

Chapter 501:

I Have Lost the Ability to Be Fooled

With Nagakin being freed up, the remaining warriors of DarkStar were quickly taken care of. The protective shield formed a large battle ring where death was the only way out. The surviving mercenaries dragged their injury-riddled bodies and gathered at the center of the battlefield.

Han Xiao took a headcount, and the original hundred or so hired mercenaries had been reduced to less than thirty survivors. With his gaze sweeping past Herlous, Sylvia, the Volgas, and Feidin, he heaved a sigh of relief. At least all of his forces were intact.

The Machinery Army was scattered all over the place, and when he instructed the mercenaries to retrieve the machines, many of them immediately started grumbling.

With the strong winds previously, who knows where your machinery flew to? We just finished a battle, and you cannot go too far and command us!

Despite their complaints, all the mercenaries still followed his orders obediently.

While not everyone witnessed Han Xiao using Ames' Character Summon Card, respect could clearly be seen in the eyes of the mercenaries who saw it.

Han Xiao picked his ears and looked a little irritated.

These darn mercenaries, complaining when I only asked them to pick some stuff up. Players are still the most professional. As long as I reward them, they enjoy whatever suffering I throw at them. They are so much better than these mercenaries; I truly miss them.

Herlous took a step forward and handed Sherman's cannon over. "Spoils of war. For you."

Han Xiao's eyes sparkled as he held onto the firearm in his hands. After taking a glance at the firearm, he stripped it down and nodded as he observed the internals of the firearm. "This cannon isn't too bad."

According to the introduction on the interface, the name of the cannon was the [Triple Core Photon Loop Cannon]. This was a weapon that enjoyed a Cannon Master's Specialty, and any Cannon Master who equipped the weapon would gain a bonus effect. The blueprint was rare, and having the weapon on hand saved Han Xiao the trouble of gambling for blueprints. Han Xiao would be able to derive the blueprint of the [Triple Core Photon Loop Cannon] from the weapon itself. This cannon came just at the right time as Han Xiao needed a light energy firearm at the moment. While he was not a Cannon Master, he would be able to equip the weapon with his Mechanical Force. It is just that the bonus stats granted would not be comparable to a Cannon Master.

A Cannon Master was a long-ranged damage dealer, and players welcomed Cannon Masters in all dungeons. Cannon Masters were an important part of the traditional triangular formation, which included a main tank, ranged DPS, and crowd control.

Han Xiao had also played the Cannon Master before, and apart from firing cannons, the Cannon Master would fire more cannons. While the DPS of a Cannon Master was acceptable, it was far too singular and lacked variation. Although it was pretty fun to fire cannons all day, one would get bored easily after

playing it for a long time. Of the three Mechanic classes, Han Xiao preferred the Machinery Master, which was far more agile.

Stowing the cannon away, Han Xiao looked at Sylvia and saw that she did not have many injuries. However, when he turned around to look at Feidin, he realized that Feidin was covered in blood all over as though he had been through a miserable battle.

“Are you alright?” Han Xiao asked.

Chen Xing immediately became anxious. Recalling Feidin’s usual demeanor, she hurriedly forced out a warm smile. “I... I am alright. It’s just that I met an enemy...”

Sylvia immediately interjected. “That’s right, I personally saw you being defeated, and that enemy was truly much stronger than you. I was worried for your safety, and it is truly great that you are fine. How did you defeat the enemy?”

Chen Xing’s smile froze up immediately. She hated the fact that she could not stuff Sylvia’s mouth up before zipping it up tight. *Of all the possible times, you just had to ask me this question now. Aren’t you trying to push me to my death?*

An idea suddenly sprouted in her head, and she said with a cough, “Er... I didn’t defeat him. The enemy was a Grade B Super, and I was almost killed by him. You also know that I do not specialize in battles. Thankfully, a sudden typhoon swept us up and separated us, thus saving my life.”

“You are truly lucky.” Sylvia lamented.

No one doubted her words. After all, they all accepted that their luck was not as good as hers.

“That’s right, you are truly lucky,” Han Xiao said as he slapped her heavily on her back, forcing her to cough incessantly as a ‘-1’ damage popped up above her head.

Feeling the pain in her back, Chen Xing suppressed her frustration and forced out a smile. Seeing that Han Xiao did not doubt her words, she heaved a sigh of relief. She was finally able to fool Black Star.

Han Xiao then called for Nagakin, who was by the side, and grabbed onto Chen Xing’s shoulder, not allowing her to escape.

Chen Xing squirmed around uncomfortably and said, “Can you let go of me?”

“Stop acting.” Han Xiao rolled his eyes. “You can’t fool me.”

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Chen Xing burst out into cold sweat and tried to look for a loophole in her words. However, she just could not spot any.

She obviously did not make any mistakes!

“You are wrong; I am Feidin.” She tried to explain his doubts away with a smile.

Han Xiao raised an eyebrow and whispered by Chen Xing’s ear, “I’ve said before, if you truly escaped, you wouldn’t want to meet me.”

Chen Xing's heart pounded.

At this moment, Nagakin walked over and Han Xiao patted Chen Xing on her shoulders with a smile. "Stop struggling. With a Grade A Super here, it's impossible for you to escape. I don't think you want to be beaten up by him, right?"

Chen Xing grit her teeth and stopped pretending. "How did you recognize me?"

Upon hearing that, Han Xiao had a face of helplessness. The interface had already exposed her identity, and it would be impossible for him to be fooled even if he wanted to. He could not possibly feign ignorance and play along with her, right? He was also in despair!

Chen Xing no longer had any tricks up her sleeves, and she could not think of a way to escape. Glaring at Han Xiao hatefully, she fantasized about a hundred different ways of how she could torture Han Xiao to death.

Since she had already been discovered, she might as well give up the control of the body. It was better than being forcefully suppressed by others.

Feidin's consciousness returned, and after doing a couple of stretches, he shook his head with a smile. "I knew that you would be able to recognize me."

"You are truly lucky. Even after she took control of the body, she did not destroy your consciousness," Han Xiao said with a tinge of envy. The Luck Glow was truly overpowered.

Feidin chuckled in response. "It is actually pretty enjoyable to communicate with her. I understand her well, and she is also completely aware of my thoughts. We can also understand how the other party thinks..."

"I will have to congratulate you on finding a soul mate. Why don't you marry her? Then my mission will be complete."

Han Xiao shook his head and suddenly froze in place.

Wait a minute... it can't be right? The perfect completion for Feidin's mission can't possibly be for him to allow her to attack himself!

Feidin pointed at his head and said helplessly, "I shall not convey how she is scolding you."

Han Xiao laughed dryly and released his grip, distancing himself from Feidin. He then grabbed Sylvia's hair to clean his hands. All of a sudden, he did not feel like being too close to Feidin.

While chatting casually, Han Xiao looked at the time, and it was about time for Ember to return. At that moment, Han Xiao noticed a serious problem. While the fight was over, the protective shield was still up and isolating the region. If he was not able to leave, he would not be able to surround Ember according to his plan.

This problem could only be solved by the Noriosse financial group. The protector was definitely watching nearby, and Han Xiao felt that it was necessary for him to have a good conversation with the protector.

Together with Nagakin, Han Xiao found the protector and displayed his intention for the protective shield to be opened. Without even thinking about it, the protector rejected Han Xiao's request.

"There is still a member of DarkStar alive, and he is rushing back. If you do not open the protective shield, we won't be able to deal with him," Nagakin said.

"I know," the protector replied indifferently. "Thus, I will not open the protective shield before the enemy leaves. All of you can stay here until I have confirmed that this battle is completely over."

"Are you trying to protect someone from DarkStar?" Nagakin flew into a rage.

"My responsibility is to protect Noriosse. Should I open up the protective shield so that all of you can continue to destroy the city? I don't wish to see anyone making trouble on Noriosse. After this incident is over, our financial group will seek compensation from Godora."

The protector's eyes narrowed. Since he could not save Anur, he had no choice but to give up. However, that did not mean that he would be on the side of Godora. The protective shield must not be opened no matter what. This was the bottom line of the upper echelons in his financial group. His financial group did not wish to see any other superior fighters of DarkStar perish there.

Chapter 502: DarkStar's Shock

While Noriosse did not wish to provoke both parties, there was no need for them to accede to the demands of both parties completely. While this action of theirs might result in conflict with Godora, it was not too serious and within an acceptable range.

The financial group still intended to seek compensation from Godora. With an important figure of DarkStar dead, Godora would be more willing to compromise in other areas. Furthermore, it was impossible for DarkStar to make any form of compensation, but Godora, being a lawful civilization, would definitely be a 'good person' and keep to the rules.

While Nagakin still wanted to persuade the protector, Han Xiao stopped him and did not say another word.

Han Xiao could tell that it was impossible for the financial group to back down and could only give up his plan to surround Ember. While it was a waste that his previous disguise had lost its effect, Han Xiao was used to the situation changing at any moment in time. At the very least, everything went pretty close to his plan.

Since we can't fight, this mission is almost over, and we won't be chased anymore, Han Xiao thought to himself.

Looking up at the sky, a black cloud could be seen floating above him, and Ember's figure could be seen. He had finally rushed back.

Looking at the miserable battlefield through the protective shield, Ember was visibly shocked. With his gaze sweeping over the battlefield, his eyes were suddenly fixed on Anur's corpse, and the shock on his face turned into fear!

Perhaps it isn't completely useless to bait Ember back. Allowing him to see Anur's corpse and dealing him a psychological blow isn't too bad either.

...

A few minutes earlier...

Ember followed 'Anur's' instructions and sped toward the battlefield. He was looking forward to diving into battle so that he could make up for the mission that he failed.

With Teacher's speed, it is impossible for any enemy to struggle free from him, and it will be impossible for Black Star to escape like before. We can finally get rid of him today!

Thinking about that, Ember was full of anticipation and excitement as he charged over joyfully.

However, the scene before him was completely different from his expectations! He never could have imagined that his undefeatable Teacher would be defeated and even killed!

The instant that he saw Anur's corpse, Ember was completely stunned, and a chill ran up his spine.

How was it possible for Anur to be killed!

Ember immediately took out his communicator and dialed Anur's number.

Du du du...

The few seconds of waiting felt like forever, and when the call finally went through, the image displayed on the screen was not that of Anur but Han Xiao letting out a maniacal laughter.

"Are you surprised? Are you shocked?"

Ember was indeed shocked. "Why is it you?"

"Oh, do you not like my handsome face?" Han Xiao chuckled before changing his face to that of Anur's. Sending a flying kiss, he continued. "How about this face?"

Ka-cha!

The screen began to crack.

Ember had almost shattered his communicator in rage. His final hope had just been destroyed!

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Anur was really dead!

Numerous emotions filled his heart. Disbelief, anger, panic, grief...

If the enemy could take Anur out, it means that he was also in danger!

"I am the only one left. I cannot stay behind to fight and let all of our soldiers die here!"

Ember gritted his teeth and escaped on his black cloud.

The situation needed to be reported to the upper echelons. Escaping as he reported the situation to his superiors, the news that he reported set off an explosive commotion within the upper echelons of DarkStar!

The upper echelons of DarkStar had been prepared to hear a report of the mission being accomplished but never expected to hear such a nightmare instead.

None of them had expected that Anur would die in this mission, which they had been certain would succeed. Sending out two Calamity Grade Supers at once, all of the upper echelons felt that the mission was a guaranteed success! However, this piece of news had completely disrupted their plans.

The forces of DarkStar had been waning over time. During their peak, DarkStar had eight Calamity Grade Supers, and Anur was one of them. He was a highly-respected figure in the organization. However, the battles over the years had injured and killed the majority of these experts. Before that day, only two of those eight figures had remained, and Anur had been one of them. Apart from those two figures, all the other Grade A Supers were new faces who they were grooming.

Losing such a figure was definitely a huge blow to DarkStar. The rate at which Calamity Grade Supers were groomed could not keep up with the rate that they were being killed at. In the organization, Calamity Grade Supers were already extremely rare.

In less than a minute, the upper echelons of DarkStar gave an emergency order to Ember.

“Give up on the mission and leave Noriosse immediately. We will send a fleet to pick you up. After losing an important member of the organization, we cannot afford to lose another one!”

Originally, he had been the one giving chase, but the roles had been reversed, and he was now the escaping party. Ember was indignant about his loss, but he had no choice and could only swallow his indignation. Turning off his communicator, Ember escaped at top speed and did not dare delay for a second, afraid that the enemy may catch up to him.

In truth, it was impossible for Han Xiao and the others to leave the protective shield. Those from Noriosse wished for Ember to scam as quickly as possible, and Ember did not know that there was no one chasing him.

...

An hour later...

Ohm!

The protective shield was retracted, and the golden pillars returned underground. Noriosse had finally retracted the protective shield.

This also meant that the financial group was certain that the battle was over. Their surveillance showed DarkStar’s fleet picking Ember up before leaving immediately, and everyone from the financial group heaved a sigh of relief. While they had a few thousand battleships around Noriosse, it was best if they did not engage in battle.

With the troops chasing after him retreating, Han Xiao knew that Nagakin's mission was completed. When Godora sent their reinforcements, the mission would be concluded. Getting rid of an Anur was already a good bargain for them.

Despite the battle being over, the effects of the battle had only just begun to show. With a Grade A Super from DarkStar dying, Godora would definitely pay close attention to this event, and the entire Shattered Star Ring would have their eyes on this news. While countless people were dying every single second, there were differences between people. The death of a Calamity Grade Super was naturally far more significant than the death of an ordinary individual.

Furthermore, with him using Ames' abilities, Ames would definitely be very curious.

However, none of that was important at the moment. Dealing with the members of the Noriosse financial group was what they needed to face. After Han Xiao and the others were freed from their predicament, they were immediately requested to meet the upper echelons of the financial group.

The financial group was getting ready to settle their scores, and they had to give Noriosse a suitable amount of compensation.

Chapter 503: Effect and Plan

The protector took everyone to another city on an aircraft. In the middle of the city was a skyscraper. Even in the iron city that was filled with buildings, the skyscraper stood out like a middle finger being pointed to the sky.

At the peak of the skyscraper was a helipad protected by a transparent cover. The cover gradually opened up, and the aircraft landed on the helipad. From the helipad to the interior of the building, numerous soldiers were lined up orderly by the side. Han Xiao and the others followed after the protector and entered the top level of the luxurious skyscraper.

A man was seated on the sofa with his back facing the crowd who had entered the room. He was looking at a wall of holographic screens with the scenes of the battlefield being displayed on them.

"Look at what you have done on my planet."

After pressing a button, the sofa turned around on its own to face Han Xiao. After seeing his appearance, Han Xiao felt that he looked extremely familiar. All of a sudden, Han Xiao remembered seeing a picture of this person before him.

A couple of days ago, he had still been playing a cat and mouse game with Aesop. Aesop had requested for him to steal an accessory. After he asked Phillip to make a search, Han Xiao had found out that the accessory was something that the head of the Noriosse financial group had purchased his wife. The person in front of him was the head of the financial group. Just what was he called again?

"Rockfess. I am the owner of this planet," the man said with a calm voice. "I know who you are. Nagakin from Godora, Wilsander from Floating Dragon, and Black Star also from Floating Dragon."

Because he belonged to Floating Dragon on the surface, the Black Star Mercenary Group was deemed a part of the Floating Dragon army. Han Xiao was not too bothered by this as the status of being part of

Floating Dragon had always brought him more benefits than disadvantages. Allowing his mercenary group to be tied together with a gigantic faction was extremely helpful to the growth and fame of his mercenary group.

“I have roughly understood what happened, and I am uninterested in the battle between Godora and DarkStar. However, your actions have resulted in damage to my planet, and Godora has no rights to deploy their army in my territory. I require an explanation from all of you and suitable compensation. My subordinates are currently calculating the exact damage, and we shall negotiate the details after they are done.”

Rockfess did not give the two a chance to interrupt and spoke without allowing anyone to refute him.

“I will report this matter to headquarters, and Godora will compensate your losses. Black Star is only a mercenary who I hired, and his actions were part of my request. Godora will never shortchange our friends, and Godora will compensate you on his behalf.”

With Anur being killed, Nagakin was in an extremely good mood. For an official of his level, taking action would definitely result in destruction, and there would definitely be people to clean up after them. He had never thought about escaping from paying compensation before.

Because Rockfess had extremely good connections and had a pretty good relationship with a couple of civilizations in the Shattered Star Ring, Godora was not willing to offend him either.

“Don’t worry, I never intended to seek compensation from him.” Upon hearing that, Rockfess looked toward Han Xiao with a smile, and his tone became gentler. “Give my regards to Ames.”

He actually isn’t asking for compensation? Han Xiao immediately felt goodwill toward Rockfess, “You know Ames?”

“Hahaha, who in the Shattered Star Ring doesn’t know of the Dragon Emperor?” Rockfess said with a laugh. “I have dealt with Floating Dragon a few times. I heard that Aesop wanted you to steal something of mine, but you caught him instead. Haha, well done.”

Han Xiao came to a realization. It turned out that Rockfess knew Aesop. No wonder there was such a prank.

However, Han Xiao did not think that it was strange at all. After being alive for so many years, Aesop was a legendary figure, and his connections were extremely deep with his friends being scattered all over the universe.

With Aesop’s abilities, the figures whom he befriended were naturally those with authority and power. Since Ames had taken Aesop back, Floating Dragon would definitely receive a huge boost, and their hidden forces would definitely be expanded.

In truth, Rockfess’ warm attitude was not entirely because of Aesop. He had always been supplying resources to Floating Dragon but had rarely requested anything in return, treating it as a form of sponsorship. Rockfess was not the only financial group that was doing so, and there were at least twenty different financial groups sponsoring Ames. When Ames first built Floating Dragon Island, she had released a notice that she wanted money, and numerous financial groups had swarmed over to give her money immediately. After so many years, there were many financial groups that still maintained their

sponsorship status. If not, with Floating Dragon's horrendous management situation, it would have been impossible for them to support all the maintenance, repairs, and other expenses.

Behind every one of the four beyond Grade A Supers in the Shattered Star Ring were numerous financial groups. A powerful organization would always draw a large number of willing sponsors; thus, these powerful beings never needed to be afraid of going broke. Many of the financial groups in the universe were past the stage of accumulating wealth, and if they were not able to convert their wealth into influence or something useful, their wealth was no more than a useless string of numbers. Investing their wealth into such organizations that housed powerhouses was the best option for them.

For someone like Ames, it was no longer her asking others for money but others taking the initiative to offer her money. Whether or not so wanted to accept the money was dependent on her mood.

As long as one became sufficiently powerful, many problems would be taken care of easily. At the same time, however, one's actions and words would also take on more responsibility.

In the later versions, a few unions would have the right to cooperate with the financial groups to obtain resources and funds. The impact of the players' presence in Galaxy became deeper and deeper, and there were more and more avenues for both parties to interact. The influence that they had on the world was extremely dynamic and realistic, thus allowing the players to remain passionate about the game.

"I heard about your arrival as soon as you stepped onto Noriosse. Meeting you in person, you are even more powerful than in the legends."

Rockfess took the initiative to reach out, and Han Xiao shook his hand. Smiling without saying a word, a thought suddenly surfaced in his head.

His plans for Version 2.0 would require a large amount of gold. To hold millions of players in his mercenary group, the hardware of his mercenary group must have an all-round upgrade, and all of that required money.

If he could mimic Ames and find sponsors, it may be much easier on his wallet.

Because Han Xiao was used to being a lone wolf in his previous life, he only had a vague understanding of deals between the guilds and NPCs. However, Han Xiao had never given it a try himself, and he needed to earn all of the money required for his plan. At this moment, a new idea sprung up in his mind. *Perhaps the influence of a faction may be larger than I think.*

Until then, Han Xiao's core business had been to earn the player's money to upgrade himself and his faction. However, could he improvise a little and get the NPCs to give him money while harvesting the money from players?

With this flash of inspiration, a new and exciting plan began to form in his head. While the plan was not feasible for the time being, it would greatly increase the benefits that the players could give him once Version 2.0 was unveiled. Of course, that was predicated on everything going according to his plan.

"Your Excellency Rockfess," Han Xiao said, "I actually have something that I wish to request and hope that we can find some time to discuss the matter."

“Alright, I will give you my personal number.” Rockfess nodded. “After this matter is over, we can talk about it in detail.”

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A conclusion was made regarding the matter of compensation—Godora would be in charge of paying for all compensation. Rockfess then arranged for a completely safe stronghold for them to stay in. Before the reinforcements from Godora arrived, they were all required to stay there.

Aroshia met up with Alvin and the others. Alvin was extremely thankful that he had managed to escape death, and the Teleportation Mage left immediately after receiving his payment. He did not wish to have any relationship with those unlucky people.

Over the next few days, the news of this great battle began to spread rapidly, and the headlines of the various news outlets were getting more and more exaggerated.

The details of the battle were not leaked, and the various articles only reported a small portion of the battle and the outcome. While the infamous DarkStar was not the most powerful organization on the list of evil organizations within the Shattered Star Ring, it was the most radical one. It had destroyed many civilizations within the Garton Star System and caused countless citizens to lose their homes. However, there was rarely news of a head-on battle with DarkStar as they usually snuck into the various civilizations stealthily.

This time, a powerful member of DarkStar had died in the eyes of the public, and it was a truly joyous occasion.

With the news spreading, Han Xiao received multiple notifications of his Renown stat increasing on his interface. Just like before, his Renown stat increased in various Star Clusters, and his Renown level had reached [Slightly Famous] in most regions. In the Garton Star System, where he was most active, his Renown level had already reached the level of [Well Known].

In the eyes of most galactic residents, Ames’ strength was the only supporting pillar for the whole of Floating Dragon. However, her subordinates did not have much fame and rarely took action outside of Floating Dragon. In this respect, Floating Dragon was far inferior to the powers of the other three beyond Grade A Supers. The other three beyond Grade A Supers all had numerous experts under their charge with their soldiers being the elites of the elites. However, Ames only had a couple of little cats as her subordinates.

For the organizations of the other three beyond Grade A Supers, even if they did not have their leader, their organization would still be a tyrannical existence.

During the previous incident when Ames smashed up DarkStar’s mothership, the majority of the focus had been on Ames’ strength as well as the new member of Floating Dragon, Black Star. However, the news this time had shown Black Star’s strength, and many of the galactic residents and organizations had the same thought.

Ames finally has a capable officer. Sigh, it truly isn’t easy!

Godora was clearer about the details of the entire event. According to Nagakin's report, the intelligence division of Godora's War Bureau immediately placed a greater importance on Han Xiao. Together with the incident when they captured DarkStar's mothership, this was the second time that Black Star had dealt a blow to DarkStar. Thus, he could be said to be on Godora's side. Furthermore, Han Xiao had also aided Nagakin in killing Anur and gave them a huge aid.

After fighting together with Han Xiao, Nagakin also treated him with great importance.

In those few days, Han Xiao had specially built up his ties with Nagakin. This was also the reason behind him accepting this mission. Building up ties with Nagakin meant that he would have a direct channel to the upper echelons of Godora.

...

After waiting for a few days, the Godoran fleet arrived at Noriosse, and the entire event was finally over. Nagakin took Alvin to the pier where Godora's gigantic fleet was waiting.

Before he left, Alvin took the initiative to shake hands with Han Xiao. "You saved my life, and I owe you a favor. If you need my help, I will definitely do my best to aid you."

Nagakin also expressed his thanks toward Han Xiao. "It is truly a pleasant experience to work with you, and the War Bureau will pay you your reward. I hope that we have the chance to work together again."

Han Xiao smiled. "Don't worry, we will meet again very soon."

Nagakin was stunned for a moment and thought that Han Xiao was only being polite. He then boarded the ship with Alvin, and the fleet quickly disappeared into space.

[Nagakin's request] has been completed.

You have received 5,800,000 Experience, 240,000 Enas, +850 Relationship with Godora Faction.

Godoran Civilization: Respect (3190/6000)

+30 Nagakin Favorability

+30 Alvin Favorability

Adding close to 2,000 points of faction favorability and raising my relationship with Godora to Respect. This isn't too bad.

Originally, Nagakin would have been crippled, and Alvin would not have survived. The fates of these two individuals had been changed by him, so DarkStar would definitely pay more attention to him. Who knew what kind of a reaction they would have?

"Where are we going?" Herlous asked, and everyone looked at Han Xiao.

Han Xiao stroked his chin. Before the new version was released, he had two targets. The first was his advancement. With his advancement being complete and him being freer, it was time to work toward his second target—prepare for Version 2.0. This was a huge project.

“Let me meet Rockfess first.”

Chapter 504: Getting Investments

“So, what request do you have, Black Star of Floating Dragon?”

Han Xiao was once again seated in Rockfess’ luxurious property, but this time, it was a private meeting between the two of them. They were seated face to face with the servants serving them tea.

After a couple of pleasantries, Rockfess went straight to the point.

Han Xiao put down his glass and leaned forward. “I shall be straightforward then. My mercenary group is the Floating Dragon’s Field Team, and we have been operating for a year and a half. It is time for my mercenary group to expand. With the prestige of Ames on my shoulders, I cannot continue to have little battles and skirmishes. Blades and Sky Ring should be the target of my Black Star Mercenary Group. The stronger the Field Team, the stronger Floating Dragon will be. Thus, I need some funds to support me. I want to build a stronghold that belongs to my mercenary group and not rent a temporary gathering point.”

His preparation plan for Version 2.0 was to expand his camp before pulling all the players from Planet Aquamarine into his mercenary group during the Mutation Disaster. Both Godora and DarkStar would be his competitors, and Han Xiao wanted to give the players a third choice. Apart from the original ‘righteous’ and ‘evil’ path, Han Xiao wanted to provide the path of ‘neutral’.

As such, there was a huge problem that he faced. In order to contain thousands or millions of players, the size of his camp would have to be greatly increased. If not, he would not be able to attract new members.

The most important factor to attract players was benefits. Even if Bun-Hit-Dog’s program was able to brainwash a large number of spectators to be attracted to mercenary groups, it would be difficult to sustain their interest for a long time. Thus, it was key for him to provide players with missions and resources. With regards to this, Han Xiao already had a plan. He had created the mercenary group so that he could be the middleman to distribute the missions and form the bridge between the players and clients. At the same time, he would be able to borrow the almost endless mission resources to groom his own faction and keep players in his camp while building up the reputation of his mercenary group.

Apart from taking advantage of the mercenary groups, he also intended to make use of NPC resources to bring him more benefits.

Other than the resources given by missions, another important point was the special produce of a faction. On top of attracting investments, class knowledge, and skills, producing machinery would be his specialty. However, it would be impossible for him to fulfil a large order alone, and he had to consider the problem of mass production. He needed to form his own assembly line and build a factory of his own. With his current knowledge and skill, he would be able to just about create an assembly line.

Thus, the second problem would surface. Where should he place the assembly line? After accepting so many players, his mercenary group would need a large, fixed gathering point that was akin to his faction's Main City. If not, he would not be able to incite a sense of belonging in all the players. Only after building up his own Main City would his forces look like a proper army. However, the location, security, resources, and functions of this gathering point were all problems.

As such, the third problem surfaced—transport! With the members under his charge exploding in numbers, going out on missions would be a problem. It would be ridiculous for the players to rent a ship whenever they wanted to travel, and it was not beneficial to attracting the players to his Main City. He needed to have a spaceship that belonged to his faction. If not, he needed to come to a long-term agreement with some Galactic Travel Agencies.

These were only the fundamental problems, and there were still many more little problems that he would face along the way, such as finding a stable supplier for materials, contacting a construction company, and so on. Expanding his faction was akin to expanding the operations of a company. If he wanted to expand his scope of influence, he had to prepare many things in large quantities, and that all required money.

Together with the reward from Nagakin, Han Xiao had about 500,000 Enas left. After a series of calculations, Han Xiao truly found his entire wealth to be pretty pathetic, and his heart would ache if he had to fork out the expenses required for his faction to expand. Thus, he decided to meet Rockfess and talk to him about the matter of investment.

“Expanding the scale of the Field Team...” Rockfess’ eyes narrowed. “Is this Ames’ order?”

“You should understand that Ames would never bother about such affairs,” Han Xiao replied. “I am the one in charge of the Field Team, and this is my own plan.”

“I knew that it wasn’t her idea,” Rockfess said with a smile that did not seem like a smile. “How much money do you want?”

“How much are you willing to give?” Han Xiao threw the question back.

Rockfess immediately changed the subject. “Up until now, I have provided nine sponsorships to Floating Dragon, a total of about 24,000,000, and this will not be the final figure. I intend to keep sponsoring Floating Dragon. Jenny and I can be considered old acquaintances, and the benefits that she brings me are the reason that I will not waver in my investment. Enjoying the prestige of Ames, I am able to earn a profit that is to my satisfaction.”

After saying those words, he kept quiet and looked at Han Xiao with a smile, obviously waiting for Han Xiao to say what sort of benefits he could provide.

Through investing in Floating Dragon, he gained the acknowledgement of Jenny and enjoyed a portion of Ames’ influence. He then borrowed the influence for political activities or negotiations. It was equivalent to exchanging his investment for influence and to use influence to make money. The amount of money that he was able to make definitely exceeded his initial investment. Such returns could only be gained if he invested in the headquarters of Floating Dragon. Why should he make an investment in Floating Dragon’s Field Team? Furthermore, this was Han Xiao’s personal plan. He would only provide money if it was Ames’ plan; Black Star did not command such respect.

Han Xiao smiled and suddenly said, "I believe that you have my information in your hands. If that's the case, you should know that I have a bunch of undying warriors under me."

"Yes." Rockfess nodded. "I have also noticed that they are not with you right now."

"They are natural born mercenaries, and their numbers far exceed your imagination. I know all of them, and expanding my mercenary group also includes expanding my numbers. I do not need to hire any other mercenaries on the market. With your investment, I will be able to rapidly expand my forces and become a large mercenary group. At that time, I will give you satisfactory benefits. Even if you have Jenny's approval, you will require the appearance of Floating Dragon's troops to help you persuade the other party at times, right? What about a large mercenary group willing to accept your private hire at no cost?"

Han Xiao selectively revealed some details of his plans. In order to persuade others to invest, he would naturally have to paint a picture of the possible benefits. While the stock market existed in Galaxy, a mercenary group was far from entering it. Thus, he naturally did not have the right to gain something without risking anything of his own.

He was not afraid of revealing the existence of players. The players would enter the galaxy eventually, and they would then be exposed to everyone. Since Galaxy was currently going through an update, even if he told Rockfess some information, the other party would not be able to do a thing because it was impossible to find any players for the time being!

This was his new plan. Allowing the NPCs to recognize the potential of players and attract their investments.

At that moment, he was only testing his idea to see the feasibility of his plan.

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Rockfess fell into deep thought and did not say a word. Han Xiao's suggestion did indeed interest him. Helping Floating Dragon build up their Field Team might be a good plan. While Black Star was a member of Floating Dragon, he did not trust Black Star enough to invest without any worries.

Han Xiao thought that he would have to wait for a long time. However, Rockfess made a decision less than ten seconds later.

"I will not invest."

"What a pity." Han Xiao shook his head. "You missed out on an investment that could bring you endless benefits."

At that time, Rockfess added, "However, I can give you a loan. 4,000,000 Enas and a three-year limit. On account of Floating Dragon, I will give you a simple interest plan. If you return the money within a month, I will not charge you any interest. Paying me back after one year and before two years, I will charge you a ten percent interest. More than two years and before three years, twenty percent interest. Above three years, forty percent interest. These are my conditions."

Han Xiao's mouth twitched. This interest rate was truly explosive. If he exceeded three years, it was enough to make his pants explode. It was no different from borrowing from loan sharks at that rate.

Furthermore, this was on account that he belonged to Floating Dragon. If not, it would have been impossible for Rockfess to lend him any money.

Being rich is truly...

“Alright, I agree.”

Han Xiao nodded. He was not worried about paying back the loan. Version 2.0 would be launched within a year. As long as the players returned, Han Xiao would probably count money to the point that his brain would cramp!

Not to mention returning the loan, even if he wanted to buy the whole Noriosse financial group... cough cough, he still would not be able to afford it.

Rockfess took out his communicator and sent him a contract. With both parties signing their names, the contract became legally binding. In the majority of the civilizations, this contract would be protected by the law. In his previous life, there had been a few guilds that did not wish to repay their debts. This had caused their Favorability to plummet with all these civilizations, and their upper limit of Favorability with those factions was set to 2,999 points. It meant that they would never be able to reach the level of [Respect]. On top of that, their personal Trust level was also reduced, and they would not be able to borrow again. In serious cases, they even ended up as fugitives.

If a guild wanted to take out a loan, it required a great deal of effort to raise the Favorability with a faction. If they did not return the money, it was akin to throwing away all of that Favorability. Any guilds with foresight would never permit such an action, which was akin to shooting themselves in the foot.

Han Xiao did not have the intention to do so either.

Ding.

Han Xiao received a notification of an incoming transfer. Taking a glance, the amount of Enas in his savings increased to 4,581,010.

Rockfess had given him the money without any fuss. For a wealthy merchant who would spend 7,000,000 Enas to buy an accessory, such a small investment was nothing to him.

However, to Han Xiao, this was a large sum of money.

“Let’s work well together.”

Standing up, Han Xiao shook Rockfess’ hand and left the luxurious property under the lead of the butler. He returned directly to the inn, where Herlous and the others were waiting. After supervising Sylvia’s homework for a while, he went back to his room.

I was really able to get an investment. It seems like the influence of a faction is truly greater than I thought. With money on hand, I only need to choose a place, and I will be able to construct a large camp. Er... which planet would be better? It cannot be too far away from Planet Aquamarine but has to be tightly connected to the galaxy...

Du du du...

Just when he was in thought, his communicator rang, and Head Butler Jenny called. Her expression was unfriendly, and she immediately interrogated Han Xiao when he picked up the call.

“Rockfess already informed me that you sought a loan from him. Why didn’t you inform me beforehand?”

“Jenny, would you have agreed?”

“Don’t call me Jenny, you should call me Head Butler. And, of course, I don’t agree.” Jenny’s tone was strict. She had never believed in expanding, and setting up a Field Team was an unnecessary expenditure to her in the first place. Ames would never require a powerful army.

“Then why should I tell you?” Han Xiao replied. He understood Jenny’s personality. She was an individual who wanted extremely tight control of business and finances. She would never agree to the expansion of the Field Team. While they belonged to the same faction, there were clashes in their ideals and responsibilities.

Of course, the main reason was because Jenny did not trust him enough. After all, he was a mercenary who had joined Floating Dragon midway.

“I command you to return the loan,” Jenny said in a tone that brooked no argument. “Without my permission, you are not allowed to accept any form of funds!”

Chapter 505: Location of the Base

Jenny’s attitude was extremely forceful, and she looked as though she would not let Han Xiao off if he chose to defy her. However, the Great Mechanic Han was not afraid of her, and it was impossible for him to return the money.

He then briefly explained the benefits that his actions could bring Floating Dragon, and without bothering whether Jenny accepted his words or not, he hung up.

This action of his frustrated Jenny greatly. Her desire for control was great, and for Han Xiao to take a loan without getting her approval made her feel as though her position of Head Butler was being challenged. She had also begun to suspect Han Xiao’s ‘loyalty’ at the same time. Ames had never been bothered with the management of Floating Dragon and handed everything over to her to handle. Thus, the majority of the consequences brought about by Ames’ actions were usually settled by her. She possessed a great deal of authority, and Ames also trusted Jenny greatly. Furthermore, most of the members in Floating Dragon would also submit to Jenny’s authority.

Black Star had joined Floating Dragon a year ago and had always been extremely low profile. However, this sudden action of his had immediately incited that sensitive nerve of Jenny’s and made her raise her guard. Deep within, she did not trust any other subordinates of Ames, and because she was Ames’ kin, she felt that only she and Ames were insiders while the others were outsiders.

After Han Xiao cut off the line, Jenny made a call of complaint to Ames without any hesitation. She explained everything that had happened to Ames and added her own opinions. She felt that Han Xiao’s Field Team had too much freedom and needed to be controlled. It would be best to transfer him back to

the headquarters of Floating Dragon and remove the Field Team completely. She felt that since Floating Dragon wanted to maintain neutrality, it was sufficient for them to be Dragon Guards. There was no need for them to have an armed force operating outside.

Under normal circumstances, Ames would not reject her proposal. However, Ames unexpectedly rejected her.

“You are too nervous. It is just a bit of money, and there isn’t a need to make a huge fuss out of the matter. I trust Black Star; he is someone reliable. Since I gave him the right to operate freely, as long as he doesn’t become a wanted fugitive, you don’t have to inform me. If there isn’t anything else, I am hanging up.”

“But...”

Ka-cha.

Ames hung up the line, and a stunned Jenny was left behind. She held onto her communicator with a dazed look. She had never imagined that Ames would reject her flatly. This was something that had not happened before.

Because Han Xiao had caught Aesop, Ames’ trust in him had increased tremendously. While her trust in Han Xiao could not be compared to the trust that she had in Jenny, it was far more than the trust that she would have in an ordinary subordinate.

Without Ames’ approval, Jenny realized that she could not do a thing to Han Xiao. Exasperated, her veins began to bulge, and her body trembled slightly with anger. Taking a deep breath, she took off her spectacles and shut her eyes. After rubbing the bridge of her nose, she gradually regained her cool. When she opened her eyes again, her eyes were filled with solemnness.

Ames’ rejection had made Jenny feel a huge threat to her position.

...

Han Xiao naturally did not know that this small conflict would make Jenny misunderstand that he was trying to fight for favor with her. However, even if he knew, he would not have been bothered. After all, the money required for his Version 2.0 plan was more important.

The version update would take less than a year, and it was important for Han Xiao to use this time to find a place and build his base. Han Xiao would not choose a deserted planet and would definitely build his base on a flourishing planet. He would then be able to enjoy the NPC resources of the planet and use the geographical location to make up for the lack of NPCs in his base.

After searching for a long time in the Garton Star System map, he finally chose a planet in Godora’s territory called Planet Golden Gate. It was very near to Juberly Hub, and he would be able to easily arrive at the star zone where Planet Aquamarine was located. This meant that transportation would be extremely convenient. On top of that, the planet was sufficiently prosperous, and from a player’s perspective, all the necessary features were present. There were shops, entertainment outlets, missions...

There were two reasons behind Han Xiao's choice. Firstly, his Favorability with Godora was high, so it was easier for him to get things done. Furthermore, he would be able to enjoy a discount. Secondly, he would be able to lower his expenses on setting up weapons. A powerful fleet would definitely be stationed within Godora's territory, and DarkStar would not dare create trouble there. After getting rid of Anur a while back, Han Xiao had decided to place safety as a priority.

Furthermore, since they were in Godora's territory, they would be able to filter out the players who joined DarkStar. With the Germinal Organization as an example, Han Xiao did not wish for there to be a bunch of spies in his base.

Among all of the planets, Planet Golden Gate was the top choice.

After choosing his target, Han Xiao did not delay any further and left Noriosse.

Because Risda had joined their group, the Blacklight Stealth became their new ship. Its speed was extremely fast and movements agile. They no longer had to worry about being surrounded by enemies.

Planet Golden Gate was not a large planet, but because it was situated near Juberly Hub, it was very prosperous. Planet Golden Gate had plenty of different cities, and setting up a base there required the purchase of a permit. With the Renown of the Black Star Mercenary Group being sufficiently high within the Garton Star System, together with the fact that their relationship with Godora was pretty good, there was no problem in the application of the permit.

After spending a large amount of money, Han Xiao managed to buy a piece of land, and the efficiency of settling all the paperwork was extremely high. With the sheer size of the universe, land was abundant, and it was unbelievably cheap for an ordinary immigrant to purchase a house.

With the current wealth in his hands, Han Xiao did not have any intention of building a large main city yet. He did not have enough people or money. He only needed a fixed base for his Mercenary Group.

As for the design of the base, it had to be sufficiently big. Apart from providing a large number of players with a region to hang out, he needed to leave space for military factories. On top of that, he had to ensure that the roads are well designed and regions demarcated so that the players would not get lost in the base. Most importantly, the base had to be impressive and sufficiently high class.

With the sheer scale of the construction, Han Xiao naturally did not intend to do so himself. He contacted a construction company to build the place according to his designs. From the construction to the purchase of materials and transportation, every single aspect required a large amount of wealth.

While he was starting to build his first base, Ember had returned to the headquarters of DarkStar. At that time, the upper echelons of DarkStar were having a meeting to discuss the incident on Noriosse.

...

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In the mysterious headquarters of DarkStar, ten or so individuals were gathered in a hall. Some were present physically while others joined the meeting through a holographic projection. Their faces were all hidden as they sat on a circular table.

Everyone in the room was at the highest level in the DarkStar organization. There were some Calamity Grade Supers, fleet commanders, logistics directors, intelligence agents, research staff, and the leader in charge of all affairs.

The majority of their identities were secret and not privy to outsiders. At this moment, the atmosphere was extremely heavy. With the traitor alive, all of their identities could be exposed, and they were all in a terrible mood.

Ember was also in the room. After reaching the Calamity Grade, he had the right to be present in that room. From time to time, the other members seated at the table would look at him with an unfriendly gaze.

Because of his mission failure, all of them had to endure the risk of being exposed, so they could not help but blame Ember, the only one who had returned alive.

Noticing the gazes of the others, Ember knew that he was in the wrong and could only remain silent.

Beside him was an empty seat.

That seat had belonged to Anur.

With his respected teacher dead, every time he saw this empty chair, Ember would be reminded of Han Xiao. The flames of rage would then burn, and he would spend a great amount of effort to suppress it.

After a long period of silence, the leader of DarkStar opened his mouth. "Anur died in combat, and the traitor was saved by Godora. This mission was a complete failure."

"Before the traitor gained access to the top-secret intel, I froze his authority," the person in charge of intelligence said with a hoarse voice. "The intel in his hands is only a small portion. This is the only good news."

"Is the traitor aware of the mutation virus?"

"No, he isn't aware about our plan. This requires a higher level of authority."

"That's good. This is an important step in our plan, and nothing can go wrong. It won't be too long before the virus spreads, and Godora will be forced to send out a great deal of manpower to protect the affected civilizations. We will be able to seize the initiative..."

The leader of DarkStar then paused and changed topics. "I am extremely disappointed in the outcome of this mission. Not only did we let the traitor escape, we had even lost a Calamity Grade doyen. Ember, you have truly let me down this time."

Ember clenched his fists and said with difficulty, "Something went wrong in the mission."

"You are trying to say that as long as something goes wrong, you won't be able to handle it?"

Ember noticed the chill in the leader's voice and lowered his head without answering.

At this moment, another member spoke up. "This was your first mission after becoming a Grade A Super. To think that the outcome would be so embarrassing! Aren't you ashamed? I truly wonder if you have the right to be in this room."

The one who spoke was another respected Calamity Grade who had even more influence than Anur. He was the vice leader and the right-hand man of the leader.

Ember's clenched fists tightened, but he did not retort. After becoming a Calamity Grade Super, he had been full of ambition and pride. However, this mission had ended in complete failure, so he was starting to doubt himself.

"I saw the mission report. Godora's Nagakin joint hands with a mercenary to kill Anur. That mercenary is called Black Star." The DarkStar leader changed the topic and did not allow the others to continue blaming Ember. It was sufficient to warn him, and it was not necessary to humiliate him.

"Kill him!" Ember said without hesitation.

"He is Ames' subordinate, and I do not wish to have a conflict with someone like the Dragon Emperor before the start of our mutation virus plan," the leader of DarkStar said. "I will make that mercenary pay the price, but not now."

"He has caused us to suffer losses over and over again, and he is an enemy whom we must eradicate. We cannot wait any longer!" Ember could not help but retort. He wished that he could reduce Han Xiao to ashes in front of him.

The one in charge of intelligence said calmly, "According to my intel, Black Star is building a base on Planet Golden Gate. That planet is within Godora's territory. If we want to get rid of him, we will have to send a large fleet. To incite such a huge battle with Godora at this important stage, do you want to ruin the organization's plan?"

"This is worth it!" Ember grit his teeth and insisted on his view.

"Enough!" The leader of DarkStar interrupted Ember. "From now on, cease all other activities on the outside until the mutation virus spreads. I do not wish to repeat myself. The meeting shall end here."

All the upper echelons did not say another word and went offline. Those who were there personally left the meeting room. Only Ember was left in his seat with a look of indignation. Looking at the empty room, a trace of anger flashed through his eyes.

Chapter 506: Mass Production Design, Onset of the Disaster

On Planet Golden Gate of the Garton Star System, the Black Star base was rapidly being constructed as Han Xiao had contracted a professional construction company. In the galaxy era, the efficiency of constructing buildings was extremely high and almost everything was automated. Building a foundation, mixing cement, laying the walls, laying the lines, and so on were all jobs that could be completed quickly. As long as the raw materials were present, the construction team would be able to construct a building identical to the blueprints in a short amount of time.

Ten or so days went by in a flash, and a metal base rose up from the ground. This base was enough to house seventy to eighty thousand people. Its size was sufficiently huge, and its geography was simple. According to the blueprints, the base was separated into a few different sectors. However, the facilities were not up yet, and the base was only an empty shell.

The funds that Han Xiao currently had on hand were pretty abundant, and he did not have to be so restricted. He needed to build a factory assembly line, equip his base with weapons, and build a main system to control the entire base. All of those facilities needed to be built by him, and the main expenditure would come from the resources.

Following which, he had to solve the problem of transportation. Buying a spaceship was far too costly, and he was prepared to strike a deal with some Galactic Travel Agencies. He wanted to rent their spaceships long term. After deducting those expenditures, he would still be left with about two to three million Enas.

The problem with transportation was not urgent, and he would only require it when the players returned. Han Xiao had to first forge an assembly line. The assembly line was a requirement for him to build up an army, and he needed the relevant Advanced Knowledge and High-End Knowledge. Han Xiao had learned the majority of the Advanced Knowledge, and his huge capital allowed him to purchase new High-End Knowledge.

He instantly used a few hundred thousand Enas to buy the High-End Knowledge of the Armed Branch, [Huge Duplex Machinery Technology]. This knowledge was one of the requirements for him to build battleships and other Super large machines. He then followed the knowledge groups in his memory and merged the relevant key blueprint, [Automated Mass Production Plan]. It was not only the blueprint for an assembly line, it was also the core of an army. As long as the raw materials available were sufficient, the assembly line would be able to automatically manufacture the weapons, and it would save Han Xiao both time and effort. The only thing it did not save was money.

The assembly line was a special type of blueprint that could not be constructed on its own. If it was a player who attempted to do so, the player would need to first activate the assembly line blueprint and leave it in the active state before using the blueprint of another machine. This was the process to create a machinery assembly line, and it was like a form of combined skill.

The construction process of every assembly line had some differences. For example, the construction of cavalry and black panthers required a different production process. Thus, the assembly line of every different machine would have to be constructed individually. The raw materials required for every machine were different, and the sheer cost of the raw materials from the assembly line was enough to make a player's wallet fall into despair. If not, there would not be the saying that the Army Style was the most money burning strategy in the game.

Han Xiao's current Army Style was merely second-rate with his main focus being low cost. He was truly some distance away from the true Army Style. The main reason was that he did not have too much money to burn in the past. With sufficient funds on hand, he could finally start with his plan to create an army.

After all, the strength of a Mechanic was directly related to their wealth.

The specialty of Han Xiao's [Ordnance Engineer] subclass was [Military Machinery Enlightenment], and it lowered the cost of building an assembly line while raising the quality of the created product.

Apart from creating a large mechanic army, the other motive of an assembly line was to forge the equipment that players were willing to purchase in bulk. At that time, he would be able to sell that equipment in bulk and use the money earned to create more equipment...

He could then open up a few different outlets with one shop becoming two, two becoming four, four becoming eight, eight becoming a listed company, gathering funds from being a listed company, then selling his stocks, then letting his subsidiary company be listed, then from just collecting interest he could... Cough cough, this was roughly what he meant. Just thinking about it, the Great Mechanic Han felt his mood brighten up.

The higher a machine's grade, the more complex its assembly line would be. Even with Han Xiao's current assembly speed, he needed a few days to complete a single assembly line. Thus, it was important for him to carefully consider which assembly lines he should build. After a long period of consideration, Han Xiao decided to place his focus on low grade machines. His level was truly too far ahead of the players, and the low-grade machines to him were just right for the players who were around level 60.

As for the high-grade machines, there was no need to create an assembly line at the moment. Han Xiao was currently level 116, and because of the Noriosse incident, Han Xiao had not had the chance to have an all-round upgrade of his core machines. Building a base was a long-term project, and Han Xiao finally had the time to upgrade his equipment.

Because of the reward from killing Anur, the amount of experience that he had in the interface had increased to 300,000,000. He first upgraded his [Automated Mass Production Plan] to the maximum level to reduce its cost to the minimum. He then gambled to obtain a large variety of low-grade machines and chose a few suitable blueprints to form an assembly line. With his understanding of the Mechanic class and the players, he was certain that the machines produced would definitely be useful.

Constructing an assembly line was a huge project, so before that, he built a main system for the base and got Phillip to manage the base. The very first assembly line that he wanted to set up was an assistant type machine. Allowing an AI like Phillip to operate those assistant type machines would definitely be extremely effective.

Following the blueprint that he had left behind, Phillip began to command more and more assistant type machines to complete the different districts of the base such as new furniture, security doors, equipment, and instruments. Han Xiao no longer needed to personally supervise those tasks.

The preparation for Version 2.0 required everyone to stay in the base for a long period of time. Herlous did not care and trusted that Han Xiao had his plans. As for the others, they cared even less. The Volga brothers and Sylvia were okay with following Han Xiao for anything. Feidin would not leave before suppressing Chen Xing completely. Risda was extremely patient. After waiting for a long time, he was not bothered about this little delay. He also did not mind letting Han Xiao use his body.

Wilsander returned to Floating Dragon, and the only ones left operating on the outside of Floating Dragon were Han Xiao and his crew.

Han Xiao was very clear that Floating Dragon was definitely aware of him constructing a base on the outside. Since Ames had not said anything to him, Han Xiao understood that Ames was silently allowing him to expand the armed forces. This trust that Ames had in him truly made him feel grateful.

Because of the base, Han Xiao's core members temporarily stopped accepting any new missions, and only the Sunil Division was still active. This piece of news spread through the galaxy very quickly, and the news of Han Xiao constructing a base made many organizations misunderstand something. They all felt that this was a signal.

Does the Dragon Emperor finally want to mimic the other three beyond Grade A Supers and strengthen her armed forces?

All along, Han Xiao's 'Floating Dragon Field Team' had only existed in name, and few organizations had paid any attention to them. However, this action of his made many organizations and powerhouses fearful as they paid close attention to Han Xiao.

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The construction of the base proceeded slowly but steadily.

As time passed, all of the mutation sources that DarkStar had stealthily placed in the planets began to awaken.

...

"... it's like this. In two days, there have been over 2,700 violent incidents globally, and over 100,000 people have been affected. This is only the information that we have managed to find out. The intel department has investigated the identities of all those who burst out in violence. They come from all different occupations and are spread all across the different cities. There wasn't a single sign of violence before the incident took place, and there isn't any pattern to the violence. Currently, the majority of those who broke out in violence are being detained by the enforcement agencies of the Six Nations and are undergoing investigation."

A member of the intel department read the report. Bennett sat on the chair with his brows furrowed. He looked a little older than he had two years ago.

After Han Xiao's departure, Planet Aquamarine had begun to stabilize socially. The Six Nations were resting and had stopped fighting wars with each other. The refugees also had a place to go.

But over the past few days, violence had broken out in many different regions, and the sheer number of these incidents had immediately drawn the attention of the Six Nations and Bennett.

"Sir, we have collated all of the information and noticed something in common..." the intel officer said with an obvious fear in his voice.

"Speak," Bennett said with a deep voice.

"All of the incidents can be split into three groups with the time of the violence in each group happening within a ten second interval in a few hundred different locations around the world as though they had all come to an agreement beforehand. However, after checking the records, these people did not contact each other in private..."

A solemn look could be seen in Bennett's eyes. This situation was too unusual!

The intel officer was sweating profusely. "Furthermore, the locations of the events also include a few of our Sanctuaries. Many refugees that we have taken in also broke out in violence."

"How are the body conditions of these refugees?"

"Their bodies heated up when we detained them, and they are unconscious. The result of the doctor's check was that their brain activity was far higher than usual, resulting in their organs being overly excited. According to the information from our informants, this is also the same as those who were detained by the Six Nations."

"All of them fell unconscious?" Bennett said with a tinge of shock and fear. "Is this a kind of virus that can spread?"

"It doesn't spread to everyone. A small portion of the refugees were awake when they were detained. They were able to clearly describe the entire situation, and their testimonies are shockingly identical. They all said that they felt a sudden outburst of anger and the urge to destroy some items to vent their anger. Our doctors have checked the bodies of these conscious individuals but did not find anything strange. The temperature of their bodies also went back to normal, and it was as though everything was normal. Thus, we have already quarantined these individuals, and they have not shown any signs of violence for the past eighteen hours."

"Is quarantining them really useful? The groups of people in the three waves of violence are completely different, and the violence took place without any signs at all. If this is truly a virus that cannot be detected, I'm afraid that the number of infected individuals will be..."

Thinking about that, Bennett could not help but take in a breath of cold air with his expression ugly. He had a feeling that this matter was not that simple.

"The war is over, and peace has finally been restored to the world with great difficulty. Why would something like this..."

All of a sudden, he thought of Han Xiao and the prophecy of a calamity that he did not believe. However, the scenario before him was actually extremely similar to Han Xiao's words!

Could it be that Black Phantom's words were true?

Clank!

Bennett suddenly stood up, pushing his chair over. As he hurriedly put his coat on, he left the room.

"Prepare the plane, I am going to Black Phantom's Sanctuary Three!"

Chapter 507

The Arrangement Comes into Effect

The chopper slowly landed on the helipad of Sanctuary Three. Bennett finished adjusting his collar, holding onto his hat as he stepped onto land. He looked down and saw a peaceful and harmonious sight

as far as the eye could see; there were no incidents of violence happening at the moment. On the helipad stood a group of people in black clothing. The current head of the Sanctuary Three, Huang Yu, was there with his subordinates.

“If you needed something, you could have called, sir. There’s no need for you to have come personally,” Huang Yu respectfully said.

Bennett waved his hands, indicating for Huang Yu to lead the way as he replied, “I need to see a few people. The situation is urgent, could you gather them for me?”

“I’ll convey your intentions. They will be waiting for you in the meeting room.”

This delegation walked all the way to the core area of the Sanctuary. After navigating through the complicated passageways, they arrived at a meeting room. Bennett left his bodyguards outside, walking into the meeting room with Huang Yu. Sitting inside were three women—Hila, Aurora, and Emerald Grass. The three of them looked toward the newcomers as they walked in, their attention focused on Bennett.

“Sir.” Hila remained impassive, slightly nodding her head. Because Aurora had not been turned into jam, Hila did not walk the extreme path. While she remained cold to everyone, toward someone like Bennett, she would still show the minimum respect.

“Cut the nonsense. I still have two more sets of experiments to perform today. Why have you gathered us?” Emerald Grass got straight to the point.

Bennett had a serious expression as he took out a few reports concerning the recent riots, sharing them with the trio as he spoke calmly. “Roughly a year ago, you guys first reported abnormal sightings. At that time, I did not notice it before, but right now, the matters seem to be connected to the strange sightings you have seen. Your group are the elites personally picked by Black Phantom himself, and with his ability for disaster prediction, I would like to hear your thoughts on this matter.”

Because the trio were elites that Han Xiao had personally asked Bennett to take care of, he did not limit their freedom. Before Han Xiao left, Hila had always spoken of wanting to travel the world with Aurora after her body had fully recovered. However, Han Xiao had been gone for over two years, and Aurora’s body had long recovered, yet Hila continued to stay within the Sanctuary.

Bennett naturally would not chase them away.

Aurora’s Esper ability allowed her to sense lives, and the huge surge of life force that she had detected that vanished after a few days had allowed her to memorize the ‘scent’ of that lifeform. This was one of the functions of her ability, to record life signatures. The signatures were like a unique brand, allowing her to differentiate between each lifeform.

While the huge life signature was short lived, Aurora discovered that the scent of that particular lifeform was spreading, with increasing numbers of lifeforms having that particular scent on them. It did not differentiate between plants or animals.

Aurora spoke in a timid voice, slowly explaining what she had felt. Bennett’s face grew graver as he listened.

If this is a sort of virus, then hundreds of millions of people could be infected in this world... that's not right. If we include the various flora and fauna, then the infected amount will truly be terrifying!

Aurora looked at everyone, hesitating for a moment before mustering her courage and pointing at Huang Yu. "He has that smell on him as well."

Huang Yu's face blanched. He immediately felt around himself, exclaiming, "I... I don't feel it!"

Bennett clapped a palm on Huang Yu's shoulder, his energy pervading Huang Yu's body through his fingers. However, even after going through a few rounds, he let go and sighed. "I could not sense anything out of the ordinary. What sort of virus is this? While I don't know the reason, it seems like only Aurora can tell apart who is infected or healthy."

Everyone turned to look at Aurora. She trembled, before blinking her large eyes as she nervously stuttered, "I... I can really be of help?"

Bennett had the urge to give out a benevolent and encouraging smile, but due to the pressing situation, he simply had no mood to do so. He could only solemnly nod.

Aurora seemed to be extremely happy to hear that. She had always been under the protection of others and had been looking forward to the day that she could return the favor.

After flipping through the report, not only did Emerald Grass not show any hints of shock, her face even revealed some form of fanaticism as she exclaimed, "I was right, my instincts were right! Indeed, my entire year of research has not been wasted!"

The moment she spoke, everyone immediately looked over, their expressions those of shock.

"What do you mean?" Bennett asked.

"Follow me." Emerald Grass immediately stood up, walking straight out. The rest could only follow her from behind.

After passing through the security perimeter, the group reached Emerald Grass' lab. Even the sentries did not dare linger around that place. They were afraid of inhaling any strange poisonous mist, leading to a coma or nervous disorder. If they were even unluckier, they might even experience a loss of ability in their procreation tool.

Emerald Grass brought the company to an open-air greenhouse, where many plants were being cultivated. Because the Esper ability of Emerald Grass was the control of plants, her medicinal raw materials were mostly planted by herself. Within this cultivation ground existed just one type of plant, which grew out fan-shaped green leaves from the ground. Its appearance could not have been more ordinary, and if it was placed in the wild, nobody would give it another look.

"This is the Rhodes Fan Leaf. It has a harsh growth environment and is extremely difficult to artificially cultivate. Because of that, it is an endangered species that has a small number of living specimens around the world. However, its extreme rarity does not indicate a high value. In fact, the Rhodes Fan Leaf has no medical function, and its only purpose is to be ground into a paste that can be eaten after cooking... provided you're a herbivore. In short, there is close to no value in cultivating this plant."

Emerald Grass simply introduced the plant, leaving everyone at a loss.

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“But you still cultivated so many of them? Why did you bring us to see this?” Bennett asked.

At this time, Aurora stretched out her finger, curiously touching one of the fan blades. Suddenly, her eyes widened, and she exclaimed, “These plants are all uncontaminated by the smell!”

Bennett was startled. His face lit up with joy as he understood the meaning behind it.

“Your hypothesis is correct. A year ago, some of the plants gave me the impression that they were spying on me. This attracted my attention, and after searching through many areas, I found that this plant is the only botanical life that does not develop this spying sense. I don’t understand the nuances behind the spying, but I realized that the Rhodes Fan Leaf can neutralize them, so I started to cultivate this plantation. However, the Rhodes Fan Leaves are too difficult to cultivate, and the seeds are scarce. These fans are all that are present at the moment.” Emerald Grass confirmed everyone’s suspicions.

“Have any clinical trials been held yet?”

“I’ve only experimented on botanicals for now. By extracting the juice of the Rhodes Fan Leaf and adding a few extra ingredients, I’ve produced a medicine that can inhibit the spying sense of plants for a period of time.”

“Great, we have no time to waste. There’s no knowing when the riots will take place. In a bit, I’ll get someone to send over those rioters who have been isolated. You are to test if the inhibitor drug works on them.”

Bennett was very decisive. During this time of chaos, he could not afford to care if there were repercussions from such a drug. He instead felt relieved that Emerald Grass could come out with such a countermeasure. At least they were much better than compared to the Six Nations, which were still at a loss.

“That’s okay. However, there’s something I need to warn you beforehand. Because of the rarity of the Rhodes Fan Leaf, the production of the drug is limited to small amounts. Furthermore, the collection of the plant’s juices at any one time cannot be past a certain limit, or else the plant will die, reducing a potential source of supply. Every cultivated stalk comes from great difficulty.”

Emerald Grass shrugged in response.

In the previous timeline, Emerald Grass had only managed to escape from the Bell of Death Island when the Mutation Disaster had completely blown apart. It was only after a long period of research that she finally came out with the prescription of the inhibitor. However, in this timeline, Han Xiao had freed her from the Bell of Death Island well in advance, allowing her to research. Han Xiao had changed the storyline once again, allowing her to invent the inhibitor when the Mutation Disaster had only just begun to rear its fangs. The impact was huge.

While the inhibitor drug could not eliminate the Mutation Disaster and could only provide temporary containment, this was one of the rare few methods to use against it. In the past timeline, the devastated Six Nations had fought red-eyed for possession of Emerald Grass, wishing to obtain the recipe for the drug.

However, Emerald Grass was now based in Sanctuary Three, under the protection of Bennett. Whether this would attract the covetous glances of the Six Nations was yet to be confirmed, but the initial reason behind Han Xiao, who was currently far away in space, gaining Emerald Grass was because of this scenario. He wanted Sanctuary Three to be the first to manufacture the inhibitor, which would attract a swarm of players to the Sanctuary. He had foreseen this from the very beginning.

Aurora had also been saved by him. Her Esper ability was able to distinguish those infected and was an important factor in changing the story. Because the mutation virus was extremely latent, everyone would begin to grow suspicious of each other after the disaster occurred. Everyone would be worried about their friends suddenly turning into enemies, but Aurora could at least prevent such a problem from plaguing Sanctuary Three. This would also attract more people toward Sanctuary Three to seek peace of mind...

Under the influences of Han Xiao, Bennett and the others could react to the issue well in advance. The Great Mechanic Han had long set the scene for Version 2.0, and the effects were gradually emerging.

After everyone had left the greenhouse, Hila suddenly asked, "If this was the disaster that he foresaw... do you think he will keep his promise and come back?"

Everyone paused mid-step. There was not a single person present who was not closely related to Han Xiao. Every time that they mentioned this Black Phantom, their facial expressions would turn complicated.

"Maybe..." Bennett could only sigh.

Black Phantom had mentioned that he would venture into outer space to find a solution to solve the disaster, but there had been no news from him for a good two years. They could not fathom just what Han Xiao had come across during his journey in space. To them, space exploration was something shrouded in mystery. It represented a higher, grander world, one that was the 'real' world. It stirred the curiosity within people, making them wish to take this step.

Every time they looked up into space, they would inevitably think of Han Xiao. However, they had no way to contact him.

At that point, even Bennett no longer held much hope.

Even for Hila, she felt that the chances were slim. She pulled out the key that Han Xiao had given her beforehand, weighing it in her hand. Her eyelids drooped, covering the glow in her eyes.

Maybe... he was never coming back.

...

Far away in space, Han Xiao did not purposefully monitor the situation of Planet Aquamarine. He had long known of the evolution stage for the Mutation Disaster, and he did not personally take another look to confirm. Time was money, and wasting time was equivalent to wasting money. This was something unacceptable to him!

In Version 2.0, the players would only return after the Mutation Disaster had completely blown up. Han Xiao calculated the time and estimated that around a month or two before the new version was

launched, signs of the Mutation Disaster would start to show, and the virus would leave its incubation period to infect and evolve into a calamity.

This was the important stage for players to enter interstellar travel. There were only so many chances in life. If one grabbed hold of the opportunity, one would soar into the sky. Han Xiao followed the prescribed order to carry out his plans without any anxiety.

Following each objective on Han Xiao's prepared list being struck off one by one, the date also drew ever closer.

Chapter 508

New Version, New Phase

The stars were shining brightly, and the rivers of light lit up the pitch-black universe. Every twinkling star was immeasurably far away, and every star represented a race, a civilization, a dream. It was like a landing plane flying past a brightly lit city, forming both a majestic and lively sight.

Looking through the spaceship's window, the contours on Planet Golden Gate gradually became finer and clearer. Spaceships of all different shapes and sizes could be seen taking off and landing on this Godoran colony. It was as though the prosperity of the planet could be spread out in the sky, and those looking from afar could also feel this sense of prosperity.

This was a type of middle-sized, long-distance spaceship. It was a commonly seen model with its exterior made from a grayish alloy. Its hyperdrive engine was also a common one, and it had an inferior grade electromagnetic shield. The official selling price of the spaceship was around 750,000 to 900,000 Enas, and a second-hand spaceship would be about thirty percent cheaper. If one had good ties with the factory that manufactured the spaceship, it could even be purchased for 170,000 Enas. On the spaceship, there was a bright yellow royal crown decal, and this was a spaceship for rent belonging to the Royal Crown Galactic Travel Agency.

This Travel Agency had just signed a long-term loan contract for thirteen spaceships with the Black Star Mercenary Group a month ago. The rental fee was far lower than the selling price of the spaceship, but it still was not cheap.

At that moment, this spaceship, which temporarily belonged to the Black Star Mercenary Group, had a few dozen mercenaries on it and was flying toward Planet Golden Gate. They were the mercenaries who had recently been hired by the Black Star Mercenary Group a few months prior.

During his one year of preparation, after Han Xiao completed the construction of his assembly lines, he had made use of his fame to hire a few hundred freelance mercenaries to build up the strength of his mercenary group and increase the NPC resources of his mercenary group. The new members were then restructured into different teams to make it easier to command them.

Herlous and the others alone would not be enough to deal with the Mutation Disaster. Presently, Han Xiao no longer needed to restrict the size of his mercenary group, so the more the merrier. The Great Mechanic Han would never be stingy in investing in his mercenary group. With a large stack of bills in his pocket, Han Xiao would not feel good if he did not spend any money.

“Black Star suddenly gathered all of us. Are we going on a large mission?”

“We are Floating Dragon’s force in name. Could it be that the Dragon Emperor has an order for us?”

“I tried asking around, and nobody knows what Black Star wants. Even the officers aren’t sure.”

“All the others have arrived already, and we are the latest. I hope we didn’t delay anything.”

As the mercenaries were chatting, the spaceship landed at the port nearest to the base. Stepping out of the spaceship, dozens of mercenaries disembarked, and not too long later, they stopped in front of a gigantic base. The base was built on an octagonal plot of land and was surrounded by automatic cannon towers made from alloy walls.

The style of the base was like a gigantic metal castle with its shiny black exterior reflecting the sun’s rays. Numerous metal buildings were joint together with ten or so cone shaped rooftops pointing toward the sky, looking like they were fries in a box. The buildings were all angular, and they had the precision of a machine. Apart from the grayish metal color, white and red paint could be seen extending out along the edges of the buildings to add some color to the otherwise heavy base. Together with the blue indication lights that were scattered all over the base, the entire base had a high-tech feeling to anyone who walked in.

This was the result of one year of hard work. Black Star’s first base!

All the mercenaries came in front of the door, and a complicated identification panel popped out on the interface. After they were all verified that they belonged to the Black Star Mercenary Group, the door of the base began to slowly open, and a voice sounded from the interface.

“Identification complete, hum... Welcome back, hum...”

“Phillip, how’s your day?” a mercenary joked with the interface.

“Currently working, hum... Cannot chat casually, hum...”

All of them then walked into the base. The interior of the base was not complicated. The center of the base was a large empty space with bridges leading toward the different regions of the base. It was like a beehive, and this middle region was called the ‘mouthpiece’ by the mercenaries.

The base was truly too large. Even a million people would not be able to fill it up completely, and the mercenary group only had a few hundred people at the moment. Thus, the interior of the base was extremely spacious.

These mercenaries walked toward the main hall while chatting, their voices echoing in the large hall.

When they entered the main hall of the base, they saw that a few hundred people were already waiting there. They were all waiting silently with the atmosphere solemn. These merrily chatting mercenaries immediately stopped their laughter and chatter and gathered behind the other mercenaries.

The few hundred people in the main hall were the present members of the mercenary group. They were clad in different kinds of armor and had either melee or ranged weapons on their backs. They were tall, short, fat, skinny, human, and beast; however, they all had something in common. They were all

emanating the sharpness of an elite warrior, and every single one of them had survived hundreds of battles.

In front of the crowd, Black Star's officers were standing in a row with their backs facing the crowd. Herlous was clad in a light blue armor, Aroshia was glowing all over, the three Volga brothers looked as though they had been made from the same mold, and three other new officers who joined a few months ago. As for Feidin and Sylvia, they were standing further away.

At that moment, the metal ground that was in front of the crowd opened up, and a human figure rose up on an elevator. His black overcoat fluttered in the wind, and he had a necklace made from compressed orbs. Furthermore, he was still wearing a pure black mask that covered his face.

It was Han Xiao.

After a year, Han Xiao had changed his outfit into something more striking, and he had mimicked the Germinal Organization leader in wearing a mask. He felt that he was more handsome this way.

I am someone who owns his own property after all, and my coolness factor should go up a little at least. Furthermore, this black mask is actually equipment.

The moment that he appeared, everyone's gaze was immediately fixed on him.

"Is everyone here?"

Han Xiao's gaze swept over everyone present. He had hired these mercenaries personally, and Floating Dragon's reputation was truly useful. The majority of those present were lone wolves with pretty impressive combat prowess. They were all extremely reliable. All of the mercenaries before him could be split into three different categories. The first category would be mercenaries who did not belong to any mercenary group before this. The second category would be those who belonged to the Sunil Division. The third category would be a 'War League', which one of the new officers had brought with him.

After the base was constructed, Han Xiao did not stay in the base but took the time to visit other planets and hired three new officers based on his memories. These were characters who had been famous in his previous life.

Sehrinde, a Sunil Grade B Pugilist. He was dressed in a white hood. While the material of the hood seemed soft, it had a defensive inscription inscribed in it. His face was hidden under the shadow of the hood, and two large blades could be seen hanging on his waist. He would be able to unsheathe those blades at any time, and when Han Xiao first met him, Han Xiao had almost thought that he had come out from a certain popular assassination game.

He was another Grade B Super who belonged to the Guardian Faction of the Sunil civilization. When Fernas left Sunil, Sehrinde did not leave together. Sehrinde had a quiet personality, and his personality was just like his swift and queer Pugilist subclass. He was like an assassin hidden in the darkness and a sharp contrast to Herlous' open Pugilist style.

With Herlous making the introduction, Han Xiao had managed to find the lonesome Sehrinde and issued an invitation to him. As the reputation of the Black Star Mercenary Group grew, more and more Sunil Supers became willing to join Black Star. It was safe, and they could earn a lot of money. It could also be

said that Han Xiao was offering them protection. Under Herlous' persuasion, Sehrinde had accepted Han Xiao's invitation and begun working together with him.

Presently, the Sunil Division was led by Herlous and Sehrinde.

The second new officer was Ginette Colin, a female space human. She was a Grade B Cannon Master and carried various kinds of heavy firearms all over her body. The thick layer of machinery covered her tall, sexy figure. It was her creed to worship firepower over anything else.

Ginette was a pretty famous lone wolf mercenary. In Han Xiao's previous life, she had joined Sky Ring Army and become a famous leading figure of the army. Han Xiao had spotted her name when he was going through the list of freelance mercenaries and thus decided to pull Ginette into his mercenary group while she was still alone.

The process naturally had not been an easy one. Ginette had an explosive temper and cursed at both the heavens and the earth. She did not even place Floating Dragon in her sights. Han Xiao had thus come up with a small plan and purposely intervened in one of Ginette's missions. With the both of them on opposing sides, they had naturally ended up fighting. After Han Xiao beat her terribly a couple of times, Ginette had finally submitted and joined the Black Star Mercenary Group.

Han Xiao had promised to provide her with heavy firearms at a low price. With Ginette's hobby of collecting all different kinds of weapons, she had immediately accepted his proposal.

The third officer had an even greater origin. He was a main character class figure. Han Xiao had spent a great deal of effort before finally being able to con him into joining. Just like how he had conned Herlous back then.

Harmon Rockfall Sonodin. He was a Luhan Beastman and was more than three meters tall. His entire body was covered in hair, and he looked a little like a bear. His appearance was still pretty adorable, but he actually belonged to a clan of ferocious fighters. The Luhan Beastmen had their own civilization, and it was located in a different Star Cluster. Their governance method was an alliance system between all the different tribes. Harmon was one of the candidates for the next tribal chief of the Rockfall Tribe.

While the Luhan Beastman was a galactic civilization, they preserved their battle loving, boorish, and warlike tradition. When the tribe wanted to decide the next chief, they would not vote for the new chief peacefully but settle it with a battle. All the candidates would be chased out from their mother planet and sent to random planets. They would have to train themselves up in the galaxy and also build up their own 'War League'. When the designated time arrived, they would then take all of their troops back to their mother planet to participate in the battle to determine the chief. In other words, it was similar to the fight between princes for authority.

Harmon was a main character, and his storyline was to aid him in snatching the position of tribal chief. When he was conning Harmon, Han Xiao had activated this mission. This mission was simple and violent. He had to fight from the start to the end. After the players completed this mission in his previous life, the process had become a dungeon, and they would be able to gain a Dungeon Crystal from doing daily missions at the Rockfall Tribe. Thus, Han Xiao could remember the mission clearly.

The way to hire Harmon was naturally to agree to an ancient ceremony and become part of his War League. Harmon was not alone, and he brought the subordinates in his War League, dozens of powerful Luhan Beastman, to join the mercenary group.

Harmon had the strength of a Grade B Super, and his Esper ability was very simply to strengthen his body and cause the muscles on his entire body to expand.

While his Esper ability was extremely singular, Harmon was proficient in many different weapons and was a warrior with exquisite battle techniques. Han Xiao had taken a look at Harmon's attributes before, and Harmon had six rare subclass that belonged to the [Warrior] class.

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The addition of the three new officers provided the mercenary group with fresh blood. Han Xiao had more and more capable subordinates under him, and the rewards that his faction could give out had also increased greatly.

Currently, the highest mission reward that Han Xiao could give out was 1,000,000 experience, and his Daily Reward Limit was over twenty times that. This meant that if he issued a faction mission, he could give out more than 20,000,000 experience to the players. Hiring NPC characters was all to better attract players.

Opening up his communicator, Han Xiao looked at his mercenary group's introduction.

Black Star Mercenary Group

Credibility Rating: 1,018 (High)

Scale: 417 members

Grade D: 47

Grade C: 359 members

Grade B: 11

Missions Completed: 82

Main Activity Area: Colton Star Cluster

History:

[Sunil Defense Battle]

[Silver Rescue Operation]

[Capture of Purple Gem Civilization's Head Of Rebels "Pilipelapa Wasasa"]

[Battle of Noriosse]

[78 more missions... (Expand/Collapse)]

Creator: Black Star—Han Xiao

Creation date: Galaxy Calendar Year 688, 02 October

Summary: A medium sized mercenary group with a good name and very high credibility. Completed hiring missions with high ratings multiple times. Work together with many large-scale mercenary groups. Field Team under the Dragon Emperor. Base is located on Planet Golden Gate. Mercenary captain Black Star aided Godora in killing a Calamity Grade Super in Noriosse. Reliable.

Today is the day of Version 2.0's release. I have waited almost a year for this day. My manpower should be sufficient.

Han Xiao nodded in his head.

Over the past year, Han Xiao had done many things and made ample preparations. He had constructed a total of twenty-three assembly lines, and his 4,500,000 Enas had almost all been spent, with only about 1,100,000 Enas remaining. The majority of his money had been spent on materials, and his assembly line had been churning out equipment without stopping. His warehouse already had a mountain of equipment at the moment.

The loan had already exceeded the first interest free year. According to Rockfess' requirement, he would have to start paying interest if his loan period was more than a year. Han Xiao was waiting to earn a huge sum of money from the players.

His experience on the interface had already fallen below 100,000,000 points, and Han Xiao was still level 116. He had spent all of his experience on gambling for blueprints and raising the level of his skills. He was currently in dire need of experience points. He still had a Mission Completion Card in his hands, and if he had sufficient experience points, he could even advance directly and charge to level 140. It would be a lie to say that he did not look forward to that.

Keeping his thoughts to himself, Han Xiao looked at the mercenaries present and said, "I have gathered everyone today for a large-scale mission. My home planet is undergoing a calamity, and their sights are only limited to that of their planet. They aren't able to see what we can see, and we are their only hope."

The mercenaries all began looking at each other.

Black Star's home planet?

That backward planet called Planet Aquamarine?

"I will fight for you just like you will fight for me." Harmon hammered his chest with his fist.

"I will be by your side just like before," Herlous proclaimed.

All the mercenaries in the hall also began to express their support.

Looking at the time, it was about right.

Han Xiao opened the interface and waited quietly.

After a short wait, a new notification appeared.

Version 2.0 is now open.

Fetching data... Fetching data done!

Player Forum Open

Welcome to 'Galaxy' Version 2.0!

After preparing for such a long time, Version 2.0 is finally here!

Han Xiao's eyes glowed as he walked toward the door.

A few hundred elites followed behind him majestically.

"Let's go!"

Chapter 509: The Players Return, Eruption of the Mutation Disaster

On Planet Aquamarine, the Southern Continent was experiencing intense summer heat. The scorching sun was high in the sky, and heatwaves could be seen rising from the ground.

The instant that Version 2.0 was released, the originally empty plaza of Sanctuary Three had suddenly been overwhelmed with people. In just a few seconds, that originally spacious plaza had become packed with people.

Before the new system patch, because of the [The Last Bastion] mission that Han Xiao had left behind and Galaxy Times' analysis of Version 2.0, millions of players had gathered in Sanctuary Three and chosen to go offline there. The moment that Version 2.0 launched, the log-in point for those millions of players was naturally Sanctuary Three.

Millions of heads were bobbing up and down, looking around curiously.

"Is it Version 2.0 already?"

"There don't seem to be many changes."

"Eh, the upper level limit has increased, and our experience can be used to increase our levels. It seems like this is the new version indeed."

"Aren't there any other changes? I truly want to try taking a dump in the game."

"Pants Taking Off Club, please have some self-respect."

All the players began chatting among themselves and opened up the interface to check their stats. Apart from the raised level cap, there did not seem to be any other changes to their stats.

But very quickly, some players realized that the status of a certain mission had changed. The mission status of [The Last Bastion] had changed from 'frozen' to 'active'.

This was the Prize-Pool Mission that Han Xiao had left behind before his departure. The mission requirement was to protect Sanctuary Three as preparation for the Mutation Disaster.

And now, this mission had actually been activated!

Does this mean that the 'calamity' in the mission hint has already begun?

All the players immediately became excited. Owing to Black Phantom's 'blessings', they did not manage to participate much in the previous Main Storyline. This time, there was finally something big for them to do!

Right, the NPC who issued this mission was Black Phantom... oh, he's now called Black Star. Is he still in the universe?

The moment they thought about Han Xiao, many of the players could not help but feel envious of the professional players who had been taken away by him. They had managed to enter the universe a step earlier and were miles away in terms of equipment and experience.

When the players were still observing their surroundings, a broadcast was suddenly made from the Sanctuary.

"Will all Inhumans stay where you are! I repeat, all Inhumans stay where you are!"

Very quickly, a large number of guards surrounded the plaza with their expressions filled with doubt as they looked at the large number of players nervously.

The Inhumans had disappeared from the entire planet for almost a year, and their sudden appearance had truly frightened the managers of Sanctuary Three. Bennett had hurriedly sent people over to control the situation.

At the same time, the players of Sanctuary Three received a mission.

Remain on the Spot

Mission Introduction: During your time away, many things have happened on Planet Aquamarine, and they are currently facing a threat that could wipe out their civilization. Remain where you are and wait patiently for the relevant person to explain the situation.

This was only a small mission, and the reward was not large. The players also wanted to know what was going on, and thus, they all stayed in the plaza. At the same time, it was also because they were surrounded by guards. Who knew whether they would end up being attacked if they chose to leave? None of them wanted to lose Favorability with the Sanctuary at the very start of Version 2.0.

Not too long later, Bennett rushed over. Looking at the huge wave of players, a trace of joy could be seen in his eyes.

He remembered what Han Xiao had said to him before leaving for the universe. Han Xiao had told him that the Inhumans would be a core strength to fight the calamity. With the Inhumans appearing again, while he did not know the reason for their appearance, their appearance was extremely timely. They truly needed manpower at the moment.

Bennett took out a loudspeaker and said, "Planet Aquamarine is currently facing a never before seen calamity, and we urgently need your help..."

He quickly described the situation, and the players found out that it had been over a year since the previous version. Just a month ago, a strange phenomenon had spread across Planet Aquamarine and become a calamity that covered the entire planet.

Planet Aquamarine called it the 'Mutation Disaster'.

It had already been a month since the outbreak of the Mutation Disaster, and the entire planet had been thrown into chaos. The regime of the Six Nations had almost collapsed in a short month.

No one knew the reason for the calamity, but they were certain that it was because of some type of virus which they called the 'mutation virus'. Many different living beings—be it humans, beasts, and even plants—had been infected by the virus. However, the appearance of the virus could not even be detected, and no one even knew how the virus was spread and who was infected with it.

Before the outbreak of the virus, all the infected individuals would be no different from usual, but the moment that the virus broke out, the infected individual would display unusual desires that included but were not limited to killing intent, destructive tendencies, anger, grief, craziness, lust, hunger, thirst, and so on. A usually weak individual could be transformed into a murderer who killed without blinking. An ordinary person might suddenly squat down and crazily eat up the sand beneath their feet before dying. A conservative and virtuous lady could suddenly turn into a lascivious lady.

The most frightening thing was the fact that the infected individual would still maintain their rationality during the outbreak of the virus. This meant that the infected individual was not losing control or acting rashly but being led by their desires to perform such actions.

According to the recollection of those infected individuals, when the virus broke out, all of their desires would come from deep within their hearts and were their true thoughts at that moment. It was as though their personalities had been altered, but they were not able to detect it. During the outbreak of the virus, all the infected individuals felt as though their actions were very normal.

Bennett gave a few examples, and the confused players immediately knew how frightening the Mutation Disaster was.

Maple was where the first large scale outbreak of the virus took place. The infected individuals in the army began to pick up their rifles and shoot their own comrades crazily. The entire army immediately fell into complete chaos. No one knew whether the one opening fire was an infected individual or a defending soldier, and an internal war broke out with tanks, helicopters, and even missiles being used. This battle had caused half of Maple's army to be lost.

The president himself had even displayed severe violent tendencies and wanted to nuke the entire world. Thankfully, the process of launching nuclear weapons was extremely complicated. If the button

to activate a nuclear missile was in the president's office, the entire planet would probably have been flattened by now. As for the president, he had immediately been caught after that incident.

Many ridiculous events that would never happen under ordinary circumstances had begun to take place all over the world. It would not have been scary if a single person went crazy. However, if the entire world went crazy, it was akin to a bunch of devils dancing.

No one knew when the person beside them would break out with the virus, and they could not even be sure that they themselves were normal. This fear was extremely frightening, and it was as though the entire world had become their enemy, and they would not dare to believe anyone else in the world.

A month after the Mutation Disaster broke out, the order of society had broken down, and many prosperous cities had become ghost towns. For their own safety, many city dwellers had no choice but to find some place to hide themselves. Depression had become an ordinary emotion, and the view that radiation caused this strange virus had become popular.

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As such, countless of citizens began to curse the Germinal Organization war, which had brought them peace. They felt that this was their retribution, and the end of the world had arrived!

After listening to the introduction, many players felt their hearts turn cold. Putting themselves in the shoes of the NPCs, this virus was truly too terrifying. The players had plenty of guesses with regards to the so-called 'calamity' of Version 2.0, but never had they expected that it would be so strange.

Just what was the mutation virus?

All of a sudden, the players fell into a daze. The time in the outside world and game flowed at different rates. In the eyes of the players, only a few short days had passed, but the entire world that they were familiar with was completely different.

Is there a need for the plot to be so exciting?

"Is this virus incurable?" a player asked.

Bennett shook his head. "Presently, we have found two ways to fight this virus. First, it isn't easy for Supers to be infected, and this is a verified fact. Second, our Sanctuary Three has developed a type of suppressant, and it can prevent the virus from breaking out. However, production is limited. We are trying to grow all the required materials, but the quantity is still far from being sufficient."

As those words were completed, a mission appeared on the interfaces of the players.

Mutation Disaster

Mission Introduction: Planet Aquamarine is suffering from an unprecedented calamity, and it is the responsibility of every being living on this planet to fight the Mutation Disaster!

Mission Requirements: Contribute to the fight against the Mutation Disaster.

Progress: 0/30,000,000

Success Requirements: Complete the mission before the mutation virus becomes complete.

Failure Condition: Collapse of Planet Aquamarine's civilization. All of the survivors being forced to retreat.

Reward: Depends on contribution. (Even if the growth of the virus results in total progress being lowered, the individual accumulated contribution will be counted toward the reward rating.)

The mission requirements for the players were extremely similar to Han Xiao's mission requirements. It was just that Han Xiao's mission included all the planets suffering from the Mutation Disaster. It was obvious that the Great Mechanic Han's mission was more complete.

This was a large Main Storyline that involved all the players. The contribution of every player would be counted toward the mission progress, and the players needed to work together toward this goal.

"We accepted a Main Storyline mission right after coming online? The plot of this version is truly fast!"

"Without any build up and going straight to the point, I like how direct they are!"

"That's not right. The reason that we were able to obtain the Main Storyline mission immediately is probably because we came online in Sanctuary Three. It seems like Galaxy Times' analysis isn't wrong. We were indeed able to come into contact with the Main Storyline more easily through Sanctuary Three."

As everyone thought about this, they were immediately enlightened.

If they were in other locations, there would not have been anyone present to explain the entire disaster to them in detail. Furthermore, Bennett had previously mentioned that Sanctuary Three was the only place that had the suppressant. This meant that Sanctuary Three was the place where the Main Storyline would unfold. It was the mission that Black Phantom had left behind that had guided them there.

He was truly their lighthouse!

With this Main Storyline mission, the players were immediately energized, and they all went forward to ask if they could be of any help. The entire plaza descended into chaos, and Bennett only managed to restore order after a great deal of effort. He then got his subordinates to issue various missions. While the missions were all different, these missions would contribute toward the Main Storyline.

Every type of mission only needed a limited number of players, and a frenzied mess of snatching for mission began.

The large guilds snatched the most missions, and there were some solo players who were not able to snatch a single mission issued by the Sanctuary.

A player could not help but ask, "Can we leave the Sanctuary now? I want to go somewhere else."

"You'd better take a look on the city walls yourself," Bennett said with a helpless look.

The tall iron walls of the Sanctuary blocked the view of the outside. Hearing those words, many players became curious and climbed up the city walls to take a look.

With just a single glance, the players were dumbfounded.

In the surrounding ten kilometers, countless tents had been set up, and the tents were like a gray cloud covering the red earth. It was like a gigantic refugee camp, and all of them stayed outside the Sanctuary, refusing to leave. From time to time, the sound of fighting would be heard. Who knew if the fighting was because of the virus or for the scarce food and water?

“The news of us developing a suppressant has been spread, and countless people come here every day, requesting the suppressant and our protection.”

Bennett also climbed up the city walls. Upon looking at the endless sea of refugee tents, he let out a sorrowful sigh.

“However, our suppressant is limited in quantity, and we can only give a small number of refugees the suppressant. As for the others, we can only let them wait outside. With more and more people coming, the number of virus outbreak incidents is also on the rise, and plenty of people die on the outside every day. However, to prevent the Sanctuary descending into chaos, I cannot allow all of them to come in. I can only watch as they die...”

The entire world was helpless against the Mutation Disaster, and only Sanctuary Three had a suppressant. The result was extremely clear. This place had become the holy land for the refugees and their final hope.

In Han Xiao’s previous life, everyone had been like headless flies when the calamity broke out. They had all been lost in shock and did not have a target of hope. The situation had been completely chaotic. Now, because of Han Xiao’s influence, the refugees of the entire planet had a target. It was Black Phantom’s Sanctuary Three, and it was treated as their only hope.

However, the suppressant that Emerald Grass and Aurora had created would only be effective in the short term, and it was not able to purge the virus. Bennett did not know what he should do to solve this calamity. In fact, there was not a single person on Planet Aquamarine who knew what to do. He could not help but think about the reason that Han Xiao had given him before leaving for the universe. Black Phantom had said that he wanted to find a way to solve the calamity. Did this mean that the solution to the calamity could not be found on Planet Aquamarine?

Bennett could only place his hope on Han Xiao.

If he can really come back...

“There isn’t another Sanctuary on the entire planet,” Bennett said with a heavy tone. “This place is the only Sanctuary.”

Chapter 510: Black Star’s Return!

At the same time, in the Black Star Mercenary Group’s previous temporary base in Juberly Hub, dozens of white lights flashed. The professional players who followed Han Xiao had also appeared. They were

Frenzied Sword, Hao Tian, Bun-Hit-Dog, and the others. During the update to the new version, they had all gone offline there.

The habit of any professional player was to open up the interface at the very first chance to see any changes to the interface. As professional players, they were most concerned about their stats and equipment.

After confirming the increase in the level limit, all of them looked around and were immediately stunned.

However, the entire base was empty and only a lonely light was lit. The metal walls glowed with a dim white color, reflecting the light. While the entire base was spotless because of the cleaning facilities, the door that was opened and the silent atmosphere made the players feel as though there had not been anyone staying there for a long time.

The items in the room had disappeared, including Black Star's personal warehouse and his machinery modification room. If not for the fact that even the furniture was gone, they would have thought that a thief had broken into the house.

"Why isn't there a single person here? Where is my Black Star?" Frenzied Sword asked.

"Who knows how long has passed? It seems like they are no longer here," Hao Tian said in a solemn tone.

"It is also possible that they are all dead," Li Ge said and immediately drew the angry glares of those around him. His consideration had historical reasons behind it. He still remembered that a subordinate guild of their Temple of God had once met the tragedy of their mission issuing location being destroyed.

"Idiots, can't you guys just check on the Faction details?" Maple Moon rolled her eyes at the rest of them. As part of the mercenary group, they were able to check the basic information of the faction and find out the situation of the Black Star Mercenary Group. There was no need for them to guess blindly at all.

However, what the players did not know was that they were only able to see the Faction information because Han Xiao had intentionally added that information into the faction interface. It was so that these players would be able to witness the growth of the mercenary group and build their sense of belonging. From beginning to end, the Great Mechanic Han had only given benefits to the players so that he would be able to snatch more money.

After opening up the faction interface, the players were immediately shocked by the information displayed before them.

"The number of people in the faction had increased, and there are actually over four hundred people. The number of missions completed has also increased. Quickly, take a look at the summary. It is written that the location of the Black Star Mercenary Group's base is on Planet Golden Gate. So, it turns out that the mercenary group has shifted house... but where is Planet Golden Gate?" Frenzied Sword asked.

"That's not all! Look at this! Black Star actually killed a Calamity Grade Super on Noriosse! My goodness, he's too powerful..." Bun-Hit-Dog gasped. He then asked, "Wait... what grade is a Calamity Grade Super?"

At that moment, the players still did not know that Grade A Supers were also called Calamity Grade. They only felt that the name was extremely cool.

In any case, anything above Grade C was something that the players could only look up to.

All of the professional players then fell into a daze. Just what had the Black Star Mercenary Group gone through when they were not around?

Right at that moment, the doorbell to the stronghold suddenly rang and the players jumped up in shock. They then opened up the door, and a three horned snakeman was standing outside the door.

“Are you guys members of the Black Star Mercenary Group?” the snakeman asked.

The professional players looked at each other before nodding.

“I am a captain of the Royal Crown Travel Agency. His Excellency Black Star asked me to send all of you to Planet Aquamarine. Please follow me.”

Hearing that, a look of disbelief could be seen on their faces. They could never have imagined that Black Star would send a spaceship to pick them up.

...

The Mutation Disaster had changed the structure of the entire planet. The rule of the Six Nations was almost collapsing, and the territories of the Six Nations had fallen into chaos with the government losing control.

Because everyone had a chance of contracting the virus, even the government officials were not spared. Officials of all levels contracted the virus, and if the government lost its competent staff, it was as good as losing its strength. Thus, the Six Nations were gradually sliding toward destruction.

The various sectors and layers of society were created by men, and the order of society was what made people submit to it. The justice department, army, economic body, cultural tradition, morals, mainstream ideas, and so on were all there to let people understand the price of going against the rules and thus restricting their own actions. However, the mutation virus destroyed a person’s ordinary sense of logic and fear. They would not consider any consequences when the virus broke out, and all of those social structures completely lost their purpose. The social system that seemed to be unbreakable had turned into a fragile vase in a single night.

Primal chaos.

This was the most accurate description of the current state of society.

No living being could be trusted, and only the cold machine was reliable.

After the outbreak of the calamity, the Six Nations had abandoned all of their former enmity. In the face of such a calamity, their individual benefits were no longer important. They had no choice but to join hands, and the upper echelons of the Six Nations were having a video conference at that moment.

“Twenty days ago, we issued a request for help to the Godoran Civilization. Godora said that they would rush here as soon as they can, but they have not appeared after such a long time.”

The Mutation Disaster was like a virgin who was wearing a chastity belt. Regardless of how they tried, they just could not get her to open up her doors. The Six Nations knew that it would be impossible for them to deal with the Mutation Disaster with their present technology, and all of their means were ineffective. Thus, they had sent a report of the calamity to Godora and hoped for a higher-class civilization to save them.

However, not a single spaceship had landed thus far, and the upper echelons of the Six Nations were growing anxious. They tried to pester Godora time and time again but would only receive a response from an Artificial Intelligence answering machine.

In truth, the Six Nations did not know that the Mutation Disaster had not only broken out on Planet Aquamarine but all over the Garton Star System. Godora was currently extremely busy as well. Han Xiao had not revealed that this was DarkStar's plot, and thus, Godora was still in the dark and did not treat the Mutation Disaster with great importance.

"Godora's arrival isn't something that we can control. Currently, we have a new situation. The Inhumans who disappeared over a year ago have appeared again."

"This is truly too coincidental. Perhaps they are the ones who brought the mutation virus!" someone said angrily.

The Six Nations had always been suspicious of the Inhumans. Since they were not of the same species, the prejudice and discrimination toward the Inhumans had never disappeared.

"No matter what, the Inhumans are mostly Supers, and they may be able to provide us with some aid. Regardless of who comes to our aid, I only wish to wake up from this nightmare soon. In this situation, I don't even dare meet my wife, afraid that I may lose control and end up harming her," one of the officials said in a depressed tone.

"While Bennett has shared with the world the recipe of the suppressant, only Sanctuary Three is able to produce it stably. He said that he isn't able to give us any extra suppressants, but I do not believe him. They are definitely hiding more suppressants in their warehouses."

As those words were said, all the leaders of the Six Nations fell silent. All of them knew that everyone present had their eyes on the suppressant.

When a calamity occurred and there was only one item capable of fighting the calamity, the meaning of that item far exceeded its own use. In order to obtain the suppressant, everyone had no choice but to be obedient. Even if Bennett did not have other plans, Sanctuary Three had already become the center of the entire world with an endless stream of people rushing toward it.

The Six Nations wanted to control the suppressant and use it to stabilize their citizens and restore order to their regime. However, if they chose to snatch it, the situation that the people of the world had finally adapted to would be broken yet again, and they would face a huge risk. If they were not careful, they might end up causing an outcome that could not be reversed. Was stabilizing their regime more important than the life and death of the entire civilization?

Some of them were not able to persuade themselves while others could. Regardless of which faction they belonged to, they were still in a dilemma.

“If we really want to do it, we have to be fast,” Raylen’s leader said. “Time waits for no one.”

...

Two days passed by quickly.

The players stayed behind in Sanctuary Three to get used to the new version and participate in the Main Storyline mission.

While the players were many, there was an almost endless supply of missions in the Sanctuary. The missions with the highest reward were naturally the official missions issued by Bennett. There was a limited number of such missions every day, and the other missions could be activated by talking to different NPCs. The endless refugees outside of the Sanctuary had plenty of requests, and they would never be able to finish all the tasks. These tasks that normal people would find extremely troublesome were extremely enjoyable to the players. They performed the tasks with a serious attitude and were extremely passionate about their jobs. Every single player was like a model citizen, and the guards of the Sanctuary seemed to be lacking in contrast.

The vast majority of the mission rewards would award them with [Mutation Disaster] progress. After two days of hard work, the total progress was at 730,000 points. It should have been higher than that, but the destruction caused by the Mutation Disaster every day would lower the total progress. The players needed to continue accumulating progress points. If not, the mission total progress points would keep falling.

While they were not clear about the reason behind the mutation virus, the players did not care. As long as they had the guidance of the mission, they would just follow the guidance and complete the mission.

Because Version 2.0 would give the players a chance to enter the universe, the players knew that this Main Storyline mission was only a single starting plot of the new Version and not the entire storyline. The players on other planets also had similar encounters, facing danger the moment that the version started. It was just that the danger that they faced was all different. Planet Winterfrost faced the funniest storyline. As a planet that the Extinguish Army stationed their troops on, someone had actually launched a punitive expedition against them. How infuriating.

In comparison, the speed at which players on Planet Aquamarine entered the Main Storyline was the fastest. Apart from that, the situation of the plot was largely similar to Han Xiao’s previous life.

The forums were as lively as before the update, in fact, even livelier than before. With the new version being released, many players were sharing information, and new posts appeared at almost every second.

Bennett stood atop the city walls and looked down at the clamoring Sanctuary. The figure of the Inhumans could be seen all around, and they took care of his present manpower shortage. Upon witnessing this scene, his furrowed brows loosened up slightly.

“Thankfully, we have the help of these Inhumans. I never imagined that Black Phantom’s influence would still protect us.” Bennett let out a sigh and muttered with a complicated tone.

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Hila was standing behind him and leaning against the wall. Her face was expressionless as she looked at the endless refugee tents.

“Ahhh!”

All of a sudden, a strange cry could be heard from the refugees, and countless individuals had an outburst of the virus. This was the most frightening part of the virus; it could break out at any time.

The refugee camp that was barely able to maintain its order immediately became chaotic. A few million infected individuals became red eyed, and a large battle broke out. The scene was extremely stunning, and the loud commotion was like a deafening tsunami of sound.

A small portion of refugees who did not break out in the virus sat down on the ground while trembling. The guards on the Sanctuary walls were also completely dumbfounded.

Bennett’s expression changed, and his arms grabbed onto the edge of the wall. He used so much force that his fingerprints could be seen on the wall.

“With so many people gathering here, the moment there is a collective outburst of the virus, the consequences are dire. When the symptoms of the virus recede, the number of casualties are probably in the millions!”

All of the players stopped their mission at hand. This was the first time that they witnessed a collective outburst of the virus, and they were extremely shocked. There were some who turned on the recording feature.

They had witnessed war before, but the sight of a large gang fight between a few million people was a first. The refugees did not use any weapons and had only used their fists or teeth to fight. They were like extremely bloodthirsty beasts.

“We must stop them. If not, many people will die. Send out all our forces and knock out all the infected individuals!”

Bennett immediately issued an order. Every infected individual deserved the opportunity to be saved. With so many people killing each other before his eyes, Bennett could not watch without doing anything.

Rumble!

Right at that moment, a loud rumbling sound could be heard from afar, getting louder and louder. Looking toward the horizon, countless beasts were sprinting over in a majestic fashion.

The beasts on Planet Aquamarine had also been infected with the mutation virus. Originally, the environment of the wilderness had been extremely dangerous, and it had become even more difficult to survive now. Furthermore, the outbreak of virus between beasts and humans was different. While the infected beasts would become violent, they would form a large herd and move around together. At times, they would fight each other, and other times, they would attack the cities.

The beast tide charged straight into the refugee camp and began a massacre. The refugees were bitten and trampled on by the beasts, and a bloody scene unfolded. It was as though a heavy cavalry legion had charged into a bunch of defenseless commoners.

Pa!

Bennett crushed the corner of the city walls and shouted with anger, "Not good! A beast tide actually came at this moment. Quickly, save them! If we do nothing, all of the refugees will die!"

At that moment, a huge change occurred on all the player's interfaces. The total progress of [Mutation Disaster] fell by 10,000 points in the blink of an eye, and all of them triggered an urgent mission. The mission requirements were to save as many refugees outside the city as possible, with the reward ranging from 50,000 to 200,000. The fewer deaths, the higher the reward.

Furthermore, the total progress of their mission was falling rapidly, and if they did not save the refugees quickly, more than half of their hard work over the past two days would go to waste.

"Quickly, go out of the city and save them!"

"Requesting for a party. Anyone will do. I just need to fill up the party!"

The players in the city immediately became frantic and charged out of the city to save the refugees. After knocking out the infected individuals, they sent them into the Sanctuary.

Apart from saving the refugees, Bennett sent out a portion of players to delay the beast tide. The number of beasts was truly too great, and there were 300,000 beasts at the very least. They would not be able to kill the beasts any time soon and could only stall for time so that they could save as many refugees as possible.

Hila had already charged into the beast tide, and her dark red energy was released without any restraint. One after another, the beasts fell. The players in the surroundings also engaged in an intense battle with the beasts, and they were drenched in the beasts' blood.

Killing was what she specialized in, and battle was already ingrained in her bones. It was an ordinary action to her, just like eating or sleeping. However, Hila truly had a complicated emotion during that battle. She used to be an executioner who killed the innocent, and this was the first time that she had been fighting in order to save the lives of others who had nothing to do with her.

Rumble!

The entire situation was extremely messy. The refugee camp was sandwiched between the beasts charging in on one side and the players trying to save as many people as possible. Both sides were charging toward the center, and the infected refugees did not know how to escape, still engaged in battle!

Even with Bennett's strength, he also felt that the situation before him was extremely messy. His palms were covered in sweat as he looked at the situation nervously.

"There are far too many beasts, and their attack rate is at least four per second. We cannot tank the damage at all!"

"Dammit! My morale is crushed! My ass has been smashed!"

"Gaps are everywhere, and we cannot block them at all!"

The players who were blocking the beast tide felt completely helpless, and players were dying every second. While they could revive, they needed time to run out from the Sanctuary, and it would delay time. What they needed most was time, and their mission progress was falling every second, causing all the players to get extremely anxious.

Xiu!

Just as the situation was becoming dismal, a deafening roar came from the sky. Despite the chaotic and noisy environment that they were in, everyone could clearly hear the deafening roar, and they all turned to look up at the sky.

A few hundred egg shaped metal pods then descended down from the sky and began burning up like fireballs. It was like a few hundred descending meteors, and their landing location was right at the doorstep of the Sanctuary.

Boom boom boom!

The metal pods landed on the ground and filled the ground with cracks. The next moment, the doors to the metal pods opened, and a person walked out from every single metal pod.

They were dressed in armor and held weapons in their hands. Their styles were extremely varied, and they were obviously guests from outer space who did not belong to Planet Aquamarine. Everyone looked over with curious gazes and immediately knew that these metal eggs were airdrop pods from space.

These uninvited guests were warriors from the galaxy!

Just as everyone wanted to ask about their intentions, a man dressed in black who was wearing a mask waved his arm, and the hundred or so galactic warriors charged toward the beast tide.

Boom!

The galactic warriors displayed their powerful combat capabilities and immediately took over the battle. The previously seemingly unstoppable beast tide seemed to have run into a metal wall!

A few hundred people displayed strength greater than the surrounding thousands of players.

A look of shock flashed through Hila's eyes. She was on the battlefield and could clearly feel their strength. Almost all of the galactic warriors gave her a sense of pressure that was even more powerful than what Bennett gave her. Furthermore, Bennett was the most powerful being on Planet Aquamarine at the moment.

This meant that any single one of those galactic warriors was more powerful than Bennett!

With an unknown force interfering, danger was averted. Only the black masked man remained by the gates of the Sanctuary without making a move. Bennett jumped off from the city walls and walked forward toward the masked man. "Who are you? Where do you come from? Why are you helping us?"

Bennett had seen the captured Godoran Observer before and thus did not lose his cool when seeing aliens.

But the very next moment, his expression, which he tried to keep cool, turned into shock.

Han Xiao raised his arm and took off his mask to reveal his appearance. A smile could be seen on his lips, and he felt as though he was extremely suave.

“It’s been a long time Bennett. Why are you so surprised? What, you didn’t think that I’d return?”

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Bennett’s body immediately froze up, and he did not dare believe what he had just seen. His lips trembled, and his look of shock turned into one of crazed joy.

Hila, who was far away, was also shocked.

The instant that Han Xiao took off his mask, almost every player fell into shock. Following which, they burst into joy at reuniting after a long parting, and their morale increased greatly. This familiar figure was like a stimulant that injected all the players with a wave of hot blood. All of them were agitated to the point their scalps turned numb!

“It’s him! Black Star has returned!”