

The Mechanic 431

Chapter 431: Revenge from the Past (1)

“What do you want?”

The bartender was a member of the ship’s crew. His face was filled with panic, and he could not even struggle.

Herlous was shocked. “Captain, this is?”

Han Xiao pointed at his cup and said, “Someone added something inside, probably poison.”

“Impossible, I brought the liquor. Why am I fine after drinking it... or have I been poisoned too?”

Herlous was shocked. He hurriedly touched his tongue and throat, but there was no sign of the numbness from being poisoned.

“There is no problem with the liquor; it’s the cup.” The item information of the liquor bottle was normal—only his cup had something added into it. The only possibility was that someone had put something into the cup in advance, and the bartender who took out the cup was the most suspicious.

This started as a very simple daily escorting mission; Han Xiao did not expect to meet something like this. He was very curious—who wanted him dead?

This time, the players and the company employees came. Dekker and the others hurried there as well. They were very confused.

“What happened?”

Han Xiao explained simply, and everyone was surprised.

“Could it be a mistake?” Dekker asked.

Han Xiao shook his head. He wrote a new mission and threw it to the players.

You have triggered mission [Poison Testing]

Mission Introduction: Someone seems to have attempted to poison your captain. Are you willing to help him to test the effect of the poison?

Mission Requirements: Drink [Strong Liquor with an Added Ingredient]

Reward: Black Star—Han Xiao Favorability +8, 150,000 experience.

Remarks: Possible death

The mercenary group players received the notification on their interface. Their eyes sparkled for this was the first time that they had seen such an easy mission that could increase Han Xiao's Favorability and receive experience. Dying once was nothing.

Just as they were about to snatch the cup, a shadow flew past everyone. Bun-Hit-Dog snatched the cup extremely quickly and gulped it down without saying a word.

"How are you able to run this fast?" Second Prince was shocked. *I'm a Dexterity-focused Pugilist, yet I could not even catch up to you. How did you do it?*

Bun-Hit-Dog glanced at everyone with pride. Before he could speak, his face suddenly changed, and the veins under his skin expanded and turned black, covering his entire face. He opened his mouth but could not say a word. The other players moved back as they saw this, leaving no one within a three-meter radius from Bun-Hit-Dog.

Bun-Hit-Dog froze in place for a few seconds, then blood sprayed out from his every orifice. He collapsed onto the ground and died on the spot.

"Tsk tsk, truly a man of the wind. He even died quickly," Frenzied Sword said.

"He—he's dead just like that?"

The company employees and the crews were all dumbfounded. A mercenary died right on the spot, yet his friends had no reaction at all. *What mercenary group is this? They're so cold-blooded! So horrifying!*

Plus, these mercenaries are way too loyal to Black Star. Black Star had yet to even speak and they were already rushing to drink the poisoned alcohol, testing the poison with their body. This does not feel like a mercenary group at all but a fanatical cult!

However, the next moment, Bun-Hit-Dog's corpse turned into white light and disappeared, then the sound of trotting footsteps appeared outside the door almost immediately after. Bun-Hit-Dog had run over from the revive point.

"Yo—you..." Dekker stammered in shock.

Han Xiao looked at him. "After working together so many times, I'm surprised that you don't know that we have the nickname 'Immortal Mercenary Group'?"

"I see, I don't know much about the mercenary industry." Dekker smiled bitterly. No wonder the mercenaries were so calm, they were all immortals.

Black Star's name was widely known, but his details were only known within the industry; the other industries did not know much about it.

Han Xiao turned around and asked, "What was the effect of the poison?"

Bun-Hit-Dog looked at the notification from earlier.

You have consumed a certain poison. Judging END... Your END is lower than 280. No related immunity ability detected. You have entered [Poisoned] state.

High Concentration Corrosive Blood Poison: This is a poison made from some Esper ability and requires blood poison cure.

Current poison level: 135/135

You are losing 750 health per second.

Duration: 8 seconds

Warning! Your health is too low. Please consume antidote as soon as possible!

Your health is lower than 0!

You died!

Bun-Hit-Dog read accordingly, and Han Xiao nodded.

6,000 health in eight seconds, very lethal to players but can't kill me. This means that the person who added the poison has limited information of me, but the fact that the culprit could poison me on this trip means that they know my location or at least know that this ship is transporting supplies for Floating Dragon and that I would definitely appear here. This ship is only so big, and the culprit is definitely hidden among them. Plus, even the title of 'Immortal Mercenary Group' did not scare the culprit away, so there can only be two possibilities. Either they know that I'm not immortal or... an act of revenge?

Han Xiao's eyebrows were locked tightly. He had many guesses in his mind, and even the players were not excluded!

He had to guard against the possibility of something like this happening. He made himself stronger by helping the players, but he never completely trusted them. After all, he knew too well what the players were like. He only hoped that this was not the right guess and that there was no player who privately accepted a mission to assassinate him.

After proving Han Xiao's words true, many pairs of eyes full of hostility stared at the bartender who had collapsed on the side. The bartender saw that the poison did exist and was scared sh*tless; his entire body was shivering.

"It wasn't me. I don't know anything about this. I just took an empty cup from the drawer..."

Han Xiao opened the bar drawer. There were many empty cups inside. He took all of them out and poured water in each of them. These were all normal; his cup was the only one that had poison. He frowned and said, "There are so many glasses, and the only one with poison is the one you gave me. How can you explain that?"

"I—I don't know. That glass was at the most outside. I really just took it randomly!"

The bartender almost urinated out of horror.

Herlous suddenly was covered in cold sweat. "If the bartender took the wrong cup, wouldn't that have been the end of me?"

"Your body is strong; the poison wouldn't have killed you," Han Xiao replied. He stared at the shivering bartender and said, "If it's not you, it's someone else that did something to the cup. Captain! Where's the captain?"

The spaceship's captain hurried to the scene, stepped out of the crowd, and said with sorrow on his face, "I'm the captain of Rainbow Conch. I am extremely sorry that something like this happened in my ship. I will provide my full cooperation to you with finding the culprit."

"I want to see the surveillance recording of this few days and see who has come close to this place."

"As you wish."

Other than the bedrooms, most areas of the spaceship had surveillance cameras, including the dining hall. The culprit could be found immediately through the recordings.

The bartender was surprised. "So, I'm free to go?"

"Are you dreaming?" Han Xiao said. "Tie him up and bring him along."

The captain led them to the main control room. Just as he was about to browse through the surveillance recordings, he was shocked to realize that the recordings had been wiped. Even the earliest recording was from less than one day ago.

"The surveillance recordings are all deleted!" The captain was stunned. "I'm the only one who can make such commands. Could it be that the spaceship system has been infiltrated? The culprit could bypass the alarms?"

He hastily opened the background, passed through authorization with his fingerprint and pupils, and activated the system scan, but there was no sign of infiltration.

"Why can't the infiltration be detected? Is the spaceship completely controlled by the enemy?"

The captain was sweating profusely. He looked at the operation diary of the spaceship, hoping to find the ID of the person that deleted the recordings. This small traveling spaceship belonged to a galactical traveling organization, so the captain was hired and only had second-tier authorization. The highest system authorization belonged to the organization, and the captain could not modify the diary. Hence, even if the culprit controlled the spaceship, the diary would not be changed. Unless the opponent's technology was strong enough to bypass the quantum network defense of the organization's headquarters and get the highest authorization.

However, there was no sign of any other accounts logging into the system, but they did find the records of the recordings being deleted.

[Operation Dairy #00784315]

22 hours ago—Clean all surveillance recordings.

Authorization granted.

Confirm/Back

Confirmed.

Deleting... Complete.

Operator: Captain's account

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The captains' eyes opened widely. "Why is it my account? I didn't do it! Twenty-two hours ago... I was sleeping at that time! It's the culprit, the culprit stole my account! But... the login password is my biometric data, how can they be stolen..."

The people looked at him doubtfully. *Maybe it was you. Now that the surveillance footage is gone, you can say whatever you want.*

"There are a few possibilities. Maybe the superiors of your travel agency worked with another organization that is against us, or maybe the opposite party used some method to get the captain's body password data, or maybe... there's a shapeshifter Esper hidden in the ship," Herlous contemplated.

Everyone's face changed. They looked at each other with suspicion—everyone looked like an enemy.

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows and looked around the crowd. Everyone on the ship was gathered here, even Sylvia. She hid at the edge of the crowd and showed half of her face, sizing him up...

His eyes suddenly narrowed.

Wait a minute, Sylvia?

With a flash of insight, Han Xiao finally realized where the strange feeling came from. He looked at Dekker and said, "Sylvia is your friend's daughter, is she?"

Dekker nodded and said with a confused face, "Yes, what's wrong with that?"

Han Xiao squinted his eyes. "Her family... only has her father, and if I remember correctly, that person is not a nobody. I almost fell for your lies; you acted quite well. Leniency for those who confess, severity for those who resist. Are you going to confess on your own, or do you need me to help you confess?"

Dekker's expression froze. His eyes clearly expressed his shock and disbelief. *Why do you know who Sylvia is?*

Although Han Xiao did not know exactly who Sylvia's father was, he remembered that her father was a villain in the background introduction, and that was enough. Dekker was just a regular employee of a business organization, yet he had a villainous friend. It was certainly possible but still very questionable...

Han Xiao shook his head in his mind. He should have noticed this long ago, but everything was normal, so he did not think too much about it. It seemed like he had let his guard down a little recently.

After resting for a month due to the Pro League, along with not facing any huge threats in the nine months before that, his alertness had decreased subconsciously. Luckily, he noticed that in time and became more alert.

This time, Sylvia walked out. She was frowning. The feeling that she gave was completely different; the young and energetic feeling that she gave earlier was all a disguise. Although her body was still in puberty, the feeling that she gave was not like a teenage girl anymore—she felt more mature.

Sylvia stared at Han Xiao; her tone was complex and mixed with astonishment.

“You know me?”

She could not figure out how it was possible for Han Xiao to recognize who she was despite him meeting her for the first time. Logically, Black Star should not even know that she existed; she should have always been hidden in the dark.

Sylvia had thought of many possible ways in which she would be found out but never thought of her identity being exposed. Because of this, she would not be able to carry out her plan anymore.

In reality, if Han Xiao did not remember Sylvia’s character background, he would not have known the identity of the culprit. It was indeed not a coincidence to suddenly meet a future renowned character!

Sylvia clenched his teeth and spat furiously, “Black Star, my father was sent to jail by you. You dishonorable mercenaries only fight for money, and for that, you help those tyrants suppress the people who are suffering. My father could’ve saved everyone, but he couldn’t because of your mercenaries!”

Since she was already exposed, she did not act like a teenage girl anymore.

The players exchanged looks confusingly. *When did we do something like that?*

Maple Moon could not help but ask, “Little girl, what’s your father’s name?”

“Langley! How can you forget his name?” Sylvia was emotional.

Han Xiao opened the mercenary group panel and glanced through it. There really was this name in the mission resume. It was a partnership mission with the Purple Gold Army, to eradicate the stronghold of a certain rebel army. The leader of the rebels was called Langley, and as it turned out, that guy was Sylvia’s father.

Han Xiao was speechless. He had become the ‘certain mercenary group’ that imprisoned Sylvia’s father in her character background. What could he say? This was the result of the butterfly effect once again. It fell from the sky.

“Not only you but Purple Gold Army too. This will not be the last time; I will hunt you people to the depths of hell!” Sylvia yelled.

Bang!

As soon as she finished her sentence, the sound of a smoke grenade exploding came from behind them. Dark red poison gas rose from within.

You are surrounded by certain poison gas. Judging END... Your END is lower than 280. No related immunity ability detected.

You have entered [Poisoned] state.

Low Concentration Corrosive Blood Poison Gas: This is a poison gas made from some Esper ability, require blood poison cure.

Current poison level: 30/30

You are losing 200 health per second.

Effects will wear off after not breathing in poison gas for 3 seconds.

They turned around hastily and saw that the captain had already put on a gas mask. He was the one that threw out the gas grenades.

At the same time, the announcement from the spaceship system echoed in the entire spaceship.

“Auto-Navigation altered. Current destination: The closest Fixed Star. Heating up jumping engine. Estimated time till arrival: 13 minutes and 48 seconds.”

“The entire ship has entered lockdown mode; all gates are locked! Repeat, all gates are locked!”

Boom!

The gate in the main control room closed with a loud bang, together with all the doors along the corridor and paths in the spaceship. The captain had prepared long ago. He dashed out extremely quickly before the alloy door on the other side of the main control room closed. Herlous could not capture the captain in time, and he punched the metal door, leaving a shallow dent.

The central alloy door divided a small part of the crowd and blocked them outside, including Sylvia.

Now, Han Xiao and the others were all trapped inside the main control room.

The crew was all stunned. The captain was with an enemy?

Whoosh.

This time, clouds of dark red poison gas sprayed out from the ventilation pipe. The ventilation system had been modified, and now the hidden system was activated by the ‘captain’.

Han Xiao held his breath, and his eyes flickered.

This was not just an assassination; this ship itself was a complete trap for them! The reason that Sylvia knew their whereabouts was most likely because of how well known they were.

This time, a new mission appeared on the interface.

You have triggered Urgent Mission [Sylvia's Revenge].

Mission Introduction: Because of a regular mercenary mission, you made Sylvia lose her father. Now, you have to face the blazing flames of her revenge.

Mission Requirements: Nullify Sylvia's revenge methods.

Reward: 1,200,000 Experience.

"Tsk tsk, they actually plotted against us and plan to send us into a Fixed Star and burn us to a crisp. Not a bad idea."

Han Xiao smiled. He did not panic at all; he was extremely familiar with this kind of plan. He had fought the Germinal Organization this way back then.

"What do we do now?" Herlous looked at him. He could breathe and talk as usual because his END was more than 280, so the poison gas could not hurt him.

"Her plan is quite interesting, but she missed a very important factor..."

The mechanical suit expanded from his necklace to his entire body. His helmet filtered the poison gas, and his 'Poisoned' state was gone in no time. Han Xiao walked in front of the main control panel, pressed on the screen, and opened the spaceship system interface. He stretched his fingers, shook his head, and laughed.

"I'm a Mechanic."

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The players activated the filter in their armor as well, making them immune to the poison gas. They looked at Han Xiao and waited for his orders.

"That captain used his authority and locked the spaceship's navigation. I'll hack into the spaceship system and change its course. You guys blast the alloy gate open; some of you go to the central computer room and insert this chip, and the rest of you go to capture Sylvia and her allies."

Han Xiao opened his palm. With a flash of electricity, a black chip flew out from his pocket.

"Understood." Herlous nodded. He pocketed the chip, swung his Battleship Slicing Blade, and slashed alloy door. With a piercing sound of steel being torn apart, an opening appeared. Dozens of armored players raised their firearms and fired at the door. The door was quickly covered in holes before collapsing.

In the poison gas, they walked out of the main control room. In front of them was another locked alloy door, and the group of people who had been separated earlier were trapped in the pathway. Many of them were poisoned and barely clinging on to life. Dekker was surprisingly among them too, but Sylvia had disappeared.

The players took out gas masks and placed them on these people. Dekker was weak and powerless. The moment he caught his breath, he started tearing up.

“I—I was forced. That girl used my family to threaten me, forcing me to act and cooperate with her. I really had no choice. I’m sorry. I’m sorry...”

“Cut the cr*p. Where’s Sylvia?” Herlous demanded.

“She’s allied with that captain. She used the authority to open the alloy gate and escaped, leaving us here.”

Bang!

Herlous slapped Dekker unconscious and said, “Tie him up. The captain might question him later.”

Gunshots echoed in the spaceship. They broke through alloy doors one after another rather quickly. Sylvia had turned the spaceship into a trap, but the spaceship itself could not trap them. This was the difference in raw strength.

Han Xiao guessed that Sylvia would be going to the escape cabin as soon as possible and escape before the spaceship entered the jump state, at the same time releasing all the emergency escape ships and trap them in the spaceship. However, he was a Mechanic and could seize the spaceship’s authorization. This was the flaw in Sylvia’s plan.

Han Xiao opened the spaceship system—his fingers moved so quickly that they created afterimages. He entered countless codes and quickly hacked into the background of the system. Then he met resistance from the security system. He had bought some new advanced knowledges throughout the nine months, such as [Advanced Smart Technology], which made up for his weakness in terms of hacking. That black chip was an even stronger assistant Artificial Intelligence. After plugging it into the central computer room, the speed of breaking through the system would be doubled.

The alarm was triggered, and the system warning echoed in the spaceship.

“System infiltration detected! Please stop your actions immediately!”

As time was limited, Han Xiao did not go around the alarm and chose the roughest method.

“Hmm... 13th generation firewall from the TAK Series, 47th calculating method of the Silverlight sequence, random password wall. Quite advanced actually.” Han Xiao’s movements did not stop. He said while hacking, “Breaking through this system will take about five minutes, but the spaceship will enter the jumping state in two minutes. Sylvia will board the escape ship before this. Aroshia, capture her.”

Upon hearing Han Xiao’s words, Aroshia turned into energy form and left through the wall. Metal walls were meaningless to her; only energy barriers could stop her from going through the wall.

Everyone was moving, while Han Xiao stayed in the main control room and focused on hacking the system.

...

“Damn, how was I exposed? How can Black Star possibly know who I am?”

The sound of hurried footsteps echoed in the ship bridge. Sylvia was running hastily. She used the captain’s authority to open one alloy door after another and closed them after she passed through.

The sound of gunfire became clearer, meaning that she did not have much time left. If they fought directly, she would not be able to resist at all.

Every second counted at this time. Sylvia did not dare to stop. Warm, moist air came out of her lungs time after time as she gasped for breath.

In order to complete the trap, she had used all her savings to hire a freelance killer and even knew about Han Xiao’s whereabouts through the intel network of an organization. Sylvia clearly knew that she was too weak. In order to go against the Black Star Mercenary Group, she could only depend on a conspiracy and plot like that. She wanted this spaceship to become Black Star’s grave... Sadly, she could now only hope to save herself.

Do you regret it?

A sound echoed in her heart. Sylvia bit her lips.

Many images appeared in her head. Her father’s eyes that were full of love, the happy memories of her childhood, plating her memories with warmth.

However, the images shattered like a mirror. Flames devoured these memories. Mercenaries landed from the sky and destroyed everything with fire. If her father had not sent her away in advance, she would have died in that storm of bullets.

After being captured by the mercenaries, her father was sent to jail. She had wandered around and suffered a lot before she could finally return to the old place. Her father’s stronghold was like a home to her, but now, the only things left were the burnt ruins.

She still remembered, when she was young, she liked to hide under the shade of an old tree and spend lazy afternoons time after time. But that tree was turned into charcoal now, giving out a pungent odor. The black branches were the only things left of the once dense leaves.

Every time she thought of these things, the uncontrollable flames of rage would burn her nerves and shatter her reason.

“In order to have my revenge on these mercenaries, it’s worth it to be in danger!” Sylvia clenched her teeth.

Very soon, she arrived at the escape cabin. Inside were ten or so escape ships.

The captain happened to arrive at the same time, and he complained, “You did not tell me that the risks were this high. I want a greater reward.”

The turbulence was becoming more violent. As soon as they entered the jump state, they would not be able to use the escape ships unless they wanted to be torn into pieces together with the escape ships. Sylvia hastily pulled down the bolt of the escape ship. With the sound of air streams, the other escape ships were released, leaving only two behind.

Just as the two of them was about to walk in, a tint of golden light appeared behind them. Aroshia passed through the wall and made it just in time.

“Quickly, go!”

Sylvia clenched her teeth. She was about to enter the escape ship, then suddenly, the captain pushed her from her back and threw her toward Aroshia.

In times of danger, he could not be bothered about the fact that Sylvia was his employee; he just wanted to stall time.

In midair, Sylvia turned around in disbelief. She did not expect the sudden betrayal of the captain.

Hum!

An energy impact ring expanded, sending Sylvia flying before she even hit Aroshia. She bumped into the wall and fell down on the side. Her expression was distorted from the pain.

Aroshia’s straightened her arm. Her forearm turned into a beam of gold energy and swept at the two escape ships like a whip, melting through their shell and leaving a consistent red cut. It was clear that they could not be used anymore.

The captain’s face changed completely.

Boom!

The alloy door collapsed. Herlous and the players rushed to the scene and surrounded the two of them.

At the same time, the spaceship suddenly trembled and entered the jump state.

“It’s over...”

Sylvia closed her eyes in despair.

...

The poison gas dissipated slowly, and the locked alloy doors opened one after another. The spaceship exited the jump state and stopped in space.

Hacking the spaceship system was just a matter of time to Han Xiao. After getting Sylvia under control, he easily gained the captain’s authorization.

The entire spaceship was under his control now. He canceled the navigation toward the Fixed Star, and the danger was diffused.

Sylvia felt that her plan was lethal, but in reality, it was not much of a threat to the current Black Star Mercenary Group. The mercenary group could get out of danger with their raw strength, so Han Xiao had no reason to panic at all. Sylvia was still too young and naive at this period of time.

The interface notified them that the mission was complete. The players were joyful upon receiving 1,200,000 experience.

The incident had come to an end. All the people on the ship were gathered in the guest hall—around them were mercenaries who aimed their firearms at them. In the middle were Sylvia, Dekker, and the captain, who were bound tightly.

Han Xiao sat on the sofa, placed his elbows on his knees, and leaned slightly forward, slowly scanning the three of them. His aura was like a crouching tiger, very pressurizing. The crew and the company employees did not even dare breathe loudly, despite them not being the ones who were being interrogated.

Dekker hastily explained the situation. A few days ago, the Tyrell Group had prepared the supplies for Floating Dragon Island and confirmed to let him take care of the handover. After that, Sylvia had found him and forced him to cooperate.

“You know about our whereabouts, so there’s definitely an organization that provided you help. You’re just a small girl and won’t have such a vast intel network.” Han Xiao was expressionless. “Plus, you bribed the captain to take the risk and fight a group of mercenaries, so you definitely depended on the power of that organization...”

Sylvia stared at Han Xiao with a determined face like she had decided not to say anything no matter what. She was not willing to lower her head in front of her enemy.

“Bang!”

The sound of gunshot suddenly appeared.

Smoke came out from the muzzle.

Droplets of blood splashed onto Sylvia’s pretty face. Her whole body shivered, and she turned her head and looked over.

The captain’s head had a penetrating hole of blood in it; the stunned expression was fixed on his face. He collapsed slowly, and the pool of blood expanded gradually.

The captain had thought that Han Xiao was going to interrogate him and was still troubled by what he should say in order to stay alive, but Han Xiao was completely uninterested in him and gave him a bullet straight away.

The widened eyes were filled with regret.

The corpse suddenly changed shape into another man. This was the shapeshifting Esper ability, especially suitable for infiltration. Herlous’ eyes sparkled. “I guessed correctly. There is indeed a shapeshifting Esper.”

Seeing this, Han Xiao could now guess roughly what had happened. “Looks like the original captain died long ago and was replaced by this shapeshifting Esper. He’s a killer you hired, and he should be the one that poisoned the cup as well.”

Sylvia bit her lower lip heavily. She turned her head to not look at the corpse. Despite her trying her best to stay strong, she could not stop herself from shivering or the tiny tears appearing in her eyes.

She only looked like a teenage girl in the face of her fear of death.

“Yo—you might as well kill me too!”

Sylvia closed her eyes and tried her best to make an unafraid expression.

“I don’t oppose that.”

The still-hot muzzle pressed on Sylvia’s white and smooth face. Through the muzzle, Han Xiao could obviously feel Sylvia was shivering more and more heavily.

Chapter 434: Father (1)

Buzz!

At this time, a hologram appeared in the middle of the hall. It was an individual wearing luxurious clothes who looked similar to lizards. He scanned the entire place, looked at Han Xiao, and said in a confused tone, “The system of a spaceship under our organization was hacked. Black Star, did you do this?”

“Your response is too slow; I’ve been waiting for you.” Han Xiao leaned back on the sofa and looked up at this lizardman, temporarily putting Sylvia’s case aside.

This spaceship belonged to a galactic travel agency, so the organization had the highest level of authorization. As soon as the spaceship was taken away by an outsider, the organization would notice it right away and locate the spaceship, unless the connection was cut. However, doing so not only required hacking technology but also all sorts of disrupting and invading hardware, only then would the highest level of authorization be blocked. Han Xiao took the captain’s authorization, so he had known long ago that the actual owner of the spaceship would find him.

Although the spaceship was under his control, there was no way to block the owner’s range surveillance. With his technology level, it would take a few days to half a month to change the basic setting of the spaceship and erase the rights of the highest level of authorization. The deeper the authorization level was, the stronger its defense was; the difference in difficulty was like the difference between hacking into a small enterprise and hacking into the government.

The lizardman had thought that the spaceship had been stolen, but seeing the current situation, there seemed to be something else. He suppressed his rage and asked about what happened.

Han Xiao explained what had happened in a simple way. Knowing that the captain had been replaced and someone had tried to kill the passengers during the trip, the lizardman’s face changed tremendously... but the humans present could not see it.

“I took your spaceship because I trusted your travel agency, but I faced such a huge danger. Your reputation is very disappointing! If potential customers hear about this, who would want to take your spaceship that’s so unsafe?” Han Xiao pressed on his heart and spoke with an exaggerated tone, blackmailing under bright daylight. “Tsk... I have yet to recover from the terror. I am so upset. You have to compensate me for this, including mental damage, lost wages, post-trauma checkup, and others.”

The lizardman swung his tail and said with frustration, “I’m sorry, this is a dereliction of duty from our organization. We will definitely deal with it and give you compensations accordingly...”

Assassinations were hard to guard against. His travel agency had been dragged into that mess as well, but there was nothing he could do. After all, it had happened on his spaceship.

There were many galactic travel agencies in the universe, so the competition was quite intense. If this was spread out in an exaggerated way, their brand image would definitely be affected. At least Black Star was a mercenary group that worked for money and kept their word—he was willing to compensate and avoid the damages.

This travel agency owned dozens of spaceships and made close to a thousand Enas every day, it would be a waste if Han Xiao did not make them pay. Han Xiao directly stated an outrageous amount, and after some negotiation, both of them barely agreed with compensation of 30,000 Enas.

After receiving the 30,000 Enas, Han Xiao now had around 840,000 Enas. He sighed in his heart and felt that blackmailing was a much quicker way to earn money compared to being a mercenary... but not as quick as earning from the players' wallets.

"Before you recall this spaceship, lend it to me for a few days. Anyways, you guys can track it and will know where the spaceship is," Han Xiao said.

"This... alright."

After agreeing, the upset lizardman turned off the communication.

Han Xiao did not intend to take the spaceship away. He was not a kid that could just snatch someone else's candy. Robbing a spaceship with an official owner will make him wanted, unless there were no witnesses. The cons outweighed the pros, and it was not as safe as blackmailing the owners. In his previous life, many players proved the consequences of robbing spaceships with actions. Regardless of whether they succeeded or failed, they would become wanted and be chased by mercenaries, bounty hunters, and the patrolling law enforcement of all civilizations. Their initial Favorability with the various lawful civilizations would drop by a huge amount as well. Also, if they were discovered in the cities or planets belonging to the lawful factions, they would be surrounded by the guards and imprisoned. It was not worth it at all.

Han Xiao had no interest in walking down the same path. He had no urgent need for spaceships, so he did not want to risk it. Furthermore, he knew how to get spaceships for free without the side effects, so of course, he was not interested in robbing the spaceship.

After this matter was settled, Han Xiao looked at Sylvia again.

This teenage girl was tied up tightly and was slumping at the side. Her low eyelashes trembled continuously, looking extremely pitiful and heartbreaking. However, this had absolutely no effect on the Great Mechanic Han. Only dead enemies were good enemies ...

"Wait a minute... who tied her up like this?"

Han Xiao had only just realized the superb tying skills used on Sylvia.

Bun-Hit-Dog raised his hand immediately like a good student answering a question. He said with a bright smile on his face, "I did. Doesn't it look amazing?"

"You're really letting yourself go." Frenzied Sword's mouth twitched.

On the side, Herlous shook his head and asked, “Black Star, what are you planning to do with her?”

Han Xiao played with a firearm, glanced at him, and said, “Judging from your tone, you seem to have some suggestions. You should speak if you have any. I’m not a dictator—I believe in democracy.”

Herlous paused and chose his words carefully. “She said, ‘You dishonorable mercenaries helped those tyrants suppress the people who are suffering.’ I think she has definitely misunderstood some details. We all know full well what kind of person Langley is, but she doesn’t seem to. I think... isn’t it better to ask about it first?”

Then, Herlous sighed and said, “After all, I understand the impulse of revenge. Not mentioning the fact that she’s just a child, if there was a chance for me to assassinate the leader of DarkStar, I would not even hesitate.”

“I see, good for you.” Han Xiao’s mouth twitched. He turned around, looked at the players behind him and asked, “What about you guys? Any suggestions?”

The players froze, not expecting to be asked.

“Us? Anything.”

“Whatever is fine.”

“Anything is fine... but which one gives a better reward?”

“This girl is quite pretty—it’s a shame to kill her.”

The players replied carelessly. Most of them were male—they preferred to be decisive and get it done with. The female players like Rainy Kim and Maple Moon were more gentle and suggested searching for the truth.

Sylvia clenched her teeth tightly and tried her best to show a fierce face, but her body was still shivering. She had no power to resist and could only wait for her fate to be decided by someone else.

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes and stared at her as he contemplated.

He had many ways to deal with this; killing was the simplest one. As long as he pulled the trigger on Sylvia, who was acting tough but shivering in fear, the players in the future would lose thousands of parodies, making her journey end on his hand before it even started. He had a reason to do so. He was just killing an enemy, so no one could say that there was anything wrong with that.

With the blood of countless people on his hands, Han Xiao did not care for one more future known character.

However, he was not a bloodthirsty person. To him, killing was just a method; benefits were his real goal.

The question that was on his mind was if he could get more benefits from Sylvia and whether killing her or not killing her was more beneficial.

It did not matter whether Sylvia would be good or evil in the future; the Great Mechanic Han only needed someone with value, just like that crazy woman Hila. No wait, he saved Aurora, so Hila was not crazy. But in the storyline in his previous life, Hila wiped out entire planets of lives, so it would not be an overstatement to call her extremely wicked. Her power was what Han Xiao paid attention to, not her personality, beauty, or things like that.

There were many types of enemies. Archenemies that could not be negotiated with such as the Germinal Organization and DarkStar, competitors that could be friend or foe, enemies from misunderstandings, and so on. The way he saw it, Sylvia was an enemy born from a misunderstanding, and Han Xiao knew what misunderstanding it was.

Langley was a criminal rebel, but as a father, he had definitely hidden something from his daughter or even lied to her, finding excuses for his actions. Therefore, Sylvia thought that her father's actions were fighting against a tyrant and that he was saving his people.

According to the experience from his previous life, Sylvia was quite righteous—she was just blinded by hatred and lies. If she knew what kind of person her father was, she might give up on her revenge as she did in Han Xiao's previous life. Han Xiao had known the truth since long ago, and he knew how to quickly change Sylvia's perspective. To him, those were just small deeds... but this was not the key.

The key was, what benefit could he get from doing that?

Hmm... maybe a certain mission can be triggered. Since there are some rewards, she still has some value. That shall be it then, keep her alive temporarily and complete the mission first, then deal with it depending on the situation. If she still is hostile... then I shall bury her.

Release her? That was completely impossible.

From the perspective of a businessman, Sylvia was not just a person but a resource that had value. His assets were not so large to the extent that he could throw away money on the streets and waste resources.

Upon having these thoughts, Han Xiao stood up and said, "Pack up and prepare to leave. Knock her out and lock her up."

Sylvia's tiny face was filled with shock. She looked up and said, "Where are you taking me?"

"To see your father," Han Xiao said coldly.

Sylvia's eyes widened instantly; she could not believe it.

Chapter 435: Father (2)

Agolo Prison City was an enormous fortress made of steel located in the Agolo Alliance Garrison Planet, one of the seven planets under the New Phyllen Alliance. It was used to imprison political criminals, war criminals, treason criminals, and other criminals from the members of the alliance. Sylvia's father, Langley, was imprisoned here.

The New Phylen Alliance was a small civilization alliance in the Rain Star System of the Colton Star Cluster in the Shattered Star Ring. In the sea of planets, there were countless political alliances like this. Usually, a civilization alliance only existed within a certain area. Most of them were formed when one civilization in the area decided to develop peacefully, hence forming an alliance.

The New Phylen Alliance had eight members, all small galactic civilizations in between planet level and star system level. These civilizations had once been nations on the same planet called Phylen. After Planet Phylen's technology reached a level that allowed them to enter space, these nations could not come to an agreement. Since there were disputes, they decided to split up peacefully. There were so many resources in the universe waiting to be discovered, so there was no need to be inflexible. Therefore, the strongest nation stayed on their mother planet, and the other nations took migration spaceships and migrated to other planets. In the end, they all developed into different civilizations.

In terms of fundamentals, these civilizations all had the same roots. Their technology and culture were very similar. Hence, after many years of separation, they came together once again, forming the New Phylen Alliance. This was the strongest force in the Rain Star System.

In Han Xiao's previous life, there were discussions about implementing a similar system on Earth. Since Earth could not be united, maybe this was a good idea. Of course, this was very idealistic, and problems regarding limited resources were always complicated. Furthermore, it was still unknown whether Earth could even develop to a point where they could enter outer space. Fortunately, the Great Mechanic Han did not have to care about this problem anymore.

Langley had originally been a high ranked army officer of a nation, almost a warlock that had a land of his own. His life was good, and he was paid handsomely too. However, one day, he suddenly used his influence to provoke the army, recruiting quite a number of people in secret and gathering a group of rebels, looking like they wanted to form a nation on their own. He called it an uprising, but in reality, they were doing immoral things. They built a very firm stronghold and fought with their old superiors for many years. In the end, they were demolished by a group of galactic mercenaries who fell from the sky and penetrated straight into their headquarters. The Black Star Mercenary Group was one of these mercenaries that accepted the hiring invitation from Purple Gold Army. There was a total of seven mercenary groups that worked together to complete this mission.

This time, Han Xiao was piloting Rainbow Conch spaceship and arrived at New Phylen Alliance's territory. He had sent a request earlier, and the alliance always welcomed mercenaries who had worked with them before. Thus, they agreed to his request of questioning the prisoner.

The spaceship landed on the pier of Agolo Alliance Garrison Planet, took the land transport, and headed toward Prison City. Han Xiao only brought a few people along for this trip—Aroshia, the tied-up Sylvia, and a few players including Bun-Hit-Dog. The rest were waiting on the spaceship. This trip was just to let Sylvia see her father, so there was no need to bring a lot of people.

"Wh—why are you doing this?"

In the stably moving Hovering Battle Vehicle, Sylvia was feeling complicated. A few days ago, when she failed the assassination, she had thought that she was going to die for sure. But to her disbelief, not only did Han Xiao not kill her, he even brought her to see her father. In the rare times that she was awake along the journey, she had been questioning if this was a dream. Without approval from the alliance,

she would never be able to enter the heavily guarded Agolo Prison City. She had thought that she would never see her father again. Sylvia could not understand why Han Xiao was helping her.

“To let you know that your hatred is meaningless and how unworthy it is for you to give your life for him. Also, to let your father know about your death. I really want to see his expression when he realizes that his lies killed his own daughter. Killing people and destroying their spirit is my favorite.”

Han Xiao shrugged. He could not be bothered with Sylvia’s furious expression and opened up the interface.

After he let Sylvia live, a new mission [Lies] was triggered. Its requirement was to let Sylvia know the so-called ‘truth’. The reward was not too bad, 540,000 experience. There was no need to search for the truth—he just had to ask her father.

In Sylvia’s character background in Han Xiao’s previous life, her father was blasted into pieces by the mercenaries, but now, he had been captured alive by Han Xiao. That hiring mission had given a greater reward for capturing him alive, so he had let Langley live, which made things much easier now.

Agolo Prison City was enormous and magnificent. There was a lot of guards, and many snipers were positioned at high locations. The searchlight illuminated the night and made it look like the day. They entered the prison successfully, and a warden came to welcome them.

“Black Star, I’ve heard a lot about you.” This warden had a beard and was very straight forward. He shook Han Xiao’s hand firmly and laughed passionately. “My friend Barny serves in the 37th Field Army. He took part in the Langley Stronghold Eradication Operation and fought alongside the mercenaries. He witnessed how powerful you are and always mentions you to me. I’m stuck in this silent Prison City every day, and finally, I’m meeting someone as renowned as you.”

“You’re too kind.” Han Xiao maintained a slight smile and chatted casually as they followed the warden forward.

Very soon, they stopped before the metal gate of a single-person cell.

The distance was only one door away; Sylvia was very excited and almost wanted to immediately rush in to see her father. However, Han Xiao grabbed her shoulder, making her unable to move. “Mr. Warden, I want to see Langley alone first.”

“No problem.” The warden nodded.

“What do you want to do with my father?”

Sylvia was like an angry kitten with flames in her eyes. She bit down with all her might on Han Xiao’s hand, but not only was she unable to hurt Han Xiao, she was giddy from the shock deflected by Han Xiao’s arm. A ‘-13’ deflected damage appeared above her head, while the word ‘Immune’ appeared above Han Xiao.

“What do I want to do to him? That’s a good question. I don’t want him to look so good when he sees you, best to have lost an eyeball or an ear.”

Han Xiao curled his lips and walked into the cell alone. The metal gate closed after him and blocked Sylvia’s furious screams.

The light in the room was very dim. The cell was divided into two areas by a cage heated by electricity, and inside the cage was the actual cell. Langley leaned on the black wall covered in moss and dirt. There was stubble all over his face, and his eyes had no focus. He was much older and more decrepit than before.

When Langley heard a sound, he thought it was the guard, so he turned and looked over subconsciously, but what he saw was his nightmare that he could never forget. His expression became terrified, and he jumped up instantly. "It's you! Why are you here?"

"You're very afraid of me?" Han Xiao walked to the cage with an expressionless face. "Shouldn't you thank me? If it was the other mercenaries that got to you, they wouldn't even have wasted their energy to pick up your corpse. Do you think you would be standing here with your full body like you are right now?"

Although there was a cage between them, Langley did not feel safe at all. He moved back hastily, and his back bumped into the wall. He swallowed his saliva anxiously, and the pain in his knees was becoming stronger. He could still vividly remember what happened—a group of armored mercenaries fell from the sky, killed his army like cutting through vegetables, and advanced into the heart of his stronghold. The mercenary that stood before him now waved his hands and summoned around a hundred cannons in an instant. At least a thousand people were killed by this person alone. He slaughtered his way through, marched up to him, and fired two bullets through his knees—that pain was almost suffocating.

Langley still had to depend on the nerves implanted into his knees to stand up.

"Cut the nonsense, I'm here for you," Han Xiao said coldly. "Your daughter Sylvia. I don't know what lies you told her, but she believed whatever bullsh*t you said and feels that you're a great man and a liberator of the people. She wanted to avenge you and tried to assassinate me..."

"What!"

Langley face changed instantly. He pounced at the railings and grabbed onto the heated cage, not caring about the high temperature burning through his hands and the burnt smell that came out of it. His face could almost touch Han Xiao's face, filled with anxiety and rage.

"Wha—what did you do to her?"

"What else?" Han Xiao let out a sigh and said, "Of course I killed her. I shot her from below her jaw through his head, opening a hole at the back of her head. Her brain juice and blood splashed all over the wall. One of my subordinates thought she's quite pretty, so he's planning to skin her face and make it into a specimen for display."

Langley almost fainted. His daughter was his only motivation for staying alive. His expression became twisted, as rage, regret, heartache, desperation, and hatred flashed past one after another. He growled like a beast approaching its death, and even his fear of Han Xiao was completely forgotten.

"I will kill you! I will definitely kill you!!!"

Han Xiao looked at the furious Langley calmly, and when his throat became hoarse from the screaming and could only stare at him while breathing heavily, Han Xiao said slowly, "Okay, enough jokes. Your daughter is outside the gate. I captured her. I brought her here just to see you."

Langley froze and could not react to it. He felt extremely weak from the emotional rollercoaster. He collapsed onto the floor, pointed his trembling finger at Han Xiao, but could not speak a word.

Han Xiao squatted, looked Langley in the eye, and said, "You're a smart person. Whether I kill your daughter or not depends on you."

Langley's expression changed many times. He lowered his head and kept silent.

"Speak, I don't have the patience to wait for you to consider." Han Xiao knocked the metal cage impatiently.

"I'm not a good person... but you're eviler than me." Langley's eyes were filled with complicated emotions. He said with a hoarse voice, "I will do it. I will tell her everything about me. I was a high-level spy for another force from the start. I was controlled by someone else, and everything I did was to overturn the rules built by the New Phylen Alliance. I will tell her that I have been lying to her. I'm not who she thinks I am. I'm just a despicable traitor, an evil man who destroyed thousands of families for his own benefit. I will destroy the image she has for me and make her feel... completely disappointed... in me, her father..."

"You know what to do." Han Xiao stood up.

Langley looked at Han Xiao and said, "This way, will you let my daughter go?"

Han Xiao did not bother to reply, he turned to walk toward the door and left him with one last reminder. "Anyway, if I do not like the result after the conversation, I will make what I said earlier a reality... This is the one and only chance I'm giving you."

He opened the door and left the cell. He immediately saw Sylvia's anxious face. She was staring at him with rage but could not control herself from glancing at the gap of the door.

"Go in, you have ten minutes."

Han Xiao waved his hand and told Aroshia to let Sylvia go. Sylvia rushed into the cell and could not wait to see her father.

After closing the door, the warden turned on the surveillance footage and monitored Sylvia's conversation with Langley. Sylvia's change in her expression could be clearly seen.

She turned from anxious to stunned, then shocked, then there was an intense argument. They could even faintly hear Sylvia's out of control howling through the thick metal door. In the end, tears gushed out from her eyes.

...

[Lies] completed.

You have received 540,000 Experience.

“It’s ten minutes.”

The warden opened the gate and brought Sylvia out.

She looked like she had lost her soul. Her eyes were out of focus, and there were still tear marks on her face. She lost all motivations and was like a walking corpse. Her energy from ten minutes ago was nowhere to be found. The strong belief that she had been holding onto had collapsed.

Only then did she know that the great image of her father in her heart was completely built from lies. She had been lied to for more than ten years. He was not a great man; everything he did was despicable, and he deserved every bit of suffering that he had now. Even without the mercenaries interfering, he would have been defeated by the army sooner or later. If not for Black Star, her father would not even have been alive.

Her world had collapsed. The warm and bright childhood images in her memories all felt different.

Everything was a lie!

She felt like her heart was being penetrated by a thousand bullets.

She could not even digest this information in a short time. Her vision started spinning, and all the sound became distant and faint like she was isolated from the world.

Plop.

Sylvia collapsed onto the ground and fainted.

Through the slowly closing gap of the door, Han Xiao looked at Langley for the last time.

This rebel leader looked like he was decades older, but his face was very calm. It even had a tint of... relief.

Han Xiao shook his head, grabbed Sylvia by her back collar, and placed this kid over his shoulder like a sack.

“Congratulations on growing up.”

Chapter 436: The Start of Ten Years

Han Xiao and the others arrived at the resting lounge. The warden left after saying a few words, leaving Han Xiao and the others in the room.

The mission is completed. Next, I need to deal with her.

Han Xiao tossed Sylvia onto a chair. He looked at the fainted teenage girl and contemplated.

I made Sylvia hear about what her father has done. With reference to what happened in my previous life, she should change... but it’s not certain. Firstly, in my previous life, she only knew the truth after battling for many years; she was older and more mature, so she could adjust better. For now, she’s just a kid.

Maybe she'll still hate me or avoid it temporarily. Secondly, Langley died a long time ago in my previous life, but now he's still alive, and this will impact her in an unknown way. It's probably beneficial.

After some pondering, Han Xiao decided to make a decision after seeing Sylvia's reaction.

From his perspective, it was definitely better to make Sylvia stay. An NPC resource delivered to his doorstep, there was no reason for him to let it go. He even thought of going through the history of the mercenary group to see if there were more chances like this.

Han Xiao was just about to slap Sylvia awake, but suddenly, he remembered that Bun-Hit-Dog was beside him, so he did not do it. Han Xiao took two steps back, turned his head, and told Aroshia, "Wake her up."

Aroshia walked forward and slapped Sylvia on her face. Sylvia woke slowly.

"Hmm... My face is so numb."

Sylvia opened her eyes. She could feel numbness on her face, and it hurt a little.

She looked around, and the moment that she saw Han Xiao, she was about to turn angry subconsciously when she suddenly recalled what had happened before she fainted, and her rage disappeared. Instead, her mood plummeted. She looked down at her toes, her face filled with gloom.

She had thought that her father was great, but the reality was, Langley was a traitor. Even without Black Star, her father would have been defeated by the other mercenaries sooner or later. Furthermore, her father only lived because Han Xiao held back, so her hostility toward Han Xiao vanished.

If the person that she was going to avenge was a traitor, even if that person was her father, she still felt that what she did would be wrong. Langley caused his own suffering, so there was nothing that she could avenge.

The glorious image of her father in her heart collapsed. Sylvia's feelings toward Langley became complicated and conflicted. She believed that her father's love toward her was true, but everything that he did was beyond her acceptable range. Her father had been lying to her all along. Of course, she despised him for it.

The doubt of Han Xiao forcing her father to say those things only existed for a split second because Han Xiao did it way too obviously and confidently without any disguise. She knew that it was impossible with just a little thought. After all, she was just a small girl that failed to assassinate him—why would the captain of a renowned mercenary group go through so much effort to lie to her? Han Xiao had captured Langley with his own hands. If he did not know her father's real identity, why would he suddenly take her to question her father herself? Furthermore, her father had given a lot of details on the crimes that he had committed, and they were all real.

Maybe when she investigated back then, she had still held some hope in her heart and felt that those suspicions were all lies. Now that the source of these things had described those crimes in detail, all her fantasies were shattered.

Sylvia looked at Han Xiao with very complicated feelings. Although this mercenary group captain had been scaring her all along, his actions had truly helped her. After her father was captured, she had

experienced both coldness and warmth between people. She did not know how to react to this kindness from a stranger, and she felt guilty.

When the flames of rage that burnt her senses away had extinguished, she finally spoke from her heart.

“Thank you. You’re a good person... And... I’m sorry, really sorry...”

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows.

Looks like the heart modifying operation was a success.

“Our captain is known as the Women Loving Mechanic Han, what did you think?” Bun-Hit-Dog laughed with his hands on his waist.

Han Xiao acted as if he did not hear it and sized Sylvia up.

This girl was not grumpy anymore; she looked quiet and pretty. Although she was a mess after being captured for so many days, the dust on her face could not cover how pretty she was. As one of the most popular targets in the parody industry in his previous life, he could already foresee Sylvia growing up to be beautiful.

“I don’t want to bother about anything else for now. Tell me, which organization helped you to know my whereabouts?” Han Xiao asked with a deep voice.

Sylvia did not hide anymore and spoke the truth.

“It’s an intel selling organization called ‘Mytar’. I used a part of my savings and told them to be mindful of your whereabouts, then bought this intel from them. The shapeshifting Esper that I hired is a freelance killer. He and I designed the assassination plan together. The poison gas and poison all belonged to him, but you have already killed him...”

Sylvia paused. She suddenly realized that Han Xiao had killed another person but not her.

Was it because he knew her?

Then she asked the question that she had been wanting to ask all along. “How did you recognize me? Did my father tell you?”

“Coincidence.”

Han Xiao gave a perfunctory response and pondered about that intel organization called Mytar.

Intel organizations were usually neutral. If the customer requested intel about someone or some organization that they could not mess with, they would refuse to sell. Not messing with people who were too strong was an unspoken rule for intel organizations.

Clearly, he was not on that list in the eyes of these intel organizations, unlike his boss Ames, who really could not be messed with.

Honestly, Han Xiao did not like the feeling of exposing his whereabouts, but he did not have a solution for it temporarily. This was an unavoidable situation. In order to solve it, he could only become stronger.

Whether it was strength, influence, or fame, as long as he could make the intel organization feel that he could not be messed with, they would not sell his intel.

Looks like I need to keep working hard. Han Xiao placed this matter in his heart, narrowed his eyes, and asked, “What is your plan?”

Sylvia shook her head and looked lost.

She did not know where to go after suddenly losing her goal. The Galaxy was so wide, yet she had nowhere to go.

“Father, he... although he’s not a good person, he told me the truth. Maybe it’s because he doesn’t want to drag me down and does not want me to neglect myself because of him. He wants me to have my own life...”

After calming down, Sylvia sort of understood that her father did what he did to save her, or why would he destroy the image that he had been building in her daughter’s heart for so many years? Although she was still bothered by it, she had no other choice but to accept reality. She said softly, “The universe is so vast. I will probably go look at different places... hoping to find something else I can be determined on...”

“You want to leave?” Han Xiao said with an expressionless face. “Did I allow you to leave?”

Sylvia froze.

“The first rule of mercenaries, all jobs have to be paid. Our help was not free. Furthermore, do you think I’m going to let go of the fact that you tried to assassinate me? I’m in a good mood, so I don’t want to kill you, but that doesn’t mean you don’t have to pay a price. You have to compensate for all my damages.” Han Xiao crossed his arms and snorted.

“I—I have no money now,” Sylvia said embarrassedly and fidgeted uncomfortably. She had spent all her savings on this assassination, and those were the funds that Langley had left her. She truly had no money at all.

“No money?” Han Xiao was expressionless. “Then you shall repay me with your body.”

Sylvia’s eyes widened instantly. She blushed and stuttered, “Yo—You... I—I’m just a kid. I—I ca—can’t...”

The players were all shocked and looked at Han Xiao in disbelief.

Holy, I didn’t know you are this kind of Black Phantom!

We’re the same type of people!

Bun-Hit-Dog recorded it with glee. He was very satisfied; this was way too explosive!

Aroshia tilted her head and mumbled, “This should be the humans’ action of sending a mating signal.”

Han Xiao almost could not keep a straight face after hearing what Aroshia said. He narrowed his eyes and said, “What are you people thinking? I have no interest in your body; I want your freedom.”

Sylvia immediately breathed a sigh of relief. She looked at Han Xiao apprehensively. "Freedom? What do you mean?"

"You have to work for me for ten years."

"Ten is too long. Can you make it a little bit shorter?" Sylvia made the hand sign of 'a little bit' as she spoke with a fawning tone.

"Twelve years."

"No no no, ten years is good." Sylvia hastily waved her hands.

"In these ten years, you'll be my subordinate. If you want to escape or betray me, I won't give you a second chance. Maybe you can escape, but your father has nowhere to run," Han Xiao said coldly.

Hearing the threat, Sylvia's face became serious for a second. She wanted to be angry but felt powerless to do so. With her emotions in turmoil, she lowered her head and said softly, "I won't run from my own mistakes. It's just ten years. I'm still young, so I can afford it... I don't have anywhere else to go now anyway."

Since Han Xiao had chosen to let Sylvia live, he definitely had to make use of her value and create more profit than killing her would. Sylvia was at least a grade A Super at her peak in his previous life, so she was quite a good potential stock. By recruiting her, he could consider it as having another high-quality officer. Furthermore, she was talented in the Mechanic class, which suited his abilities. She could become his assistant. Although she needed time to grow, it was worth the investment.

Han Xiao wanted mature grade A Supers too, but tricking someone with a higher grade was way too difficult. There were not that many people who were as easy to trick as Herlous, and even tricking Herlous had not been that easy.

According to Sylvia's personality in his previous life, although she was sometimes extreme, she could be considered as normal after giving up on vengeance. Now, this process had been completed many years in advance, which could only be for the better.

Furthermore, no matter what, Sylvia was a popular character. This could indirectly increase the popularity of his faction among the players, giving his faction more 'fame'.

After she joined him, her galactic pirate career would no longer occur. However, she had the fundamentals after all. As long as she was tuned properly, her flavor would definitely not be worse than the previous life...

For the possibility of not being able to control her in the future, the Great Mechanic Han was not worried at all. Not because he was arrogant, but even the players' growth speed could not match his. If he did not have this tiny bit of confidence, he might as well go back to Planet Aquamarine and open a pig farm.

Chapter 437: Conclusion of the Pro League

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas

Han Xiao and the others returned to the spaceship. Sylvia was clearly not used to her new identity and looked cautious. Han Xiao told the Volga brothers to teach her the basic knowledge, and he was pulled aside by Herlous.

“You let her join our team?” Herlous asked in surprise.

Han Xiao described the process briefly and gave Herlous a look. “You got a problem?”

“No, I don’t have a problem with a little girl, but she can’t fight—how can she become a mercenary?”

“She’s talented. She won’t be worse than you with some training.”

Herlous’ mouth twitched. “Comparing me with a small girl... I feel like you’re shaming me.”

“Hehe, you’re overthinking it. I’ll only shame you during training.”

Han Xiao joked around. He turned and looked at Sylvia. She was surrounded by the players, who were trying to start a conversation with her, and did not know what to do. This was Black Star’s traditional welcome ceremony.

In Han Xiao’s previous life, Sylvia had joined and left many organizations to acquire Super knowledges, showcasing her potential. Since now she had joined his faction, Han Xiao was naturally going to pass on his knowledges to her if he wanted her to be of some use. According to the path that she took in her previous life, she was most suitable for the Mechanic Class. Han Xiao rubbed his chain and decided to personally tune... train her.

...

At that time, Floating Dragon Island was also in the Rain Star System. Han Xiao set the auto navigation of the spaceship, left the New Phylen Alliance, and arrived at Floating Dragon Island to handover the supplies.

Although Dekker had been threatened, he had been involved in the assassination. Tyrell was furious when he found out and fired Dekker on the spot. Even if Dekker had his reasons, Tyrell did not want to use someone that had damaged the profit of the organization.

After this, Tyrell expressed his sincere apologies. Han Xiao would never give up on an opportunity to gain profit. The compensation that he demanded this time was a higher discount, which Tyrell agreed to instantly. He was different from the travel agency that Rainbow Conch belonged to—his business partnership with Floating Dragon was much tighter so things were easier.

Speaking of the travel agency, a group of lizardmen went to Floating Dragon to retrieve the spaceship. On the docks, the travel agency’s team had already arrived. They sent compensation to Han Xiao’s account and retrieved Rainbow Conch after all the goods were unloaded. Han Xiao watched as those people left with the spaceship. He shook his head, took out his Galactic Communicator, and was going to call for a spaceship.

This time, Floating Dragon’s Guard Captain Wilsander came and said with a light-hearted tone, “I heard someone tried to assassinate you.”

“Just kid’s play.” Han Xiao glanced at him. “Are you interested?”

“Of course. I have to stay on this island every day to maintain order. Do you think my life is very interesting?” Wilsander said bitterly.

After chatting awhile, Han Xiao sent Wilsander away and went aside alone. He opened the forums and paid attention to the competition. After the incident with Sylvia, the Pro League had finally ended. The discussion on the forums was lively and passionate. He looked through the competition process roughly.

In the battle between the top four teams, Dynasty defeated Hydra 3:2, advancing to the finals. On the other side, Tulips won against Devil. In the champion deciding match between Dynasty and Tulips, the popularity and broadcast rating went above the roof. Han Xiao did not watch the videos, but according to the content in these discussion posts, the matches seemed to be very interesting and close. They fought back and forth time after time, performing at the highest level of pro players, bringing a feast to the viewers' eyes.

Sadly, in the end, during the match point when the score was 2:2, Dynasty made a small mistake, and Tulips caught that opportunity. Using that momentum, they won the match. Dynasty lost the match. Tulips were horrifyingly steady. When fighting against them, any small flaw or mistake would be taken advantage of and turned into the key of turning the tables.

As the final result was decided, the first season Pro League ended. Tulips was the champion, Dynasty was the runner up, and the other two top-four teams were Devil and Hydra. In the Singles, the champion was a German player who showcased how terrifyingly accurate and precise the Germans were. King Admiral was in the top four. Of all the China players, King Admiral's result in the Pro League was the highest—it was top-notch in the entire world. As the top one player in China for many years, this result undoubtedly made his position even firmer.

On the forums, spectators from all the nations discussed their nation's teams. Although Dynasty did not win the championship, the Chinese players were still very joyful. At least they were the runners-up, which was better than most of the teams. The first Pro League season was very encouraging. Even some foreign spectators became fans after seeing the Chinese teams' performance.

Compared to the ranking in his previous life, the results this time were way better. In his previous life, China only had one place in the top eight, and now there were two teams in the top eight. There was an improvement in the Singles as well. In Han Xiao's previous life, King Admiral was the only Chinese contestant that made it to top sixteen, but now there was also Frenzied Sword. They had brought pride to their nation.

The noticeable improvement in the results as compared to the previous life was only because of the Great Mechanic Han.

The players who followed him came back with good results, so his influence would be increased indirectly as well. His potential market had expanded, so Han Xiao was satisfied with the performance of the players.

With this result, Dynasty was overjoyed. Even Second Prince, who usually complained all the time, had a content smile on his face. He surprisingly did not degrade his captain. Long Sky's ranking was not bad either, but Hao Tian was not satisfied with that; his attitude for continuous improvements never

changed. Frenzied Sword was in the top sixteen in Singles and was satisfied as well. This was a result that he had never even dared to imagine before. Most of the Chinese players were satisfied with what they had achieved. Temple of God was a little jealous of Dynasty and Long Sky's results. In comparison, Temple of God's performance in the first season looked bleak.

After the league ended, all sorts of shows started one after another. The shows reported and discussed the Pro League, the teams hosted press conferences, and there was also the awards ceremony. However, none of that was what Han Xiao focused on. The first season's ending meant that... the version update was going to arrive.

The last version update was three years ago. To Planet Aquamarine, the players that suddenly appeared sparked waves of terror. During the update from Version 1.0 to Version 2.0, the players would disappear once again.

Normally, six days in in-game time was equivalent to one day in the players' 'real' time. The flow of time was constant, but when there was a version update, the connection between their time would be cut off. In the Version 1.0 update, the time passed in-game was one year. To players, it was only about two to three days.

Every version update's time skip was different; the players would enter Galaxy at different times. Usually, the versions were all large events or disasters.

During the version update, these players will not be here. Without these 'immortal' and convenient players, I will have to be more cautious with my actions. Furthermore, there aren't any methods to quickly earn experience or money in the one-year period. Hence, it will be better for me to dig up those missions with high potential. The details need to be planned...

Chapter 438: Goddess of Luck

The main members of the mercenary group were temporarily the players. When they disappeared, the team that he could command was only the Sunil Division. There were too few NPCs.

While the players are away, the income of the mercenary group will decrease. I can halt our operations temporarily and make time to recruit more people. When Version 2.0 starts, the Mutation Disaster will break out. The players on Planet Aquamarine will start to connect to the galaxy. During the version update, I'll have time to make preparations.

He had only brought along fifty players for now, and they had already made a huge profit for him. Version 2.0 was the time where his profit would rocket through the sky. The players were mountains full of green leeks—he would not even be able to harvest all of them before they grew again. Just thinking about it made the Great Mechanic Han look forward to the profit that he was going to make.

His target was the tens of thousands of players. He wanted to make Black Star Mercenary Group a guiding faction for the players to enter space. Of course, it was easier said than done. He had hidden competitors—Godora and DarkStar.

These two forces would use planets as battlefields to fight each other, and the players would then choose a faction in this situation. Han Xiao would be snatching meat from the mouth of a tiger by interfering.

However, he also had some obvious advantages. These two sides would be focusing on fighting with each other, so he was the only one that would focus on the players. Plus, the impact and sense of belonging that he had built through Bun-Hit-Dog's shows, as well as his position in the hearts of the players, would attract them to him.

The more players that he recruited, the better. Therefore, he had to make abundant preparations. First was benefits such as equipment missions, rewards, and so on, enhancing his power and strength. Second was measures for the Mutation Disaster. The former was targeted at the players; the latter was targeted at the main storyline.

I have more than 800,000 Enas, enough to buy two advanced knowledges and complete the class advancement mission. However, I'm now at level 95, and there'll be a promotion mission at level 100, meaning I can only increase my level by five after spending all my money. It's best to first get a subclass, reach level 100, and look at the promotion mission. If it can't be completed in a short time, there's no hurry to spend this 800,000, and I can save it as funds. I have about 1.5 billion experience, which is not enough to level up to 120 straight away. Plus, I still need to leave some experience to gamble blueprints and upgrade abilities.

Since there would be no players for him to harvest in the next year, Han Xiao had to be more calculating. The promotion at level 100 was the second chance of race evolution. He had received Void Genes from the Void Dragon Bone Marrow, which would largely affect his race evolution choices, so he was quite looking forward to promotion.

Subclasses are easy to find, but the rare ones are rather troublesome...

Han Xiao searched his memories. These rare subclasses could usually only be acquired after very complex processes. The difficult ones were too time-consuming, but the easier ones were not suitable for the Mechanic class. Subclasses were just an add-on for him; he did not need them to be rare, but they had to be suitable for the Mechanic class.

Since that's the case, attribute classes are not a bad choice. Luckily, I can get this class right in Juberly Hub. Although it's not rare, its effect is simple and straightforward.

Han Xiao's eyes sparkled.

...

After completing Floating Dragon's daily escorting missions, Han Xiao was summoned by Ames to her house, as usual, to ask him about the progress of looking for her teacher. He then took the others back to Juberly Hub to rest.

The pro players had just finished their competition and were exhausted, so they completely loved the idea. Doing missions in Hub City was much more relaxing, almost like having a holiday.

Obviously, Han Xiao did not do this to let them rest; it was mainly because it was almost the version update, so he wanted to use this opportunity to make one last push for profits.

Han Xiao was planning to sell some machinery that he did not need anymore to the players, as well as some elite machinery from time to time, then take one the enhancing and repairing services. For this, Han Xiao isolated himself for a few days to build more machinery. When there were so many players, no matter how quickly he could build the machinery, he would definitely not be able to meet the demands of all these players... unless he had assembly lines, but that was a plan for further in the future.

However, Han Xiao had a solution for this problem long ago—enhance the NPC resources of the faction, then use the connections with these NPCs to give the players opportunities to go to other places for missions and income. Sunil was one of the training bases that he had prepared for the players.

After selling things for a few days, Han Xiao took a flying disc carrier to the fifty-seventh floor of a tall building in the middle of the hub city. This place was an absolutely neutral agency called [Spacetime Research Council]. The name sounded very high-class, but it actually had nothing to do with spacetime. This was a scholar association for people to store their knowledge and discuss their findings. They had agencies in various Star Fields, and it was based on a membership structure, so it was very liberal.

The purpose of the Spacetime Research Council was to store the information and history of all the civilizations in the universe, similar to a knowledge base. Also, to provide a platform for the scholar members to exchange new research topics. This kind of organization, of course, was a public and neutral organization. The Arcane Church was the one that started it. The Arcane Church was the Universal Civilization that focused most on culture and knowledge. They had countless members across many Star Fields. Even the Federation of Light and Crimson Empire were among the executives of this association.

The inventory of the Spacetime Research Council included very practical knowledge, such as the technology, magic, and Super knowledges of different civilizations. Practical knowledge was more precious, and the sensitive parts would usually not be showcased to the outside world. This was a request from advanced civilizations as well. If someone wanted to browse that important information, they had to have higher authorization.

The only way to increase the faction relationship with this association was to donate unknown knowledge and literature, but to gain higher authorization was much more complicated. There was no clear path, and one had to wait for the executives to make the selection. Firstly, one had to attend all kinds of networking gatherings hosted by the association, suggest new understandings, and make one's existence more known, increasing one's position and reputation among then members.

When one's faction relationship was high enough, had been a member for long enough, had made actual contributions to the society, and did not have a criminal background, then there was a chance that the executives would make that person's authorization level higher. In conclusion, it was very complicated.

In his previous life, when the players started to pay attention to the Spacetime Research Council, it was already the later stages. Back then, the players had been looking for the highest-level knowledges for their classes, but these were extremely rare, and the research council had related information for them. This was one of the ways that one could obtain the highest-level class knowledges. However, it required a tremendous amount of time and energy, and there were no shortcuts. Anyway, Han Xiao did not have to worry about that for a very long time to come, and it was better to join this association earlier, so he might as well join now.

There was not any requirement to becoming a member; he just had to pay some money. Compared to the standard of the research council, the membership fee was really low, just 500 Enas.

Of course, at that moment, Han Xiao's target was only the subclass that could be acquired just by joining the research council, and that was what he wanted.

...

There were no twists and turns during the admission procedures—enter information, submit the form, pay the fee, tease the lady receptionist, and it was done. The entire process took less than ten minutes.

After walking out of the research council agency, Han Xiao opened his interface. He now had a new entry under his subclasses—[Scholar]!

He directly leveled it up to level five and reached the promotion criteria of level 100.

[Scholar] leveled up to LV5.

+10 INT.

You have received 1 Potential point.

One type of subclass was known as the 'attribute subclasses', such as this [Scholar]. Every time it leveled up, it would hugely increase an individual attribute, and there were no Free Attribute Points, only Potential Points.

Every level of [Scholar] provided an increase of ten Intelligence. The five levels that Han Xiao had just acquired gave him fifty Intelligence.

Intelligence was the core attribute of the Mechanic class as it was related to Machinery Affinity. Han Xiao currently had an ability called [Machinery Analytical Comprehension], which provided one percent Machinery Affinity for every ten points of Intelligence.

Han Xiao basically spent all his Free Attribute Points in Intelligence. He now had more than six hundred Intelligence, which was more than sixty percent increase in Machinery Affinity. This was a core ability, and Han Xiao knew that this was just one of the Mechanic abilities that were related to the Intelligence attribute. There were more class abilities in the later stages.

Furthermore, the subclass [Scholar] gave him another ability—[Research Theory]. Its effect was to increase his Intelligence by one for every three abilities that he possessed. It was extremely suitable for the Mechanic and Mage class. These two classes were known to have a ton of abilities, and the combat power of both was enhanced by Intelligence. Compared to the Mage class, which also needed the Mystic attribute, the Mechanic class received the most benefits from [Scholar]. The two of them were a perfect fit.

For the Mechanic class, every blueprint was considered as an ability. Han Xiao knew more than a hundred blueprints, so the level 5 [Scholar] alone gave him ninety INT.

Among all the subclasses that were easy to obtain at the moment, Han Xiao felt that the attribute subclasses were the most useful options.

Every player could easily obtain this kind of attribute subclasses—if they knew that it existed. Their effects were all very useful, and they also gave attribute abilities with growing potential that would still be useful even in the late stages. In his previous life, many top pro players would have one or two attribute subclasses.

The most impressive one was the attribute subclass that was related to the Luck attribute, which had a very clear and straightforward name—[Gambler]!

He still remembered [Gambler]'s ability effect—the things won through gambling and betting would increase the LUK attribute. The more one won, the more Luck attribute this ability gave, while losing would decrease it. It perfectly explained the name of this subclass and what the Luck attribute meant.

Actually, Han Xiao did want the [Gambler] subclass somewhat. After all, no matter how much his Luck decreased, it would only go from one to zero, which would have no impact at all, but if he won, he would benefit greatly!

After experiencing the clarity of mind given by leveling up, Han Xiao looked at his interface. Seeing the Promotion Mission for level 100 was his main goal.

With just one look, Han Xiao suddenly started to question life.

I should probably learn the [Gambler] subclass...

Chapter 439: Version 1.0 Update (1)

Your total level has reached 100. Complete the promotion mission to continue leveling up.

[Trail of the Strong]: Kill an enemy that's one grade above you.

Note: This mission can be completed with a team, but the team members cannot have a higher grade than you.

Progress: 0/1

God damn it... Han Xiao clenched his teeth. This promotion mission was not the most difficult one, but due to his grade, its difficulty multiplied many times.

He had met a similar promotion mission before when he was level 40. Its requirement was to kill three targets that were five levels above him. Compared to an entire grade, five levels was nothing.

I'm now at Grade B. Doesn't that mean I have to kill a Grade A enemy?

Han Xiao's mouth twitched. If this mission appeared at a lower level, it would only have been a little challenging, but it became multiple times more difficult as the levels increased.

[Trial of the Strong] only appeared in Grade B to Grade E promotion missions. At Grade A, this mission would no longer appear. If he was Grade B+, the strength difference would not be that huge, but he was only level 100, and level 100 usually meant that one had the strength of lower to medium Grade B. However, it just so happened that this requirement appeared when he was at this level. It felt like the goddess of luck was kicking him in the face.

What did Grade A represent? It meant that the individual could cause a destructive disaster on an entire planet surface, had strength only below Grade S, and was more than enough to rule one place alone. Grade B was the backbone level power in the galaxy, while Grade A was the high-end power. The number of Grade Bs in the galaxy was tens of thousands of times greater than Grade As.

The strength difference was too vast!

Han Xiao sighed. The mission was already determined, so there was no use in being annoyed by it. He needed to get promoted one way or another, so he had no choice but to think of a way to fulfill the requirement.

The difference between Grade A Supers is large. If I want to complete the mission, I have to pick the weaker ones... but no matter how weak, Grade A is still much stronger than me. I will definitely lose if I fight head-on, so I have to plot. Luckily, there's no need to fight one on one, and there are no restrictions to how the mission can be completed.

Han Xiao contemplated.

First, I have to choose a target and search for an opportunity from what I remember. Then, I have to make a plan to weaken the enemy as much as possible before the battle, or it will be impossible to kill a Grade A at their peak.

Since the killing method was not limited, it meant that he just had to be the one killing the target. The most idealistic way, of course, was to kill a prisoner that was unable to resist. This might have worked at lower levels, but it was impossible at his level. Even if some organizations might have imprisoned Grade A prisoners, they would not kill them out of nowhere, and of course, they would not let anyone else kill them. Therefore, the only way to complete the mission was through battle.

This was like a hunt. The hunter had his eyes on strong prey, so he hid in the dark and waited for the prey to fall into the trap. It required a huge amount of patience.

It was impossible to complete the Promotion mission any time soon. Han Xiao was glad that he did not advance his class, or he would have been much more frustrated.

There are many targets, but none of them can be messed with easily. This needs a long-term plan...

...

When he returned to the stronghold, most of the players were not there. As the first competitive season had ended, there were many follow up activities. The time that those pro players spent online was

obviously much less. Only Bun-Hit-Dog, Maple Moon, and a few other players maintained the same play time. However, they were not in the stronghold; they were outside, doing daily missions.

Han Xiao knocked on the doors of the others. Herlous, Aroshia, and the others had all gone out, so he was the only one home.

The enormous stronghold hall felt deserted.

Han Xiao looked at the time—time for dinner. He took out a bright silver colored alcoholic drink from the drawer and activated the portable food box. After one minute, a box of food covered in tinfoil was made, inside of which was some meat and beans with black sauce.

Han Xiao placed the food and drink on the table in the middle of the hall, sat down on the sofa, and ate slowly. Such simple food was his dinner.

After eating for a while, the stronghold door opened, and the officers returned together. Herlous walked at the front with a toothpick between his teeth and chatted with the three brothers of Volga. Sylvia carried many bags and clung to Aroshia, who was expressionless, talking non-stop. Aroshia's replies were never more than five words, yet Sylvia did not get tired of it. She had walked out of her negativity faster than Han Xiao expected. After all, her father was still alive, and things would only be treasured when they were lost. She understood her father's intention to want her to have a new life, so she did not want to keep being so negative.

Aroshia wore a new dress, and from what Han Xiao knew about her, it was most likely Sylvia who had chosen it.

When Han Xiao was doing his things, these officers went shopping and had dinner together, or Aroshia would have preferred to stay at home.

As soon as they entered, they saw Han Xiao sitting on the sofa eating a box of fast food.

Han Xiao looked up and glanced at them. "You're back."

They hastily wiped the smiles off their faces and nodded.

"Herlous, go check on the recent mission report of the Sunil Division. Volga brothers, remember to enchant the batch of machinery that I gave you. Aroshia, don't transform in the stronghold for the next two days, or it'll be very difficult to clean." Han Xiao put down the spoon, stood up, walked toward the machinery modification room, and said, "Sylvia, follow me."

Sylvia's face tightened, and she hurriedly followed behind Han Xiao into the machinery modification room. The door closed.

Han Xiao kicked away the waste parts on the floor, found a box, and sat down. He sized Sylvia up and did not speak.

Sylvia was very uncomfortable from being looked at. "May I know why you've called me here?"

Han Xiao tapped the table and said in a deep voice, "I wanted ten years from you. You're now my subordinate, not having a holiday. What use do you think you can provide me?"

"I don't know..." Sylvia lowered her head. She did not understand why Han Xiao wanted her to work for him for ten years. Clearly, she was just a child and could not help in any way.

"You're not of any use now, so in the days to come, I will teach you the knowledge of a Mechanic. Only when you're stronger will you be of use to me. If you refuse to learn and do not want to work for me, don't think I will allow you to laze around in my mercenary group. I don't need flops." Han Xiao was very direct.

"Yo—you want to teach me Super knowledges?" Sylvia froze and struggled to speak coherently. "I thought you just wanted a maid."

Han Xiao frowned and said, "What do I need a maid for? Can you do it better than the cleaning robots?"

Sylvia's eyes swayed and said with uncertainty, "I—I never thought of that. Super... can I really be one? I mean... do I have the talent?"

"My eyes can see a rough image of the future, and I saw potential in you," Han Xiao said calmly.

"Langley never let you set foot in the areas of Supers, how foolish. Ever since you were born, the Super-Gene has been lurking in your body, waiting to be awakened. Your asshole father wasted many years."

"You can't call him an asshole," Sylvia said unhappily. "That's my father."

"I haven't lost my memories." Han Xiao raised his eyebrows. "He is accused of seventeen major crimes, including but not limited to betraya..."

"Okay, he is an asshole." Sylvia bit her lips. "But you can't call him that, only I can!"

"Stop talking nonsense and get back to business. I will let you awaken Magnetic Energy and teach you Mechanic knowledge."

Sylvia straightened her back uncontrollably. She felt like she was about to enter a new world. She looked forward to it, but she was understandably nervous.

"Then... what should I do?"

Han Xiao took out four thick, heavy books and stacked them up. Combined, the four books were about forty centimeters thick. Those four books were all basic machinery theories written by different people. The interface allowed him to not need to read them and study them, but for others, it was not that convenient.

It took months and years of learning to become a Mechanic. Even though Sylvia was very talented, this step could not be skipped.

"First, memorize these four books."

Sylvia's mouth opened widely as she looked at the thick books. This was very different from how she had thought it would be. "That's too much..."

Ignoring her suggestion, Han Xiao continued. "I'll give you ten days, after which, there'll be a test. If you fail, you'll have to memorize one more book. This will repeat until you pass."

Sylvia's face immediately turned dropped. She felt that even if she exhausted herself, she would not be able to memorize so much in just ten days. Furthermore, she had never come into contact with anything related to it. How was she going to even understand the content of those books?

"Anything you don't understand, ask me. When you pass the test, I will teach you the way to awaken Mechanical Force."

Han Xiao waved his hands. Sylvia had no choice but to walk out with a long face holding the books, quickly heading off to memorize these books.

Although Han Xiao did not have to study this way, the knowledge did exist in his brain, and he had gone through it before. Teaching someone else Mechanic class knowledge was certainly not a problem.

I wonder how long she needs to grow to a level where she can be of use.

Han Xiao shook his head.

This was what long-term investments were like; earning back the investment was not that quick. Luckily, patience was something that he was not short of at all.

...

The aftertaste of the league lingered, and players reveled in it. A few days after, an official update announcement suddenly appeared on the forums and instantly became the top post. The players were surprised once again. This was translated into many languages, and players from all areas could understand it. Within one minute, the number of replies had already exceeded ten thousand and was quickly growing.

In summary, the content of the announcement was that at midnight twelve days later, in game time, Version 1.0 update would officially end. At that time, all accounts would be unable to log in, so they suggested that players log out in advance to avoid unnecessary damage.

As for what was new in the update, nothing was mentioned at all. The players thought that it was very mysterious—the unknown new version made the players look forward to it even more.

The main storylines in the various novice planets were all completed, and popular characters in these planets had already showcased their charm and all had some fans. After the main storyline was completed, the players were in the stage of exploring freely and were still excited. Even the side missions had a lot of related storylines and felt very real. Compared to fighting monsters and beating levels, this was more like a journey full of experiences. Therefore, many players could not wait to find out what new storyline would unfold on their planet. They were interested in the fate of the planet and the people in it, as well as the look of the entire universe.

The unknown content of the next version sparked discussions and speculations from players on all planets. Many people guessed what would come next by referring to what had happened in Version 1.0, which was all recorded in the chronicle posts of the various planets that recorded the history.

When the main storyline ended in Version 1.0 across the areas, some players finally had the idea of posting such a post. This sparked interest from countless players, and the chronicles of these planets were born.

All the players came together to contribute, posting the missions, events, and characters that they had met, trying to record everything that had happened on the planet, regardless of whether they were main storylines or side missions. Even the most ordinary NPCs had been recorded by some players.

Everyone contributing to the same thing made the players have a lot of fun, and the sense of belonging was very strong.

This was the first batch of senior players and loyal players in Galaxy. In Han Xiao's previous life, even when some players could not play Galaxy anymore due to being busy or other reasons, they would still log in occasionally to see how the storyline had progressed. There were way too many things, so it was incomparably immersive and real. It felt both like a game and a drama series.

Not long after, Galaxy Times dedicated an episode to the unknown new version, analyzing the speculations.

Chapter 440: Version 1.0 Update (2)

"Hello players, this is Galaxy Times, dedicated to sharing first-hand game information. Your gaming career is our top priority."

The male and female host read the familiar opening line. The moment the show started, tens of thousands of viewers flooded in and started the usual comments began floating along the top of the video.

"Looking forward to the discussion of the version update."

"Galaxy Time rules."

"Spam the comments and cover the cold joke!"

The usual extremely awkward opening joke passed by quickly, and they got to the main topic.

"In a few days in game time, the Version 2.0 update will arrive," Male host said. "Galaxy will enter the storyline of the next version. In regard to this, we have obtained first-hand intel and some unproven information, which we will be filtering and sharing with the audience in this episode, speculating and analyzing what the next version will entail.

"So, before the analysis starts, let's first do a summary for the storylines across the various planets in this version. A very big part of our data comes from the planet chronicles, which the players arranged and added to. For this, we sincerely thank these players—this data has helped us a lot in our work."

The players felt joyful as they were mentioned.

Next, the two hosts summarized the storylines of the various novice planets. By this point, the main storyline of every planet had already ended, so they went through the storylines from head to toe, including the major events and characters involved. They also discussed and commented on various parts. Of course, it was not just them speaking—images and videos were also shown to aid the process.

Every time the history of a planet was mentioned, the players of that planet would be the most active ones. The Version 1.0 storylines of these planets were very diverse as well—Lord Singelase’s incident on Planet Winterfrost, Arcane Tide on Planet Brighton, Dynasty Divergence on Planet Lasting Song, Shadow Group incident on Planet Summer, Chaos Expedition in Planet Sourné, and many more. These were all core main storylines, and there were also the side storylines. For example, in the case of Planet Aquamarine, the core storyline was the Six Nations and Germinal Organization, while the sub main storyline was Bennett’s sanctuary construction.

Due to the different backgrounds of these planets, the feeling that their main storyline gave was also very different. Some were filled with technology; some were surrounded by magic; some were mysterious. The vast majority of players had not entered space, so they did not know where their planet was in the universe, but Han Xiao did. The novice planets were quite evenly spread among the Star Fields, and Planet Aquamarine was the only novice planet in Shattered Star Ring.

In all the core main storylines, the one on Planet Aquamarine ended the earliest, and it received the most attention. There was definitely a main character in these storylines that was very connected to the storyline. The two hosts continued their speech, and it was finally Planet Aquamarine’s turn.

“Speaking of Planet Aquamarine’s main storyline, we must mention someone no matter what. After the Planet Aquamarine storyline ended, he’s still been active in the eyes of the players. He was the first to take players into space. I’m sure our regular viewers are familiar with his name...”

The comments rampaged. Maybe they did not know the storyline of other planets, but almost everyone knew Han Xiao. These fans had a common topic instantly.

“It’s Black Star!”

“Is that ‘Black Phantom’ Han Xiao, Destroyer of the Germinal Organization, Sanctuary Owner, Interstellar Explorer, Prophet, Black Star Mercenary Group Captain, Supporter of Materialism, Manipulator of Loot Boxes?”

“Black Star: You kids are talking behind my back again.”

“Thirty Second True Men Group requests to battle!”

“Ahhh! I want the Dragon Emperor! I want Aroshia! I’m going to lick them to my last breath!”

“Go away, screen licking monsters!”

It was the Planet Aquamarine players’ turn to be active. The density of the comments increased to another level. The Chinese players had leveled up the useful ability to spam comments to the max level.

The male host continued to read the script and explained Han Xiao’s background briefly.

“Original name Han Xiao. Member of the Alumera family, almost killed during an accident but was captured by the Germinal Organization. The Germinal Organization made him into a test subject but failed the brainwashing. He disguised himself for a very long time, and in the end, he found the opportunity and escaped from the Germinal Organization’s control.

“From then on, he acted against the Germinal Organization. He once joined Stardragon but left later and became a contract killer for the Dark Net, code name [Black Phantom]. The Germinal Organization

chased after him for many years but only saw his shadow. He awakened some kind of foresight ability that allows him to obtain benefits as well as avoid danger.

“After a period of hiding, he started his revenge. He alone directed the Six Nations’ expedition against the Germinal Organization. In this war, he infiltrated the Germinal Organization Headquarters and stole all their confidential intel, bringing the Six Nations’ victory. He became a hero of Planet Aquamarine, but his journey did not end there.

“One day, he foresaw that a disaster is going to break out in Planet Aquamarine. So, he summoned a spaceship in some way and led the warriors that he had carefully selected and handpicked into the galaxy, looking for a solution...

“As before, most of our data comes from the chronicles provided by players.”

The players searched for a lot of intel during the exploration times. Han Xiao’s history had already been made public. In the things that had happened on Planet Aquamarine, Han Xiao was like a puppeteer behind doors, and many things were connected to him. In the chronicles, Han Xiao’s name was mentioned countless times. This had led the new players to know what happened in the storyline before, continuing to increase Han Xiao’s reputation.

The chronicles of Version 1.0 were enormous, but Han Xiao was still a bright star among all the storylines.

After the hosts finished talking about Planet Aquamarine, the summary of the Version 1.0 storyline had come to an end. The hosts started the next topic, which was the main theme of this episode—analyzing the new version.

“According to the intel we have, we have made a few deductions. First, in the new version, the players will definitely connect with the galaxy and be able to leave their original planet, starting to explore the universe.

“Second, other than the current thirteen novice planets, the new version will add more birth planets. Due to what we have mentioned, the new birth planets should be planets that allow the players to enter the galaxy directly. Therefore, we have made a daring guess that the difference between the new and the old novice planets is that players in the old planets will only be able to enter the galaxy after going through the new storyline, while players in the new planets can enter the galaxy directly. The price is that these players have to start with a new account, while the old planet players can continue to use their high-level account. Hence, old or new, they have their advantages.

“Third, although the new storyline of the planets is unknown, there will definitely be someone that will lead the players to the new storyline. The clues of the new storyline are definitely hidden in some characters. We suggest looking for clues from NPCs in order to guess who will lead the next version’s storyline. What role will the main character of Version 1.0 play in the new version? The clues are limited in most planets, except for one—Planet Aquamarine!

“Before Black Star left, he left behind a frozen mission—[The Last Bastion]! The mission introduction is as follows.

“Someday in the future, a calamity will strike this world, and Sanctuary Three will become the last remaining bastion for humanity. Protect this dwindling flame from the encroaching darkness. Only then will there be hope to overcome this calamity.

“The mission requirement is to protect Sanctuary Three and make sure its destruction rate is not above fifty percent. So, we have reason to believe that this mission is a hint to what will happen to Planet Aquamarine in Version 2.0. There will be an unknown calamity, and the entire planet will be affected. Black Star will definitely play a role in this disaster...”

The reason that Han Xiao had left the frozen mission was exactly to give the players direction for imagination so that he could increase his fame. In his previous life, every time there was a version upgrade, there would definitely be a wave of speculation over the new versions. This was within his expectations.

...

In Planet Aquamarine, Sanctuary Three...

With the tall, metal walls and tight air defenses, the current sanctuary was fully complete like a huge fortress standing on a desolate land. Han Xiao had been gone for more than a year, and the current manager of the sanctuary was Huang Yu. He had constructed the sanctuary as planned and had already taken in more than three million refugees. Other than those who sought protection, there were also hundreds of thousands mobile inhabitants, the Inhumans.

Countless players took Sanctuary Three as the main city, not only because there were more than enough daily missions and rewards there, but also because the decisions that Han Xiao had made when he was there had developed the players' habit. After they developed a habit, the players liked to gather there and interact with each other.

The feeling of the residents toward the Inhumans was very conflicted. On one hand, the Inhumans like to help them do stuff; on the other hand, most people envied the Inhumans and saw them as outsiders, so there was always a sense of alienation. In the eyes of some residents, the square where the players gathered was very dangerous, and they did not dare get close.

The Inhumans had helped Bennett build many sanctuaries, but after that, most Inhumans returned to Sanctuary Three. Huang Yu could not understand why they did this, so he thought it had to be because of his boss. He felt that only Black Phantom would know the reason.

However, over the past few days, a huge number of Inhumans had migrated to the sanctuary from all areas without any warning. Huang Yu took this phenomenon very seriously.

In the sanctuary meeting room, Huang Yu asked his subordinate, “Have we found the reason?”

After he took control of the sanctuary, he had built a group of subordinates himself. The people here were all members of Dark Net and worked directly for Bennett.

“No. We gathered intel from all areas and still have yet to find out why the Inhumans have mass migrated. Currently, the number of Inhumans in Sanctuary Three has exceeded 800,000, and it’s still growing.”

“This is not a good sign.” Huang Yu was very troubled. “Although most Inhumans are peaceful, there are destructive ones as well. We have already been attacked a few times in the past year. If these Inhumans have an ulterior motive, the damage that 800,000 Supers can cause is unimaginable. If not handled properly, the Sanctuary Three that took two years to build might be gone within a night.”

Of course, there was no way for him to know that the reason that the players had gathered in Sanctuary Three was because of the speculation that Galaxy Times made from the mission that Han Xiao had left behind. Sanctuary Three would very likely be a key area in the upcoming main storyline, and there was a very high chance for it to be a safe area.

Therefore, most players had decided to go to the sanctuary before the update. This way, not only could they get into the main storyline as soon as the new version arrived, but they would be safer than those in other places.

“We have to prepare measures for this kind of hidden threat,” Huang Yu said.

“But... the order that Black Phantom left was not to use any hostile strategy against the Inhumans and not try to control their freedom, except for those who cause trouble. We’re going against his words by doing this.”

Huang Yu shook his head. “I know, but we cannot not guard against the Inhuman because of that. Black Phantom has been gone for more than a year. If he was here, I would not worry about anything at all, but he’s not. Therefore, we need to be flexible.”

“Then what do you plan to do?”

“Split them,” Huang Yu said with a deep voice. “Forbid some Inhumans from entering the sanctuary main city and chase them to the two guard cities nearby. Alumera and Black Pine are both fine. This way, even if a riot breaks out, it won’t happen in the most important place.”

They exchanged looks.

“That’s my decision. Report this to the rulers of the two guard cities, and tell them to gather an army just in case. We’ll start to split the Inhumans in three days,” Huang Yu said firmly.

Suddenly, he felt very sleepy and yawned uncontrollably.

...

In the dark conference room of a certain DarkStar mothership that was in stealth mode, the display screens were giving off a dim light.

These people were the superiors of DarkStar. Every screen was showing a blurry outline of a person and no face—it was very mysterious. Even for Godora, who had been an enemy of DarkStar for many years, they only knew a few of the superiors. DarkStar was like a mysterious fog, always hidden in the darkness.

The middle screen was DarkStar's leader. It was blurry as well, and the voice also went through a mechanical voice changer.

"What stage have the Mutation Sources that we planted developed to?"

"Based on the time, the larval stage has passed. All Mutation Sources will enter the pupa stage, and the impacts have already been done. In an estimated time of around one year, the Mutation Source will enter the eruption stage. However, the time predicted is not too accurate. After all, we cannot control the thoughts of the Mutation Sources."

"Maintain the observation," DarkStar's leader said. "Godora has obtained a Mutation Source, and we don't know how much headway they have made in their research. The plan needs to be improved; we can't wait for the Mutation Sources to grow on their own. After the symptoms break out, we need to take action. The details will be discussed again. Anur, how's Ember?"

The last question was directed at Anur, one of the Grade A Supers in DarkStar, Ember's teacher.

A voice came out of the screen that represented Anur. "I made him focus on training his power, and it's going quite well. His strength has increased visibly. There's more than a twenty percent chance that he can enter Calamity Grade."

"Hmm. Rogue died in battle, and Vivira is imprisoned in Rainbow Prison, so we have an imminent need to add high grade combat power. Esper currently has the highest chance to reach Grade A, and his Esper power is very strong. Tell him I have high hopes for him... Meeting dismissed."

The screens turned black one after another. The dark room returned to dead silence.