

## Wow 1021

### Chapter 1021: Painting?\_2

At this moment, in their "sight" or "perception," it seemed as if a gigantic, translucent "scroll" phantom appeared, covering part of the sky!

On the scroll, thick smoke, a gloomy sky, distant shadows, the scars on the earth, ruined walls...

Every detail is astonishingly similar to the reality they are in, as if it were a reflection of the real world or a script already written.

And at the core of the scroll, the most captivating is still that human figure, upright and steadfast, stepping out from behind the ruins with its back to all the spectators.

This figure is merely a silent silhouette or backside in the scroll, yet when it appeared in this desperate reality, it seemed to carry a kind of indescribable, frozen "power."

The tumultuous spiritual energy surged seemed to pause, the screech of the Bug Race, the roar of the Beastman, the murmurs of the Demon, seemed all momentarily muted or lowered by this suddenly appeared "scroll" phantom.

"What... what is that?!" Someone pointed at the phantom in the sky, exclaiming.

"A painting? A picture? How could it..."

"The scene in the painting... is just like here..."

Confusion, shock, bewilderment replaced pure despair, rising within countless hearts.

And at this moment, the figure that had always turned its back in the scroll, moved.

He seemed to sense the myriad gazes projecting from outside the scroll, mixed with despair, pleading, confusion.

His steps did not halt, still stepping forward resolutely, but his upper body turned around slowly, with a calm and clear posture.

The side face first, with a firm outline.

Then, the complete front.

As that face fully revealed in the scroll phantom, and through this mystical resonance, appeared to all survivors at Ming Pearl Port instantly—

Time, seemed to truly stop.

In the old city, Morphie suddenly widened his eyes, the battle knife with a curled blade clattered to the ground from his hand, yet he was completely unaware, just stared fixedly at the phantom in the sky, lips trembling, unable to utter any sound.

That face... the face he knew so well, revered like a deity, yet wished day and night to replace!

Within the Spiritual Ability Guild tower, Kiro Lan's hands maintaining the barrier fell weakly, she raised her head blankly, gazing at the nearing back-turning figure in the scroll phantom, her pale face suddenly lost all color, then replaced by a kind of disbelief, mixed with tremendous delight, endless comfort, and deeper shock, flushed red.

Tears, unexpectedly poured out, blurring her vision, but she still stared at that face intently.

Master... it's Bai E!

In the council command center, the speaker suddenly sprang from the slumped chair, knocking over the table before him unawares.

Ethan and other officials opened their mouths wide, as if witnessing the world's most incredible miracle.

That face... although young, although seems unchanged since it left in legends, but contained within it the kind of unique temperament that has gone through vicissitudes, seen through illusion yet resolute as before, and... those very same features as in the legends!

It's him! It's truly him!

The Bai E, only existent in legends and fragmented communications, believed to have long perished!

He unexpectedly... appeared in a painting predicting the current disaster?

Moreover, at this moment, the painting... became alive?

At the port area, battling soldiers and surviving citizens saw it too, some recognized the face depicted in old posters or tales, expressing doubtful cries.

Even those slow-witted Beastmen seemed to sense some unusual aura, their offensive slowed, some blankly raising their heads to the sky.

On the sea surface, the mass of coagulating darkness also fluctuated, emitting a deeper, angry, and wary silent screech.

Under all focused gazes, Bai E in the scroll phantom, seemed to not only turn around within the "painting."

His gaze pierced through the boundary of scroll and reality, calmly and profoundly sweeping over the crying, burning, collapsing city below, every face, whether familiar or unfamiliar.

His eyes lacked the tension of first arriving at the battlefield, lacked panic facing desperation, only a calmness after perceiving everything, and a relief of "what is meant to come has finally arrived."

As if the apocalyptic scene before him, terrifying enough to shatter anyone's heart, to him, is merely... a scroll long foreseen, destined to be altered by him.

Following this, a more shocking, completely overthrowing the understanding of reality moment occurred!

The figure existing in the illusory scroll, unexpectedly... stepped forward!

This step was not a continuation of the scene in the painting, but... stepped out from the "painting," into "reality!"

As he stepped, the scroll phantom rippled violently like a stone disturbing the calm water surface.

His figure, in this ripple, separated from the two-dimensional "painting," from virtual into reality, carrying an indescribable, as if traversed endless time and space, faint ripple, clear and actual, appearing mid-air outside the Spiritual Ability Guild tower at Ming Pearl Port!

Not an illusion, not a projection.

But truly tangible, flesh and blood, or you could say, an existence with overwhelming spiritual energy, as solid as reality!

He still wore that simple, seemingly unchanged dark combat attire, figure upright, black hair slightly fluttered in the tumultuous airflow caused by various explosions and spiritual energy chaos.

On him, there was no dazzling light, no deliberate oppressive aura, yet merely standing there, as if became the absolute center of the whole chaotic, hopeless battlefield, a kind of invisible, reassuring sense of "Order," began to quietly spread with his appearance.

The battlefield, momentarily frozen due to the scroll's appearance, now fell into a deathly silence.

The screech of the Bug Race ceased.

The roar of the Beastman quieted.

The frenzied scream of the out-of-control Spiritual Ability Users eerily lowered too.

Even the squirming darkness on the sea surface seemed to become cautious and slow.

All beings still possessing rationality, whether human, Bug Race, Beastman, or that high-dimensional dark existence, turned their "gazes" to that suddenly appeared figure, supposed to be far in the Star River.

Kiro Lan, through the shattered tower window, gazed at the air, that familiar to the bone figure from behind, tears gushed like a breached dam, but the corners of her mouth couldn't help but lift, that's the ultimate joy of surviving despair, faith rekindled.

Using up her last ounce of strength, she spoke to the equally dumbfounded, post-disaster purified squad members beside her, with a hoarse but incredibly firm voice: "Look... it's Master... he's back..."

Morphie, in the ruins of the old city, clenched his fists tightly, nails deeply dug into the palms, yet feeling no pain.

He looked at the figure in the air, chest heaving violently, all fatigue, failures, unwillingness, transformed at this moment into boiling hot blood and almost throat ripping shout.

He wanted to shout aloud but found himself too excited to utter a sound.

The Speaker and Ethan, among others, utterly petrified, their brains unable to process this information beyond their understanding—

Prophetic painting? Person stepping out of the painting?

Bai E, presumed missing or even dead, returns in such a manner?

This... is this truly a miracle, or some higher power they cannot comprehend?

Bai E hovered in mid-air, gently lowered his head, his gaze first landing within the tower window below, on the pale face, tear-streaked but with a radiant smiling girl.

His gaze softened for a fleeting moment, nodding subtly.

Then, his sight swept over the ravaged city below, those horror-stricken yet due to his appearance reignited with hope citizens, swept over the direction in the distant old city where Morphie stood.

Finally, his gaze fixed on the southeast sea surface, the ceaselessly surging, emitting a nauseatingly evil aura darkness...

Chapter 1022: One Hand Holds Up the Heavens

Bai E's face was expressionless.

He simply raised his right hand and gently grasped at the void.

There was no earth-shattering commotion, no dazzling brilliance.

But in the next moment, centered on him, a wave of spiritual energy, clear, cold, yet full of majestic vitality, swept silently like the purest moonlight or the first ray of dawn light, instantly covering the entire Ming Pearl Port and even spreading towards the more distant sea!

For the out-of-control Spiritual Ability Users, he merely brushed remotely, and the twisted whispers and eroding marks from high-dimensional space entwined in the depths of their souls swiftly dissolved and evaporated like thin ice exposed under the scorching sun.

The out-of-control ones collapsed one after another, mentally exhausted and weakened from their previous rampage, yet the deadly madness and chaos in the depths of their eyes had faded, replaced by deep fatigue and a bleak sense of survival.

The purification process was gentle and thorough, causing no secondary harm.

For the Bug Race emerging from underground, Bai E's approach was even more direct.

His spiritual energy penetrated underground, not to attack crudely, but precisely "calmed" the energy veins disturbed by the Bug Race's "mother body", temporarily severing the energy and information link between the surface Bug Race and the underground "mother body".

Without the support and command of the deep "mother body", the remaining surface Bug Race units suddenly became disorganized, their attack rhythm completely collapsed, and under Bai E's star sea-like spiritual energy pressure, they instinctively began to retreat underground or fell into a daze, becoming easy targets for the defending forces.

As for the Bug Race under the harbor and the restless beastmen at the coast, he didn't even directly attack.

He merely pushed his spiritual energy "presence" like a tangible wall towards the coastline and sea area.

This was not an aggressive spiritual energy shock, but a "domain" proclamation of a higher-level life form.

The bugs underwater sensed the deadly threat and frantically submerged, away from the harbor.

The beastmen at the shore were as if an invisible giant hammer struck their hearts, their "Waaagh!" frenzy instantly extinguished by cold fear, they gazed hesitantly towards the city, letting out uneasy growls.

Ultimately, led by a few relatively smart beastmen leaders, they scrambled onto their shabby vehicles, cursing yet swiftly fleeing the coastline without looking back, leaving behind chaos and the gradually fading roar of engines.

As for the southeastern sea where a dark mass, nearly forming, from evil plots in high-dimensional space, Bai E's presence and releasing his spiritual energy field initiated a violent struggle and retreat.

It seemed able to see Bai E, and more so, sense a certain trait in Bai E's spiritual energy that it both greatly detests and dreads—

It was the sun... the eternal sun in high-dimensional space.

The darkness rolled violently, issuing soundless, pain-filled, and furious spiritual energy shrieks, ultimately retreating like tidal waves into the deep sea, disappearing into the shadows between high-dimensional and physical worlds.

A demonic ceremony that almost destined to corrupt half the city was snuffed out invisibly.

With a wave of his hand, a light breeze disperses the clouds.

Strong enemies retreat, crisis reversed.

Only then did Bai E slowly speak, his voice wasn't loud, yet resonated clearly in everyone's ear, calm, yet with an undeniable power:

"I have returned."

A simple four-word phrase, yet like the needle stabilizing the sea, thoroughly anchored the minds on the brink of collapse.

Like the first ray of dawn before the darkest hour, it pierced the sky, dispelling the despair shrouding Ming Pearl Port.

The prophecy in the painting has become reality.

And the one who rewrites the ending has returned...

From extreme hopelessness to unbelievable ecstasy.

Then to a bewildered awe towards such a power beyond comprehension.

The chairman, Ethan, and other council members slumped in their chairs, bodies drenched in cold sweat, their minds blank, with only two thoughts echoing repeatedly: "Bai E has returned", "We are saved".

Ordinary soldiers and civilians erupted in thunderous cheers, many bursting into tears of joy, worshipping the figure hovering in the sky.

If Bai E's prestige previously stemmed more from legends and his achievements in saving other cities, now, he genuinely performed a "miracle" in front of everyone in Ming Pearl Port as a living "god".

Kiro Lan stood at the shattered tower window, gazing at the silhouette, silent tears streaming down, yet her face blossomed into an unprecedented, radiant and reassuring smile.

Morphie, in the ruins of the old city district, punched the nearby broken wall fiercely, gazing at the sky, his eyes complicated.

Feeling both relieved and dejected.

Even if I put in two hundred percent effort, I still can't reach even the tail end of his shadow?

...

Outside Ming Pearl Port, Blade Face Kiao saw the little ones retreating like a tide.

Though he disdained personally engaging in such meaningless destruction, the clumsy retreat of his kin sparked his interest.

Yet as he aimed to move against the retreat, he suddenly sensed the spiritual energy surge from Ming Pearl Port that made even his soul tremor.

"It's 'that human from before'!" Blade Face Kiao licked his somewhat dry fangs, eyes gleaming with intense excitement and escalating battle zeal, yet also a clear hint of dread.

"He really has returned! And... become even more 'Waaagh!'!"

## Chapter 1023: A Single Hand Lifts the Falling Heavens (Part 2)

The feeling of spiritual energy sweeping by just now was much stronger than during our previous encounter!

He swung his giant axe forcefully and roared at his subordinates, "Boys! Train harder for me! Once I become more 'Waaagh!', I must go find him for another fight! Next time, I'll definitely beat him!"

The young beastmen didn't understand but hearing the boss talking about becoming more 'Waaagh!' and fighting, they quickly forgot their recent scare and excitedly howled.

...

The darkness forced into high-dimensional space didn't dissipate but instead writhed violently on some level, transmitting waves of chaotic and angry thoughts.

"Impossible... how could he appear there?! At this time, in this place... he couldn't possibly be here!"

"It's the elves... the elves' spell provided him an anchor point."

"No! More importantly, his essence... this is his foundation, the starting point of his path as the Human Emperor, he would never forget it, let alone abandon it."

"The plan failed."

"Come back..."

...

After the crisis was resolved, Bai E didn't linger in Ming Pearl Port for long.

He briefly reassured the populace, gave simple instructions to the Speaker and Ethan to "strengthen defenses, clean up remaining enemies, restore order, and await the federation's next orders," then departed with Kiro Lan, Morphie, and part of the core guards on an aircraft back to Blackwater City.

On the journey, Kiro Lan gave a detailed report of everything that happened on the planet after Bai E left:

The signs of awakening of the "Mother" deep within the earth's veins and its connection to sporadic bug race activities; the increasing high-dimensional whispers leading to frequent spiritual ability user breakdowns and rampant internal rumors; beastmen taking advantage of the chaos for harassment; and the centrifugal tendencies and ambitions displayed by various cities.

Her report was clear and well-organized, but it couldn't hide the fatigue and pressure of holding everything together alone during this period.

Bai E listened quietly and at the end, he just gave Kiro Lan a gentle pat on the shoulder, "You all worked hard. Well done."

There weren't too many accolades, but this simple acknowledgment allowed Kiro Lan's always tense nerves to completely relax, making her eyes moist again.

Morphie reported more on specific combat situations and the unusual movements of the beastmen's war boss, Bladefist.

"Bladefist..." Bai E murmured the name, his eyes flickering, "Still unconvinced?"

He didn't take the beastmen's challenge to heart, for his perspective now was entirely different.

When the aircraft landed in Blackwater City—

This city, where Bai E started and has now become the nominal center of the Human Federation, the core personnel had long been waiting after getting the news.

The city seemed more prosperous than when Bai E left, yet there was faint tension because of the power vacuum at the top and external pressures.

The news of Bai E's return swept across the city like a whirlwind, sparking a wave of cheers even more intense than at Ming Pearl Port.

To the residents of Blackwater City, Bai E was not only the hero who saved humanity but also the City Lord leading them to revival, an undisputed leader.

Upon returning to the city, Bai E didn't first deal with the mountain pile of political affairs, nor did he immediately summon personnel from various factions.

His first stop was the advanced Scientific Research Institute located in the core area of the city.

Inside a spacious laboratory filled with various complicated instruments and data screens, exuding a sense of futuristic technology, he saw Helen.

Compared to his memory, Helen seemed a bit slimmer, but her charming and wise eyes were still bright, though they hid a subtle weariness due to long-term high-pressure work and worries.

She was wearing a white research gown, intensely focused on a set of complex three-dimensional star maps and data streams.

Hearing footsteps, she looked up, and upon seeing Bai E walk in, an astonishing brilliance erupted in her eyes; it was a mixture of extreme joy, relief, and... a deeper curiosity for investigation.

"You..." Helen's voice was a bit hoarse. She put down the electronic pen in her hand, walked quickly over, and examined Bai E up and down as if to confirm whether he was intact, "Really came back? How did you come back? Are there really intelligent beings in the universe? What about our spaceship?"

For a researcher, these mysteries were even more important than life.

"My return was an accident..."

Bai E said concisely, "I won't be able to stay here long, this time I was 'summoned' because of a painting left by the Elf Race Prophet."

Since foreseeing disasters several times in dreams, he finally traversed high-dimensional space at the last moment from the anchor point provided by the painting.

But such summoning is temporary, he could already feel the call to return from the body left in the universe spaceship.

"This way... how much longer can you stay?"

Helen, being extremely smart, didn't ask for details but focused on the upcoming matters.

Bai E rubbed his brow, sensing, "At most a day."

Upon hearing this, Helen let out a long breath of relief, a genuine relaxed smile appearing on her face, "A day is enough. If you hadn't come back, I and the doctor might really have been unable to suppress those people's intentions. Kiro Lan, that child... she has reached her limit, it wasn't easy for her."

As she spoke, her eyes flowed with a thoughtful look, "Although a day is tight, a lot can be accomplished."

She quickly led Bai E to the center of the laboratory's holographic platform, her fingers operating quickly to bring up several sets of core data, "You returned just in time, there's some key information and decisions that must be confirmed by you personally."

"First, the underground 'Mother'. We confirmed it to be a highly specialized 'ecological engine' of the bug race coexisting symbiotically with the planet's veins. Its awakening is accelerating, with the energy reaction core located at the juncture of the planet's mantle and crust, specific coordinates are..."

She displayed a three-dimensional cross-sectional diagram, highlighting a pulsating red dot resembling a giant heart, its depth and complex energy entanglement network were daunting.

"Our model indicates that its 'hatch' will reach the first peak in about three months, potentially triggering global geological disasters and bug race outbreaks. Conventional attacks cannot reach it, and forceful attacks may accelerate its absorption of earth vein energy or cause more uncontrollable chain reactions."

"Second, high-dimensional erosion. After you left, its intensity and 'intelligence' have significantly increased, aiming specifically to dismantle our organization and spiritual ability user defenses. We suspect a higher existence is systematically guiding this erosion."

Helen switched the screen to show a series of spiritual energy waveforms and associated event reports, the data was shocking.

"Third, internal..." she was about to continue but Bai E raised his hand.

"I know about internal divisions and ambition. Kiro Lan and Morphie have already reported in detail on the way."

Bai E's gaze calmly swept over those complex graphs and coordinates, his voice steady, "Time is limited, we must address the core problems directly and establish a long-term resolution basis."

He looked at Helen, "Helen, in your opinion, what is the theoretically optimal plan to completely destroy this 'Mother'? Consider feasibility without resource and technological constraints."

Helen did not hesitate, clearly having thought about it countless times: "There are three plans, with increasing difficulty and risk. First, use ultra-large-yield core drilling thermonuclear warheads to attempt a direct detonation of its core. But the success rate is very low, as the depth and energy intertwining would greatly diminish the explosion's power, possibly triggering devastating geological disasters.

Second, utilize our still-forming 'spiritual energy resonance interference technology' to attempt a disruption of its connection to the planet's veins from the spiritual level, leaving it to starve or enter a longer dormancy. However, this requires extremely high spiritual power precision and a large total

spiritual power, and we currently lack a sufficiently strong 'resonance source' and control center. Third..."

She paused, her eyes showing a hint of the light of madness belonging to a scientist, "Reverse utilization!"

Chapter 1024: Tight Arrangements

"Since it's trying to absorb the planetary energy, we can design a super large directional explosive device that, at a critical moment, actively guides a surge of excessive energy into its core, causing an overload and collapse. But this requires an extreme understanding of the flow of planetary energy and the energy structure of the 'mother core,' as well as... a carrier that can withstand and guide that excessive energy."

Bai E listened, almost without thinking, directly pointing to the red light on the holographic screen representing the 'mother core': "Plan three. I can act as that 'carrier.' From now on, how long will it take to create that directional explosive device?"

Helen's eyes lit up with incredible brilliance as she quickly calculated: "You are the ideal 'carrier'! Your spiritual energy intensity is sufficient to support it, and if you personally act as the energy guiding core, the success rate is very high! The core parts of the device... mainly the energy focusing array, the spiritual energy frequency modulator, and the interface device with the planetary energy node. With our current technology and industrial capabilities, if we concentrate all resources and I personally lead the team, with the doctor in charge of some precision components... the fastest... we can manufacture a prototype in forty-eight hours. But it would still take at least a week of onsite deployment and adjustments to establish a stable link with the planetary node."

"But we don't have forty-eight hours, much less a week."

Bai E shook his head, yet his tone remained calm, "How about a simplified version? I just need one that allows me to directly carry it near the mother core, driven by my own spiritual energy, able to

temporarily establish a strong link and inject energy. It can be one-time use, just needs to deal a critical blow at key nodes or temporarily paralyze the mother core, giving us at least a year's buffer time for migration. Can it be done?"

Bai E did not intend for humans on this planet to continue to populate it.

Living in a place within the influence and distortion of a supermassive black hole is too dangerous. For long-term consideration, directly moving humans from the planet to space... such as Mine Star and two other planets that originally belonged to Bauhinia, is obviously a better solution.

Thus, he actually does not need to completely solve the Bug Race mother core that has almost merged with the planet, just delay its awakening until human migration is complete.

Helen's brain worked rapidly, drawing tracks on the holographic platform, simulating various parameters: "Simplified version... With you as the absolute core, the device only handles initial energy gathering, frequency locking, and temporary bridging with the planetary energy... Sacrifice stability and durability in pursuit of peak power and precision in an instant... Use the highest purity spiritual energy crystals and superconducting materials from our inventory... Theoretically feasible! But it requires extremely precise scanning and modeling of your spiritual energy characteristics to ensure complete frequency matching of the device. However... once this 'bomb' explodes, the load on your own spiritual energy and body could be extremely huge, even..."

"That's my problem to face." Bai E interrupted her, "Tell me, how long would it take to make such a simple prototype?"

Helen took a deep breath: "If you start cooperating with the scan now, and I and the doctor team begin at once, gathering all the key materials in stock... the fastest... eight hours. That's the limit."

"Okay. Eight hours it is." Bai E nodded, "Start now. Also, issue the highest level call to assembly and martial law in my name."

After tentatively deciding on the solution for the Bug Race mother core, Bai E didn't waste even a bit of time.

He simultaneously cooperated with Helen's team in the detailed spiritual energy scanning and device design through encrypted communication, issuing a series of indisputable commands to Kiro Lan, Morphie, and the Arbitration Place core left behind.

"Kiro Lan, Morphie, you now have my full authorization. The orders are as follows:"

"First, effective immediately, the Human Federation enters a 'wartime state of emergency.' All cities, armies, and scientific institutions must unconditionally obey all instructions from the Blackwater City central command."

"Second, broadcast the news of my return across the Federation, as well as the severity assessment of the 'mother core' threat. Clearly inform everyone that three months later, the globe may face devastating disaster. The Federation needs to concentrate all its power to respond."

"Third, order all major city governors, army commanders, and heads of large research teams to attend an emergency joint meeting via remote communication within twelve hours. I want to meet them personally. Those who are overdue or passively resistant, hand the list to Morphie. Morphie, you lead all loyal troops, and after I leave, are responsible for eliminating all unstable factors and open dissenters on the list, by any means necessary. Primary objective: ensure absolute control over research systems, military production lines, and key resource points."

"Fourth, the Spiritual Power Managers Center is immediately upgraded to the 'Spiritual Defense Command,' with Kiro Lan fully in charge. Integrate all Spiritual Ability Users, establish a graded monitoring and emergency purification system. Promote the basic Breathing Skill I left behind..."

That was Bai E's previous version based on the Elf Race Breathing Skill and his own human physique modification, suitable for the cultivation of most human Spiritual Ability Users.

"For those confirmed to be seriously eroded and irretrievable... execute purification procedures. Meanwhile, concentrate the strength of Spiritual Ability Users to cooperate with Dr. Helen, and establish enhanced 'Spiritual Power Stabilization Fields' around major cities and critical facilities."

"Fifth, regarding the Beastman... temporarily put aside. As long as they do not actively launch large-scale attacks on cities, do not mind them. Our primary enemies are underground and those from higher dimensions."

Chapter 1025: Intensive Arrangements (Part 2)

His orders were clear, cold, and efficient, with no room for negotiation.

This was Bai E's optimal solution after fully understanding the situation, based on the pressing premise of "only one day left"—

By using absolute authority and force, he could forcibly consolidate all available powers in the shortest time possible, establishing a wartime system capable of operating continually and addressing core crises after his next departure.

Kiro Lan and Morphie solemnly accepted the orders.

They understood that these were extraordinary measures for extraordinary times, which also came with huge risks and subsequent governance challenges.

But faced with the imminent extinction threats of both the "Mother" and high-dimensional erosion, this might be the only choice.

After Bai E arrived, everyone seemed to have found their backbone.

Everyone was tensely handling their critical tasks at full throttle, and the design and material preparation for the 'bomb' device were also proceeding against the clock.

During the intervals of scanning and waiting for components, Bai E made another crucial request to Helen.

"Additionally, I need to establish a stable 'space coordinate anchor point' that could be received by specific ships in the universe. This is a related technology I've recorded in space, absorb it quickly and establish the anchor point. Once the anchor point is established, I will send someone to fetch you. The entire planet's population must be prepared for migration."

"No problem." Helen agreed without hesitation to Bai E's request.

After roughly reviewing the technology shared by Bai E, Helen slightly furrowed her brows, "Time, I need some time... The matters regarding the Spiritual Resonance Bomb in hand are more urgent."

"They can be conducted simultaneously." Bai E decisively said, "This period will require you to endure some hardship, split off a team, and concurrently lead the framework design of the anchor point launcher. The anchor point requires activation by Spiritual Energy, and before I leave, I will complete the core imprint injection and initial activation. The subsequent construction, integration with the Spiritual Energy network, is in your hands. Inform Kiro Lan and Morphie that the anchor point and the global Spiritual Energy network connected to it are the foundation for future reinforcements, and must be prioritized at all costs."

Helen's eyes gleamed slightly, feeling the increasing burden on her shoulders, but this instead aroused her resilient spirit, "Leave it to me!"

... Eight hours of time swiftly passed in tense and orderly busyness.

Bai E's summons and martial law order caused a huge stir like a boulder thrown into a pond.

But under the display of his nearly miraculous return and his unparalleled personal prestige, most cities and factions chose to comply—

At least on the surface.

During the remote meeting, Bai E's image appeared on every participant's screen.

He had no lengthy opening, directly showcasing the intuitive demonstration and some data on the "Mother" threat, urgently produced by Helen's team.

The devastating prospect turned everyone pale.

"This is the situation." Bai E's voice transmitted through the communication network, cold and full of pressure, "We have at most three months. Any internal strife, resource holdbacks, and technological blockades are accelerating our common demise. From this moment on, the Human Federation has only one goal: survival."

"All resources are to be concentrated on the projects specified by the Blackwater City Research Institute. All military forces are to accept unified dispatch and deployment by Morphie's headquarters. All Spiritual Ability Users are to be incorporated into the defense system managed by Kiro Lan. All administrative orders, to be issued by the highest command council."

"I give you twelve hours to consider and prepare. After twelve hours, those who haven't openly expressed support and started executing the above requirements will be considered enemies of the Federation and obstacles to human survival. We will show no mercy to enemies."

His words were firm, with no room for maneuver.

On the screen, the faces of many city rulers changed, some unwilling, some fearful, and some finally resolute.

In the shadow of extinction and absolute power, many petty thoughts had to be temporarily shelved.

Most important is Bai E...

The legend of the first Great Commander of the rebuilt Human Federation had not yet faded, and the miraculous feats left by him during the unification of the planet were still flashing in the minds of these people with real power.

No one wanted to become his enemy.

Not to mention, after his return, many who were originally wavering would become the Federation's most loyal dogs at the first opportunity.

Eight-hour deadline was approaching.

Helen's team miraculously completed a prototype of the simplified "Spiritual Resonance Bomb" under extreme time constraints.

It was a complex metallic and crystalline structure about half a human high, with a surface coursing with a dark blue Spiritual Energy glow, and a reserved interface at the core for integrating Bai E's Spiritual Energy.

"We call it the 'Purification Core'." Helen, looking exhausted but with bright eyes, "It has already locked onto the 'Mother's core energy frequency and the closest Earth vein access point coordinates. You only need to carry it to the coordinate point, implant it at an Earth vein node, and then fully inject your Spiritual Energy targeted at locking the Bug Race Mother into it. The 'Purification Core' will complete energy gathering, frequency resonance, and directional infusion. Theoretically, maximum power...it's sufficient to temporarily tear apart the Mother's core structure, severely wounding its consciousness, rendering it paralyzed for at least a year."

"What's the cost?" Bai E asked.

"...Your level of Spiritual Ability User power is beyond our data analysis, I can only say it's likely to drain all your Spiritual Energy, possibly even impact your soul to some degree. Of course... it shouldn't cause permanent damage."

Helen cautiously answered.

"It's enough." Bai E nodded, placing the "Purification Core" into a specially designed portable case.

Meanwhile, the core framework for the anchor point launcher, led by Helen who was multitasking, had also been completed, located deep beneath the Research Institute, connected to the city's Spiritual Energy network main control.

Bai E walked to the crystal tower and slowly injected a core Spiritual Energy imprint containing his own will into the heart crystal of the tower.

In an instant, the crystal tower emitted a gentle yet stable glow, a unique Spiritual Energy wave, seemingly branded with Bai E's personal will, began to ripple slowly, spreading through the main arteries of the Spiritual Energy network to all parts of the city.

This wave was very weak, but extremely special, like a unique identification code added to the radio waves.

"The anchor point is initially activated." Helen monitored the data, "It will continue to radiate this characteristic signal. As long as your ship enters a certain range and has the corresponding reception and recognition devices, it can lock onto this signal, finding the planet's location."

Bai E sensed the faint but real connection between himself and the anchor point, nodding.

Thus, even if he leaves, the ships from the Mine Star now have a "lighthouse" to find here.

Time was running out.

Bai E could feel the call from his body aboard the spaceship growing stronger, the time remaining for this projection was counting down by the minute.

He gathered Kiro Lan, Morphie, Helen, Doctor, and other key personnel before him.

"I have to deal with the 'Mother' now." Bai E looked at them, "After that, I will directly return to space. Here, I leave in your hands."

"Sir..." Kiro Lan's eyes welled up with tears, though he tried not to let them fall.

"Bai E..." Helen and the others also looked complex.

The brief reunion made it all the more difficult to part, but each had their own mission.

"Remember your duties." Bai E's gaze swept through each one, "Unity, vigilance, development. Eliminate internal instabilities, fully support research and defense construction. The Purification Core will buy us at least a year. In this year, you must complete the initial construction of the global Spiritual Energy defense network and consolidate forces to deal with potential high-dimensional retaliations and the Mother's potential revival. The anchor point is already set; when my ship is ready, I will come back to fetch you, or... bring reinforcements back."

He paused, his tone becoming unusually gentle, "You've done very well. The road ahead will be tougher. But I believe in you."

"The world is vast, and I will be waiting for you in the universe..."

With that, he wasted no more time.

Grasping the "Purification Core," his body flickered with spiritual light, and he soared through the air, racing towards the coordinate point in the northern mountains.

What remains for him is only the time to handle this last matter of the "Mother."

Chapter 1026: Star City

Bai E, carrying the "Purification Core," arrived at the Earth Veins entry point coordinates marked by Helen's team, located deep in the northern desolate mountains.

This place is a valley of deathly silence, with the surface covered in gray-white alkaline and broken rocks. The air is thin, and the psychic energy background is exceptionally chaotic.

He could clearly feel the viscous pulsation coming from deep beneath, like the beating of a giant heart, and the cold, greedy Bug Race will that sought to assimilate and devour everything.

There was no time to survey the terrain. Following the guidance of the device, he found a natural fissure at the center of the valley.

Bai E implanted the Purification Core into the fissure, and the spiritual energy patterns on the surface of the metal and crystalline structure instantly lit up, extending downward like a living thing, establishing a fragile temporary link with the raging Earth Veins energy.

Immediately afterward, Bai E sat cross-legged, placing his hands on the conduits of the Purification Core, took a deep breath, and poured all his psychic energy into it like a flood breaching its dam.

The Purification Core vibrated violently, emitting a high-frequency hum.

Bai E's consciousness seemed to be forcibly dragged by this force into the deep network of the planet's Earth Veins, facing the massive Mother Entity that was almost fused with the Earth Veins.

It was an endless "underground ocean" composed of countless writhing, growing, and pulsating biomass and azure psychic energy veins. Its core consciousness, like a cold, viscous deep-sea monster, instantly locked onto him, the "intruder"—

Welcome to the path of confrontation.

This is not a conventional battle, but a direct impact and purification occurring at the energy and psychic energy level, targeting the core consciousness and structure of the Mother Entity.

Bai E's psychic energy, like a red-hot iron, pierced fiercely into the consciousness of the Mother Entity.

The opponent emitted a soul-shaking psychic scream, mixed with agony and fury, mobilizing the entire Earth Veins network's energy for frenzied counterattacks and devouring.

Bai E felt his psychic energy rapidly depleting while enduring the dual horror pressure from the planet's strata and the Mother Entity's consciousness, as if the entire planet's weight and endless malice were concentrated on him at this moment.

His body began to tremble uncontrollably, blood flowed from his mouth and nose, and his consciousness started to blur, signifying severe over-exhaustion of psychic energy and spirit, reaching the brink.

This was the first time he encountered such an awkward situation since his power had grown.

But he did not stop, nor could he stop.

Bai E gritted his teeth and even began burning part of his Life Essence to extract the last bit of strength, pushing the Purification Core's power to the theoretical limit he could bear.

Finally, amidst a muffled cracking sound from inside the planet, all the purification energy carried by the Purification Core collaborated with Bai E's full outburst, exploding like a supernova in the core region of that "underground ocean"!

"Sss!"

Silent blasting echoed within the consciousness of the creatures, and Bai E was almost instantly propelled into the sky by this force.

Having delivered this full-force strike, Bai E was nearly drained of all his power, and in his last vague perception, he felt the violent pulsations deep within the Earth Veins becoming disordered and temporarily subsided.

He could also sense the signal anchor he left behind remained stable.

Only then did he truly relax, no longer opposing the dragging sensation from the consciousness of the entity.

At the moment of surrender, the light and shadow before his eyes quickly blurred and withdrew like a faded canvas.

Intense weakness and the pain of the soul being torn overwhelmed him, and in the next instant, endless darkness and the heavy tide of deep consciousness engulfed him...

Unknown how long had passed, like struggling to float up from the deepest ocean, Bai E's consciousness gradually returned.

The first thing he felt was the intense fatigue and dull pain from the physical layer, as if every muscle and nerve had experienced overload.

The psychic energy was nearly depleted, and an empty dizziness arose from the depths of his soul.

He struggled to open his eyes, and the familiar yet cold metallic ceiling came into view—

This was his personal rest cabin on the spaceship.

"Awake?"

Yue Ying, who had been watching beside him, immediately noticed the movement, leaned over, her face showing obvious concern, "Your psychic energy projection seems to have... gone very far, consuming massive amounts."

Bai E propped himself up, his head slightly woozy, nodded lightly, his voice hoarse, "Mm... I went back once. Just as your sister said, when danger arises there, I have my own perception."

Saying so, Bai E closed his eyes to feel his own state. Although tired, the core was intact, just needing time to recover psychic energy and strength.

More importantly, he could clearly sense a unique "signal," deeply bound to his psychic energy imprint, persisting stably in the direction of the distant Original Planet.

The anchor point still exists.

"Inform Catherine, have her immediately contact the Mine Star, find Dai Lian."

Bai E took a deep breath, suppressed discomfort, his tone swiftly turning clear and decisive, "Tell her that the coordinate anchor point has been established, I will transmit the signal characteristic data later. Have Dai Lian and Zhou Wenjie start preparations for the first batch of reception ships immediately. Priority reception target: Helen and her scientific research team. Also prepare sufficient hibernation

pods and survival supplies. The situation on the planet is complex, reception needs to be conducted in batches, the first batch of personnel must be elite and crucial. Helen is the absolute core for our technological advancement in the universe, deciphering the Bug Race, and tackling high-dimensional threats. Her safety and arrival must be prioritized. Put Gong Yan in full charge, and meet any technical or resource requirements with all available power."

Chapter 1027: Star City (Part 2)

"Alright, I'll inform them. You can rest well." Yue Ying didn't hesitate for a moment and immediately turned to arrange the communication.

Although she didn't know exactly what had happened, the urgency and seriousness in Bai E's tone made her realize that this matter was fundamental.

After arranging this most critical step, Bai E finally took a breath and looked out the porthole.

The starry sky was brilliant, but it was already different from what was seen during the previous voyage.

The stars in the distance were denser, and the background radiation contained more complex traces of artificial signals.

"Where... are we?" Bai E asked.

Yue Ying quickly returned with Catherine, who held a data pad and reported: "Sir, you are finally awake. Your arranged communication has been sent. Additionally, according to the navigation display, we have just passed the last preset jump point and have officially entered the broad area of the 'Stability Zone of the Third Arm of the Galaxy Center.' We are about a day's standard voyage away from the host star of

this Star Alliance Finals — 'Honor Competitive World' and its affiliated service starport 'Star City.' We have arrived nearly a month ahead of the original schedule."

A month ahead... This was the redundant time Bai E had set before departure.

Faced with unknown powerful enemies and complex environments, arriving early for adaptive training, intelligence gathering, and familiarization with the environment was crucial.

"Very good." Bai E nodded, "Notify all participating members that we are about to reach the Galaxy Center region. Before entering the airspace of 'Star City,' I need to know the specific arrangements of our foothold and the latest competition process."

Soon, Gong Yan, who was responsible for logistics and external relations for this trip, along with accompanying Elorin scholars and others, came to Bai E's rest cabin for a briefing.

Gong Yan's language was concise, "Sir, according to the confirmation letter and guidance information sent by the Star Alliance competition committee, the official designated stopover for all participating teams is the 'International Pavilion' area of 'Star City.' It is a series of comprehensive pavilion buildings specifically built for large Star Alliance events, equipped with independent ecosystem maintenance, training facilities, and basic defense. Different sizes of areas are allocated based on the scale and needs of the participating teams. Our 'New Bauhinia' representative team is assigned to 'International Pavilion Zone 7', with an independent accommodation building, a medium-sized tactical discussion room, two standard mecha adjustment warehouses, and a simulated training ground. The conditions are moderate to above average, sufficient for our initial use. Relevant permissions and identification codes have been issued."

The Elorin scholar also supplemented on the side: "'Star City' is a giant space city-state built relying on 'Honor Competitive World', and is also one of the most important transportation hubs and centers for

business and cultural exchanges in the Galaxy Center region. The powers are mixed there, and the information flows very quickly. Your early arrival, Lord Bai E, is wise. This month is not only a time to adapt to the competition environment but also a critical window to observe opponents, understand the political ecology of the Galaxy Center, establish preliminary connections, or at least avoid pitfalls."

"Regarding the competition system," Gong Yan continued to report, "the official process of this Star Alliance Finals has been announced. The entire competition is divided into three stages."

"First Stage: 'Qualification Selection Matches.' The location is in multiple preset arenas of 'Honor Competitive World.' All participating teams will conduct a fifteen-day round-robin points competition. The competition formats include but are not limited to: individual duels, pair collaborations, tactical team challenges, survival in specific environments, and comprehensive projects like simulated fleet command. The top 64 teams in the points ranking will advance to the second stage. This stage aims to eliminate teams that are clearly lacking in strength and initially showcase the comprehensive qualities of each team."

"Second Stage: 'Glory Elimination Matches.' The 64 advanced teams will go through a single-elimination draw. Competition venues will be transferred to more complex and challenging special environment districts on 'Honor Competitive World,' which may include areas like deep-sea, lava, strong radiation, extreme gravity, or areas of spiritual energy disorder. The competition format emphasizes actual combat, adaptability, and team coordination. Until the top eight are determined."

"Third Stage: 'Peak Showdown.' The top eight teams will conduct the final public duels in the core main arena of 'Honor Competitive World'— 'Star Ring.' The competition system might be a traditional team arena battle or a high-difficulty challenge project temporarily announced by the event committee. This stage's competition will be broadcasted live to the main civilizations within the entire Star Alliance, garnering the highest attention. The champion will receive supreme glory, and... reportedly unimaginably generous rewards jointly provided by the Star Alliance and the seven 'Sons of the Empire,' including but not limited to cutting-edge technology sharing permissions, rare resource mining rights, and major political influence."

Gong Yan paused, speaking with a hint of seriousness: "Additionally, based on the non-public information we have gathered, in this competition, several traditional strong teams from the 'Sons of the Empire' seem to have sent stronger lineups than in previous years."

Bai E listened quietly, the fatigue still present, but his eyes had become sharp and clear again.

Arriving a month ahead, the time is still abundant.

The conditions of the foothold are sufficient, the competition process is clear.

The opponents are strong, the environment complex, but this is precisely the purpose of their coming here.

"I understand," Bai E said slowly, "After arriving at 'Star City,' proceed as planned. First, thoroughly check and adapt to our station facilities, ensuring safety and no surveillance dead spots. Second, under the guidance of the Elorin scholars, Gong Yan and Kuang Xin will be responsible for starting to systematically collect all public intelligence on opponents, especially the representative teams of the seven 'Sons of the Empire,' and any power information that might be hostile to us. Third, training cannot stop. Make good use of our own simulated training ground and apply for the use of 'Star City''s public advanced training facilities to quickly enable everyone to adapt to the different environmental parameters and combat rhythms that may exist in the Galaxy Center. Fourth..."

He looked at Catherine, "Maintain a low-key but open attitude in external contacts. We don't provoke trouble, but there's no need to deliberately avoid it either. For reasonable exchanges or probing, you and I will respond. Our primary goal is to participate smoothly and achieve results, while... waiting for the first batch of our 'family' to arrive."

"Yes!" everyone responded in unison.

"Additionally." Bai E said to Catherine, "Receiving Helen's affairs is the highest priority. Over on Mine Star, it all depends on you. Report to me anytime if there's any progress."

"Understood, Sir." Catherine's voice was filled with determination.

She, like Bai E, was full of curiosity about the woman named Helen.

A woman who could haunt a leader like Bai E, what kind of charm would she possess?

She was eager to see for herself.

The briefing ended, and everyone went their separate ways to prepare.

Bai E sat alone in the cabin, looking out at the ever-nearing Star Domain, which represented the most brilliant core of human civilization, and sighed softly.

"The depletion is indeed still too great..."

Whether it was responding to calls across star domains or finally breaking through the defenses of the Bug Race's mother body, including facing the mother body's desperate backlash in the end, the depletion to his Spiritual Energy and soul was unimaginably large.

It is foreseeable that in the long time ahead, he will be unable to take action in his full state.

This also limited another important ability he originally envisaged—

Descent!

Before, while still on the planet, he could directly control the bodies of his fellow believers through descent.

During the speech at Mine Star, he once again felt this ability being activated.

However... now this "trump card," which he was ready to use to deal with some troublesome places, might not be usable in the short term.

In other words, in the upcoming first competition stage, he must rely on those mech pilots to carve out a new realm solely with their strength...

Chapter 1028: Trouble

The spaceship finally reached its destination at the culmination of a smooth flight.

Through the porthole, Bai E and the others had their first chance to witness the full grandeur of the "Star City."

It was not a planet, but a colossal, unimaginably vast ring-shaped space colony built on the orbit of the "Glory Tournament World" gravity.

The immense structures made of countless alloys and crystals were nested layer upon layer like a stellar ring, rotating with all sorts of energy light bands flowing across their surfaces.

Dense landing platforms and transportation pipelines covered the city like a beehive, with ships of various forms from all over the universe, flowing steadily like schools of fish guided by beams of light into the "veins" of this cosmic hub.

"This is... Star City." Catherine stood beside Bai E and murmured in awe.

The scene before their eyes was far more magnificent, bustling, and futuristic than any city in the Peak Alliance.

This, here, was a direct manifestation of the core strength of human civilization.

Following the received guiding signals, the spaceship slowly cruised into the specified airport channel.

Through the transparent alloy walls of the channel, the scene of the "International Pavilion" area was clearly visible —

It was a massive architectural complex divided into numerous independent areas, each with distinct styles. Some appeared like steel fortresses, others were covered with lush ecological domes, and some shimmered with the glow of Spiritual Energy, evidently designed specifically for teams of different civilizations' styles.

The New Bauhinia's spaceship finally docked at the berth labeled "Zone 7."

The hatch opened, and fresh circulating air flooded in, carrying a unique scent of metal and energy.

Bai E led the group down the gangway, stepping onto the first temporary territory of the "New Bauhinia" at the Galaxy Center.

The architectural style of Zone 7's base was simple and practical, with a main building of a composite structure featuring strong, clean lines, and the silver-grey exterior walls were sprayed with a reduced version of the "New Bauhinia" emblem surrounded by flames and thorns.

One side of the building was connected to two standard-specification mech tuning warehouses, with silver-white alloy doors tightly shut; on the other side was a semi-open simulation training ground, equipped with various basic obstacles and targets.

The perimeter of the base was separated by a semi-transparent energy barrier, ensuring privacy and basic security without complete enclosure.

Having received notification beforehand, a specialist from the Star Alliance event committee awaited at the entrance, and after verifying Bai E and the others' identification codes, guided them into the base.

The accommodation area was clean and tidy, equipped with standardized living facilities.

The tactical discussion room was located on the middle floor of the building, with panoramic observation windows overlooking part of the training ground. The room was equipped with advanced holographic tactical tables and encrypted communication devices.

The interior of the two mech warehouses was spacious, with basic maintenance equipment and energy interfaces fully equipped, sufficient to park and initially tune the dozens of main mechas they brought.

"The conditions are better than expected," Gong Yan surveyed the facilities and nodded. "They're sufficient for our preliminary stationing and training needs."

Bai E walked to the window of the tactical discussion room, gazing at the never-extinguishing brilliant lights of the "Star City" outside, and in the distance, other regions vaguely showcasing the bases of other strong teams.

He could feel countless gazes, some curious, some scrutinizing, others carrying complex emotions, cast towards the newcomer team "New Bauhinia" from corners of this space city.

"This is our starting point," Bai E turned to the core members gathered inside the room and said, "The next month should be spent familiarizing ourselves with the environment, gathering intelligence, and adjusting our condition. Here is our first home during the Star Alliance Finals. For now, let's settle in."

They followed orders, beginning to systematically assign rooms, unload necessary supplies, and check the functionality of the base.

Having initially adapted to the environment of "Zone 7" of the International Pavilion at Star City, following Bai E's instructions, Gong Yan, Kuang Xin, and others began systematically gathering intelligence on the participating teams from the Galaxy Center under the guidance of Elorin scholars.

Bai E, meanwhile, took the core members to selectively interact with other participants, experiencing the atmosphere here personally and identifying potential opponents.

Their first choice was to head to "Starlit Arena," one of the advanced public training areas open to participants from the "Star City."

This arena was a massive venue integrated with various complex environment simulations and advanced training equipment, often serving as a place for mech pilots from different teams to observe each other, or even engage in informal sparring.

When Bai E, Catherine, Rose, and a few key members along with Elorin scholars acting as liaison officers entered this brilliantly lit, bustling area, they immediately felt a vibe starkly different from the Edge Star Domain.

The Spiritual Energy fluctuations and life essences gathered here were generally more refined, powerful, and even bore clear marks unique to their respective civilizations.

The air was imbued with the scents of metal, energy, sweat, and... a faint aroma of competition and scrutiny.

Their first notice was drawn to the northwest corner, an area shrouded by a special Gravity Field.

Within it, several mechas, each with a distinct style yet all emanating a powerful, oppressive aura, were conducting adaptive training.

Among them, the most attention-grabbing was a mech adorned in golden and luxurious deep red livery, embellished to the point of lavishness, and moving with a strange rhythmic grace.

Chapter 1029: Trouble 2

"That is the 'Brilliant Star,' the representative team of the Golden Federation."

Elorin quietly introduced to Bai E, clearly recognizing the other side, "The leader is said to be a young prince of the Golden Federation with extraordinary Spiritual Talent. Judging by the Spiritual Energy fluctuations of that Mecha, he has likely perfectly integrated some kind of Spiritual Energy amplification system with the Mecha. Their people are usually arrogant, tactics elegant and lethal, adept at using Spiritual Energy and precise coordination to establish an advantage. They are extremely vigilant opponents, especially in team battles or competitions involving Spiritual Energy rules."

As if to confirm Elorin's words, the golden Mecha seemed to sense the gaze of Bai E and his group. The observatory on the Mecha's head slightly turned to "glance" in their direction before returning to normal and continuing its training.

But the feeling of being "seen" remained clearly in the perception of Bai E and the others.

This was the mark of a strong presence.

In another training area simulating a lava environment, the situation was completely different.

Several Mechas with wild paint jobs, rugged structures, and a clear emphasis on explosiveness and close combat capability roared with violent engine noises, engaging in straightforward charges, collisions, and power contests.

One notably large, heavily armored, crimson Mecha equipped with giant ramming horns and thermal battle axes was taking on two other seemingly formidable Mechas, pushing them back step by step with wide and open movements filled with a primitive aesthetic of violence.

"'Blood Fury Battle Group,' a team from the Flame Republic."

Elorin continued, his tone carrying a hint of gravity, "The leader is known as the 'War Dog' Berserker. Their style is attack, attack, and then attack. It seems reckless, but their combat experience is extremely rich, and their willpower frighteningly resilient. The one who fought two at once just now is probably their main vanguard. When facing them, you must be wary of their aggressive start and psychological pressure. If you fall into their rhythm, it will be very troublesome."

At this moment, another team entered through the entrance of the public training area.

They were few in number, wearing uniformly styled but somewhat plain dark combat uniforms, moving with almost no extraneous noise, their eyes sharp and calm.

After quickly scanning the field, they headed directly to an area simulating a complex ruins environment.

Their Mechas didn't look flashy either, preferring high mobility and stealth, with sleek body lines and paint that seemed to absorb light and resist detection.

"People from the Shadow Kingdom, the 'Ghost Walkers.'

Elorin's voice dropped lower, carrying obvious apprehension, "They rarely appear in public events. It seems they are also conducting adaptation training. Information on them is scarce, but it's certain they are absolute masters of reconnaissance, infiltration, ambush, and special environment combat. In any non-direct arena match, they are the most unstable factor and the most dangerous hunters."

Besides these, Bai E also noticed some other intriguing presences:

A team of Mechas clearly equipped with various odd and even somewhat cobbled-together experimental equipment, suspected to be the 'Divine Chosen of All Machines' from the World Forging Collective; a team composed of a few pilots with calm demeanors and meticulous tactical actions, seemingly molded from military templates, likely from the Steel Alliance or the Deep Space Alliance; and some independent or small country teams that, despite not having a prominent background, included individual pilots with exceptionally sharp auras, clearly battle-hardened.

"Did you see them, sir?"

Catherine, standing next to Bai E, spoke softly, "This basically matches the information we've gathered. The 'Sons of the Empire' team has exceptional individual strength and team quality, with each having unique skills. Among those independent teams, there are also quite a few formidable figures. Indeed, this place is a gathering of the strong."

Bai E nodded slightly.

He didn't feel surprised or tense; instead, there was a sense of "this is as it should be."

No one weak could make it here.

And this was precisely the stage he wanted.

As they were observing and whispering, a slightly frivolous yet not off-putting voice sounded from nearby: "Oh? Unfamiliar faces, and... scholar Elorin? It seems we have new friends who just arrived?"

Everyone turned to see a young man dressed smartly with a shrewd smile like a merchant, accompanied by a few equally well-dressed individuals whose aura leaned more towards technical or logistical roles.

A badge composed of a star and a balance was pinned on his chest.

"Let me introduce myself; I'm the leader of the 'Fist of Wealth' from the Trade Star Domain Alliance. Friends call me 'Money Eye.'"

The young man smiled warmly, his gaze quickly sweeping over Bai E and his group, pausing especially on Bai E, perhaps recognizing him as the "mysterious powerhouse from the Edge Star Domain" recently circulated in some small circles.

"Are you interested in the strong here? Perhaps we can exchange some information... that we both need? After all, the tournament is not just about battles; it's also a platform for exchange and cooperation, isn't it?"

Catherine stepped forward half a step, ready to respond, but scholar Elorin gently pressed her shoulder, politely but distantly nodding to the young man who called himself "Money Eye": "Thank you for your kindness, Mr. Money Eye. However, we are newcomers and need time to adapt. Once we are settled, there might be opportunities for cooperation."

"Money Eye" didn't insist, shrugged, and kept smiling: "Of course, of course. You're always welcome. Then, I won't interrupt your familiarization with the environment."

With that, he led his team to another area, but before leaving, he gave Bai E a deep look.

"People from the Trade Star Domain Alliance are adept at using rules and various means to enhance themselves, and their intelligence network is very developed," Elorin explained only after the others had

left, "It's fine to make contact, but caution is needed, as there's always a commercial calculation behind their actions."

At this moment, a portable communicator on Elorin's wrist vibrated urgently.

He glanced at it, and his expression changed slightly.

"Mr. Bai E, my assistant at our station responsible for communication with the competition committee says there's an urgent issue that requires my immediate attention. It seems... there's a problem with the inspection of our competition Mechas."

Bai E frowned lightly, inspection of the Mechas?

This process was mandatory for all teams upon arrival, with a technical team designated by the Star Alliance conducting basic safety checks, performance parameter records, and confirmation of equipment meeting the tournament's basic specifications.

"Let's go and see," Bai E said, a vague premonition arising in his heart.

This kind of technical issue seemed reminiscent of something he'd encountered not long ago.

The group quickly returned to their station in the International Pavilion's seventh zone.

As soon as they entered the hall temporarily serving as a tactical discussion room, they saw Elorin's assistant and a middle-aged man with a serious expression in a Star Alliance technical officer's uniform waiting there.

Standing nearby were Gong Yan, Kuang Xin, and others, their expressions somewhat grim.

"Scholar Elorin, Mr. Bai E," the Star Alliance technical officer nodded slightly upon seeing them but spoke in an official tone, "I am a representative from the Star Alliance Competition Committee's Technical Audit Department, responsible for the basic review of the competition Mechas in this tournament. We have encountered some technical standard issues with the main competition Mechas your side submitted for review."

He opened the data pad in his hand, pulling up several inspection reports: "According to the latest 'Universal Technical Specifications for Mobility Warrior Competition Safety and Fairness (17th Revision)' by the Star Alliance, all competition Mechas must have an energy core output stability, Spiritual Power Circuit compatibility, and basic structural material stress tolerance coefficient reaching Milky Way universal standard level three or above. Additionally, to ensure fairness, certain 'non-public custom technologies' or 'special modifications' that could affect competition balance need extra safety assessments and functional limitations."

"However, on the Mechas provided by your side, we encountered some issues..."

Chapter 1030: Rules Are Rules

He pointed at several data points marked in red on the report: "The mechas submitted by your side, including the blue and white mecha labeled as the 'main battle core', as well as the mechas from Lady Catherine, Lady Rose, and others, show stability at the end of the energy core output curve that is slightly below the lower limit of the Level Three standard. Additionally, the construction mode of their spiritual power circuits...is very unique and does not match any known general or custom templates in our database, which has triggered alerts in the safety systems. Moreover, we detected some alloy

components with abnormal performance parameters in the structural materials of several mechas, which were not listed in the reporting list."

He looked up, his gaze sweeping across Bai E and the others: "According to the regulations, mechas that do not meet basic technical standards cannot obtain permission to participate. Any special technology or modifications requiring additional evaluation may take weeks or even longer to be assessed. Given that the first phase of the Qualification Tournament is set to officially begin in a month, time is very tight."

The assistant anxiously supplemented from the side: "We have explained that the design and manufacturing of these mechas are based on our unique technology tree and combat needs, and their safety has been validated in previous battles. However..."

The technical official shook his head, his tone leaving no room for doubt: "Rules are rules, gentlemen. The Star Alliance Competition is open to the entire universe and must ensure the most basic, unified, and quantifiable technical entry threshold and fair environment. We cannot make exceptions just because a team claims their technology is 'unique and safe.' Otherwise, it would be unfair to other teams that follow the rules."

He paused, giving his conclusion: "Therefore, according to the preliminary opinion of the Technical Review Department, your main mechas currently cannot pass the review.

You have two choices: first, within the next month, modify the existing mechas to fully comply with current general technical specifications, and submit detailed descriptions and safety verification data for all special technologies, and reapply for review. Second, abandon the existing mechas and custom manufacture new mechas that meet the standards at 'Star City' or other manufacturing points recognized by the Star Alliance. Of course, the debugging of new mechas and their integration with pilots also require time."

The atmosphere in the hall instantly became heavy.

Catherine, Gong Yan, and others' faces were grim.

The mechas they brought are a fusion of Mine Star's technical essence and Bai E's and others' real combat needs, with many designs stemming from Bai E's "intuition" and their reverse engineering results, differing from the mainstream technical route of the Galaxy Center.

Forcibly modifying them to adapt to the so-called "universal standards" might destroy their unique performance balance and cooperation with the pilots...which is the result of their pilots' half-year training.

If they choose to re-customize...the time, resources, and whether they can replicate the original performance are all huge unknowns.

Elorin scholar's face didn't look good either.

He certainly knew the importance of technical standards, but such a problem arising at this critical juncture inevitably made people suspect whether there were some "extra" factors at play.

Are some opponents exerting influence behind the scenes?

Or is there inherent scrutiny and troublemaking within the Star Alliance against "New Bauhinia", this emerging force?

Catherine looked at Bai E, unsure of what to do.

Bai E listened calmly, his face not showing much surprise, instead appearing to confirm something.

He looked at the technical official, asking calmly: "If we choose to re-customize, are there any suggestions or restrictions? For example, must it be manufactured at a designated place? Can we use our own technology team and some core components or materials we bring?"

The technical official seemed surprised by Bai E's calm demeanor, pausing before answering: "The manufacturing location must be at workshops or shipyards recognized by the Star Alliance and having the appropriate qualifications to ensure standardized and safe production processes. As for the technical team and materials...if you can provide proof of meeting the safety standards for your own technology team, and the materials you provide pass our composition and safety inspections, in principle, they can participate in the customization process. But the final product must fully pass our review."

"Understood." Bai E nodded, looking at Catherine, "Notify our technical team that their primary task has changed. Start immediately with researching this technical specification from the Star Alliance, assessing the feasibility and cost of modifying the existing mechas. Meanwhile, contact top-notch mecha workshops or casting factories with a good reputation and qualifications within 'Star City' to discuss custom manufacturing cooperation. Dr. Helen should already be en route; once she arrives, our technical strength will be more complete."

He then looked at Elorin: "Elorin scholar, please assist us in maintaining communication with the technical review department of the Event Committee, trying to gain some understanding, or at least clarify all specific requirements to avoid further issues."

Finally, he glanced at Catherine, Rose, Kuang Xin, and other team members: "It seems our adaptation training needs to enter the 'mech adaptability' stage ahead of schedule. Everyone, be mentally prepared; we may need to familiarize ourselves with entirely new mechas within a month. But this may not be a bad thing...at least, we discovered the problem early and have a one-month buffer period."

His calm and orderly arrangements instantly stabilized the somewhat panicked hearts.

Yes, there's still a month, which is better than discovering the problem a day before the competition starts.