

## Wow 931

### Chapter 931 - Counterattack on the Bai E Behemoth

The same model Mecha as Xing Hen's stood silently in the formation, its blue-white body surface scanning beams flashing at high frequency.

The unique perception originating from the "Insect Race Killer" penetrated the layers of biological armor's camouflage, clearly mapping the bluish spiritual energy core light points within the three dominant variants' chest cavities onto the "Star Dust's" tactical screen, simultaneously shared with the squad members.

At this moment, Buton's cockpit had been invaded by locusts, corrosive fumes filled the air; Remington's shield was on the brink of breaking, every joint was in jeopardy; Xing Hen had lost most mobility; Catherine was busy clearing spores from the gun barrel, significantly reducing marking efficiency.

Encountering these bug race combo units capable of various powers for the first time, even the battle-hardened legendary mechanics were caught off guard, their formation teetering on collapse.

Yet amid this chaotic humiliation, the light of spiritual energy blazed through the dark space!

Bai E's Mecha erupted at a speed beyond visual capture limits, expertly wielding the power to instantaneously kill a hundred heads, transforming into nine dazzling blade shadows that tore through space!

The first slash, like wildfire sweeping the plains, slashed across!

The violent spiritual energy storm brought up by the blade instantly evaporated and dispersed the acid spore cloud enveloping his teammates, clearing a brief safe zone.

The second slash, like a meteor crash, precisely stabbed into the core node of the micro nest within the locust swarm!

The blade force exploded, instantly turning the core nest along with hundreds of Bone-Eroding Flying Locusts within its vicinity into dust, halting the swarm's assault.

The following seven slashes, like seven soul-seeking lightning stars! They disregarded the void hunters' strange carapace capable of bending light, precisely locking onto the bluish light points on the tactical screen, piercing through with an unstoppable force!

"Puff! Puff! Puff! Puff! Puff! Puff! Puff!"

Seven muffled explosive cracks rang out almost simultaneously!

That was the sound of spiritual energy nodes being precisely detonated and utterly shattered!

The ferocious movements of the three variant dominators instantly froze, their sickle blades raised but unable to fall.

Their remains didn't even touch the ground before being charred black by the spiritual energy flames of the Devouring Star Blade, emitting a pungent burnt odor.

Through the crosshair of her sniper scope, Catherine clearly captured the trajectory of those blades.

Her breath nearly stopped—each of Bai E's slashes precisely targeted the smallest connection gaps in the bone armor where her previous bullets failed to penetrate or even couldn't capture!

Those were absolute blind spots even her top sniper system couldn't lock on!

Remington looked down at the terrifying corrosion pits on his shield from acid and then compared the dominator variant severed into halves by Bai E, his Adam's apple rolling violently, a feeling of indescribable shock stuck in his chest.

Xing Hen was about to shout out to remind Bai E about the remaining locusts but choked on the words.

He only saw Bai E sheath his blade with fluid motions, his stance composed.

Countless spurting acid rushed toward his Mecha but was instantly evaporated by an invisible spiritual energy field ten centimeters from the blue-white armor, not leaving even a wisp of white smoke.

Bai E's Mecha stepped over charred bug corpses strewn about the ground and the still weakly wriggling locust remnants; the last drop of acid dripping from the Devouring Star Blade's tip sizzled into green smoke as it scorched the carpet of fungi underfoot.

He didn't even look back as he calmly issued another order: "Stick close."

Behind him, the four legendary mechanics forcefully suppressed the surging shock in their hearts—

Whether it was the eerie ferocity of the bug race individuals or Bai E's inhuman precision and domineering prowess, both had dealt a subversive blow to their past worldviews.

Remington took a deep breath, and the Ion Shield of the "Thunderstorm Monarch," damaged but still standing firm, glowed faintly again, closely following behind Bai E.

Catherine swiftly cleaned off the last bit of corrosion residue from the gun barrel, and the muzzle of "Silver Feather" stabilized and raised, locking instantly onto several meat tumor turrets on the chamber wall ahead, beginning to twitch and charge.

Xing Hen and Buton also struggled to repair their damaged systems, keeping pace again.

Led by Bai E, the squad tore their way through obstacles.

Having experienced the first battle, these legendary mechanics quickly adapted to the Bug Race's fighting style.

Despite being on foreign turf, they performed more and more deftly.

With Bai E always able to back up the team at any moment, the squad pushed towards the spiritual energy core Bai E sensed at lightspeed.

All the way, they trod upon mountains of corpses and seas of blood, beheading countless bugs.

At the end of the flesh labyrinth, Bai E and others saw a chamber as large as a beating heart.

Suspended in the center was a Spiritual Mother Worm—

Its bloated body was almost entirely composed of translucent biomass and shimmering bluish spiritual energy veins, seeming almost incapable of movement or offense.

Yet the spiritual energy waves it emitted were like a tangible tsunami, making Catherine and the others feel a moment of dizziness simply by approaching.

However, within this brief disorientation, they seemed to glimpse a golden sun in the void.

That ever-burning sun warmed their bodies and dispelled their confusion.

"Is that the heart of these cosmic monsters?"

The group gazed in shock at the gigantic Mother Worm before them.

Their Mecha, already over ten meters tall, seemed like a child in front of a building while facing it.

That sense of insignificance against the colossal instantly climbed into everyone's heart.

"That's it!" Bai E's intense spiritual energy feedback was wildly alerting him, "Act now!"

Yet before he could genuinely approach, a massive bubble in front of the Mother Worm suddenly burst.

Chapter 932 - Anti-Bai E Behemoth (Part 2)

Tumbling down alongside the vile green acid was a crimson giant beast that exuded a sinister sense of oppression.

Its form was even more massive and robust than a Dominator, carrying the weighty sensation akin to a Nest Guardian.

However, its crimson chitin bone armor was identical to the Dominator's, though with additional intricate patterns.

Like the Dominator, it had six arms, but they were not all bone blades; instead, they were more targeted composite weapons:

Two arms resembled the Dominator's gigantic bone blades, two ended in prism carapace shields capable of refracting attacks, similar to a Dominator variant, and the last two arms mutated into massive, pincer-like structures with corrosive liquid secretion ports.

Upon spotting Bai E and the others, the beast did not scream like the other Bug Race creatures they'd encountered before.

It merely turned silently, its six disparate arms aimed at Bai E and the other intruders.

As Bai E was locked by those cold, indifferent eyes, he faintly heard a hollow, frightening voice—

"You may call me, the Arbiter!"

It even knew about his ability to sense the nest network?

Bai E realized that this giant beast before him might have been born specifically for him.

But time was not on humanity's side, as the sticky sound of jointed limbs approached massively from the nearby fleshy corridor.

Remington's "Thunderstorm Monarch" charged forward first, trying to break through with an Ion Shield slam and heavy cannon bombardment.

However, the Arbiter's two prism shields raised precisely, not only deflecting the cannon fire but their special structure even absorbed and dispersed some of the ion energy.

Meanwhile, a bone blade sliced toward the shield's edge with Dominator-like precision and speed while another corrosive pincer sinisterly reached for the Mecha's leg joints.

Catherine's "Silver Feather" sniper rifle roared, with specially crafted Spiritual Armor-Piercing Bullets tracing a streak of light.

But when the bullet hit the predetermined area on the opponent's breastplate, it failed to penetrate as hoped and only erupted into a dazzling spark on the thickened and structurally specialized bone armor, leaving just a shallow dent.

The Arbiter didn't even look at her, a prism shield adjusted slightly, encompassing the possible paths of follow-up shots within its defensive range.

Xing Hen and Buton attempted a flanking maneuver, but the Arbiter's massive body along with preemptive sweeps of its pincers and interference with active tendrils in the chamber blocked them from cutting in.

Its actions were efficient and ruthless, like a killing machine executing a fixed program, each move treading on the Mecha squad's ideal path as anticipated.

After observing shortly, Bai E's Mecha transformed into a streak of blue-white light.

Swift-Strike protocol engaged, nine slashes hurtling towards the Arbiter's head, joints, and other critical node areas from various angles.

"Clang! Clang! Clang! Sssshh—!"

The intense clash of metal and the sound of energy erosion resounded sharply.

Most of the slashes were blocked by bone blades or shields, while the few that hit the carapace embedded deeply into those specialized proliferating structures, unable to cause the intended damage.

Only one slash grazed a relatively weaker joint connection, sparking flames and some biological tissue.

Its defense nearly perfectly sealed off all efficient attack paths for Bai E.

From the first encounter, Xing Hen realized they were in big trouble.

"Conventional attacks are futile; its shell is too hard, and it seems to know where we will strike!"

"It's more than just knowing." Bai E calmly analyzed, maneuvering the Mecha to narrowly avoid a pincers' combined attack, "It has turned 'the ways we succeeded in harming the Bug Race' into its hardest places. It is using our past to defend against our present."

The Bug Race had always possessed top-tier learning abilities, something Bai E was well aware of.

But what this Arbiter demonstrated might have even absorbed the entire growth process Bai E went through while facing the Bug Race on the planet—it was so familiar with him, possibly even more than himself.

The battle fell into a stalemate.

All the squad's attacks seemed anticipated by the enemy, resolved or endured one by one.

Meanwhile, the opponent's methodical rhythm combined with its terrifying power and defense relentlessly added scars to the Mechas.

Remington's shield started to crack, Catherine needed to constantly change positions to find new vantage points, and Xing Hen and Buton's maneuvering space was further compressed.

"We can't keep going like this!" Bai E's gaze was sharp as a blade.

Facing this monster that concentrated all experiences of past confrontations against him, any previously used, recorded techniques would have greatly reduced effectiveness.

To defeat it, they must wield something not stored in its database.

Or... use absolute force to hammer out a gap in its specialized defense that it couldn't patch with 'past experiences'!

Bai E's gaze swept over the struggling teammates, past the flashing alarm lights on their Mechas.

A makeshift strategy formed in his mind.

"Everyone, listen up!" Bai E's voice was firm and resolute, "Abandon the probing, concentrate firepower! Remington, maximum power ion surge, hit its frontal shield, provide as much distraction as possible! Catherine, switch to high-explosive rounds, hit the fungal mat and support points underneath it to break its balance! Xing Hen, Buton, Dragon Roar, hold its side arms, create an opportunity for Remington!"

"Understood!" The five responded in unison, immediately changing tactics.

Remington's "Thunderstorm Monarch" madly channeled Ion Shield energy towards the main cannon, a massive ion torrent blasting at the Arbiter's prism shield.

Catherine's sniper rifle loaded special rounds, continuously striking the fleshy ground and joint connections beneath the Arbiter.

Xing Hen, Buton, and Dragon Roar attacked frantically on the Arbiter's flank, forcing it to split focus and defend.

This set of combined attacks was not directly lethal but rather tactical interference and suppression.

Facing an experience amalgam, they employed a new tactical approach through teamwork and battlefield conditions.

The Arbiter's response remained precise, but faced with such a multi-target, multi-type saturation interference, its built-in "optimal solution" response exhibited a brief, extremely short delay—

It had never encountered such targeted "field control."

At this moment!

Bai E's Mecha thrust into full power, pushing the "Insect Race Killer" perception to its limit.

He no longer aimed for those commonly weak points with specialized defense but focused his spiritual perception like a sharp cone, combining the instincts of the Insect Race Killer, viciously stabbing into the Arbiter's core!

Meanwhile, he recalled the first time he fought alongside Catherine.

The skill she had employed, seeking the utmost frequency and concentrated striking...

"Now! Everyone, aim for its core!" Bai E's voice was resolute, "Alpha Limit Overclock Attack—full power!"

Bai E's voice always became the absolute anchor during critical moments, and the six stylistically diverse Mechas synchronized their most threatening strikes almost simultaneously.

Six different types of attacks, yet each equally exerting full force, during the Arbiter's brief delay caused by tactical interference, resonated in attack with millisecond precision, converging on its most confident defensive layer!

"Buzz buzz buzz—Boom!!!"

First, the buzzing of high-frequency energy impact, followed by the explosive crash of defensive structures reaching their limits!

The layers of specialized bone plates over the Arbiter's chest finally forced open and shattered under such concentrated, fierce compound attacks!

The Bug Race core beneath, stripped of its surface defenses, lay exposed under Bai E's blade tip.

A glint of fierce determination flashed in Bai E's eyes, using his last strength to drive the blade harshly into the enemy's flesh!

"Puff—Boom!"

The terrifying convergence of mechanical force and spiritual energy exploded from within the Arbiter, tearing its massive body apart from the inside out!

And realizing its meticulously crafted 'anti-Bai E giant beast' was once again eradicated, the imminent demise of its sentient consciousness resonated as the Mother Worm let out its final spiritual screech.

Chapter 933 - The Name of God

The path ahead was unobstructed, and the bugs surging from all sides were no match for Bai E. At times, they even struggled to bypass the Legendary Pilots Team's blockade.

Bai E piloted the mecha, flying up in front of the Mother Worm.

The opponent's milky-white, murky eyes now stared at Bai E, filled with fear.

'Don't kill me.'

A hollow voice echoed in Bai E's mind, not belonging to any known language, yet conveying a meaning Bai E could comprehend.

Bai E remained indifferent, "Goodbye."

These bugs, pure malice incarnate driven only by primal hunger, could never coexist with humans.

There could only be one result between the two: one must face complete annihilation.

Bai E swung the Devouring Star Blade, a glow specifically restraining the Bugs flickered across it.

The Mother Worm, though large, fell in a single strike.

Instantly killing a hundred heads!

"Boom!"

At the true end of its life, this bloated Mother Worm, made of translucent biomaterial and azure spiritual energy veins, let out the ultimate wail of life's final moment.

It was not a sound wave, but a destructive impact made entirely of spiritual energy!

It sought to take the Human Race enemy before it down together!

"Buzz—!!!"

It felt like billions of steel needles piercing the brain directly, or the entire universe collapsing beside the ear.

Catherine, Remington, Xing Hen, Buton, and Dragon Roar, the five Legendary Mechanics, felt darkness engulf them, their consciousness flickering like candle flames in a raging storm.

Even their vaunted legendary mechas emitted a heart-wrenching metallic wail under this pure spiritual energy eruption.

Silver Feather's precision sniping system instantly overloaded, sparks flying, the optical targeting lenses cracking piece by piece; Thunderstorm Monarch's ion shield generator completely exploded, the heavy alloy joints twisting under an invisible force; the remaining three mechas fared even worse, with the cockpit warning lights flashing crazily before extinguishing abruptly.

The spiritually resistant coating covering the mech bodies peeled like charred bark, and the brittle cracking of internal drive springs was incessant.

In just a moment, the five war machines, representing the pinnacle of human technology, were totally paralyzed under the vast spiritual energy impact released by the Mother Worm before its death, becoming gigantic scrap metal sparking among the viscous fungal mats and acid remnants.

If not for the mechas' final protection mechanisms activating at the last moment, injecting high-concentration cushioning gel and spiritual isolation fields into the cockpits to barely shield their comparatively fragile minds and bodies, the five would have fallen into the hands of the bugs to become new Bug Race fodder.

"Ugh..." Catherine convulsed in pain within the viscous gel, blood oozing from her ears and nose.

The others were in equally dire conditions, their consciousnesses floating between agony and vertigo.

Only Bai E's mecha remained standing.

An invisible spiritual energy field fiercely fluctuated around the blue-and-white body, like the most tenacious barrier, forcibly isolating spiritual energy screeches strong enough to destroy legendary mechas.

The Devouring Star Blade's tip hung low, the spiritual flames flowing along the blade flickering, striking down all surrounding bugs attempting to attack.

"Don't worry, I'll take you home."

...

Meanwhile, at the command center of the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance's Xing Qiong on the united human fleet.

On the massive star map, fierce marks representing five Bug Race biological dreadnoughts remained high, but the enemy's brutal attack stream had eerily stalled.

The Bioplar battery of the Bug Race ceased spewing azure plasma beams, and the swarms of Bone-Eroding Flying Locusts went silent, even the writhing of the biological dreadnoughts' surfaces becoming sluggish.

"Detected a violent surge in spiritual energy radiation peak!"

"Report! The target Bug Race fleet... attack has completely ceased!" The observer's voice trembled in disbelief, "Energy readings plummeting! They... they seem to have lost unified command!"

The deathly silent command center was instantly engulfed in a low murmur of conversation.

Xing Zhuo's furrowed brow remained set, his weary eyes scanning the data on the screen: "What's the status on the mech squad signals?"

"Last signal source disappeared inside Biological Ship No. 3, completely cut off 37 seconds ago! The spiritual energy interference is too strong to re-establish the link!"

"Cut off..." Xing Zhuo's fingertips bore deeply into the alloy armrest.

Could the five Legendary Mechanics and that mysterious and powerful Bai E all have perished in there?

But what caused the Bug Race's fleet to stop its assault?

Mutual destruction?

"Sir!" A technician suddenly stood up excitedly, "The high-dimensional engine has responded! The restriction of spatial blockade seems to have vanished!"

This discovery was like a boulder thrown into a calm pond.

The commander of the Blood Cry Empire immediately spoke up: "An opportunity! This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! The enemy's spiritual energy blockade core may have been destroyed, and the Bug Race fleet is in chaos! We should immediately activate the high-dimensional engine and prepare for high-dimensional jump!"

"No!" The representative of the Thunder Dragon Empire immediately retorted, his voice hoarse, "The mech squad might still be alive! Are we just going to abandon them and flee? And what if the Bug Race's stasis is only temporary, what if they recover..."

"What do we use to save them?" Another officer slammed the table, pointing at the screen's suffocating size comparison of the Bug Race biological ships, "How can we achieve what those Legendary Mechanics couldn't? Send shuttlecraft in? That's a death wish! If they recover, we'll all be dead! The brief opportunity the Legendary Mechanics exchanged with their lives must not be wasted by us!"

Chapter 934 - The Name of God (2)

The debate instantly became heated.

The survival faction advocating for an immediate breakout clashed fiercely with the responsibility faction insisting on waiting for rescue, making the air in the command center so heavy it seemed like it could drip water.

Marshal Xing Zhuo's eyes were fixed on the enormous and silent shadow of Bug Race's number three biological ship, his heart in a fierce inner battle.

The thunderous tactics displayed by Bai E when leading the charge into the biological ship had given him a faint glimmer of hope, but the collective disappearance of the legendary mecha signals and the devastating spiritual energy shriek drowned that hope like a cold tide.

Time mercilessly slipped away amidst the debate, with every second concerning the survival of the entire fleet.

"Prepare to execute..." Xing Zhuo's voice was hoarse, nearly issuing the cruel order to break through.

...

Inside the number three biological ship, a hell of flesh and blood.

Bai E moved with ghostly speed.

The mechanical arms of the mecha precisely and brutally tore open the outer covers of the cockpits of five paralyzed mechas, enveloping and dragging out Catherine and others gently yet irresistibly with spiritual energy. Their bodies were extremely weak under the impact of the spiritual energy, almost unable to move autonomously.

"It's okay now," Bai E softly comforted them.

The mecha erupted instantly with blue-white flames exceeding its limits, massive mechanical force combined with surging spiritual energy bursting forth!

He did not choose to drag the heavy wreckage of the mechas, but instead, with lightning speed, cut down the relatively intact heavy ion shield fragment of the "Thunderstorm Monarch" and the sturdiest pieces of blood steel armor from the "Dragon Roar Blood Steel" using the Devouring Star Blade!

In a dizzying operation, the remnants of these legendary mechas were forcibly fused, compressed, and shaped by the invisible spiritual ability field!

The metal wailed and deformed under the immense power, and within a short dozen seconds, a makeshift "metal cocoon" crudely pieced together from legendary mecha fragments, barely able to accommodate four people, took shape under the spiritual energy flames!

It's ugly, rough, lacking any propulsion system, more like a floating metal coffin.

Bai E securely fastened Catherine and five others inside the metal cocoon with spiritual energy ropes, the mecha's single arm wrapped around the heavy burden, adjusting the direction of the engine nozzle, aiming towards the path of the torn and now frantically writhing flesh trying to seal the breach.

"We're going home." A gentle voice echoed in the dim consciousness of the five, Catherine and her companions feeling as if they were nestled in the warm harbor of a mother's womb.

The gentle sunlight consistently shone upon them, preventing their will from drowning in the chaotic sea.

In the next moment, the Devouring Star Blade was unleashed again!

The blaze of spiritual energy igniting on the blade is more intense and concentrated than ever before!

"Open!"

Although past systems had already proven to be the trickery of the Evil God, those abilities seemed to have originally belonged to Bai E himself.

This time, the power of the Devouring Star Blade, having absorbed the life essence of the Mother Worm, evolved once again. Accompanied by Bai E's roar, a blade of blue-white energy condensed to the extreme tore through the layered, frantically proliferating meat walls, vasculature and scattered intercepting Bug Races ahead like a world-creating blade cleaving the chaos!

Where the blade light passed, viscous tissue liquid evaporated, resilient biological tissue carbonized and disintegrated, carving out a brief but scorching vacuum path through the flesh maze!

The blue-white mecha, clutching the metal cocoon, the engine power soaring past the red line, turned into a blue-white comet dragging a long tail flame, thunderingly charging towards the breach on the outer hull of the ship along the path it had forged!

Outside the number three biological ship, in the dark universe.

The debate in the human fleet command center was forcibly interrupted by a blue-white light piercing the starry sky!

"Alert! High-energy reaction! Bug Race's number three biological ship midsection!!" The observer's scream echoed throughout the command room.

Everyone suddenly looked up at the main screen.

They saw the midsection of the Bug Race's biological giant ship, resembling a living mountain and long since restored by the Bug Race, suddenly erupt like a volcano at the main cannon blast wound!

Chunks of charred carbonized biological tissue were hurled into the cold space, enveloped in a violent energy stream.

At the center of that eruption, a dazzling, eye-catching stream of light with a long blue-white tail, like an indomitable arrow, broke free from the constraints of the biological ship with a resolute posture, racing towards the deep universe!

The light was so familiar—it was the same model mecha used by Xing Hen, with only slight differences in paintwork.

In front of it, a continuous slash of materialized spiritual energy blade evaporated the scattered Bone-Eroding Flying Locusts attempting to intercept in an instant.

And in its embrace, there was a "cocoon" made of twisted metal fragments, flickering with weak energy sparks.

"It's...it's Xing Hen! It's Bai E!" Xing Zhuo was momentarily speechless, a strong light bursting from his eyes, "He's still alive! He's out! And... and he brought out others?!"

The entire command center fell into a dead silence, followed by an explosive outcry and incredulous gasps!

This shocking scene seized everyone's minds.

Escaped from hell!

With only his own strength, surviving in the spiritual energy storm self-destruct of the Mother Worm, and forcefully breaking out from the core of the Bug Race's biological giant ship with five teammates deprived of mecha protection!

What kind of terrifying power is that? What kind of tenacious will?

"Quick! Cover with all firepower! Frontline the frigate to receive! Quickly!" Xing Zhuo's shout was hoarse, his voice breaking as he lunged towards the console, personally issuing the command, "Abandon the emergency retreat plan! Fully assist in the return of the War God!"

The fleet group, which had been ready to allocate energy to the higher-dimension engines, quickly altered commands, unleashing a barrage of scorching beams and missile torrents behind the blue-white mecha, forming a short but intense interception fire net, blocking out the reacting Bug Race pursuit forces.

Several high-speed frigates shot out like arrows, their engines spraying dazzling blue light, recklessly rushing towards that blue-white meteor representing miracle and hope.

The blaze on the surface of that blue streak of light noticeably dimmed after breaking free of the biological ship, with some parts even flickering with unstable electric sparks.

But its grip on the metal cocoon remained stable, flying steadfastly towards the nearest reception frigate under the protective firepower unleashed by the human fleet.

Inside the battered metal cocoon, Catherine and others peered through the gaps, watching the space illuminated by artillery and the boundless darkness outside, their sense of surreal survival mingling with deep awe for the blue-white figure ahead, leaving them speechless for a long time.

"Quick! Initiate the higher-dimension engines."

After reaching a certain distance away from the Bug Race fleet, Bai E, who regained communications, was the first to speak to Xing Zhuo: "Their command core has temporarily collapsed, but the remaining units will spontaneously generate a new intelligent core. We must enter the higher-dimension passage before they resume unified command!"

"Okay! Okay!" Xing Zhuo readily agreed.

Bai E, who had just accomplished these feats, seemed to Xing Zhuo like a god or demon, and someone who had never believed in the existence of gods faintly found a sense of faith at this moment.

If God had a name, it was surely Bai E.

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Everyone in the fleet emerging from the higher-dimension passage felt a joyous euphoria of narrowly escaping death, although tinged with a faint sadness for those allies who were not as fortunate and had perished, their starships destroyed.

The leaders responsible for this trip of the three major forces, however, couldn't afford to indulge in sentimentality; they had more important matters to attend to.

"Gentlemen, we must present a unified narrative. The core of the report upward should emphasize two things: Bai E, and the Bug Race."

The purpose of their journey was originally the Stellar District internal selection competition.

But unforeseen developments occurred both during and after the competition, events the entire Peak Alliance hadn't anticipated—

Firstly, Bai E, this demon-like man, single-handedly leading the disbanded team of the Bauhinia Republic, achieved victory in the competition!

Although the final stage was interrupted due to the Bug Race's arrival, before the actual interruption, Bai E had already taken down all opponents.

The outcome depended on the intentions of the president of the Competition Committee, who had watched the entire event unfold...

Chapter 935 - Leasing the Future—In the Name of the Bauhinia

Before the Bug Race incident occurred, they still intended to use their status as the three giants within the alliance to apply pressure on the chairman of this Competition Committee.

They wanted to see if they could order a rematch, and after the rematch, without their Bauhinia Squad, there would be no qualification to compete, so the final winner would be no one other than their Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance.

But now, after witnessing the true power of Bai E in the Bug Race incident,

they need to reassess whether they can actually make this decision in the presence of such a formidable figure...

After all, Xing Zhuo's first reckless confrontation with Bai E led to the loss of more than half of the armed forces on the battleship.

This War God, capable of influencing small skirmishes single-handedly, must be taken seriously, even by their Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance.

The commander of the Thunder Dragon Empire, still showing signs of his hasty escape, was the first to sneer, "Another competition? I've already spoken to the chairman of the Competition Committee, and he stated that the results are in, no need for further discussion."

The Blood Cry Empire commander was still unwilling to relent, "But the Bauhinia Republic is dissolved; according to the alliance charter, those without national backing have no right to inherit competition achievements! I suggest we apply for a rematch with the Competition Committee..."

"A rematch?" Xing Zhuo sneered, "Do you have the guts to mention this in front of Bai E?"

"And so what?" Blood Ming was indomitable, "No matter how strong he is, he is still an individual! If the alliance Order crumbles for him alone, where would our three giants stand? Besides, do you think a place like Bauhinia could produce such talent? Bauhinia must have paid some price to enlist his help, so can't we control him to make him work for us?"

Originally, their hopes of winning the Star Alliance finals with their five legendary mech pilots were slim, but with Bai E as a strong ally now, their chances might be better!

"Control?" Xing Zhuo shouted angrily, "What makes you think you can control him? Soldiers are like ants before him, and a legendary Mecha is but a toy under his blade! Control? How do you think you can control someone like that?"

He had not mentioned to Lei Long and Blood Ming about his attempt to engage Bai E with his fleet.

In fact, the motives for originally taking action were related to these two empires... If their Business Alliance could recruit him, why couldn't Lei Long and Blood Ming do the same?

Once the initiative was given to Bai E, having three options at hand would undoubtedly raise the cost of recruiting him while also running the risk of being intercepted by the two empires.

So he chose to take the risk of direct coercion, but didn't expect...

"Then what do you want to do? Worship him?" Blood Cry Empire's commander sneered, "He's just a capable Mech Pilot; no matter how strong, can he withstand a shot from the battleship's main cannon?"

Xing Zhuo gave him a deep look, took a deep breath, "...So, that brings us to another factor I mentioned — the Bug Race."

"A cosmic-level Bug Race civilization with highly unified intelligence, vast Spiritual Energy, and military technology enough to rival us humans! As of now, they have not shown any intent to communicate, posing only a threat of annihilation to humanity, making them even more incomprehensible than those green-skinned monsters. In the face of such a formidable enemy, I even feel that the Star Alliance competition is no longer important."

"And regarding this civilization, the only intelligence currently comes from Bai E. He is not only a capable Mech Pilot but also an expert with insights into areas we have yet to understand."

Or perhaps a leader?

The thought of Bai E as a leader startled Xing Zhuo.

A leader? Why would he think of him as a leader?

But if not him, then who?

Reflecting on previous brief encounters with him... Why did almost everyone subconsciously follow his instructions?

Is it because of power? No, power can only make people temporarily submit; only a leader can gain willing allegiance.

"In facing a major enemy like the Bug Race, I believe Bai E's status should be elevated to the highest level; the sole strategy should be: respect, cooperation, empowerment! If necessary, I even feel the alliance should consider forming a 'Bug Race Threat Response Command,' with Bai E appointed as the highest action commander, granting him cross-national absolute command authority during emergency situations, and a complete tilt of all resources and intelligence."

"Are you crazy?" The Blood Cry Empire commander sneered, "Granting supreme military authority to an outsider? Lei Long, would your country accept a non-national commander leading your imperial fleet?"

Lei Long's representative remained silent, stroking his beard, neither agreeing nor disagreeing.

"See, who would willingly hand over their military power to an outsider? I think you were just scared by those bugs in the recent battle. This fight was costly, but remember, none of the fleets we brought are main battle fleets. You saw that the main cannons of our three starships could effectively damage those Bug Race biological ships, probably a volley from the main battle fleet would take down these so-called Bug Race biological giant ships. The threat of the Bug Race is indeed imminent, but we don't need to worry too much."

"We humans have main battle fleets, how do you know the bugs don't have more ships behind?" Bai E once said...

"See, again with Bai E..." the Blood Cry Empire commander interrupted Xing Zhuo, "From beginning to end, his understanding of the Bug Race is just his own words. If he hadn't exaggerated the threat, how could you have the idea of receiving him with the highest standard? I think this is just his way to increase his worth, and once we completely purge these so-called Bug Race biological ships, then he too must become a vanguard for the Empire and conquer the Star Alliance."

Seeing the two of them about to break into a heated argument, the previously silent commander of the Thunder Dragon Empire finally spoke to mediate, "The Bug Race threat is real and has interrupted the competition, but the threat and Bai E's achievements must be reported immediately. So I propose our report should be divided into three parts: one, evidence of the Bug Race threat; two, Bai E's redemption merits; three, request the Alliance Supreme Council to determine the competition result and Bai E's authority — after all, it involves the fundamental laws of the alliance."

## Chapter 936 Renting the Future—In the Name of Bauhinia (Part 2)

Xing Zhuo suppressed his anger: "I second the motion. But I add one point: the medical team has prioritized the care of the five Legendary Mech Pilots except Bai E. Their testimonies after waking are crucial. I will include their objective testimonies in my report to add evidence."

Blood Ming snorted coldly: "Fine. But Lei Long representative, if the council ultimately decides to hold a rematch..."

"That is the council's power." The representative of Lei Long stood up, "Each of us should improve the details of our reports. Arguing fiercely here is useless; the decision ultimately depends on what the council members think."

The meeting room returned to silence.

Xing Zhuo looked out the porthole at the wreckage of the fleet, his knuckles turning white.

Their arguments were indeed useless, but the reports from frontline personnel like them have very strong guiding influence.

Even the council members cannot help but consider their subjective opinions. If the descriptions are not accurate enough, it will inevitably lead to misjudgment.

Just hope that the reports from the other two factions do not deviate too much from his own, otherwise, the authenticity will be greatly discounted, potentially causing a misjudgment on the Bug Race, which might lead the Alliance to pay a bloody price.

...

Medical cabin rest area.

Catherine leaned against the bed, her gaze vacantly aimed at the shattered stardust outside the porthole.

When Bai E pushed the door in, the ashes fell from her fingertips.

"I heard the President of the Competition Committee has already awarded the championship to you."

Catherine's voice was hoarse: "Stellar District Champion... heh."

She mechanically pulled up the electronic certificate of the finals victory, the Bauhinia national emblem on the screen had dimmed, "The country is gone, who is this honor for? To those surrendering high officials as a token?"

She was only aware of all this after returning to the Starship.

Although she fought alongside Bai E full of passion, now in this moment of physical weakness, she found herself inevitably plunged into the gloom of her country having already vanished.

Bai E sat down silently, the blue light of medical instruments flowed over his outline.

He suddenly spoke: "Give it to me."

"What?" Catherine turned her head in shock.

"The competition rights." Bai E's gaze was burning, "Why not give them to me."

The people of Blue Star will eventually come to this universe, perhaps reborn using Bauhinia's guise is a good path.

Catherine flicked away the cigarette butt: "To you personally? The Competition Committee will never approve! The charter of the Alliance clearly states—The competition entity must be a sovereign nation!"

"Not personally." Bai E summoned a star map, his finger pointed at the edge of the Black Hole's gravitational field distortion, "My planet needs a status. Bauhinia has three planets, though Mother Planet and Colony Star have fallen into Alliance control, but the Mine Star..."

Catherine suddenly sat up straight: "You want to use the name of Bauhinia's Mine Star? But it's also currently under Peak Alliance!"

"No, I've checked." Bai E pulled out Star Alliance's Covenant's Article 17 amendment—data sourced from the access chip Catherine previously gave him, "When the state entity perishes, if the original planet residents form a new regime and inherit cultural heritage, they can apply to maintain the former national Star Alliance rights."

Catherine's breath caught.

This obscure clause she had never paid attention to, but now it exploded like thunder.

"The Mine Star has a sparse population, but at least it has over a billion people!" Bai E pulled up the planetary data she had once displayed, "As long as someone is willing to inherit the name of Bauhinia..."

"This..." Catherine was silent, but her heart was pounding faster.

She didn't want to be a displaced person, nor did she wish to live like a wandering soul.

The past Bauhinia is gone, perhaps she could build a new Bauhinia...

After a long silence, Catherine suddenly asked: "Even if we successfully declare sovereignty, how will you hold it? The Alliance is not a charity, if you resist, suppression will follow. The Mother Planet and Colony Star are in the hands of the Alliance, you only have one completely backward Mine Star..."

"I don't need them." Bai E enlarged the Black Hole Star Domain map, "My planet is deep within the gravitational trap, the coordinates are not present on current star maps. Using Bauhinia's Mine Star's name to apply for autonomy, actually controlling my planet—this is a dual barrier."

He stood up and opened the medical cabin storage cabinet, taking out the Bauhinia medal Catherine had hidden: "You once said, Bauhinia's gene is 'finding a way, never complaining'. Now the solution is right before our eyes—to use this virtual status to trade for my planet's true right to survival."

Catherine rubbed the thorny pattern on the medal, suddenly clenching it tightly: "Star Alliance's review takes three years! During this period, Peak Alliance will not spare you!"

"That's why I need your help." Bai E pulled up the Star Alliance competition rules, "Stellar District Champions have two rights: one is to represent the Stellar District in the Star Alliance finals, the other is to receive a 'development protection period'—any military actions against us require the Star Alliance Arbitration Court's approval."

Catherine's pupils contracted sharply, she finally understood Bai E's persistence in the competition—

Was it for honor? This was to fight for a legal shield for his unregistered planet!

Leader... indeed.

He had always been a leader, such a plan, who knows how long it's been brewing in his mind.

The demise of Bauhinia, it's hard to say if it's not a gift from heaven to this Barbaric Planet leader.

"Madman..." she murmured, but couldn't resist calculating the possibilities.

Bai E's strength is manifest; if he advances to the finals under Bauhinia's name, the Star Alliance, to maintain the integrity of the competition, will certainly provide protection...

Outside the porthole, Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance's repair craft was welding the cracks in the ship's hull.

Bai E's voice was like nails forging into reality: "Most importantly, the threat of the Bug Race is also imminent. In the short term, they probably won't bother with us... they might even need to rely on me."

Catherine suddenly looked up.

The surrender scene of the Mother Planet and the image of the Bug Race tearing apart starships overlapped in her mind.

She suddenly grabbed the communicator: "Victor! Contact all the veterans you can—immediately restart the Bauhinia underground council!"

After closing the communication, she slapped the medal into Bai E's palm, her eyes lined with blood like burning thorns: "Bai E, this is not a gift for you. It's a loan—use your planet's future to trade for Bauhinia's undying flame!"

Bai E grasped the medal, smiled, "Someday, I will return you a complete Bauhinia."

...

Once her condition slightly improved, Catherine brought Bai E to meet members of the Competition Committee as soon as possible.

While delivering the championship honor certificate, the President of the Competition Committee also once advised:

Though the nominal champion is their Bauhinia, considering Bauhinia's main body has perished, the final competition rights would be inherited by the original second-place successor.

Originally, she hadn't paid much attention to this matter that seemed straightforward, but now with Bai E's new idea, she had to verify immediately if there was any possibility of execution.

The President of the Competition Committee, an elder with gray hair, appeared very spirited and wise.

Facing Bai E and Catherine who had come to him, his gaze focused especially on Bai E, then he smiled and extended his hand, "You must be that mysterious Mech Pilot, right?"

Bai E nodded, "I am."

"Your prowess in the finals, taking on four opponents alone, indeed mesmerizing. It's a pity such talent cannot appear in the Star Alliance finals..."

"That's why we're here now, for exactly this." Catherine said beside him.

"?" The President turned to look at her, his eyes puzzled.

"If we wish to continue competing, how do we proceed?" Catherine's eyes were bright, full of motivation.

"Continue competing?" The President repeated, his eyes also beginning to flash with excitement, "You want to continue competing?"

"Is it possible?"

"Don't rush, let me think... let me think." The President lightly tapped his temple with his finger.

After briefly considering, he excitedly said: "It can be done! It can be done! As long as Bauhinia restores sovereignty before the next stage of the competition schedule is announced! You can represent again to compete!"

Chapter 937 Recruitment

Having received the definitive opinion of the chairman of the Competition Committee, Catherine finally felt that the plan was feasible.

"Don't worry, I've already arranged for Victor to temporarily contact some of my old subordinates. Once we return, we can begin the reconstruction work on Mine Star."

Trying to restore the sovereignty of a civilized nation is impossible with just a rundown, backward Mine Star as it will never pass the Star Alliance's inspection.

Before declaring restored sovereignty, they must first develop Mine Star to a sufficient scale.

"National sovereignty recognized by the Star Alliance is not merely a matter of a few people owning a planet. Otherwise, with so many planets in the universe, those Rangers and pirates exploring everywhere could just establish their own kingdoms anywhere."

"True national sovereignty demands that the country has a minimum population, a certain level of independent technological advancement, a stable social structure, and the citizens' subjective recognition of the country."

"These requirements are currently not met on Mine Star. The chairman mentioned that there are still six months until the Star Alliance announces the list for the finals, during which time we need to develop Mine Star to meet the minimum requirements for national sovereignty, which will not be easy."

As the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance's starship dropped them off at the nearest port, Catherine and Bai E were closely discussing the feasibility of this plan.

"Moreover, during our development, the three main giants will certainly take action, both openly and covertly, to obstruct us."

"Resources, security, technology, population—these are all issues we need to face. Even if you are exceptionally powerful, you cannot take care of the entire planet alone."

"Although I will try my best to leverage my past connections to help us rebuild New Bauhinia, Bai E, I want to ask, apart from military force, what else can you assist with?"

Gazing intently at Bai E's eyes, Catherine cautiously explored another possibility, "In fact, you could have another choice..."

"If you are willing to accept the recruitment of the three giants, with your abilities, helping them achieve a good enough score in the Star Alliance competition, it would be far easier for you to lead your planet's citizens into the universe in the future than the path we are choosing now."

Bai E looked out the window as the planetary port gradually approached.

He spoke softly, "From past experiences, I learned the most important thing is to never rely on others."

A country built on reliance on others is bound to struggle to truly possess its independent qualifications.

A country supported by the three giants will naturally find it hard to escape their control, which is not what Bai E wants.

"Alright." Catherine's gaze gradually became sharp, knowing that Bai E was steadfast enough, she felt assured to entrust both her and her country's future, "Once decided, then do it. Success or failure, let fate decide."

...

This is a planetary trade port belonging to the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance.

Back at his home field, Xing Zhuo showed great hospitality.

In the upper level of the port's trade zone, Bai E received a grand reception.

Here, he also saw Xing Hen, who had been recovering after being injured in the decapitation operation, along with other legendary mechanics.

Xing Hen holding a wine glass, was the first to approach.

Her blue bionic eye shimmered with rational light in the soft lighting of the banquet hall.

Towards this savior who rescued her from the depths of the Bug Race Mother Ship, Xing Hen was deeply grateful... even harboring intentions to follow him.

In the state of confusion after being struck by the Mother Worm's Spiritual Energy blast, if not for that eternal sun in the sea of consciousness that always warmly shone upon their souls, she felt she might have already been lost in a void of spiritual world.

"Why not join our Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance?" Xing Hen extended her most sincere invitation.

Though there was implicit prompting from Xing Zhuo, much of it came from her genuine heart.

"With your joining, you'd be the absolute leader of our alliance's mobile forces."

Currently, the leader is her, but facing Bai E, she wouldn't mind becoming a deputy.

Faced with her invitation, Bai E shook his head, indifferent.

Xing Hen thought he was still hesitating, so she spoke more urgently, "Maybe you don't know yet, the Bauhinia is already gone."

This was news she only heard during her recovery after leaving the field, and the upper levels were extremely secretive about their campaign to persuade the Bauhinia Republic to surrender, even keeping frontline personnel like her completely in the dark.

"Perhaps you led the team to win this Stellar District championship, but without national sovereignty, your team has lost the opportunity to go to the Galaxy Center to compete with the universe's strongest."

"As the runner-up in this competition, our Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance will substitute and replace your team to participate in the Galaxy Center finals. Mr. Bai E, you possess the strongest power in this world, I truly don't wish to see a pearl covered in dust."

Seeing Bai E still with little reaction, Xing Hen tried another approach, "I don't know how Captain Catherine managed to secure your help, but regardless of what kind of bond she had with you, I believe you leading her team to win the championship is enough repayment."

"Captain Catherine might still have her dreams, but the time, resources, and resistance she needs to face are far beyond imagination."

She paused, observing Bai E's peaceful expression, and continued, "No matter how strong one person's power is, it's hard to support the reconstruction of a nation. You need a platform, a strong backing."

Chapter 938 Recruitment (Part 2)

The Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance boasts the largest resource network, the most advanced technology, and the most flexible system in this Stellar District. Here, your strength can be maximized.

The Alliance also needs strong individuals like yourself, especially after witnessing firsthand the threat of the Bug Race. Join us, and you can directly lead the mobile forces, and both Iron Curtain and I will fully cooperate with you."

At the side, Iron Curtain, the bald man with bronze skin, also approached.

He grinned sheepishly, his voice deep: "You're stronger than me, I acknowledge you. While the Alliance can be domineering at times, it never hesitates to reward real talent. Here, you can gain much more than on that leaky little boat called Bauhinia. And also..."

He lowered his voice, "Xing Zhuo is also regretful of the previous offense and will provide you with a satisfactory explanation and enough respect."

Bai E just swirled the liquid in his glass, not responding to her words.

Beside him, Legendary Mechanic Remington Storm from the Thunder Dragon Empire noticed that Bai E was unmoved by Xing Hen and Iron Curtain's overtures, thinking he might have a chance too.

Initially, he and Blood Roar were traded to the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance to form a team, simply because the Alliance had two Legendary Mechanics, while their country had only one.

If Bai E were willing to join his Thunder Dragon Empire, then even after this deal ends, the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance wouldn't have as much leverage as before.

Ignoring the presence of Xing Hen and Iron Curtain, Remington decided to step in directly.

"The Thunder Dragon Empire values strength and glory." Remington's voice was steady and powerful, with the Empire's unique weightiness, "Your abilities were proven in the finals, and you saved us all inside the Bug Race mothership. Our Emperor highly respects warriors like you. If you choose to join Thunder Dragon, the Empire will offer you the rank and treatment of 'Guardian Dragon General', with independent territory and recruiting rights.

Even if you have aspirations for independence in the future, the Thunder Dragon Empire will be your staunchest supporter and protector. This is more substantial than being in a merchant alliance or a... nebulous revival dream.

Most importantly... the Thunder Dragon Empire has never had a dispute with you."

Bai E didn't directly accept Xing Hen and Iron Curtain's invitation, which Remington felt had to do with Xing Zhuo's previous hasty actions.

Bai E turned his head, glancing at Remington, who always steadfastly followed during the Bug Race mothership incident, displaying the serious commitment unique to imperial soldiers.

Bai E nodded slightly: "I appreciate the Empire's regard, but for now, I have no such intention."

What was most unexpected was Victor Dragon Roar from the Blood Cry Empire.

He took advantage of Bai E's brief absence from the heart of the banquet to almost "huddle" with him, the dragon tattoo on his face appearing somewhat mysterious in the shadow.

"Hey, Boss Bai E." Dragon Roar's voice was low, carrying that unique mix of wildness and craftiness from the Blood Cry Empire.

"Don't listen to their high-sounding rhetoric. The Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance is just a bunch of calculating businessmen to the bone, and the Thunder Dragon Empire has too many rules and pretensions. Blood Ming is different; we only value strength and results! His Majesty has said, as long as you come, the position of Deputy Commander of the Blood Ming Empire's Mobile Armed Forces will be yours, second only to His Majesty himself!"

Resources, technology, manpower, all at your disposal. If you can't let go of Catherine's revival dream, Blood Ming can also immediately allocate a colonization fleet and complete industrial modules, directly helping her build the planet, affiliated with Blood Ming in name, but actual control can be negotiated slowly. How about it?

Are these terms more practical than their empty promises of the future? Furthermore, we of Blood Ming are the most loyal and never go back on our word!"

Dragon Roar's words were filled with allure, directly raising the level of support to almost the point of "ceding territory."

But Bai E looked at his single eye glinting with intelligence and responded plainly: "The terms are very generous, I'll consider them."

Clearly, the moment they returned to civilized society, these individuals completed first-time communications with the highest rulers of their respective powers.

They all offered the largest stakes their forces could promise, and without the Bauhinia affair, Bai E might truly have considered them.

But now... it's too late.

After this unofficial recruitment attempt, the atmosphere of the banquet seemed to relax a bit, with everyone celebrating surviving the ordeal and commemorating those who perished at the claws of the Bug Race.

In this seemingly harmonious party, Xing Zhuo, the highest official in charge of this action from the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance, finally made his formal appearance.

He didn't speak with Bai E in the bustling banquet hall but invited him to a highly private meeting room.

The room was elegantly decorated, with expansive floor-to-ceiling windows offering a view of the busy spaceport below.

Xing Zhuo personally poured Bai E a cup of tea, his face lacking the sharpness and arrogance seen before on the command ship, replaced by an expression mixed with fatigue, remorse, and sincerity.

"Mr. Bai E," Xing Zhuo stood in front of Bai E without sitting, slightly bowing.

"First of all, please allow me to express my sincerest apologies for my previous folly and offense."

He raised his head, making direct eye contact with Bai E, without evasion: "On the contest planet, ordering the forces against you was born out of the Alliance's usual arrogance and an underestimation of your abilities. This not only led to our meaningless losses but almost deprived the entire human fleet of its only chance to strike back under the Bug Race threat. This was a major decision-making error on my part. Upon returning to the Commerce Alliance headquarters, I will formally submit a report and take full responsibility."

Bai E nodded, waiting for him to continue.

The apology wouldn't be the end; it was obviously just the opening statement.

After the apology, Xing Zhuo finally sat down, his demeanor turning serious and earnest: "For this reason, I understand your value more clearly, not just in terms of individual strength, but also your understanding of the Bug Race, this unknown formidable enemy, and your decision-making abilities at critical moments. As stated in my report, in facing the Bug Race, our Alliance's attitude toward you will be one of 'respect, cooperation, and empowerment.'"

"Therefore, on behalf of the Supreme Council of the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance, I extend the sincerest invitation for you to join our ranks.

We promise: First, you will directly serve as 'Special Tactical Advisor' and 'Commander of the Elite Mobile Forces,' with powers parallel to the Star Domain Governors, reporting directly to the Supreme Council.

Second, the Alliance will fully support your force development. We can provide basic infrastructure, technology, and initial immigration support in a co-development form and leverage our influence within the Star Alliance to pave the way for its potential future membership.

Third, concerning the Bug Race threat, you will have the highest priority in resource mobilization rights and intelligence privileges, with the Alliance fully cooperating to establish the relevant research and response systems."

The conditions offered by Xing Zhuo incorporated the platform resources mentioned by Xing Hen, as well as substantial support similar to Dragon Roar's offer, providing extremely high independent authority and strategic position, tying Bai E's capabilities to the Alliance's overall interests and future threats, clearly more long-term and comprehensive.

Bai E listened quietly, letting his gaze drift from the glittering lights of the port outside the window back to Xing Zhuo's expectant face.

He slowly put down the teacup, his voice calm and clear: "Mr. Xing Zhuo, I appreciate the regard of the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance and your sincere apology. The terms you offer are very generous; the Thunder Dragon Empire and Blood Cry Empire also showed great sincerity."

"However, I still choose to decline."

The muscles on Xing Zhuo's face tightened slightly, but he seemed not entirely surprised. He quickly spoke: "Mr. Bai E, please reconsider! Is it because you still have lingering resentment from the earlier conflict? I can assure you, the Alliance can show the highest sincerity in apologizing to you! Any request, just name it, as long as it's within my capability. Or if there are any aspects of the offer that you are not satisfied with, we can discuss it. There's plenty of time; we can communicate slowly to find the most suitable cooperation method."

Bai E shook his head: "It's not because of the previous conflict. I have accepted your apology. I refuse because I have already made my choice."

Chapter 939 - The Mine Star Dilemma

He looked at Xing Zhuo and said something similar to what he had told Catherine: "Captain Catherine and I have reached a consensus, we will attempt to apply for the restoration of sovereign state status based on the Bauhinia Republic's Mine Star."

Bai E hadn't considered keeping it a secret; once he and Catherine made any moves on the Mine Star, the three major hegemonies would surely know immediately.

Development is not something that can be achieved overnight, and dealing with these people will be unavoidable in the days to come.

Xing Zhuo was stunned. He never thought that Bai E would refuse the recruitment of the three major powers, and it was truly for that "extinct" Bauhinia Republic... was it because of Catherine?

He opened his mouth, wanting to say something more, such as pointing out how unrealistic this plan was and how many difficulties it would face.

But seeing the unwavering calm and determination in Bai E's eyes, he knew any amount of persuasion would be futile at this moment.

This was the first time the Business Alliance's chief, who had weathered the seas of commerce and politics for many years, sensed a kind of almost stubborn conviction in a young person that couldn't be swayed by interests.

He recalled Bai E's unwavering figure in front of the Bug Race mothership and the report's description of the god-like power saving people amidst the spiritual energy storm.

Perhaps such a person cannot be measured with common logic and interests.

Xing Zhuo finally took a deep breath, forcefully suppressing his regret and confusion, and regained the calm demeanor of the Business Alliance's chief.

He stood up and extended his hand to Bai E again: "I understand. Although very regrettable, I respect your choice. The gates of the Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance are always open for you. If you encounter difficulties on the road to rebuilding Bauhinia..."

He paused, suddenly realizing he might not be able to make such a commitment from the perspective of his faction.

With Bai E not cooperating with their Thousand Stars Commerce Alliance, it would be good enough if the alliance didn't hinder him in the dark or even openly; offering help was out of the question.

"If you change your mind, please make sure to contact us."

This time, Bai E extended his hand and shook it.

Xing Zhuo withdrew his hand, and his tone turned businesslike: "Then, we must return to our respective headquarters and submit a detailed report on the interrupted event and the Bug Race incident. This report will be submitted to the Peak Alliance's highest council and relevant Star Alliance departments. Regarding the part about the Bug Race, we will focus on referencing your discoveries and contributions. As for the event result and Bauhinia's qualification issue..." He paused, "As Representative Lei Long said, that is the council's prerogative. We can only report truthfully, including your final decision."

His implication was clear: the recruitment by the three major powers was all rejected, so they might take a more neutral or even more inclined attitude towards acknowledging established facts in the report.

After all, forcibly erasing or belittling Bai E's achievements in the face of the Bug Race threat seemed foolish and unwise.

But ultimately, how it will be judged is beyond their control.

Bai E nodded: "It should be so."

The meeting ended.

Xing Zhuo left with complex feelings, knowing that although the Bug Race incident was a huge unexpected occurrence, not winning over Bai E might still be considered a failure in the eyes of the Business Alliance's upper echelons.

And he himself would need to pay the price for previous decisions.

The banquet ended shortly after.

Several legendary mechanics had varied reactions upon learning of Bai E's final choice.

Xing Hen and Iron Curtain felt regret, Remington silently raised a glass, while Dragon Roar muttered, "What a shame."

But they all understood that once someone as formidable as Bai E made a decision, it was hard to change.

Catherine came to Bai E's side and asked softly, "All refused?"

"Yes." Bai E looked at the various ships preparing for departure outside the window, "Next, it's up to us. Let's go 'home' and then start building our 'New Bauhinia'."

...

Three days later, the two stepped down from the spaceship.

The strong wind whipped iron-rust-colored sand against the drop pod's outer wall, making a sound like sudden rain.

Bai E looked up, seeing the world covered in chaos.

The sparse domed cities resembled rusted iron cans half-buried in the dunes, with the faint light from the energy towers flickering in the sandstorm.

"It's very bad, isn't it..." Catherine said with a wry smile beside him, "This mine star doesn't have many rare minerals, and the Republic has always been indifferent about it. Apart from two basic mining areas, the rest have all been subcontracted. If we hadn't decided to use this mine star as a starting point, I wouldn't have been very familiar with the situation here before.

From the information I gathered, the registered population on this planet currently totals just over a hundred million, almost all of whom are miners and their families. But this list is dubious, not updated often, and hasn't been thoroughly checked. According to Victor, at least half of it is inaccurate. The actual population is unknown, and it's one magnitude below the ten-billion population minimum requirement for a level one sovereign state.

Next is recognition... According to Victor's preliminary investigation, people here have almost no recognition of the name Bauhinia. In fact, the initial miners of the mining area were composed of some criminals and vagrants; they only cared about production and never enjoyed the Republic's benefits. To gain their recognition in Star Alliance's survey, we need to make an effort.

Then there are the cities... There's no cultural capital here, only two large agglomerations centered around the core mining areas. Spiritual and cultural activities, including guidance, are almost nonexistent, completely failing to meet the spiritual core required of a sovereign state.

Chapter 940 - Mine Star Dilemma (Part 2)

"Finally, there's the matter of technology... this isn't something that can be rushed. I'm already trying to contact some of the old scientists in the country, whether they can come is up to fate."

Only when they truly began to develop did Catherine realize how unbelievably poor their foundation was.

But if the foundation wasn't so poor, they probably wouldn't have the chance to take over this Mine Star.

For instance, when the Bauhinia Republic announced its surrender and dissolution, most of the core areas and industries of their Colony Star and Mother Planet were instantly taken over by personnel arranged by the Peak Alliance.

Perhaps the policies hadn't changed significantly yet, that was to give the people who originally belonged to Bauhinia a reasonable psychological transition time, preventing too much backlash... but the core had already been replaced.

Only Mine Star, due to its truly limited development and the relatively homogeneous miner population, had not yet been formally controlled by people sent by the Sword Edge Alliance.

Before the alliance genuinely values this Mine Star enough to send teams for an actual takeover, it depends on whether Bai E and his people can produce "results" and have a say with those from the alliance.

After reporting the general situation, Catherine shielded her eyes with her hand, peering into the distance, "Let's go, Victor and the others are already waiting for us in the mining district. Let's go see your future subjects."

The periphery of the basic mining district.

Victor had been waiting for some time, the young Mech Pilot's face carried less of the usual excitement and more of a heavy sense of helplessness.

"Captain, Brother Bai E, you finally came." Victor approached, his voice somewhat muffled by the wind and sand.

"How's the situation?" Catherine asked directly.

Victor shook his head, leading the two toward the entrance of the mining district.

The so-called entrance was merely a large pit descending into the ground, with crude metal braces supporting the tunnel walls, and sand occasionally falling with a rustle.

The tunnel was dim, with only a few old lamps providing faint light, the air filled with a mixture of dust, sweat, and some metallic rust scent.

They descended the tunnel, passing by some miners clad in worn protective gear silently operating outdated mining machinery or pushing carts loaded with ore.

No one looked up at them as if they were just insignificant background.

"I tried communicating with them," Victor lowered his voice, sounding defeated, "to understand their needs and see if there's anything we can do. But... no one pays attention to me. If I get one response out of ten questions, I'm lucky. The most common thing they say is, 'You didn't treat us as humans before, so what are you doing here now?'"

Catherine's brows knitted tightly.

Bai E silently observed his surroundings.

The living conditions of the miners were even worse than he imagined.

The protective gear was battered, with many of their masks cracked, leaving them directly exposed to the dust-laden air.

The living quarters were simple caverns dug out beside the tunnels, with a few dirty blankets serving as beds, and food consisting of monotonous nutrient paste and murky recycled water.

They lacked basic medical facilities, many bore obvious marks of injury or illness, and coughing echoed throughout the tunnel.

"They believe that as long as they meet the output quota set from above each month, they can maintain the status quo, and all other communication is superfluous," Victor continued, "They said that back when Bauhinia was around, no big shot truly cared about whether they miners lived or died. Taxes, conscription, resource allocation, which part didn't squeeze them dry? Now, with the country gone, they feel at least a bit of peace. The current district heads only concern themselves with ore and don't interfere in how they live."

The three of them arrived at a relatively spacious tunnel junction, which seemed to be a place for miners to rest and change shifts.

A few miners squatted in a corner, silently eating, seemingly indifferent to Bai E and the others' arrival.

No matter how difficult things get, they have to start somewhere.

Catherine took a deep breath, stepped forward, and attempted to speak in a gentle tone, "Everyone, we're people of the Bauhinia Republic. We've come back, hoping we can make this place better together."

An older miner looked up, his face etched with weathered lines, his eyes apathetic.

The rest didn't even glance her way, continuing to eat.

Catherine stepped closer, looking with sympathy at the sores on these people, "If you have any trouble, please tell us. We might be able to help you."

Seeing Catherine's persistence, the older miner finally responded hoarsely.

He hung his head, not daring to meet Catherine's eyes, his voice filled with a sort of lament, "Better? How? With what?! Can you provide us with clean air purification systems? Can you fix those constantly malfunctioning water processors? Can you bring us enough medicine and medical equipment? Or can you improve our provisions so the children can eat more nutritious food?!"

His tone grew increasingly agitated, almost reckless by the end.

Perhaps these thoughts had been simmering inside him for years, and today, even if he lost everything, he didn't care anymore.

This barrage of questions left Catherine momentarily speechless.

She clenched her teeth, took out a small data tablet from her satchel, and pulled up some information to show them.

"I've contacted some of the old comrades and managed to gather some supplies, which are on their way. We can also try to improve mining equipment, increase efficiency, and reduce your workload..."

"Save it, Officer," another, younger miner suddenly interjected, his tone filled with resentment, "We've heard enough pretty words. All those officials who came down for inspections before, which of them didn't paint a rosy picture? In the end? Everything stayed the same.

You don't even have a country now. Can you bring in enough resources to change even this one mining district? And if you do, what about other districts? There are dozens of places like this on this planet, at the very least."

His words resonated with some nearby miners, who murmured their own thoughts, their eyes filled with distrust and aloofness.

In recent days a team had come to the mining district, claiming to want to reestablish Bauhinia to their benefit, something they were all aware of.

After the country disbanded, someone remembered them, wasn't that ironic?

Victor was beside himself, rubbing his hands together anxiously. He had tasted enough of this cold shoulder treatment.

He looked at Bai E, hoping this strong elder brother could come up with a solution.

Bai E had remained silent, his gaze sweeping over the miners' worn protective gear, their simple dwellings, the faces marked by illness, and the fatigue and despair deeply embedded in their eyes.

He walked over to the old miner, crouched down, and looked him in the eye.

"He's right." Bai E's voice was calm, yet it reached everyone's ears clearly, "Empty promises won't change your reality. We truly don't have the resources to immediately transform this entire Mine Star."

The miners looked at this unfamiliar young man with some surprise, not expecting him to admit it so frankly.

Bai E continued, "But we did bring some items, not much, but it was everything Captain Catherine and Victor could muster by selling all their possessions."

He gestured to Catherine and Victor, "They left no escape route for themselves."

Catherine then presented another data tablet, showing a list of supplies:

A batch of basic air filter cartridges, some portable water purification equipment, some common medicines and medical kits, some durable high-energy food, and several versatile parts for repairing old machinery.

The list wasn't long, and the variety was limited, but for this mining district, each item was urgently needed.

"It's not much," Bai E admitted, "maybe enough to resolve one or two of your most urgent issues. To improve your whole life? Far from it. It's unrealistic to expect that these supplies alone will prove to you that we're not like those who just spout pretty words."

His candor piqued some interest among the miners, the apathy in their eyes replaced with a glimmer of scrutiny.

"We're not aiming to buy your allegiance with these supplies." Bai E stood up, his gaze sweeping over the miners present, "We're just here to work. The supplies are here, and you decide how to use them. We'll stay and use our skills: fix whatever we can and improve whatever processes we can. Do what we can."

He paused, his voice steady and powerful, "As for whether you'll trust or support us, that's a matter for the future. Once you've seen for yourselves, whether we're just like those who only knew how to make empty promises."

Finishing his statement, Bai E didn't speak further and indicated to Catherine and Victor to unload the first batch of goods from the transport robot — several heavy boxes of filters and medical kits.