universe. I'm sure that the other Beyond Grade As can see how much power we have together. If we can make use of this power, we can demand and obtain more things," Manison said slowly.

"You're still the same, saying the same old things." Kasuyi's tone did not express any of his emotions. "The Ancient Ones, the Mechanical Race, the Limitless Financial Group... you have plenty of resources. Sadly... when at your level, you alone aren't enough anymore. You have no choice but to make use of everyone... So, tell me, what 'Ones' are you going to form this time?"

"Just benefitting from each other. I'm not the only one benefitting from it; all the Beyond Grade As stand to gain something. Isn't that good?" Manison smiled.

"No matter what, you know me. Unless you have a way to help me complete the final God's Trait Transformation, don't come to me for something like this." Kasuyi waved.

Manison did not mind and changed the topic. "Then let's not talk about this. The void specialties you gave me the last time are quite good. Can you give me more? Come on."

"Sure, give the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter back first."

"Are you dreaming?"

While the two of them poked at each other, the dozen or so Beyond Grade As who were waiting at the dock came over. They were mostly Beyond Grade As of the federation and the church.

These people had arrived earlier, but as not everyone had arrived, they were waiting in the army's headquarters and had already stayed there for some days. Since their 'bosses' had arrived, they went out to meet up.

There was only one exception—Sorokin, who stood outside the crowd alone with a big smile on his face.

“Why did you come to us?” Manison glanced at him.

“Although this is Black Star’s territory, the two of you are important shareholders in the financial group, so meeting you guys is what I should do.” Sorokin’s tone was sincere.

From the way this sounded to the others, his tone totally sounded like he was trying to bootlick, which suited their impression of Sorokin perfectly.

At this time, Han Xiao walked over and attracted the attention of everyone. He said with a smile, “Welcome to the Black Star Army. Follow me, the rooms are ready.”

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“Black Star.” The Beyond Grade As turned around and greeted him, all with complex looks in their eyes.

Some of them had only heard about Black Star and had never met him personally, but after staying in the Black Star Army for the past days, they knew Han Xiao.

Most of the Beyond Grade As there did not actually want to go, and they only went reluctantly because of the order from the upper echelons of the federation and the church.

However, even though they were unwilling, since they were in someone else’s territory, they did not dare act too arrogantly, or they would insult Han Xiao completely. Clearly, enraging a peak Beyond Grade A who was very capable at fighting was highly irrational.

Manison nodded at Han Xiao. “We meet again. If I remember correctly, this should be the second time I’ve come to your territory.”

“Third.” Han Xiao raised his brows. “You forgot the fight.”

“Alright.” Manison shook his head and chuckled. He did not mind.

Ever since that fight, Han Xiao had not made any moves for the next decade or so. Manison had already confirmed that Han Xiao had admitted loss and would not challenge his position again. Therefore, he had no problems with him.

He had already beaten a ton of Mechanics over the years. As long as the opponent admitted their loss, he would not continue to trouble them. He had to maintain his reputation as the main God of the Machinery Faith.

“This is the Void Overlord, Kasuyi. If I remember correctly, this should be the first time the two of you have met.” Manison turned his head and introduced Kasuyi.

“It’s indeed the first time, but I’ve heard a lot about you.” Han Xiao smiled and extended his hand. “I’m honored to meet you, Your Excellency Kasuyi.”

Kasuyi shook Han Xiao’s hand and said, “I’ve been hearing the name Black Star a lot. You’re a legend, too. Meeting you is also my honor. I heard you also have the blood of the Void Race. I think we’ll have a lot of common topics to talk about.”

After praising each other, Han Xiao guided everyone to their own room. After the federation and the church’s people settled down, Sorokin was the only one left.

“Your Excellency Black Star, it really shocked me how big your face is. So many important people are here.” Sorokin seemed like he was praising Han Xiao sincerely, but it sounded pretentious in Han Xiao’s ears.

Han Xiao curled his lips. “I thought you wouldn’t come.”

“Impossible! I have business in the Shattered Star Ring too, and you’re the top of this Star Field, so how can I not give you face? I know you have some misunderstandings about me since we have some competition in terms of businesses, but I personally have nothing but respect for you.” Sorokin smiled brightly. “We might even have the chance to work together in the future.”

Han Xiao knew that this guy’s shamelessness could match up to his own, so he was used to it. He tutted and asked, “Didn’t Heber come with you?”

“He said he’s going to come on the last day. Hehe, despite being the nearest to you, he’s trying to object like a kid.” Sorokin sold Heber out immediately.

“Humph, got it.”

Han Xiao waved and left the fake-smiling Sorokin.

Other than those allies who came because of the order from the three Universal Civilizations, everyone else had their own intentions. For example, Sorokin was probably there because he wanted to blend into the crowd, as well as to network with these Beyond Grade As. That old man Manison seemed to have other goals, too...

The Beyond Grade As who were staying at the Black Star Army could be classified into three types—the dynasty’s allies and those who were on his side, like Ames and Austin; the allies of the other two universal civilizations who came because they were ordered to do so; and the Beyond Grade As from the other factions as well as neutral Beyond Grade As, most of them whom had come to socialize.

However, the goals of these people would not impact this event too much, so Han Xiao did not mind.

To Han Xiao, the main focus of this Beyond Grade A gathering was the waiting stage before the official meeting. These Beyond Grade As would be waiting for more than ten days in their rooms, which would create a platform to communicate and socialize. Usually, due to factors such as distance and their respective factions, there were no occasions as public as this to gather so many of them together.

This way, everyone could socialize together, and it would be very convenient for him to find out more about the Beyond Grade As he would be meeting for the first time. Not only him, everyone’s circle would expand by quite a large extent, which would be beneficial to enhancing the relationship inside the entire Beyond Grade A circle.

Han Xiao did not just want to increase his reputation and maintain order within the Star Field; he also wanted the other Beyond Grade As to communicate and socialize. He was providing an opportunity for these people to build a good relationship with each other.

Although Beyond Grade As might have conflicts and grudges against each other, they would have no choice but to become comrades and fight alongside each other when the war of the World Tree erupted. He wanted to do something good in advance.

Furthermore, if the Beyond Grade As maintained the state of disunity, it would also lead to some very dire consequences.

“There were both natural and man-made reasons that led to the Calamity of the Supers, I hope this meeting will cause some changes...”

...

“Your Excellency President, there are already close to thirty Beyond Grade As who are now living in the Black Star Army’s headquarters. The estimate of the final count is around seventy to eighty.”

On the Federation of Light’s mother planet, Bader listened to the Chief Elder’s report with a frown on his face.

Considering the various factors, he decided to let the federation’s allies attend the meeting. However, he suddenly realized that the power of so many Beyond Grade As gathered in one place was too horrifying. Even though they were just meeting each other, it was still enough to shock the entire universe and stir up storms. The impact of this had exceeded his expectations.

“There are too many Beyond Grade As...”

“That’s right. In a few days’ time, the Black Star Army’s headquarters might be the most dangerous place in the entire universe.” The Chief Elder’s expression did not look good either.

“You misunderstand.” Bader looked up at him. “What I meant was... there are too many Beyond Grade As in the universe.”

The Chief Elder’s expression changed drastically.

Bader stood up, approached the window, and looked out. “The lifespan of a Beyond Grade A is very long. Without any accidents, they would live up to a thousand years, and there are also those Eternal Lives with seemingly endless life spans.

“Even though the chance of a Beyond Grade A appearing is extremely low, compare how long it takes for their life span to run out to how long it takes for a new one to appear—the number of Beyond Grade As in the universe will only keep growing. A hundred... two hundred... One day, sooner or later, there’ll be thousands of them!

“By that time, individual great power... will be uncontrollable!”

The Chief Elder’s expression became extremely serious. “You’re saying... to carry out a new cleansing? Like the Tragedy of the Pinnacles?”

Bader shook his head. “The Tragedy of the Pinnacles was just an accident, but it hinted to us how to deal with the problem of Beyond Grade As. Although the number of the Beyond Grade As right now is still controllable, if we don’t plan ahead, the day when the peak of individual power overflows will come sooner or later... Therefore, cleansing the Beyond Grade As is a must. However, I don’t plan to do this during my term.”

The Chief Elder nodded. “Hmm, the Flickering World is very important to the entire universe right now. It isn’t the time for a cleansing.”

If there were too many individuals with extraordinary power that surpassed even logic itself, order would no longer be stable. In his eyes, cleansing the Beyond Grade As had nothing to do with hatred; it was only to maintain the stability of the universe. However, this would definitely cause unrest in the short term. Therefore, it was a hot potato to any leader of the universal civilizations—no one wanted to do such dirty work during their term.

To him, this was like keeping the ecological balance of the universe. This was not eliminating Beyond Grade As but controlling the total number of Beyond Grade As, keeping the ratio of individual power to collective power at a safe standard.

In peaceful times without exterior enemies, the consequences of this ratio being unbalanced would be unpredictable.

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This was not his sudden idea. In fact, many years ago, the three Universal Civilizations had developed similar plans privately. However, the Beyond Grade As had never gone out of control, so they had never executed this plan. This was a silent agreement between the three rulers of the universe.

“I wonder if Black Star hosted this meeting because of this too...” Bader thought of Manison’s attitude, paused, and said with a deep voice, “Manison probably guessed the inevitability of the cleanse, so he wanted to gather all the Beyond Grade As to show us their strength. Or is he trying to improve the position of the Beyond Grade As? Tsk... these two crafty guys.”

He had to admit that he did now fear the Beyond Grade As more, but there was no way to start the cleanse now, so the only thing to do was to turn this fear into showing that the Beyond Grade As were more important.

“Black Star, Mechanic Emperor... do you really want to gather the power of the Beyond Grade As?” Bader’s eyes had a deep and unforeseeable look.

Chapter 1007 Meeting

As more and more Beyond Grade As arrived at the Black Star Army’s headquarters, Han Xiao’s territory became increasingly rowdy. Within a few days, there were already about eighty Beyond Grade As and their fleets gathered there.

The Purple Crystal Civilization, which managed this Star Cluster, became nervous and secretly deployed some forces to set up defenses.

It was not just the Purple Crystal Civilization. All the Star Cluster civilizations of the Shattered Star Ring, as well as the three Universal Civilizations’ garrisons in this Star Field, started to secretly deploy troops to prepare for what might happen.

This many peak individuals of the universe would easily be able to turn an entire Star Field upside down, and they were all individuals with independent minds who carried the risk of not being controllable. These civilizations did not dare remain unprepared.

As for the Godoran Civilization, which directly ruled the Star Zone that the Black Star Army was in, all of their fleets had gathered around the Star Zone housing the Black Star Army's headquarters as if they were facing a lethal enemy.

The things going on in the outside world did not affect the mood of the many Beyond Grade As. With Heber arriving last, the meeting began as scheduled.

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The meeting location was a palace in the headquarters. The ceiling with a hundred meters tall, and dozens of floating thrones formed a circle five meters above the ground.

As the gate opened, the Beyond Grade As swarmed in. The tallest was the Beast Ancestor Gorutan, and the shortest was the finger-sized Sun Hunter. There were all kinds of appearances.

They all picked a location to sit one after another. The allies of the three Universal Civilizations all sat around each other in their own corner, with the Beyond Grade As of the other factions in between them.

After they sat down, they noticed three empty seats that were next to each other. Seeing that Han Xiao had yet to arrive, they casually started chatting while sizing each other up.

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While waiting, many Beyond Grade As had moved around. In the past, some of them had only heard about some of the others but had never met. Using this opportunity brought by Han Xiao, these people had finally met each other and made some new friends.

Those who were visited most were the peak Beyond Grade As who had the highest positions and the strongest organizations in the circle. That included Manison, Kasuyi, Kant, and Gorutan. Clotti and a few of the other Beyond Grade As who did not come to the Shattered Star Ring, of course, did not participate in this meeting.

At this point in time, those who were sized up the most were the new members of the circle, those who only became Beyond Grade As in the past decade or so, such as the federation's Hades, the dynasty's Silver Shadow, and the church's Tolaen.

After a while, three people walked in. Everyone stopped chatting and looked over at the gate—it was indeed Han Xiao, Hila, and Ames.

Han Xiao walked forward with wide strides, came before the mechanical throne, and sat down, facing all of the Beyond Grade A.

At the same time, Ames and Hila sat in the empty seats on his left and right.

Many looked at Hila with curiosity—there were a lot of people who were interested in this new Beyond Grade A of the Black Star Army.

Finally, the gate slowly closed.

With a smile on his face, Han Xiao looked around and slowly spoke, "Everyone is here. Pardon me for the wait. I appreciate all of you being willing to take part in this meeting..."

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While saying the standard things, he observed everyone.

As he spoke, some sat tight and upright with a serious expression, some had indifferent and careless looks, some smiled to express friendliness, and some lay back in their chairs. He could see some of their attitudes.

Of the Beyond Grade As present, more than forty, including himself, were allies of the three Universal Civilizations. Most of the rest were on their own, and some were allies of the Super Star Cluster civilizations.

Many also had multiple identities. For example, quite a few Ancient Ones were there. There were also a few shareholders of the Limitless Financial Group. The Protector of the Galactic Black Market 'Beast Ancestor', 'Secret Master', and so on were here too. These were all very important people whom Han Xiao had to pay more attention to.

These people had very complicated relationships with each other. Some had good relationships with each other; some held grudges against each other; some were brothers on the surface but actually plotted against each other behind each other's backs; some looked distant but were actually close secretly.

Han Xiao had moved around during the past few days too. He had managed to talk to everyone and successfully collected the combat information on everyone present. There were only a few whose levels were higher than his whose abilities he could not fully see. Still, he had the abilities of everyone else. He had obtained quite the amount of valuable intelligence.

These people, however, had no idea that Han Xiao knew even the color of their underpants.

"No matter why you are all here, I appreciate your arrival..." Finally, Han Xiao had finished the cliché opening and entered into the main topic. "I suppose everyone has already spoken with each other, so I will save myself the saliva of making introductions."

The people all looked at Han Xiao, waiting for his next sentence.

Han Xiao softly patted the handle of his throne and said, "The reason I hosted this meeting is mainly to discuss the matter about the Shattered Star Ring with everyone..."

Before he could finish, a very intrusive voice sounded.

"Humph, can you represent the entire Shattered Star Ring?"

The look in everyone's eyes changed slightly as they looked over at the source of the voice. The person who spoke was the Federation of Light's Sierron, as well as a member of the Ancient Ones. He had a mocking expression on his face.

Without any change in his expression, Han Xiao smiled. "There are so many civilizations and organizations in the Shattered Star Ring. Of course, I can't represent the stand of the entire Star Field alone."

"Then, what right do you have to talk about this issue?" Sierron demanded. "Don't forget, the Federation of Light is the actual ruler of the Shattered Star Ring. We're the only ones who can speak for this Star Field, not you."

The other allies of the Federation did not stop Sierron. They came to give face to Han Xiao, but as competitors, they were not going to make this too easy for him. Causing trouble was unavoidable. Even if they were not going to stop him, they did not want him to achieve his goal too easily.

"I cannot agree with that," Han Xiao said slowly. "I'm a local of the Shattered Star Ring, and I'm stationed here on behalf of the dynasty. Also, I'm the strongest Beyond Grade A of this Star Field. Although I can't represent the stand of this entire Star Field, I'm sure I have the right to speak for it personally. Furthermore, I'm not announcing some kind of order. I'm just here to discuss certain matters with all of you today."

"The strongest Beyond Grade A of the Shattered Star Ring? Are you sure?" Sierron sneered.

Han Xiao raised his brow and slowly opened his arms. "Are you questioning my combat history?"

"Don't worry. I won't deny that you've defeated Heber, Psyker, and Ames. As for Hila... she's new, so she probably is no match for you."

Heber's expression was not looking too great. He did not like the fact that his defeat was mentioned by an outsider in front of so many Beyond Grade As.

Psyker coldly glanced at Sierron before glaring at Han Xiao. He was not happy about it either.

Ames, however, did not mind, and Hila's expression was like a rock, as if she did not hear anything.

"Then, what's the issue?" Han Xiao asked.

"Simple, there's still one person who you've not defeated, the Magus, Austin!" Sierron shook his head. "He's just too low profile, but it's not certain he's no match for you. Without defeating him, you can't solidify your position as the strongest of this Star Field."

Austin was stunned. Why mention me out of nowhere?

Then, he understood it immediately. Sierron wanted to put him on the spot, which might be an act to stir up disagreement. Although Sierron probably knew that he had quite a good relationship with Black Star, there was no harm in trying. After all, as long as the relationship between the two of them was tainted even a little, Sierron would benefit from it.

"I admit Black Star's the strongest in this Star Field. I'm no match for him." Austin curled his lips. This was the only thing he could say. It was not like he could spar with Han Xiao right there.

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Hearing this, Han Xiao nodded at Austin before asking Sierron, "Do you have any other objections?"

“Nothing else.” Sierron saw that Manison had given him a look, so he closed his eyes and did not say any more.

Han Xiao looked around. Seeing that no one else had a problem, he said with a deep voice, “Alright then, since everyone agrees that I have the right to speak for the Shattered Star Ring, let’s get back to business... As the opening of the Flickering World is near, I can understand why all of you have come to the Shattered Star Ring to wait. However, I believe that everyone here knows that this many Beyond Grade As gathering in one Star Field will create a lot of unstable factors. As the peak of the Shattered Star Ring Supers, I have something to say. Please do listen.

“I grew in the Shattered Star Ring, so of course, it’s my responsibility to maintain the stability of this Star Field. I welcome all of you to the Shattered Star Ring as guests, but I have but one small request... I hope that while you’re all here, you won’t destroy the order of the Shattered Star Ring. If all of you are willing to give me face for this, I’ll be very appreciative.”

This time, Han Xiao’s tone changed into a much deeper and more serious one.

“However... if anyone ignores my request, I shall see it as a personal challenge to me, and I will absolutely not let it off easily. Remember, there’s still a long time till the date of the opening of the Flickering World. I hope to not have any conflict with anyone.”

The atmosphere suddenly became tense. The people had different looks on their faces—indifference, approval, seriousness, and many others.

Although Han Xiao said it in a very nice way, the main purpose of this sentence was to serve as a threat and a warning, and its meaning was very straightforward.

I don’t care where you’re from—this is my territory. If you mess with me, you’re not going to get away with it easily.

If you want to cause trouble in the Shattered Star Ring, you’d better weigh the consequences of messing with me!

Everyone there was a boss of an area, and there were quite a few who could speak for their Star Fields too, so many felt that these words were rather sharp.

However, with the position and strength Black Star had now, he already had the right to say something like this, so no one felt it was out of place.

This time, Austin smiled and said, “I’m a local Beyond Grade A of the Shattered Star Ring too. I also don’t want the Star Field to become chaotic. I agree completely with what Black Star said.”

“Humph, me too,” Heber said reluctantly.

Ames and Hila also expressed their agreement. Seeing this, Psyker had no choice but to do the same.

This time, all of the local Beyond Grade As of the Shattered Star Ring had supported Han Xiao, expressing their intent to maintain the stability of the Star Field together. In a way, they had indirectly approved of Han Xiao’s position as the leader.

Han Xiao paused for a few seconds, saw the reactions of everyone present, and suddenly smiled. "Of course, if you're willing to give me face on this matter, I'm willing to have a partnership with you guys in the development of the Flickering World. Currently, the Black Star Army has the most territory in the Flickering World. I believe I can provide quite a lot of help."

Many people's eyes sparkled.

Everyone knew that the Black Star Army had a huge force in the Flickering World, and the Flickering World was their goal. If they could receive Han Xiao's help, they would naturally have an easier time over there. Before they arrived, they thought that Han Xiao was just going to intimidate them. Never did they expect Black Star to be willing to provide opportunities for partnerships. This came as quite a surprise.

"We will remember what you said," Manison said calmly. "The federation doesn't want to see people causing trouble here."

Seeing that Manison had expressed his stance, various Beyond Grade As spoke as well.

"Since both Black Star and the Mechanic Emperor say so, then nobody will cause trouble in the Shattered Star Ring."

"Peacefully wait for the opening of the Flickering World. There'll be plenty of time in the future."

"Whoever dares cause trouble here shall be all of our enemies."

"Black Star, I shall give you face for this. Remember your promise."

Han Xiao smiled. "I'm glad we could come to an agreement."

At this time, Manison suddenly changed the topic. "Black Star took the lead in hosting this meeting for the sake of the Star Field's stability. It's a respectable act. However, you did not just gather all of us here for something this trivial, did you?"

Han Xiao's eye sparkled for a split second. He turned to Manison and said, "If you have anything to say, please do."

"Okay, then I shall get to the point."

Everyone looked at Manison with curiosity, not knowing what he meant.

Manison pondered for a moment before speaking. "The advanced civilizations make use of us, and we make use of the advanced civilizations. Everyone here works for various factions. We kill and fight with each other, which is very normal. However, I think that we should not be limited to the differences between factions. That's the game made by these advanced civilizations. Sometimes, we should jump out of their game and make plans for ourselves."

Everyone's expression changed slightly, and the room became silent.

This had always been a sensitive topic. No one expected Manison to talk about this at a meeting about regional stability, not caring about those present who were direct members of the advanced civilizations.

From the moment they stepped into the territory of Beyond Grade A, everyone was in the same Grade. Even though they belonged to different factions, this could not be changed.

Manison looked around and continued. "You guys know that the advanced civilizations both need us and fear us. They don't want us to have too many private relationships. An opportunity like today is very rare. As all of you have seen, we're only having a meeting, yet it stirred a storm in the universe. There are definitely countless fleets aiming their cannons in our direction, and you all know I'm not exaggerating."

"You don't need to emphasize the situation we're in," Kant said with a frown. "I don't think this is the time to discuss this topic. It's too early."

"Preparing early is better than not preparing at all," Manison said coldly.

"So, why did you mention this? Do you want all of us to form an alliance?" Gorutan said.

"Just a reminder, us forming an alliance will be the same as starting a coup d'état," Kasuyi said. There was one thing he did not say, which was that pillars of the three Universal Civilizations such as him were basically safe, so he did not want to concern himself at all.

Everyone spoke one after another, expressing their opinions and discussing the matter intensely. There were hardly any opportunities to discuss something like this usually, so this event hosted by Han Xiao became a platform to exchange opinions.

"Don't worry. It's not time yet. What I want is just a silent agreement..." Manison then looked at Han Xiao and said with a curious tone, "You're the host of this meeting. You've just been listening for quite a while and did not stop us, so what are your thoughts on this?"

Everyone turned to look at Han Xiao. Han Xiao's position was quite high in the circle, so his opinion was relatively important.

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Han Xiao shrugged, shook his head, and said, "I have no other suggestions. I just feel there are too few Beyond Grade As..."

"That's right, too few." Manison sighed.

Han Xiao glanced at him.

I'm pretty sure the 'too few' we speak of means different things.

Chapter 1008 Version Star

"Like the Mechanic Emperor said, it's not time yet. Waiting is what we should do," Sorokin said with a smile.

"Yes, we need more new blood." Manison nodded. He then looked around at the new Beyond Grade As present and made his mechanical host send a virtual emoji. A smiley face popped up above his head in a bubble.

This old man actually knows to act cute quite well, Han Xiao thought.

Hila turned and looked at Han Xiao, wanting to say something, but in the end, she did not.

She did not expect these Beyond Grade As to gather and discuss such a major topic.

This meeting gradually headed in a magical direction. To Hila and the other new Beyond Grade As, the topic these Beyond Grade A bosses were talking about was way too vast. They could only listen and had no right to speak at all.

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Will there be trouble discussing topics like this in our own territory? Hila was worried.

Noticing Hila's expression, Han Xiao gave her a look to not be worried at all.

Ames noticed that the two of them were giving each other looks, so she knocked on Han Xiao to make him look over and quietly said, "You actually had the same goal in mind when hosting this meeting, didn't you? Otherwise, you wouldn't have let Manison use your territory to say something this big."

"Everything is within my calculations." Han Xiao raised his brow.

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After the people discussed for a while, someone finally made an important remark.

"Although we can't form an alliance, our circle indeed needs a closer relationship," Kant said with a deep voice. "The communication between us needs to be more frequent."

"The Flickering World will be a suitable reason for that," a neutral peak Beyond Grade A slowly said. "In the past, due to the limitations of factions and areas, the interactions between us were limited. Now, however, all our organizations will enter the Flickering World. This Star Field will become the platform for our communication so that the limit we had before is surpassed to a certain extent. Therefore, we need a bridge, a messenger."

Hearing what this person said, everyone subconsciously turned to look at Han Xiao.

In the known universe, Beyond Grade A organizations were not allowed to expand as much as they wanted to. They were restricted by the advanced civilizations and all kinds of rules. However, in the future, everyone would be able to enter the Flickering World, which had a very deep meaning. Even though the Beyond Grade A civilizations would only be building divisions there, they would have much easier access to one another to a certain extent. This would aid in the communication between all the Beyond Grade As and the unite of this circle, presenting an opportunity for everyone's strength to be completely united.

This needed a bridge to act as the center of the transmission of information and resources for the Beyond Grade As in the Flickering World, putting everyone together like glue.

The one who could do this had to have a strong foundation in the Flickering World, and the Black Star Army was the largest force in the Flickering World other than the dynasty...

The best candidate to build the bridge was none other than Black Star!

When more than seventy Beyond Grade As stared at one person, even though they had no hostility, the pressure was still quite terrifying. Han Xiao took a deep breath and smiled.

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“If you guys need it, I’m happy to do this.”

In fact, this was one of Han Xiao’s goals to begin with. Although the process was a little different, he still obtained what he wanted.

Part of the reason Han Xiao had been making the Black Star Army build such a strong foundation in the Flickering World was indeed to obtain this position.

Since he was an individual with peak strength, he had to face this problem. Although the butterfly effect he triggered changed the storyline, regardless of whether the World Tree War happened before or after the Calamity of the Supers, he had to make preparations for himself in advance.

If he could be the belt of the Calamity of the Supers, he would have more power.

As pinnacles of individual power, unless one was the ruler, there was no such thing as absolute loyalty to a collective power. Ever since the start, the relationship between these two sides had always been making use of each other. The Great Mechanic Han had never even thought of giving his all to an organization. Even kids knew that eggs should not be all placed in one basket. He had to prepare to ensure his own safety.

Interests between different levels of society could never be truly unified. Unless one was willing to be used like a chess piece, these complicated questions would never be simplified.

The relationship between friends and foes changed regularly; the interests shared within a level of society were the most reliable agreement.

“Your Excellency Black Star, you really are a responsible man.”

Everyone nodded at Han Xiao and smiled.

“I want to achieve a kind of silent agreement between us all.” Manison looked around and said seriously, “When that day really comes, as long as someone sends a signal, I hope everyone can respond to it.”

“That’s reasonable,” Kasuyi said calmly.

Everyone nodded and achieved an agreement.

They would not be forming an alliance. In usual times, they would still fight for their own factions. However, when the time came, they were willing to step up.

...

They then chatted about many things for a whole two days and two nights. Only then did the meeting officially end. The various Beyond Grade As took their leave and departed from the Black Star Army.

Manison walked with Kasuyi together toward the dock and chatted softly.

“The content of this meeting will definitely spread to the three Universal Civilizations, yet you didn’t hide it at all. Aren’t you afraid of enraging the Federation of Light?” Kasuyi asked.

Manison smiled. “Even without this meeting, fear will still exist, so I might as well give them some pressure to add on to our chips... With Black Star, the federation can’t lose me, and vice versa. The difference between factions limits us, but it also restrains them.”

“Everything is possible.” Kasuyi shook his head. “When a tool starts to have other thoughts, no matter how useful it is, it might still be abandoned anytime.”

“We’re no tools.” Manison’s tone was calm. “Remember this, we represent the peak power an individual can achieve. Every single one of us is a treasure of this universe. Not only are we entities of violence, we’re also precious special gene data banks. We represent the infinite possibilities of evolution itself, and we are never to be controlled or toyed with. If they want to abandon us, there will always be a price to pay.”

“I got it. This is why you’re in such a hurry, to protect yourself.” Kasuyi glanced at him. “Have you finally realized that your forces are too strong?”

Manison did not reply. He paused before sighing. “Sadly... EsGod is no more. Although he isn’t the same as us, he was still somewhat useful. If he doesn’t stand against the three Universal Civilizations, God knows how much help he is to us.”

Kasuyi’s tone was strange. “You know his life span was already not long, don’t you?”

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“...What are you trying to say?”

“Hehe, nothing. It’s just... he definitely knows about his life span more than anymore.” Kasuyi smiled.

...

After the meeting ended, days passed one after another. The outside world gradually noticed a very strange phenomenon. All the Beyond Grade As who attended the meeting were keeping a shockingly low profile and did not have any conflict with each other.

Initially, with so many Beyond Grade As gathered, instability seemed inevitable. Everyone expected this to affect the order of the Star Field and thought that there would be some Beyond Grade As fighting once in a while. However, they controlled themselves and made sure the Shattered Star Ring remained orderly.

The entire universe was shocked, triggering a wave of speculation.

The reason behind this definitely lay in the meeting that Black Star hosted.

What did Black Star say to make this many Beyond Grade As so disciplined?

The rumors kept spreading. Finally, Han Xiao arranged to have someone leak some inside information. Black Star gathered all the Beyond Grade As, representing the Shattered Star Ring, and asked all of them not to cause trouble in order to maintain the order of the Star Field.

As soon as the information was out, the entire Shattered Star Ring was amazed!

The countless local galactic residents felt touched!

Look, how responsible is Black Star? In order to maintain order, he took the risk of gathering this many Beyond Grade As in his very own territory. He's basically the agent of peace with great love in his heart!

A Beyond Grade A who's willing to speak for us, what a responsible man!

Furthermore, Black Star's action was clearly extremely effective. All the Beyond Grade As were somehow convinced and did not cause trouble, which clearly proved that Black Star's influence was extremely strong.

To have someone like this in our Star Field, it's a blessing for us!

With this, Han Xiao's reputation in the Shattered Star Ring rocketed in a short period of time.

Having done something like this, the countless galactic residents did not mind having Black Star speak for the entire Shattered Star Ring at all.

The power and position as the leader of the Star Field was now finally approved by even the galactic residents.

To the Black Star Army, this meeting was like a promotion event which increased their fame.

This meeting itself was also a noteworthy event more than enough to be written into the history books.

On the internet, more and more people felt that this was a signature event before the opening of the Flickering World, and they gave it a nickname... [Meeting of the Gods]

...

You have received 2 Universe Legendary Points.

Universe Legendary Point: Representative of the Shattered Star Ring—You have been recognized by this Star Field. In the future, you have the right to represent the Shattered Star Ring!

Universe Legendary Point: Initiator of the Meeting of the Gods—After many years, the many Beyond Grade As have gathered once again. As the initiator of this event, you've been written into the history books!

“Meeting of the Gods? How about just calling it ‘Martial Arts Tournament’?”

In the headquarters of the Black Star Army, Han Xiao could not help but snidely comment on that name after looking at the notification on the interface.

Other than the name, he was quite satisfied with everything else. Two Legendary Points was quite a good reward.

The mission given by the Crimson Dynasty to maintain the order of the Star Field was also completed, giving him a few billion EXP, as well as a decent amount of the Crimson Dynasty Contribution Points.

Now that Hila had become a Beyond Grade A, he had reasons to purchase Ultimate Knowledges of the Esper class from the dynasty, so he had new ways to spend the Contribution Points. The more Hila owed him, the easier he could keep Hila in the army.

After the dynasty's mission was completed, Urranrell personally made a call to compliment him but refused to speak about the other matter... Nonetheless, no one intended to hide it.

Of course, the three Universal Civilizations knew about this. Since she did not say anything, Han Xiao understood the dynasty's stance on this. They knew that questioning their allies would do nothing, so they had an understanding with each other.

"There won't be any problems over here in the Shattered Star Ring now..." Han Xiao played around with a palm sized pet robot. "Now I'll just have to wait for the dynasty to blow the horn of the new era."

...

With so many Beyond Grade As already making a stand, the other organizations did not cause trouble either. Everyone waited patiently and peacefully for the Flickering World to open.

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What Han Xiao did was make the Star Field stable. Everyone focused on making preparations as days passed.

After a few months, the day finally came.

On this day, the dynasty officially announced the opening of the Flickering World. The Inter-Star Field Stargates leading to the Flickering World were all activated!

At the same time, a notification about the start of the new version popped up on Han Xiao's interface as well—the players had finally come online!

Chapter 1009 Online

At the border of the Shattered Star Ring, Inter-Star Field Stargates with the dynasty's symbol stood in the cosmic space in a row, extending outward. The dynasty's fleets were stationed between each of the stargates. It looked like a necklace with sapphires.

On the other side of the stargates were countless fleets with symbols of different organizations, almost filling up every inch of one's sight. The sheer quantity of these fleets was a rare occurrence.

It was the day that the dynasty would open the Flickering World. These were all spaceships waiting to enter. Other than civilizations and organizations from the various Star Fields, there were also many galactic residents who could not wait to enter the Flickering World. Some were going for sightseeing purposes, some who were looking for adventure, and there were also some who wanted to search for opportunities and earn a fortune.

The time when the dynasty would announce the opening of the Flickering World got closer every second.

Seconds felt like years. Finally, the dynasty's announcement sounded from the area communication channel and on every single spaceship present.

"It's time. On behalf of the Crimson Dynasty, to the entire universe... the Flickering World is now officially open!"

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The next moment, all the stargates were activated. The vortexes at the centers of these stargates started spinning, forming blue wormholes.

All the spaceships moved, forming a queue that seemed to extend infinitely, entering the various stargates one after another. It was marvelous.

Not far from these civilian stargates were VIP military stargates for the dynasty's allies.

Black Star's ride was in the queue. The various officers stood in the command room, looking at the person standing before them.

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With his back turned away, Han Xiao looked through the porthole at the seemingly endless sea of ships not far away and softly asked, "Did you guys hear that?"

"Hear what?"

"The sound of the new era breaking through its shell."

Han Xiao chuckled softly.

In his eyes, the interface was hovering before him, notifications were popping up one after another.

Version 4.0 Activated!

Fetching data... Fetching data complete!

Player forum opened.

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Welcome to Galaxy Version 4.0—[Flickering World]!

This day has finally come... Han Xiao took a deep breath.

This was an important turning point version. In Version 4.0, the players would officially enter the stage of the fight within Galaxy. They would interfere with history and achieve notorious names such as Cancer of the Universe and The Fourth Calamity.

The strength the players controlled would truly cross a limit, allowing them to enter a standard where they would have a completely different influence on the universe. With the Lv.150 level limit of the version, the players would have a consistent strength of Grade B+!

Once the tinder of anarchism was ignited, it would engulf the entire universe.

At this time, Sylvia seemed to have received some kind of report. She took out her communicator and looked at it. Her pupils then constricted, and she said with a deep voice, "Army Commander, those immortals of the army have appeared again."

Han Xiao finally turned around, looked at everyone, and nodded slightly.

"Bring all of them over."

...

At the same time in the Black Star Army headquarters...

Before the version update, many players logged off in the Black Star Army headquarters. Once they logged in again, with countless flashes of white light, the empty hall suddenly became crowded, boisterous, and noisy like a wet market.

"Galaxy, I'm back!"

"I've already bought ten cans of Blue Bull, brothers!"

"Did the new version repair the bug that causes us to not be able to go naked?"

"There they are! I knew it! Those 'No-Pants-Supporters' never left!"

"By the way, are there any new functions added? Since this is already so close to reality, why not add a function to reproduce? Creating offspring is the soul of a social system!"

"If we could really reproduce, this would be the most god tier game ever created."

Countless players cheered in excitement. Meanwhile, at the edge of the crowd, a group of professional players logged in one after another. The members of the four biggest clubs of China were basically all there, as well as Frenzied Sword, Maple Moon, Bun-Hit-Dog, and so on.

"Yo, the maximum level of the new version has increased to Lv.150." King Admiral looked at the interface and smiled.

"The difference in the cost of leveling up is way too huge." Second Prince could not help but twitch.

"The Black Star Army's faction interface is still here. The army did not shut down." Frenzied Sword checked the faction interface instantly.

"How could the Black Star Army shut down so easily?" Maple Moon softly murmured.

The players in the other Star Fields would have to worry about the faction they were disappearing after the version update, meaning all the Contribution Points they had farmed before that would go to waste. This was why stable factions were the most popular.

The players in the Black Star Army, however, had no such worries. After three versions, they already had complete faith in their faction leader, Han Xiao.

At the end of the previous version, the army's position was already stabilized. The Arcane Church lost, EsGod was defeated, and they obtained a super business called Evolutionary Totems. Even the players knew that the army would not shut down easily.

At the start of the new version, the most important thing was finding out what happened during the version update as well as what the situation in the universe was now. This had already become the players' habit.

Many players took out their communicators to look at the calendar and were met with shock.

"Wait, it's Galaxy Calendar Year 729 now?"

"It was year 709 when we logged off, right?"

"This means that the duration of this version update is twenty years?"

"I thought the Version 3.0 update duration was long enough, but Version 4.0 doubled it!"

Frenzied Sword exchanged looks with Maple Moon. A tint of excitement flashed across both of their eyes.

Twenty years!

That's not a short time.

How much will the Black Star Army have grown?

While exciting thoughts flashed across their minds, the notification sound from communicators suddenly appeared one almost simultaneously in the hall. Every player received a new message sent by the internal program of the army.

They quickly opened it. Virtual screens expanded before them, all showing Han Xiao's face and playing the same recording.

In the recording, Han Xiao sat up straight, only showing half of his body as he spoke with a very formal tone.

"Comrades, I'm Black Star. In the past twenty years, we have obtained countless achievements, especially in the Flickering World. The army now has ten Star Systems as its territory, thanks to the effort of each and every member that helped to achieve the glory we have achieved today.

"Now, the Flickering World will be entering its fourth exploration phase and will be officially opened to the public. People from the entire universe will swarm into this Star Field. This is a new era; we need to grab the opportunity and charge forward... I hereby send a recruitment order to all army members. The army needs you... The Flickering World needs you!"

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The short recording ended here. The pupils of the players gradually enlarged as they received a huge chunk of information from this message.

It's now the fourth exploration phase? I seem to remember the first phase not having ended when we logged off!

The army has ten Star Systems as its territory in the Flickering World? What's going on with that?

What did the army do in the past twenty years?

Everyone was extremely intrigued.

What they did not know was that this recording was a 'cutscene' Han Xiao had specially made for the players to help them understand the situation quickly.

This time, Hao Tian suddenly realized one thing. "Wait, if it's now the fourth exploration phase for the Flickering World, is our main storyline mission still there?"

The various professional players realized this too. Their original main storyline mission was still in the stage of the first exploration phase. Due to the version update directly skipping twenty years, would their missions be canceled?

If it was gone, it would be quite a loss.

They hastily opened the interface before relief flooded through them. The main storyline mission of the [Flickering World] was still there. The mission requirements had just changed into developing the Black Star Army's territory as well as exploring the few Star Clusters of the fourth exploration phase.

"Although it's changed, it's still exploration."

Many players shook their heads but were not excited, a little disappointed even.

They were curious about the information given through the recording, but they were not very interested in the Flickering World's mission. This was because the army players had already tried this mission in the previous version. Although the goal had changed, the way to do the mission looked the same to them.

Pioneering new Star Fields was fresh indeed, but it lacked opportunities for battles. In the previous version, many players were tired of doing the Flickering World mission and preferred to do hiring missions in the Shattered Star Ring.

This was actually quite common, as the Flickering World main storyline the players experienced in Version 3.0 was actually just half of what it was supposed to be. The dynasty was the only organization pioneering, so of course, it lacked battles.

At this time, they were suddenly stunned upon realizing one thing.

Did Black Star say... the Flickering World is now open to the public?

So, the organizations from the other Star Fields are entering?

Then... what about the players of the other Star Fields?

Frenzied Sword immediately went online to do some research and confirmed the legitimacy of this information very soon. Not only that, the organizations of the various Star Fields were also recruiting Supers on a large scale to go to the Flickering World.

The biggest impact this had on the players was that the inter Star Field channels were now completely open!

Compared to the last version, the players had a method to cross between Star Fields!

The people quickly logged into the forums.

As expected, all of the forum boards were frenzied by this information!

Frenzied Sword understood immediately. With his eyes sparkling brightly, he yelled, "This is... a world server!"

All the players in the various Star Fields would finally be able to come to the same stage, gathering in the Flickering World!

What did this mean?

National wars!

The speculation that Galaxy Times had made about crossing between Star Fields became real!

All the players in the hall were astonished and thrilled!

"Holy, it's the world server!"

"Hahaha, I knew this day would come!"

"Finally, national wars! I can't wait!"

The next moment, they realized something else. The Flickering World would be the world server of this version, but as the members of the army, they had already entered in the previous version in advance.

How much of an advantage would that be?

The players were overjoyed!

"Oh my god, we have already marked our territory in Flickering World in the last version. We're one entire version ahead!"

"I'm crying! I felt that the exploration was too boring and went back to the Shattered Star Ring to do hiring missions!"

"With such a big advantage, we'll have a blast this version!"

The players who had gone to the Shattered Star Ring from the Constellation Corridor in the previous version all felt relieved. Had they not followed the Black Star Army back then, how could they have gained such privileges?

On the other side, the players of the other Star Fields were in an uproar.

In Version 1.0, Black Star led some players in the universe in advance. Okay, we'll put up with it.

In Version 2.0, the Black Star Army became the guiding faction, making the Shattered Star Ring players ahead of everyone else again. Alright, we'll put up with it too.

In Version 3.0, the Black Star Army had a Beyond Grade A, leading to it being connected to a Universal Civilization before everyone else. Well, we will put up with it. Sooner or later, our day will come.

But now, in Version 4.0, the Black Star Army is god damn one step ahead again!

Are you guys dogs?

Why are you always the ones enjoying the most benefits?

What happened to the law? What happened to the rules?

Do you fu*king... still need more members?

Only then did they realize that Black Star had already built a foundation for them in the previous version, and they saw what an advantage they had gained from this faction!

The various army players could only praise how amazing the game experience was.

With such a reliable faction, the players of the other Star Fields and countries could only be jealous.

This was the only one in the entire universe!

Now, the army players' interest for the Flickering World was never higher.

Initially, many felt that the exploration game style was too boring. Now, however, as the Flickering World became the world server for the players, it would become the most chaotic and exciting Star Field in the entire universe. There would be countless and never-ending conflicts. This was the full experience of the [Flickering World] main storyline!

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Having this thought, Frenzied Sword and the others quickly went to research about what the Black Star Army had done in the past years, wanting to know what advantages their faction had exactly in the Flickering World.

As soon as he opened the Black Star Army's records, Frenzied Sword's eyes opened extremely wide.

He had made a lot of speculations, and he was mentally prepared too. However, the first thing he saw was completely different from what he imagined, and it stupefied him completely.

"What the hell? Old Black became a god?"

Chapter 1010 World Server, Start of Revenge

The records clearly stated the major events that the Black Star Army had been through during the twenty-year update. Frenzied Sword filtered it to be between the years 709 and 729, arranged from the earliest to the latest.

And this highlighted record was the first thing he saw.

'Galaxy Calendar Year 710, Black Star became a Mechanical Deity!'

This term blew Frenzied Sword's fragile mind. There was only one thought in his head.

Black Star has become a God!

This name was very intimidating, but Frenzied Sword calmed down and did some research. Only then did he understand that 'Mechanical Deity' had a different meaning to what he expected. It was the nickname of Divine Throne Mechanics, which meant that Black Star had become a peak Beyond Grade A.

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"That startled me. I thought Old Black was going to ascend above."

Slightly relieved, Frenzied Sword continued to browse through, noticing another few major events in the same year.

Firstly, when the first exploration phase ended, the army received seven Star Systems as its territory and became the biggest armed organization in the Flickering World. Secondly, the Germinal Financial Group was formed, starting its fight with the Limitless Financial Group in the various commercial industries. Thirdly, the plan of building Super Academies was executed; the Black Star Army had already built tens of thousands of Super Academies in the Shattered Star Ring, raising countless Supers, some of which were chosen to become members of the army.

In the same period, after Black Star became a Mechanical Deity, he had fought the Tyrant once again, beating him with just an avatar. This confirmed his position as the strongest individual in the Shattered Star Ring. Not long after, the Mechanic Emperor invaded, and conflict erupted, which was ended by the dynasty interfering to force the Mechanic Emperor away.

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Frenzied Sword could almost feel how intense things were back then from just the words.

After that, the army entered into a low-profile development period. Black Star no longer featured in the top news as often and quietly remained in the Flickering World. Then, in the year 716, the war with the Kunde Race erupted. This was the first sub-Star Cluster native civilization that was eliminated.

However, the records of this period of history were very sparse and vague. There was only a rough conclusion, and nothing could be found online. The only valuable clue that Frenzied Sword had was that the Black Star Army was now responsible for the transformation task of the Kunde Race, which had been going on for thirteen years.

After the Kunde Race war, the army remained low profile during the second and the third phases as well. Everything had been peaceful and calm until only recently, when the army revealed its second Beyond Grade A, someone they were familiar with.

"Hila has become a Beyond Grade A?" Seeing the name, Frenzied Sword's eyes widened in shock.

No players born on Planet Aquamarine were unfamiliar with Hila. Be it when she was the villain 'Crimson Snake' in the Germinal Organization or when she fought on their side during the Mutation Disaster of

Version 2.0, these impressions were all deeply rooted in each and every player of Planet Aquamarine... mainly because Hila's astonishing beauty made the deepest impression.

All the old players knew that Black Star and Hila went way back, from Planet Aquamarine to the universe. She was an old friend who appeared very long ago.

Frenzied Sword had worked hard for four versions in the army, so the army was his home faction. Now that his own faction had another person to rely on, no words could describe how pleasantly surprised Frenzied Sword was.

Suppressing his excitement, Frenzied Sword turned to the last bit of the records—the 'Meeting of the Gods' that Black Star had hosted just recently, where he summoned more than seventy Beyond Grade As to gather in one place.

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Seeing the shocking influence Black Star had, even his heart skipped a beat. After twenty years, how had Black Star's position in the universe already achieved this standard?

"My god..."

Before Frenzied Sword could pull himself out of the shock, loud laughter exploded from beside him, startling him.

"Hahaha! Nice!"

Bun-Hit-Dog guffawed into the sky with his hands on his hips. His mouth was opened so wide that it almost looked like it was going to crack. His smile was like the smile of an evil hound.

Frenzied Sword covered his ears. "What are you laughing about?"

"Look at this. During the twenty years of the version update, look at how much has happened to the Black Star Army. This is all material for videos. This is a treasure!"

Bun-Hit-Dog was exhilarated. With so much material, he would not have to worry about having nothing to make videos about for quite some time.

He planned to include all the things the army achieved during the update, to help the army players know about the army's history. Just thinking about it made him certain it would be popular, and he was sure he would probably go viral again!

With that in mind, Bun-Hit-Dog took a look around and realized that many people were looking at their communicators and browsing through the history of the army. He could not help but open the forums. He used his talent as the number one reporter and uploaded the army records. At the same time, he gave the post an attractive title—'Shock! The Army's Glorious Twenty Years!'

At the start of a new version, countless players were exchanging information on the forums with excitement. As soon as this post was uploaded, it attracted a lot of attention in the Shattered Star Ring panel.

Army Commander's Big PP: "Old Black is fierce as always!"

Fulliron Alchemist: "Old Black has been like this ever since the first version. He's undoubtedly a legend at starting from zero. Is there anyone in the entire universe more amazing than him?"

Stupid Cat: "The ID of the brother above..."

Magnet Link: "I didn't expect Hila to become a Beyond Grade A too. By the way, do you guys remember Black Star's origin? He started as a traitor of the Germinal Organization, and Hila was a member of the Germinal Organization too... Tsk, what an organization."

Mysterious Man: "Germinal doesn't die; it only hides!"

While Frenzied Sword was deeply drawn to the stupid comments, he was suddenly dragged by Maple Moon toward the dock.

"Stop reading, let's quickly go to the Flickering World, as soon as possible."

With someone taking the lead, the players of the entire Black Star Army headquarters started moving and swarmed toward the dock.

Come and read on our website [wuxia worldsite](#). Thanks

...

The forums, which had been quiet for quite some time, suddenly became extremely boisterous. After the army players scattered around various places understood what was going on in this version, they immediately headed to the nearest army base and boarded a fleet toward the Flickering World. No one wanted to miss out on the world server.

As members of the Black Star Army, since they had such a huge advantage, they were not going to waste it. Every second counted.

In the eyes of the foreign professional clubs, the exclusive faction advantage the Chinese players in the Shattered Star Ring had was just about the worst news they could receive. The guilds of the various countries hastily started private meetings to discuss the matter.

"Things are not looking good. The main storyline of this version is way too good for the Chinese players. The world server is right beside the Shattered Star Ring, and they've already been there. When our guilds enter the world server, it will be very difficult for us to compete with these top Chinese guilds such as Dynasty and Long Sky. We will certainly be at a disadvantage in Guild Wars, which will very likely affect the growth of our professional players."

"In the previous season, three teams out of the top four teams were from China. We can't keep letting them have such dominance over us no matter what this season."

"It's going to be tough. The Black Star Army is basically going to be the locals in the world server, and it's backing the Chinese players up. Are we going to join the Black Star Army?"

"It's very difficult for the professional players and the guild top players to join other factions on a completely different side, or all the effort spent in the previous versions will go to waste."

“That’s right. Even if we do change factions, we can’t compete with what the Chinese players have built up in the Black Star Army over several versions.”

“Let’s observe how things go for now, see how the Chinese guilds respond to this. If it’s not ideal... we might have to unite the clubs from the other countries.”

Although this was just the first day of the start of the new version, the situation had already made the clubs from various countries agitated.

After all, the faction advantage for the Chinese players was way too huge. While the Americans, Frenches, Koreans, and Japanese were feeling indignant, they all had thoughts of forming an alliance.

...

“So, all the players have moved...”

Han Xiao smiled after hearing Phillip’s report.

With the opening of the Flickering World, the traffic of this Star Field would explode. There would be demanded businesses everywhere, bringing opportunities. It would be like the age of digging for gold. The advantages the Black Star Army had been building for so long would now finally show their effects.

To him, this was not the stage of exploration but the stage of harvest!

With the territory he had, it basically meant he could just sit and watch while others brought him profit.

Countless organizations would be competing there, so the players would have plenty of mission resources and countless ways to gain EXP, as well as no shortage of opportunities to fight.

However, it’s not that easy to harvest EXP at the start of the new version, Han Xiao thought.

The players’ current main goal was continuing to level up, so most of the EXP they earned would be spent on levels. It was not time to harvest yet.

In order to quickly level up, Han Xiao had to wait for the players for a period of time.

However, Han Xiao was in no hurry. Quite a number of new items had been added to the army’s store. No matter how petty the players were, he could make the players open their wallets. The efficiency of getting EXP from this still far exceeded him doing missions himself.

His level, which had remained stagnant for so long, could now finally increase rapidly!

Players from various nations swarming into the world server was an opportunity to enlarge his farm. For the Black Star Army to attract outside players now, Han Xiao no longer had to do much. The advantages he had obtained over the versions and his positive name were the core appeals.

The bigger the advantage the army players had in the Flickering World, the more attractive the Black Star Army would be. However, due to exactly this reason, Han Xiao could guess that some foreign clubs might get together to fight the Chinese players. Therefore, helping the army players was a must.

In his previous life during Version 4.0, the clubs from the various nations kept forming alliances and betraying each other in all kinds of ways that made things almost look like they were in the 'Romance of the Three Kingdoms' era.

His plan was to use the army's territory as a base to provide resources while helping the army players become stronger in Version 4.0. At the same time, he would use the players' power to create trouble, attacking the enemies while protecting their own forces, attracting more players, and satisfying his need to level up.

"Modo Civilization, Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy..." Han Xiao's eyes sparkled.

It would still take the players of the various Star Fields some time to arrive at the Flickering World. Other than the players, these two matters were what he needed to deal with the most.

The Kunde Race's mission required him to take revenge against the Modo Civilization. Back then, the dynasty told him to only fully execute the plan when the Flickering World was completely open. Now, the Modo Civilization's troops had also entered the Flickering World. On his turf, Han Xiao had a hundred ways to make life hell for the Modo Civilization.

The mission reward was the [Proof of Leadership] talent, which was extremely useful for the leader of a huge organization like him. Han Xiao had waited more than ten years, and he could finally make a move.

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The moment when the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy appeared would also soon arrive, and there would probably be quite a number of organizations who would fight for it. Han Xiao had already sent troops off toward the location marked in EsGod's heritage.

He had also researched its owner in his previous life. If he remembered correctly, it should be an ordinary person called Evans. He already had the location of Evans, who was also in the Flickering World and under his surveillance.

If there was no one under his command that could control the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy, he would find the owner from his previous life, who would definitely be able to control it.

While pondering, Han Xiao told Phillip, "Search for the current location of the Modo Civilization's fleet... I shall send them a huge 'gift' to begin."