

Mechanic 1151

Chapter 1151 Little Kid Soro, You've Revealed Yourself!

In the Limitless Financial Group's Flickering World branch, a huge virtual star map was suspended in the center of the top-level office, and the picture showed the current pattern of the free competition zone. The Super Star Cluster Alliance was occupying a large majority of the core and central areas of the four Star Clusters. Their territory was represented by the red dye spreading and encroaching upon the blue area representing the other forces.

Sorokin stood with his hand propping up his head, staring at the star map as his eyes flickered.

"After this Crimson Tide, the advanced civilization conflict will affect the structure of the entire universe... There will be business opportunities everywhere!"

After solving the problem of Traveler, the Limitless Financial Group turned back to hug the thighs of the federation and the church once more. As such, they definitely had to contribute toward this turmoil, and at the same time, this was a reasonable opportunity for him to make a fortune in war. As the head of the financial group, Sorokin would definitely not miss it.

"The middleman during the war can promote the business of selling materials, arms, and other resources. Those forces standing on the side of the three Universal Civilizations will definitely need to replenish their materials. This is the number one business opportunity... but it's only a small profit. The true profits are outside of the chessboard, and I also need admission tickets. I should be eligible though..."

Sorokin was muttering to himself, feeling a little excited.

If he could obtain the real benefits of this incident, the size of the Limitless Financial Group could move up again, and a skyrocketing share price would not be a dream.

Beep beep!

Just as he was fantasizing, his personal communicator rang. It was a call from Black Star.

Seeing the caller, Sorokin's expression changed.

He subconsciously trembled a little upon seeing Han Xiao's name now.

But he quickly adjusted his mood, putting on his signature smile as he answered the call. "Your Excellency Black Star, my dear partner, why have you contacted me today?"

"I have a cooperation deal." Han Xiao did not beat around the bush. "The conflict between the three Universal Civilizations and the Super Star Clusters has finally broken out, and it's my chance to settle accounts with the Modo Civilization. Everyone knows that I'll deal with Modo Civilization, so we should have the same interests here, right?"

Sorokin's eyes gleamed as he smiled. "That's right. Ignoring my relationship with the federation and the church, Traveler sold me out, so he and the Modo Civilization have a debt to settle with me."

He still thought that the Modo Civilization was the backer of Traveler. He completely believed the lie Han Xiao weaved at the beginning and had decided to settle his accounts with Modo Civilization.

“Since we have the same goal this time, there’s a basis for cooperation. You’re a commercial organization and are not suitable to intervening in armed conflict. Thus, I need you to provide funds and materials on a large scale, okay?”

“The Black Star Army’s influence in the Flickering World is much larger than mine, and you still need me to supply war funds?” Sorokin raised his brow.

“The more, the merrier. I’ll never find them enough.” Han Xiao did not feel embarrassed at all.

While he was not lacking in funds, it was definitely more comfortable to spend the money of others than his own.

Sorokin gritted his teeth in secret, cursing his shamelessly while his smile remained unchanged. “Yep, I’m happy to fund your war activities against the Modo Civilization.”

“I’ll ask the clerk to send a list of supplies over later. Just follow it.”

“...Okay.” Sorokin gritted his teeth.

“There’s another thing. With your foresight, you must have seen the new business opportunities.”

Sorokin hesitated a little, having a bad premonition. “You mean...” “Stop pretending. The conflict between the three Universal Civilizations and the Super Star Cluster Alliance reaches everywhere. Although the free competition zone is the target of competition, the three Universal Civilizations will not just gaze there and will inevitably open up a second front to turn the tides. They will target the foundations of the Super Star Clusters in the explored universe through putting political, economic, and other sanctions to pressure them... and here are the huge business opportunities.”

The Flickering World was the center of the storm, and the main stage of the armed conflict. However, there would be another battlefield outside this chessboard, which was the three Universal Civilizations exerting pressure on the Super Star Clusters themselves, making them too tired to cope, which indirectly served as a way for the Super Star Cluster to give up their advantages in the free competition zone as soon as possible. This business opportunity lay in the economic sanctions. Targeted by the three Universal Civilizations, the business community of the Super Star Clusters would experience turbulence, and a large number of companies would be unluckily hit. This was a good opportunity for other universal financial groups to enter the market, biting off a piece of meat from the Super Star Clusters.

The Limitless Financial Group was close to the three Universal Civilizations, and being a top financial group would naturally give them the qualifications to enter the market and feast on it. Han Xiao was eyeing this opportunity, preparing to take a share.

At the same time, this plan would also better allow him to complete the mission of the Kunde Race. The remaining mission requirement was for him to cause huge losses to the Modo Civilization. Killing the opponent’s army was one way, and destroying the financial stability of the Modo Civilization was another direction.

Moreover, the scene of the death of the Kunde Race leader was still vivid to him. From an emotional point of view, Han Xiao also wished to beat Modo as badly as possible.

Sorokin was a little unwilling. "I haven't decided to intervene yet. Besides, you're already a guest of the three Universal Civilizations and can enter the venue without me. Why use my channels?"

"Your channels are more suitable." Han Xiao smiled without any shame. While the Germinal Financial Group under his banner could independently enter the market, compared with the Limitless Financial Group, his business scope was still a lot smaller. It would not be as easy as utilizing the Limitless Financial Group's channels. In this way, not only could he borrow someone's strength to develop, he would also not feel the pinch. Of course, for Sorokin, this was akin to grabbing his business. He felt as though he had swallowed a fly, and he felt an urge to command his factory to begin manufacturing punching bags with Black Star's face on them so that he could vent his frustrations.

"That's not too good..."

Sorokin was unwilling and wanted to avoid the request.

However, Han Xiao's tone suddenly changed, becoming more subtle. "Speaking of which, I recently found a historical figure that interested me when I was looking up information."

Sorokin was taken aback for a moment, wondering why Han Xiao changed the topic all of a sudden.

He suppressed his impatience and pretended to be curious. "Who?"

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes, staring interestedly at Sorokin as he spoke. "Rovell Sissock, one of the Primordial Ones with the name of Soul Emperor. Have you heard of him before?"

"... I have, but why has he aroused your interest?"

"Oh, I was collecting Primal Esper Ability Entities a while ago, and this one called the Soul Flame caught my attention. When I checked its information, I found out that its last host was someone called the Soul Emperor. It didn't matter much to me, but not long after, I happened to run into the current host of the Soul Flame, and he told me some astonishing news. It turns out that the Primordial Soul Emperor did not die in a war as the data showed. His soul managed to escape, and he hid himself. Due to his special ability, he might just have survived to the present day... and I also discovered that his ability is very similar to yours. Don't you think it's magical?"

"Haha, it's just a coincidence... but a Primordial One that's survived to this day? It's really a bit powerful."

"I agree. I feel that it's a coincidence... Yes, let's get back on topic. We're working together to intervene in this matter, and it's actually a win-win situation. Isn't it good to get a larger share together?"

"Oh, that makes sense. Alright, you've convinced me. We'll put it as such. When the time comes, I'll open up the channels to help the Germinal Financial Group enter the venue."

"Haha, I wish us a happy cooperation, and I won't continue to disturb you."

"Alright, to a happy cooperation."

The moment the call ended, the smile on Sorokin's face vanished.

Ka-cha!

An electric spark flashed as the communicator was crushed into a piece of scrap iron.

"This guy has discovered my secret!"

Sorokin looked suspicious.

'Soul Emperor' Rovell Sissock was indeed his earliest identity!

Although he did not reveal anything when he spoke just now, a storm was actually brewing in his heart.

Were it not for his psychological qualities, Sorokin would not have been so calm after someone had called out his previous identity, and his expression would have revealed the answer.

Sorokin did not believe that Black Star was absolutely certain of being able to see through his identity. It had to be because of some certain intelligence he had that allowed him to make an association, so he asked to test him out.

With so much time in between, he had already gone through many identities. The other party could not possibly have real evidence on him.

Just purely from an identity viewpoint, it did not matter even if he knew that Sorokin was the Soul Emperor. He had no grudge nor grievance with the Soul Emperor identity. Even if there were any enemies, they had long since disappeared in the long river of history. What Sorokin was afraid of was the chain reaction caused by the exposure of his identity. If the three Universal Civilizations and Beyond Grade As knew that he was actually a Primordial One who had survived to this day, they would definitely be jealous. Then, how could he maintain his weak image, continuing to be a pig to eat a tiger?

Furthermore, he was quite sure that he was the only Primordial One who had survived so far. The three Universal Civilizations would definitely move when they heard the news. Just thinking about it made him shiver.

Now that the bargaining chips were in Han Xiao's hands, Sorokin could only accept Han Xiao's proposal, much to his chagrin.

"While Black Star does not have any proof on his hands, if I allow him to continue his investigation, he'll definitely find out all the identities I've used before..."

Sorokin's expression changed slightly.

The identity of Soul Emperor being blown was okay, since it was a positive one, but the other identities he had used were not so clean.

It was to the point that when the Beyond Grade As had received a cleansing, his shadow was behind it!

While any traces were practically cleaned up over the years, if someone managed to uncover it, the consequences would be unimaginable! Right now, he only wished to let Black Star think that the Soul Emperor identity was enough to blackmail him, so he would not pursue it any further.

“Even if I change my identity again, there’ll always be a risk for exposure. Only by getting rid of Black Star can I get it over and done with...”

Sorokin’s expression was uncertain.

Chapter 1152 The Worrying Cancer of the Universe

When the anti-monopoly regulations of the three Universal Civilizations were released, the effect was akin to war mobilization. The four Star Clusters making up the free competition zone began to surge as all the watching forces made their choices.

Only a small number of forces were unwilling to get involved, and they thus reluctantly gave up on their investment that had lasted for several years, withdrawing from the competition. Most of the forces were unwilling to get out, and they deployed forces to stand on the three Universal Civilizations’ factions, engaging the agents of the Super Star Cluster Alliance in frontal battles within the inner and central ring Star Clusters.

Just like how the civilizations predicted earlier, when the fourth exploration phase was close to being completely over, the trend of free development would gradually reverse to frequent armed looting. With the outbreak of large-scale conflicts, the flames of war spread rapidly. Under the attention of the entire universe, the free competition zone entered a state of war.

The armed forces of the majority of organizations launched a blockade, immediately curbing the expansion trend for the Super Star Cluster Alliance. The four Star Clusters opened up countless battle fronts, in which the stronghold planets on the edge of each faction’s territory continued to repeat the process of losing and recovering, appearing on the map as though sharp teeth were constantly chomping up and down.

The Emerald Star Cluster was divided into fourteen battle zones, most of which were located in the inner and central ring regions. The bridgehead of the Super Star Cluster Alliances scattered in the outer edge area was under the most intense siege, with their strongholds quickly falling. However, the majority of people present just wished to seize more territory. Thus, the intensity of the war was still under control, where everyone tacitly banned the use of Planetary Obliteration weapons, focusing mainly on their fleets and surface combat. After all, if they blew the planet up, there would be no territory left to grab. Thus, the surface combat weapons and the role of Supers were very important.

The large-scale war also represented the rapid depletion of battleships, ammunition, weapons, and equipment. Demand determined the market and gave a large number of opportunities to the financial groups to make money during wartime.

The financial groups in the Flickering World sold various war resources. This included the Black Star Army’s Germinal Financial Group whose orders were skyrocketing. The logistics department’s assembly line was in full operation, shipping boxes of arms to the free competition zone.

On the other side, at Han Xiao’s order, the armed forces of the army assembled at the army’s frontline exploration stronghold, attacking the Ferdinand Star System, where the Modo Civilization was located.

At present, the regular forces of the Super Star Cluster Alliance had yet to be activated, and their agent forces were used as the outer defense lines. The Black Star Army's forces advanced straight, deep into the defense line, exchanging fire with the agents belonging to the Super Star Cluster Alliance.

In the inner ring sector of the Emerald Star Cluster, a stronghold on the edge of the Super Star Cluster Alliance was attacked by a large armed organization under the Super Star Cluster Alliance, and their main force was temporarily stationed there.

And today, this planet was raided by the advanced forces of Black Star.

With the stronghold as the center, a hemispherical sky-blue energy shield was inverted on the surface, covering tens of millions of kilometers. Above the shield was an intense interstellar war. The defense fleet was struggling to resist the attack of the Black Star Army's fleet, slowly being smashed to pieces.

Small spaceships acted like hummingbirds, wandering throughout the crisscrossing light cannons in the battlefield, up and down, left and right, using thrilling maneuvers to avoid the artillery fire while shooting their assault capsules from time to time, smashing through the enemy battleships. The capsules would penetrate deep into the ship's armor to help the players land on the enemy ship.

The blue tail flames of the rear thrusters from the heavy assault battleship formation left traces of light on the dark battlefield, shining as though they were a swarm of meteors. Supported by the powerful dark matter engine, the assault ship array chopped through the formation of the enemy, tearing the defense fleet into pieces. Bit by bit, they shattered the enemy's coordinated defense.

With the Army Commander being one of the best Mechanics in the universe, the ship manufacturing technology of the logistics department was naturally outstanding. The performance and firepower advantage of their battleships were similarly dominant. The dense energy beam easily penetrated the defensive lines of the stronghold defenders and hit the protective shield like a torrential downpour, creating a series of cobweb-like glowing cracks.

In the headquarters of the shaking ground base, the atmosphere was extremely tense, and the base commander stared at the durability of the shield anxiously.

"The reinforcements aren't here yet?"

"Commander, the other allies are unwilling to fight against the Black Star Army, and they refuse to come to our rescue. Only the nearest MODO Civilization has sent troops, and they are coming through the Hyperdrive Base Station at the moment."

"Damn it, these b*stards... Notify each captain that they cannot allow the Black Star Army to break into our base! Once they send in their immortals en masse, we're finished!" the base commander screamed.

The nickname for the players, the Cancer of the Universe, had spread throughout the galaxy, and they were unanimously known as the King of Ground Warfare. If a battle was maintained within a fleet, they could hold out for a period of time. However, the moment the Immortals broke through the ground defense line, there would only be one outcome: a one-sided defeat.

Faced with the Cancer of the Universe—who were not afraid of death, could resurrect, and disregarded their lives—there was no soldier that would not feel jealous. When confronted with such an opponent,

no matter how many casualties the enemy created, it was useless. The ground army would have no morale to go to war.

There was no need to even mention the tens of millions of Immortals that the Black Star Army sat on. Now that they were rushing toward the battle zone controlled by the Modo Civilization, it was basically a walking meat grinder.

Even the agent forces of the Super Star Cluster Alliance hurriedly stayed away from the direction the Black Star Army was taking out of fear, not daring to obstruct them. Their goal was clear; they were there just for Modo, and no one wanted to waste their troops for nothing.

“Commander, the durability of the base’s protective shield has fallen below twenty percent. Three of our energy furnaces have overheated and are expected to break in eleven minutes and twenty-seven seconds. Please give instructions!” the operation team leader said in a flustered tone.

The base commander gritted his teeth while looking at the retreating fleet. “Prepare the reserve fleet to take off at any time to seize air supremacy. Preheat all anti-aircraft turrets and activate all missile wells. The moment the shield is broken, fire immediately. All Machinery divisions, armored divisions, and Supers, get ready for ground combat...”

A series of orders were issued, and the soldiers and vehicles quickly got in position, looking up at the battlefield in outer space. From time to time, soldiers could be heard gulping nervously in the communication channel.

In this tense atmosphere, every second seemed like a year. Under the horrified gazes of the base soldiers, the blue shield covering their heads exploded into light motes.

The next moment, a series of whistling sounded ensued.

Pew! Pew! Pew!

Airdrop capsules with shields passed through the net of firepower, dropping down one by one onto various locations within the base, emitting white smoke.

The moment the hatch slid open, teams of heavily-armed Grade B players stepped onto the ground, blatantly charging toward the ground troops.

The quickly approaching Immortals looked akin to the Devil himself in the eyes of the base soldiers. They mustered up their courage and rushed up with an angry roar.

Boom!

Two torrents on the ground clashed!

The Grade B realm was already considered the backbone of the universe, and the moment they came into contact, the more than a hundred thousand players smashed the armored divisions onto the ground, frontally crushing them. The vehicles piled up or exploded, the light of the flames flickering off the players’ mechanical suits.

The player waves swallowed the area one after another, flooding the battlefield composed of steel and flesh, causing huge casualties.

It was not that there were no players besieged to death, but the troops of the base saw that every player who they tried their best to kill was resurrected on the battlefield the next moment. Their work was an act of futility.

Despair took hold of every soldier's heart, and the seeds of fear blossomed, forming their deepest nightmare.

Very quickly, the first soldier whose mentality collapsed fled in a panic. This was akin to a signal that caused more to desert their troops and run.

"They're all devils!"

"This is a losing battle. Just run!"

"I don't want to die!" Desperate shouts rang out from the communication channel, and the base's defenses quickly collapsed.

The base command originally wished to go into battle to inspire morale but was shot with a super long-ranged concentrated energy projectile by a Cannon Master and was immediately turned to ash.

At this moment, the cosmos not far from the planet flashed, and the support fleet of the Modo Civilization appeared at the warp point. Seeing the state of the battle, they knew that it was too far gone.

"We've arrived too late. They've already been attacked by the Cancer of the Universe. There's no saving them."

The captain ordered the fleet to turn around immediately.

Bang! The conference table was pounded hard.

"Tell me, how do we deal with the Black Star Army?" Roddick, the Commander of the Modo Civilization Expedition Fleet, was furious. His roar echoed throughout the conference room.

Before the war, the Black Star Army could not attack the Modo Civilization alone due to the help of the Super Star Cluster Alliance. But now that the latter was too occupied with its own war, this was the best time to start.

This was supposed to be the surrogate war phase, where the Super Star Clusters would only watch the situation, but because of the Black Star Army, the Modo Civilization had to move out in advance, losing their qualification to wait and watch. They had fallen into a disadvantage. "Most of our allies are unwilling to fight head-on with the Black Star Army. We can only resist it personally, not allowing him to enter our territory."

"The other Super Star Clusters will not sit back and watch our line of defense being breached. They will provide support."

"Even so, their support will be limited. The goal of the Black Star Army is clear-us, and us alone. Everyone is worried that intervening too much will cause the Black Star Army to drag them down as well." Everyone discussed their thoughts in low volumes, and the atmosphere in the room was gloomy.

If it was any other armed organization, the problem was not that serious. After all, the Modo Civilization was still a Super Star Cluster Civilization and had sufficient armed forces.

However, with the current limitation to the war intensity, Supers were very important. The Immortals of the Black Star Army were too devious. Even if they could stop the Immortals for a while, they would not be able to withstand the casualties.

“We can only let the Immortals deal with other Immortals. We have also recruited many Immortal organizations. As long as they are given enough money, they can be dispatched to resist the Black Star Army,” Lagos proposed. “We can only do this for now.”

It was a loss for them to take out their normal Supers, whom they had painstakingly cultivated, to fight against the players. Only Immortals could fight against Immortals.

Roddick was gloomy. “Unfortunately, we’ll need to force the Black Star Army to withdraw if we want to get out of this situation.”

“What should we do, reconcile with Black Star?”

“That’s impossible.” Roddick decisively shook his head. “Only by getting rid of Black Star himself will the army fall apart... Unfortunately, it’s not possible for us.”

“Well then, if we change the direction, it’s okay to cause Black Star some trouble so that he has no time to take care of us.”

“You have a plan?”

“Not at the moment,” Lagos shook his head thoughtfully. “But I may have a way to deal with Black Star...”

Chapter 1153 Arrangements

Roddick’s eyes flashed, and he asked, “What’s your idea?”

“What do you think Black Star’s weakness is?” Lagos beat around the bush.

Hearing this, everyone fell into deep thought.

“Black Star has amazing strength. His fleshy body is tough, his foundation is huge, and his influence is at the peak...” Roddick’s expression was unsightly. “I can’t think of any weakness.”

“I’ll rephrase, what does Black Star care about?”

“His troops? But we can’t shake his foundation at all... His mother planet? It’s heavily protected. There’s no way to strike, and this sort of small problem is not enough to make Black Star feel overwhelmed... His officers? As far as I know, all important members of the Black Star Army are equipped with the transmission device similar to a Multi-Dimensional Sky Opening Transportation Device, which cannot be blocked. It’s impossible to threaten Black Star with this...”

The more Roddick spoke, the more he despaired. In his opinion, unless the upper echelons intended to encircle and suppress Black Star without considering the casualties, there was nothing that they could do to the opponent.

Lagos shook his head.

“Black Star is indeed powerful, but we’re overthinking it. Get rid of your inner doubts and re-examine him. There are still some ways to achieve our goal, which could be divided into direct and indirect routes.”

Hope welled up back in Roddick. Over the past few years within the free competition zone, Black Star had become a tumor to him. “Hurry and explain.” “The direct route is simple. Start with Black Star himself. While you cannot destroy his body, his soul is definitely not as tough as his Indestructible Body.”

After hearing this, Roddick was immediately discouraged. “So what? Even if Black Star’s soul is relatively weak, it’s not something we can target. You should at least be at the level of a pinnacle Beyond Grade A to affect him.”

“No, no, no, look at this file.”

Lagos swiped his finger on the virtual screen, releasing a confidential file.

Glancing over, Roddick muttered to himself, “Marwell Project File, Number 023, Project name: [Soul Swap Twins)... What’s this?” “This is a confidential file sent to me by the superiors not long ago. I don’t know much about this Marwell Project, but according to the description, this plan is one of the civilization’s secrets to cultivate special Espers.

Everyone nodded, not finding it surprising.

Because they coveted the position of hegemony that were held by the three Universal Civilizations, the Super Star Cluster Alliance had always known to hide its trump cards, and they had formulated many secret special talent training plans. After the Tragedy of the Pinnacles, there were even more plans. Some of the Beyond Grade As of their direct line that were hidden in the secondary dimensions were the products of their training plans.

This matter was considered a semi-open secret among the advanced civilizations, and the three Universal Civilizations also knew something about it, but they were unaware of the details behind each plan.

“You’re saying these two can deal with Black Star?” Roddick expressed his doubt. “Impossible. These twins are not even at the Beyond Grade A level. Can they even hurt him?”

“You also subconsciously fell into a misunderstanding. It’s not just another Beyond Grade A that can hurt one! While the twins are weak, they are the only qualified ones to be able to utilize a Universal Treasure that is classified as a Space Wonder. It possesses a miraculous effect toward the Soul and has never appeared before. It might work on Black Star.”

Roddick hesitated a while before gritting his teeth. “Since there’s no other way, apply to the upper echelons for them to dispatch the twins to help... What’s the indirect route?” “For the indirect route, we start from the people around Black Star. Throughout his life so far, the people he has acknowledged are few. Among them, his relationship with the Dragon Emperor is more subtle. If something goes wrong with the Dragon Emperor, he might temporarily throw everything aside and restrain the Black Star Army.”

Roddick was taken aback. “Why use the Dragon Emperor as a target?”

“An officer like Hila will definitely be heavily protected. Compared to her, the chances of targeting the Dragon Emperor are higher.”

“Didn’t you say that he will have equipped the people he values with the teleporters. The Dragon Emperor can’t be defenseless, so how do we deal with her?”

“What I’m talking about is not a siege. She’s a Beyond Grade A and cannot be easily attacked...” Lagos took a deep breath. “But imagine, the Dragon Emperor’s temper suddenly changes, and she begins to commit heinous crimes. It’s impossible for Black Star to turn a blind eye toward her actions.”

“You mean...”

“I have two plans. One is to let the Soul Swap Twins go to Dragon Emperor and distort her thoughts, so the success rate is more straightforward. The second is to find a way to get the Dragon Emperor trapped into a vortex of anger, causing her to perform heinous crimes such as randomly killing innocents and breaking the peace treaty. Black Star will have no choice but to divert his attention.”

“The first one can be thrown aside. How do we go about the second plan?”

“It can be blaming her or causing her to go crazy. According to the data, she has a very obvious weakness...” Lagos’ eyes flickered. “As for specifics, some consideration is needed.”

Hearing this, Roddick’s eyes lit up. It seems like this is pretty reliable!

Among the battle zones of the four Star Clusters, the Ferdinand Star System of the Emerald Star Cluster was the most eye-catching. The reason was the Black Star Army being so powerful that it tore through the outer line of defense formed by the agent forces, pointing directly to Modo Civilization, which was located in the central area.

While the Black Star Army only stated that it would target the Modo Civilization, this would inevitably affect the whole scenario. The current behavior of the army had a profound impact on the overall battle situation of the Emerald Star Cluster, and the outer defense circle that was constructed by the Super Star Cluster Alliance now showed a gap.

Using the attacking direction of the Black Star Army as a breakthrough point, a large number of organizations in the faction of the three Universal Civilizations chose to follow them, trying to enter the Modo Civilization territory through this gap, which was in the hinterlands of the Super Star Cluster Alliance.

The Super Star Cluster Alliance could only plug up the gap with their reinforcements. Even if the agents’ forces were not willing, they had to come to curb the advancement of the three Universal Civilizations’ forces headed by the Black Star Army.

The Modo Civilization also had to supplement a part of their armies to cooperate with the Northern Battlefield to block the Black Star Army, barely restraining them around the fifth to seventh Star Zones on the frontline.

This front has also turned into a war vortex of the Emerald Star Cluster, attracting a large number of armed fleets to gather and turn it into a meat grinder. The Ferdinand Star System had become the most intense area of this current battle.

The war in the Flickering World was in full swing, and the three Universal Civilizations were not idle either. They promulgated measures to impose multi-domain sanctions on all the Super Star Cluster Civilizations, eroding the national power of each Super Star Cluster on the political and economic level, so they could not concentrate on this war.

Thus, there were also a large number of business personnel from the Germinal Financial Group that had joined the fleet returning to the explored universe and travelling to the various Star Fields.

In the spaceship, the current vice president of the Germinal Financial Group, Iapetus, looked out of the porthole, the brilliant tail flame reflected in his eyes as he muttered to himself, "In the blink of an eye, over twenty years have passed..."

Touching his little moustache, a complicated look flashed past his eyes. The image of him being taken away by Black Star was still vivid. In a flash, Iapetus had turned from a youngster with a slight talent in business to a strong, experienced businessman. He had even risen to the position of vice president.

At first, he was reluctant, but he felt more at ease as time passed. In order to get promoted, he had worked hard to showcase his value. Right now, he was already accustomed to working for the army, helping them to seek more benefits.

Every time he thought back to his past, Iapetus felt as though it was all a dream.

Originally, he was just the head of a small financial group. He had never expected to become an important civilian officer under the Black Star Army, boarding the top stage of the universe.

By obtaining the opportunity created by turbulent times, they would shake the economic stability of an advanced civilization, not only earning huge profits but also affecting the state of the universe. This was one of the top achievements of the galactic merchants!

Those who could do this were definitely hegemony in the universe.

Without Black Star as the guide, he might only have made his name in the small pond of a Star System. It would be difficult to imagine doing things he had done in his current life.

If asked whether he felt gratitude to Black Star, there was indeed some, but Iapetus sighed more at how much his destiny had changed after meeting up with Black Star.

At this moment, the secretary walked in, holding a digital document in his hands. "Vice President, the Limitless Financial Group has drawn up a cooperation agreement and needs your signature."

"Oh, bring it over." Collecting his thoughts, Iapetus glanced through the document once before signing his name.

He was clear that this was a trip with a mission.

Cooperating with the Limitless Financial Group to take a share of the economic sanctions was only a superficial reason. He had two underlying missions to perform. The first was to focus on combating the

Modo Civilization in the economic field, and the other was to help the intelligence personnel monitor the material and military movements of the Super Star Clusters.

The lifeline of the Super Star Cluster Alliance in maintaining this war lay in their logistics and transportation. The moment their backend assistance stopped, the troops in the free competition zone would just become a lone army looking to be defeated. Thus, the Army Commander privately gave him a task to allow him to pass through the Super Star Cluster and detect the transportation lines of these civilizations.

As long as they could control or cut off the transportation lines, the troops in the free competition zone would just be a group of turtles within an urn.

After more than twenty years of contact, Iapetus was aware that Han Xiao was farsighted. He knew well that his Army Commander was already making arrangements and that he was just one of the chess pieces that needed to be placed in a suitable position.

Meanwhile, in an exploration base of the Black Star Army, a group of players gathered in a private room, making a hubbub of noise.

“It’s been almost twenty minutes. Why were we called over?”

“You guys were also notified by Phillip?”

“That’s right. I don’t know why we’re here.”

Everyone there had just arrived at the exploration base, ready to join the next fleet to attack the Modo Civilization, but they had suddenly received a notice from Phillip, asking them to come to this room to standby.

This situation was generally a sign of a mission trigger. Only a few would refuse, so there were about two thousand people within the room. They were basically part of the group that had joined the Black Star Army since its inception, and some were even members of the Chinese clubs.

Suddenly, a strange noise sounded in the room.

Buzz!

A virtual projection appeared, which immediately attracted everyone’s attention. Many of them gasped.

“Black Star!”

The projection that appeared was Han Xiao.

Looking around at the curious faces, Han Xiao nodded in greeting.

“Everyone, it was I who asked you to come here. You are all veterans who have been fighting with the army for many years, which makes you trustworthy. I have picked the best out of all of you, and there’s a secret mission I hope to entrust to you.” Upon hearing this, everyone present widened their eyes.

We’re players specially selected by the Army Commander?

Ah, a hidden mission!

“What would you need us to do?” some of the bolder players shouted.

Han Xiao smiled.

“I require you all... to act as spies!”

He then released the ‘Secret Mission’ he had prepared earlier to the players present. All those on scene lost focus in their eyes as they turned their attention to the interface.

Since many of the foreign clubs had planted their spies there, Han Xiao was prepared to give them a taste of their own medicine. He was going to send some players to pretend to join those guild alliances to inquire about news. He had also conveniently planted a few spies in the Modo Civilization to investigate the transportation lines as well.

For this reason, he would conceal the files of these players in the army, ‘washing out’ their identities and creating a scenario not unlike that of Infernal Affairs[1]. This was nothing difficult for a Beyond Grade A.

He did not wish to discover the Modo transportation line to completely ruin the hope of the Modo Civilization but to better encircle and fight their reinforcements. He realized that the Modo Civilization would not give up on their desire in the Flickering World that easily. As long as they could survive, the Modo Civilization would insist on sending in troops and continuously throwing soldiers into this meat grinder.

Not only would it allow him to complete his own mission, it would also keep the Black Star Army in a state of intervention. After all, once Modo was gone, the Black Star Army would no longer have an excuse to intervene in the war.

This was just one corner of the strategy. Han Xiao was secretly laying out many traps, preparing to weave a large web to cover the Modo Civilization, turning it into a prey in the web with nowhere to escape. For this reason, he even secretly contacted a person he had not talked to in a long time, a dangerous antisocialist and a powerful demagogue, a person who was perfectly useful for such situations in his mind...

Rossellin!

It was not difficult for him to imagine what sort of changes would take place within the Modo Civilization...

Chapter 1154 Dilemma of the Silver Revolutionary

On a colonial planet of a certain Star System level civilization, within a rented temporary stronghold, the senior officers of the Silver Revolutionary Army gathered together, most of them with a melancholic look.

The current leader, Edmond, frowned. “While the competition in the Flickering World has caused turbulence in the universe, the efficiency of our publicity program is far from expected. It could even be said that progress is stagnant.”

The Silver Revolutionary Army had predicted this conflict in the Flickering World, so they wanted to take advantage of the turbulent times as an opportunity to grow their team. But when the conflict broke out, the spread of their ideals did not go as easily as they thought.

One of the men wearing glasses pushed his glasses up as he spoke. "Based on our survey, the popularity of the three Universal Civilizations in the universe is 1,174.1% higher compared to the same period as predicted by our mathematical mode. In other words, the three Universal Civilizations have obtained more trust from the people in this period. The turmoil of the Flickering World should have allowed the galactic residents to see their domineering attitude, but it did not drastically deteriorate the image of the three Universal Civilizations, unlike what we predicted."

"How could this be..."

"The root cause of this deviation lies in the sudden Intelligent Plague incident not too long ago... This disaster scared countless galactic residents, and the three Universal Civilizations responded in a timely manner. It only took about half a year to resolve it, and this extreme universal crisis allowed the galactic residents to see the power of the three Universal Civilizations, which is what they wanted.

"Black Star also played an important role in this, and it can be said that if not for his achievements, along with the Mechanic Emperor's ambitions attracting hatred, the three Universal Civilizations would have lost a large wave of popularity in this Flickering World incident. Right now, their foundations are still stable."

Hearing this, the senior officers of the Silver Revolutionary Army could not help but reveal bitter expressions.

The conflict of the Flickering World should have been a once in a lifetime opportunity for them to develop, but now, it seemed that this opportunity would no longer meet their expectations, as the effect was ninety percent lower than expected.

Without this, everyone felt that their future was quite gloomy, and they lamented in secret, complaining about how the Intelligent Plague had destroyed their plans.

But everyone was unaware that this Intelligent Plague should have been the important event in their rise. Due to the butterfly effect Han Xiao caused, this had become an obstacle to their development.

Edmond turned his head to look at the dignified woman who was leaning on the sofa not too far away and asked, "Mentor, how do you see it?"

Everyone gazed at her. While they were all in the upper echelons, they subconsciously understood that Rossellin was their true spiritual pillar.

Rossellin swilled her wine glass as she indifferently replied, "Since development is now blocked, take your time. The hearts and wills of people are ephemeral like smoke, and the current support may change in the future. Be more patient."

"This..." One of them opened his mouth in hesitation. "You don't have a way to solve this problem?"

Hearing this, Rossellin laughed. "Haha, do you think I'm omnipotent? I can only follow the general trend to plan out details. I can't change anything with my own strength." As she spoke, Rossellin stood up, walking to the front as she smiled. "Since there are difficulties with our development now, I plan to take out some time to work on something else. Black Star sent me a request a while ago." Everyone got a shock.

“You still maintain contact with Black Star?” Edmond was surprised.

“Why not?” Rossellin casually shrugged. “After all, I was an officer under him for a period of time. He didn’t stop me from leaving, so I technically owe him a favor.”

Edmond’s expression turned serious as he solemnly replied, “Right now, we’re plotting against the three Universal Civilizations. Who’s Black Star? An important ally of the three Universal Civilizations! How can you still maintain contact with him!”

“To be precise, it was Black Star who contacted me.” Rossellin did not think much of it. “Besides, I think he’s well aware of what we’re trying to do. He probably thinks of us as a joke.”

Edmond’s expression was grave as he paced around the room. He finally said hesitantly, “What does Black Star want you to do?”

“He wants me to go to the Modo Civilization and intensify their social contradictions.” Rossellin clicked her tongue. “He really trusts in my abilities...”

One of the Silver Revolutionary Army members was shocked. “How can this be? It’s one thing not to expose us, but he even asks for your help to fan the hatred in another civilization. Isn’t he someone who cares for the masses?”

Rossellin laughed derisively. “How could a man who broke into the decades-long established foundation be as kind-hearted as the news says? It’s just that he knows how to maintain his image and give the dirty work to others. Now, it’s my turn to work as well...”

With that, she did not wait for the rest to reply, pushing open the door and leaving the room.

Black Star’s request for her was to try and provoke the internal conflicts within the Modo Civilization, and she was given free rein. Rossellin already had a vague idea of how she should act. In her opinion, Modo Civilization was made up of three main races, and thus, it was very suitable for implanting radical split thoughts. Speaking of which, she herself originally wanted to revolutionize the lives of the three Universal Civilizations’ citizens but ended up turning around to revolutionize the lives of people in the Super Star Clusters, who were supposed to be her supporters.

Rossellin did not mind it, however. Unlike most of the upper echelons in the Silver Revolutionary Army, she did not believe that she needed to do something big. Be it against the three Universal Civilizations or the Super Star Clusters, as long as she could create upheaval in society, she did not care who the opponent was.

Within a certain asteroid belt in the explored universe was the secret base of the Assassin’s Society.

Ding ding dang dang!

Hundreds of assassin apprentices in training suits were practicing in the open-air training ground. Only the sound of weapons colliding could be heard.

In the stands of the training ground, several instructors stood with their arms folded, supervising the practice of the apprentices while Lothaire stood at the very front, staring with indifferent eyes. It had been almost twenty years since Han Xiao ordered him to secretly form the Assassin’s Society. Over the

years, he had left a frightening record of assassinations on the black market and secretly recruited many assassins, constantly training new people. Now, the organization had reached a certain scale.

Beep beep.

His communicator rang.

Lothaire glanced at it before walking off. "Stop the training, assemble the staff, and prepare the spaceships. We're heading off."

Several of the officers showed curious expressions.

"Where are we going?"

"New mission. We're going to Modo."

Lothaire concisely spoke as his figure disappeared down the passage. He had no interest in authority and always kept in his mind that the organization he established was a sharp blade that Black Star hid in the dark, stabbing the target Black Star pointed to.

In the Primeval Star River, within the Modo Civilization's secret base..

Ta, ta, ta! Heavy footsteps sounded in the corridor outside as a person slowly approached a door.

With a creaking sound, the door was opened, and dazzling light shone in.

A group of soldiers stood at the door, with only their silhouette seen against the light. The commander said in an emotionless tone, "Soul Swap Twins, there's a mission."

There was no response at first, only deathly silence.

But this silence did not last long. A rustling sound came from a corner where the light could not reach, and a humanoid creature enveloped in shadowy fog walked out of the darkness. There was a baby-sized figure lying on his shoulders, wrapped in the same shadowy fog. Both of them only revealed a pair of blood red eyes, and no one could see what sort of species they were. Obviously, some kind of abnormality had happened to them, and the only telling factor was their size. These two were the Soul Swap Twins. The person with a normal growth was the elder brother, while the infant was the younger one. "Modo allowed us to go out again?" The younger one lying on the shoulders spoke with a hoarse voice, not unlike that of an old man.

Seeing the two, the officer immediately replied, "Same old rules. Immediately get on board with us. You can only get in touch with the Soul Swapper once you get to the mission location."

"Who are we dealing with this time?" the elder brother asked with some resentment.

"Black Star!"

Hearing this name, both twins shared a look, inexplicable fluctuations in their eyes.

There was no tension but rather a faint excitement and greed, as though they had discovered a treasure.

At this moment, the officer took out a magical orb, saying, "The target has an ability to make predictions. This magic orb is inscribed with a magic circuit that will cover your aura, so when it's worn on the body, it can effectively interfere and mislead any prophetic abilities."

After the magic orb was given, the group of soldiers stepped forward, leaving the room with the Soul Swap Twins. Each soldier had a tense expression, their footsteps subconsciously speeding up, obviously wishing for the twins to be boarded as quickly as possible.

Even if they did not have the Space Wonder called the Soul Swapper, the twins were still quite dangerous, spending most of their time in prison.

While their realms were not high, long term contact with them would cause people to have more hallucinations, lowering their Sanity values.

At the same time, Aesop raised his head to look out of Floating Dragon Island in suspicion.

Aesop closed his eyes, directly activating his abilities. His thoughts seemed to pass through the dimensions until he locked onto the territory of the Modo Civilization.

"The feeling comes from Modo Civilization. What sort of abnormalities? It seems like they've used a masking device. The perception is vague, and the specific possibility of a future cannot be seen either..."

Aesop frowned uneasily.

Chapter 1155 Chess Player

In the Army Commander's Black Star Palace office, the bright and shining star map sand table was suspended a meter above the ground, like a flat picture scroll, and the blue light reflected on Han Xiao's face.

The star map sand table was a miniature map of the explored universe, of which two areas were illuminated. One of them was the free competition zone of the Flickering World, while the other was the Modo Civilization's territory within the Primeval Star River.

In these two areas, there were many scattered light spots. Above each spot was a head or influence emblem, which represented the identity of the light spot. These included people such as Lothaire and Rossellin.

Han Xiao slowly paced around the sand table, moving the light spots representing Lothaire and Rossellin to the Modo Civilization area as he whispered to himself, "Rossellin and Lothaire are in place. Iapetus is almost there with the Germinal Financial Group as well..."

This scene was akin to a chess player, with the star map as a chessboard and the forces deployed as chess pieces, constructing a game of encirclement and suppression against the Modo Civilization.

Because of the development union as well as the constraints of the image created by the three Universal Civilizations, he could not move personally. Thus, in the free competition zone, if he wanted to mess around, he needed someone to do the dirty work for him.

This time, Han Xiao formulated a strike plan based on the military and economic fields. The frontal battlefield was simple-just fight and consume the forces and resources of the Modo Civilization.

As for the economic field, that was the highlight, taking advantage of the opportunity of war and sanctions that would shake the domestic market of the Modo Civilization. With the large number of financial groups and organizations that would close as a result, the Germinal Financial Group under his command would cooperate with the Limitless Financial Group and other business giants to enter and hunt down these assets, sucking the lifeblood of the Modo Civilization.

The partners Han Xiao found for the Germinal Financial Group were not just limited to the Limitless Financial Group. Since the Black Star Army represented a huge community of interests, Han Xiao had a lot of connections with the heads of various financial groups. He contacted a bunch of people, putting forth his cooperation requests through relying on his twin heavyweight identities of the Black Star Army and the three Universal Civilizations' ambassador. Faced with such an opportunity, there were few financial groups that would refuse such a deal.

With his current influence and status, even if he merely remained in Black Star Palace, he could still leverage resources of a terrifying scale.

As for what would happen as a result of this chain reaction, the Modo Civilization might not regress but would definitely be hurt through this attack.

In contrast, all the partners of the Germinal Financial Group would be able to make a fortune out of it.

"This feels more and more as though I'm the leader behind the scenes in the triads." Han Xiao snickered before sighing. "I'm only missing one last link, which is a supervisor for the Shattered Star Ring, who is needed to locate their supply lines as well..."

The Shattered Star Ring bordered the Flickering World, so the Super Star Cluster Alliance would definitely use this to their advantage to send reinforcements and supplies to the Flickering World. However, the Shattered Star Ring was his backyard, and the army would definitely know of any movements made by the Super Star Cluster Alliance there. It would definitely be possible to trace their transportation lines.

The Super Star Cluster Alliance was definitely aware of this point, so they would use various means to cover up the fleet, fighting a battle of wits. For them, maintaining the concealment of their supply lines was vital to winning the

war.

"Sylvia and Herlous are both in the Flickering World, and the highest-ranking officer left in the Shattered Star Ring is Lagi. I worry about his way of doing things..." Han Xiao shivered involuntarily and decided to change to another person. "Hila and Sylvia cannot return for the time being... Oh, Nero has already grown up. It's time to make him take more responsibilities."

The Shattered Star Ring was still the base camp of the Black Star Army, and the task of monitoring the Super Star Clusters should not be too difficult. It was a good time to let Nero handle this and temper the kid.

Right now, Nero was at his peak. He had the ability but lacked the experience. Han Xiao had always hoped to train Nero into a unique talent. Aside from the close relationship, Nero himself was also a protagonist-level character, with amazing potential and worthy of training as a core member.

If he could train out a better worker than Sylvia, that would be for the best. Not only would he be more worry-free, but Nero was also a man and would not care about his hairline. Added with his various fatigue resistances, he was strong and could literally be worked to death.

“That’s right. Aesop is also good at finding people. I can invite him as a consultant and let Nero temporarily act as his assistant...”

Han Xiao stroked his chin as this idea took hold.

An elder in the family was akin to having a treasure. Getting Aesop to come forward would not only increase the chances of finding the Super Star Cluster Alliance transportation line but also allow Aesop to pass on his precious life experience to Nero, killing two birds with one stone.

He just did not know if Aesop would willingly step up and help. That old fellow should be desperate for something to do, after being trapped in Floating Dragon for over a decade.

Beep beep!

Just as he was thinking about it, his communicator rang. Glancing at it, the corners of his mouth curled up.

Speak of the Aesop. That old man probably foresaw that I was going to call him and thus decided to be preemptive. As he thought that, Han Xiao answered the call. “Old man, you saw that I was going to find you?”

“I’ve come for something else.” Aesop did not beat around the bush, immediately speaking. “I foresaw that danger’s coming from Modo Civilization. They’ve made some movements lately targeted toward you. You have to be careful, as they used a shielding device and I cannot get a clear prediction.” “Oh, I understand.” Han Xiao nodded, not feeling surprised at all.

With him already targeting the other party, the Modo Civilization would definitely do something to try and restore the situation. Even without Aesop’s reminder, he knew that the Modo Civilization would inevitably counterattack. It was not surprising for them to use a shielding device, as he still had someone with the title of (Oracle) protecting him.

“You’d better be more cautious. While I might not have gotten a clear prediction, I have a bad feeling about this,” Aesop stressed.

“Alright, I’ll keep my eyes peeled.”

Han Xiao began to recall the various trump cards that the Modo Civilization had in his previous life, beginning to deduce how they would carry out their counterattack against him.

“Just take it seriously. You said you were looking for me as well?” Aesop changed the topic.

Hearing this, Han Xiao told Aesop his plans. “To invite me as a consultant... I have no objections, but you’ve got to ask Ames for this. If she’s not afraid that I’ll take the chance to run off, I’m alright with that.”

Aesop thought about it and did not reject it in the end.

He had been 'trapped in Floating Dragon for so long and had already given Ames to Black Star as though he was sending off his daughter to be married. He had nothing else to worry about now, so his adventurous spirit had begun to resurface once more.

"I'll find time to speak to her." Han Xiao laughed. While his relationship with Ames was close, he still needed to observe his manners and pay a visit if he wished to borrow one of her people.

After chatting a while more, Han Xiao turned off the communicator, sizing up the star map as he nodded in satisfaction.

In this manner, the layout was basically complete. He did not need to interfere anymore; he just needed to wait for his pieces to act and let things develop as planned.

Han Xiao opened the interface.

More than half of Version 4.0 has passed. According to my current experience accumulation efficiency, I should have enough to reach level 340 before the end of the version, undergoing my next sublimation.

He had originally almost saved up enough experience, but because of his battle against the Mechanic Emperor, he had been forced to change his experience into Awakening Points in one go, adding nearly ten thousand Intellect points. After so much time had passed, his experience was slowly accumulating once more.

The God's Trait Transformation points obtained through producing four new Universal Treasures had already been used by him. Now his God's Trait Transformation Machinery had reached level nine, bringing to him a considerable bonus. As long as one more God's Trait Transformation Machinery point was obtained, there would be a qualitative change as with every five stacks.

According to Han Xiao's estimation, when he reached level 340 and transformed his God's Trait Transformation Machinery to level ten or more, alongside the new talents from the Kunde Race Mission and some new Mechanic Universal Treasures, he would be able to suppress the Mechanic Emperor.

At that time, even if the Mechanic Emperor did not come to provoke him, he would go and fight with him, rewriting the 'tie' battle record that they had!

As the days passed, the battle in the free competition zone intensified. Under this chain reaction, turmoil broiled in the universe, raising surging winds and storms.

The three Universal Civilizations began imposing extremely strong sanctions on the Super Star Clusters. The latter was still resisting all pressure, and various negative reactions had already started appearing in each civilization.

Among them, the Modo Civilization suffered the most. Not only did they suffer heavy losses due to the Black Star Army in the free competition zone, but the country also gradually turned chaotic. Assassinations got more frequent, with the victims all being successful people from all walks of life, causing panic among the populace. It also seemed that someone was deliberately inciting negativity among them, causing the social conflicts to further amplify.

At the same time, their economy was also impacted. A large number of their companies went bankrupt, and many people became unemployed. Even if the Super Star Cluster Civilizations had many huge

businesses, when having their revenue robbed by several financial group giants, it would be impossible for them not to suffer losses.

If it was in peacetime, with just the power of the Black Star Army, it would be impossible for the Modo Civilization to even be swayed. However, the three Universal Civilizations were the main force behind the sanctions this time, which burnt out the Modo Civilization. This environment provided Han Xiao with an excellent opportunity to mess them up.

In just three months, the Super Star Cluster Alliance's plan was in full swing, but with their investment regardless of cost, the overall war in the free competition zone had achieved some advantages... except for the zone where the Modo Civilization was located.

Meanwhile, a fleet with no emblems arrived at the Inter-Star Field Stargate linking to the Shattered Star Ring. It was the secret force dedicated to transporting the Soul Swap Twins.

Chapter 1156 Nation Saving Plan

The conflict of the Flickering World was seen as a resistance by the Super Star Cluster Alliance toward the three Universal Civilizations' hegemony. The Galactic Society eventually gave this resistance a formal name – The Flickering War.

For this Flickering War, the Super Star Cluster Alliance had prepared decades in advance. From the first to third exploration phases, they had continuously sent stowaways into the Star Field, establishing secret Stargates. While the three Universal Civilizations were preoccupied with the Intelligent Plague, the Super Star Cluster Alliance had started to prepare war resources, avoiding eyes and ears to establish hidden warehouses in the barren universes at different locations. They even managed to build secret military communication networks.

And today, all of their hidden hands had been connected. The Super Star Cluster Civilizations had built a secret transportation network to deliver lifeblood to the Flickering World, and the secret force that transported the Soul Swap Twins also utilized this secret stargate to arrive at the Shattered Star Ring, leaving no record in the public stargates.

In the temporary detention room of the spaceship, Lagos, the warlord of the Modo Civilization Expedition Fleet, was communicating with the twins to explain the mission.

"... Your mission objective this time is Aesop Hurricane, the adoptive father of the Dragon Emperor and the current Special Consultant for the Black Star Army."

"Didn't the superiors call us over to deal with Black Star? Why is it another target now?" the elder brother of the twins said.

"This is part of the plan to deal with Black Star. Aesop is a key figure, and his position is important to the Dragon Emperor. With the relationship between Black Star and Dragon Emperor, we can use this strategy to shift Black Star's attention away from us," Lagos solemnly said.

In the past few months, he as well as all the other upper echelons of the exploration army had repeatedly analyzed the pros and cons, finally choosing this method to save their nation.

This battle plan had received approval from the various members of the Military Strategy Department. According to Modo's current situation, if they wanted Black Star to stop, they could only do so by throwing him into another vortex.

The Modo Civilization was also aware of the name of Aesop. This long-lived man had a strong power of Prophecy and was thus difficult to deal with. But in contrast to going head on with a Beyond Grade A, it was easier to attack Aesop.

It was precisely because of Aesop's predictive abilities that he had to be specifically targeted. In the past few months, Aesop had paired up with Nero to search the Shattered Star Ring. They had discovered the location of multiple transportation lines dedicated to the Super Star Cluster Alliance, which caused a substantial number of problems for them. If it were not for the fact that the Black Star Army only targeted the Modo Civilization, the overall damage to them would be even larger.

While Nero's luck also played a huge part, in the eyes of the Super Star Clusters, the main point was still Aesop's Prophecy that did the work. Thus, even if they could not deal with Black Star, they had to get rid of the problem that was Aesop.

However, the Soul Swap Twins were terribly disappointed.

"I thought that I would be able to directly attack Black Star. I rejoiced for nothing."

Lagos frowned. "If you went directly against Black Star and failed, you would die immediately. Isn't targeting Aesop the safer option?"

Hearing this, the Soul Swap Twins displayed sarcastic smiles.

The way they spent their lives was as good as not living. So, why would they care about it?

Black Star was a pinnacle Beyond Grade A, and he would definitely not be easy to deal with, but they did not care about the danger. They only looked at his huge assets and lofty status.

If they could utilize the Soul Swapper to occupy Black Star's body, all of that would belong to them. Not only would they gain their freedom, but they would also become a top powerhouse in the universe, taking away the foundation of power and strength that Black Star had developed for decades. Compared to their lives, the twins wanted to gamble on this, but there was no need to express their hearts at this time.

"Tell us the process," the younger brother of the twins said hoarsely.

"Aesop is currently a Special Consultant for the Black Star Army," Lagos explained. "He is highly guarded, and he has his ability to find any hostile targets, so we will use some forged transportation lines as bait to lure the snake out of its hole. Then, we'll find a way to allow you to make contact with Aesop. You can then use the Soul Swapper to temporarily distort his thinking and manipulate him to intervene in the conflict of a certain civilization, before asking him to commit suicide. This will anger the Dragon Emperor into pinning the blame on the civilization... We will help to secretly propagate this. All you need to do is to be responsible for your own mission."

Be it for official or private reasons, Aesop had to die, and his death would be blamed on a Star System level civilization that was protected by a peace treaty. This was for the Dragon Emperor to form some

hatred toward the civilization, forcing her to lose control and cause a slaughter due to her anger. Even if the Dragon Emperor did not give in to her grief, she would inevitably have a conflict with the civilization due to her temperament. No matter what, Black Star would turn back to help, and to protect the Dragon Emperor, he might even have to resort to using force. As a result, the Black Star Army would gain another opponent and would have a high probability of withdrawing its armies.

“Understood.” The Soul Swap Twins were noncommittal.

It was not the first time they had done such a thing

Lagos instructed them some more before cutting the communication. The guards then closed the door again to prevent them from moving around.

The Soul Swap Twins glanced at each other, understanding each other’s meaning without needing to speak. This was a chance for them to become free men. The moment they obtained the Soul Swapper, they could escape after finishing their mission. They were not reconciled to spending their lives as tools.

In the office, Han Xiao read the report of the Shattered Star Ring, from time to time looking up at the remote projections of Nero and Aesop in front of him.

“Discovered thirty-eight Super Star Cluster Alliance transportation fleets; completely destroyed two lines of the Modo Civilization and seven secret resource bases, seizing daily supplies, weapons and ammunition. Another eleven suspected transportation routes of the other Super Star Cluster Alliances during the monitoring...” After browsing the report, Han Xiao smiled and praised them. “Well done.”

“It’s all because of your tutelage.” Nero scratched his head as he laughed dumbly.

“You’re now the chief in charge of the Shattered Star Ring. Don’t laugh so stupidly. You have to be more serious, understand?” Han Xiao rapped on the table. Nero immediately straightened his expression.

He was already an adult, but in front of Han Xiao, he behaved in a very relaxed manner, naturally revealing his childish side.

At this moment, Aesop smiled as he said, “I like this kid. He has a lot of potential. Given enough time, he will become quite a unique character. His luck is pretty good.” Han Xiao nodded and asked, “Any forecasts so far from your Prophecy?”

Aesop shook his head. “It’s still the same foggy sense of danger. Three months have already passed, but they have not seemed to move.”

Han Xiao turned back to Nero. “Take note to increase the collecting of intelligence. At the first sign of trouble, report to me.”

During this period of time, he had analyzed the possible plans of the Modo Civilization and felt that the probability of them attacking him was quite low. It was more likely that they would choose to start with the people around him, so he had strengthened the protection around his mother planet as well as various officers and increased Phillip’s monitoring of the entire army.

Because most of the information was actually reported up by level and might not be able to reach him, he lowered the standard of importance for Phillip to directly report to him. While this might cause his workload to increase, it was a trivial matter for such a period.

“By the way, what did you say to Ames?” Aesop asked. “I’m running everywhere with the Black Star Army right now, but she does not seem to be afraid that I’ll suddenly leave.”

“Oh, I told her that I’m watching you for her. If you run away, then I’ll bring you back.” Han Xiao laughed.

“Tsk, I knew it.” Aesop’s eyes narrowed. “Is she that unconfident of me? The stuff I’ve seen, how could she know more than me? I’ve probably eaten more salt than the amount of rice she has eaten.”

“Then you must feel thirsty a lot,” Han Xiao joked. “From your tone, it seems like you were really intending to slip away.” “I’ve been under house arrest in Floating Dragon for decades. I can’t possibly stay there until the end of my life.” Aesop folded his arms in front of him. “To be honest, with you taking care of Ames, I feel reassured. There’s no need for me to remain here. I took those years of staying as a rest, and now I’m ready to continue my travels.”

Han Xiao did not find it weird at all. For a long-lived species such as Aesop, a decade or two was just like a year or two for a normal person. This old man’s desire for adventure was carved deep into his bones, and he could not settle down in one place forever.

“Then, why don’t you just tell Ames directly? If you are honest and truthful, she definitely won’t stop you.”

“No, no, then she won’t send people after me. That would be so meaningless.”

Aesop shook his head, revealing a gleeful tone akin to someone goading another party to catch him.

Han Xiao was speechless. I suddenly have the desire to beat this old man up...

“Aren’t you afraid that I have preparations made to prevent you from slipping away?” “Haha, even if I tell you, you won’t stop me.” Aesop smiled. “I want to maintain a tacit understanding with her, so I’ll need you to help convey my meaning.” Han Xiao understood. This meant that Aesop was planning to leave without saying goodbye, and he planned to use Han Xiao as a microphone. This was also a way to get back at him. Previously, it was Han Xiao who had caught Aesop, making the latter lose face. Giving himself a reminder before successfully slipping away would settle their debts.

“Then, when are you preparing to leave?”

“I’ll help you with this last task, and once the Flickering War is over, I’ll leave.”

“Hey, when the time comes, I’ll see if you can escape from my palm.” Both of them shared a laugh.

By the side, Nero suddenly felt as though he had become a lightbulb. Han Xiao gave him a few more instructions before hanging up. Thinking about it, he then called Ames. Only two rings had passed before the call connected.

“Oh, busy man, you have the time to chat with me now?”

Ames’ laughter was like a clear spring bubbling through the communicator. “What are you up to?” Han Xiao smiled.

“Practicing the Knowledge you got for me.”

Han Xiao had managed to exchange a Knowledge of the Esper Class, passing it to Ames. She had been studying it diligently. Because ordinary people did not have an interface, they could not do it overnight but had to slowly pore over the research.

The two of them chatted a little before focusing on the trending topic.

“Black Star, how long do you think the Flickering War will last?” Ames was curious.

Han Xiao contemplated. “At least three to five years, a decade or two at max.”

The Super Star Cluster Alliance would not give up so easily. The previous Flickering War lasted for quite a long time. The players were only contracted as agents around the end of Version 4.0, and in the later stages, most of it was reduced to cutscenes as the players went offline.

This time, because of the sudden emergence of the Intelligent Plague, the Super Star Cluster Alliance was more prepared and could resist for a longer period of time. However, with his own intervention, the course of the battle would be shortened. The two factors both affected each other, changing the plot of his previous life. Thus, Han Xiao also found it hard to say how long the alliance could support itself this time.

But the final result should be the same as in his previous life, where it would end with the failure of the Super Star Cluster Alliance. This battle was for them to gain a glimmer of hope, a gamble with a low success rate.

“So long...” Ames sighed. “I originally wanted to invite you to travel to the world of the secondary dimensions, but it seems like you don’t have the time in the next few years.”

“Again?”

“You’re not willing?” Ames tilted her head, her hair spilling over her shoulders like a waterfall.

“Cough cough, I’m actually not that busy. You also know that us Beyond Grade As cannot personally enter the Flickering War. After destroying the Modo Civilization, I’ll be free, and I can accompany you to visit the secondary dimensions...”

... as well as allow Aesop to slip away. Han Xiao finished in his mind.

“Then we have a date.” Ames’ eyes curled up as she smiled.

Chapter 1157 Soul Swapper

Somewhere within the Shattered Star Ring, three small battleships with the Black Star Army emblem were cruising in the starry space. All three battleships were blitz-class shuttles, exceptional in speed.

The responsibility of this force was to track down any suspicious transport fleets. In the command room of the lead spaceship, the captain carefully stared at the star map in front of him, which marked the patrol route of the squad. Once a suspicious unit was found or a new mission assigned, it would be displayed.

"I heard that a couple of days ago, there seemed to be traces of a suspicious transport fleet in the neighboring Star Zone. However, the clues were intermittent, and we seem to have lost it. Do you think they will come over to our sector?" A nearby officer made some idle talk.

"It would be great. If we can track down the suspicious fleet, it will be our credit. We have been patrolling here for a few months and have not even performed a proper mission. If we're not lucky, we probably won't get any merit," another person said with some envy.

Because the patrol mission was dull and boring, the captain did not stop his subordinates from chatting as he thought the same. While he was only a bottom-rung member in the army, he had the desire to progress. As long as he accumulated enough merits, he could acquire the army's elite training qualifications and invest in himself, which would be beneficial to his promotion.

Beep beep!

At this moment, a red dot of light rippled on the star map, and a notification was heard. This was a field inspection mission, which meant that their space buoy had intercepted a suspicious unit.

"Mission!"

The captain's eyes brightened as he thought that an opportunity had come for him. He immediately ordered the fleet to change directions, heading toward the marked coordinates.

The spaceships immediately turned around, and their engines released a roar as they shot toward the depths of the starry sky.

After flying for a period of time, the team arrived at the target location. Opening the detection device, thirty or forty spatial folds appeared on the radar's view.

These were the traces left by hyperdrive transitions. Each trace represented a spaceship. At this moment, the traces had yet to disappear and extended out, pointing out the course of these dozens of spaceships in disguise.

"A total of forty-one hyperdrive jump tracks have been spotted. Follow the traces and catch up!" The captain did not hesitate.

The squad was now energized, and they followed the trail of the hyperdrive engines, tracking them for around two hours before a barren asteroid leapt into view.

The trail ended here, which meant that the target exited the hyperdrive mode at this point.

The vice-captain glanced at the radar before speaking. "Report, the target has disappeared. They might be on the planet to collect resources or hiding in ambush behind the asteroid. Awaiting instructions."

The captain deliberated for two seconds before saying, "No. 2, perform a scan on the planet surface. No. 3, round to the back of the planet. No.1, maintain position. Keep the engines ready, prepared to move at any moment."

"Roger that."

The three spaceships immediately separated, and it did not take long for the results to arrive.

A docked fleet was found on the planet's surface. Their emblem represented a local commercial organization, and they were currently collecting the underground gas resources. The scale of this fleet was exactly the same as the number of transition traces, which was the target of this team.

"Send out a wide area communication, asking to check the identification codes," the captain ordered.

The transportation fleet of the Super Star Cluster Alliance utilized various methods to hide as they travelled, and one of the most common ones was to pretend to be the troops of other organizations. If the tracking team of the area happened to come across any of such fleets, they would generally ask to check the identity of the other party, guilty until proven innocent.

However, the authority to check the identities of any transit fleet was actually only given to the Civilization Security Team. The Black Star Army, as a private armed organization, did not have the right.

But in this world where authority was decided by one's fist, the Black Star Army's motive of tracing the transportation fleets of Modo Civilization resulted in many of the civilizations allowing it, unwilling to cause trouble. Most of the civilizations of the Shattered Star Ring did not have any issues, closing one eye to this. Occasionally, the tracking team would uncover a genuine transport party, and the enemy would strike at them first, but this was an unavoidable risk. Thus, the tracking team generally did not fight, only maintaining communication with the intelligence department. This way, even if the tracking team was killed and disconnected, it could still send back messages and allow the department to know the identity of the target enemy.

At this time, the tracking team sent a communication request to the transport fleet, but the other party did not respond.

The captain immediately turned vigilant. "Something isn't right. Immediately prepare to report..."

Before he could finish speaking, his brain spun, and his vision turned chaotic. This state only lasted for a second before he regained clarity. But the scene in front of him froze his whole body, and fear erupted from his heart.

He saw that his surroundings had turned into a prison, and his body was firmly fixed in a confinement chamber, unable to move.

He was lost for words.

I was in the command room a second ago. How did I end up here?

Before he could make sense of his situation, his brain spun yet again. His surroundings changed, and he was now situated in a transparent glass room, with a swarm of black beetles next to him.

Looking through the transparent walls, he was terrified to see giants walking outside the room without even looking at them. He could not even see how tall these giants really were.

Everything seemed to have been magnified countless times over in his vision.

"What the hell..." the captain murmured subconsciously, but rather than hearing his voice, he only heard a slight hissing sound.

He paused before lowering his head to look at himself. A chill ran down his spine, and he dared not believe his eyes.

His body had actually turned into that of a black beetle, just like the bugs around him!

In that instant, he seemed to have understood.

It's not that the world has gotten bigger... I've shrunk!

At this moment, a deep-orange jet of flames blazed in the sky, filling the entire glass capsule and turning his thoughts into a blazing white cloud.

Boom!

With just a breath, all the black beetles were burnt to ash.

Wer u

An operator in a white lab coat removed the flamethrower used for the experiment. Taking a look at the residue within the glass capsule, he gave an 'OK' signal.

The team leader nodded before saying, "Reporting to the commander. The targets have been eliminated."

"Hmm."

In the flagship, the commander nodded as he looked out of the porthole at the scene outside.

Two of the spaceships, No. 2 and 3, had already been reduced to fireworks. Only the commanding spaceship managed to escape and leave the scene.

In this escaped spaceship, all of the members were shells, replaced by a different soul!

"The plan was a success."

The commander lightly nodded before looking to the side. There was a smoky crystal-colored mirror floating in the air, about fifty centimeters in diameter and only three centimeters thick.

The Soul Swap Twins stood in front of this mirror, their palms submerged inside the surface of the mirror up till their wrists, as though it was being swallowed.

This mirror was the marvelous Universal Treasure named the Soul Swapper!

"It's done. Stop right now!" the commander bellowed.

Hearing this, the Soul Swap Twins slowly withdrew their palms. The soldiers around them immediately moved forward, taking away the Soul Swapper and placing it in an extremely sophisticated safe, away from the Soul Swap Twins.

Seeing this, the twins glanced around the surrounding mechanical turrets protruding from the walls and ground that were aimed toward them before laughing nonchalantly.

These turrets were safety devices to prevent them from moving. They were remotely and intelligently controlled, since the soul swapper only worked on the souls of living creatures. It was useless against

machinery. The commander then retracted his gaze, looking in the direction that the shuttle was fleeing, and whispered, "The Death Warriors prepared in advance have already penetrated the enemy. With our bait, it should be enough to catch the person..."

"A squad in the Thousand Lights Star System was ambushed on their way to track a suspicious fleet. Two of their spaceships were destroyed, and only one of them got out alive..."

At the Black Star Army headquarters in the Shattered Star Ring, Nero whispered after reading the report. He looked up at the several officers in the room, asking, "Everyone, what are your thoughts?"

Mia was decisive. "The situation is obvious. The transport fleet attacked them, so it is likely from the Super Star Cluster Alliance. We should immediately mobilize troops around the incident site to track the target."

"I feel that this is a little strange. The Super Star Cluster Alliance normally do not make any head-on attacks because their identity will be exposed once they fight. Most of the time, they try to get rid of the tail instead. The reason for their attack is only if the chasing troops were not discovered early, allowing them to accidentally catch up... but once they attack, they will not leave any of them alive. The previous cases were all like this," Tomar muttered.

He had already been studying magic under Lagi for decades. While his teacher was a salted fish, he still could not resist Tomar's gifts for magic, so he had slowly worked his way up into one of the officers of the Black Star Army. His relationship with Nero was good, and he was currently in Nero's team.

"Maybe the surviving spaceship escaped in time. However, the Star Clusters must also have known that the information was leaked, so did they decide not to waste their energy in pursuit?" Mia guessed. "That would make sense." Tomar did not doubt much as well.

"Let's ask the survivors for any details first."

Nero thought about it before ordering his assistant to contact the captain of the surviving spaceship. After a moment, the communication came through, and the captain of the tracking team appeared on the screen.

"Recount your experiences. I want to know the details."

The eyes of the captain on the screen flashed. He nodded, revealing an expression of lingering fear and anger as he recounted his experience.

The soul in this body had already been replaced by a Death Warrior prepared by the Modo Civilization. The effect of the Soul Swapper was not simply just transferring the souls of the two bodies but also allowing the invading soul to inherit most of the target's memories. This was because the brain of the body was still present, just like a library.

However, this memory would not naturally merge with the new soul. It needed to be sorted and read slowly, and there would naturally be parts missing. Generally speaking, the older memories would be more easily forgotten, while the most recent memories would remain complete.

There usually existed some sort of exclusivity to prevent different souls and physical bodies from merging. Methods like reincarnating in a new shell and seizing souls could also be done by some Espers or Psychics, such as Feidin or Chen Xing, but with lower success rates.

The Soul Swapper would greatly increase the success rate of the transfer of souls, bringing it close to a hundred percent under normal circumstances. However, this was affected by the strength of the target and the strength of the user. At the same time, using the Soul Swapper to complete the soul transfer would greatly reduce the chances of rejection of the body and soul.

The soul transfer was only one of the functions of the Soul Swapper. This mysterious thing had many other functions.

After listening to the report, Nero gave a few words of encouragement and prepared to end the conversation.

At this moment, the 'survivor' suddenly put on an angered and sad expression as he shouted, "We're now the nearest unit to the enemy. I hope to be able to continue this mission, continue pursuing the troops to avenge my friends!"

"Sure."

This request was reasonable, and Nero had no reason to refuse. Hanging up the communication, Tomar spoke out again.

"Nero, now that the target knows that he has been exposed, he'll definitely change his plan. Instead of going to the transportation line, he will escape separately. I suggest using the second plan."

This sort of scenario was not the first. The moment their transport forces were exposed, they would be treated as abandoned children. Even if they continued to track them, they would not be able to discover the secret stronghold of the Super Star Cluster Alliance.

"That's right." Nero turned over to look at Aesop. He said in embarrassment, "This... Your Excellency Aesop, we'll have to trouble you once again."

"No problem." Aesop waved his hands, as though it was nothing.

The so-called second plan was to borrow Aesop's ability to let him go to the location of the incident, using the relevant clues as a medium to make on-the-spot predictions, seeing the multiple possibilities and grasping more clues.

In order to obtain a clearer prediction, more information was needed. This method was effective, so over the past few months, Aesop had not just stayed in the headquarters but also conducted many field visits under heavy protection. This method had allowed the Black Star Army to discover many targets.

Nero nodded and loudly declared, "Let's not delay further. Prepare the spaceship immediately and take His Excellency Aesop to the location."

In a certain Star Field, on a certain planet, at a certain base, Manison stood in front of a virtual screen with his hands behind his back, staring at the contents of the screen.

This was the secret information from the Primeval Star River base camp, coming from the spy he had planted in the Modo Civilization many years ago.

Only a brief message was written.

The Soul Swap Twins were transferred from the base, and the Soul Swapper was taken from the warehouse by the army. The destination was unknown.

“Soul Swapper... If I my guess is correct, the Modo Civilization must intend to use this Universal Treasure to deal with him. Maybe I can...” Manison muttered to himself, an inexplicable light in his eyes.

Chapter 1158 Parasitism and Sudden Change

A few days later, in the Thousand Lights Star System of the Shattered Star Ring, a Black Star Army armed fleet flew out of the stargate. There were thousands of battleships of various models. In the middle of it was a very large, conspicuous flagship.

Inside the command room, the Calamity Grade officer nodded at Aesop and said, “Your Excellency Aesop, we’re here.”

“Quickly get to work then.” Aesop nodded calmly with hands behind his back.

Usually, Nero would arrange at least two Calamity Grade Supers as Aesop’s bodyguards, at least a thousand battleships, and Black Star’s mechanical army and Lord’s Avatar. When in danger, Black Star would be able to arrive at any moment. He was very well protected.

“The tracking team nearby have all been called here to search the area. They have yet to find anything for the time being. Let’s go take a look at where it happened.” “Sure.” Aesop had no objection.

The fleet advanced quickly through Star Zones, soon arriving at the planet where the battle happened.

The ground location where this Super Star Cluster Alliance transportation fleet once stopped was already occupied by the army warriors who arrived a few days ago and guarded as the crime scene.

A small ship carried Aesop and was launched out from the bottom of the flagship, crossing the cordon that the army had deployed at the exterior atmosphere of this planet.

When the hatch opened, Aesop stepped onto the ground in a light protection suit, surrounded by a group of bodyguards. There were dim depressions on the ground in front of them, clearly the marks left by a battleship stopping and taking off. Aesop quickly walked to it, squatted down, and closely observed these marks while occasionally touching them with his hands. After he walked around the entire crime scene, he finally stopped and closed his eyes as if he was meditating

This process lasted for about two minutes before Aesop opened his eyes and clapped. “I saw some transportation spaceships sailing through the universe. The organization symbol on them has already changed to something else. This Super Star Cluster Alliance fleet should’ve changed into different disguises and gone in separate directions. I’ll draw out these organization symbols for you later, so you can search the fleets of these organizations in the nearby area.”

“That’s great. That’s extremely helpful. The great prophet Aesop never disappoints. Your efficiency is amazing, and receiving your help is our great honor,” the fleet commander said, clearly having learned how to bootlick from Hadavy.

“Just a small matter.” Aesop waved. “However, this is not enough. If you guys can seize one of their battleships or capture their men, I will be able to obtain more accurate leads and search for their original destination.”

“Don’t worry. With the intelligence you’ve provided, catching them is just a matter of time. Unfortunately, we’ll have to trouble you to stay in this area a short while longer. We’ll need you when we seize the enemy ship.”

“Hmm, that’s no big deal. I happen to want to take a walk outside too.”

Aesop did not mind and wrote down what he had seen in the prophecy, all the organization symbols of the enemy’s disguises. The fleet commander immediately gave the order and sent this information to all the tracking teams.

The group of them returned to the fleet and was about to depart for the army base of this area and standby when the fleet commander suddenly received a message. He looked down at the communicator, and his eyes gleamed.

“Your Excellency Aesop, you’re such a lucky star! I’ve only just sent out the crucial information you provided, and there’s a tracking team that’s already found the target. They happened to be resting at a city planet and discovered the suspicious transport spaceship that matched your prophecy. Plus, that ship is alone.”

“That’s surprisingly quick.” Aesop smiled. “Looks like we’re still in luck. This team that discovered the enemy did a good job.”

“Let me take a look... Oh, the one we’ve discovered is the only surviving spaceship from before. I remember they were searching everywhere for these guys. Now they’ve finally got their revenge.” The fleet commander smiled. “I told them to standby and keep an eye on the enemy spaceship, to wait for us to arrive and not scare them away.”

The fleet departed immediately and hurried all along the way, reaching the destination very soon.

A light purple and bright silver planet hovered in space outside the porthole. The surface of it was filled with colorful galactic cities

This was a rather prosperous colonial planet. It belonged to the ruler of the Thousand Lights Star System, the Light Rune Civilization.

The Black Star Army would not do whatever they wished without restraint when they were in city planets that belonged to a civilization like this one. The main reason was that there was no need to. Most of the civilizations in the Shattered Star Ring had a good relationship with the Black Star Army, so the army would not offend them for no reason.

“The tracking team is still surveilling the enemy spaceship. They’re not moving. What do you think?” the fleet commander said.

“Did they see any of their crew?” Aesop asked. “The tracking team has already requested to look at the surveillance footage from the officials and shared it with us. According to the surveillance, that suspicious spaceship sent a total of forty-three crew members out. They seemed to be purchasing daily supplies and all returned to the ship not long ago... We’ve come just in time. Any later and they might have departed.”

“Okay! We must seize this transport ship,” Aesop said slowly. “Inform the officials to work with us, evacuate the locals, and lock down their departure path so that they can’t take off.”

The Black Star Army members had a lot of privileges in the Shattered Star Ring. Even if it was just a middle to low-level army member, as long as their identity checked out, they would be able to request official support from the various civilizations if they were on their planet. This was all thanks to the connections Han Xiao had built. It was part of the faction privileges. The fleet arrived around the dock very quickly and formed an encirclement, while some Supers entered the dock with assistance from the officials, closing in on the target hangar.

Aesop and the fleet commander waited in the flagship in the outer atmosphere and monitored the operation remotely.

On the screen, the Super team charged into the hangar. Very soon, sounds of intense crossfire erupted from within, and flashes of energy cannon attacks flickered inside the hangar, leaving burn marks on the silver alloy walls.

The sound of the battle lasted for about a few minutes. The report from the operatives at the frontline came.

“Report, we only have three team members suffering from light injury, no casualties. The enemy ship contained a total of 271 crew members, who resisted, hiding in the battleship. We killed 209 targets, and the rest saw that there was no way out and ended their own lives. We were not able to capture anyone alive.”

“Shame, I was hoping to interrogate them.” The fleet commander shook his head. “Never mind, these low-level crew members probably don’t know much either. Seizing their transport ship is enough. Your Excellency Aesop, please.” Aesop nodded. He landed on the dock with his guards and came to the hangar where the battle happened.

He looked at the seized transport ship. Its exterior appearance was almost undamaged. There were only some burn marks on its exterior armor.

He stepped forward, pressed his hand on the bottom of the spaceship’s armor, closed his eyes, and activated his ability.

At the same time, in a rented temporary stronghold in a galactic city not far from this airport, the Soul Swap Twins were using the Soul Swapper hovering in front of them. Dozens of MODO Supers surrounded and aimed their weapons at them. There were also quite a number of portable cannons around.

There was more than one MODO Civilization spaceship that had arrived on this planet, but they had secretly turned the tracking team into their people, so they had all kinds of ways to remain undiscovered.

The commander walked back and forth on the side nervously.

“Have you locked onto the target?”

The elder brother of the Soul Swap Twins’ hand was devoured by the mirror of the Soul Swapper. He casually stirred it and said, “Yes.”

“Can you sway him out?” “Tsk, us brothers are just Grade C Supers. Aesop is a Grade B. The success rate of us swapping his soul out of his body isn’t one hundred percent.”

“To be safe, use the second plan,” the commander said.

“Okay.”

The Soul Swap Twins focused their energy into the Soul Swapper. Black ripples appeared on its mirror sides as it was activated.

At the same time, Aesop, who was far away at the port, suddenly opened his eyes, and his pupils shrunk abruptly to the size of a needle.

He felt like countless voices had suddenly rushed into his brain and fused into a deafening noise that echoed in his mind. His head was hurting immensely.

He wanted to raise his hand to hold his forehead, but he could not move his body at all.

The aide-de-camp beside him saw that he was acting unnaturally and asked, “What’s wrong?”

Aesop’s expression changed several times. It became stiff for a moment but then returned to normal.

He coughed, lowered his voice, and said, “Nothing, I’ve already completed the prophecy.” “What clues did you get?” Aesop’s eyes gleamed, and he said, “I’ve discovered the real destination of this Super Star Cluster Alliance. It’s a secret resources stronghold in a desolate universe belt. The coordinates are...”

He gave the coordinates, and the aide-de-camp hastily wrote it down.

“Hmm, this is enough information. Let’s return to the spaceship.”

Then, Aesop turned around and left without waiting for his aide-de-camp to reply. The bodyguards beside quickly followed.

On the other side, inside the temporary stronghold where the Soul Swap Twins were at, the commander asked, “Was it successful?” “Hmm.” The younger brother of the Soul Swap Twins replied with a husky voice, “We have swapped the many soldiers’ souls over. They’ve successfully become parasites in Aesop’s soul.” The main function of the Soul Swapper was to swap souls, but there was no such rule as one for one. Stuffing many souls into one body or just swapping the soul out of the body and turning the body into an empty shell, there were many possibilities.

Unlike with Feidin and Chen Xing, it was a type of puppet manipulation using parasites. The souls of many soldiers and Aesop were fused together temporarily like puppet strings injected into Aesop’s soul. Aesop’s mind had become fuzzy, and he could no longer think normally. He felt that all his actions came from his heart and did not realize what was wrong with him at all... Putting it simply, it was similar to how someone might go crazy when drunk.

“Aesop’s bodyguards won’t realize, right?” someone asked. The commander shook his head and said, “Don’t worry, the Soul Swapper’s powers are extremely stealthy. No one will be able to notice it other than Beyond Grade As who excel in the mind or soul related abilities, not even Calamity Grades... Of course, peak Beyond Grade As might notice something wrong too, but Black Star’s main body isn’t here, and he won’t monitor such a small matter with Lord’s Descent. So, there’s nothing to be afraid of.”

After the commander said that, he clearly looked more relaxed. He turned to the Soul Swap Twins and said, “Your mission is complete. What comes next won’t involve you. Put down the Soul Swapper.”

The Soul Swap Twins exchanged looks and laughed creepily at the same time.

“Hehe, sure.”

As soon as they said that, a change occurred!

A black shockwave expanded. Other than the commander, all the soldiers’ eyes rolled and fell to the ground, not moving.

The Soul Swapper had silently swapped everyone’s soul out!

At the same time, the infant-sized younger brother opened his mouth and sucked one soul after another from the Soul Swapper, swallowing them.

The commander instantly reacted to it. He was shocked and furious.

He did not expect the Soul Swap Twins to dare to do this even when they were targeted by so many weapons. Had they really given up living?

However, at this time, a powerful energy erupted from the Soul Swap Twins. Feeling this energy level, the commander’s expression changed drastically.

“Grade B? We ran a check on you right before we departed. Aren’t you guys Grade C?”

The older brother of the Soul Swap Twins laughed out loud. “Hehehe, people grow!”

The two of them had always been acting weak, making the Modo Civilization think they were Grade C Supers. The method they used was not just simply hiding their real strength but a hidden ability they had never told anyone about-their energy could move freely between the two of them without any restrictions. This was related to the mutation these two brothers went through.

If they focused most of their energy on one of them, he would temporarily become a Grade B. If they spread it evenly, they would be able to fool the Super Grade Detection Devices of the Modo Civilization. The two of them had been planning their escape for many years, deliberately controlling their growth speed to stay at this level, all for an opportunity like today.

The Soul Swap Twins laughed creepily and said with a confident tone, “Think about it, we’re now Grade B Supers. These cannons won’t be able to kill us instantly. The Black Star Army’s men have yet to go far. If a battle breaks out here, it will definitely attract their attention. So, think thoroughly about whether you want to attack us because your plan is at risk of being exposed!”

The commander was startled. He quickly yelled at his comrade who was controlling the cannons, "Wait, don't fire."

"That's right. Play nice, and your plan will be able to continue."

The Soul Swap Twins snickered. They chose to do this now exactly because of this reason.

The commander suppressed his rage and questioned, "What do you want?"

"Simple, Modo have been using us as tools for many years. We've contributed enough, and now is the time we take back our freedom... Hehe, I know what you're thinking. Don't worry, we just want to escape. We didn't sabotage the plan with Aesop. Take this as the last mission we'll ever execute for Modo. We don't owe you anything anymore.

"As for this treasure, it naturally belongs to us, so we'll be taking it away. Anyway, no one but us can use it."

The Soul Swap Twins sneered. The shadow shrouding their body devoured the Soul Swapper and absorbed it into them.

Then, the two of them stepped back to the wall, activated their ability, turned into two piles of ink-like shadows, and disappeared. The commander was furious beyond imagination, but he still did not dare do anything

He was not only worried about alarming the Black Star Army, which was not far away, but also because he was not confident enough to stop the Grade B Soul Swap Twins. He had no choice but to watch the two of them leave with the Soul Swapper.

It was dead silent in the room. The only sound was his heavy gasps for air.

"Quickly report this to the upper echelons. We've lost control of the Soul Swap Twins. They've escaped!"

Chapter 1159 Destiny's Child's Prophecy

"The Soul Swap Twins escaped!"

Lagos was shocked to receive the notice from the army emissary and looked worried. However, he was not worried about this but its influence on their plan against Black Star.

"Are you able to capture the Soul Swap Twins?"

The military emissary shook his head and said, "The Shattered Star Ring isn't our territory. The Black Star Army and the local civilizations' surveillance network is all over it. We can't carry out a large operation. The target can use the Soul Swapper and swap bodies. It's too difficult to find them, so we most likely won't be able to capture them."

"The plan..."

"Don't worry. The plan continues." The military emissary smiled. Seeing this, Lagos looked confused. Why don't the upper echelons look worried at all about losing a special Universal Treasure?

"You don't seem worried..."

The military emissary shook his hand. "Don't worry, there's no need to send people after them. They'll return on their own."

"You're saying..." Lagos had a rough guess.

The military emissary changed into a serious expression and said, "This information isn't really that confidential. The upper echelons have told me to tell you not to worry about the Soul Swap Twins and continue carrying out the plan as usual. The person in charge of the Marwell project got a Beyond Grade A Mage to secretly plant a mental trap in them long ago and built a hidden sub-personality that's completely loyal to the MODO Civilization. Once triggered, the sub-personality will take over, and they will obediently return themselves."

"I see..." Lagos nodded subconsciously. He then frowned and wondered, "But if that's the case, why not take over the Soul Swap Twins' consciousness completely? Why take the risk?"

The military emissary did not mind and continued explaining. "Controlling the Soul Swap Twins is very easy. No matter how special they are, they're just low level Supers. Do you really think that there have never been such experiments even though the Marwell project has been going on for so many years? We've basically tried everything you can think

of.

"However, the results proved that the Soul Swap Twins can only use the Soul Swapper when they have complete self-control and clear consciousnesses. Other than that, any attempt to control the Soul Swapper through controlling the Soul Swap Twins won't work. Even after just the simplest brainwash, the Soul Swapper won't recognize the two of them as qualified users. Therefore, we can only do it this way."

"Why is that the case?" Lagos wondered. "Hell if I know. It's as if the Soul Swapper has chosen the Soul Swap Twins. It's probably related to the mysteries of the soul. It's all very non-scientific really. And that's the reason we consider the Soul Swapper a Space Wonder. If we could figure out how it works, there would be no Soul Swap Twins..." The military emissary snorted. "Though strange, the two of them are very weak and are no threat. They're only feared because they can use the power of the Soul Swapper. It's like a child holding a gun."

"Understood." Lagos nodded.

"Hmm, good that you know. Anyway, you don't have to be concerned about the Soul Swap Twins. Just be worried about Black Star."

Then, the military emissary cut off the communication, and the screen turned black.

Lagos turned off the virtual screen, exhaled, and smiled with relief.

Although there was a tiny hiccup, to him, the plan targeted at Black Star being carried out smoothly was the most important.

At a certain desolate universe belt in the Shattered Star Ring, a secret resources stronghold of the MODO Civilization was being attacked by the Black Star Army's armed fleet.

The images of this battle were transmitted into the main control room in the Thousand Lights Star System's base. Aesop and a group of officers were remotely monitoring the battle.

Not long after, the battle ended. The Black Star Army fleet had annihilated all enemies and was picking up the loot.

"Great! We've destroyed another secret stronghold of the Modo Civilization!" Nero was watching the battle with a smile. "This is all thanks to His Excellency Aesop's accurate prophecy, which helped us find the enemy base."

With their boss leading the praise, the officers present all expressed how impressed and appreciative they were of Aesop.

"No big deal." Aesop was not in the best mood and just waved slightly. "Haha, a great job is a great job. Don't have to be so humble. I'll have some people take you back so that you can have a proper rest," Nero said with a smile.

"No need, I'm planning on taking a walk outside. I won't be going back to the headquarters for the time being." Aesop shook his head.

Nero was surprised. "How long do you plan to stay outside then?"

"About a month."

"So long?" Nero hesitated a moment. "I suggest you come back as early as possible. There might be new missions..."

"What's with all the bullsh*t? I don't even have the right to take a walk outside anymore? Am I just a tool now?" "Er, that's not what I meant."

Aesop narrowed his eyes and coldly said, "Also, take these troops and bodyguards away. I don't like to be disturbed when taking a walk."

"This..." Nero looked troubled. "I can't just remove them for no reason. What if an accident happens?"

Bang!

Aesop slammed the table and yelled, "What, you think I need your protection? Or are these people here to surveil me? I'm telling you right now, remove these people, or I'll go back to Floating Dragon immediately! Is it your place to control me? Do you have any idea what my relationship with Black Star is?"

Nero's expression froze, and he was rather unhappy inside.

This old man is usually easy to talk to. What's wrong with him today? Did he swallow a bomb, or is it that time of the month?

However, unhappiness aside, Nero did not dare talk back to Aesop. After all, Aesop was there to help and represented Floating Dragon. Plus, Aesop was his senior and the Dragon Emperor's foster father, as well as his godfather's good friend.

Aesop did not want to return to the headquarters, and it was not like he could force him or kidnap him. Otherwise, even if his godfather might not blame him, Aunt Ames would not be happy about it for sure.

Nero barely forced out a smile and said, "Since you like to be alone, I won't have the guards follow you."

"That's better."

Aesop turned, glanced at the officers around, and said casually, "You all heard that?"

While the two of them argued, the people in the room all stopped what they were doing and stood in place, frozen. Hearing what Aesop said, they could only nod. "Good, that's all. I'll go back to my room," Aesop said monotonously. He turned around and left with hands behind his back.

Watching Aesop disappear from their sights, dissatisfaction showed on many people's faces. "Who does this old man think he is? So arrogant," a Calamity Grade bodyguard said with a frown. "As if I'd be willing to protect him if not for the army's order." "Exactly, this old man is in over his head." Another person was rather unhappy too.

"Alright, alright, that's enough. He's my senior no matter what. Maybe he's just not in a good mood today. Let's not force him if he's not willing to do so." Nero frowned slightly. He said a few words and hung up the communication.

To be frank, he had been a little tempted to report this to Han Xiao. However, Aesop had just made a big contribution, so if he reported him just because his attitude toward him was a little off, it would be too petty of him, like a kid crying to his father when just slightly unhappy. His godfather hoped he could be independent, and him doing that might disappoint his godfather. "I'm not angry... I'm not angry..."

Inside the headquarters office, Nero softly murmured to himself. Then, he started to really feel his emotions gradually calming down, as if he was meditating. He had a subtle feeling that he seemed to have learned some kind of special trick to keep himself calm.

"Godfather! Godfather!"

More than a half month later, Han Xiao, who was in the Flickering World's Black Star Palace, received a communication request from Nero. He was startled by Nero's loud voice right after he picked it up.

"Calm down, what's wrong?" Han Xiao moved the communicator a little further away and picked his ear with his pinky finger.

"Aesop is missing!" Nero's tone was anxious.

Han Xiao's movements paused for a second. He frowned and said, "What do you mean by missing?"

"It means he's missing! We have no idea where he's gone, and we can't find him."

"Didn't you send people to follow him? How did he go missing?" Han Xiao asked.

"I..." Nero explained what had happened with a regretful tone. Aesop had shown displeasure toward the bodyguards, so the bodyguards did not follow Aesop closely around so that Aesop would not be disturbed. However, when they were resting on a city planet, the bodyguards discovered that Aesop had gone missing. "Also, they've discovered a video message Aesop left inside his room."

“What did that old man say?”

“He said it was a message for you, telling you to remember your promise from not long ago.” Nero played the video of Aesop saying that.

Having figured out the whole picture, Han Xiao caressed his chin and wondered.

About a month ago when he chatted with Aesop, Aesop had mentioned that he planned to leave the Shattered Star Ring and continue travelling, and he had come to an unspoken agreement with Han Xiao. This was the first possible reason for Aesop going missing that popped up in Han Xiao’s mind.

However, with some thought, Han Xiao felt something was not right.

That’s weird. The old man clearly said he’d only leave after the Super Star Cluster Alliance issues are over and he’s done helping me with it. By leaving now, it means he didn’t keep the promise. Was he just unable to endure it any longer?

Han Xiao was wondering but it did not show on his face. He nodded at Nero and said, “Got it, I’ll deal with this matter. You can put it aside.”

“I... sigh, alright then.” Nero wanted to explain himself but gave up after pausing. He sighed and hung up the communication. Han Xiao stood up from his chair, softly tapped the table twice, and suddenly pulled Phillip out.

“Master, hum... What is it?”

“Bring up the records of Aesop’s whereabouts in the last month.”

Although Han Xiao felt that Aesop might have run away deliberately, it was better to check through with caution in times like this.

Very soon, Phillip found the records. Han Xiao closed his eyes and browsed them quickly in his mind.

“Hmm, doesn’t seem like anything is wrong. He even successfully destroyed a secret stronghold of the Modo Civilization more than ten days ago. Everything seems normal,” Han Xiao murmured.

No part of these records seemed abnormal, but he still had a strange intuition that something was off.

The intuitions of Beyond Grade As were always rather accurate. Considering what Aesop had said some time ago about facing some kind of danger in the future, he had a bad feeling about this.

“I have to find him and make sure things are fine.”

Initially, his agreement with Aesop was that he would only symbolically chase after Aesop if he ran away but actually let him go. If he really captured Aesop, Aesop would definitely be more cautious and monitor Aesop even more closely, and Aesop would probably not have the chance to escape again.

However, out of caution, Han Xiao decided to catch Aesop for real this time. Anyway, the old man did not keep his side of the bargain, so he would still have the moral high ground even if his intuition was wrong.

Having made his decision, Han Xiao gave an order to Nero and told him to command the Shattered Star Ring troops to use all the resources to search for Aesop. Then, Han Xiao walked out of the room and entered a secret lab.

Inside the lab was a translucent hibernation cabin where Rody was locked inside. Around it were Information Form restrainers. It was the Destiny's Child sub-body that had yet to fully transform.

Aesop's foresight is strong. If he really has made up his mind to escape, unless Nero or Feidin go after him personally, it really won't be an easy task to capture him with just my subordinates. However, now I have a reliable foresight talent in my hands...

Han Xiao chuckled.

In the past, he was only a fake 'Foreseer', so he could only rely on superstition and luck to capture Aesop. However, this time was different. He had a real foresight master in his hands.

Foreseers could see the multiple possibilities of the future. When their abilities clashed, it was basically something like 'I foresaw that you foresaw what I foresaw'; whoever could see further would win.

Although Rody was only half transformed and could not control his ability fully and the focus of the prophecy was basically random, with the uniqueness of Destiny's Child, he should be able to have a few rounds with Aesop.

Han Xiao operated on the hibernation cabin for a while, and Rody awakened shortly after. He opened his eyes slowly with confusion and was dazed for quite some time before gaining focus. Seeing Han Xiao outside the cabin, he shook his head and said softly, "Your Excellency Black Star?"

"You're awake." Han Xiao opened the cabin door and said with a smile, "I need your help for something. I have to borrow your foresight ability."

"Huh? But I can't control this ability yet." Rody panicked a little.

"Just do your best... Do you remember that old man who can see you too? The tall, skinny one, the one who spoke for you."

"Yes." Rody nodded. He had a strong impression of anyone who could see him.

"That guy is playing hide and seek with me. I need to find him now. Keep saying his name in your head, then touch me and try to trigger a prophecy that's related to him."

"W-what if the prophecy isn't related to him?" Rody asked softly.

Han Xiao smiled but said with an indisputable tone, "Then try until it is!"

Rody shivered.

He could not control his ability yet. He had to come into contact with the person and would certainly faint afterward. After which, he would wake up feeling extremely weak, and that did not feel good at all.

At this moment, Han Xiao's smile looked like a devil in his eyes. "Ready?"

"Y-yes."

Rody knew he was in no position to object. He swallowed his saliva and started to rapidly repeat Aesop's name in his mind, hoping he would overperform and succeed in one try.

He extended his shivering hand and touched Han Xiao's arm.

The moment they touched, Rody started to tremble all over his body like he was being electrocuted.

"Ah!"

A few seconds later, his eyes rolled up, and he fell onto the ground. He had fainted.

Han Xiao was not surprised. He took out an emerald green potion from his pocket and injected it into Rody.

He could observe Rody now, which meant he could touch him. Rody fainted because he was just an ordinary man, and he could not afford the energy consumption of his ability, so giving him some potions would speed up his awakening... This was the result Han Xiao had obtained after more than a dozen tests.

As expected, not long after, Rody's eyelids shook, and he slowly opened his eyes. His blurry vision started to clear up as he saw Han Xiao's large body squatting in front of him, staring at him with burning emotions in his eyes.

"Tell me, what did you see?"

Rody shrunk his neck with fear, recalling the images he saw in his dreams. He looked at Han Xiao's expression and said cautiously, "I-I saw that you and a black-dressed woman were dragged into a war. Countless battleships exploded in your hands, and a corpse lay under your feet..."

"A corpse?" Han Xiao was stunned. The storyline of the previous life flowed up his mind, and he said subconsciously, "Aesop's?"

"Yes, his."

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes. In his previous life, Aesop's death was what caused the Dragon Emperor to lose control and start a slaughter, which went against the peace contract between Universal Civilizations and led to her being hunted.

Is this the world correcting the timeline, or is it because of some reason I'm unaware of? Han Xiao crossed his arms, scratched his chin, and pondered. Interesting. It feels like someone is plotting something in the dark...

Chapter 1160 Dragon Emperor's Inverted Scale

On the Modo Civilization's mother planet, the Modo Three Kings were having a meeting with the military upper echelons.

"Message from the frontline. Aesop has started moving. The plan is going smoothly."

"Our first choice is to have Aesop leave the Shattered Star Ring and take part in the conflict between the civilizations of another Star Field. This way, when Aesop dies, Black Star would have no choice but to go to another Star Field to deal with this, leaving his headquarters..." "Aesop's foresight ability is great, but

he might not be able to escape alone given the long years Black Star has been operating his forces in the Shattered Star Ring. Therefore, we'll have to help him."

"Hmm. If he really can't make it out, we'll have to choose a local civilization of the Shattered Star Ring to frame."

The upper echelons discussed their options.

At this time, the Modo Three Kings received a secret message and suddenly said, "Meeting temporarily dismissed. Take a half hour break."

The people were surprised but had no objection and all left the conference room.

After everyone left, the Modo Three Kings were the only ones left in the room. This time, a virtual communication screen appeared on the table, and a soft laugh sounded.

"Hehe, I'm honored to meet the three of you for the first time."

"Mechanic Emperor!"

The Modo Three Kings looked solemn.

Just now, the Mechanic Emperor had contacted the Modo Civilization and specifically asked to discuss a partnership with the Three Kings. Hence, the secretary had come to relay the message, and the Three Kings had decided that they would listen to what the Mechanic Emperor had to say.

The entire universe knew what an extremely awkward situation the Mechanic Emperor was in. Many Super Star Cluster civilizations saw the opportunity to woo him and wanted to work with him secretly, but Manison never gave a clear answer, nor did he reject them totally. Therefore, the leaders of the Super Star Cluster civilizations monitored Manison's current attitude closely.

"Your Excellencies, I know you're busy, so I'll cut to the chase... I've considered the proposal you made before, and now I'm planning to initiate a partnership with the Modo Civilization," Manison said calmly.

"What kind of partnership?"

"Us secretly working together against the Black Star Army. What do you guys think?"

The Three Kings exchanged looks but did not agree to it immediately. Instead, they asked back, "There are so many Super Star Cluster civilizations wanting to work with you. Why choose Modo?"

"Hehe, it's simple. I have no interest in stepping into the conflict you guys have with the three Universal Civilizations. Black Star is my only target, and you guys happen to be the most suitable partner for that. He's our common enemy, so I have a sensible reason to step in and interfere."

"We'll need more details."

"The shared battlefield requires the Beyond Grade A members to remain neutral, so taking part in the war is looked down upon. However, despite being the vice president, Black Star used personal beef as an excuse to start a war with the Modo Civilization. Therefore, as the president myself, I can do the same thing, using my beef with Black Star as the excuse to work with you guys against the Black Star

Army. That way, even if it's found out, there's nothing anyone can say." Manison's tone was casual but clearly showed his determination.

The Modo Three Kings pondered for a moment before nodding in agreement to what he was saying.

Although they hoped the Mechanic Emperor would join the Super Star Cluster Alliance faction to fight the three Universal Civilizations, they were well aware the chances of that were very slim. Nonetheless, it was acceptable for Modo Civilization now that the Mechanic Emperor had decided to target only Black Star. Black Star was the one who had caused them to be in such a horrible situation, so getting rid of him surely was a good thing.

"So, you plan to send troops to help us fight the Black Star Army?"

"Not really." Manison shook his head slightly. "My forces in the Flickering World are not as strong as Black Star's, and fighting the Black Star Army directly goes against the purpose of the development union..."

"How do you plan to cause damage to Black Star without sending troops?"

"There are plenty of ways. Damaging his reputation for one," Manison slowly said. "The three Universal Civilizations used me as the negative example to build his reputation, which has already affected my position in the Machinery Faith and damaged my interests. I have to think of ways to damage Black Star's reputation, and that is why I've decided to work with you guys. "What I can do is secretly provide help. For example, have the forces I secretly planted in the Flickering World and Shattered Star Ring do something. After all, your troops are being closely monitored, and my men can move freely in the dark."

Hearing this, the Modo Three Kings frowned.

If the Mechanic Emperor was not planning to participate directly in the battle, his impact would be very limited.

However, thinking about it, there was no way they could make the Mechanic Emperor sacrifice his own troops for their Super Star Cluster civilization. After all, they had never had much of a relationship prior to this, and the Mechanic Emperor was not in the best situation himself.

Furthermore, the Mechanic Emperor was right; the Super Star Cluster's troops were being way too closely monitored. On the other hand, the Mechanic Emperor had planted a ton of subsidiary forces in many Star Fields that formed intelligence and resource networks, which might come in handy.

"...Okay, we'd be happy to work with you. We'll discuss the details later."

"Sure, I'm looking forward to it." Manison smiled faintly and cut off the communication.

The Modo Three Kings finally relaxed and looked at each other. They all saw the same thought in each other's eyes.

If they got Manison's help to transport Aesop out of the Shattered Star Ring, the success rate would be much higher than if they did it themselves.

Although the three of them had yet to decide whether or not to let the Mechanic Emperor take part in this operation, another layer of insurance would never be a bad thing. If they had no way of sending

Aesop out of the Shattered Star Ring, it would not be too late to ask the Mechanic Emperor to help. Furthermore, if Aesop died in the Mechanic Emperor's hands, they would achieve their goal all the same, with greater results than they could have hoped for!

However, while the three of them were having these thoughts, they had no idea that Manison's motive of proposing this partnership was anything but pure. Although he did want to cause problems for Black Star, it was not his main goal.

His sources showed that the Modo Civilization had moved the Soul Swapper out, so it was definitely going to be used on someone, most likely Black Star. Therefore, Manison wanted to use Black Star as an excuse to work with Modo, attempt to take part in the related operation to obtain more information, and find the whereabouts of the Soul Swapper.

Robbing the Soul Swapper was his true goal! After all, he would not incur any losses even if he failed, so it was worth a try.

In the cabin, two bodies shrouded in darkness laid on the ground, one large and one small. They were completely stationary like vegetables. It was the Soul Swap Twins.

Two normal-sized Spacehumans stood on the side, one male and one female. They were stretching their bodies, and the dark Soul Swapper hovered beside them.

"This body is a Pugilist with a strong physique. It feels quite good. It's been long since I've felt this healthy." The male rubbed his neck with a comfortable expression.

"Stop dawdling," the female scolded. "This is just a temporary shell. Quickly pick up our original bodies."

The man and woman were the Soul Swap Twins who had changed their bodies. The elder brother was Jill Emmerson, and the younger brother was Warren Emmerson.

The Soul Swapper worked on them too. They could swap their own souls into someone else's body. After swapping bodies, their Esper Ability would not be swapped too, and they would only be as strong as the new body. For example, if they swapped into a Grade D Super, they would also become Grade D. However, their souls would be unaffected and remain at Grade B, so their ability to use the Soul Swapper would not be affected either.

Their right to use the Soul Swapper came from their soul and had nothing to do with their bodies, so they would be able to use it even if they were in the body of a dog.

This ability was one of the reasons the two of them were confident in escaping successfully —they could keep switching bodies and be very difficult to find.

"Elder bro, although we're free now, we haven't got rid of that..." Warren pointed at his own head.

"Hmm, that mind trap is a problem. Luckily, the Modo Civilization probably thinks we can't even detect it."

Jill curled his lips with disdain.

The mind trap the direct Beyond Grade A Mage of the Modō Civilization planted into their souls would not disappear when they changed bodies.

Accordingly, given their Grade B strength, not to mention defusing this mind trap, they would not even be able to notice it at all. They should have been in the dark all along... However, the Soul Swapper had the function to check the state of a soul.

All Space Wonder level treasures had a certain 'absolute' aspect. Not to mention a mind trap set by an ordinary Beyond Grade A, even if it was set by a peak Beyond Grade A, as long as it was targeted at the soul, the Soul Swapper would discover it. This was similar to the Spacetime Amber's 'absolute' aspect; as long as its fundamental mechanism was not figured out, even ten peak Beyond Grade As attacking it together would not damage it in the slightest.

It would be a wild dream for the two of them to defuse a mind trap set up by a Beyond Grade A, but including a Space Wonder in that equation would make things different. Even though the two of them could not use the Soul Swapper to its fullest potential, they still had an emergency method to deal with this problem.

The Soul Swapper did not have the ability to 'purify souls', but the two of them planned to gather mind energy far beyond their own power by absorbing a large number of souls and slowly chipping away at the trap in their minds.

This plan would require a lot of souls, which meant they had to kill a lot of people. But clearly, they had no choice, nor did they care.

"Elder bro, what's our plan?"

"Let's go to some place where no one recognizes us, take over a body with high potential, and slowly grow stronger. When we're at Calamity Grade or even Beyond Grade A, we will be able to go anywhere we want in this universe!"

Jill knew that 'keeping a low profile and cultivating' was the right path. Flames of ambition sparkled in his eyes.

In his heart, becoming the only ones who could use the Soul Swapper was both lucky and tragic.

The lucky part, of course, was that the Soul Swapper only recognized the two of them as users, as if they were chosen.

The tragic part was that, because of that, they were imprisoned by the Modō Civilization for many years, they became the subjects of countless inhumane experiments, and their personalities became twisted.

However, the tragic dark days were in the past now. The future was full of hope, and the Soul Swapper had brought them infinite possibilities... From now on, they were free!

In Floating Dragon Island, water vapor filled the magnificent palace. Deep inside the layers of fog, there was the sound of water flowing.

Hu!

The thick fog was suddenly disturbed, and a tall silhouette suddenly appeared beside the wardrobe shelf in the palace. The King mechanical suit automatically fell off and disappeared, leaving Han Xiao standing there.

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The sound of water in the room paused for a split second, and a force field shockwave fused with water vapor suddenly rocketed toward him. Han Xiao stood still and let it land on his chest, creating a loud noise, but his body did not move at all.

“You startled me. Next time, tell me before you teleport here.” Ames’ voice came from the fog.

Han Xiao’s vision penetrated the fog and saw a magnificent black, crystal bathtub in the middle of the room. Ames tied up her hair with a piece of white cloth and faced away from him, sitting in the tub. He could only see her snowy neck and moist shoulders that were tender like the skin of a child.

“Bathing?” Han Xiao snapped his fingers. “Quickly finish up. There’s something I have to tell you.”

“What is it?” Ames turned her head slightly, showing her elegant side face with water droplets hanging from her long earlids that blinked softly.

“It’s about Aesop. He’s missing.”

“... Give me a minute.”

Ames did not mind Han Xiao watching and stood up directly. She heated up her body temperature, and the water vapor quickly evaporated from her skin.

She walked out of the bathtub, casually pulled the black dress over to her with a force field, and donned it with a spin. She then took off the white cloth in her hair and let it fall.

Beyond Grade As’ bodies would never get dirty; bathing was mainly for the purpose of enjoyment. All they had to do was adjust their temperature to that of an ordinary person, and they would be able to enjoy the feeling of taking a warm and comfortable bath. This way, they did not have to look for lava.

“Let’s go. We’ll speak outside.” The two of them walked out of the palace and came to the garden. Ames sat down on the chair and stared at Han Xiao with a weird expression.

“I allowed Aesop to go and help you, but you let him escape. That’s a little irresponsible of you... Did you deliberately let him go? You’re so bad.”

“Ahem, you’re overthinking it.” Han Xiao coughed unnaturally and said without changing his expression, “Didn’t I come to notify you instantly?” Ames held her chin and joked, “Looks like even the universally famous Black Star still loses to a great prophet.”

“He’s a friend after all. It’s not like I can really imprison him or something.” Han Xiao smiled casually before putting on a serious expression. “Enough with the jokes. My intuition tells me that there’s something wrong. Aesop might not have left on his own will.”

“Oh?” Ames frowned, and the smile disappeared on her face. Shocked, she said, “Did someone kidnap him?”

"I don't think so. I arranged more than enough guards for him. If they'd kidnapped him physically, I'd definitely have found out." "Does that mean someone controlled his mind?"

"That's the problem. I've had Aesop's guards carry around all kinds of psychological guarding devices, mind wave detection devices, and energy radars on them. If someone used soul magic, a psychic Esper Ability, or anything of the sort on him, it would have triggered an alarm, even if it was from a Beyond Grade A. However, none of these devices responded... Therefore, I suspect that Aesop might be controlled by an unknown method."

Although the soul and mind were not areas Mechanics excelled in, it did not mean he had absolutely no knowledge of them. He was just not as good as those who were experts on the subject.

"What method?" Ames asked.

"I don't know either. We'll only find out after we find Aesop and check him." Han Xiao shook his head.

In fact, if this conspiracy theory was right, he was very curious about how Aesop fell for it. It was completely undetectable, so he had no idea what method was used.

"I'll find him with you." Ames narrowed her eyes, and dangerous emotions flickered in her eyes. "Who dares to target my people? Do they think I'm dead!"

"Don't get so riled up. This is just my guess. We'll have to investigate further." Han Xiao comforted Ames.

He had come to give Ames a heads up so that she would be mentally prepared, preventing the situation of her emotions going wild like it did in the previous life.

Han Xiao knew Ames' personality quite well. Sure, she looked like she did not care about anything usually, but her family and friends such as Aesop, Jenny, Hila, and Aurora were her inverted scales. Once threatened, she would turn into a raging dragon, leaving all rules and laws behind, and retaliate, no matter who the enemy was, not giving the consequences any thought at all.

This time, Han Xiao told Phillip to send a message. A few seconds later, the King mechanical suit appeared beside him again. The helmet opened, and inside was Feidin.

"Army Commander, I'm here."

Han Xiao nodded and explained to Ames, "Aesop's prophecy ability is very suitable for hiding. It won't be easy catching him using regular methods, so we'll need some luck."

He was not just going to bring Feidin along for this but also Rody. Teleporting the three of them there using the King mechanical suit would save a lot of time, and he could use the Black Star Army's troops right there in the Shattered Star Ring.

"All of Floating Dragon's resources are available for you to use. You don't have to care about anything else. I just want Aesop." Ames gave the right to command to Han Xiao without any hesitation and then stood up with a poker face. "We'll leave now!"