

L Hero

Chapter 991 Galaxy Calendar: Year 729

On Planet Three Kings...

“There have been many assassination incidents recently, and public security is being affected badly. The identity of the assassin is unknown, but according to our investigations, the Crimson Dynasty’s shadow can be seen behind this matter. It is very obvious that Madison has failed, and his methods weren’t able to fool the dynasty.”

An important meeting was being held to discuss recent events, and everyone present had an ugly look on their face.

The continued assassinations of their government officials brought about social unrest, and many Modo citizens were living in fear.

With their safety under threatened, these high officials were all enraged.

A military officer with an explosive temper slammed the table and roared, “Too arrogant! Does the dynasty really think that we are a weak civilization that cannot fight back? If we work together with the other Super Star Cluster Civilizations in the Primeval Star River and refuse to listen to the rule of the three Universal Civilizations, we shall see what they do!”

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“It is best to say fewer such words,” someone said.

The others present also did not treat those words seriously. Although all the Super Star Cluster Civilizations had plenty of resentment toward the three Universal Civilizations and wanted to replace the other party, gaining independence was a path of no return. Unless they had absolute confidence, no one would support such a notion.

After venting their anger for a while, they went back to the main topic and discussed how they should take care of the matter.

“We must first stop anymore assassinations from happening, but we cannot give in to the dynasty. They want us to admit to the crime of making use of the natives and compensate their losses in the war. They must be dreaming!”

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“That’s right. Announce that this matter has nothing to do with us. If the dynasty is able to bring out evidence, insist that the evidence was forged.”

“Also, we must insist that the dynasty is assassinating our officials without any evidence and make an application to the Civilization Conference to denounce the dynasty’s actions. The federation and church will stand on our side. We will also be able to pull more Super Star Cluster Civilizations to our side. The universe isn’t ruled by the dynasty alone.”

Someone shook his head and said, "The Flickering World is about to be opened up, and there won't be many willing to offend the dynasty during this period."

"Then, what should we do? We can't let the dynasty continue assassinating our officials, right?"

"Humph, we should give them a taste of their own medicine. Since they can assassinate our officials, we can also assassinate their officials."

Another immediately objected. "Assassinate the dynasty's officials? Have you forgotten what happened during the Tragedy of the Pinnacles?"

Upon hearing that, a look of anger could be seen on the faces of everyone present.

This was a humiliation that they had not forgotten. The Beyond Grade As of the three Universal Civilizations were engaged in an intense battle, and because of their heavy losses, they decided to make the Super Star Cluster Civilizations the scapegoat. Including the Modo Civilization, the three Universal Civilizations slaughtered all the Beyond Grade A Supers in the Super Star Cluster Civilizations before leaving as though nothing had happened.

This action of theirs damaged the strength of the various Super Star Cluster Civilizations greatly and resulted in a long-lasting negative impact. Many Beyond Grade A Supers became worried about their own safety and did not dare join a Super Star Cluster Civilization.

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As such, the Modo Civilization knew that they would not be able to retaliate by assassinating the other party's officials. If they did, a huge storm of blood would definitely be stirred up. The church and federation would not watch by the side and would work together with the dynasty to deal with them. The three Universal Civilizations would collaborate if it was to protect their prestige.

They had already experienced this many times before and could only endure silently.

"Don't exaggerate this issue. The assassinations are only a small matter. The dynasty will know when to stop and won't dare push us into a corner. However, we must also fight back and control the degree of our retaliation. We cannot touch the dynasty and can only take a step back to deal with the organization of their allies. However, we can only deal with the organization but not the Beyond Grade A."

"I think Beyoni is very suitable. His organization is located in the Primeval Star River, and it will be easy to deal with him. We will also be able to show our attitude this way."

In just a short few sentences, Beyoni's bad luck was determined.

To a Super Star Cluster Civilization, apart from Manison, Kasuyi, or Black Star, an ordinary Beyond Grade A was nothing in their eyes. Even a Star Cluster Civilization would be able to get rid of a Beyond Grade A, not to mention a Super Star Cluster Civilization like them.

Since the dynasty assassinated our officials, we will definitely have to take revenge.

As for the fact that we are the ones who started this matter and are at fault...

So what?

We're all gangsters anyway.

At this moment, someone said with worry, "What I am worried about is the fact that the dynasty may make use of this matter to restrict our entrance to the Flickering World."

"What are you afraid of? The Flickering World will be opened eventually. Even the dynasty won't be able to stop this from happening. If they insist on barring our entry, we can just create a huge fuss! The other Super Star Cluster Civilizations will stand on our side, and the dynasty won't be able to endure the pressure!"

The Modo Civilization was not afraid that they would be barred from entering the Flickering World because of this.

All the Super Star Cluster Civilizations understood extremely well that even if the Flickering World was opened, the three Universal Civilizations would definitely suppress them. As such, they had formed an alliance of their own.

The Flickering World was a rare opportunity, and the Super Star Cluster Civilizations were willing to work together for this.

Even if the Modo Civilization was the only party being suppressed in the Flickering World, the other Super Star Cluster Civilizations would back them up. Although they did not like to help their competitors, fighting back against the three Universal Civilizations was more important. The Super Star Cluster Civilizations understood that they would be defeated if they did not stand together.

Furthermore, the dynasty was currently occupied with other things and could only use assassinations to warn the Modo Civilization.

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The Super Star Cluster Civilizations had the confidence to fight the three Universal Civilizations. After all, they were different from other Star Cluster Civilizations. They no longer had the space to fawn over the three Universal Civilizations.

They could only fight and snatch.

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In the Limitless Financial Group headquarters, Mechanic Emperor Manison, Void Overlord Kasuyi, and Beast Ancestor Gorutan visited Sorokin again.

"I wonder what the three of you need today?" Sorokin said with a calm smile.

"Do you still remember our deal?" Gorutan asked.

"Of course. I am in charge of competing with the Black Star Army and applying pressure to him to aid all of you in getting the Evolutionary Totems," Sorokin said slowly.

"However, you don't seem to be producing much results," Kasuyi said.

The Black Star Army was able to withstand the pressure of the Limitless Financial Group, and the organizations behind the three were not satisfied.

“Ah,” Sorokin replied casually. “I already said that it wouldn’t be so easy to deal with the Black Star Army.”

“We hope that you will apply more pressure.”

“No problem.” Sorokin smiled. “However, I have already displayed sincerity, and it is now your turn.”

The three of them understood that Sorokin was asking them to fulfil a portion of their promises first.

“That isn’t a problem,” Manison said slowly.

“I shall wait then.” Sorokin smiled. “I also need an appropriate opportunity for my next plan.”

“What plan?” Gorutan asked.

Sorokin cleared his throat and slowly said, “After so many years of competition, we are stuck in a stalemate, and it will be difficult to have a new point of breakthrough in the Shattered Star Ring. Thus, I have my sights set on the Flickering World. That is the core of the Black Star Army’s development.

“I have some inside news. The dynasty will open the Flickering World in the fourth exploration phase. Many financial groups will be interested in fighting for this slice of cake at that time.”

He was already eyeing the opening of the Flickering World. He would be able to make use of various methods to pressure the Black Star Army at that time.

Since the Black Star Army had received the benefits of obtaining a territory, they would have to take the risks of managing it. Sorokin wanted to engage on a new battlefield with the army.

The Limitless Financial Group had plenty of different methods to use money to suppress the ordinary businesses of the Black Star Army within their territory.

Of course, Sorokin’s main objective was the growth of the Limitless Financial Group.

Compared to the benefits of the Flickering World, the cost of suppressing the Black Star Army was negligible.

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Under the control of both parties, the conflict between the Modo Civilization and the Crimson Dynasty did not escalate further.

Both parties prepared their manpower and resources as they awaited the opening of the Flickering World.

Apart from a few small skirmishes, the galaxy was extremely calm.

Under such circumstances, the second exploration phase of the dynasty was completed smoothly, and the dynasty started the third exploration phase.

In those peaceful times, time crept by silently, and many years went by.

Without too many setbacks, the third exploration phase was coming to an end.

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On the 15th day of the 7th month of the 729th year of the Galaxy Calendar, the Crimson Dynasty finally announced a piece of news that everyone had been waiting for.

The fourth exploration phase was about to start, and the Flickering World would be opened!

It was like a psionic bomb being set off!

The universe that had been peaceful for over a decade was stirred again!

Chapter 992 Incoming Storm 1

News of the fourth exploration phase spread through the entire universe like a storm.

The entire universe had been waiting for this day for far too long, and every Star Field became bustling with excitement. The civilizations of the various regions all began to recruit manpower and purchase resources.

The normal galactic residents also became excited. They could not wait to explore the new Star Fields, and many of them wanted to try their luck to get rich or migrate over.

Countless troops and resources were being mobilized all over the universe. The dynasty had only announced the time, but before the official opening of the Flickering World, all the manpower and resources would have to wait in the Shattered Star Ring. As such, the Shattered Star Ring would become bustling with activity during this period.

The opening of a new Star Field would reshuffle the current state of the universe once more.

A huge tide of migrants flooded toward the Flickering World from all directions.

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On a red mining planet, there were many prisoners mining for resources.

In the middle of a circular mountain range, there was a prison with a grayish exterior.

“Congratulations, you’re finally out.”

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After stepping out from the surveillance region of the prison, even the air smelt sweeter. Looking at the usually stern prison guards smile at him, Evans felt as though it had been an eternity.

He could finally leave the stinky sweat filled prisoner attire and was dressed in a simple top with light luggage in his hands. It had been a long time since he was so at ease.

A floating device was stopped not too far away. This was the prison’s bus that was in charge of sending the prisoners to the space dock outside the atmosphere. At this moment, there was a man in military attire standing beside the bus waving at him.

Although it had been a long time since they last met, Evans immediately recognized the man in military attire.

He could not help but smile and hugged the other party.

“I am here to fetch you. How have you been all this while?”

“Work, eat, sleep—every day is the same.”

They were both extremely excited to meet each other after so long and felt as though they had endless conversation topics.

Evans sized his friend up and lamented, “Time really flies. You were only a skinny child running behind me before I went into prison. Who would have thought that you’d join the military?”

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“You have also changed greatly. Don’t just stand there. Get on.”

Both parties then took the bus to the space harbor and took a spaceship to a colonial planet not too far away.

This prison was located on a mining planet surrounded by various colonial planets. There were plenty of different prisoners housed within the prison being laborers on the mining planet.

Evans’ friend had already booked a room in a famous hotel and treated Evans to a good meal.

It had been far too long since Evans last tasted anything other than nutrition fluid. He immediately gobbled down all the food before him and stuffed himself until he could not eat anymore.

Patting his bloated tummy, Evans let out a sigh of satisfaction.

At this moment, his friend took out a box and opened it up. There was a Galactic Communicator, a translator, and other necessities in the box. There was even a portable mechanical suit in it.

“I prepared all this for you. I also opened up an account for you with 15,000 Enas inside.”

“I will accept the other items, but you can take the Enas back. I don’t need it. I did receive a salary in the prison, so I have some money.” Evans waved his arms.

“How can that do?” his friend immediately exclaimed. “You saved my life before. If not for you, how would I have my current life? You must definitely accept my repayment.”

He had always been thankful toward Evans. Evans killed an evil Super back then in order to protect him and went to prison because of it.

The supernatural abilities of a Super would enlarge the darkness in some people’s hearts. They would attempt to seek a sense of superiority from ordinary individuals and humiliate or torture these individuals with their strength.

They had once met such a Super, and their lives had been threatened. Although Evans was only an ordinary person, he had managed to find a way to get rid of that Grade E Super.

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His good friend was already a military officer and had awakened his Super Gene. However, it was a pity that Evans did not have a Super Gene and would remain an ordinary individual for all his life.

With Evans' abilities, if he has the talent to become a Super, he would definitely be more powerful than me in future.

Sigh, it is a pity that this is his destiny.

"Haha, I shall accept your sincerity, but I don't need your money. Don't think of trying to repay me with material items if we are brothers," Evans said with a smile.

"You can come over to my place if you are willing." His friend refused to give up.

"You are already married. I cannot disturb you."

"I can try to get rid of your past record if you want to enter the military."

"It's alright. I am an ordinary individual and will only be cannon fodder if I join the army." Evans knew that it would be impossible for him to become a Super but was not too bothered about it.

He did not have the bad habit of lamenting about life. The way he saw it, rather than spend time lamenting, he might as well spend the time on practical actions.

"Then, what are you planning to do in the future?" his friend said with resignation.

"Hmm, let me find a job first and talk about the rest later."

Evans then began browsing the web with his communicator to view the employment advertisements. He was startled the moment he saw the advertisements.

There were plenty of jobs available but the first criteria of all the jobs was the same.

'Job location: Flickering World!'

As long as they could work in the Flickering World and were not a wanted individual, they would be hired!

His friend looked over and shook his head.

"The Crimson Dynasty has finally announced the opening of the Flickering World, and every organization is hiring more manpower."

In his memories, the Flickering World was still in the Crimson Tide era. The universe had truly changed greatly during his imprisonment.

He then lowered his head and looked at the recruitment notice before nodding his head.

"Flickering World... let me go and take a look then."

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"It is finally going to open up."

On the Star Pupil Holy Race's home planet, Psyker stood in front of a window.

After the Planet Lighthouse incident, he had maintained a low profile to recover from his losses.

After more than ten years, the negative influence of him giving up the Evolution Cube was already gone, and he was still the noble leader in the eyes of many.

Although he was extremely close to the Flickering World, he could only watch as Black Star and the Tyrant gained an early advantage in the Flickering World because he was a member of the church. Psyker was extremely envious and anxious. He had been waiting for this day for a long time and also wanted a slice of the cake.

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The way he saw it, the Flickering World was an opportunity for the Star Pupil Holy Race. He no longer needed to be restricted in the Shattered Star Ring. His current situation would only become worse as Black Star and the Tyrant developed themselves. As such, he needed to find a new way out for the Star Pupil Holy Race.

As such, the Arcane Church had an excuse to interfere and support him. The more the benefits he could obtain in the Flickering World, the better for his race.

As he thought about the past, Han Xiao's figure appeared in his mind.

"Black Star... he has also remained silent for more than ten years. It seems like his strength has stagnated after reaching peak Beyond Grade A..."

Chapter 993 Incoming Storm 2

It was the day for Black Star's Party again, and the Black Star Army headquarters located in the Shattered Star Ring welcomed the representatives from many different organizations.

Over the past ten years, Black Star's Party had become an iconic event of the army.

Compared to the first few years, there were many more participants with many of the organizations coming from other Star Fields. They were all organizations preparing to head to the Flickering World. With the Flickering World about to open to the outside world, many organizations wanted to have a good relationship with Black Star, who had territory in the Flickering World.

The number of explored Star Clusters would be increased to nine, and the Dawn Star Cluster, which was the entrance to the Flickering World, was being managed by the dynasty. Garu, Renault, and Crown, which were explored in the first exploration phase, had been split up to the dynasty's allies, and their basic facilities had been completed. The five Star Clusters of the second and third exploration phase had plenty of room for development, and the dynasty was prepared to open more slots and get the various organizations of the universe to bear the cost of developing them.

The dynasty announced that the Black Star Army would be given two Star Systems, located in the Russo Star Cluster of the second phase and the Mark Star Cluster of the third phase. Only a small portion of the other allies had a territory assigned to them.

Unlike the first phase, the dynasty would not give out too many territories but considered arranging various National Pillars to maintain their control over the various Star Clusters.

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Within the territory of the nine explored Star Systems, the Black Star Army was the organization that had the largest territory in the Flickering World, except for the dynasty. Thus, there were many organizations fawning over the Black Star Army and hoping to gain more benefits from the Flickering World.

The party was boisterous and filled with individuals from many different races. It was almost as though it was a gallery to view all the different races.

There were many who were joining in Black Star's Party for the first time, and they gathered in small groups to chat with each other while gossiping about the various Black Star Army officers.

"That woman with a Star Cluster representative beside her is Chief Administrative Official Sylvia. She is Black Star's head butler, and I heard that she is extremely capable. The one beside her is Fleet Commander Herlous, and his student Mia is beside him. She stepped into the Calamity Grade a year ago and uprooted a traitor of a galactic civilization organization that had a Calamity Grade Super single handedly. It is said that she is the lover of Nero, the heir to the Black Star Army."

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"... Look there. That is Vice Commander Lagi, the former leader of the Hidden Red Robe Abbey. He is also the principal of the Black Star Super Academy and entered the list of Beyond Grade A seeds last year. The one beside him is Tomar, a genius Mage. It is said that Austin wanted to rope him in a few years ago but was rejected by Black Star."

"The individual reading blueprints in the corner is Reynold, who is in charge of logistics. The one beside him is the vice head of the intelligence department, Shazik. There is also the upper echelon of the Germinal Financial Group, Iapetus... Most of the important personnel of the Black Star Army are gathered here. I think that there are more than thirty Calamity Grade Supers present."

"This is only a small portion of the Calamity Grade Supers in the Black Star Army. The elite Black Star Guards such as Hadavy and Feidin are all in the Flickering World. The entire Black Star Army has about sixty to seventy Calamity Grade Supers with two Beyond Grade A seeds."

"Black Star has lived in seclusion for the past few years and almost never made any public appearance. It is only possible to see him during Black Star's Party. I wonder if there will be a chance to talk to him..."

Just as everyone was chatting, a holographic projection appeared on the stage.

The attention of the guests was immediately attracted by the screen, and they all greeted the silhouette that had appeared.

"Your Excellency Black Star."

Han Xiao nodded and smiled. "Welcome to the Black Star Army."

With his current life span, a decade was no more than a snap of his fingers, and he did not seem to have aged the slightest.

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With the main character appearing, the plaza became boisterous with plenty of people coming forward to chat with Han Xiao.

Han Xiao was already used to this and dealt with them with a smile.

According to his memory, a portion of these organizations were active in the Flickering World.

Apart from the three Universal Civilizations and Super Star Cluster Civilizations, some neutral civilizations and civilian organizations also played an important role in the Flickering World.

Because of Han Xiao's hard work, the army had gained an advantage in the Flickering World and had nine Star Systems as their foundation. They could make use of their foundation to build ties with more organizations and form a large net of benefits. This was also the reason for the party today.

Han Xiao dealt with all those who approached him while searching through his memories to match these individuals to their organization.

The banquet was a very successful one, and after sending away the guests, the officers followed Han Xiao into his office.

"Army Commander, the Flickering World is about to be opened to the outside. We need to make sufficient preparations and be prepared to fight off the various large organizations," Sylvia said.

Han Xiao nodded and replied, "Just go according to our plan."

The army had been preparing for more than ten years and had already made all the relevant preparations.

When the Flickering World opened, it would also be the start of Version 4.0 and the time for the players' return. At the same time, inter-Star Field transportation would also be activated for the players, and all the players would flood toward the Flickering World.

Compared to the other players, the players of the Black Star Army obviously had an advantage as they had come in contact with the Flickering World during Version 3.0.

Han Xiao had been waiting for this day for a long time. The Black Star Army now had the foundation to welcome the new version, and they would be the leeks for him to harvest.

Through his hard work, the Black Star Army had become the largest private organization in the Flickering World and could provide the players with even more benefits to attract them.

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Over the past ten or so years, the strength of all his officers had improved, and he had not remained idle either. He had replenished his mechanical army and perfected his Dimension Factory. At the same time, he had converted more first-generation Mechanical Lives to aid in the development of the machinery civilization.

Although he still was not capable of forging a Universal Treasure, Han Xiao would send his mechanical army out from time to time to search for opportunities to obtain some talents. He had also accumulated plenty of Random Reward chances.

The experience that he had accumulated was all spent on increasing the levels of his skills to obtain Potential Points. As such, his level did not change much, and he was still around level 300.

Apart from this, Han Xiao also searched for more Energy Training Techniques to increase the upper limit of his energy.

Because of his interface, his training efficiency far exceeded the other Beyond Grade As, and the increase in his energy level was pretty substantial.

After over ten years of accumulation, Han Xiao's foundation was no longer weak and could barely match up to his status of a peak Beyond Grade A Mechanic.

After remaining low profile for so many years, the outside world probably thinks that my strength has stagnated. I am already all prepared and only waiting for an opportunity. When Version 4.0 launches, my strength will be increased rapidly again...

Nero stood up and said, "Godfather, I have a request."

"Speak." Han Xiao looked over. Nero was already an adult, and although he still had a childish appearance and was still short like before, he had a far more stable aura.

Nero had acted as his right-hand man over the past few years and helped him greatly.

"I wish to apply for leave to accompany my father on Planet Aquamarine. I also wish to take Mia with me," Nero said.

"Hmm, you should go back."

Bennett was getting older and older. As the leader of Planet Aquamarine, he was extremely busy, and Nero would apply for leave to visit him from time to time. Han Xiao naturally did not stop him from doing so.

After checking on the work of all the officers, Han Xiao's communicator suddenly rang.

Upon glancing at the caller, Han Xiao waved his arms and got his subordinates to leave the office before picking up the call. Tarrokov's silhouette then appeared on the screen.

"Black Star, the Flickering World is about to be opened, and you should know what you need to prepare. I am calling you for something else."

"Speak."

"You should have paid attention to the newly ascended Beyond Grade As over the past few years, right? One of them chose to join the dynasty, and they will head to Planet Crimson Ring to meet Her Excellency Ruler. The dynasty is going to gather the Beyond Grade A allies to meet him. Are you planning to meet him?"

Every Beyond Grade A that joined the alliance had the same treatment, and it had been the same for Han Xiao.

Over the past ten years, a few new Beyond Grade A Supers had risen in the various Star Fields.

He was no longer considered a newbie.

After taking a look at the information that the dynasty had sent to him, Han Xiao was immediately tempted. This individual had joined the dynasty during this period in his previous life and made the same decision.

“Alright, I shall go and meet him,” Han Xiao agreed, and his thoughts began to drift.

Version 4.0 is about to open up. I wonder how Hila is doing.

...

At the same time, in the desolate universe belt, Ames floated outside the atmosphere of a planet and looked down at the boundless sea of red on the planet.

The red energy swept over the entire surface of the planet like a flood, and anything that came into contact with it disintegrated into dust.

The sturdy earth seemed to have turned soft, and the sea of red was still rapidly expanding.

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All of a sudden, the red energy shot toward the sky with a red figure emerging from within it.

Her face was filled with the coldness of death.

Upon seeing that, Ames smiled.

“Welcome to the Beyond Grade A realm.”

Chapter 994 The “Whore” of the Beyond Grade As

The red energy that saturated the entire sky was quickly absorbed back into Hila’s body, and the red light within her eyes dimmed. However, her aura seemed as though she was a totally new person.

After twenty years of grueling training in the universe, Hila had finally taken this step. In her previous life, she had arrived at the Beyond Grade A realm earlier than this, so she had always had the potential.

After transforming into a Beyond Grade A species, Hila’s appearance became more refined, her skin was cleansed and flawless, and her genes were greatly optimized.

Though her growth rate could not be compared to Black Star, Ames was equally amazed by Hila’s talent. Compared to those who needed centuries to reach this stage, Hila’s special S Grade Esper Ability had greatly shortened her journey.

“How do you feel?”

Ames sized Hila up, her eyes glowing with appreciation, as though she was viewing a work of art.

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“Miraculous.” Hila was sensing the changes and thoughtfully spoke. “So, this is the world in the eyes of the Beyond Grade A. Everything feels different.”

“Hehe, slowly experience and get used to it. We have plenty of time.” Ames slightly smiled.

Hila breathed out, a spark of excitement flashing across her eyes.

The me now should be able to barely catch up to Black Star.

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I can... return.

Ames then controlled her force field, taking out the communicator and sending it to Hila’s side as she smiled. “Do you want to share this good news with him?”

Hila received the communicator, but after hesitating a few seconds, she shook her head.

“No, I’ll surprise him by personally returning.”

...

On Planet Crimson Ring, a saucer shaped spaceship pierced through the Psionic Seal Ring, slowly approaching Planet Crimson Ring. On the star bridge stood a huge figure in front of the porthole, silently staring at the growing Planet Crimson Ring.

This person possessed a bright silver body, and his skin was like flowing liquid metal. One could only see a pair of metallic eyes on his face, and any other places are as smooth as a mirror, reflecting the galaxy outside the window. He was not wearing clothes and possessed no s*xual characteristics.

He was a newly born Beyond Grade A, having ascended just five years prior. He was considered a Beyond Grade A seed from the Sea of Star Spirits, and a hundred years ago, he had locked himself into the core of a dying star to cultivate in a perilous method that only gave a slim chance of survival. A hundred years later, like a cocoon, he broke out, transforming into a new life form born from the core of the star.

He abandoned his original name, naming himself ‘Silver Shadow’, and formed his own Beyond Grade A organization within the Sea of Star Spirits. Over the past few years, he had made a name for himself and developed rapidly, forming a base of operations within the Sea Of Star Spirits.

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Silver Shadow had accepted the dynasty’s invitation, so he had traveled over to meet the Dynasty Ruler as well as the Beyond Grade As of the dynasty.

At this moment, one of his officers came up behind him and whispered, “Your Excellency Silver Shadow, we’re about to descend.”

“Hmm.” Silver Shadow’s voice was cold and brought with it the timbre much like a metal vibration. It was akin to an electronic sound without emotion.

The officer hesitated a while before asking, “Your Excellency, if I may ask, why are we choosing to join the dynasty?”

“Are you questioning my decision?” Silver Shadow did not even turn around.

"I do not." The officer immediately refuted that. He had not joined Silver Shadow for long, so he did not dare offend him at this time. He spoke in a hesitant tone. "I just feel that the offers from the Arcane Church and the Federation of Light were much better."

Silver Shadow did not deny that. "With the development of the Flickering World, the attraction the dynasty has now prevails over the rest, so the Federation and the Church have to pay higher prices. It's not because they value me. Furthermore, the power distribution in the Sea of Star Spirits has reached saturation, and only the Flickering World can provide me with more room to develop. Thus, choosing the dynasty is the better option for me... However, this is not the main reason I chose to join them."

"Then why?"

"The Evolution Cube... as well as Black Star." Silver Shadow paused. "If not for the fact that Black Star, who has possession of the Evolution Cube, is with the dynasty, I would not have agreed to their invitation."

"That's right. The dynasty said that they were going to gather a few Beyond Grade As to meet you. Will Black Star come as well? If he's there, you can make your request."

"Heh, from what I know, those old Beyond Grade A fogeys seldom appear at such affairs. The most one will see is Urranrell's bodyguard, Dark Lord Clotti. As for whether Black Star will come or not, I do not know," Silver Shadow muttered. "But I would like him to come so that I can spar against him."

"You wish to spar with Black Star?" The officer got a shock. "He rose to the peak of the Beyond Grade A realm more than a decade ago and is even recorded as one of the strongest Mechanical Deities. While he has been silent these few years, still..."

"I know what you mean. There's no need to say any more. The Beyond Grade A circle within the three Universal Civilizations have always ostracized newcomers. If you want the right to speak, you have to prove it through your strength. Since I must fight, I might as well pick a stronger one."

The Silver Shadow turned around, coldly remarking, "Dark Lord, Dragon King, and Illusory Deity. These three veterans have the highest status of the Beyond Grade As within the dynasty, and directly behind them would be Black Star, who only took a few decades to reach the Beyond Grade A realm. He is almost guaranteed to succeed the trio and will be the main pillar of the dynasty in the future, holding the most authority. In just twenty years, to grow to such a state, I'm extremely interested in him, and if he wants me to listen to him, I must experience just how good he is."

Very quickly, the spaceship landed on the political core of Planet Crimson Ring, Tarunamir Palace. Silver Shadow brought his officers to exit the spaceship and followed the attendants to walk into the palace.

Boom!

At this instant, a strong overbearing Beyond Grade A pressure burst out, viciously pressuring him. This was obviously an opening gambit by the seniors.

Silver Shadow did not show any weakness, and the aura unique to a Beyond Grade A burst out from him and pushed back hard.

Bang bang bang!

Rings of invisible shockwaves seemed to burst apart in midair.

As though sensing his attitude, the Beyond Grade A pressure receded quickly like the tide.

“We’ll meet with the Ruler first.” Silver Shadow coldly gazed toward the direction of the aura before following the attendants to another location.

At the same time, inside a room far away, a few of the Beyond Grade A allies of the dynasty were seated.

“The newcomers now are really arrogant. None of them are willing to bow their heads.” Beyoni sighed.

“That’s right. Thinking back, when I first fought Black... cough cough.” Viru embarrassedly coughed twice, sneaking a look at Han Xiao who was sitting at the head using his Lord’s Descent.

Han Xiao smirked and made a sarcastic remark. “That time, you couldn’t even beat a newbie like me.”

“That was different. You’re a special case that broke all records in history, and you’re even at the peak of Beyond Grade A now. Losing to you at that time... shouldn’t be too embarrassing, right?” Viru laughed hollowly.

“No, it was embarrassing.” Lotus Swordsman harshly shot him down.

Everyone could not help but burst into laughter.

Over the past few years, Han Xiao had already established a deep level of friendship with most of the Beyond Grade A allies in the dynasty. Due to his strength and legendary points, he had a greater say in this circle, only behind Dark Lord, Dragon King, and Illusory Deity. He had long shed his identity as a newcomer.

Among the dynasty alliance, only the stubborn little Ty-Ty refused to admit his influence; the rest all were in awe of him.

That day, there were nine Beyond Grade A present. Neither Milizaus nor Kant were there, but it was still more than when Han Xiao had arrived for the first time.

The last person to experience such a battle was Han Xiao himself. Seeing Silver Shadow was just like seeing the him of yesteryear, coming in with as much pomp and fanfare.

He was not interested in bullying the newcomers together with this group of Beyond Grade As, so he did not pressure Silver Shadow with his momentum like the rest. He chose to come because he wanted to see Silver Shadow.

If he remembered correctly, this Silver Shadow was a special existence among the Beyond Grade As. He had molded himself into something equivalent to a Universal Treasure during this life evolution, but right now, this ability should have awoken yet.

In the later version during his past life, Silver Shadow had an infamous nickname among the players—the ‘Whore’ of the Beyond Grade As!

According to incomplete statistics, during the World Tree Civilization battles, over twenty Beyond Grade As had ‘used’ Silver Shadow before.

Among them, the one who utilized his abilities the most was the late bloomer Karlot, which earned him the nickname of 'Whore Monopolizer' Karlot.

While Han Xiao wished to turn this 'public good' into a 'private good', this sort of thinking was a bit unrealistic, so he settled for making contact with the other party first.

At this time, Ravenlaude was surveying the audience. "We will most likely have to do a spar later. Who's going up?"

"I have no interest." Lotus Swordsman firmly refused.

"Don't look at me." Beyoni waved his hands. "You should know that I'm not good at solo battles."

"I..." Viru hesitated a little. After the thrashing Han Xiao had given him, he was no longer that passionate about such matters and ended up shaking his head. "I won't go up either."

"Black Star, are you interested?" Maximiler looked over.

"I never fight unnecessary fights." Han Xiao waved his hands in refusal. He did not have any intention of bullying a newcomer who should be worth befriending.

Moreover, they were on Planet Crimson Ring, the capital of the dynasty. He had not stationed much machinery there, and any machines that broke would need to be fixed.

By the side, Kohler, who was treated like transparent glass, finally opened his mouth in resignation. "Since none of you are interested, let me do it."

Everyone cast their sight over, with suspicion on their faces.

Without any exaggeration, Kohler was the one recognized as the most noob, even taking Beyoni into account.

"I'm still a Pugilist class that specializes in individual battles. What sort of expressions are you guys showing?" Kohler was embarrassed and angry.

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"We're afraid of you embarrassing us," Lotus Swordsman said straightforwardly.

Taking advantage of the people teasing Kohler, Han Xiao scooted over to Beyoni's side, whispering, "How've you been doing recently?"

"How else can I be doing?" Beyoni replied in a not-so-polite manner. "Thanks to you, the Modo Civilization is constantly trying to suppress my race. The other day, those idiots even fired a long-range galactic missile toward my Land of the Fire Core, ploughing the entire landscape for me. Are you paying for the damages?"

"Nope, speak to the dynasty for compensation. It was them who allowed me to do so." Han Xiao dryly coughed.

Over the past few years, Lothaire had been making waves within the Modo Civilization, assassinating target after target. He had already thoroughly offended the entire civilization many times over.

Modo naturally vented his anger on Beyoni, who was an ally of the dynasty. In those few years, he had been beaten black and blue, an innocent bystander dragged into the affair.

While Lothaire was cautious in handling matters, it was not as if he experienced no danger. Treading the thin line between life and death had allowed him to grow rapidly. While there was some measure of luck involved, it was not as exaggerated as Feidin and Nero, and more of relying on his own skills to escape the situation.

His Assassin's Society was developing quite well, having already nurtured a group of interstellar killers. On paper, it was a bounty hunter organization within the black market, but in secret, they were Han Xiao's Shadows.

After chatting for a while, Silver Shadow's aura suddenly drew closer. Everyone instinctively knew that his talk with the Ruler had already ended and put on a serious expression.

Swoosh.

The doors opened, and two people walked in. One of them was Clotti with a passive expression. He walked up until he reached Han Xiao's side, taking a seat at the head.

The other was naturally Silver Shadow. He stood in the middle of the room, surveying the area and the Beyond Grade As present. Finally, his gaze stopped on Han Xiao's avatar.

"You're Silver Shadow from the Sea of Star Spirits?" Viru was the first to open his mouth, pretentiously sneering. "You don't seem to respect us much."

"Why should I respect you?" Silver Shadow indifferently replied.

By the side, Kohler coldly laughed. "How arrogant. A pity, this place is the Crimson Dynasty. The dynasty does not allow such prideful characters to exist."

Hearing this, Han Xiao immediately cast a glance at him.

Why does that sentence sound so familiar?

Silver Shadow turned to Kohler, and after being silent for a while, he finally said, "There's someone like you in the dynasty? I've never heard of you."

Kohler's gaze turned frosty. He was originally only pretending, but having been insulted, the person in question could not suppress his rage.

"Within the Beyond Grade A circle, status and authority are earned by strength. I believe you understand this rule as well." Kohler pushed his hands against his kneecaps, leaning forward. "You've come to the Ruler's side as an ally of the dynasty, but you haven't earned respect among us. Do you dare you spar against me?"

"You? Forget it, you're not my opponent."

Silver Shadow's tone was calm, as though he had just spoken a fact.

Without waiting for Kohler to continue, he turned to look at Han Xiao, leisurely saying, "If I must spar, I will of course choose someone stronger. Black Star, do you have the guts to fight me?"

Han Xiao was stunned in place.

Why did it suddenly become my problem?

I only came here to support you.

The eyes of everyone present lit up, and a look of interest crossed their expressions.

There were people, who after stepping into the Beyond Grade A realm, felt that their strength had no limits and would like to leapfrog to directly challenge those at the peak. This sort of mentality often appeared in the Beyond Grade As, so people did not find Silver Shadow to be weird.

It was just like how a newborn calf might dare to challenge a tiger. The spirit of daring to challenge someone stronger was also a good mentality.

Han Xiao was about to decline, but he discovered a notification on his interface and immediately swallowed his words.

Glancing at the notification, he almost let out a cry.

Silver Shadow had initiated the battle, which directly triggered the mission for battling against the Beyond Grade A. Just as had happened against Heber and Manison, not only was the experience reward good, he even had the chance to draw a skill from the other party.

After so many years of research, Han Xiao was now more aware of the trigger mechanism for such missions. If the other party took the initiative to request a battle, then the rate of the mission appearing was insanely high. Right now, while there were only a few people within this room, they could all be considered big shots within the universe, so there was sufficient influence to activate the mission.

This newcomer is too generous, to actually give me a skill the moment he showed up... Han Xiao could not help shaking his head.

“Alright, no need to be aggressive. I can agree to that.”

Silver Shadow nodded before suddenly saying, “Just sparring itself is pointless. Shall we have a bet as well?”

Han Xiao was curious. “What do you want to bet?”

“I wish to borrow the Evolution Cube. If I gain the advantage or even win in this battle, please accede to my request. If I lose, I can fulfil any request you have of me, so long as it does not cross the line.”

“Done. It’s a small matter.” Han Xiao nodded. He did not lose out in any way.

At this moment, the cold-faced Clotti opened his mouth. “Go fight outside the Psionic Seal Ring. Don’t fight near the mother planet.”

Hearing this, Han Xiao suddenly felt a strange feeling in his heart.

You seem to have also said this the previous time, and it was even the exact same wording. You just came here to be a referee, right?

...

Urranrell stood by the window at the office within Tarunamir Palace. She raised her head to see a group of Beyond Grade As rising like spaceships, disappearing beyond the horizon.

“Ruler, have Black Star and the rest left?”

There were several other upper echelons within that room, consisting mostly of advocates of the Evolution Cube being handed over. Among them was the hawk faction Bekorodi, as well as Ludwell, who previously owed Han Xiao a favor.

Urranrell turned around, indifferently commenting, “Hmm. It seems that Clotti said they went beyond the Psionic Seal Ring to battle.”

“That...” Bekorodi mused for a while before saying, “Your Excellency Ruler, what do you think of our plan then?”

Urranrell’s brow creased. “Gaud’s ability is indeed the first of its kind, but we can’t even do anything with our techniques. Are you sure of the success?”

“Right now, no.” Bekorodi shook his head. “He only told me that, as long as he reaches the Beyond Grade A level, his Esper ability will allow him to analyze the principle behind the Evolutionary energy. You also know how miraculous the powers of Espers are.”

“Beyond Grade A...” Urranrell shook her head. “He thinks that he will reach that realm for sure? Even so, how long does he even need?”

“Not sure. We can only wait.”

Hearing this, Urranrell could not help but fall into silence.

Seeing this Bekorodi could not help but push some more. “Your Excellency, this is a good chance. Black Star has already proved that it is nigh impossible for the dynasty to obtain the Evolution Cube from him. We cannot use any domineering methods against him, but if we can dissect and analyze the energy ourselves and replicate it, Black Star will have no excuses. This is not offending him, and he has no grounds to forbid us studying the Evolution Cube, so even if he’s dissatisfied, he can’t do anything!”

“I know.” Urranrell’s brows were still furrowed. “But Gaud’s request is for him to come into contact with the actual body of the Evolution Cube. If his goal is discovered by Black Star, this may anger him.”

“This is a small risk, but we’re not trying to snatch the cube, so it isn’t so serious. Furthermore, Gaud has always been someone our dynasty supports, so it is natural that we provide him the quota for the Evolution Cube.”

Urranrell was still hesitant. The Evolution Cube was Black Star’s, and the dynasty could not snatch it, but it would be a different matter if they managed to create one themselves.

From a personal viewpoint, Urranrell did not have any problems with Black Star and was even pleased with his performance.

However, as the Ruler, she had to consider the issue from the standpoint of the dynasty. The benefits of the Evolutionary Totems were too great, and they had to be recharged every decade or so. Allowing an ‘outsider’ to monopolize it was not something the dynasty was comfortable with.

“This is not necessarily to snatch away the interests of Black Star but to prevent the outcome of Black Star losing the Evolution Cube some day. It’s better for the dynasty to study the mystery of the Evolution Cube in advance as a backup.” Bekorodi struck while the iron was hot.

“He makes sense,” Ludwell added.

Speaking of whom, Ludwell had owed Han Xiao a favor, but in previous years, he had taken the initiative to invest within the Shattered Star Ring, suppressing the Limitless Financial Group, which was in a way repaying his favor.

Today, he did not go against Bekorodi but rather supported this plan. It was not because he had issues with Han Xiao, but rather, from a professional viewpoint... the success rate of this proposal seemed quite high.

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Urranrell thought for a while longer before sighing and replying, “Bekorodi, Black Star will come over later. You can use your name to invite him to discuss the matter of exchanging the Evolution Cube with something else one last time.

“If he still rejects, then put that plan into motion. Remember, the fewer people who know about this, the better. This is especially so for Black Star. If he finds out, he will definitely think of ways to prevent it.”

Hearing this, Bekorodi and the others in the room had expressions of joy and immediately nodded in response.

“Understood.”

Chapter 995 Exchange Three for One?

It did not take long for the whole group of Beyond Grade As to arrive outside the Psionic Seal Ring, and the group chose an uninhabited area for the battlefield.

Han Xiao and Silver Shadow separately from the group, facing each other. The other Beyond Grade As stayed outside the battlefield and chatted animatedly, with Lotus Swordsman even building a mental network for them to communicate.

“To actually choose Black Star as his opponent, I’m not sure how long this Silver Shadow can last.” Viru shook his head.

“Even if he beat Kohler, his authority would be second last,” Lotus Swordsman indifferently replied.

“Instead, he might as well choose Black Star. As long as he can pose problems for Black Star, the effect will definitely be better than fighting Kohler.”

Kohler frowned. While this is the truth, can you be less hurtful in your comments my friends!

Ravenlaude pondered, “Silver Shadow seems to have quite a lot of confidence. Maybe he has some special talent.”

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“I heard he’s a pugilist, but he looks more like an Esper.”

“I’ve checked through his history, and his speed is the astonishing factor. I heard that he even has some special flying skills, allowing him to continuously accelerate to warp speed. It seems like he has a void bloodline.” Maximiler pointed to Silver Shadow in the distance. “Furthermore, look at his body surface using microscopic vision. The seemingly smooth silver surface is actually covered with extremely small mana circuits, which most likely come from the Beyond Grade A mages of the Sea of Star Spirits.”

Hearing this, the Beyond Grade As all adjusted their vision and entered their microscopic view, and they discovered that there was indeed a dense energy circuit covering Silver Shadow, much like a semi-invisible tattoo.

“There are several Beyond Grade A mages residing within the Sea of Star Spirits, but such an insane way of inscribing magic circuits should belong to the [Secret Master] of the Elderly Association. While the Secret Master is one of the controllers of behind the scenes of the galactic black market, he belongs to the neutral faction. Still, his fees are not cheap, so it seems like Silver Shadow must’ve bled quite badly.”

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Ravenlaude got unhappy. “What Elderly Association? It’s called the Ancient Ones!”

Lotus Swordsman was focused on another point, and she squinted. “He has too many enchantments on his body. To be able to withstand such a load, his fleshly body should be quite strong.”

“Oh, this is indeed the case,” Beyoni said in resignation. “However, no matter how strong his fleshly body is, can it be stronger than Black Star’s?”

“Good point.”

With Han Xiao as a shining example, no one was surprised anymore when they saw any meat shields.

“Speaking of which, ever since his battle with the Mechanic Emperor, Black Star has not fought anyone in the past twenty years. After reaching this stage, he most likely won’t be able to maintain that startling growth speed.” Viru shook his head.

Even Clotti who was usually silent could not help but say, “Upon reaching the limits known to man, climbing further will require one to break through the limits into a whole new path. Throughout history, there were many who tried and failed. It’s more difficult than it seems.”

As they chatted, Han Xiao and Silver Shadow also began their battle.

The mechanical host carrying avatar floated in the universe with a small mechanical army. Its dark armor flickered constantly with blue and gold Mechanical Force.

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He, the mechanic, stood still while the Pugilist Silver Shadow was the one who took the initiative to put some distance between them.

This sort of situation was rarely seen, but everyone shared a glance, their eyes twinkling with laughter. In the entire universe, it was probably only the Mechanic Black Star that no pugilist dared to face head on.

From afar, Silver Shadow circled around Han Xiao, looking for openings and opportunities to attack.

Looking at him making circles around him, with no intention to attack, Han Xiao could not help but open his mouth.

“How long are you going to circle me? Come and attack!”

Silver Shadow did not reply, only continuing to circle around. He gradually accelerated, flying faster as his body began to blur. He was akin to a silver comet, leaving behind a series of silvery afterimages like a flaming tail of a meteor.

Through his Void Vision, Han Xiao could clearly see that the speed of Silver Shadow was not only fast—the space around him had distorted slightly, constantly warping at the rear to form the shape like a tidal wave, which allowed him to ride the waves to provide additional acceleration.

At the same time, there was a familiar Void Energy fluctuation coming out of Silver Shadow, which proved that the other party also possessed some Void Genes.

Han Xiao was quite clear of the general abilities of Silver Shadow. At the Beyond Grade A realm, Silver Shadow had a few obvious characteristics. One of them was speed, or his ability to maintain near warp speed for prolonged distances. At his peak, he could even reach actual warp speed.

The second was that his body was extremely tough and nearly indestructible.

The third was a rare racial talent.

And his fourth was the ‘whore’ effect.

Silver Shadow did not have a high HP count, but his defense was extremely exaggerated, to the point that even Heber could not compare with him. This was related to his attributes as a living Universal Treasure.

Due to his various special abilities, Silver Shadow’s actual combat capability was pushed up to the level of Heber or Viru despite him being a new Beyond Grade A, above the likes of Kohler and Beyoni. He was probably only weaker than Maximiler, Ravenlaude, and Lotus Swordsman, who belonged to the middle ranks, as he had a great shortcoming in his spiritual attributes.

As one of the dynasty’s allies with the strongest combat capabilities, Han Xiao carried himself calmly and did not mind allowing Silver Shadow to display all his means. After all, the other party was someone who had a special role. It was worth it to allow the other party to play his own style and obtain more authority to speak within their circle.

It was not that Han Xiao was arrogant, but he knew his baseline. He had already calculated the entire battle scenario time and again in his heart, and the conclusion was set.

Just with his current strength, he had enough ability to control the entire battle situation. He did not need any fancy moves to deal with Silver Shadow, he just needed to F2A[1], and everything would be settled.

With such an overwhelming advantage, how could he lose?

No matter how flowery the opponent's skills were, a raise of his hand would be enough to annihilate them.

Thus, Han Xiao patiently waited for Silver Shadow to speed up, only occasionally letting his machines shoot from a distance.

Finally, Silver Shadow felt that he was sufficiently warmed up and suddenly turned around, shooting like a beam of light straight toward Han Xiao's mechanical troops.

With permission from Han Xiao, the battle AI Sparta immediately responded, opening the spacetime stabilizer to lock down the area.

With the increase in spatial stability, Silver Shadow's speed was affected as part of his speed came from the distortion and warping of space. Even so, his speed remained quick, to the point that Calamity Grades would not be able to discern where his true body lay, only seeing a silver streak.

Relying on his high speed, Silver Shadow started to clash against the machinery. The psionic cannons' shots mostly went wide, and the few that contacted were stopped at the psionic energy matrix shield that was formed from his silver pugilist flames, unable to penetrate.

After fighting for a while, Silver Shadow turned and rushed toward the psionic shield of the mechanical troops like a silver comet.

Before impacting, the silver comet suddenly changed, splitting up like a cluster warhead and turning into hundreds of tiny silver meteors. They scattered in all directions in an instant, bypassing the limited area of the shield and penetrating the mechanical troops' formation.

Each sub-body was a silvery liquid-like metallic substance, which were reduced versions of Silver Shadow and all part of his body.

This was his racial talent, which was brought about by the mutation within the star nucleus. His body could achieve the effect of splitting itself on a nano level, as well as freely take on all shapes and sizes.

Furthermore, the split selves also possessed a considerable fighting capacity. Because his total overall strength remained unchanged, the combat capability of each smaller self would depend instead on its size. Silver Shadow's Void genes allowed him to use the void dimension to obtain energy to boost each smaller self.

Silver Shadow's Universal Treasure talent brought him insane defense, which would not be differentiated by size. So, even if each smaller self did not possess the same strength as its main self, it was nigh indestructible, which was his advantage.

Because of this special skill, within the suffering Pugilist class, Silver Shadow was akin to a billionaire in a society, not needing to bow to anyone to survive.

A few of the split selves rushed through the mechanical soldiers at great speed, but due to the separation in strength, the attacks were fast but could not pierce through the armor of the mechanical soldiers, only leaving traces on the surface.

The majority of his selves merged together again, turning into a childlike version of Silver Shadow, and went straight to Han Xiao.

Han Xiao's avatar did not move, only releasing a faint blue arc from his eyes. [Virtual Paramount] struck directly into Silver Shadow's soul!

The next moment, Silver Shadow lost control of his body, barreling out of control!

Even his smaller selves lost control and were easily captured.

Han Xiao twisted slightly, avoiding Silver Shadow, and reached out to grab his ankle, pulling him back.

Silver Shadow's weakness was spiritual attacks, but [Virtual Paramount] did not just contain a mental attack but also the difficulty of Virtual Technology. It would take Silver Shadow a long time to escape from the skill normally, not to mention that Han Xiao's virtual technology and level suppression would only increase the difficulty.

Nano-mechanical tentacles extended from behind the avatar, firmly binding Silver Shadow with three layers. At the same time, the tentacles were outfitted with electromagnetic, space and other control devices. Disc-shaped miniature cannons popped out from Han Xiao's shoulders, suspending over Silver Shadow.

From afar, the mechanical army also caught up, turning their weapons toward the restricted Silver Shadow, and released the reverse psionic shield, locking Han Xiao and Silver Shadow within the small confined area. In this manner, even if Silver Shadow wished to rush out, he had to break through the shield in order to gain distance to accelerate.

Silver Shadow finally got out of the shackles from Virtual Paramount and received great mental injuries in doing so, being inflicted with many negative statuses. The moment he regained consciousness, he discovered that he had been fully bound up.

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"Do you want to continue?" Han Xiao communicated within the mental network with a jovial tone.

"... This sort of battle can't hurt me." Silver Shadow struggled for a while before realizing that it would be hard to extricate himself. He then decided to pull out his head, separating himself from his body and turning into a miniature version of himself.

"I know, your body is extremely durable, and my troops can barely harm you." Han Xiao nodded and smiled. "However, just this point is not enough to gain the advantage against me... Believe me, I have sufficient experience in this regard."

In fact, he was the natural counter to Silver Shadow. If he had utilized the Spacetime Amber, with Silver Shadow's smaller frame, it would have been easy to encase and seal him within before slowly weakening him. However, this was only his avatar, so the Spacetime Amber was not with him.

Silver Shadow sighed before hiding his arrogance and nodding. "You've won."

He originally wanted to rely on his high speed and the ability to split up his body to gain the upper hand for a while. He had no confidence in being able to defeat Black Star, even if this was just an avatar.

But the offensive that he had been preparing for a long time was dissolved by Han Xiao easily, and he ended up falling straight into the grasps of his opponent. This allowed him to feel the disparity between their abilities.

With more than half of his body currently trapped by Han Xiao, it was pointless to continue fighting. Furthermore, Black Star had given him face and allowed himself to display his strength. Silver Shadow understood that clearly and did not wish to fight for a lost cause. While he wanted a strong opponent, he would not seek ridicule needlessly.

Hearing this, Han Xiao released the restraints, and Silver Shadow regained his original body. Han Xiao laughed. "Now you owe me one."

"What will you have me do?" Silver Shadow asked.

"Er, just remember it for now. I'll look for you when I need your help." Han Xiao thought about it before deciding to shelve the matter.

He actually wished to research Silver Shadow's body, to activate the Universal Treasure hidden attribute, but they did not have that good of a relationship. To suddenly suggest such an absurd thing... this was a dangerous topic for all Beyond Grade As.

So, it was better to cozy up to him first. This was not a one-off matter, so a better relationship would allow him more usages of Silver Shadow if need be.

In the past, Karlot was a good friend of Silver Shadow's, so he was about to enjoy such personalized service free of charge.

Speaking of which, Karlot should have entered the dynasty army right now. While he was still far away from the time he was supposed to take shape, it was unknown if history would change due to Han Xiao's interference.

"Ok, I'll remember it." Silver Shadow nodded.

"If you have time, you can come over to the Shattered Star Ring or Flickering World to look for me. If you have any problems, I can help too." Han Xiao laughed in return.

Silver Shadow nodded quietly, accepting Black Star's friendliness. Black Star sounded like an older brother right now and was just lacking the words 'I'll protect you'.

He felt a little emotional in his heart.

All the other Beyond Grade As were trying to make things difficult for him, but only Black Star was different. This was the attitude that the future pillar of the dynasty should have!

Seeing that the battle had ended, the rest of the Beyond Grade As flew toward them.

The result of the battle was not out of anyone's expectations, but the calmness with which Black Star had handled this battle left everyone sighing in awe. In just twenty years, Black Star's bearing no longer gave one the feeling of a maverick who did not stick to conventional means but rather a straightforward suppression, easily pulling it off.

While they did not cross swords, everyone could judge what would happen to them if they were faced with Silver Shadow's skills. Their conclusion was that while Silver Shadow might be a newcomer, his combat capabilities were good. Even Kohler or Beyoni might not be able to win.

This was especially so for Kohler. He was secretly thankful that Silver Shadow did not accept his invitation to spar, or else it would have been really embarrassing.

However, Black Star could deal with Silver Shadow so easily. It represented the gap between their realms.

Other than Clotti, the respect that the other Beyond Grade As had for Han Xiao deepened.

Upon returning to the spaceship, the group set up to return to Planet Crimson Ring. While Han Xiao chatted with Silver Shadow, he summoned the interface and saw that the mission of fighting against Silver Shadow had already been marked as 'completed'.

However, he did not settle it immediately, instead choosing to wait until he returned. He had to molest Feidin before he drew his reward—this ritual could not be skipped.

...

Once they returned to Planet Crimson Ring, they exchanged communicator numbers before Silver Shadow bid his farewell, returning to his quarters to rest.

Han Xiao was about to release his Lord's Descent, when a member of the dynasty's army approached him.

"Your Excellency Black Star, Mister Bekorodi requests an audience with you."

"Bekorodi?" Han Xiao knew that this guy was the most important leader of the hawk faction, totally not in line with him. They did not have many dealings, so he curiously asked, "What is he looking for me for?"

"He wishes to discuss with you the problem of the Evolution Cube."

Han Xiao was surprised. Over the past few years, the federation and church did not stop their pressure, which caused many of the dynasty's upper echelons to question the ownership problem of the Evolution Cube. Bekorodi was one of the hardcore supporters of the dynasty owning the cube. That much, Han Xiao knew.

Then, what does he wish to talk to me about?

Han Xiao was a little curious and nodded. "Alright, please lead the way."

"Please follow me."

The dynasty officer guided Han Xiao to a government building, passing through layers of restrictions, before they arrived at a secret conference room.

Han Xiao went in and saw an old yet majestic dynasty official seated at the head. His skin was stretched, the wrinkles deeply carved, and his nose a little big. With his dead-set eyes and mouth, he looked like a stubborn man.

“Nice to meet you, Black Star. I’m Bekorodi. This should not be our first time meeting.” Bekorodi squeezed out a small smile.

Han Xiao sat on the other side of the conference table as he replied, “It’s the first time we’ve met in private though.”

He had only seen this person during the meeting of the senior officials of the dynasty, but they had not communicated much.

“I’m not a person who likes to talk nonsense, so I’ll get straight to the point.” Bekorodi supported his hands on the table and spoke in a deep voice. “The dynasty hopes to exchange items for your Evolution Cube. The conditions can be freely raised by you.”

Wanting to exchange for my Evolution Cube? Han Xiao’s eyes moved.

In fact, such signs had appeared a long time ago, but this was the first time the dynasty had approached him directly.

“This should not be your personal intention, right?” Han Xiao gave a smile that was yet not a smile.

“That’s right. I hope you understand. This is no personal grudge, and the reason we did not do so in the past was because the Evolution Cube was not worth much. However, the Evolutionary Civilization blueprints that were in the EsGod’s hands use the cube as the core of their technology, so its importance has changed. The dynasty hopes to obtain such a strategic Universal Treasure, but we had not asked you up till now because of the Ruler’s support for you.”

Han Xiao nodded. This was understandable. As a civilization, there were a lot of points to consider, and they would only be reassured if they could hold the strategic level object in their own embrace.

Not to mention the Crimson Dynasty, be it the federation or the church, as long as the Evolutionary Totem as well as a bunch of related techniques appeared in their hands, they would also make the same choice.

If he was a Beyond Grade A of the civilization, the rest would probably have forced him to give it up directly, rather than talking conditions.

Since he was an external ally, the dynasty could not force him to hand over his items, or it would result in a negative impression.

For the advanced civilizations, a Beyond Grade A was merely used as a tool for war, and the civilization itself was the main character of the universe instead.

However, to a Beyond Grade A, there were few who were actually willing to help a civilization to the end. They were merely exchanging services and benefits.

“Letting me make conditions at will, this is really generous...” Han Xiao smiled. “There should be an upper limit though. How about you make an initial offer?”

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“Good.” Bekorodi nodded. “The dynasty is willing to use a Universal Treasure to exchange for your Evolution Cube.”

Han Xiao shook his head. “You’ve already said so yourself. The Evolution Cube’s meaning has changed. Wouldn’t a one to one exchange be detrimental to me?”

“You’re mistaken. It’s not a one to one.” Bekorodi smiled before dropping the bombshell. “Three Universal Treasures in exchange for the Evolution Cube! This is a sincere offer from the dynasty. What do you think about it?”

[1] F2A should be describing a macro bot in Starcraft that was so powerful that all it needed to do was to press F2 (select all armies) and then A (attack) to win any battle.

Chapter 996 Tricky Question

“Three for one?” Han Xiao jumped in surprise.

It seemed like the dynasty was prepared to bleed. Just by the amount, they indeed were expressing their sincerity.

A Universal Civilization would naturally have the technology to craft Universal Treasures, and with their many years of accumulation, they should have a lot in stock.

Bekorodi tapped on the table, and a screen popped out in front of Han Xiao.

“This is the exchange list provided by the dynasty. You may choose any three of them listed.”

Han Xiao glanced at it and immediately knew that the Universal Treasures on the list were not the complete inventory of the dynasty.

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Thinking about it, he then opened his mouth to ask, “What if I want other Universal Treasures from the dynasty?”

“If you wish to exchange for those outside the list, then there will not be the privilege of three exchanging for one. Furthermore, there are important assets of the dynasty that cannot be taken out for the exchange. I hope you understand this point. Other than that, if you wish to customize a Universal Treasure, you may suggest it to the dynasty. However, it needs to undergo a review,” Bekorodi said.

That’s within my expectations... Han Xiao nodded.

Just think about it, the three for one could not be without conditions, and they would definitely not use their own strategic-level Universal Treasures to acquire his Evolution Cube.

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Whatever they were willing to exchange was those they opened to everyone, which was also the Universal Treasures not too important to the civilization.

The importance of Universal Treasures was dependent on their specific role. From Han Xiao's perspective, they were akin to magical items, with the top being held by strange, unsolvable mysteries such as the Spacetime Amber. There were also many kinds of man-made Universal Treasures, such as Austin's Palace of Hidden Spells, Beyoni's Land of the Fire Core, or the Arcane Church's Ten Thousand Deity Scepter.

The Evolution Cube was the core of the technology from the Evolutionary Civilization, and this technology had since been lost, only leaving behind a series of technological applications.

With the legacy from EsGod being revealed, many advanced civilizations would also have obtained the data, which meant that whoever obtained the Evolution Cube would inherit part of the core technology from a quasi-Universal Civilization, completely exclusive to them. This was naturally of great significance.

Han Xiao pondered while scanning the exchange list again, secretly analyzing the pros and cons.

In his previous life, during the World Tree Civilization war, the three Universal Civilizations took out large stacks of Universal Treasures to equip the Beyond Grade As with, including quite a few Universal Treasures that he had seen on the list today.

Among them, magic and mechanical equipment occupied the most of them, and the majority were meant for individual scale battles, such as armor, melee weapons, or special devices.

A small part of them would be special purpose Universal Treasures, most of which Han Xiao knew about from his previous life. For example, there was an item called the Shadow Lantern, where the wick was made up of the source energy fragment of the shadow dimension, and the 'light' it emitted was pure shadow. It possessed many special effects, with the main effect to open the dimension portal and transform the area into a dangerous dark dimension, changing the existences of everything in the area, as well as inviting shadow creatures from beyond.

Another example would be the Key of Destruction. This was one of the defining technologies of the Crimson Dynasty, which could be mass produced and even used by ordinary citizens. Its effect was to remotely call upon the firepower of the various armies of the dynasty.

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However, this required the dynasty army to cooperate. Most of the dynasty's armies were equipped with a Key of Destruction. When activated, a special secondary dimension would be opened, and the armies would launch a cannon salvo, which would be temporarily held in the secondary dimension and transported over to the summoner.

The summoner would then release it to attack at their desired location. The range was extremely wide, enough to clean up everything in the area. However, because it was an indiscriminate attack, it was only used as a last resort.

Compared to the Multi-Dimensional Sky Opening Transportation Device, the Key of Destruction was not as flexible and was affected by spacetime stabilizing anchors, magic, or Psionic Seal Rings. However, it had its advantages of being portable and high-volume production.

As long as the operating procedures were known, even mortals could use this, but this was not a good that could be sold, and the dynasty would only give this out during special missions.

When caught unaware, even Beyond Grade As could be killed by the volley of firepower. Throughout the exploration era, the dynasty used this technology to kill many of the original pioneers, leaving them without a complete corpse. However, with the development of space technology, the Key of Destruction was now slightly outdated, and everyone knew to guard against this trick of the dynasty's.

In addition, there were also miscellaneous items, such as golden blueprints left by the previous Beyond Grade A mechanics or magic equipment forging diagrams from mages and so on.

The dynasty had a lot stashed away and wanted to exchange their unused stuff for the Evolution Cube.

As for what the dynasty did not study or understand, it would naturally not be included in the list. Han Xiao initially wanted to take advantage of this loophole, but it was a pity that the other party did not give him a chance.

After patiently waiting for a while, Bekorodi asked, "How is it? Have you made your decision?"

"Oh..." Han Xiao breathed out before shaking his head. "This is too sudden, and I've not thought about it properly. I can't give you an answer now. Give me some time to consider."

"That's fine." Bekorodi nodded, and his tone grew a little heavier. "I believe, after serious consideration, you will make the best choice and not disappoint the dynasty's faith in you. I hope you can make your decision before the Flickering World opens."

"We'll see depending on the situation."

Han Xiao nodded before standing up, following the secretary out of the room.

Leaving the government building, he headed toward his small base that was used for storing his machinery while thinking about the pros and cons.

The first would be with regards to the interest. If he handed over the Evolution Cube, he would receive three Universal Treasures. According to the list, he should obtain all combat related Universal Treasures, but there was always the opportunity to acquire another strategic level Universal Treasure instead. Han Xiao had always felt that it was pointless to only have combat-related treasures.

It would be good if they gave them away for free. However, that was just his wishful thinking.

There were also other benefits, namely that the Black Star Army would not have to stand on the cusp of the storm, and Sorokin's Limitless Financial Group would not continue to make trouble for him. There was also no need to worry about any potential attacks from both the federation and the church, which could mean a long period of stable development... given that their previous grudges were not counted.

Han Xiao also assessed the effects of losing the Evolution Cube.

This was a unique strategic-level Universal Treasure, and while it possessed no combat power, its effect could be reflected in all aspects of development for a faction. If this were to be handed over to the dynasty, the Black Star Army would lose its faction's special product, and its attraction to players and

other characters would inevitably decline. A good example would be Silver Shadow. The latter would not have been so interested in him if not for the Evolution Cube.

With the Flickering World as a foundation, his interest group derived from the cube at the start had also stabilized, but the business of the Evolution Cube was still an important pillar in the army's finances.

Handing over the cube was tantamount to transferring the frightening profits of the Evolutionary Totem to the dynasty. The expansion and maintenance of the Black Star Army required a huge amount of funds to constantly flow in, and without the transactions of the Evolutionary Totem to support them, the army would shrink and even slow its expansion.

While they had to abide by the covenant and seek the dynasty's permission to use the Evolution Cube, he still possessed its ownership. Once his ownership was lost, the meaning would be different.

This would mean that other organizations would no longer need to cooperate with the Black Star Army, instead directly bypassing them to work with the dynasty. The Black Star Army would be kicked out of this game, which would impact their various businesses. The financial losses were not limited to just the transactions of the Evolutionary Totem.

Moreover, if he wished to use the Evolution Cube in the future, he would have to buy the right with money or contribution points.

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At the same time, without the uniqueness of the Evolution Cube, the Black Star Army would also drop in influence. No matter how good his prestige was, he could not provide people with what they wanted.

To sum it up, the growth of the Black Star Army would become several times more difficult if he handed the cube over.

Han Xiao did not know if the dynasty had any hidden intentions to restrict the Black Star Army from growing. Did they feel that it was enough to allow his organization to grow to such a point? By reason, it would not be the case, but the thoughts of those above were always hard to speculate.

The Mechanic Empire was a good example. While the Federation did not regret it, if they had a chance to start over, they might not wish for the Mechanic Emperor to grow to such an extent, making him difficult to control.

But if he were to reject the dynasty's suggestion, there would also be trouble.

From Bekorodi's words, Han Xiao smelled a different meaning within... Was the dynasty eager to obtain the Evolution Cube so that it could sell the totems publicly?

After the Flickering World opened, countless organizations would enter and inevitably cause friction with the dynasty. If they began selling the totems openly, the pressure would decrease, and their control of the Flickering World would become unbreakable.

If that was the case, then rejecting the proposal would mean disrupting the strategic deployment of the dynasty, which was tantamount to him being ignorant of the bigger picture.

Bekorodi had already displayed the 'sincerity' of the dynasty, with polite words, and even shown a sincere attitude. However, in reality, this was merely a facade, and they were forcing him to hand over the cube. If he rejected, the upper echelons of the dynasty would feel that he did not know what was good for him, incurring dissatisfaction.

Han Xiao believed that if we refused to hand the cube over, the dynasty would not give up easily and would likely take some unknown follow-up measures.

It was impossible to steal from an ally, but underhanded moves would be set down one after another.

"What a difficult problem for me..."

Han Xiao sighed, unable to choose.

When the Evolutionary Totem appeared, he knew that the future would be troublesome, but the dynasty had helped him bear the pressure and had lasted for twenty years. Finally, this trouble had still appeared.

"I need to carefully think about this. I'll contact Urranrell in the next few days and find out about her stand."

...

Not long after Han Xiao left, a figure walked into Bekorodi's conference room. It was Gaud.

After accumulating enough military merits over the years, Gaud had been sent back to the dynasty, formally focusing on his training with the same batch of Calamity Grades with potential.

The birth of a Beyond Grade A was full of uncertain factors. Even a Universal Civilization could not mass produce them, so the basic method was to spread the net as wide as possible and cultivate a large number of Calamity Grades.

Due to the huge talent pool as well as their advanced training methods, the conversion rate would not be null, but their output was also not fixed. It was the method through which Dark Lord Clotti had been trained by the dynasty into a Beyond Grade A.

Gaud was wearing a special dynasty officer uniform but with no rank markings on it. His figure was still skinny, no different from the him over a decade ago.

"You're here, sit." Bekorodi glanced at him before nodding.

Gaud sat at where Han Xiao had originally sat and lightly smiled. "How was the discussion?"

"No idea. It would be good if Black Star agreed. That would save us a lot of trouble."

"With such good conditions, I believe he will not reject it. Black Star is a smart person, and smart people know their circumstances." Gaud smiled.

"It's difficult to say. Based on the character analysis by Heroic Soul, Black Star is a typical profit-seeker. Three to one may not be able to impress him, and the probability of rejection is at sixty-three percent." Bekorodi shook his head. "Let's not mention him. In short, whether he agrees or not, we still need your ability to analyze the principle behind the evolutionary energy."

“Haha, I’m waiting to be sent.” Gaud laughed.

“I know that your abilities are unprecedented, but how confident are you that you can use your abilities to analyze the Evolution Cube? Don’t wait till the end before telling us it’s impossible.”

“Right now, there’s no chance, but if I reach Beyond Grade A, I would probably have a seventy to eighty percent chance.”

“So, when can you reach Beyond Grade A?” Bekorodi asked.

Gaud only smiled.

Seeing this, Bekorodi knew that there was no answer to this question and shook his head. “So long as you know it in your heart, that’s fine. If you can unravel the mystery of the Evolution Cube, this would be a great contribution to the dynasty. In addition to your promotion, the Dynasty Ruler will also pay more attention to you.”

He firmly supported the Evolution Cube being handed over and could only rely on Sorokin to put pressure on Black Star, but because of the Black Star Army and Germinal Financial Group’s cooperation, there were not many results. It was only when Gaud appeared that Bekorodi saw a new hope.

As a direct potential Super cultivated by the dynasty, many factions were attracted to Gaud, but the one he was closest to was Bekorodi’s Hawk faction. They had invested in him from an early stage.

After pausing for a while, Bekorodi’s words turned sharp.

“Let’s set this aside for now and talk about the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy. This is information revealed by EsGod’s legacy, and this mysterious energy is very dangerous. If you cannot become the host, even a Calamity Grade can be annihilated. Isn’t your idea too risky?”

“There’s no risk.”

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Bekorodi frowned. “Are you sure that your Esper Ability will allow you to control the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy at the Calamity Grade?”

“It can. Furthermore, this power will allow me to reach Beyond Grade A much faster,” Gaud replied.

“Humph, you’d better be right,” Bekorodi said in a deep tone. “Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy was from EsGod’s legacy, but it did not fall into the hands of the dynasty. The fact that you obtained it from other sources and handed it to us is good. When the time comes, if there are any other organizations that want to fight for the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy, the dynasty will also interfere. I’ve already submitted your application, and the whether the dynasty will allow you to use the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy in the end is up to them.”

“That’s right.” Gaud laughed.

Chapter 997 A Simpleton’s Killing Move

After releasing his doppelganger, Han Xiao's consciousness returned to his main body, and the scene in front of him changed back to the room where his Divine Mechanical Throne was located in Black Star Palace within the Flickering World.

He took off the Evolution Cube that he wore around his neck, looking carefully at it. The small silver square reflected the gleam of light.

"It's been twenty years since I got you from Psyker's hands..."

Han Xiao touched the cube, and from the icy cold touch, a sense of intimacy rose from his heart.

According to the incomplete legacy of the Evolutionary Civilization, Han Xiao had long resonated with the Evolution Cube, forming a soul connection.

If he passed this over to the Dynasty, he also did not know if the dynasty would request for him to cut off his soul connection, letting someone else like Dark Lord Clotti form a connection.

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Shaking his head, he buried this thought before putting the Evolution Cube back around his neck. He left the room to find Feidin.

From the surveillance shown by Phillip, Han Xiao found Feidin as well as the other older officers in the recreation area. He took a floating vehicle, arriving outside the Black Star Guards' exclusive recreation room.

As he walked in, he could hear Hadavy's delighted voice.

"... I can feel it. A few days ago, my Esper Ability rose a bit once again. There have been some minute genetic changes in me, and I feel that a small corner of the door to Beyond Grade A has opened."

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Aurora turned to look at Feidin. "How many times has he said this?"

Feidin laughed. "About two hundred and thirty-three times."

"That's right. Every day, you talk about how you're about to reach the Beyond Grade A realm, but it's been a decade, and there's still no change," Aurora added.

"You may not believe me, but every time I finish sparring with the Army Commander's Apostle Weapons, I show some improvement, even if it's only a small bit." Hadavy snorted.

"Spar? More like being beaten up." Feidin waved his hands in dismissal.

"So what if it's being beaten up? My Esper Ability is like that." Hadavy was not angry. "At least I can now last longer than all of you. After all, I can be considered Black Star's trump card."

Now that he was already a peak Calamity Grade Super, only the powerful attacks of a Beyond Grade A could stimulate his cells to improve further.

After the first of his Apostle Weapons, Psionic Prime, was born, Han Xiao had handed the task of beating up Hadavy to his Apostle Weapons. With the improvement in his abilities, the combat prowess of the

Apostle Weapons naturally increased. Since they were able to fight against Beyond Grade A Supers, they could naturally thrash Calamity Grades. Thus, Hadavy would always run over to them to seek abuse.

Because of his superior defense, he could remain in the hands of the Apostle Weapons for a long time, surpassing other guards. After receiving more than twenty years of beatings, Hadavy had been steadily progressing, and his combat power had significantly improved. As a Beyond Grade A seed, he had always boasted about being the top warrior in the army.

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This moment, everyone heard footsteps and turned around to see Han Xiao walking in. They all stood up in respect.

“Sit, I just came over for a look.” Han Xiao waved his hands before walking over to Feidin, his hand grasping his shoulder.

“Again?” Feidin spoke in resignation, only using his hand to hit Han Xiao’s chest as a token of resistance.

After so many years, he had already gotten used to it. The friendship of men was simple—the more they touched each other, the better their relationship would get.

With the rise of Black Star’s prestige, there were more and more officers who felt cautious about Han Xiao. In the army, only a few old friends, including Feidin, could be so casual in front him.

After Han Xiao was satisfied that he had gotten enough luck, he turned around to look at Aurora before asking, “How’s the accumulation of life energy?”

Aurora smiled, and the entire room seemed to be wrapped with sunshine. “It’s quite huge, and I can feel that as long as I train for another half a year, I’ll step into the Calamity Grade.”

Upon hearing that, Han Xiao nodded.

Aurora’s Esper Ability was that of life, and thus, her life energy was increasing every moment, resulting in the transformation of her body. Not only would her physical fitness become better, her genes would also naturally optimize, and she would maintain her youth forever.

At Grade B, her abilities were upgraded in a different manner. It was difficult for her to train her life energy; she had to wait until the total amount reached the standards of the next level.

This approach had its advantages and disadvantages. The disadvantage was that progress would be slow. Every day, only a certain amount of life energy would be generated based on one’s level. Because Aurora had created many life potions, her life energy had not yet reached the Calamity Grade, so she rarely did so anymore.

But the benefit in this approach was that there was almost no bottleneck for her in the long term. As long as her life energy reached a certain standard, she could advance, which meant that it was only a matter of time for her to advance to Beyond Grade A, but it might take hundreds or even thousands of years.

Speaking of which, Hila functioned through grabbing the life energy of others to strengthen herself, while Aurora shared her life energy with others and slowed down her own growth rate. Both their abilities and advancement modes were diametrically opposite.

“That’s right, uncle, when will my sister return?” Aurora could not help but ask that.

“I don’t know.” Han Xiao shook his head. “A few days ago, I sent out news to them, but they didn’t reply, nor did they pick up my call. They might have run off to some dangerous place where there’s no signal.”

“Sigh, it’s been so many years. I miss my sister.” Aurora scrunched up her face, looking a little depressed.

“Me too.” Han Xiao nodded.

“Me three.” Hadavy added on.

The duo immediately glared at him, with an expression of ‘what has it got to do with you’ on their faces.

Hadavy crossed his hands and coldly snorted. “She left twenty years ago and is still hogging the title of Captain. Feidin is only a stand-in, and I’m still the deputy, without being able to challenge her position.”

“Oh, it’s like that.” Aurora sighed in relief, patting her bouncy chest. “I thought you had something for my sister.”

“Your sister is so aloof. How could I like her...” Noticing Han Xiao’s gaze, Hadavy trailed off and coughed, mumbling in a small voice, “And how could I dare?”

When he first joined under Black Star, Hadavy did not have many qualifications, so he was willing to serve under Hila as a deputy despite being a Beyond Grade A seed.

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However, so many years had passed, and Hadavy was considered an old-timer now. His capabilities had improved, and he had influence and qualifications. Furthermore, Hila had been gone for twenty years straight, so he felt that he had the right not to be under any other Calamity Grades. He wished to have a higher position, becoming the captain of the Black Star Guards.

This was also good for his reputation in the universe. The title of ‘Captain of the Black Star Guards’ was just like the Chief Vanguard Official for Bloodshed Land, and there was a bonus in terms of influence. Hadavy was someone who sought authority and strength, so he considered this as well.

“Alright, when Hila returns, as long as you can defeat her, you’ll be the new captain.” Han Xiao laughed.

“Ok, you’ve said it.” Hadavy perked out.

After some idle conversation, Han Xiao left the room. As he walked down the corridor, he opened his interface and selected Silver Shadow’s Beyond Grade A mission.

Mission: Silver Shadow is complete!

You have completed all the mission requirements and received 24,500,000,000 Experience.

You have received: Character Summon Card – Silver Shadow

Character Summon Card – Silver Shadow: [Comet Rush]. For a short time, +15% DEX, +45% Move Speed, and +300% Acceleration. Upper cap for move speed is removed, and one can accelerate endlessly. Lasts for 12 seconds. Number of times used: 0/4

You have received a reward: Draw one of Silver Shadow's skills (Ability/Talent)

Tip: Silver Shadow is a Pugilist, so some of the abilities and talents are adjusted according to your class.

Randomizing... complete!

Please select one from the five options below as the reward:

1. Charge—Endless Potential – Ability: Your next melee attack will grant additional damage based on the sprint distance. The greater the distance, the higher the damage. There is no upper limit, but at the same time, your body will suffer from the recoil, being damaged for 70% of the total damage inflicted on the other party. Consumes 200 Energy and 3,000 Stamina. Cooldown: 240s. Remark: To strike the enemy, or to strike yourself, that is the problem.
2. Dark Energy Extraction – Ability: You can draw upon the Dark energy within the universe, recovering 15% – 25% of your Energy each time. Consumes 800 Stamina. Cooldown: 24s.
3. Nuclear Force—Structure Reinforcement – Talent: Your cells will undergo particle structure reinforcement, gaining 12% immunity to all physical damage. You are immune to True Damage, Armor Piercing, Shock, and other special attacks (non-immunity, converted to normal damage).
4. Self-Refresh – Ability: Remove all negative status affecting you (does not work on [Silenced] and [Energy Locked] states). Consumes 300 Energy. Cooldown 420s.
5. Repeated Critical Strike – Ability: Passive skill. When you accelerate, your body's melee Crit Rate and Crit Damage multipliers will rise, providing up to a maximum of 80% Crit Rate and 375% Crit Damage. The effect is constant when you maintain your speed. When speed is reduced and peak speed is not restored within 2.5s, the effect will begin to irreversibly decline after 8s and return to zero in 4s. A cooldown of 120s will be applied the moment it hits zero. Remark: Life is like exercising. Start running, don't stop!

"The quality this time is quite good." Han Xiao was satisfied.

There was even a Molding Talent, and the other skills were all good. Apart from his 'touched' luck, the main reason was that the average quality of Silver Shadow's skills was high.

Taking a closer look, Han Xiao first ruled out [Dark Energy Extraction]. The Pugilists required a lot of energy, but he had a more efficient manner of gaining energy through being beaten.

Generally speaking, Han Xiao would want to choose Molding Talents where possible, but [Nuclear Force—Structure Reinforcement] only provided damage immunity, which would duplicate the ability given by the Germinal Organization Leader.

As for the twelve percent of Absolute Physical Resistance and immunity to shock, armor piercing, and so on, it was a good effect, but the cost to performance ratio was not good.

Since Han Xiao was already tanky, the defense improvement would be weak. Furthermore, he had trampled upon little Ty-Ty the last time and obtained his [Legendary Fixed Damage Reduction], which was enough.

After thinking for a bit, he finally made a choice.

You have acquired the skill: Charge—Endless Potential!

“This suits me better.”

While [Repeated Critical Strike] was good, it was limited to only one’s melee Crit Rate and had to be triggered by speed. This was suitable for Silver Shadow’s combat style but not too much for Han Xiao.

In contrast, [Charge—Endless potential] was very fierce. It provided unlimited additional damage according to sprint distance, but one had to bear seventy percent of the damage inflicted. It had great power and side effects.

This was a move that would result in a pyrrhic victory where no one would benefit.

However, the Great Mechanic Han was a unique character unseen in this world!

With his ability to recover energy from taking damage and use the energy to recover his HP, not only was his skull thick, he was not afraid of recoil damage.

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Furthermore, he was a Mechanic, and he need not even go personally to battle. Just by having one of his avatars rush forward to hit them, all danger was gone. This was even more suited for him than Silver Shadow!

“What a reliable ability. I finally got my hands on a fierce attacking skill. Silver Shadow is really generous, to give me such a good welcome gift.”

Han Xiao was extremely satisfied.

This brother is interesting. I’ll have to look after him more in the future.

Chapter 998 Storm Rises and Falls

“My current combat style is perfect, not only tanky but with powerful burst strength and lots of crowd control skills. The size of my mechanical army is huge, and it can carry out tactical cooperation with hundreds of thousands of troops. There are also high levelled machines such as the mechanical host as well as Apostle Weapons, and my mental resistance is also high. I have Virtual Paramount as a spiritual attack, and my void bloodline also gives me unique skills...”

Analyzing his current cards, Han Xiao felt that he was getting quite overpowered, having developed a comprehensive spiritual and physical enhancement.

Among the five big Super systems, the Espers had the highest battle power in the beginning, but in the endgame, the Mechanics and Mages would shine. Compared to the other three systems, Mechanics and Mages utilized knowledge as the source of their power and had very comprehensive abilities, leaving few shortcomings. For Mechanics, their low HP and mental resistance would be considered their more prominent weaknesses.

However, in Han Xiao's dictionary, there was no 'Low HP' or 'Weak Mental Resistance'. Having compensated for them, there were no weaknesses, and he was basically an all-rounder.

But now, he had the skill [Charge—Endless potential]. This sort of super high-explosive single target skill would make the fighting method more perfect because when they were fighting, Han Xiao's main body or his avatar would usually be roaming around and would not immediately step forward to engage in a melee entanglement. With his potential accumulation skill, the distance he travelled could be converted into damage, which gave him more strategic options.

He gleefully admired this ability for a while longer before turning off the interface.

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Returning to his room, he suppressed his joy, taking out his communicator. After a few deep breaths, he dialed the private line of the Dynasty Ruler to find out her stand.

After a few rings, Urranrell's delicate face appeared on the screen. It seemed that she had expected Han Xiao to contact her.

"Black Star, you're here."

"Your Excellency Ruler." Han Xiao went straight to the point. "Do you know about Bekorodi's matter?"

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"Hmm." Urranrell nodded.

Glancing at her calm expression, Han Xiao confirmed his suspicion that the dynasty's decision makers wanted him to turn the cube in, and even the Ruler was standing on their side.

Han Xiao paused for a moment before saying, "Do you have any suggestions?"

"I also hope that you can hand over the Evolution Cube. This concerns an important strategy of the Dynasty."

"Is the important strategy to sell the totems publicly? If I pass over the cube to you, what I'm losing is a huge amount of profit." Han Xiao tested the waters.

Urranrell shook her head, slowly explaining, "The dynasty has no intention at the moment to sell the totems to the public. This decision was based on our consideration of risk. For you, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. The federation and church are increasing their pressure, and while the

dynasty is holding the majority back, as long as you hold onto the Evolution Cube, it's hard to guarantee that they will not take the risk again to launch a new sneak attack.

"I believe that you understand this too. In your hands, the Evolution Cube is a hot potato. Dealing with you is much easier than forcing the dynasty to compromise. If the cube is handed over to the dynasty for custody, the enemy will face no chance."

"You seem to have very little confidence in me." Han Xiao raised a brow. "I thought you were always optimistic about me."

"I indeed am optimistic about your future, but you're still one person," Urranrell replied. "After their last lesson, if the federation and church act, they will definitely bring out the likes of Manison and Kasuyi, peak Beyond Grade As. As of now, you're still not an opponent for the Mechanic Emperor himself, and if the other peak Beyond Grade As are added, the risk is too big."

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"This makes sense, but since they chose not to act over the past few years, it's hard to say so in the future too." Han Xiao was still undecided.

"The situation is now different. Beyond Grade As are generally distributed in different Star Fields, so when mobilized, we can receive warnings and prepare in advance. However, when the Flickering World opens, it will be an excellent opportunity for the federation and the church. The entire universe's Beyond Grade As will rush to the Shattered Star Ring, and with so many people gathering, it will be easy to gather high levelled combatants to quickly attack your base camp. Because they have a legitimate reason to gather them, it will be difficult for us to be on guard."

Han Xiao stroked his chin. Indeed, due to the news of the Flickering World about to open, all sorts of organizations had begun to gather within the Shattered Star Ring. This naturally included many Beyond Grade As from the other Star Fields.

In the past, all these Beyond Grade As were distributed in various Star Fields, so it was difficult to gather them to deal with him. However, with the opportunity, the situation would naturally turn more dangerous.

It could be foreseen that during this period, the originally chaotic Shattered Star Ring would become much worse. Whether or not he as the local tyrant could withdraw the chaos, it was really hard to say.

Seeing that Han Xiao did not speak, Urranrell continued in her attempts to persuade him. "Black Star, although the future profit of the Evolution Cube is huge and it is disadvantageous to trade it, it's still better than losing it."

"Let me think about this." Han Xiao nodded. For the time being, he decided not to burn all his bridges.

"There's no need to give me an answer soon." Urranrell suddenly changed the topic. "I have something I need you to do as well."

"What?"

"Right now, the dynasty is building an Inter-Star Field Stargate to link the Shattered Star Ring and the Flickering World. Before we officially open it, a large number of organizations within the entire universe

will flock over, which will impact this Star Field. I need you to maintain law and order, suppressing all foreign organizations and Beyond Grade A to prevent chaos.”

Han Xiao was quite interested in this. “But I remember that the Shattered Star Ring belongs to the federation in name.”

“That’s right. However, our dynasty is stronger in the region, and maintaining stability is beneficial to us. I don’t want any incidents to happen and affect the opening of the Flickering World.”

“You could actually speak to Heber for this.”

“The Tyrant doesn’t have your prestige, and only you have the qualification to suppress all the incoming Beyond Grade As.”

Hearing this, Han Xiao could not help but laugh.

To think that the dynasty Ruler, who sat above all others, would be so well versed at bootlicking.

His interface released a notification, which was displayed as an additional faction mission regarding the Main Storyline of the Flickering World arc. The requirement was to maintain the stability of the Shattered Star Ring before the opening, and the reward was quite satisfactory, giving him experience, contribution points, Enas, and resources from the dynasty.

“Alright, I’ll take helm in the Shattered Star Ring, and I hope that the other Beyond Grade As will show me some face.”

Even without the mission, he would still do the same. The Shattered Star Ring was where his army was currently camped, and stabilizing his backyard was compulsory. He would not allow any outsiders to run rampant in his leek field.

This was especially so for those newly minted Beyond Grade As. During this time, they would need to perform great deeds that would cement their influence and prestige.

After hanging up, Han Xiao breathed out and activated [Lord’s Descent], sending his consciousness to his machinery civilization’s planet.

Since he was going back to hold the fort, the troops remaining in his headquarters were not enough, and a new wave of reinforcements was needed.

It was just nice that the machinery civilization had already developed for over twenty years stably and was walking on the correct track. He was going to pull the group of Apostle Weapons back.

The scene in front of his eyes changed again, and he was now inside a mechanical palace, with the mechanical host sitting on the throne of the palace.

Han Xiao had left a mechanical host in the machinery civilization to facilitate himself coming over to take a look now and then. Thus, Psionic Prime and the rest had built a palace hall that resembled a Sky Reaching Pagoda, tens of thousands meters in height, and had enshrined his mechanical host within.

Manipulating his avatar, Han Xiao walked out of the palace and stood there overlooking the entire planet. He saw an endless line-up of mechanical cities, and countless mechanical life forms were flying in the sky.

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This was the main planet of the machinery civilization, Planet Apostle, which was much better than a decade ago.

After more than twenty years of constant development, the machinery civilization had completely transformed this planet, building countless facilities on the surface and underground. With their strong productivity, they had even started to develop the planets nearby.

At the same time, like tree branches growing leaves, their population swelled up. This would be the future source of Han Xiao's mechanical army.

Speaking from the scale of a civilization's progress, the machinery civilization's speed of development was akin to travelling using a hyperdrive spaceship. However, compared with the Black Spirit Race, the latter's development was not slow either.

After years of study, batch after batch of scholars and researchers had appeared within the Black Spirit Race, and they had begun to integrate the knowledge from various fields taught by the army. Due to the special characteristics of the Black Spirit Race, once someone had learned a piece of knowledge, they could quickly spread it out.

With the resources and equipment generously provided by the army, the Black Spirit Race did not need to accumulate their production efficiency and could directly apply any acquired knowledge. Thus, in just two decades, they had directly entered the electrical age from the tribal age, completing a triple jump. The horrifying talent of the race had begun to emerge.

In his view, if the Black Spirit Race had started at the same point together with the federation and the church, it might have been the fourth Universal Civilization.

The talents of the Black Spirit Race were almost entirely focused on learning and education. To slightly exaggerate, this was a race that was qualified to use the prosperous saying of 'everyone can be a dragon'.

As for the Kunde Race, they were still undergoing their cultural transformation, but Han Xiao had also allowed people to give them something good.

At this moment, the inner circle of the Kunde Race had already shown signs of people worshipping the Machinery Faith. Although their tragic battle a decade ago had left behind some wounds and they had not fully converted to this religion, the roots had already taken hold.

As Han Xiao gazed around the planet, in a short time, more than ten black dots appeared from afar, heading over.

Behind those black dots, which were his Apostle Weapons, there was a huge mountain-like shadow slowly approaching. This was the Giant King Kong, famous for his size, and his height was exactly parallel to the gate of the Sky Reaching Pagoda where Han Xiao was located.

“We greet our Lord.”

Psionic Prime led the Apostle Weapons and flew into the gate, stopping in front of Han Xiao and saluting.

In the recent years, Han Xiao had utilized all his Apostle Weapon slots, expanding the team. Because of [Perfect Mechanical Sense] as well as a series of talents and abilities that increase the upper limit of his skills, his Apostle Weapons numbered more than twelve now.

Gazing at them, he discovered that the Apostle Weapons now had better weapons and armor than they had twenty years ago. At the same time, their source energy had also grown.

All Mechanical life forms could grow as they could upgrade themselves. This was especially so for the first generation of mechanical life forms, which contained the purest Mechanical Life Tinder.

“Psionic Prime, Silver Flash, Mad Sky Hunter, Scarlet Flame, Gold Sovereign, Formless Ghost, Heaven-Suppressing Banner, and Purple Sky Spirit... Bring your troops with you and return to the headquarters in the Shattered Star Ring. I might require you guys to fight.” Han Xiao passed down the command.

“Understood,” Psionic Prime responded. To him, Han Xiao’s words were akin to divine doctrine.

...

At a stargate border of the Shattered Star Ring, a fleet with the symbol of the Arcane Church slowly exited the stargate.

Nowadays, Beyond Grade As everywhere were flocking to the Shattered Star Ring. This fleet was dedicated to escorting a new Beyond Grade A who had joined the Arcane Church a few years prior.

‘Red Devil’ Tolaen, once a wanted criminal from Silver Arm, had reached the Beyond Grade A a few years back. He was then recruited by the Arcane Church, and his previous deeds were wiped clean. With the support of the Arcane Church, his Silver Arm had a place in the universe.

In the conference room of the flagship, a portion of the Beyond Grade As of the Arcane Church were within the room, but only Tolaen was there with his main body.

“Haha, it seems like I’m the first to arrive. When will you all get here?” Tolaen laughed.

“Soon. You and Psyker had better wait there quietly for us.” Sun Hunter had a small stature, but his voice was mighty like a booming cannon.

“Hmm, what’s the use in just waiting?” Tolaen’s eyes gleamed. “Since there’s nothing to do, I’ll find someone to spar.”

He had just entered the Beyond Grade A realm not too long ago. As a newcomer, he did not have any outstanding battle records, so upon reaching the Shattered Star Ring, he felt the urge to prove himself.

“Don’t try to do anything funny in the Shattered Star Ring,” Kasuyi coldly interjected, his voice wispy. “It’s his territory. Show him some face.”

The Shattered Star Ring of the past only had Heber, Austin, Ames, and Psyker, which made it a remote and weak place, not enough for a peak Beyond Grade A like Kasuyi to notice.

But things were different now. With Black Star rising vigorously, he had become the representative of the Shattered Star Ring, holding the fort in the name of the dynasty.

There was a certain level of prestige given toward a peak Beyond Grade A, and the other Beyond Grade As were willing to show Black Star some face and behave themselves in the Shattered Star Ring. Even as fellow peak Beyond Grade As, none of them wanted to rile Black Star up for nothing.

The moment Black Star was mentioned, a few of the Beyond Grade As present showed uneasy expressions. They were the participants of the Planet Lighthouse battle and had eaten a loss when facing Han Xiao.

The feeling of being trapped in Spacetime Amber was not a good one. That was especially so for Dylan, who let out an involuntary shudder upon hearing Han Xiao's name.

"Haha, you've only been defeated once, but you're already afraid to this point? Your Excellency Kasuyi, it can't be that even you are afraid of him, can it?"

Tolaen knew about this matter and could not help but laugh sarcastically. As a wanted criminal in the past, he was not someone to lie low.

As soon as this remark came out, quite a number of Beyond Grade As looked a little embarrassed, coldly snorting.

"I'm not afraid of him," Kasuyi calmly stated. "But now isn't the time for us to fight. I advise you not to provoke him."

"I'm not that foolish." Tolaen waved his hands. "Relax, I'm not so arrogant as to choose Black Star as the target."

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"Then, who do you want to spar with?"

"Heh, I can't defeat Black Star, and Heber belongs to the Dynasty, which is also troublesome to provoke. Psyker is weak, but he's still one of us, so that only leaves the other two."

Tolaen's eyes flashed in excitement.

"Austin always hides in his Palace of Hidden Spells, and I should not be able to defeat him, but as for Ames... Hehe, she should be easy to deal with. I'll use her as my stepping stone and let her become my Beyond Grade A battle record!"

Chapter 999 Return, Accepting the Battle

A small spaceship was flying through the universe at warp speed, resembling a gleam of white light against the dark backdrop.

The spaceship was on autopilot, with only two people in the cabin. They were Ames and Hila.

Hila sat in a precarious position, her eyes closed and her hands flat on her knees. Her fingers were continuously moving as she controlled wisps of death energy to flexibly swim between her fingers, training her control over her power.

Opposite her, Ames reclined on the sofa with a hand on her head and the other on her waist.

Watching the death energy move, Ames could not help but sigh. "You're really working yourself to the bone. Even at the Beyond Grade A realm, you're continuously training."

Hila opened her eyes, her tone indifferent. "Beyond Grade A is not the endpoint, and there's no limit to my path ahead of me. I cannot be satisfied with just this."

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"I feel that you should still rest a little though. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."

Ames shook her head in resignation. She was very satisfied with this disciple of hers, but her desire to grow stronger was so intense that it made her, as the teacher, seem like a lazy bum.

"I'll always have time to rest in the future." Hila shook her head. "When I return, I will definitely spar with Han Xiao once and test out my current strength. Thus, I cannot rest now. However little I can improve, it's better than nothing."

"Relax, based on what I know of Black Star, he will definitely not let you lose too badly and damage your self confidence." Ames laughed. With a flick of her finger, she opened the star map. "We only need two more days to arrive at the Inter-Star Field Stargate of the Ancient Star Desert, then we'll arrive directly at the Constellation Corridor. We can use Black Star's identity to borrow the dynasty's channels, which will save us a lot of time..."

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Before she could finish her words, the communicator beside her started to ring.

"It's Black... eh? It's actually old man Aesop." Ames was surprised after giving it a look. She originally thought that it was one of Han Xiao's desperate serial calls, but it turned out that it was her teacher on the line.

Sitting up, Ames activated her force field to bring her communicator over before answering, and Aesop's face appeared.

"What do you want?"

"Where are you guys now? When are you returning to Floating Dragon?" Aesop asked.

"We're still at the Ancient Star Desert, almost reaching the stargate."

"You should still make it on time." Aesop relaxed. "Try to hurry. I've foreseen that, in a while, the new Beyond Grade A of the Arcane Church will come over to challenge you, and you need to step forward."

This was really insane. Tolaen only had the thought, and Aesop had already sensed the changes in the world. The powerful ability of this old man surfaced once again.

A flicker passed through Ames eyes, and she laughed harshly. "A new Beyond Grade A challenging me? I know, that person is probably looking to gain a battle record. Hehe, to pick me when there's five of us within the Shattered Star Ring, does he think I'm that easy to bully?"

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While Floating Dragon was stationed by Planet Aquamarine, allowing the Black Star Army to aid them, this was a battle between Beyond Grade As. Since the other party was targeting Floating Dragon, the Black Star Army had to receive the permission of Ames before they could help. But such a small matter could be settled on her own, and she did not intend for Black Star to step in.

After hanging up, Ames found Hila staring at her.

Ames looked at her and immediately understood what she wanted. "What, are you interested?"

"You're my teacher, so this time, let me help." Hila nodded, and a cold gaze flashed across her eyes.

She had originally intended to directly head toward the army to give Han Xiao the good news after arriving at Shattered Star Ring, but with such a situation, she changed her mind.

The other party was also a new Beyond Grade A, and such an opponent was not commonly found.

It was a good time for her to test out how much she had grown.

...

On one of the islands around Floating Dragon, a group of newly recruited Supers were practicing in the square, and the current commander of the Floating Dragon Island Field Team, Vilna, was supervising them.

It had been more than twenty years since Floating Dragon Island anchored itself to Planet Aquamarine. The main island continuously expanded, along with its subordinates and troops. While they could not compare to the scale of the Black Star Army or Bloodshed Land, they could be considered a passable Beyond Grade A organization.

Correspondingly, the scale of Floating Dragon's officers also expanded, and the work for everyone was becoming more and more arduous. Vilna had taken over Han Xiao's post and helped manage Floating Dragon to the best of her abilities.

While her temperament was mild, she could be fierce and strict when needed, so this batch of new recruits did not dare slack off, fully engrossing themselves in exercise.

Beep beep!

At this moment, the communicator on Vilna's wrist rang. It was Aesop.

The moment she picked up, Aesop did not even greet her, immediately shooting out commands.

"Gather the fleet and set down a defensive formation."

"So fast?" Vilna stuttered but did not hesitate, immediately calling out all her subordinates to assemble the fleet.

Ames had specifically instructed earlier on that if she were not present, Aesop would be the highest in command.

Thus, under Vilna's instructions, Floating Dragon's armed forces finished assembling, surrounding Floating Dragon in a tight defensive array.

There were a lot of people thinking that something serious had happened, but after a long while, everything was still calm, with no new orders.

"There's nothing. What are we going to do now?"

"Was it just a drill?"

Just as everyone was getting confused, an abrupt change took place.

Ohm!

All the spaceships within the fleet let out warning alarms as a humongous fleet appeared on their radars, rapidly drawing closer to them!

The next moment, streams of light could be seen from the distance, and an armed fleet appeared on the outer space of Planet Aquamarine, each marked with the insignia of the Arcane Church.

"Arcane Church?"

Vilna's expression changed as she jumped.

Her reaction was mild, as the other Floating Dragon members were showing even more exaggerated reactions. All of them panicked, as though facing their mortal enemy.

Floating Dragon was different from the other organizations like Black Star Army, which regularly had dealings in the universe. Thus, seeing such a scene would easily ruffle them.

However, it was not just Floating Dragon. Even the observatory post on Planet Aquamarine was also alarmed!

The observers scrambled to send the news back to their headquarters, and this information was quickly uploaded, skipping through all the layers of authority, directly to the decision makers where Bennett was.

"The Arcane Church have come?"

In the administration building at Planet Aquamarine, Bennett also received a shock.

As the leader of a civilization protected by the Peace Treaty, the Black Star Army, the Crimson Dynasty, and Floating Dragon Island, he was not afraid that the Arcane Church had any malicious intentions. However, such an abrupt visit left him with a bitter taste in the mouth, and the lack of a diplomatic etiquette showed that the other party did not have any good intentions.

Thinking about this, Bennett immediately sent an order.

"Invite Black Star's avatar!"

His voice had just sounded, and he found out two figures had suddenly accelerated quickly toward the sky. Raising his head, he saw Nero and Mia shooting up toward the sky, taking the first step to check on the situation.

At the same time, Tolaen was staring down at the defensive troops from his main flagship, pouting.

“Sigh, I thought I could scare them a little and look at them scramble and panic... but they seem to have already known that I would come. Was the stealth function rendered invalid, or is it the legendary Aesop’s ability?”

Shaking his head, Tolaen did not bother to think so much. This sudden appearance was just a passing evil thought of his. After all, he still had to publicly declare his challenge.

Turning to the commander, he said, “Send out the broadcast; announce my intention.”

The commander nodded before moving on to carry out the tasks.

...

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The arrival of the Arcane Church’s fleet was imposing, causing both Planet Aquamarine and Floating Dragon to be on alert. After some negotiations, both sides reached a consensus, with the Floating Dragon fleet giving way to allow Tolaen to land on Floating Dragon Island with a spaceship.

Hu!

The spaceship landed on the main island, and Tolaen walked out with large strides, setting foot on Floating Dragon Island.

Surrounding him was a group of Floating Dragon Warriors bearing arms, with visibly nervous expressions.

There was no helping it, for he had announced his identity and intentions a moment ago, and without Ames helming Floating Dragon, everyone felt nervous at having to face an unfriendly Beyond Grade A.

Tolaen swept them a glance before coldly saying, “I want to speak to the commanding officer.”

The crowd moved, parting to allow Aesop and Jenny to step out.

Jenny was impassive as she said, “I’m the Chief Administrator of Floating Dragon. Her Excellency Dragon Emperor is not here at the moment. You’ve come at a bad time.”

“I don’t care if she’s present or not. You just have to give me an answer. Does she dare accept my challenge?” Tolaen stood with his arms crossed, revealing a high and might pose.

“I cannot make that decision.” Jenny shook her head.

“Then you should just shut up, Baldy. Contact Ames and have her answer me.” Tolaen was not polite at all.

He had a different temperament to most Beyond Grade As. While he had been ‘reformed’, he still carried the air of a wanted criminal, arrogant and brash.

“Bald... Baldy?”

Jenny froze for a moment before flaring up.

My hairline is just a little high. This lady here is not bald! I have hair!

At that moment, Aesop blandly replied, "I've already contacted Ames. She has indicated that she will accept your battle."

"Oh, you're Aesop?" Tolaen turned to look at him with an interested expression. "I've heard your name, and everyone says you're an immortal species with a good ability. How about it, would you like to work for me?"

"You don't have the qualifications." Aesop slightly smiled. While he was not a Beyond Grade A, his bearing was more regal and dignified than Tolaen.

"Tsk." Tolaen only snorted before ignoring him. He raised his voice. "Since Ames has already agreed, I'll wait here until she arrives... What are you waiting for? Aren't you going to prepare a room for me?"

At this moment, a few figures flew up from Planet Aquamarine, landing on the main island of Floating Dragon.

Among them were Nero and Mia, and the rest were the machinery troops that Han Xiao had left on Planet Aquamarine, which included a mechanical host carrying his Lord's Avatar.

Seeing that Black Star was there, the soldiers all heaved a sigh of relief.

The prestige that Han Xiao had left behind on Floating Dragon Island had continued to this day. In the eyes of many of Floating Dragon's members, their ally Black Star was sometimes more reliable than their own boss, Dragon Emperor.

Han Xiao's consciousness had already descended as an avatar, and he sized up Tolaen before muttering in a puzzled tone, "What, are you tired of living already?"

He had guessed that the new Beyond Grade As would cause problems, but he did not expect them to jump the gun like this. To run all the way to his mother planet, were they seeking death?

His current identity was different from the past. If one provoked him, he would not mind getting rid of a Beyond Grade A Super from the Arcane Church. Since the dynasty had tasked him with maintaining law and order, nothing set an example like killing another.

"It's you." Tolaen eyed him before lightly saying, "Your Excellency Black Star, I'm not here to go against you. This matter has nothing to do with you."

Oh, what an arrogant attitude. People like you, I've already killed numerous of. Nothing much to add another to the list, Han Xiao thought.

He had read all the material on the new Beyond Grade As that the dynasty had shared with him, and he recognized this guy as 'Red Devil' Tolaen, who had joined the Arcane Church. His strength was ranked around the middle of the Beyond Grade As, but he had a streak of self-confidence, making him think that he was the best. It seemed a miracle he had not gotten beaten to a pulp yet.

There was a wide variety of Beyond Grade A personalities, from those like a big brother such as the Mechanic Emperor or Dark Lord, and there were also old foxes such as Sorokin, lazy people like Ames,

and Heber who was prideful. There were also people like him, who could not hide his handsome-ness even though he stayed low...

“Dragon Emperor is my ally. Since she’s not here, how about I play a round with you?” Han Xiao tilted his head.

“It’s alright.” Tolaen raised his hands up, an arrogant expression still on his face as he said, “I can’t beat you.”

Han Xiao was stunned.

With that expression, I thought you were going to say something insulting!

Could it be that those were the most courageous words you could squeeze out with that expression?

Directly blocking me like such, what a clever little brat you are!

Han Xiao had intended to teach this Tolaen a lesson, but to think that this person had seen through his ruse and ‘arrogantly’ rejected it.

While Tolaen might appear very impulsive, he knew his limits clearly. He understood that it was not good to provoke Black Star, who was at the peak of the Beyond Grade A realm, so he decided to only challenge Floating Dragon and nobody else.

At this moment, fluctuations could be seen in the space not far away, and the Palace of Hidden Spells jumped out of the void.

Seeing this, Han Xiao froze.

Austin?

Why is it you?

How are you everywhere? You really know how to join in the fun!

However, Austin did not come over to watch a scene this time. After his Palace of Hidden Spells arrived, it created another rift, and a small spaceship flew out, landing on the dock.

Shua!

The door opened, and long, smooth legs appeared. Ames and Hila descended from the spaceship one after another.

Ames smiled and explained, “Just rushing would not have cut it, so I called Austin to help out.”

Han Xiao could not help but raise his head, and he saw that at the peak of the Palace of Hidden Spells, Austin sat there like a little kid, with two fingers pointing up and twiddling around, making a ridiculous greeting to Han Xiao.

“Show off,” Han Xiao grumbled.

After a quick greeting, Ames noticed Tolaen, and a smile appeared on her face.

“So, you wanted to challenge Floating Dragon?”

“Aren’t you asking the obvious?” Tolaen snorted.

Ames nodded before taking a step back, allowing Hila by her side to step out as she smiled. “If you wish to spar with me, that’s fine, but you’ve got to win against my student first. She’s part of Floating Dragon.”

While Han Xiao’s avatar was present, Hila had not glanced at Han Xiao once after touching down. Her gaze was fixed on Tolaen with an indifferent expression.

“Her?”

Tolaen was surprised. He looked over her, remembered the previous material he had seen about Black Star Army, and snorted.

“I recognize her. She’s an officer under the Black Star Army. Just a mere Calamity Grade, are you sending her to die or to humiliate me?”

However, just as he spoke, the surging death energy burst out from Hila like a tsunami, exploding with intense energy fluctuations rising into the sky!

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Boom!

Shockwaves spread, and the land around them cracked.

Everyone steadied themselves in a hurry and refocused their attention on Hila, who was cloaked in death energy. Fright and amazement filled everyone’s eyes.

This level of energy fluctuations... belonged to a new Beyond Grade A!

Chapter 1000 Goddess of Death

“Beyond Grade A?”

Tolaen’s expression warped with horror!

All newly born Beyond Grade As would have their records taken by the advanced civilizations, so he knew of all their abilities and weaknesses. However, Hila was not on the list, and thus, it totally disrupted his momentum!

Hila had just stepped into the Beyond Grade A realm and had only just displayed her skill for the first time in front of people, so no one had any information on her.

But today would be the day the Goddess of Death was truly born!

Nero’s figure jerked, and a look of happiness crossed his face.

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“Sister Hila has broken into the Beyond Grade A realm!”

While they had not seen each other for years, Nero had always remembered how Hila had shown him grace by giving him the Death Spirit Mark[1]. Seeing that Hila had finally taken that last step, he felt happy for her and could not wait to share the news among the Black Star Army officers.

“She’s the Hila that you guys always mention?” Mia asked with a look of excitement while tugging on Nero’s sleeves.

Mia had joined the army after Hila left, but she always heard her name coming out from all the important officers, including Nero. In her mind, Hila appeared to be a mysterious character.

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This was the so-called ‘No longer in the martial world, yet the martial world would ring of one’s tales forever’. Today, Mia finally got what she wished for, to see Hila in person. She was indeed as everyone described her.

Looking at the strong aura being released by her body, Mia was instantly won over. It was exactly in line with her imagination of how a strong female warrior should be.

In Han Xiao’s past life, Mia had been a follower of Hila’s, and now, meeting for the first time, it was just the same as before. She totally worshipped Hila.

Feeling Hila’s aura, a sense of relief surfaced in Han Xiao’s heart.

Finally, the Goddess of Death that I’m familiar with is back!

She indeed didn’t let me down!

Austin also froze for a moment before a genuine smile appeared on his face. He looked as though he was about to watch a good movie.

“The sixth Beyond Grade A of the Shattered Star Ring? Damn, this is going to be lively...”

While everyone was reeling in shock, Tolaen’s expression slowly changed to an ugly look.

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The situation was somewhat beyond his expectations. He had thought that his opponent would be Ames, but suddenly, a new Beyond Grade A had popped out.

While Ames was a veteran Beyond Grade A and would be stronger, the material compiled about her had clearly explained her strengths and weaknesses. This was very important, and now that his opponent had been changed to an unknown Beyond Grade A, it was harder for him to deal with it.

He had seen Hila’s files before, but that was twenty years ago, and she had even undergone an evolution. It was unknown what new abilities she had developed.

“You...”

“Don’t waste my time. Fight or not?” Hila’s eyes were shining with an ominous red light, her aura suppressing everything around her.

She ignored everyone else around her and was only focused on her target. She had always been decisive in her matters and never liked to waste time spouting bullsh*t.

“Alright!” Tolaen’s personality meant that he would not think too much and quickly agreed.

Both were Beyond Grade As, so whether he won or not, it would still be a battle record for him.

At this moment, Han Xiao, who was standing by the side, indifferently spoke.

“If you want to fight, move further away from Planet Aquamarine. If even a single blade of grass on the planet gets destroyed because of your battle... you can forget about leaving today, Tolaen.”

“Humph, I wouldn’t dare.” Tolaen coldly snorted.

He knew not to lay hands on Han Xiao’s mother planet. If not, even if the other party shredded him to pieces, the Arcane Church would not make a sound.

...

Both sides reached a consensus, and everyone pulled away to a location further from Planet Aquamarine for their battlefield.

There was only Hila and Tolaen on the battlefield. Both faced each other, their auras rising rapidly.

Everyone’s eyes were focused on the two, holding their breath and watching the battle.

At the next moment, both of them moved!

Tolaen’s body swelled, and muscles bulged out as bone spurs emerged from his skin. A pair of curled devil horns grew on his head, and two pairs of bat wings spread out from behind. His back vertebrate also lengthened and divided into three jagged tails.

His entire being turned into a red creature resembling a demon. His muscles were bulging and knotted, covered with bone spurs. His skin was covered in mysterious lines, and it lent him a cruel visage.

“He’s a Pugilist?”

Seeing this, Ames raised her brow.

“Nope, a Mage.”

From a side sounded a voice. Han Xiao’s avatar had flown over, and he was reading out Tolaen’s information.

“He possesses a demon’s lineage, and this bloodline got elevated during this sublimation to Beyond Grade A. Just now, he utilized the True Liberation unique to the Demon Race. That red body is his true form and also the origin behind his nickname ‘Red Devil’. He’s a mage that leans toward transfiguration and melee battles, as his racial talents have brought him extraordinary resistance and extreme regeneration, a relatively rarer breed. His combat style should be a bit similar to Milizaus of the dynasty.”

“I see.” Ames nodded before turning and lightly smiling as she teased, “Long time no see. Are you still doing well?”

“Very.” Han Xiao nodded and joked, “Did you miss me?”

“Why would I?” Ames laughed before turning back to look at the battlefield.

On the battlefield, Tolaen completed his transformation before charging forward aggressively, heading straight for Hila. At the same time, a cluster of dark blue mana poured out of him, turning into spells that buffed his body. He continued to grow, and at the same time, a colorful magic circuit appeared on his skin, raising his attributes.

He did not know what new abilities Hila had obtained, but her core power would not change. Based on the data twenty years ago, Hila was a mid-range combatant, with an Esper Ability that controlled a certain type of energy, so he chose to engage her in close combat.

The Demon Race’s True Liberation brought him strong resistance and regeneration, and various magic shields on his skin supported his flesh and muscles. If needed, he could even use it to support a long range spell artillery.

Ames’ power was focused around control and restraint, and she did not have high lethality. In his opinion, his combat style would restrain Ames, so his chances of winning would not have been low. Only because of this did Tolaen have the confidence to challenge Ames.

Seeing her opponent rush forward aggressively, Hila did not retreat, instead choosing to advance, wrapping her dark red death energy around her entire body and shooting forward like a comet.

Boom!

The sound of an impact echoed in everybody’s heads as they slammed into each other. A dark red shockwave exploded at their point of contact!

Just comparing strength, Tolaen, who was blessed with an amplification spell, had the absolute advantage, directly flinging Hila away.

However, instead of taking the chance to follow up, Tolaen suddenly froze, as though finding something strange.

Hila did not stop, stabilizing her body and shooting out rays of death energy from her finger to overwhelm Tolaen.

“Shield!” Tolaen woke up from his reverie, and his gestures rapidly changed as he covered himself in a mana shield shaped like a tortoise’s shell.

The countless death energy arrows hit the shield, collapsing every layer!

Bang bang bang!

Every shot that struck the shield would bring with it a mental shock, which was pressuring to every spectator on the scene. The mental shock did not require a medium and would sound in the minds of everybody near the source.

Hila’s death energy was equipped with multiple damage types and contained both physical and mental attributes. At her level, there was even true damage, so it was difficult to defend against.

Tolaen did not take the attacks passively, however. He continued to advance toward Hila while blocking. While Hila was good at mid-range attacks, she did not adopt any hit-and-run tactics but faced him in a frontal battle.

The figures of the two continuously collided with each other, flying out again and again, leaving behind hundreds of afterimages that were hard to tell apart.

Hila was always someone who gave her all in every battle, so the intensity of the battle gradually progressed beyond the scope of a spar.

Han Xiao was paying attention to the battle, but Nero suddenly flew toward him with Mia tagging along and asked with a voice full of concern, "Godfather, Sister Hila doesn't look too good right now, does she?"

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"You're thinking too much," Han Xiao said before chuckling.

"Isn't it so? Sister Hila gets sent flying each time. Her melee battle abilities are below her opponent's, but she does not engage in hit-and-run. Isn't that a bit..."

Han Xiao smiled as he shook his head. "Carefully observe Tolaen's body. He's not doing as well as you think."

Hearing this, Nero squinted. The speed of a Beyond Grade A was too fast to see clearly, and it took a while for him to notice the abnormal state of Tolaen.

Dark red death energy was coiled all over his body, full of corrosiveness, just like gangrene. It was constantly eroding his mana but could not be removed.

Han Xiao patted Nero's shoulder as he explained, "The time at which they entered the Beyond Grade A realm only differs by a few years. To a Beyond Grade A, such a short amount of time is negligible in terms of their improvements, so their actual combat ability should be in the same tier... Don't look at me. I'm an exception. And within this tier, Hila's Esper Ability has an absolute advantage."

He was not even the least bit concerned about Hila. Among those spectating, only he knew... just how perversely strong the Beyond Grade A Hila was!

Controlling death itself, this was an Esper Ability that was part of the Super High Risk Esper Abilities!

He knew full well that after arriving at the Beyond Grade A realm, Hila's Esper Ability would undergo a qualitative change.

The intelligence regarding Hila's abilities in his past life was overflowing, and it was all teased out using players who threw their lives away.

Firstly, upon reaching the Beyond Grade A realm, Hila had obtained an exclusive passive ability. Every time her death energy struck her target, a stack of a special status, [Death's Erosion], would be added to them.

[Death's Erosion] had a total of fifteen stacks, and the first stack would reduce all enemy recovery skills by twenty percent and defense by fifteen percent.

Reaching the fifth stack would result in a forty percent decrease in their recovery ability, a twenty-five percent decrease in their defense, and the random elimination of a buff every ten seconds.

The tenth stack would result in a sixty percent decrease in their recovery ability, a thirty-five percent decrease in their defense, a ten percent decrease to all attributes, the random elimination of buffs, and the collapse of their cells, reducing their HP by 0.8% every twenty seconds.

At the fifteenth stack, an eighty percent decrease in their recovery ability, a forty-five percent decrease in their defense, a twenty percent decrease to all attributes, the elimination of all buffs, and a loss of one percent of their HP every twelve seconds.

And when all fifteen stacks were placed, Hila could release a special skill without any prerequisites—she could completely detonate all [Death's Erosion] stacks on the enemy and immediately make a death judgment!

The conditions for death judgment were harsh, and generally, they could not be applied to targets that exceeded their level. However, even if the judgment failed, it would still have an effect where it would directly shave off twenty to thirty percent of the enemy's total HP and reduce their max HP by eight to twelve HP.

After detonation, Hila could immediately apply a new round of [Death's Erosion] after a short cooldown, which was extremely scary.

If the enemy wished to stop the stacking of [Death's Erosion] marks, then they had to disperse the death energy settled in their body. If they did not have similar skills, then they had to rely on their own resistance.

The duration of [Death's Erosion] depended on the resistance of the target. The higher the number of stacks, the longer the retention time would be. The first layer usually lasted for only three seconds, but at the third layer, it would last for eight seconds. Furthermore, forcefully resisting would only allow the layers to drop down one by one instead of them completely disappearing, making it extremely hard to completely get rid of.

In addition to this core skill, Hila's death ability had also obtained the passive property of 'Vampiric', which could turn ten to twenty percent of the damage she dealt to a vital target into her own HP. Group battles against her would be tough, as the more enemies she had, the faster she would regain her HP.

In addition, every time her death energy hit a target, there would be three seconds of aftereffects, which would hit her enemies with fifty to seventy percent of her base damage.

Lastly, after Hila was promoted, she had also developed a special ability that was useless against the players yet lethal threat to any others.

That was to use her death ability to deprive the cell vitality of a living person, reducing their upper limit of cell divisions, causing them to lose their life force!

Because of this ability, the vast majority of Beyond Grade As in the universe treated her like a viper, not willing to fight with her.

If you hit me, I'll lose one second of my life, literally. Who would dare spar with you?

However, other than Han Xiao, no one in the universe knew of this point.

Even Tolaen, who was sparring against Hila, was clueless.

Boom boom boom!

The fighting was getting more intense, and the surging mana waves and death energy collided again and again, exploding against each other in a burst of energy.

Tolaen might initially just have wanted to spar, but against the strong attacks of Hila, he could no longer keep his aces hidden and continued to raise his strength. Now, the situation was no longer under his control, almost shifting to a life and death battle.

If an onlooker did not know that both of them had met for the first time, they would probably think that the two had some deep hatred, where one could not live if the other was alive.

Crazy woman!

Tolaen was furious, to the point that his attacks got wilder and fiercer.

Even though his magic shield could ward off most attacks, his body would still be occasionally hit. As the [Death's Erosion] stacks grew, he began to discover something weird.

Not only were his recovery abilities restrained, but the effect of the amplification spell applied to him seemed to be getting weaker, and his body seemed to be unable to bear the magic energy used for transformation.

Moreover, since he had stacked up more than ten stacks, he discovered that his cells were continuously being destroyed, his injuries rapidly increasing. He could barely maintain his current state with his suppressed regeneration.

Her Esper Ability is too strong! Tolaen's heart sank.

While he had also dealt Hila some injuries, they seemed to recover in the blink of an eye, and it was him that seemed to be getting worse because of the death energy raging in his body!

This newly emerged Beyond Grade A had such a high combat capability!

In that case...

Tolaen's eyes grew cold, and mana condensed in his hands. This was followed by a mass of blood pouring out of his fingertips, and they mixed, turning into a strange purple blood flame.

By the side, Austin suddenly narrowed his eyes. As a master mage, he recognized the spell.

The Demon Race's unique advanced forbidden technique—Polluted Blood!

"Not good." Austin felt his heart clench.

This was a forbidden technique, and it transformed the blood of demons through a special method to become polluted and full of inferior genes. This would pollute the blood and genes of the other party, causing irreversible damage to them. Its power was not strong, but it was very damaging, a unique method of the Demon Race.

He knew that Tolaen's usage of this technique would not help his battle situation, but it would contaminate Hila's genes instead. His intention was insidious.

Hila also sensed the danger with her instincts, immediately retreating, but Tolaen raised the purple flame and pursued her. The distance between the two continued to shorten.

"Don't blame me..."

Tolaen had on a vicious expression.

Because Hila was a Black Star Army officer, he had been worried of provoking Han Xiao and did not intend to do so in the first place. But now that he was truly angered, he did not care about being lenient, and he was determined to use more damaging tactics. As a former wanted criminal who had slaughtered surface civilizations for pleasure, he had no moral standard to begin with.

Seeing that she could not get rid of Tolaen, Hila squinted before shooting out a highly concentrated blast of death energy that pierced through his magic shield, hitting his chest squarely.

At this moment, Tolaen's body suddenly expelled a large amount of mana, and his cells eroded by the death energy could no longer bear the amplification effect. Thus, all his buffs disappeared!

"Wha—"

Tolaen's expression changed.

But before he could react, Hila raised a hand, pointing toward him from far away, and squeezed her fingers together abruptly.

[Reaper of Souls]!

The full fifteen stacks of Death's Erosion immediately detonated!

Tolaen's heart tightened, and a life-threatening instinct sounded in his mind. He felt that the death energy in his body had been agitated, and like a bomb ignited by a fuse, it exploded within his body!

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The next moment, intense pain penetrated his body and soul!

Boom!

Under the gazes of everyone present, before his attack could reach Hila, his body burst apart into a mist of blood!