

Chapter 571

Is This Guy a Cockroach?

At the same time, the Six Nations were also attacked by the DarkStar spaceships. Without the protection of Han Xiao, the cities were ravaged by the projectiles, with charred corpses lying everywhere in the streets.

The tanks fired toward the spaceships in the sky, the artillery shells bursting out into black smoke as they bombarded the energy shields of the spaceship. However, even an armor-piercing round could not penetrate the shield made from interstellar technology and would only cause a few ripples. The DarkStar spaceships remained unaffected, only leaving behind a cloud of smoke in the area of impact before they turned to fire directly at the tanks.

The laser cannons effortlessly punched through the armor of the tanks, blowing them up from the inside. The tanks were quickly annihilated.

The civilization tiers of both parties were too far apart; the Six Nations had no way to resist.

However, the fighter planes continued to bombard the DarkStar spaceships. Even at the cost of being destroyed, none of the planes chose to retreat. They were akin to moths flying toward the flame in this one-sided battle.

Even though they knew it was impossible to break the defense of the spaceship, the planes still stubbornly launched their suicidal attacks.

The aliens wished to destroy the whole planet, so escaping would not be of any use. There was no path of retreat for them, and this disaster seemed to have awakened the tenacity of the Planet Aquamarine people. The Six Nations swore to guard their homeland till their very last breath.

Even if they knew that this was like a mantis trying to stop a cart, they would still put in all their strength to resist, despite being weak!

As the upper echelons of the Six Nations watched DarkStar ravage the city and the soaring levels of casualties, they felt a sadness within.

The Old Era had been a turbulent time, and because they had experienced countless wars, everyone had long become accustomed to it. However, they had to continuously consume the lives of their soldiers now, letting them die without any means of damaging the enemy. This was the first time that resistance had been futile.

The upper echelons of the Six Nations all had expressions that were as calm as a lake, but their fists were clenched so tight that their knuckles had turned white. In the past few months, they had continuously felt the sorrow of being a backward civilization. It was akin to being a child that continuously got trampled by the adults around it.

At this moment, the reinforcements from the Sanctuary arrived. Many of the players had also been brought over. While the enemies' spaceships outnumbered the reinforcements, a portion was successfully restrained, allowing the Six Nations to somewhat negate the threat of annihilation.

"Black Star's men have arrived." The clenched fists of the upper echelons loosened slightly.

Thank goodness... on this weak, backwater planet like ours, we still have someone like Black Star.

Only through him do we have some form of retaliatory strength.

...

Above the Sanctuary, there were vastly more DarkStar spaceships. They rained concentrated fire on the protective shield of the Sanctuary. Tremors and rumbling could constantly be felt. With Nagakin's troops continuously harassing the spaceships, they were unable to focus on breaking the protective shield.

This was especially so for Nagakin, who did not need other means to deal with the spaceships in the atmosphere. Blasts of flames from his body would be able to shatter a spaceship's energy shield, and a few punches would be enough to decimate the whole ship!

He had a worried expression on the whole time, constantly glancing at the battlefield where Han Xiao was. He had noticed the appearance of Degulish and company, and only then did he realise that their target was Black Star.

Nagakin wanted to turn around and provide assistance to Han Xiao, but the latter had informed him through his communicator that there was no need for assistance. Black Star himself would handle the three Calamity Grade Supers, whilst Nagakin would be in charge of attacking the spaceships.

The guy was mad!

Nagakin did not wish to imagine how Han Xiao was going to entangle with three Calamity Supers. If it was him, it would be equivalent to a death sentence!

Only after Han Xiao told him that he would definitely call upon him if he could not handle it any longer did Nagakin throw away his thoughts of reinforcing him. He had viewed Black Star's interactions with the upper echelons a few times and knew that this mercenary was extremely practical.

He would never sacrifice himself for a noble cause and would definitely have some assurance before he carried out his plan. Thus, he could only restrain his anxiety even though he did not know how Han Xiao was going to deal with the three of them.

Inside the protective shield, countless residents gazed with expressions of fear at the shield above their heads, which looked like it would shatter at any moment. This was their last line of defense. Everyone was so afraid that they were shaking and praying nonstop.

A portion of the DarkStar spaceships suddenly opened to release ground troops, which bypassed the protective shield to land on the ground. The tens of thousands of players immediately rushed forward to get a kill, and the inserted troops were drowned in the sea of players like pebbles, hardly even making a ripple.

With tens of thousands of Supers, all of whom were immortal, this sort of combat capability scared DarkStar into no longer carrying out a ground attack. The ground combatants of DarkStar all hugged on the doors of the spaceships, refusing to get off.

*D*mn, how good it is to be in the air. I'm not going to send myself to my grave!*

The DarkStar troops also could not be bothered to deal with those immortals, only focused on laying siege to the city. Because only a few of the players had the privilege of entering spaceships to fight in the aerial battle, the majority could only helplessly crane their necks up to look at the scene. A couple of people who had gotten bored out of their minds had already begun using their recording functions.

However, those people quickly found something else to do and all turned their heads to observe the earth shaking battlefield that Han Xiao was a part of.

...

Boom!

Degulish sent a fist through one of the tower shields of the G-1 Steel Army Corps warriors. The pugilist force radiated outward, and the surrounding mechanical warriors were also caught in the impact and blasted off.

Meanwhile, Terry rotated like a gyro, with a killing range of more than a hundred meters in diameter. The mechanical soldiers caught within his range were all cut into pieces.

With another two companions to suppress the firepower, Ember's black current could finally showcase its killing potential. The black current swept across like a tsunami, swallowing everything in its path. He alone destroyed over two thousand machines on his own.

The attack of three Calamity Grade Supers contained a terrifying destructive power. The number of machines in the mechanical army was reduced by a third in a short period of time. The losses were serious.

To use my current mechanical army to go against three Calamity Grades seems to be a little forced. Han Xiao had a solemn expression.

Those losses, however, were still within his expectations. A Calamity Grade was not that easy to deal with. With his current machines' performance, he had to sacrifice tens of thousands of cannon fodder before he could grind the energy of a Calamity Grade to zero. He also had to see what sort of ability the opponents had. If it was someone with an AOE skill such as Anur, then the difficulty would rise.

Thankfully, Ember's ability was better suited to go against carbon-based lifeforms. While it afforded both offense and defense, the consumption of energy was huge. Degulish was a pugilist, and while his single target offense was insanely high, he lacked an AOE skill. As a Mechanical Pugilist, Terry was the same. Thus, the mechanical army had some sort of effect on them, dragging out more time before the three of them could reach him.

However, Han Xiao only managed to dodge for a while before being pounced upon. At close range, he still fell into a passive state.

Degulish and Terry were both good at melee battles, so their offense was like a storm. Han Xiao could only defend. His energy shield was constantly being broken, and the Hovering Shield Shuttle had also been sliced in two. His giant mechanical hands had been blasted into smithereens, and he was only relying on the hardness of his Mechanical suit, with his HP slowly dwindling.

Whenever he commanded his mechanic army to rain fire, Ember would control his black current to withstand the gunfire and allow his teammates to focus on attacking Han Xiao.

The black current separated the mechanical army from Han Xiao, with the army outside and Han Xiao on the inside. While the mechanical army wished to rush inside to aid Han Xiao, they were all repelled by Ember. Because their numbers had dwindled, the pressure on Ember was a lot weaker as well, and he now had the energy to occasionally fire a shot at Han Xiao.

Only the eight Oathkeepers constantly guarded Han Xiao's side. They assisted in his battle but were broken one by one. The Oathkeepers were elite machines, and under the mechanical bonus given by Han Xiao, they had the ability to fight against a Grade B Super alone. However, this time, the opponent was Calamity Grade, and there were even three of them!

Bang!

The last Oathkeeper was viciously kicked by Degulish, and its mechanical parts spilled out like intestines. This was closely followed by Degulish grabbing its head and yanking it off, splashing its surroundings with motor oil. There were still a few sparking wires on its neck

"Whatever else you still have, call it all out." Degulish threw away the Oathkeeper's head, speaking arrogantly.

The eight Oathkeepers had all collapsed, and Han Xiao was half kneeling on the ground, coughing nonstop. His mechanical suit was quite damaged and was spraying sparks.

In his surroundings was the black current, blocking all his mechanical army through the control of Ember.

Han Xiao took a breath as he checked his status. His HP was still at eighty-two percent, his energy having just returned to full. However, his mechanical suit had sustained quite a bit of damage and was already at eight percent durability, activating its skill [Indestructible Toughness]. This gave him some immunity, but he needed to receive damage to his body to activate [Energy Absorption].

The Void Dragon Mechanical suit was decent equipment, and he had used it for a long time, with it being able to keep up with his promotion in Grades. Han Xiao did not wish to lose this Mechanical suit, and seeing its durability hit rock-bottom, he quickly stowed the suit away, exposing his body to the three Calamity Grades.

Only then did the three of them finally see his face.

"Finally, you are willing to come out from your turtle shell." The corners of Ember's mouth curled up.

Once a Mechanic abandoned his mechanical suit and revealed his true body, it meant that he had been forced down the path of no return.

"Stop talking nonsense. Hurry up and kill him." Terry looked impatient as he shook the metal pieces, turning them into a blade brimming with energy.

At this juncture, Han Xiao suddenly stood up straight. His expression did not have much nervousness, and his composure caused the trio from DarkStar to frown in response.

“Don’t rejoice too early. The battle has only just begun!”

As he spoke, Han Xiao stomped using his foot.

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Hum!

Endless Mechanical Force spread from his feet into his surroundings, akin to a large spider web. It easily bypassed the black current, covering the entire battlefield.

The scraps and broken parts lying around all connected to each other, buzzing with a loud noise.

The next instant, countless metal scraps floated up into the air, and the deformed scraps recovered their original shapes through the Mechanical Force. They were speedily re-constructed into the original mechanical warriors. The destroyed portion of the mechanic army returned.

Within the black current, the eight sets of Oathkeepers stood up once again, and one of them retrieved its head that had been thrown away, reinstalling it on its head with a click.

[Waste Modification]!

The destroyed machines were all repaired once more!

Looking at the eight sets of reformed Oathkeepers, Degulish and the others’ expressions dropped.

“This guy has a lot of tricks!” Terry snorted.

“It’s futile. Without his mechanical suit, he’s dead meat,” Degulish retorted in anger.

Ember coldly glowered. The current strength of the mechanical army had been restored, and the pressure on him sharply increased. He could not afford to attack Han Xiao any longer and could only concentrate on resisting the mechanical army.

Han Xiao’s face had blanched. Using [Waste Modification] on such a large scale was extremely taxing on his energy levels. His filled energy bar had already gone down by half in just a few moments!

The consumption of this skill depended on both the area of coverage and the number of machines. At the same time, it measured through a coefficient of $0.x$, where x was a variable. After multiplying everything, that would be equivalent to his energy consumption. The higher the level, the smaller this coefficient would become. Thus, as a Mechanic’s level increased, the cost of [Waste Modification] would naturally become cheaper.

Boom!

The next second, Degulish and Terry threw themselves forward once again and attacked with the force of a storm, reigniting the battle!

A fist harshly landed on Han Xiao’s body, and the metal alloy blade slashed out wound after wound on his flesh.

Without his mechanical suit bonus, Han Xiao became more passive. He was continuously hit with heavy blows, spilling out mouthfuls of blood. It looked as though he was at his wits’ end. The Calamity Grade

Supers' attacks were powerful, and when landing on his body, they caused thousands of damage per second to him.

However, after beating him up for long period of time, Degulish finally discovered that something was amiss.

Wait a minute!

This guy has spat out so many liters of blood. How is he still so active?

If Degulish could see Han Xiao's interface, he would see that his health and energy bars were constantly moving up and down. When the red rose, the blue fell, and when the red fell, the blue rose. While it looked scary, the total amount of HP never dropped less than half.

While Han Xiao looked bedraggled and terribly wounded, in actuality, he was as stable as an old dog without any sense of panic!

Every second he took several thousand points of damage, and with the crazy damage done, his energy bar likewise shot up crazily. While Degulish and Terry had great killing power, it could not keep up with the pace of Han Xiao's thought commands!

Han Xiao secretly relaxed. After this personal experiment, he finally discovered the tenacity of his vitality. Even the Aurora Character Summon Card that he had prepared in advance did not need to be used any longer!

[Middle Grade Cell Proliferation Control].

[Energy Absorption].

Those two Molding Abilities were just too OP!

Long live ol' buddy Feidin¹!

While he was not in mortal danger, he still felt the pain from being beaten up. However, compared to the pain he felt when undergoing his Race Evolution, this was like scratching an itch, almost a sort of massage.

Degulish had beat him up for half a day, his expressions constantly changing from viciousness to surprise, surprise to shock, and finally from shock to dumbfoundedness.

No matter how much strength they put into it, causing Black Star to vomit blood, there was no sign of serious injuries from the other party. He could still run, jump, and open his mouth to trash talk.

Not just Degulish, but even Terry was also stunned.

*What the f*ck? This guy is too f*cked up!*

Is he a cockroach? Why won't he just die?

Bang!

Another blow came, causing Han Xiao to fly back and slam heavily into the ground, creating a crater. Degulish and Terry, however, did not continue attacking. Instead, they stood back, suspicious as to whether they were actually fighting Han Xiao.

“Ah? Why are we not fighting anymore?”

Wiping the blood off the corners of his mouth, Han Xiao stood up once more. His clothes were covered in bloodstains, and after wiping off the dust off his body, he suddenly flashed a smile, as though he was full of energy.

“Are you done? I’m not comfortable enough yet. Put more effort into this. Did you guys not drink your milk?”

Ember’s pupils shrank, and he had an expression of disbelief. He remembered the past when he had first fought with Han Xiao back on Floating Dragon Island. Han Xiao had showcased his incredible healing ability, eventually forcing him to retreat.

At that time, Ember had thought that Han Xiao’s ability definitely had a limit; as long as the lethality was sufficient, it would be enough to wipe him out. At least, he had thought so until then.

However, Han Xiao had merely used his fleshy body to withstand the attacks of two Calamity Grade Supers, and even the earth had been levelled, yet he was still hale and hearty!

At this moment, Ember started to sway.

Could it be... that he was wrong from the start and that this guy’s recovery ability had no limits?

Then, was he... not an immortal freak that could not be killed?

Just as the trio stared in shock, from afar came the rumbling of footsteps, as though tens of thousands of troops were marching. Even the ground started to tremor.

They only saw the tens of thousands of players rushing toward Han Xiao with great momentum. Since they could not reach the spaceships in the air, they had decided to join the fun.

While they were all low-grade Supers, with more than 10,000 of them, many of whom had broken past the level 60 mark and achieved their first Race Evolution, they could be considered a group of dancing devils.

“Seeking death. I’ll deal with this group; you think of an idea to get rid of Black Star.”

Ember restrained the fear and shock in his heart, his eyes flashing with a cold glow. He prepared to use his ability to decimate this entire group.

Idea? What ideas could they have?

Degulish gritted his teeth, finally opening his communicator and sending an order up to the mothership.

“Activate the mothership’s main ray cannon!”

“Your Excellency, where should we aim?”

“Hit that d*mned Black Star!”

Not far away, Han Xiao's Cheshire grin suddenly froze on his face.

He had hit the motherload this time!

Chapter 572: Tanking the Main Cannon? (1)

The mothership's main ray cannon!

Only then did Han Xiao begin to panic. The lethality of the main cannon far outstripped that of the laser cannons attached to the side of the ship. Based on the size of this DarkStar mothership, one shot toward the planet could create a new trench. Using it just to deal with him was like using a cannon to kill a mosquito!

Was I too vicious to Degulish earlier? Han Xiao could not help but reflect.

If he had known about this, he would have exercised more restraint earlier, screaming out in misery and pretending that he had been severely wounded. At the very least, that was showing respect to their hard work! For him to sneer at them, he had trampled on their pride!

The other party was a Calamity Grade—how could they not be shown some face?

Han Xiao had no idea how much a blast of the main cannon would damage him. While he had proven the tenacity of his flesh through proper battle, it was another question to take the blast from a mothership's main cannon head-on!

The nemesis of having fast recovery was an explosive burst attack. For example, if Ames unreasonably took the whole of Floating Dragon and threw it as an attack, the damage inflicted would far outstrip the rate of recovery; he would certainly die!

The main cannon of the mothership belonged to that of the high damage category. While it was far from being able to compare to a planetary destroyer, its killing power was able to disintegrate a Calamity Grade if they merely used their fleshly body to withstand it. If they were lucky, they might still have a few charred pieces of flesh remaining.

As such, only a fool would stay and accept the cannon blast!

Han Xiao did not say a single word, immediately donning his still persevering Void Dragon Mechanical suit and flying toward the sky.

The BlackLight Stealth dived down, ready to take Han Xiao in.

"Stay here!" Ember turned his attention away from the players, and with a wave of his hand, the black current soared out to capture Han Xiao.

However, the speed of the black current was far from comparable to the maximum speed of the Void Dragon mechanical suit.

At this point, Degulish's head popped out multiple veins as he bent his legs, stomping and destroying the ground in a hundred-meter radius around him. In an instant, he appeared above Han Xiao's head, and a swirling vortex gathered around his fist. A piercing light could be seen dazzling from within; that was a Pugilist skill that Han Xiao had suffered from more than once previously.

Han Xiao only had the time to raise his arms, and the glowing fist hit the direct center of his crossed arms.

Bang!

It was as though the sky had exploded into a purple sun!

A forceful shock rushed toward Han Xiao, and being in midair, he had no way to transfer the impact. His vision blurred, and he only saw the BlackLight Stealth rapidly moving away from himself, followed by a heavy impact coming from his back. His entire body was slammed into the ground, and rubble covered him. Only a tiny pinprick of the sky was left in his vision.

This explosive fist had knocked Han Xiao straight from the sky into the ground.

His arms were weak and full of pain, with the interface showing the [Fractured] state on his panel. Han Xiao secretly lamented about how the fist strength of a Calamity Grade Pugilist was indeed extraordinary, even while he urged his energy to increase cell proliferation, swiftly healing his wounds.

The fractured bones were held in place through the contractions of his muscles, and with the increased proliferation of cells, the bones were connected in the blink of an eye.

Cell proliferation could repair damage inflicted to any part of the body. So long as it was repaired consciously, the negative conditions such as fractures or handicaps would also be recovered while recovering HP. This was a side bonus that Han Xiao had discovered when he was being beaten up, or else all his bones would have broken by now.

Dong! Dong!

Before he could even take a breath, the rubble above his head was blasted open as Degulish directly smashed through the ground. With his fists continuously hitting the ground, he resembled a human bulldozer.

Han Xiao did not wish to be buried alive, so he knocked away the falling rubble and flew out. However, Ember's black current shot forward at this point, blocking him for a moment.

"I've got you!"

Degulish rushed up with big steps, grabbing Han Xiao's waist in a bear hug. He quickly changed his position to move behind Han Xiao, his hands forming a lock as he wanted to use his strength to suppress Han Xiao's movements.

Comparing by Strength, Han Xiao was definitely not a match for the Calamity Grade Pugilist, and thus did not wish to tango with him at all.

Swoosh!

At that moment, Terry also took the chance. Several metal pieces elongation, piercing toward Han Xiao's eyes, throat, heart, and other vital areas.

Clank!

The two Oathkeepers shielded Han Xiao from the deluge of metal. Each time he used [Waste Modification], the quality of the machinery would be reduced by a level. Thus, the Oathkeepers did not manage to block off much of the metal projectiles before they were pierced into beehives. However, they managed to buy Han Xiao some precious time.

Han Xiao fully activated his mechanical suit propulsion module, bringing Degulish with him as he rushed toward the sky to avoid the assault from Terry.

Even after struggling twice, Han Xiao was still unable to disengage himself from Degulish's lock. Thus, he changed his method. The legs of the mechanical suit suddenly split open, and Han Xiao slid out from his suit, easily escaping. At the same time, he utilized the Mechanical Force to disintegrate the Void Dragon Mechanical suit, allowing it to form up around him once again.

Degulish was left hugging the air and immediately fell back to the ground.

The threat of the mothership main cannon gripped his heart, and with every additional second of delay, Han Xiao felt the danger increase another notch. However, with Degulish and Terry eyeing him, any attempt made to fly toward the sky would be blocked.

The BlackLight Stealth could only hover above his head and did not dare get too close to the Calamity Grade Supers because it would be torn apart if it did.

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The time taken for the battle had already past five minutes, and the cooldown for his [Void Travel] was over. Han Xiao wanted to use the skill to rush toward his spaceship, but once he entered the void travel state, he would phase through all matter, unable to affect any matter. Even his mechanical suit would be useless, and he would only be able to float using his mechanical force. The duration afforded by [Void Travel] was insufficient for him to fly manually into the spaceship.

Things are not looking so good...

Han Xiao felt a sense of helplessness in his heart and turned to rush toward the tens of thousands of players.

So long as those 'foot soldiers' could buy some time by delaying the three Calamity Grade Supers, he would be able to escape the battlefield. The saying was true, 'one trains soldiers for thousands of days just to use them during an opportune moment'.

Ember snapped his fingers a few times.

Pa pa pa...

The tens of thousands of players saw their HP get reduced to 0, and they turned into white motes as they were sent to revive.

Ember's ability was just that overpowered. If one did not have the ability to resist true damage, so long as they were weaker than him, they were not qualified to fight against him. Numbers did not mean a thing to him, which was why he was regarded as a killing machine by DarkStar. He could effortlessly slaughter millions in the blink of an eye.

...

The tens of thousands of players simultaneously revived in the square, stunned in place.

"F*ck, I died just like that!"

"Carbon dissociation? True Damage? This Boss is broken!"

"I'm out of here. It's obvious that Black Star's battlefield is not something that we can affect."

"That was part of the storyline killing us."

The storyline killing quickly spread, and the majority of players present believed in it, not going over to join the activities. In the game, they could only die ten times every six days, so the players did not wish to spend their limited death entries on such a pointless storyline action. Thus, they simply chose to crane their necks and watch Han Xiao's fight.

This was also not the first time that they had watched a storyline plot. The period in Version 1.0 when the Six Nations warred against the Germinal Organization, as well as the resolving of the Mutation Source earlier, had already prepared the players for it... Come to think of it, it seemed like Planet Aquamarine had quite a number of storylines. Wow.

Everyone felt that this time was also a personal storyline of Black Star and was curious as to the development of the plot.

In the eyes of the players, to have Planet Aquamarine meet with such a crisis, it signified the transition that they were about to leave the novice planet, which should be part of the plot.

As the leader of the Guiding Faction, Black Star would be their head for a long period of time. Therefore, many of the players hypothesized that Black Star would likely shine in this event, leaving an even deeper impression. However, they were unable to predict what would truly happen.

...

Seeing the tens of thousands of players brushing their butts and sauntering off, Han Xiao could not stop the corners of his mouth twitching.

Tut, looks like I can't rely on this group of players. The gap between them and the Calamity Grade Supers is too great.

Degulish and the other two encircled Han Xiao in a triangular formation but did not proceed to close in on him, maintaining some distance.

The three of them did not wish to allow Han Xiao to escape, but they also did not wish to take the cannon blast together with him. The cannon blast was not going to differentiate between friend or foe.

"Risda, is there any way to stop the firing of the mothership cannon?" Han Xiao asked softly into his communicator.

"I have no way to go about it. I infiltrated another mothership and can only help you to check the situation... Oh no, the charging of the main cannon is complete, and the target has already been locked on. You have roughly 8.6 seconds left."

“Seems like I can’t avoid the blast. Ok, let’s go. I can tank this...”

Han Xiao could only attempt to motivate himself. He threw out a few compressed orbs, which expanded into layers of alloy covers. This was a portable tactical defense fortress that could be used for protection. It had no other effect than that being extremely durable.

This was closely followed by the mechanical soldiers throwing themselves on Han Xiao, on top of the portable defense fortress, using their bodies as shields. They also activated their own shields and faced the sky.

Degulish and the others did not wish to enter the blasting radius of the cannon and would turn a blind eye as long as Black Star did not escape. Thus, they turned around and attacked the mechanical army around them. While only a small portion passed through the three of them to reach the defense fortress, the defense line constantly got thicker.

The remaining shuttles and mechanical hands also flew up into the sky and activated their shields.

Han Xiao had released almost all his machinery for defense, and he did not know how much they could offset. Thus, he recovered his HP back to the maximum and concentrated his energy, readying himself to use Aurora’s Character Summon Card.

At that moment, Degulish, who was blocking the mechanical army, received a notification from the mothership. The three of them stopped their actions immediately, retreating far away.

“The deed is done. Black Star cannot avoid this!”

Degulish revealed a satisfied smile. They had chased after him and blocked Han Xiao from escaping, all in order to allow the main cannon to lock onto and hit Black Star. This was the method with the highest possibility of killing him.

At that moment, within the defensive fortress, Han Xiao raised his alertness to the highest, as well as activating the skill [Repel—Thorns], which he had obtained for the Germinal Organization Leader. The skill would offset thirty percent of the damage received from the next attack.

“It’s coming!”

Chapter 573: Tanking the Main Cannon? (2)

The speed of the main cannon was undoubtedly fast, and now that he had been locked on to, there was no point in him trying to dodge. The entire process from the firing of the cannon to the time it hit was measured in milliseconds. Even Degulish and the other two had to move away before the cannon was fired.

Since he was unable to board the BlackLight Stealth, he could not hope to avoid the impact of the cannon fire with his own speed. His [Void Travel] skill might be able to avoid one shot, but so long as the main cannon remained active, they would just need to fire another shot if they saw him dodge.

Instead, it would be better for him to use the limited amount of time to stack all the defenses he had, then use the [Repel—Thorns] skill as a guarantee and find out the damage of the cannon. With so many measures, his chances of survival should be quite high, and if he survived, it would be able to work as a bluff to scare the enemy.

Having thought of this, a horrific energy was detected. He had just felt it when the entire attack had already arrived.

Han Xiao hunkered down in his fortress. He could not see the outside perspective of the cannon ray being shot down and could only feel through the feedback of his Mechanical Force when the various shields shattered, and his numerous mechanical soldiers were destroyed. A piercing white light filled his vision, and horrible heat covered his entire body.

Boom!

A huge force seemed to press down upon him like a mountain, slapping Han Xiao flat on the ground and wrapping him in the energy column of the main cannon. His field of vision was blank, and the energy ray rushed down continuously like a waterfall, forcing him to remain prone.

His HP levels rapidly dropped, and even with the thirty percent reduced damage from the skill, the first impact reduced his total HP by a third. The subsequent high temperature and energy shock caused continuous damage after that, rapidly sapping away his HP. Han Xiao could not move, and only felt his flesh and blood melt and evaporate as various negative statuses appeared on his interface.

If it was an ordinary person, just the cannon blast would have disintegrated them. Even dregs would not have remained.

Han Xiao gritted his teeth as he activated the skill [Middle Grade Cell Proliferation Control] to replenish his HP as fast as possible. Every tick would allow him to regain twenty-eight percent of his HP. This allowed him to break even with the falling HP level. The gauge continuously jumped up and down, giving him goosebumps, and he prepared to activate Aurora's Character Summon Card at any time.

To recover more than 10,000 HP every second would be equivalent to using 2,000 to 3,000 Onas of Energy. Luckily, with the cannon dealing damage to him, it provided him with an inexhaustible supply of energy, allowing him to fully display his HP recovery abilities.

The interface was flooded with notifications about receiving damage. While the attack from the main cannon also contained a portion of true damage, it was nullified by Han Xiao's talent of [Steel Body]. This point was critical, as it helped to reduce a large portion of damage taken by him, thus allowing him to only suffer the regular damage.

...

A few seconds earlier...

Yet another DarkStar spaceship was shot down, and wreathed in flames, Nagakin briefly paused in midair, looking down Han Xiao's battlefield, the surprise in his eyes evident.

Black Star really managed to withstand the attacks of three Calamity Grades! How has he achieved that?

Nagakin was extremely surprised, as even he could not achieve that level.

At this point, he realized that there were changes to the battlefield. He only saw that Black Star was constantly imposing defenses on top of himself, whereas the three Calamity Grades had somehow scampered away, as though hiding from something dangerous.

“Why have they stopped fighting? What is Black Star defending himself against?”

Nagakin had a confused expression on. However, before he could think about the reason, the answer was presented to him.

Swoosh!

A huge beam of light shot down from the skies, connecting heaven and earth to strike Han Xiao’s position. The word ‘strike’ might be a little inaccurate, as the beam was a good few hundred meters wide!

From the sky to the ground, the time taken for the beam to traverse the distance was quicker than the blink of an eye. Even with Nagakin’s reaction speed, he did not have time to take any countermeasures and could only squint to resist the strong light.

Bang!

The cannon blasted out a new landmark!

It was akin to a spear of God stabbing straight into the earth. It gave off the illusion that it could penetrate this planet, striking an intense sense of shock in everyone!

The light was piercing, and Nagakin struggled to open his eyes as his expression constantly changed.

Were they nuts? To actually use the main cannon just to deal with a single target...

How did Black Star manage to rile them up so much?

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Boom!

The next moment, a violent explosion occurred. The shockwaves spread from the epicenter, and debris and soil was blown outward from the point of impact.

The DarkStar mothership’s main cannon utilized a separate energy furnace that was dedicated to it. Thus, its killing power was many times higher than that of its light weapons. While the light weapons were focused on penetrative power, the main cannon was geared more toward ‘single target’ damage. Of course, if one was so crazy as to use the main cannon to hit an individual, then the effect was no different from an AOE.

The main cannon continued to release energy, the terrifying high temperatures distorting the air as shockwaves constantly blasted outward. The earth roiled, and the area covered by the cannon beam had turned into a ring-shaped depression while still continuously expanding.

Inside the protective shield, the faces of countless players were illuminated by the white light, and their expressions were slack, with only that beam of light in their vision.

Was that... Heaven’s Judgement?

Xiu!

The main cannon stopped firing, and only a final glare could be seen disappearing from the core of the crater, flickering.

Boom!

The accumulated energy within suddenly imploded, the resulting sound from the explosion louder than before. Flames and smoke spread out at a high speed, as though it was an opening umbrella.

Heated winds swept out, and the mountains trembled!

Even those hiding inside the protective shield felt the violent tremors.

It was only after a long while that the energy within eventually dispersed. Smoke obscured the vision of everyone present, and one could only see that there was a huge crater left in the outer sector of the Sanctuary, as though a meteor had struck there.

“What was that?”

The hearts of countless of players present shook.

Even Bennett felt a little lost for words.

Hila slammed herself on the protective shield, her pupils shrinking into tiny points as she stared.

Nagakin stood on top of the protective shield with a worried expression as he gazed at the position of where Han Xiao was, the center of the crater that was surrounded by smoke.

Degulish, Ember, and Terry stood up, their faces covered in soot. They had attempted running right before the cannon fired and were knocked off their feet by the incoming debris and soil waves, landing in different locations. After standing up, they simultaneously looked at the crater, wanting to know the outcome.

All the DarkStar and Godoran spaceships suddenly ceased firing, floating in the sky as they watched the outcome below.

After the smoke dispersed, one could see that the center of the crater was several meters deep. The slope was steep, and the soil got redder in color the lower it got. There were many areas that had crystallized due to the high temperature, with some rocks having melted into magma, gleaming as it flowed down the slope.

Countless mechanical fragments were scattered around, with some having been melted into molten iron, glowing red-hot.

At the middle of the crater, a figure slowly climbed up, his burnt body radiating smoke. He was blacker than the night sky, and after shuddering a few times, the burnt scraps on his body fell off, revealing pale skin. With a zap of the Mechanical Force from his hands, several pieces of machinery transformed into a pair of pants to cover his lower body.

Han Xiao stood there, his upper body bare, supporting the back of his neck with one hand as he stretched and revealed a smile.

“Huff... that was intense. I can feel my whole body becoming more comfortable!”

Everybody's gaze landed on Han Xiao, their mouths agape.

He... he didn't die?

The energetic and spritely Black Star contrasted with the crater that was full of death.

This scene caused Degulish, Terry, Ember, Nagakin, Hila, and the players to suffer from near mental breakdowns, their eyes bulging open with an expression of shock.

Chapter 574: Tanking the Main Cannon? (3)

"Even the mothership's main cannon could not kill him?"

Degulish opened his eyes wide in disbelief.

Ember's fists were clenched tight, his face pale.

Terry shuddered, with an expression of shock.

The battlefield was dead silent!

Han Xiao glanced at the machinery scattered around him, and a hint of pain flashed across his eyes. He was alright, but the majority of his Mechanical Army had been demolished. This time, his losses were huge. Right now, he had over 10 million Enas, and Godora still owed him another 15 million Enas, so money was not a problem.

The main problem was the time needed to rebuild the entire Mechanical Army. After this battle, he would probably have to spend a long time in the machinery modification room to restore the current size of his army.

The Great Mechanic Han counted the notifications on his interface, which indicated the duration of the main cannon shot and the damage inflicted. It was divided into several tiers, with the first impact the highest, gradually decreasing after. It accumulated to more than 50,000 damage in total, higher than his own HP. Most of it was soaked up by himself, with his machinery and shields having absorbed a portion of it.

Having experienced it once, Han Xiao had a good gauge now. If he did not have his defensive measures in place, directly receiving the impact with his body, he would have been hit by a total of more than 80,000 damage. His own HP would not have been able to keep up, and he would most likely have been required to use Aurora's Character Summon Card. There were three usages left. Plus, he still had his [Void Travel] skill.

I can hold on a few more times. There's no need to escape right now. I can give this mission another shot. Why not?

Han Xiao's eyes flashed, and with a wave of his hand, the hull of the BlackLight Stealth opened, spewing out dozens of compressed orbs. He used his Mechanical Force to draw them onto his body, unfolding the spare Amphiptere mechanical suit. Since he always had a habit of storing spare machinery, he had placed several sets of equipment in his spaceship's warehouse.

The original mechanical suit and compressed orbs that he had on his body were all smashed. Even his Void Dragon Mechanical suit could not withstand the impact. However, the void dragon bones were durable, and most of his core materials were not completely damaged, just scattered around the area. Moreover, with his current position in Floating Dragon, to apply for a few pieces of Void Dragon bones was an easy task for him.

Putting on his mechanical suit, Han Xiao leaped out of the deep crater, hovering in midair as he looked straight at a dumbfounded Degulish. He utilized his thick skin to teasingly say, "Heh heh, I tricked you. Actually, that hit was quite effective. Do you want to try again? Who knows? You might be able to kill me."

Degulish could hear the mocking inside his words and was so angered that his entire face turned purple. He lost control and bellowed into the communicator, "Continue firing!"

Since one cannon shot could not finish him off, make it two! I don't believe he can last that long!

Degulish leaped up, and like a cannon shell, he rushed straight toward Han Xiao. The mothership's main cannon required time to recharge, and he had to tie down Han Xiao to prevent him from escaping. Seeing the situation, Ember and Terry could only put aside their emotions to deal with the matter at hand and cooperate with Degulish.

"Black Star, the mothership's main cannon has begun the second round of charging." From his helmet, Risda's voice sounded.

"Show me the duration," Han Xiao replied.

On the upper left-hand corner of his tactical screen, a row of numbers appeared, counting down. The second blast of the main cannon would be fully charged and fire after forty seconds.

Han Xiao and the other three once again started to fight. The durability of Amphiptere was far below that of the Void Dragon Mechanical suit, and it was not long before it was reduced to scrap metal. However, he still had a few more compressed orbs containing different mechanical suits, and he merely kept replacing them after they were destroyed.

Thirty seconds soon passed. The moment the second shot would be fired was getting closer.

Having once again smashed Han Xiao into the ground, Degulish and the others moved away to avoid the blast.

However, this time was different. Han Xiao did not remain on the spot to prepare his defenses but rather lunged toward Terry who was nearest to him.

The fact that Han Xiao was aware of the timing was not surprising to them, because after the previous scenario, he could easily have inferred that the cannon strike was coming when they started to avoid him.

"He wants to drag Terry down with him?"

Degulish immediately understood Han Xiao's intention. He was not surprised and only snorted coldly as he muttered, "He'll never catch up to Terry."

As a Calamity Grade, Terry's speed surpassed Han Xiao's. Even at his full speed, the distance between the two was constantly widening. Based on this scenario, Han Xiao could never catch up to Terry.

Ember suddenly lurched to a stop, screaming out, "No, hurry and stop the cannon! Black Star has a teleportation ability!"

In his previous battle, Han Xiao had used his skill [Void Travel] once. It was to stop Ember from utilizing his Esper ability, and Ember had almost been kicked in the crotch. Thus, his impression of that was deep.

Having been reminded, Degulish's expression dropped as he grabbed his communicator and bellowed.

"Trouble! Cancel the lock on now!"

At that moment, Han Xiao activated [Void Travel] and flashed across the remaining distance to appear beside Terry, an evil grin on his face.

"Hehe, come, let's bet who can last longer this time."

"No!"

Terry's face drastically changed, a hint of fear appearing on his face together with a 'Don't-come-closer' look.

Boom!

The next moment, the second shot was fired from the cannon, and another mountain range appeared.

Explosions, debris, soil flew everywhere, just like the previous scene. Everyone inside the protective shield felt the tremors once more.

When the smoke disappeared, everyone discovered that the aim of the cannon was off, tens of miles away from where Han Xiao was supposed to be.

At the very last second, the commander of the DarkStar mothership had hurriedly shifted the muzzle of the cannon.

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Terry stood rooted, his mouth agape, as he stared at the crater far away from him. His whole body was covered in cold sweat, and he immediately escaped from Han Xiao to a few thousand kilometers away.

Having escaped the jaws of death, Terry still felt trepidation at what had occurred, heaving and gasping for breath.

"Well, count yourself lucky."

Han Xiao remained where he was, his mouth twisted, thinking it a pity.

If DarkStar did not have the chance to react, he would have been able to give his enemies a taste of their own medicine. Through killing with this borrowed knife... no, cannon, he would get rid of a Calamity Grade Super, obtaining his repayment with interest and at the same time having one less enemy.

Even so, it served its purpose. Han Xiao shook his head, turning back to look at Degulish and company. He waved his hands, revealing a look of apology.

“What next? Are you still firing?”

“You...”

Degulish almost broke his teeth as he clenched his jaws, almost crushing his communicator as well. However, he did not dare use the same tactic on Han Xiao anymore.

Black Star had received the first shot, and they had almost killed Terry with the next shot. Those two shots proved that the main cannon was useless against Black Star and could even backfire on them!

The three Calamity Grade could not kill Black Star, and even the mothership’s main cannon with the highest lethality could not stop him. This allowed them to discover a point—even though it was Black Star that could not defeat them, the advantage had fallen into his hands! Before this, they never would have thought that a little fellow who was not even Calamity Grade would be so troublesome!

He could not be beaten to death, nor could he be killed. Then, could they take him up to the ship?

Degulish immediately vetoed this idea. What a joke! Why would anyone take this malicious star onto their own spaceship?

At that moment, an urgent message came through the communicator.

“There’s a strong spatial fluctuation detected nearby. Godora’s fleet has broken through the lock down in space, and their reinforcements are approaching us through hyperdrive. We do not have much time and must retreat.”

Han Xiao had also received news from Nagakin at the same time and heaved a sigh of relief. The Godoran reinforcements had arrived, albeit a bit late, but it was better late than never.

Degulish’s face was extremely ugly to behold. He had no other choice but to accept that their mission had failed this time. Because they had been delayed too long by Han Xiao, they were not able to cause greater damage to Planet Aquamarine.

The DarkStar troops began to retreat, and Degulish and company retreated from the flight, boarding the spaceship to take over command.

At that moment, the three of them heard the light laugh from Han Xiao.

“Come and play when you have the time!”

Han Xiao smiled as he waved, adding another sentence in his heart— *If you still have the chance to do so.*

“Just you wait, I’ll see if you still can laugh in the future!”

Degulish had a dark expression as he turned to enter the spaceship.

Ember deeply looked at Han Xiao... *Next time, I’ll definitely find a way to kill you.*

The DarkStar troops began to retreat, and the mothership that remained in outer space also took its leave.

Because the reinforcements sent by Godora were overly huge this time, along with the escort teams from all the other Calamity planets coming over, DarkStar did not wish to exchange fire and hurriedly retreated.

After watching the DarkStar motherships depart, Han Xiao shifted his gaze, looking around at the devastated Sanctuary as his smile slowly vanished. He exhaled heavily.

This time, their losses were heavy.

The main base was still fine, but the outer sections of the Sanctuary had been wrecked, becoming a pile of debris. The death count had not been tallied, but it would not be far from their estimations. In addition to the losses of the Six Nations, the number of dead and injured would reach tens of thousands.

They had scraped through the Mutation Disaster, but the survivors had now experienced another calamity, causing their civilization to receive a big hit.

The only good news was that Planet Aquamarine's civilization did not completely die out.

"Bennett, count the losses and treat the wounded."

With a sigh, Han Xiao used the communicator to issue some instructions before he plopped down on the ground, facing the sky.

Once the pressure vanished, all the pain burst forth, and it attacked his body in waves, causing him to feel like not moving a single muscle.

This battle had truly tired him out.

Thankfully, though the losses were huge, the outcome was still reasonable. At least it was over.

Over on Nagakin's side, he gazed on with a complicated expression at Han Xiao, who was lying on the ground, with the horror in his heart still surging.

While DarkStar had taken advantage of the unprotected Planet Aquamarine and launched an attack with three Calamity Grade Supers, their siege was fruitless. Even the main cannon could not kill Black Star, and in contrast, because of Black Star's actions, they had prevented the planet from being destroyed and even forced them to retreat!

Nagakin could imagine, in the following period, how much this news would shake the Shattered Star Ring!

Chapter 575: Mission Reward, Plan Preparations

A series of notifications popped up on Han Xiao's interface.

[Planet Aquamarine's Crisis] has been completed!

You have received 620,000 Experience.

+2 Garton Star System Renown

+1,500 Planet Aquamarine: Six Nations Faction Favorability

[Assassination Target] has been completed!

You have received 12,100,000 Experience.

+30 Garton Star System Renown

+1,000 Godora Faction Favorability

You have received 1 Legendary Point.

Both tasks were completed in one go. Han Xiao glanced at the notifications. His renown in the Garton Star System had not been low to start with. When the news spreads, there would still be an additional increase in renown. After this battle, his renown would probably take another step forward and attain the tier of [Famous Far and Wide], allowing him to join the list of notable characters in the star system.

He even got a new Legendary Point.

Star System Legendary Point (Garton Star System): Battling against Three Calamities—You were besieged by three Grade A Supers, facing them alone, but you were not defeated in the end. This proves your strength! This is a legendary deed, enough to make anyone who hears of this feel surprised and intrigued. Those who know you will recognize your ability, and your deeds will be sung throughout the galaxy!

The Legendary Point of a Star System had wider coverage than Planetary Legendary Points. This would help to increase his rewards. While the Planetary Legendary Point gave an increase of five percent in rewards, the Star System Legendary Point gave twelve percent. This was also Han Xiao's first Legendary Point of the Star System.

Other than the mission reward, the NPC template was updated with a new dungeon along with a title.

[Warfare: Defense of Planet Aquamarine]

What an unexpected joy. Han Xiao's eyes sparkled.

Only the more sensational battles would result in the generation of a dungeon copy. A similar one to this dungeon would be the [Warfare: Power of the Dragon Emperor]. This meant that his battle had reached the level that was deemed worthy of being saved as a copy.

The rewards were easily dealt with. At this point, the Godoran spaceships slowly landed from the sky, and the commander brought a whole bunch of subordinates down as he briskly walked over.

"DarkStar installed a space disruptor. We're late because of that and allowed them to escape. How's the situation here?"

As he spoke, the gaze of the fleet commander slowly drifted toward the crater blasted by the main cannon. His heart sank as he thought that the mission had failed, and Planet Aquamarine had suffered from irreparable damage.

“The enemy did not succeed...” Nagakin briefly summarized the happenings, including the actions of Han Xiao. He heavily emphasized the fight between Han Xiao and DarkStar.

As he listened, the Godoran commander, alongside with his subordinates, changed the way they looked at Han Xiao. The disbelief in their faces was clear to see.

To resist three Calamity Grades, and even be able to tank the mothership main cannon blast, this was too overpowered. Just by looking at the surrounding battle scars, the Godorans could tell how intense the battle had been.

The upper echelons of Godora were still anxiously awaiting the results. They did not care about Planet Aquamarine, but they did care about Han Xiao’s safety. As long as Han Xiao remained alive, their intelligence transaction could continue.

When they received the news that three high-level combatants from DarkStar had been sent out, the upper echelons had felt their hearts grow cold, thinking that Black Star had been caught stealing information and thus had been wiped. However, the report from Nagakin surprised them.

To think that Black Star could actually go against three without being defeated! One had to know that he was not facing off against weaklings but rather Calamity Grade Supers! As for tanking the main cannon, such a level of strength caused even the knowledgeable Godoran superiors to be shocked.

The performance of Black Star was enough to rank him as a first-rate combatant!

Because the Sanctuary and the Six Nations had been damaged to varying degrees, people were organized to deal with it. Since the Godorans had arrived and needed camp for a while in case DarkStar decided to make a return trip, they pitched in to help clear up the wreckage.

There were ruined structures everywhere, and flames and smoke still lingered. Many of the wounded were still being dug out by the guards from the ruins, screaming miserably. There were also people who were weeping at the loss of their family. It was a scene of tragedy. Although DarkStar had been repelled, they had caused countless deaths, and the wounds would forever remain in the survivors’ hearts.

Fortunately, many of the surviving residents did not have time to be sad, instead taking the initiative to join the disaster relief effort, contributing their strength.

Han Xiao took a short rest before walking in the direction of the base. Along the way, the participants of the disaster relief effort rushed about, brushing past him to save people. While no one stopped in front of him, all of them would nod toward Han Xiao as a sign of respect, their expressions carrying a hard-to-express gratitude.

After entering the base, Hila came over and looked him over once. She paused for a while before asking uncertainly, “Are you really not injured?”

“If you’re injured, you can tell me. I can treat you,” Aurora hurriedly added.

“I’ve faced a lot of such incidents.” Han Xiao waved his hands as he boasted with a straight face.

“... Whatever floats your boat.” Hila paused for a while and decided not to say anything more.

“Hehe, Sis was really worried about you just now.” Aurora giggled.

Without waiting for Han Xiao to look over, Hila hurriedly explained, “If you died, then we probably would have died as well.”

Han Xiao rolled his eyes in response and commented, “Being able to help me is better than saying anything.”

Hila had never accepted Han Xiao’s invitation directly, but this time, she did not deny anything. She slowly said, “I’ll practice hard with the Dragon Emperor and become strong as quickly as possible.”

“Me too!” Aurora raised her hand.

At this time, Bennett walked over from the side, his expression one of sorrow.

“The outer areas of the Sanctuary have almost been completely destroyed and can only be rebuilt. The losses of the Six Nations were even greater, with cities being completely reduced to nothing.

They are currently busy with disaster relief efforts, so let me thank you on their behalf for the reinforcements sent. Otherwise, the losses would have expanded even further. It is estimated that a total of twelve million people have been killed on Planet Aquamarine, and the number of injured and crippled might be several times this number.”

“That’s better than expected.” Han Xiao nodded.

DarkStar’s assault had only lasted around ten minutes but had already caused millions to perish. Their efficiency was shocking, and if not for the mercenaries, Nagakin, and the players, the casualties would have been much greater.

As for the Godoran reinforcements, they had actually come very quickly, attributed to the hyperdrive station that Godora had installed early on. If DarkStar was given more time, it would no longer have been a problem of deaths and injuries but rather if there were any living people left.

The destruction of the cities was even more serious, basically becoming scrap, and they all had to be rebuilt.

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“Were those attackers from DarkStar?” Bennett asked.

Han Xiao only nodded.

“Abominable...” Bennett’s expression was filled with helplessness and fury. Even if he clearly knew who the enemy was, he had no way to deal with them. He did not even possess the qualifications to talk to them and could only swallow this bitter pill. His eyes were filled with vengeance and hatred.

“Relax. I’ll settle the problem of DarkStar soon. You do not need to worry.” Han Xiao smiled.

Patting the shoulders of Bennett, Han Xiao then moved past several people, walking deep into the base. He only left a dwindling silhouette in the eyes of Hila and the rest.

Those few people seemed to see an illusion where the departing shadow of Han Xiao leaving the planet intersected with his current departing shadow. Before they knew it, this old acquaintance had already grown to the point where they could only look up to him.

...

Returning to his room, Han Xiao took a bath before putting on a fresh set of clothes. The battle had greatly consumed his stamina, and the moment he relaxed, his stomach growled in hunger. He finished more than twenty high-concentration nutrition bars before he felt some form of stamina returning.

Knock, knock, knock.

Knocking was heard from the door. Herlous stood outside with a group of his officers.

Because the majority of them had gone to support the Six Nations, they had only returned a while ago. Upon hearing of Han Xiao's battle results, the group was stunned and even thought that their captain had been mistaken for someone. Only after confirming this fact did they then accept it and immediately ran over to find Han Xiao.

The moment the door opened, everyone rushed into the room in an instant.

"I heard that you repelled three Calamity Grades, and even the main cannon could not hurt you!" Herlous had an expression of surprise, looking up and down Han Xiao before speaking in confusion. "When did you become so powerful? Why was I unaware of it?"

"If we have time, we can fight a round. Then you'll find out."

"This... better not." Herlous shuddered out of reflex.

Their previous fight could barely be considered a spar, but now it would just be a one-sided beatdown. Herlous did not indulge in being abused, and it seemed like he could only beat his captain through playing cards.

Han Xiao smiled before turning around to see Sylvia staring at him with sparkling eyes.

"Teacher, I want to learn this!"

"Scram, why the f*ck do you want to learn everything?"

"No... I really want to learn!"

"You can stop thinking about it. That's something that cannot be learned."

The little face of Sylvia drooped down as she huffed. "Unfair. Why is it like this?"

On the side, Ginette batted her eyes and licked her lips. "Captain, turns out you were this strong. Should we one day... try it out?"

"You can find Harmon for that. I'm not interested." Han Xiao's lips twitched.

As though he had received a cue, Harmon scratched his head, turning over to look at Ginette as he snorted, "You want a fight? I can accompany you anytime."

"I'm not talking about fighting!" Ginette's face froze.

The oldest Volga curled his lips as he thought, *Bullsh*t, how could that not be considered fighting?*

All the officers were babbling on, and only Feidin smiled warmly as he asked, "Black Star, you're not injured, right?"

"Nothing too serious." Han Xiao nodded, sweeping his gaze across the room, before asking, "Where's Aroshia?"

Aroshia did not follow the rest of the officers over to view... ahem, to visit him.

"She overexerted herself and has gone over to the reaction furnace to recharge."

Han Xiao nodded in understanding. Because Aroshia was an energy body, the energy furnace was her best supply station.

The group of officers rambled on for a while, giving Han Xiao a headache. Thus, he eventually chased them out to help with the disaster relief whilst he stayed in his room to rest.

He did not need to stick his hands into the disaster relief as he had more important things to do.

The battle had resulted in him losing the majority of his machinery. The first task at hand was to rebuild his Mechanical Army, restoring the previous quantity. The second matter was to break through to the Calamity Grade as quickly as possible. He was already at Level 136, with his combat capability close to the great divide of Grade A. Most likely, when he exceeded Level 140, he would enter the realm of Calamity Grades.

The Level 140 Advancement happened to be the next Race Evolution, and this would result in a huge promotion.

It was just nice that his advanced class [Virtual Mechanic] was currently at Level 11, with the upper limit being Level 20. This meant that even if his total level reached 140, there would not be any Class Missions, only a Promotion Mission. Furthermore, he still had a leftover [Mission Completion Card] on hand, which could allow him to undergo his Promotion immediately.

However, while he was only separated from advancing by four levels, every increase in level at this point required a veritable ocean of experience. From Level 136 to Level 140, he required more than three billion experience.

The upper limit of Version 1.0 was Level 60, whereas the limit for Version 2.0 was Level 90. However, the experience required to upgrade would only increase. In the future, the upper limit increase during each version update would gradually decrease as players required more time to upgrade.

At the beginning of the battle, Han Xiao had allocated all his stored experience to upgrade himself. If he wished to obtain another three billion experience points in a short amount of time, he could only turn to the players.

Godora was already quietly preparing for the final battle, while DarkStar was completely unprepared. He had to quickly recover his combat strength in order to obtain the right to participate. After all, [Godora's Ally] was also a main storyline.

It seems like there's a need to refresh the batch of knowledge and skills for the players. Since I also have plenty of funds in my account, I can freely choose the professional knowledge for the Pugilist and Esper classes, then copy it and sell it. I just need to change the prices from money to experience. Oh, that's right. I also have the dungeon copy and can milk it for quite the sum.

Han Xiao had long become accustomed to such methods and conveniently opened the forums, looking at the current situation of the players.

Various posts on the forum came into view. In Planet Aquamarine's board, most of the posts were basically about him, and the forum had exploded into conversation about his battle. Numerous screenshots and videos taken depicted the historical scene where he took the main cannon head on. The players had exploded in excitement!

The trending posts were all dominated by him once again.

Casually opening a few of those posts, he got goosebumps from seeing himself inside the videos.

All the posts put up by the players could be summarized using the few phrases.

Strong! Fantastic! Earth shaking! Explosive! I'm in love!

For those who had already joined the Black Star Mercenary Group, they were the happiest. Because the stronger their boss was, the more positive an impression people would have of them. In addition, there was still Dragon Emperor Ames on top, and just thinking about it, the future of their faction seemed quite bright.

This event can be considered an opportunity, to allow players to feel that the storyline for Planet Aquamarine has already ended, and it is the time to enter a higher stage, to lead them into the galaxy...

Moreover, according to the needs of Godora and the galaxy's journalists, what had happened on Planet Aquamarine would be vigorously publicized. If he did not guess incorrectly, there would be many uninvited guests heading over to the planet soon.

Han Xiao's eyes flashed. This would be a good chance for him to carry out the next phase of his plan!

Chapter 576: Always Causing Sensational News

Godora's actions had always been observed by the media. Especially after the battle of Planet Golden Gate, the majority of the news reports had praised Godora for their victory. As such, many galactic residents were looking forward to the next piece of news regarding Godora.

However, most of them never would have expected that the next news of victory would come so quickly.

The battleground this time was a backward planet called Planet Aquamarine!

Many people could not help feeling bewildered. It was perfectly reasonable for Godora to push DarkStar back, but how was a backward planet able to fight DarkStar off?

No one knew exactly what had happened and only knew rough details of the incident.

To the majority of the galaxy, Planet Aquamarine was no more than a low-grade planet. If not for it being one of the calamity planets, many of them would not even have known that such a planet existed.

As for Black Star's reputation, the majority of the galactic citizens were not familiar with him. While Han Xiao was an individual to be taken seriously in the eyes of the various large organizations, who were able to guess that this incident was probably related to Black Star, Han Xiao was no more than a mercenary to the commoners. A mercenary was not a superstar, and they would not commit the name of a mercenary to memory. Han Xiao was only famous among the upper echelons.

On the galactic web, many people were extremely interested in the details of the entire incident. There were not many witnesses, and this was a juicy piece of news that all the galactic news agencies wanted to get their hands on.

After just a short few days, galactic news agencies from all over the Star System sent their spaceships over to conduct interviews and dig out the truth. Just how did Planet Aquamarine fight DarkStar off?

The backward planet of Planet Aquamarine, which was usually ignored by the entire galaxy, became the center of attention of the galactic residents for once. This was the first time that they had welcomed visitors from the galaxy who were also commoners.

...

Planet Aquamarine had also become bustling with activity.

With Godora's aid, the Sanctuary and Six Nations had cleaned up the mess from the battle, and there were plenty of things waiting for them to do. All the spaceships from the various news agencies were blocked outside the atmosphere by the Godoran fleet.

Godora was not planning to allow those reporters to enter Planet Aquamarine. While there were safety considerations, there was also a deeper meaning behind their decision.

The regime of the Six Nations was completely clueless about the visitors from the galaxy. After all, they did not have the means to contact the galaxy.

Since the reporters were not able to contact the regime of Planet Aquamarine, they quickly remembered that the Black Star Mercenary Group had been mentioned in the previous reports as well. As such, they decided to contact the Black Star Mercenary Group instead.

"They're finally here."

Phillip passed the message on to Han Xiao. Those reporters were a key part of his plan, so he contacted Nagakin to order the fleet to give way.

The fleet commander received the order from Nagakin. Despite him not wanting to let the reporters in, he had received orders from the higher ups to follow Nagakin's orders when they were on Planet Aquamarine. Furthermore, after thinking carefully, he realized that he would not want to provoke Black Star either, especially after seeing Black Star's display of strength. As such, he could only unwillingly move his fleet out of the way.

All the reporters rushed into Planet Aquamarine excitedly. Many of the reporters were old and experienced in this field and immediately knew that something was wrong. They wanted to meet the

Black Star Mercenary Group, and the Godoran fleet had to give way obediently. There were many hints behind this simple action.

Godora had to give face to the Black Star Mercenary Group!

Many of the reporters instinctively realized that while Black Star was no more than an ordinary mercenary in the eyes of the Godorans, it was extremely likely that Black Star had played a key role in fighting off DarkStar.

This group of reporters showed their respect to the regime of Planet Aquamarine and all landed in the Six Nations. Only then did the Six Nations find out about the visitors from the galaxy. The Six Nations were filled with both excitement and nervousness as they welcomed their guests.

This was the first time that the Six Nations and inhabitants of Planet Aquamarine had seen so many aliens of different races. When the reporters stated their reason for their visit, the upper echelons of the Six Nations swiftly realized that this was an extremely good opportunity!

This was a good opportunity for them to build ties with the galaxy!

All this while, the Six Nations could only unilaterally contact Godora and knew very little about the galaxy. This situation had only improved slightly after Black Star's return.

DarkStar's assault on Planet Aquamarine had drawn the attention of the galaxy to the planet. To a backward planet like Planet Aquamarine, this was a significant event. The upper echelons of the Six Nations welcomed the reporters with the best hospitality they could provide, and they all felt that it was a blessing in disguise.

While the Six Nations were not familiar with the customs of the galaxy, they were extremely humble in the hospitality. At the same time, they showered the reporters with an endless stream of questions, and the reporters answered whatever they could without any arrogance. They would not look down on Planet Aquamarine. After all, this planet had just fought off DarkStar, and there was a need to show the most basic respect.

Very quickly, the upper echelons of the Six Nations found out that the reporters had initially been blocked outside the atmosphere and only managed to gain entry after Han Xiao's intervention. They were immediately filled with immense gratitude toward Han Xiao. Because of Black Star, this planet had not been destroyed, and now, Black Star had given them the opportunity to contact the galaxy.

It was indeed right to hug Han Xiao's thigh. The other party had already begun to fulfil his end of the promise to help them develop.

On the other side, the reporters also found out that the Black Star Mercenary Group was the main reason for the planet fighting off DarkStar, and their guesses were confirmed.

No wonder Godora had to give Black Star some face.

However, the Six Nations did not understand the details of the entire event. They could barely take care of themselves and had only found out after the entire incident.

The reporters then took pictures of the destroyed cities. It was all precious news footage. Following which, the reporters could not stop themselves rushing to the Sanctuary to interview Han Xiao.

Before the spaceships even arrived at the Sanctuary, they could see two gigantic circular mountains, which were obviously the outcome of the battle.

They had indeed come to the right place! The reporters became energized, and they took out their cameras to capture the footage of the battle.

The spaceships landed one after another, and the reporters walked out. Herlous was already waiting for them and calmly said, "Follow me to the conference room. Black Star will accept your interview."

The reporters all nodded and quickly followed behind him. Their attitude was completely different compared to when they were meeting with the Six Nations.

While these reporters were not arrogant and treated the Six Nations as their equals, the inhabitants of those from a backward planet were different, and there were no common topics between them.

However, before the Black Star Mercenary Group, these reporters humbled themselves even further. The Black Star Mercenary Group was an existence of a higher level, and this respect came from their hearts.

When they arrived at the conference room, Han Xiao had not arrived, and the reporters could only wait. However, they did not waste any time and began interviewing Herlous.

Herlous had already received Han Xiao's orders, and he purposely stayed behind so that the reporters could interview him. He then began to illustrate the entire event honestly.

"DarkStar sent out a large number of spaceships to assault the Six Nations and us. Our captain was DarkStar's target, and the enemy sent out a total of three Calamity Grade Supers to surround him!"

Black Star faced three Calamity Grade Supers single handedly? Since he was still alive, the outcome of the battle had spoken for itself!

All the reporters were dumbfounded and began scribbling down their notes.

"DarkStar sent out three Calamity Grade Supers to surround Black Star!"

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Herlous then continued. "Our captain single-handedly tied down the three most terrifying enemies and bore the weight of the greatest danger. The three Calamity Grade Supers weren't able to break our captain's defense, and DarkStar was forced to use their mothership's main cannon to attack our captain..."

The reporters gasped in shock and continued scribbling.

"Three Calamity Grade Supers were beaten up and forced to use their spaceship's main cannon!"

"The two circular mountains on the outside are the result of the main cannon. Our captain used his own body to tank the cannon and emerged unscathed. Following which, DarkStar fired another shot, but they fell for our captain's trap and almost caused the death of their own Calamity Grade comrade. As such, they didn't dare fire another shot..."

This was truly some juicy news!

The reporters were all dumbfounded and hurriedly wrote.

“Tanking the main cannon with his body, Black Star arrogantly taunts for another shot!”

“Finally, the Godoran reinforcements arrived, and DarkStar wasn’t willing to fight Godora again. As such, they were forced to retreat. That’s what happened.” Herlous then shut his mouth.

The reporters gave a warm round of applause and wrote frantically.

“Black Star’s divine might, DarkStar’s pitiful escape!”

...

After estimating that Herlous’ interview should be over, Han Xiao entered the conference room.

All the reporters immediately jumped up with faces full of respect and cried out, “Sir Black Star!”

Han Xiao immediately felt as though he was the discipline teacher making his rounds in a school.

Han Xiao sat down, and the reporters began their interview. They first confirmed that what Herlous had described was the truth before showering Han Xiao with many other questions.

“Did you feel any pressure from facing three Calamity Grade Supers?”

“How did it feel to tank the main cannon?”

“What do you feel about the actions of DarkStar?”

The endless stream of questions made Han Xiao feel as though he was holding a press conference.

Han Xiao answered all the reporter’s questions patiently as he needed to rely on them to spread his name. This was an additional Renown reward. After all, an event that could give him Legendary Points would definitely have many hidden rewards.

As the interview came to an end, one of the reporters asked a final question.

“Sir Black Star, for you to stay behind on Planet Aquamarine and aid the planet in fighting the calamity and fending off the enemies, is it because this is your home planet?”

Hearing that, Han Xiao’s eyes glowed, and an idea popped up in his mind. “That is only one of the reasons...”

“Can you tell us the other reasons?” the reporter asked.

Han Xiao chuckled and said, “Of course. Planet Aquamarine isn’t only my home planet. The Black Star Mercenary Group also plans to expand to Planet Aquamarine and set up a branch division on the planet. This will also be one of the bases of the Floating Dragon armed division. A while back, the Dragon Emperor came to Planet Aquamarine to assess the location, and my job is to fight off all incoming enemies.”

The eyes of all the reporters lit up, and they were overjoyed! This was another juicy piece of news!

It turned out that Planet Aquamarine was a planet under the protection of Black Star and Floating Dragon!

From that day onward, Planet Aquamarine would no longer be a low-grade planet without anything special. The brand of Floating Dragon would be marked on it, and this brand would be a protective talisman for the planet. At the very least, ninety percent of those with ill intentions would be deterred.

After all, he would not remain on Planet Aquamarine forever, and this was beneficial to both Planet Aquamarine and his own base.

Apart from raising the level of security, the fame of Floating Dragon would attract merchants and investments to the planet. Some financial groups would invest in the planet, and this would speed up the process of Planet Aquamarine becoming connected to galaxy.

Since Planet Aquamarine was the territory of Floating Dragon, even if it was a backward planet for the time being, the financial groups would still be willing to carry out some investments and transfer some technological knowledge over to aid the Six Nations in their development. This way, he would be able to fulfil his promise to the Six Nations.

At the same time, stamping Planet Aquamarine with the brand of Floating Dragon was a precautionary measure. Even if the Six Nations developed in the future and became independent, they would not dare go against their contract with him. They would be extremely clear about the outcome of losing the brand of Floating Dragon.

As such, even though the regime controlling Planet Aquamarine was the Six Nations on the surface, the true ruler of the planet was actually...

Ames

It naturally was not him.

However, with Ames' lazy nature, he would have an extremely large say.

Of course, Ames would not reject. As for the Head Butler Jenny, who was in charge of operations...

Ha! Loving colleagues like them should clean up after each other!

...

This trip of theirs was filled with rewards, and they all returned with satisfaction.

The next day, the various news agencies of the Garton Star System released detailed coverage of the 'true story' of the battle on Planet Aquamarine. It was coupled with photos of the circular shaped mountains being the main headline.

After taking a glance at the article, Han Xiao almost puked blood as he strangled Herlous and roared with anger, "Didn't we agree to tell the truth? Just what did you tell the reporters? Did I ask you to brag? Did I?"

Herlous was filled with grievances. "I really did tell the truth. Who knew that reporters would be so good at fluffing things up?"

This incident was spread far and wide in the galaxy. Not just the Garton Star System, even the other Star Systems of the Shattered Star Ring who were paying attention to the chaos created by DarkStar knew

about a character called Black Star who fought three Calamity Grade Supers alone and tanked the main cannon of a DarkStar mothership.

Even a Star Cluster level civilization remembered Black Star's name.

The entire Shattered Star Ring was shaken!

Chapter 577: Attention from Everywhere, Black Star Army

Godora paid close attention to the coverage. Nagakin had already reported Han Xiao's personal strength, so the focus of the upper echelons was on another problem. Han Xiao had already declared to the galaxy through the reporters that Planet Aquamarine was a part of Floating Dragon.

Despite Floating Dragon being a neutral organization with no regime, its influence was not to be underestimated.

With the brand of Floating Dragon labeled on them, even though Planet Aquamarine was in Godora's territory, it would be difficult for them to control or manage Planet Aquamarine. This planet would then become a special region within Godora's territory.

Floating Dragon's value had far exceeded the value of a low-grade planet like Planet Aquamarine. As long as there was no conflict between the two, Godora could only choose to close one eye.

Of course, compared to DarkStar, Planet Aquamarine was a tiny problem. After the news got out, Godora's official media team also came forward to join in the fun and spread the news. As long as they could dampen DarkStar's momentum, it would not matter who it was that defeated DarkStar.

...

As Jenny watched the news, her face turned dark, and she immediately contacted Ames.

Ames was currently roaming the galaxy, and Jenny's holographic figure appeared on her communicator.

"What's the matter?"

"Go and take a look at the news! Black Star is creating trouble again!" Jenny pressed a few buttons on her communicator and sent the news over.

After watching it for a while, Ames smiled calmly. "He's not too bad."

"That isn't the point! Before gaining my approval, he announced to the galaxy that Planet Aquamarine is a division of Floating Dragon!" Jenny looked as though she was about to go crazy.

"But I agreed." Ames blinked innocently.

Jenny had no choice but to force all her curses back down her throat.

"I took in two disciples recently, and they are both from Planet Aquamarine. Black Star will be bringing them to Floating Dragon Island soon, and you should look after them."

After saying that, Ames cut off the line.

"Argh! Black Star!"

The employees outside the room heard Jenny's enraged roar and all jumped out of their seats.

...

In some random place within the Shattered Star Ring where a beyond Grade A organization was located.

"Tanking the main cannon... he does have my style. Ames finally has a powerful officer."

In the darkness, a giant who was seven meters tall sat on his throne and watched the news with a look of deep thought.

"Floating Dragon has begun to expand, and Ames is finally interested in building her organization. Hmm, I should find some time to propose to her again. Maybe I will succeed."

...

The DarkStar mothership that had ambushed Planet Aquamarine was currently floating in space, and the three Calamity Grade Supers also saw the news.

"Bullsh*t! When did he beat us up?" Degulish flew into a fit of rage. "It was obviously Black Star who was beaten to the point he couldn't fight back. These reporters really know how to bullsh*t!"

"The truth is, we weren't able to kill him," Terry said helplessly.

Ember snorted but did not comment. He was thinking about how he could get rid of Han Xiao.

"He must have a weakness. We have to quickly plant spies within his mercenary group. We will only be able to find his weaknesses by coming into close contact with him."

"Then, what should we do next?" Terry asked.

Degulish frowned and slowly said, "Black Star's ability was out of our expectations, and our mission has failed. The leader said that this isn't our fault as none of us knew how much strength Black Star is hiding. He ordered us to regroup with the main fleet and prepare for the next step of the plan."

"Next step of the plan?"

"I am not aware of the exact details, but since he is gathering all the motherships, it will definitely be a large mission," Degulish said.

DarkStar was still planning their next attack.

However, DarkStar did not know that Han Xiao had already snuck into their backyard.

All the hidden motherships were exposed under Risda's surveillance, but DarkStar was still in the dark.

...

With the news being spread throughout the entire Shattered Star Ring, Black Star's name was being discussed everywhere. His name spread far and wide, and Han Xiao received plenty of bonus Renown points.

DarkStar had finally paused for a moment after failing twice.

However, this was only the calm before the storm. The large storm that was being directed by Han Xiao was currently brewing.

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Every now and then, Han Xiao would send the coordinates of the DarkStar motherships to the upper echelons of the War Bureau through Nagakin. Godora intended to destroy DarkStar in one fell swoop and secretly mobilized their forces without making any rash moves.

At the same time, Godora kept the mercenary groups on the payroll as insurance but did not reveal their exact plan to them. Godora only got Sky Ring, Purple Gold, Blades, and the other large mercenary groups to await their orders.

Han Xiao was still on Planet Aquamarine carrying out his plan to recruit the players. The plan was now at its most crucial phase.

By making use of this event, Han Xiao changed the name of his faction through the faction interface and Mercenary Alliance.

The [Black Star Mercenary Group] was renamed to...

[Black Star Army]!

Only large mercenary groups would dare have the word 'Army' in their name.

Because of the addition of a large number of players, Han Xiao's faction had more than ten thousand members. His faction was already at the right level, and the mercenary world probably would not have any complaints about it.

Regarding this decision, Han Xiao gave a speech to all the players and emphasized the fact that their faction was only able to change their name thanks to the players. He wanted to make the players feel as though they were contributing to the growth of the faction.

By changing their name because of such a reason, Han Xiao would be able to cultivate a stronger sense of belonging and team spirit among the players. The players would then feel as though Black Star Army was a faction that belonged to them.

At the same time, this was a signal to the players that they were about to leave Planet Aquamarine and start the next phase of their journey. This was so that the players would have some mental preparation.

The way the players saw it, a change of name in the faction meant that they were about to enter the galaxy!

Of course, all his plans would only work if there were sufficient benefits provided to the players. Han Xiao had to make sure to launch new products from time to time.

Through the exchange center in the galaxy, Han Xiao spent more than 100,000 Enas to purchase new Pugilist and Esper knowledge and placed them in the faction store. What shocked the players the most was that the new knowledge did not require money like in the past but experience!

At the same time, there were no Favorability requirements to fulfil.

With respect to this incident, Han Xiao made an explanation through Phillip.

“The Black Star Army will provide these two Advanced Knowledges ‘free of charge’ to groom and train the new mercenaries.”

This action of his immediately drove the players mad with excitement!

Han Xiao sold his own Mechanic knowledge using the [Skill Impartation] method, but he sold the knowledge from the other two classes through the faction store. This meant that as long as players joined the Black Star Army, they would be able to learn those two Advanced Knowledges for ‘free’!

This immediately became a beginner benefit for those in the faction. It was just like how the players who joined the Godoran faction would be able to acquire knowledge if they accumulated sufficient merit. It was just that Han Xiao had removed all those restrictions and allowed the players to spend experience points to learn the knowledge without spending any money.

The players were overjoyed and felt as though they had made a huge profit!

The players who had entered the galaxy in Version 1.0 shared the price of that Advanced Knowledge in the galaxy. If they did not join a faction, the Advanced Knowledge would cost them tens of thousands of Enas to purchase.

In comparison, the Black Star Army seemed to be the kindest of saints!

The way the players saw it, this was all due to their contribution. It was because of them that the faction could grow to such a size. It was because of them that the faction could change its name and provide such benefits. This was truly a faction that could grow!

Han Xiao intentionally made it so that only experience was required to learn the Advanced Knowledge. His target customers were the players of the other two classes, and his intention was to accumulate experience so that he could quickly hit level 140.

The Great Mechanic Han had over 10,000,000 Enas in his account, and the 100,000 that he had spent was peanuts in his eyes. In fact, he was even too lazy to collect a symbolic fee. Even if he only collected 1 Ena, the effect would have been grossly different from providing it for free.

Advanced Knowledge was a necessity, and the market was essentially all the Planet Aquamarine players of the two other classes!

After spending 100,000 Enas, if Han Xiao could not harvest a good amount of experience, he would be going against his conscience!

This was the only shop where they could purchase Advanced Knowledge at such a good price. None of the players hesitated in the slightest, and the experience points on Han Xiao’s interface rapidly shot up.

300,000... 600,000... 1,000,000,000...

The effect of it being ‘free’ was truly frightening!

Looking at the explosion of his experience points, Han Xiao was in a great mood.

After this harvest of experience, apart from being able to reach level 140, it will probably last me a long while.

...

In just one day, the amount of experience accumulated was enough to bring Han Xiao up to level 140.

In order to get to Grade A, Han Xiao did not even bother repairing his Mechanic Army. This ambush had allowed him to understand that it was best to harvest the vegetables when they were ripe. If he had already been at the Calamity Grade when facing the encirclement of the three Calamity Grade Supers, it would not have been so dangerous for him.

Han Xiao then walked into the training room of his second base and locked the door.

Taking in a deep breath, Han Xiao opened the interface and channeled his experience into increasing his level.

I can finally reach the Calamity Grade and step into the ranks of the powerhouses!

Han Xiao was truly excited.

Chapter 578: Stepping into the Calamity Grade!

The difference between a Grade B and Grade A lay in the level of their lifeform. After entering Grade A, one's genes would be optimized to become even more perfect. The body would become more adapted to the release of energy, and the energy loss would also be greatly reduced. At the same time, even the energy output would also be transformed. In layman's terms, endurance and attack power would increase. Thus, Grade A was known as the Calamity Grade.

As its name suggested, as long as they released power, a Grade A Super would definitely be able to wreak havoc akin to a natural disaster on a planet in a short time frame. Before the emergence of Beyond Grade A Supers, Grade A was the strongest level in the Galaxy.

Even then, Grade A remained a significant milestone.

In his previous life, the level of the players had at most reached Grade A, so Han Xiao was acutely aware that once someone passed through the threshold of Grade A, their strength would immediately experience a great improvement!

This was a new phase!

Currently, he was at Level 136, and his main class was at Level 11. With excitement, he began to pump in his experience.

[Virtual Mechanic] has been upgraded to Lv.15.

+150 Energy, +3 END, +6 INT.

You have received 6 Free Attribute Points and 1 Potential Point.

Your total level has reached 140. Complete the promotion mission to continue leveling up.

At this level, there would not be able sort of easy missions given. Han Xiao glanced at it, and immediately knew that he would not be able to complete it in a short amount of time. He unhesitatingly used up the last Mission Completion Card, and the Promotion Mission turned from the uncompleted gray color to the bright gold color symbolizing completion.

This was the fastest time taken for the Great Mechanic Han to have completed a Promotion Mission.

Just one word. Soothing!

Level 140 Promotion Mission has been completed! END has been increased!

1 END = 80 HP = 90 Stamina

The last time I advanced at Level 120, my Endurance increased by fifteen, reaching a ratio of 1:65, whereas prior advancements only increased it by ten. Now that I've promoted to Level 140, it has increased by fifteen again to reach 1:80. After my Race Evolution, my next Promotion should increase my Endurance by twenty.

Han Xiao slowly recalled his past experience.

From Level 60 onward, every forty levels would result in a Race Evolution. Level 140 would be the third Race Evolution for Han Xiao!

At that moment, the interface popped up with many words like a waterfall.

After a long time of existing with energy, your genes have been optimized once again. You can now go further on the route of evolution. You have been awarded with a sublimation of life level.

Detecting Race... [Void Prowler (Human Form)].

Randomly drawing seven matching evolutionary directions...

Drawing complete.

Please choose one of the following seven options for your Race Evolution. Warning! The evolution process is irreversible, so please choose carefully!

[V-type Galaxy Human Race]: 74% Compatibility

[Void Symbiote (Human Form)]: 88% Compatibility

[Void Corruptor (Human Form)]: 75% Compatibility

[Void Hunter (Human Form)]: 77% Compatibility

[Chaos Observer (Human Form)]: 72% Compatibility

[Eye of the Void]: 42% Compatibility

[High Energy Entity (Soul-based Creature Type)]: 35% Compatibility

Out of the seven options, five of them belonged to the Void evolution system.

The Void System was a rare evolutionary chain that was difficult to obtain. A normal Race Evolution would only have a small chance of drawing the chance to evolve in the direction of the Void System. Because Han Xiao had injected himself with the bone marrow of the Void Dragon and managed to obtain a portion of the Void Genes fragment, he had been able to draw the [Void Prowler] race in his previous evolution.

After becoming a [Void Prowler], his evolutionary chain had shifted from being part of the human race to being a branch of the Void System while retaining some of the characteristics of the human race. The Void System was a variant evolution and had a high degree of integration of many different species. Therefore, he was offered many evolution options, marked with the characteristics of 'human form'.

Of course, he still had options that did not retain his human form, such as [Eye of the Void]. If he selected that, he would become a large eyeball with a tentacle attached to it. It would have an innate ability of Void Gaze, which could inflict Fear onto anyone.

[High Energy Entity] was another state of an energy life, where they existed as soul-based creatures, similar to that of a Lich. As long as their soul core was not damaged, the energy body could be repaired at any time even if it was destroyed. This was a species suitable for those who were Mages.

Han Xiao naturally wanted to retain the potential evolutionary direction of his Void System. However, he also needed a human form to complete mechanical manufacturing. Some of his expertise could only be activated in human form, so only four of the Void Evolution options that preserved his human form would meet the requirements.

I have a high level of tankiness, so I don't need to worry about HP. What I lack now is attack power. I'm also a mechanic, so the higher my Intelligence, the higher my bonuses...

After pondering for a moment, Han Xiao made his decision and solemnly confirmed his evolutionary route.

Selection complete. Undergoing Race Evolution... Evolution complete.

Your race has been changed to: [Chaos Observer (Human Form)]. Molecular structure is improved, organ structure strengthened, metabolism changed, and adaptability enhanced... Your potential aptitude has been improved!

You have received attributes in the following: +0 STR, +40 DEX, +94 INT, +72 MYS, +56 CHA, +840 Energy.

Energy Level bonus attributes have been changed!

An avalanche of pain exploded from deep within his body. Han Xiao had long prepared for it and gritted his teeth as he endured the pain that would make an ordinary person faint as he tried to feel the changes in his cells and genes.

His body uncontrollably phased in and out of its Void form, and his Void Vision flickered and disappeared constantly, as though looking through dozens of frames per second. This time, the pain in his brain was

the strongest, and it was as though thousands of needles had stabbed into his head, giving him some sort of brain acupuncture.

The [Chaos Observer]'s attributes were biased toward Intelligence, which was one of his reasons for picking that route. The second reason was that Han Xiao recalled that this route would have a chance of evolving into a high-level Void Entity in the future, with more potential than the other three.

Luckily, the pain this time was not as severe compared to when he had evolved into the [Void Prowler]. Han Xiao was already considered a Void creature, and the reaction to changes in the genes was not so drastic.

“Huu, huu...”

After a long period of time, the pain gradually faded. Han Xiao took ragged breaths, covered in sweat as though he had just been dragged out from a lake. The world in his eyes was much clearer, and the thoughts in his brain spun much faster, like bubbles in boiling water.

After appreciating it for a few seconds, Han Xiao looked at the interface to access his new race talents.

Your Race Specialty has been altered!

You have received the Race Specialty [Advanced Void Travel]!

You have received the Race Specialty [Void Vision – Observer]!

You have received the Race Specialty [Observer's Mark]!

You have received the Race Specialty [Chaos Entity – Release]!

“Four talents!” Han Xiao's face lit up. This was one more than Void Prowler provided.

After trying them all once, he got a rough idea of them.

The one that he was most familiar with was the [Advanced Void Travel]. It was just an upgraded version of the original [Void Travel], lasting up to three minutes. The phasing was also increased, meaning that he could now phase longer distances and complete more things during that time. However, the cooldown remained at five minutes.

The other three talents were the special talents of the [Chaos Observer], of which [Chaos Entity – Release] was the core. The other two required [Chaos Entity – Release] to be activated before they could be used.

The moment Han Xiao's thoughts moved, his entire person suddenly dispersed, turning into a gray fog. This was a weird field of energy, where light was swallowed up by it, but it retained its gray color instead of being displayed as black.

It was as though space was used as the canvas, with a touch of gray paint applied on it.

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In addition, his sensory organs also morphed along with his appearance. He no longer needed 'eyes' to see things, no longer needed 'ears' to hear things. The chaos fog provided him with sight, hearing, touch, smell, and more. In fact, its acuteness was increased many folds, and even his movements were no longer consistent with human actions. The chaos fog served as the core, drifting around, and could even shift into many shapes, akin to a cloud moving by itself. Its speed was quite fast and even had the ability to phase through walls.

Not only that, but the new sensory organs were hard to describe. Simply miraculous.

This is a chaos body? Han Xiao thought to himself before realizing that he did not have a brain anymore, so how could he think? After pondering for a while, he suddenly came to the realization that after forming a 'chaos body', he had technically changed from a physical lifeform into an energy field. Inside this field, the chaos fog constituted his organs and body parts at a microscopic level. It was precisely all these molecular and atomic structures that formed a circuit of thinking, conducted through bioelectricity.

Since he could create Artificial Intelligence, it was not surprising to have an alternative path of thinking.

He then tried out the other two talents. [Void Vision – Observer] utilized his chaos body that could phase between the void dimension and the physical world. This was unlike [Void Travel], where time was almost static. When he utilized this ability, time flowed as per normal, but he could hide within the gap to observe changes in the outside world and with a larger field of vision.

He could also place [Observer's Mark], which was related to his new sense organs. As long as the markers were set around a certain person, place, or spatial coordinate, they could be observed across space synchronously, akin to a split screen mode with a maximum of five markers at any one time. The markers could also be replaced.

Wait a minute... this observation, this is simply akin to voyeurism!

Han Xiao was rendered speechless.

Could it be that I've become a sentry ward?

This is getting more and more 'perverted'... I like it!

After turning into a chaos body, his interface was also refreshed accordingly, displaying the status of his 'transformation', which included a ninety-five percent immunity to damage. The energy possessed in his human form would turn into the HP level of the chaos body, meaning that energy was required to maintain this state. Most skills and abilities were frozen, but [Advanced Void Travel] would be greatly enhanced, and the cooldown reduced from five minutes to 15 seconds.

If the HP of the chaos body was fully depleted, it would force the human form to take shape once again. However, his energy would be completely depleted, and there would be a negative status of [Severe Injury]. At the same time, [Chaos Entity – Release] would enter a forty-eight-hour cooldown period.

This also means that the chaos body does not have much combat capability and is mainly used for its observation and scouting. It's an auxiliary function.

Deactivating the [Chaos Entity – Release] skill, the fog rolled and shrank toward the center, condensing back into a human body. The color of his skin regained its original human-like color as Han Xiao returned to his normal shape.

Taking out a mirror, Han Xiao took a look. This time, it was not his wishful thinking, but he seemed to have grown more handsome. In addition, he had grown taller. His eyes in particular were breathtaking, giving people a mysterious urge to dig them out.

Those were the changes brought about by the Race Evolution. In his interface were more notifications.

Your combat capability has broken through 10,000 Ona!

You have been promoted to Grade A!

You have received a special rank bonus!

A special rank bonus was a privilege one could only obtain when they arrived at Grade A. With the baseline of 10,000 Ona for their energy level as a gauge, for every 10,000 Ona increased, they would receive a new rank bonus. However, the distance from Grade A to Beyond Grade A was still too far apart.

Within the Grade A range, it was also divided based on strength. The easiest way was just to compare one's combat capability or to distinguish the difference in level, attributes, skills, and expertise. A Grade A+ Super could easily deal with a newly promoted Calamity Grade Super, probably even steamroll them.

Your END has been increased by 10. Currently, 1 END = 90 HP = 100 Stamina

+8% all resistances!

+10% highest stat(s), +5% other stats

You have received an additional 30 Free Attribute Points.

You have received an additional 5 Potential Points

You have awakened the skill [Mechanical Force Field]!

You have awakened Rank Talent [Superhuman]!

These were the two exclusive talents that would only be awakened when one reached Grade A. Of which, the skill [Superhuman] was fixed, and the other skill would suit one's profession. Han Xiao had played a few different professions previously, so he was quite clear on this.

[Mechanical Force Field]: When you apply a Mechanical Force bonus, a machine will be used as the center point, forming a force field around it. Machinery within this range will randomly have a 40 – 80% bonus effect (non-stackable), which only consumes the strength of one machine. The range of said force field is dependent on one's INT attribute.

This was an ability limited to Mechanics, which would serve as one of the core skills of the Army Style. Just by adding another machine, without a change in consumption, the surrounding machines would be able to enjoy a bonus effect, enhancing their longevity on the battlefield. Using the language of players, it was called a 'splash effect'.

[Superhuman]: You have awakened the ways on how to perfectly control your own abilities and how to increase your strength (including but not limited to various types of weapons and equipment, mechanical creations, summoned entities, and other means of combat that you possess). The bonus effect depends on the character's total Level.

From Level 1 – 100: +2% Attack Power every 10 Levels

From Level 100 – 160: +3% Attack Power every 10 Levels

Above Level 160: +4% Attack Power every 10 Levels

Thus, his current ability strength increase was thirty-two percent.

If the previous ability was meant to increase one's stamina and endurance on the battlefield, [Superhuman] was the main reason for the great increase in damage dealt by Calamity Grade Supers. The ability strength was basically equivalent to one's attack power.

This bonus was independent of all talents and skills. No matter how high one's attack power was, it would take that as the base and increase in percentage based on that.

The stronger one's attack, the greater the increase.

The higher one's level, the greater the bonuses.

This explained the terrifying attack power that Ames had displayed the other time. Of course, the main reason was also because Floating Dragon was durable enough.

With all the notifications having come to an end, Han Xiao used his remaining experience to improve his [Mechanical Force Field] skill, raising it another two levels, before allocating all his free attribute points to Intelligence.

Having reached Level 140, the experience consumption was even greater. Just rising two levels required nearly two billion experience. If Han Xiao only used the mission rewards given at Version 2.0 as the standard experience gain, then God only knew when he would next be able to level up.

The players' mission rewards naturally rose with the versions. At that level, experience reward would start from tens of million at the very least.

I've finally stepped into Calamity Grade!

Filling his body full of a surging strength, Han Xiao revealed an expression of excitement as he clenched his fists. He felt as though he could now destroy Harmon with just one punch.

Looking at his interface, he observed the overall changes that had occurred.

Level: 142

Main Class: Mechanic

Race: Chaos Observer (Human Form)

Attributes: 201 STR, 518 DEX, 485 END, 1500 INT, 200 MYS, 102 CHA, 1 LUK

Free Attribute Points: 0

Potential Points: 62

Health: 64,020

Stamina: 64,250

Energy: 12,410 [Lv.10]

Lv.10 Energy bonus stat: +81 STR, +113 DEX, +122 END, +144 INT, +91 MYS, +16,020 Stamina Limit, +97% Machinery Affinity

Power Level: 11,237 Ona

Grade: A

Grade A Ranked Bonus: +10 END, +8% All Resistances, +10% Highest Stat(s), +5% Other Stats, +30 Free Attribute Points, +5 Potential Points

You have entered the Calamity Grade, becoming a top rate combat power in the Galaxy. From now on, you will always have a spot in any Star Field!

Chapter 579: It's Time

After checking the changes from entering the Calamity Grade, Han Xiao tidied up his clothes before walking out of the training room.

As he walked down the corridor of the base, he met Aroshia.

"Where are you going?"

"Back to my room." Aroshia was prepared to walk past Han Xiao but suddenly paused beside Han Xiao and began sniffing him with a strange look in her eyes.

“What’s the matter? Do I smell good?” Han Xiao then looked down at his own body.

Aroshia shook her head, and a look of uncertainty could be seen on her usually calm face. When she walked past Han Xiao, she could sense something different about Han Xiao’s aura, and she thought that her senses were wrong.

“What kind of change have you undergone?” Aroshia would never beat about the bush and went straight to the point.

“Oh? You have felt it? I achieved a breakthrough in my strength, and I am already at the Calamity Grade.” Han Xiao did not bother hiding anything. His Officers would find out eventually anyway.

Aroshia nodded indifferently in response. To her, regardless of what Han Xiao did, she would never doubt him in the slightest. Besides, Han Xiao had just survived a huge battle, and it was extremely normal for him to achieve a breakthrough.

To NPCs like them without an interface, battling was indeed the best way to raise their strength.

Han Xiao suddenly thought about something and smiled.

“Don’t be in a rush to leave. Let me show you a little trick.”

As he said that, Han Xiao activated his [Chaos Entity – Release], and his entire body turned into a grayish fog.

Aroshia looked at the fog before her with her eyes wide open in shock. Such a domain like transformation was extremely similar to her energy body. As she stretched out her hands to touch the fog; her entire hand passed through the fog, and she could not feel anything. The grayish fog before her was no different from an ordinary fog.

Hum!

Aroshia transformed her own body into her energy form and entered the grayish fog. The glowing golden energy body was tangled together with the grayish fog, and she could feel a warm sensation that she would only feel when present in the energy furnace.

Upon thinking about charging, Aroshia subconsciously attempted to absorb energy from the grayish fog. However, the Chaos Body was maintained by Han Xiao’s energy, and this energy was controlled by Han Xiao. Thus, it could not be absorbed by Aroshia.

Feeling Aroshia’s action, Han Xiao released a small portion of his energy for Aroshia to absorb. Aroshia suddenly turned into a bright ball of light that began flickering. Absorbing the energy from the Chaos Body made her feel a great sense of comfort, and she could not even be bothered to maintain her human form. If not for the fact that she did not have vocal cords in her energy form, she would have let out a groan of satisfaction.

The energy of a Calamity Grade Super was far thicker, and it had the brand of Han Xiao’s genes. Thus, it naturally felt extremely different from an energy furnace.

Energy was the HP of the Chaos Body, and with a small portion of his energy being absorbed, Han Xiao’s HP decreased. Han Xiao was then surprised to realize that he could send a telepathic message with the

Chaos Body and sent Aroshia a message. He asked her to channel some of her energy into the gray fog as well. Theoretically, the both of them should be able to exchange their energy.

A golden streak of energy was then transmitted into the gray fog, and the HP of his Chaos Body was filled up to the brim. Han Xiao was suddenly struck by a thought. Because the majority of his talents were locked up in his Chaos Body form, Aroshia was not only his 'battery' but was also a moving HP potion for him.

He then sent another thought to Aroshia, and Aroshia transformed into the Chaos Body form to merge together with the gray fog. The gray fog immediately shone with a golden tint, and the two of them were able to have a deeper connection, which increased the efficiency of their energy transfer. This was akin to Aroshia becoming one with the Chaos Body.

After experimenting for a moment, Han Xiao deactivated the Chaos Body and transformed back to his original body. Aroshia also separated from his body and cancelled her energy form.

"Is this your new ability?" Aroshia could not help but ask. For some reason, her beautiful face had a slightly red hue.

"Yeah, I have acquired Void abilities."

Han Xiao's expression was a little odd, and he felt as though he had just done something strange.

Shaking his head, Han Xiao disposed of all the strange thoughts in his head. He then tried to think back about what he had just felt. Because his Chaos Body was a domain type lifeform that also had energy as its lifeline, he had tried experimenting with Aroshia. In the end, things were as he had expected, and as long as they were connected and consciously willed it, they would be able to transmit energy to each other.

However, while Aroshia could take the initiative to absorb energy, the Chaos Body could not. The Chaos Body could only passively absorb energy from its surroundings. Aroshia's Esper ability had another defining feature. She could make use of energy in almost every form possible.

The talents of the Chaos Observer are special, and there should be many more ways to use it, Han Xiao thought to himself.

After entering the Calamity Grade, Han Xiao had many new abilities that he had to familiarize himself with.

He then casually threw an [Observer's Mark] onto Aroshia before parting ways.

Along the way, Han Xiao thought about Risda's request. He did not intend to go back on his word. When Risda completed his mission, he would aid Aroshia in regaining her memories.

In any case, Han Xiao could already more or less guess what the final mission requirement of [Reboot] would be. He just had to ensure that he did not need to face Manison from the [Mechanic Empire].

...

Over the next few days, the various officers of the Mercenary Group found out about Han Xiao stepping into the Calamity Grade. Compared to Aroshia's calmness, they were all shocked.

That was the Calamity Grade!

Before their captain reached the Calamity Grade, he could already tank the attacks from three Calamity Grade Supers. Now that he had joined the ranks of the Calamity Grade Supers, just how powerful would he be?

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The person who was most shocked was naturally Herlous. He had joined the Black Star Mercenary Group before Han Xiao had entered Grade B and had personally watched how Han Xiao caught up to him, exceeded him, and left him in the dust without any hope of catching up!

Han Xiao had gone from Grade C to Grade A in just a short few years?

Herlous had only touched the boundary of Grade B+!

He had never heard of such a growth rate before! Just what did Han Xiao eat when growing up?

Sylvia was the happiest. After living together with the mercenaries for the past few years, she treated the Black Star Army as her second home.

There was finally a Calamity Grade Super to prop up the Black Star Army, and Black Star was also her own teacher. Thus, she naturally felt it a great honor.

However, the officers of the Black Star Army had not seen Han Xiao much over the past few days as he had locked himself up in the machinery modification room.

Entering Grade A was the prerequisite to merging a few blueprints, and Han Xiao could upgrade his equipment again. He did not need to change the type of equipment that he equipped but could use more powerful equipment of the same type. Han Xiao had lost a large number of machines during the battle, and this was the best time to make up for the gap in his weapons.

The Void Dragon had already been destroyed, and the only thing left of it was the core material, Void Dragon Bone. Han Xiao merged a new blueprint that was of a higher grade and was prepared to construct a new and more powerful battle suit to keep up with his Calamity Grade strength.

There were three core materials to the new mechanical suit: Kyle Alloy, PR-909 Super Nano Polymer Fiber, and Refined Overga Metal. These were all military grade materials and were extremely pricey. Furthermore, the ones controlling these materials were civilizations of the Star Cluster Grade.

These three materials were considered strategic military resources being used for transactions between civilizations and could not be found on the market at all. As long as it appeared on the black market, it would be purchased anonymously within seconds. Just a kilogram of Kyle Alloy would be the same price as a small spaceship. It was a market with demand but no supply. Even if one had the money and wanted to purchase it, it was impossible to do so.

However, as the ruler of a galactic civilization, Godora would have some in stock that they had bought from Star Cluster grade civilizations.

When he was selling the Mutation Source, one of the conditions was for Godora to allow him to purchase these restricted materials.

However, while Godora did agree to his condition, they added one of their own. The amount of restricted materials that he could purchase annually was limited. Godora would not allow too much of those restricted materials to enter the outside world.

Taking out his communicator, Han Xiao wanted to contact Nagakin to purchase the materials. However, he never imagined that Nagakin would be the first to speak when the call connected.

“Black Star, it is time,” Nagakin said in a solemn tone.

As Han Xiao heard that, he placed the matter of purchasing the materials aside and said with his eyes narrowed, “Is Godora ready?”

“The fleet has been deployed, and all the DarkStar motherships are within our grasp. The head will command an attack very soon. This is a confidential mission, and its code name is [Operation Hodellas]!”

This code name was a direct translation from an ancient Godoran language, which meant ‘uprooting the enemy’ and ‘cutting the weeds at the root’.

Han Xiao’s face was solemn. From the day he sold the intelligence to Godora, he knew that such a day would arrive. Godora was currently starting their retaliation against DarkStar, and this was all caused by him.

Such an event did not happen in his past life.

“Black Star, we need you,” Nagakin said.

Hearing that, Han Xiao became slightly excited as he said with a teasing smile, “Heh, you must know that providing intelligence and personally joining the battle are two different things. Are you officially hiring me?”

“We will give you remuneration that will make you satisfied. It will be of the same level as the large sized mercenary groups like the Sky Ring Army.”

Han Xiao intended to join the battle anyway and was only casually mentioning the matter of remuneration. However, he never imagined that Godora would be willing to pay him the same amount as the other large mercenary groups.

It seemed like Godora wanted to get rid of DarkStar at all costs.

After causing them so much trouble for so many years, Godora was already thoroughly enraged at DarkStar. As long as they had an outlet to vent their anger, their attack would be akin to the avalanche of a snowy mountain.

Without their ability to remain hidden, DarkStar had to suffer the rage of Godora without being prepared in the slightest.

It was finally time for both parties to resolve their many years of hatred and enmity.

This was also an opportunity for Han Xiao to complete the [Godora’s Ally] mission and perhaps an important part of the [Bloodline] mission.

Hanging up the communicator, Han Xiao stroked his chin and called Herlous over.

“O’ Her, we have a job to do. Gather all the mercenaries and prepare to set off.”

“Including the new Inhumans?”

“Yes, everyone.”

Han Xiao revealed a smile.

This intergalactic battle would be the opportunity for him to take the players into the galaxy! It did not seem too bad.

It was time to let the galaxy have a new understanding of the Black Star Army!

Chapter 580: Depart

Dusk approached.

The clouds seemed to have caught fire, painting the Sanctuary that was under reconstruction in a pale-yellow color. Above the base, a fleet of mercenary ships was quietly docked, causing those on the ground to constantly turn their heads up to glance at it, a sense of envy and respect appearing in their eyes.

What had happened in the past few months had completely subverted the world view of Planet Aquamarine’s people. It was like a dream, where one would wake up the next morning feeling dazed as they recalled the happenings of that day. It would always take a while before they regained their senses.

The suspended spaceships resembled a banner, constantly reminding them that this planet had entered a new era. It was not about the exchange of power from an ‘old era’ to a ‘new era’ but rather a brand-new age as a result of the breaking down of barriers, truly connecting them to the interstellar regions.

In the eyes of Planet Aquamarine’s inhabitants, the past few months had heralded an unparalleled change in the times, subverting all their old patterns and ideologies. However, in the eyes of those from the galaxy, it was just another indigenous planet that had been baptized with a new world view. For the Black Star Mercenaries, this was merely another mission.

In the eyes of the players, everything happening on Planet Aquamarine was just another storyline event.

The players were more concerned by when they would truly step foot into space.

All signs pointed to the Black Star Army being the faction that would guide them into space. Furthermore, it was a faction that showed promising growth and lots of benefits. Hundreds of thousands of players had already joined the Black Star Army. Players were still passing the assessment

In the base’s square, with Herlous’ call, the players arrived one after another, resulting in a mass of bobbing heads.

When Han Xiao returned, he had taken out a mechanical throne for his speech. That had been used to showcase his power. He had floated in the middle of the square to allow all the players to be able to see him.

Now that they were leaving, in order to improve his image in the players’ minds, he planned to give a speech to end the storyline on Planet Aquamarine. At the same time, he planned to give an opening

about the new phase, to increase the expectations of the players. This, he felt, would make the whole process more complete.

As he thought, Han Xiao spoke.

“A few months ago, I returned to Planet Aquamarine to fulfill my promise, helping Planet Aquamarine overcome its disaster. Now, I’ve completed my promise; the disaster has been resolved, and the enemy has retreated. Today is the day I leave.”

Now that the Mutation Disaster had been resolved by him, and the civilization of Planet Aquamarine had survived, he had saved hundreds of millions of living beings, ensuring their safety.

Compared to his past, this result was much better.

It was time for him to continue his journey in the galaxy, and the players in front of him would be the best warriors to do so.

Not out of his expectations, all the players began to get excited, their eyes glowing.

We can finally step into the interstellar region! We’ve been waiting for so long, to the point the flowers are already withering!

Looking over everyone present, Han Xiao continued.

“The Black Star Army will follow alongside me in leaving. In the past few months, tens of thousands of you have passed the assessment, becoming a part of my team. I’ll join you in the battles to come, and we’ll carve out a corner for ourselves in the galaxy!

“As for those that have yet to join, if you guys are willing, I’ve already set up a base on Planet Aquamarine. You can apply to join at any time you wish, and no matter your identity, as long as you can pass the test, the Black Star Army will welcome the strong. There will be spaceships on standby to welcome new recruits at all times that will bring you to our base in the galaxy, making you an official member.”

The objective of his recruiting was not just to the players. Even normal civilians from Planet Aquamarine could participate. After all, there would always be people aspiring for a higher stage.

The hundreds of thousands of players in the faction revealed expressions of joy. Indeed, only by joining the Black Star Army would they be able to enter the galaxy. The selections were just to select the first batch of interstellar explorers. This was the greatest benefit of being in his faction, which was that they would be ahead!

The other players were a little depressed, but there was no way to go around it. Who told them not to be capable enough to win in the selection? But they did not need to feel too uncomfortable. While they did not obtain the chance to be the first batch to leave for the interstellar regions, Black Star had left behind a channel for further admissions. As long as they continuously took the assessment, they would have a chance to enter the second batch or even the third batch.

In addition, Planet Aquamarine now required a large amount of manpower for post-disaster reconstruction, and remaining meant that they would obtain lots of profits.

At present, joining Black Star would be the most cost-effective way to travel to the interstellar regions.

Furthermore, in the eyes of the majority of players, there were many hints showing that joining Black Star was akin to following a potential main storyline!

In other words, it was the prior requirement for them to open the storyline of interstellar exploration!

At this point, Han Xiao's words took a turn.

"The size of the Black Star Army has expanded many times over. We've received our first large-scale employment, which is to have us participate in a war. This will be the first battle after the expansion of our army, allowing the universe to see our strength."

As he spoke, he sent out a Faction Mission to the players through the interface. Tens of thousands of players received the notification simultaneously.

You have triggered Faction Mission [Black Star Army: The First Battle].

This is the first large-scale mission for the Black Star Army. There will be a war in the interstellar regions, and those who fight with the army would be awarded 500 Faction Favorability.

The rewards that he could hand out were limited, so Han Xiao only chose to issue a reward related to Favorability. However, this was only the first mission, and when he met with the Godoran troops, he would naturally get a formal war employment mission.

At that time, the players would also trigger sub-missions through him, receiving experience and monetary reward. That would be the true substantial benefit.

This was also the original intention of Han Xiao adopting the mercenary regiment model. As his own reward quota was not enough, he would borrow the tasks of the employer to supply his faction with resources. Basically, he was akin to a human resource intermediary or even a pimp.

Only the first batch of players would make it in time for the war.

"There's a battle the moment we enter the interstellar region. This is going to be fun!"

"What a unique coincidence."

The crowd could not help but burst into excitement, discussing fervently.

Han Xiao finally surveyed the entire area.

Bennett, standing by his side, expressed his gratitude to Han Xiao. He had decided to stay there to continue managing the Sanctuary.

As for Hila and Aurora, they had already decided to leave Planet Aquamarine. After this incident, Han Xiao would be sending them over to Floating Dragon Island for further studies. Thus, they would leave together. The two sisters did not have any luggage, just whatever was on themselves.

Emerald Grass had also decided to join Black Star to see the galaxy. However, she was different. She brought hundreds of boxes of her medicinal ingredients with her, with the group of prisoners from Bell of Death Island who had finished the training helping her carry them. They were almost totally covered by the boxes.

Han Xiao paused for a moment before saying aloud.

“Now, let us depart!”

The spaceships suspended above slowly lowered themselves, unfolding the gangway.

The tens of thousands of player mercenaries stepped onto the spaceships with boiling blood.

Almost all the clubs and professional players were within the first batch of players leaving. They secretly cheered to themselves. *While you guys are still building sandcastles here on the planet, we are off to explore space!*

The officers also boarded the BlackLight Stealth, with Han Xiao being the last on.

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As the hatches closed, with the BlackLight Stealth at the head, the twenty or so mercenary spaceships took tens of thousands of players as they disappeared into space. The last rays of sunlight disappeared with the spaceships, signaling the end of dusk and the heralding of the night.

The people on the planet raised their heads, looking at the fleet until they disappeared from view.

“Black Star...”

The emotions of countless people were surging wildly.

It was as though they had witnessed a legendary departure.

...

Nagakin’s spaceship had been waiting outside the atmosphere for a long time. They would take the Black Star Mercenary Group to join with the other mercenary groups, which would require a few days.

This was the first time that most of the players had entered the galaxy, and they were extremely excited. Through the interstellar communicators, they learned more about the structure of the galaxy. Because the spaceship was equipped with sufficient facilities, the players were able to familiarize themselves with everything, repeating the actions that Frenzied Sword and the others had done in the past.

However, on the forums, this event was sensational. The first batch of players to reach the interstellar regions raised a huge ruckus, and numerous foreign players came over to watch the news, curious and envious.

This group of players were a key part of Han Xiao’s plans. By bringing players into the galaxy in advance, it would allow them to quickly develop their own forces, further enriching his own pockets. The Godoran war mission was an opportunity to allow the players to understand the mercenary industry and the

forces that occupied the galaxy. At the same time, the ability of the Black Star Army would allow them to refresh their impression of him, improving his reputation.

The Black Star Army was no longer the small-scale mercenary group of the past but had been promoted into a large-scale legion. As long as their reputation spread, the missions would flow in ceaselessly.

This first battle was also good to allow the players to familiarize themselves with the playstyle of interstellar battles.

...

A few days passed, and the spaceships of the Black Star Army as well as Nagakin arrived at the meeting place. The combined fleet of the mercenary group was watching as they moved slowly through the universe.

Han Xiao's spaceship was ushered in, and he immediately received a communication request. The other party was the Sky Ring Army Commander, Gureja. The two of them had cooperated many times before, and their relationship was not too bad.

"Black Star, why are you here as well?" Gureja, complete with a beard that resembled steel bristles, asked in a surprised tone.

"Godora also hired me to take part in the war." Han Xiao laughed.

"Haha, I thought you only acted as a middleman. To think that you would come here personally. It seems like we'll be fighting side by side again."

Gureja let out a loud laugh. Their last mission on Planet Golden Gate had been a success because Han Xiao had helped in the dark. He remembered this favor.

Han Xiao shrugged in response. "Godora can afford the expense, so I'm here."

"That's right. You've gotten quite close to Godora recently. Do you know what this strategic operation is about?" Gureja asked.

Godora had prevented any information from leaking, only keeping the mercenary groups on standby. They did not disclose the fact that this was a complete offensive against DarkStar, so all the mercenaries there were in the dark.

"Since Godora did not tell you guys, I can't either. It's a secret."

"Ha, you indeed have close relations with them." Gureja did not press the issue, instead changing topics. "All of the captains are having a meeting on Sky Ring at the moment, assigning tasks. You've come at the right time."

"Hmm, then I'll head over now."

After hanging up the communicator, Han Xiao piloted the BlackLight Stealth to enter the array leading to the Sky Ring Army. Sky Ring was a flagship, built to resemble a mountain.

After docking the spaceships, Han Xiao led his officers to board Sky Ring. There were already mercenaries from the Sky Ring Army stationed at the entrance to greet them, taking them into the great hall.

The great hall was spacious, with a circular sofa placed in the middle. A dozen Army Commanders sat on the sofa, each occupying a position. Their respective officers would stay behind their factions' leader.

The moment Han Xiao walked into the great hall, everyone turned around.

Aurora pulled on the clothes of Hila, carefully whispering, "Sister, the life force of all these people is really huge."

The mercenaries present came from various star systems and star zones and were all outstanding in their own regions.

For example, the Sky Ring Army had Gureja and another Calamity Grade Super, whereas all the other commanders were at the Calamity Grade as well. Furthermore, those officers that were selected to come along with them were also all strong. This could be described as a gathering of the strong.

Hila's expression was grave. The gazes of those mercenaries gave her huge pressure, as though everyone present could easily deal with her.

However, at this point, a few of the army commanders smiled and passionately greeted them. The atmosphere calmed down.

"It's... it's Black Star!"

"We've not seen you for a while."

"Brother, come, sit beside me."

At least half of the commanders there had ties with Han Xiao or had worked with him before, so they were familiar with him.

There was a smile on Han Xiao's face as he replied to each and every one of them.

Situated in the midst of powerful allies, he felt more secure.

Herlous and the rest also began to greet the mercenaries whom they knew. The two sisters did not know anyone, so they did not speak a word.

Hila secretly scrutinized the group of mercenaries.

Are all these people Han Xiao's counterparts? They look formidable!

As Han Xiao walked toward the sofa, one of the commanders, code named 'Underworld Feather', shifted before patting the seat beside her, gesturing for him to take a seat.

Just as Han Xiao was about to sit, a commander who was short in stature opened his mouth, his tone harsh.

"Black Star, with just a small number of people in your mercenary group, you've come here to have fun?"

The laughter of everyone present suddenly halted.

Han Xiao paused for a moment before looking over. The speaker was foreign to him, and they had not worked together before. Most likely, he had been called over by another mercenary group.

Who was he?

True, his own expansion had happened not too long ago, so it had only just been filed with the Mercenary Alliance. News had not yet spread.

Han Xiao now understood.

That was to say, in the eyes of all those large mercenary groups, he was just a small-scale group with little over a hundred members.

Chapter 581: Refreshing Everyone's Understanding

Phillip's scan quickly located the origins of this person.

The person talking was an Army Commander called Justin. He was a Mage, and the Expeditionary Army that he led was a large mercenary group in one of the Star Systems within the Colton Star Cluster. He was a comrade who had been called there by the Purple Gold Army.

The top-notch mercenary groups within the Shattered Star Ring had their own circle, and Han Xiao had paid close attention to the various famous mercenary groups in the region. In the past, he did not have any dealings with the Expeditionary Army.

As Floating Dragon's Field Team, Black Star had gained a place within this circle because of the Dragon Emperor's fame. Justin had also heard about Black Star before and knew that despite the small size of the Black Star Mercenary Group, they were a special bunch.

While the other large mercenary groups were willing to network with Black Star due to Floating Dragon, he did not have such an interest. When roaming in the mercenary world, he had seen far too many things. So what if the Dragon Emperor was powerful? Justin felt that both of their jobs were completely different. He did not wish to provoke the Dragon Emperor but was too lazy to network with her.

To him, Han Xiao was no more than a fellow mercenary who he had heard of before. He did not have anything against Han Xiao but could not help but speak the truth and doubt the size of Black Star's Mercenary Group.

While Black Star had a large network, they were about to take part in a war, which carried a huge risk. As an experienced mercenary, Justin doubted that his comrade had the strength to fight alongside him.

If a third-rate mercenary was hired and caused the battle line to collapse, everyone would be affected.

The way Justin saw it, Black Star was no more than a third-rate mercenary who was there to join in the fun. All of them had to shoulder the burden of the war, but what kind of a burden could Black Star shoulder? Their remuneration was earned through placing their lives on the line, but Black Star would be able to earn his by slacking off at the back. Thus, Justin was not too pleased.

“Since we are going to participate in a war, every Army present has over a hundred battleships and a few ten thousand mercenaries invested into the battle,” Justin said with a deep voice. “How many troops can you bring out?”

The other Army Commanders looked at Justin before looking at the standing Han Xiao and did not interrupt.

None of them present were aware that the battle in which they were about to participate was a result of Han Xiao’s actions. With a lack of information, they naturally thought that Han Xiao was only making use of his network to earn a quick buck.

While they did not say anything, all of them felt this way.

“Army Commander Justin, your doubts are justified and understandable,” Han Xiao replied with a calm expression. Everyone present had some kind of status, and it was not wrong for them to voice their doubts.

It was also the best opportunity for him to refresh the understanding that those Army Commanders had of the Black Star Army. Since they were about to fight together, he naturally had to display sufficient strength to put all of them at ease.

“All of your understanding of me is a little outdated. My Black Star Army has already expanded, and we are no longer the same as before. We now have more than ten thousand mercenaries, and they all have the strength of Grade C at least.”

“More than ten thousand Supers?”

Justin’s eyes widened in shock, and the other Army Commanders were also dumbfounded.

Such a scale was something that even they found frightening.

Just a while ago, the Black Star Mercenary Group had only been a middle-sized mercenary group. How did they grow so rapidly?

Many of them doubted the validity of Han Xiao’s words, and Han Xiao immediately got Phillip to pull up the registration file of the Black Star Army.

Justin did not say another thing. Black Star did indeed have the right to participate in this war with those numbers.

At this moment, Han Xiao’s gaze swept past everyone present and said, “Everyone knows about the immortals under my charge, right?”

Everyone nodded. It was no secret that Black Star had a couple of immortal mercenaries under him.

Han Xiao smiled and added, “These new recruits are all immortals.”

The entire room fell silent.

“They are all immortals?” Gureja stood up abruptly and broke the silence.

All the other Army Commanders also snapped back into their senses.

All of them understood the significance of those words. This meant that the mercenaries would never be 'expended', and the Black Star Army would always maintain its size. Furthermore, they would be able to take on risky missions without the slightest bit of hesitation and would not need to worry about deaths or compensation!

This was like their dream team!

More than ten thousand low grade Supers would be enough to rank any Mercenary Group at the top. If those Supers were immortals, they could only imagine what kind of a stir this would create in the mercenary world.

They would be the best cannon fodder... no, partners!

Many of them could not help but think about Han Xiao's other identity.

The Black Star Army was also the Field Team of Floating Dragon!

These immortals would be the strength of Floating Dragon after their expansion!

Just when Justin was tongue tied, he heard Han Xiao's voice.

"Army Commander Justin, these are the forces that I have brought for the battle. Are you satisfied?" Han Xiao asked.

Justin's mouth cramped up and had nothing to say.

"Or do you doubt my personal strength? If you have any doubts, we can have a little spar." Han Xiao raised his brows. He was not angered by Justin doubting him, but since he wanted to display his strength, it was best for him to take on a harder stance.

Gureja coughed and resolved the situation. "Black Star single handedly fought off three Calamity Grade Supers recently and tanked a main cannon. While the news may have been exaggerated slightly, I believe that the majority is still the truth. I believe no one here will doubt your combat capability."

Justin then stood up with a solemn expression with his height only up to Han Xiao's waist. Raising his arm out toward the sofa, he invited Han Xiao to take a seat.

"I apologize for my doubts previously. Please take a seat."

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Just when Han Xiao was about to take a seat, he interrupted Han Xiao's actions with his words. Now that he understood the strength of the Black Star Army, Justin naturally admitted his mistake and invited Han Xiao to take a seat.

The moment Justin took a step back, the other Army Commanders nodded in agreement, and the atmosphere became lively again.

Han Xiao sat beside Underworld Feather, and Herlous and his other officers sat behind him.

After he sat down, Underworld Feather handed him a bag of snacks.

"You want?"

“What is this?” Han Xiao looked into the bag, which was filled with a pile of black dried meat.

“Dried lizards. I made it myself,” Underworld Feather said with her brows raised.

Han Xiao hesitated for a moment before picking up a piece and eating it. He then asked curiously, “What kind of lizards did you use to make this?”

“I once completed a mission to wipe out an entire lizard tribe.” Underworld Feather picked up another piece and ate it merrily.

Han Xiao placed the second piece that he had just picked up back down.

She was truly too ferocious.

Underworld Feather was a female Dark Elf and had all the characteristics of one. Her chest and ass were well developed, and she had the beauty of an elf. Her physique was strong and healthy, and she looked like a lazy panther. She had inherited the cold blooded and blood thirsty nature of the Dark Elves. Despite looking tender and flirtatious, no one dared underestimate her. She was like a female dragon.

The Dark Underworld Army that she led had the background of a civilization, and her backing was a magic civilization led by elves belonging to the Colton Star Cluster.

In the universe, elves were also known as the long ears clan and had the ability to hear the sound of nature. They had many different species such as Child of the Forest, Tall Elf, Dark Elf, and so on. The elves were not considered common in the universe, but they were not especially rare either.

It was not too strange for a mercenary group that was half run by a civilization to exist. Because of the agreements between civilizations, any movement of a civilization’s army was extremely sensitive. As such, it was much more convenient to grow a private army. Completing their mercenary missions was no more than a cover for their private and more sensitive missions in the dark.

Many civilizations would groom such an army in the dark, and there were many such examples within the top mercenary circle of the Shattered Star Ring. In fact, Han Xiao’s Black Star Army was also Floating Dragon’s Field Team in name.

The higher one climbed in the universe, the more complicated things would get. The universe was far too large, and no single organization or individual would be able to dominate it.

Gureja led the meeting ahead of their battle to allocate everyone’s role clearly. Han Xiao kept quiet throughout the entire meeting and did not say a word.

“Black Star, what role are you going to take?” Someone asked.

Han Xiao thought for a while before saying, “I will take care of them if a melee fight breaks out.”

He did not wish to participate in the battle between spaceships at all. He would have to repair the spaceships if they were damaged, and it would not be worth it. Furthermore, he only had twenty or so spaceships with him, and the spaceships were mainly used for transportation, not battle.

Since the players were not afraid of death, they would be the best choice to deal with the DarkStar warriors.

After a short discussion, the jobs of the various armies were decided, and the Army Commanders dispersed.

Han Xiao boarded the BlackLight Stealth and returned to his own fleet. Looking out of the window, his twenty or so spaceships were currently following the troops of the alliance.

The players had just entered the galaxy, and everything was still extremely fresh to them. However, Han Xiao understood that if they got rid of DarkStar now, many of the future storylines would disappear.

In his previous life, the players could only join Godora or DarkStar. After entering the galaxy, both parties would be in opposing factions. However, this was completely changed because of Han Xiao's presence. As such, this meant that all the players no longer had this Main Storyline.

The way Han Xiao saw it, while he did not want to give up the missions, getting rid of DarkStar was a must.

The storyline between DarkStar and Godora has been replaced by me. To the players, joining the Black Star Army has become their new Main Storyline. This is the best time to cultivate the player's sense of belonging. If I can borrow the strength of the players to expand, I will also be able to let them feel a sense of honor. It seems like I need a few big events to let the players feel a sense of accomplishment. This attack on DarkStar can be the beginning.

Han Xiao was extremely concerned about the players. The accumulation in Version 2.0 was extremely important, and it was akin to building a strong foundation.

The players formed the core of his plan in Version 2.0 because the next version refresh would only take place ten years later. While it was still a while before the end of Version 2.0, Han Xiao was used to making preparations early.

However, he had to first take care of the battle before him.

Opening his communicator, Han Xiao looked at the message sent by Risda.

DarkStar's troops were scattered around the different regions of the Garton Star System, and the largest cluster had gathered a total of six motherships as though they were planning another attack. The other motherships were roaming the galaxy independently.

The location of the six motherships would probably be the main battlefield for the mercenaries.

The war was about to begin.

...

At the same time on a DarkStar mothership, Degulish and the others were in a meeting again to discuss their next plan. This time, their leader had given the order for them to attack the Rainbow Prison.

Their previous two assaults had failed, and they were not able to increase Godora's losses or get rid of Black Star. Before they could find a way to get rid of Black Star, DarkStar had decided not to touch the calamity planets but attack the Rainbow Prison instead. They wanted to save their former comrades. There were even a few Calamity Grade Supers locked up in there.

DarkStar took action without any fear or wariness. With Godora being in the light and them in the dark, DarkStar was confident that their ambush work.

However, DarkStar did not know that they had already lost the advantage of being hidden, and their locations had been exposed by Han Xiao. A calamity capable of wiping DarkStar out was brewing silently, and they were completely unaware of that.

Just as Degulish and the others were planning their next mission, Ember suddenly frowned and pressed down on his chest.

For some odd reason, he had a bad premonition.

Chapter 582: The Counterattack Begins

In an empty area of the universe, not far away from the large army of the six DarkStar motherships, a huge Godoran fleet was hidden behind a barren planet. Various battleships were densely packed to form neat rows. This was one of the temporary formations created for Operation Hodellas.

On the screen of the command ship, the coordinates of all the motherships of DarkStar were marked in red on the star map. The six motherships were slowly moving toward the ambush area, and it was those enemy troops that were the objectives of the Godorans.

“Target is approaching ambush site. Estimated time of arrival is 11 hours and 25 minutes.”

The fleet commander reported the situation to the upper echelons, and he was one of the members in the War Bureau who was aware of the identity of their target.

In order to prevent any leaks, every commander responsible for Operation Hodellas had been thoroughly screened. Only those that were absolutely loyal knew the target of their operation.

The fleet commander was also secretly excited at the thought of launching a counterattack against DarkStar. He was an old-fashioned, pureblood Godoran official with deep-rooted hostility toward DarkStar. He looked forward to removing this tumor every day.

This was an important operation, and to be selected as one of the commanders by the upper echelons was undoubtedly an honor. The sense of responsibility on his shoulders was also extremely heavy.

After completing his report to the upper echelons, the fleet commander then contacted the leaders of all the other formations to exchange information. Their strategy was to perform simultaneous strikes on

After confirming the operation time, another commander raised a topic within the encrypted military communication channel.

“Do all of you know the source of intelligence for this operation? When I asked about the relationship with the party, I was actually told that it was labelled as a secret of the highest level.”

“Highest level secret? Seems like the channels our superiors have for obtaining information are really mysterious.”

In the eyes of those senior officers, Godora had already been warring with DarkStar for so many years to no avail. To suddenly obtain a set of coordinates for the DarkStar motherships, there was some

strangeness to this whole situation, so they could not help but wonder about the source of this intelligence. However, no one could inquire about the specifics.

"I do have some information though. I heard that this counterattack was organized by Godora because they managed to buy some information from a mysterious person. Otherwise, the War Bureau would not have been able to stop DarkStar leading them by their nose."

"Mysterious person?"

"That person can actually monitor the coordinates of DarkStar. Haha. Could it be that there's a traitor among the upper echelons of DarkStar?"

Everyone shared their views, secretly curious about the mysterious person who provided the intelligence.

Who was this sacred person who single-handedly provoked such a huge war? They were the hero of Godora!

After ending their communications, the respective commanders began handing down their new orders.

"It's about time. Inform the mercenary fleets on standby. Tell them to cooperate with our attack.

...

During this standby period, there was little to do, but the players were not idle, often looking for the mercenaries to improve favorability, trying out new tasks, as well as discovering new and interesting gossip. They did not require Han Xiao to pay close attention to them.

Han Xiao took the chance to visit the different spaceships in the fleet, interacting with the players and continuing to harvest experience from them. He also looked for the various heads of the large mercenary groups to exchange pleasantries. The rest of his time was used to make machinery.

In such a manner, a few days passed, and Gureja called over all the commanders. The orders from Godora had been passed down, and it was finally time for them to start the mission.

The mercenary fleet sped up, arriving at the predetermined location for the ambush. The Black Star Army followed as well.

Returning to his BlackLight Stealth, Han Xiao accepted the private communication from Godora.

"Black Star, the operation is about to begin. We need you to control your Artificial Intelligence that has snuck in to create chaos for the enemy."

"Got it." Han Xiao nodded in response.

To have the whistleblower cause a ruckus within, that was a simple task.

"The remuneration for this employment has been notarized with the Mercenary Alliance and the official employment mission sent to the file of the Black Star Army."

Opening the Mercenary Group interface, the official employment of Godora had been authorized with the name Operation Hodellas.

A war employment was not a private transaction and needed to be recorded in the Mercenary Alliance. After it was completed, a large number of Credibility Points would then be added to raise the Credibility Rating of the Mercenary Group. Furthermore, the mission details would be added to their mission files.

This was also the first war-level employment for the Black Star Army.

The interface popped up a notification of the corresponding hire, with a total of 18,000,000 experience as well as 1500 Favorability for the Godoran Faction.

As the Army Commander, his remuneration was the highest, receiving 3.4 million Enas. In addition, the officers and mercenaries would be remunerated individually.

This was especially so for the players. Other than Black Star's mission of [Black Star Army: The First Battle], all of them also triggered the mission [Operation Hodellas – War Employment]. They all received substantial experience and monetary rewards, although they were a far cry from his own.

This was a war-level employment, so while the players only got to drink a bit of soup from the pot, the rewards were far beyond their current standards, which was extremely generous.

On the forums, the tens of thousands of players were in high spirits, posting to show off the many rewards of their first battle upon joining the Black Star Army. This piqued everyone's interest in the Black Star Army further.

This large-scale employment allowed players to understand that they shared common interests with their faction, thus helping them strengthen their sense of belonging. Han Xiao had led them to participate in the war for this purpose.

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Because most players desired to take on a 'role', the various influences in the game allowed them to fulfill their dreams and fantasies. In order for the Black Star Army to become the faction akin to their 'first love', Han Xiao had to utilize plotlines, feelings, interests, and other means.

When Han Xiao first set up his faction, he had already made this plan.

...

In the vast universe, the mercenaries stayed by their ambush point. It would only take a short jump for them to reach their battlefield position. During this time, the enemy's actions were monitored through the coordinates on the star map, which were shared by Godora.

The formation of the Black Star Army was placed behind the rest, as they were not participating in the frontal attack of the DarkStar motherships.

Inside his BlackLight Stealth, Han Xiao watched the actions of DarkStar through the feedback provided by Risda.

His monitor was different. While others could only see the coordinates on the star map, he could see the internal conditions of the mothership. At this moment, the members of the DarkStar fleet were still unaware of their impending doom, conducting their businesses as usual.

Attacking Planet Aquamarine and giving me such huge losses... it's time for you to pay your debts.

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes.

As time progressed, the six DarkStar motherships finally entered the ambush site.

They're here!

Han Xiao's eyes gleamed.

"Attack!" Gureja's command spread through the entire army in an instant.

The next instant, the joint mercenary fleet jumped simultaneously. The universe outside of their spaceships turned into flowing streams of light as they activated their hyperdrive.

In just a few seconds, the fleet had crossed a long distance, and the undefended DarkStar motherships appeared in front of their eyes.

On the other side, streams of light appeared as the Godoran fleet emerged. They attacked from both sides, instantly surrounding the DarkStar fleet.

The ambush sites for both were out of DarkStar's radar detection range, and they appeared at the same time, catching them off guard.

Without another word, Godora and the mercenaries began to open fire, and countless cannons and lasers bombarded the six DarkStar motherships. With such deliberate calculations, the troops in the mothership were immediately thrown into chaos.

Inside the mothership where Degulish was located, the lights turned red as they sounded the warning alarms.

The people on the ship were shocked, immediately rushing to their positions. The mothership was being rocked around from the explosions, causing people to fall from time to time.

"What's happening?"

Degulish had an expression of anger as he called for the observation equipment. When he saw that the attackers were from Godora, he lost his composure immediately.

How could it be Godora?

Did Godora plan to ambush us?

How could they know our location?

The projection of their Head of Intelligence appeared on the screen, with a face of worry. "Degulish, we're being ambushed, and the enemy is well prepared. Not just our fleet, the other DarkStar motherships in the other Star Zones are also under attack! Godora has planned this for a long time. They've cracked our stealth equipment and grasped our movements!"

This was the first time that DarkStar had been attacked by Godora while in stealth mode!

This ability to go into stealth mode was DarkStar's biggest reliance. Now that it had failed, Degulish immediately realized the seriousness of their situation.

"Send orders to all fleets. Do not engage and seek opportunities to breakthrough. This is Godora's trap, and it is an important life or death situation. We cannot fight head on with them!"

Degulish issued the order.

There was no warning of Godora's attack, and the incident happened too quickly. The upper echelons of DarkStar had no time to react, and they did not even have time to think about how Godora had managed to grasp their whereabouts.

Right now, their top priority was to escape!

If Godora had come with a plan, DarkStar would not be able to stand up to the attack and could only escape.

However, the command was not sent out. A notification on the communication interface showed that the link had been cut off.

Not only Degulish, but the entire DarkStar motherships had their connection cut off from the outside world.

This was because Degulish was residing in the mothership that Risda was controlling.

Risda had totally cut off their connection to the outside world.

The whistleblower had begun his actions!

Chapter 583: The Ending Is Usually Decided Before the Battle Even Starts

The battle entered the climax as soon as it started.

Outside the porthole, the Godoran fleet, mercenary fleet, and DarkStar fleet blasted at each other. The light from the cannon fire brought multiple colors to this space in the universe, along with countless deaths.

Cannons shot through the armor plates of one spaceship after another, turning the people inside into ashes.

Since Degulish could not send out any orders, the DarkStar fleet lost command and unity, fighting for themselves. Only after quite some time did they start to unite into groups under the orders of other furious DarkStar superiors and tried to break through the situation.

Sadly, as the initial order did not arrive on time, so DarkStar lost their best chance to escape. The way they pushed forward under the heavy fire was like trying to move in mud.

"Looks like we don't even need to do anything."

Han Xiao shook his head as he looked at the situation of the battlefield.

With Godora and the mercenaries working together, the strength of their fleets completely outpowered the six DarkStar mothership fleets. It was highly likely that there would not even be a need to enter the

melee battle stage; they could turn these DarkStar armies into wrecks floating in space with just nonstop cannon fire.

Black Star Army's mission was handling the melee battle, so they had no chance to showcase their abilities and could only stay back and wait.

DarkStar started to show signs of collapsing. Some of the DarkStar frigates became deserters, wanting to escape from the slow mothership. Unsurprisingly, they were turned into fireworks midway.

Han Xiao thought for a while. Doing nothing did not fit his goal of building a name for Black Star Army, so he decided to create an opportunity for himself.

"Risda, can you control the movement of that mothership?"

"Sure."

"Drive the mothership and carry out a short distance hyperdrive, crashing into the closest planet. I will convince Godorans to let you go."

As he was saying, Han Xiao contacted the War Bureau through a private channel.

"This is Black Star. I'm going to control a mothership to crash into the surface of a planet and carry out land battle. The deputy leader of DarkStar is on that mothership. This is a chance to capture him alive while simultaneously seizing a DarkStar mothership."

Degulish was also a mission target of [Godora's Ally], so capturing him alive and giving him to Godora would result in a reward just like killing him. Also, giving them a mothership also had a high reward.

Godora had come prepared. This war might be DarkStar's last struggle, so Han Xiao wanted to increase the mission rating as much as possible.

The War Bureau had been paying close attention to the battle. With how things turned out, the superiors had no reason to doubt Han Xiao. Besides, capturing Degulish alive and seizing a mothership was very useful. After some discussion, the superiors decided to try Han Xiao's plan. They were confident in controlling the situation, so they took the risk and quickly sent orders to the fleet commander.

This order made the fleet commander very confused. Nonetheless, he was used to obeying orders as a soldier, so he quickly did as he was told.

Risda controlled the DarkStar mothership and deviated from the fleet, slowing speeding up as the attacks targeted at it became scattered.

The other motherships, of course, did not receive such treatment. They faced heavier fire as they watched Risda's mothership slowly move away.

Before the passengers on this mothership knew what was going on, they entered hyperdrive and arrived at the nearest planet—the barren planet that the Godoran fleet had hidden behind previously.

Boom!

The mothership immediately crashed through the atmosphere and toward the ground, forming a crater as dust shot into the sky like a fountain.

The DarkStar members inside the mothership were thrown about from the impact.

Degulish was the only Calamity Grade Super on that mothership. With his body strength, he was not injured, but his face was filled with surprise.

As soon as the communication was cut off earlier, he had already started to be suspicious, and the fact that the mothership had moved on its own proved his suspicion. Clearly, the mothership was under the enemy's control.

No wonder their whereabouts had been exposed to the enemy—even their mothership belonged to them!

When did the enemy do that? Degulish was furious and shocked.

The intelligence of the mothership crashing into the planet surface reached the mercenary fleet, and Gureja quickly contacted Han Xiao.

“Black Star, it's your turn.”

“On it.” Han Xiao nodded.

The BlackLight Stealth turned around, followed by the rest of the Black Star fleet. They diverged from the alliance fleet and entered hyperdrive, arriving at the planet where the mothership had crashed in the blink of an eye.

All the DarkStar members including Degulish were trapped on the planet surface, and a ground war was a stage exceptionally suitable for the players.

“Touch down, deploy the mercenaries!” Han Xiao ordered. The spaceships slowly descended toward the planet's surface.

The players inside the spaceship were already waiting behind the hatch, ready to strike at any time.

There should be tens of thousands of DarkStar members inside a mothership, with quite a number of them being Grade B Supers. Of course, the strong ones would be dealt with by the officers; the players only needed to deal with the normal soldiers.

This time, Hila, who was standing beside Han Xiao, frowned and asked, “What about us?”

Han Xiao turned around, pondered for a moment, and said, “You guys can join the battle this time, too.”

Hila and Aurora would not die so easily. Furthermore, they would eventually need to familiarize themselves with the feeling of a space battle, so they needed training. This was a rather safe chance to do so. Hence, Han Xiao did not plan to stop Hila.

Feeling Han Xiao's trust, Hila's brows loosened, and she nodded.

She did not like to always be protected and had always hoped to be of use.

The DarkStar soldiers on the surface guarded the mothership closely as the mercenary spaceships carrying the players surrounded them from all directions.

Whoosh!

Hatches opened one after another.

Players walked out of the spaceship, and hundreds of thousands of them surrounded the DarkStar warriors.

The BlackLight Stealth hovered in midair, and Han Xiao jumped down. He did not need the standard superhero landing. Mechanical Force surrounded his body and created a repulsion force when he was about to land on the ground. He hovered just less than twenty centimeters above the ground.

“Black Star! It’s you again!”

Degulish clenched his teeth.

With a poker face, Han Xiao slowly said, “Last time, the three of you fought me together. Now, it’s only you, and no one will come to save you no matter how loud you scream.”

Now that he was Calamity Grade just like Degulish, their strength difference was tremendously reduced. There was only one ending for Degulish if they fought one on one—defeat!

A tint of nervousness flashed within Degulish’s eyes. He indeed dreaded Han Xiao’s tankiness, so he quickly thought of what he could do. However, the more he thought about it, the more hopeless he got. He could not think of any possibility in which he would be able to escape. The fleet could barely hold on; no one would come to help him.

His only advantage was that, although it was extremely difficult to kill Black Star, Black Star was just Grade B, so he might be able to stall for a very long time.

Hum!

Just as Degulish had this thought, electric sparks shot out from Han Xiao’s body, and compressed orbs opened one after another. This was the first time that he had used his full power since he entered the Calamity Grade. Thick, dense energy splashed in all directions, showcasing the energy level that belonged to the Calamity Grade!

Noticing the energy rank, Degulish’s face changed drastically.

“Yo—You’ve achieved the Calamity Grade?”

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When they fought not long ago, Black Star had been Grade B!

How could he improve so fast?

Without saying another word, Degulish turned around, turned into a stream of light, and immediately escaped, disappearing into the horizon and leaving the DarkStar warriors behind.

Before Black Star was Calamity Grade, he had already been unkillable. Now that he was Calamity Grade, how was he supposed to fight him?

“I’ll chase him. You guys deal with DarkStar’s army.”

At this point, the new mechanical suit was not yet built. Han Xiao wore the backup mechanical suit, turned the thrusting module up to its full power, and dashed toward Degulish like a bolt of lightning, disappearing before everyone else’s eyes.

Not long after, the deafening sound of fighting came from afar, and the ground trembled.

As if this was a signal, the battle erupted!

DarkStar warriors fiercely fought back against the hoard of players coming from all directions.

Boom!

Countless abilities and bullets covered the sky, bringing chaos to the battlefield.

Players fell onto the ground like wheat being harvested. After all, DarkStar members were galactic warriors; their average strength was much stronger.

However, as the battle continued, DarkStar warrior’s faces changed as well. First, they were fiery, then tired, and after some time, they became numb. Finally, the DarkStar warriors noticed the fact that the players were immortal.

The enemies would not die, so no matter how many times they kill them, it was useless. Realizing this, the minds of the DarkStar warriors were instantly defeated.

From having the upper hand in the battle, the DarkStar warriors slowly began to get defeated. Tens of thousands of people could not hold the line of defense anymore; they were eaten up bit by bit. Not long after, the entire DarkStar army was drowned by the players.

Ember, whose Esper ability was extremely powerful against crowds, was not here, so the players had no nemesis.

The stronger DarkStar officers were held back and defeated by Herlous and others, and the rest of the DarkStar soldiers were no match for the players.

...

Sometime later, the chaotic battlefield gradually quietened down, only left with scattered screams of agony. The battle was ending, and the ground was covered in the corpses of DarkStar soldiers. The remaining DarkStar members surrendered and were tied up and thrown aside.

The players excitedly cleaned up the battlefield. The DarkStar warriors’ equipment was everywhere. There were even players who fought for them once in a while. Herlous did not stop them. According to the rules of the mercenary industry, that equipment all belonged to the mercenaries.

“How’s Han Xiao doing?”

Hila wiped off a bloodstain on her face and walked to Herlous.

She had taken part in the battle and had experienced the strength of regular galactic warriors first hand. Tiny streams of red flew out from the tens of thousands of dead DarkStar warriors and were absorbed by Hila.

Living creatures that had recently died could provide energy to her. Hila could increase the strength of her Esper ability through large scale slaughters. In Han Xiao's previous life, she had slaughtered many races and used this method to increase her strength. Now that she was not that extreme, of course, she would not choose that method anymore.

"The captain could deal with three Grade As even before. There will definitely not be a problem."

Herlous was not worried at all. He took out the communicator and contacted Han Xiao.

"Captain, you done?"

"What a coincidence, I just finished up with the battle. Wait there, I'm on my way back."

...

Hanging up the communication, Han Xiao looked at Degulish, who was not far away.

Degulish was breathing heavily and in a very bad state. He had almost zero stamina left and was staring at Han Xiao.

The marks from their battle extended hundreds of miles. The ground was dented everywhere, covered in craters created by them. Some places had even become trenches.

Han Xiao had used his Calamity Grade strength without holding back, enjoying his destructive powers.

The aftermath of a full-on Calamity Grade battle could easily change the terrain.

Degulish could crack the surface with just a punch or a kick, but he could not penetrate Han Xiao at all.

Han Xiao was also Calamity Grade, so Degulish could not overwhelm him like he did when he attacked Planet Aquamarine. He could not defeat Han Xiao, nor could he run away. His situation was very frustrating. He would get battered if he did not fight back, but if he did fight back, he would unavoidably waste his energy without even being able to hurt Black Star.

High-intensity battles were highly draining. As his energy levels fell, his strength continuously diminished. Han Xiao's attacks brought dealt more and more injuries, and the vicious cycle repeated.

A battle of stamina was where Han Xiao excelled. Although the Mechanical Army had yet to recover and he had yet to update his own equipment, with his talents and rare abilities, he wore Degulish down steadily.

Degulish coughed, clenched his teeth, and started to activate the energy that he had only just recovered.

"Stop it, do you even have the strength to fight anymore?"

Han Xiao was speechless. Degulish was a Calamity Grade Pugilist after all. Even though his stamina was completely drained, he could recover it in a matter of seconds.

Seeing Degulish was still trying to regain energy, Han Xiao pondered and asked, "Do you know why your location was exposed?"

Degulish's face drastically changed. His movement became stiff, and his just recovered energy disappeared.

"Could it be..."

"Before you people attacked Planet Aquamarine, I had already invaded your mothership when you attacked Planet Golden Gate. The person that gave Godora intelligence and started this war was me."

Degulish's face turned black.

This time, the communicator rang again; it was a message from Gureja.

"Black Star, the battle here is almost finished. All the DarkStar motherships have been destroyed. Only a few DarkStar members escaped through the gaps created by the mothership in small spaceships. The Godorans are chasing them down. We still don't know if any of the DarkStar upper echelons are among them. We are preparing to fetch you. Are you done over there?"

"Yes, the mission is complete. Come over."

The war was a complete victory just as he expected. The intelligence provided by Risda was extremely detailed. Not only did they know DarkStar's location, they also knew the number of DarkStar troops. Plus, Godora had more than enough time to gather enough troops to attack them when they least expected it.

Godora controlled an entire Star System, and if they still could not achieve an overwhelming victory with such an enormous advantage, it would have been way too embarrassing.

Without their stealth advantage, DarkStar could not match a Star System Civilization that attacked them with all they had. If not for their stealth ability, DarkStar would have been destroyed a long time ago.

What Han Xiao had provided was what Godora needed most.

He could very well be considered the main reason that DarkStar had been destroyed.

Han Xiao did not mind that Degulish was just beside him. He ended the communication in front of him.

Degulish knelt onto the floor with a plop and stopped resisting. He closed his eyes with agony and whimpered, "DarkStar is done for..."

Chapter 584: Escaped Fish

"DarkStar is done for..."

At the last moment, Degulish realized that it was the end for the warriors he led, and he had nowhere to run. He lost the will to fight and gave up resisting. His exhausted and enormous body fell to the floor, facing down.

Han Xiao did not have an easy time dealing with Degulish, and many of his adorable machines had been destroyed.

Since he did not have enough time to recover the machines that he had lost during the Planet Aquamarine battle, he was using the backup machinery that he built before, and Degulish had destroyed two-third of his stash.

Nonetheless, after this battle, Han Xiao had a very clear understanding of his own strength, so it was well worth it.

His current battle mode was rather impressive, and the synergy between his talents and abilities were quite perfect. For regular Grade A Supers, he was basically undefeated just with how strong his body was. After he recovered his Mechanical Army, he would even be on par with Calamity Grade Supers who were three to four thousand Energy Rank above him.

The strength differences between Calamity Grades were exceptionally large. Han Xiao had only just stepped into this territory, so there were still many who were a threat to him. Such as those above Level 200 who could overpower him. However, given how tanky he was, he would still be quite a pain to deal with.

Comparatively, opponents who used psychic attacks were a bigger threat to him. Psychic attacks were not included in the damage types that could be absorbed by [Intermediate Energy Absorption]; only attacks that landed on his physical body would be turned into energy. Psychic attacks could break his 'health-mana cycle'.

Some Mages would be quite difficult to deal with as well, such as those who excelled in Curse magic and abilities that could suppress life regeneration of sorts, also Espers that had psychic abilities like Hila.

There are countless abilities in the universe. I am far from the top of Grade A.

He was very self-aware of his strength, so there was no way he would get arrogant.

Seeing that Degulish did not have the will to fight anymore, Han Xiao said, "Anur had a stronger spine than you. I thought you would fight me to death."

Degulish clenched his teeth and said, "Black Star, don't get ahead of yourself. You've not won yet!"

He still had one final shred of hope—the DarkStar army had been annihilated, but the superiors were not all caught. The DarkStar leader had yet to return and was not in Garton Star System. This was his hope; as long as the leader was still alive, DarkStar was not completely obliterated.

Therefore, he had chosen to surrender. He wanted to keep himself alive and useful, even if it meant that he would be sent to Rainbow Prison, so that he could wait for his leader to come and save him, to give himself to the cause once again, rising for his leader.

"DarkStar's leader..."

The DarkStar leader was a very remarkable man. He had avoided this disaster out of luck. However, even if he wanted to start all over, he would have to keep an exceptionally low profile for a long time in order to escape from the Godorans. Hence, he would not be much of a problem any time soon.

Furthermore, Godora wanted to kill the DarkStar leader more than he did, so there was no point worrying about it.

...

Dragging Degulish along, Han Xiao returned to where the others were. Seeing the corpses that were piled up and scattered across the ground, he nodded with approval.

The players did very well; the effect that he wanted had been achieved.

Shortly after, the mercenaries and the Godorans landed together. The DarkStar captives were handed to the Godorans. Degulish was escorted onto the ship by two Calamity Grade Godoran government officials, heading to the dreamy life of free housing for the rest of his life in the marvelous cell of Rainbow Prison.

Risda completed his mission and returned to the BlackLight Stealth, pushing Phillip out.

This DarkStar mothership was handed to Godora as part of the deal that had been discussed with the Godoran War Bureau.

The notification of two missions in [Godora's Ally] being completed popped up on the interface.

[Deputy Leader – Degulish] complete.

You have received 24,200,000 Experience, 1500 Godoran Civilization Favorability, [Character Summon Card – Degulish]

[Seize Mothership] complete.

You have received 30,000,000 Experience and 1800 Godoran Civilization Favorability.

Other than that, [Operation Hodellas – War Hire] was shown to be completed as well, despite him not doing much. Nonetheless, after Han Xiao thought about it and realized that in order to even receive these benefits, he had to be qualified for it. After all, Godora would not hire just anyone for this. Furthermore, Risda had played a rather large part in it, so it was counted toward his contribution.

The initial reason that Godora hired him back then was to let him control the mothership; capturing Degulish and others was a pleasant surprise.

These three missions brought Han Xiao more than 70 million experience. Although it was not comparable to harvesting the players, it was still quite profitable.

Hence, despite the players' mission being the shrunk version, they still made quite a fortune.

The players were happy, and Han Xiao was happier.

Sadly, the players did not have the [Godora's Ally] mission and could not receive the other two rewards.

Shame.

With the boost of three continuous missions, Han Xiao's Godora Favorability rocketed past 6,000 and reached the highest relationship status—[Reverence].

It was well deserved. He had provided intelligence to Godora to counterattack, captured deputy leader Degulish alive, and seized a mothership. If he was a civil servant in Godora, he would have been promoted more than ten times. Hell, he might even have become a candidate for top positions in the War Bureau.

As Han Xiao was about to have a conversation with the Godora superiors, Gureja, Underworld Feather, Justin, and the other Army Commanders stared directly at Black Star Army that were cleaning up the battlefield.

Defeating tens of thousands of DarkStar warriors was an easy feat; their army could do it too. However, they would never have achieved the result that Black Star Army had!

Almost zero casualties!

Their speculations about Black Star Army had become a reality.

Those Army Commanders knew full well that as soon as word about this spread, Black Star Army's name in the mercenary world would shoot up into the skies, completely overturning their past image and officially becoming one of the top mercenary groups.

...

"Other than this seized one, all the other DarkStar motherships were destroyed. Very few escaped, and their identities are yet to be verified." In the communicator image, the War Bureau superior explained the situation.

"Is that so?" Han Xiao contemplated.

DarkStar did not have a fixed base—the motherships were their base. Now that these had been destroyed, it was basically the end for them. The 'DarkStar' organization was no more. What Han Xiao cared more about was if Ember was alive.

Ember's Esper ability was very destructive, and he had immense hatred for him. Plus, his brain was the most developed. If he escaped, there would be quite a problem.

Maybe he could use the Destiny's Child card to foresee Ember's whereabouts?

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The Destiny's Child Character Summon Card only had two more uses left, and Han Xiao had yet to decide whether to use one of it here.

This time, the War Bureau superior said, "After some time, Godora will announce this victory to all of the Star System. Following your request, Serbia the Fifth will publicize your achievements personally, telling everyone that you're the hero of DarkStar's destruction and that you're a valued ally of Godora."

DarkStar had threatened the Garton Star System for many years, causing countless disasters. Now that they had finally been dealt with, Godora would certainly make an official announcement, streaming to all the channels in the entire Star System, listing DarkStar's sins and promoting their profound victory. That would boost the confidence of their people, making it known that DarkStar no longer existed, that they had saved the world, and so on.

Back then when Han Xiao sold his intelligence, one of the requirements was to publicize his contributions after the plan succeeded. This was to tremendously increase his fame.

For such an enormous feat, it was almost a definite that he would receive Star System level Legendary Points.

“By the way, you will be needed at the scene. Serbia the Fifth will personally give you the honors, and you will be a friend of Godora forever. After the ceremony ends, we will pay you the rest of the reward as discussed. Fifty medium battleships and one large main ship, the remaining fifteen million payment, and some Super Knowledges.”

Han Xiao’s eyes sparkled.

Finally, he was about to receive the remaining payment, but receiving the honors was unexpected.

Godora was very generous, so being honored by the leader of the nation was a huge honor. This was not his request but Godora’s decision.

With some thought, Han Xiao roughly knew what Godora was thinking. Their appreciation was indeed sincere, as were his achievements, but a part of it was definitely because he was part of Floating Dragon. Thus, they wanted to improve their relationship with the Floating Dragon.

If Floating Dragon’s Field Team Officer was Godora’s honored hero, their relationship would be closer.

This had no negative impact on him, so of course, Han Xiao would not reject it.

“Before bringing the players to Base One to officially start their mercenary career, showing them a ‘cut scene’ of me being honored is very beneficial for my personal image. This will all increase my reputation. Marvelous!”

Han Xiao was very content.

When Han Xiao ended the communication, the battlefield had almost all been cleaned up. The Godoran fleet dragged the DarkStar mothership from the ground like pulling up a carrot. They then moved it outside the atmosphere and were planning to take it back.

On the galactical battlefield on the other side, there were also many Godoran spaceships cleaning up the wreckages of DarkStar fleets.

This was an overwhelming victory; joy was on the face of every Godoran soldier.

Not only Han Xiao, but all the mercenary groups were also invited to Godora’s Mother Planet to attend the government ceremony not long after. Showing their faces was a free advertisement, so no one rejected the offer.

The Black Star Army and Alliance Fleet took off and headed toward Godora’s Mother Planet together.

After just experiencing a war, all the players were excited. All kinds of screenshots and recordings were being posted to the forums.

Herlous was extremely excited. Han Xiao had promised to get rid of DarkStar, and he had always thought that there was little hope. He had stood behind Han Xiao and watched his every step. He had

never thought this promise would be fulfilled in just a few years. At this point, Black Star's promise only had one outstanding condition—sending hundreds of thousands of Supers to deal with the problem on Planet Sunil. Even though DarkStar was destroyed, Black Star would definitely not go back on his word on this one. The highly risky bet that he placed on trusting an unknown mercenary back then had paid off!

Inside the BlackLight Stealth cockpit, Han Xiao did not pay attention to the players' actions as he would usually. After a long consideration, he had made a decision—he would foresee Ember's whereabouts. Although he might waste one use of the Character Summon Card, he wanted to be mentally prepared in case Ember was still alive.

You have used [Character Summon Card: Destiny's Child]

Usages: 4/5

The familiar fog covered his vision once again. Passing through the fog, a blurry image appeared before his eyes.

...

A mini DarkStar assault ship was speeding through the universe, escaping.

Ember was the only one on the ship.

Long before the ambush, he had felt uneasy and kept his alert up. When it happened, his reactions were the quickest. Realizing that there was no possibility of winning, he had abandoned the mothership, taking a small, fast assault ship. With a bit of luck and all his might, he had successfully escaped.

Hundreds of assault ships had tried to escape, but he was the only one that had succeeded. Ember had seen the mothership shattering into pieces under the barrage with his own eyes, and countless DarkStar warriors had turned to ash, floating in the cold universe.

DarkStar was finished, and Ember realized that.

Where should he go?

Piloting the spaceship, the dim light from the star map illuminated Ember's face. He was lost without purpose.

As a wanted man who had slaughtered tens of millions of Godorans, Godora would never give up chasing him.

It seemed like there was only one path ahead of him—leave Garton Star System, or even Colton Star Cluster, go to another Star Cluster in the Shattered Star Ring, hide his name, and start a new life.

Thinking about this, veins filled his eyes.

He did not want to escape anymore.

DarkStar still had him; it was not the end for DarkStar!

“I am destined to become Godora’s nightmare. With slaughter, I will make them reflect on their traditions that are countless years behind. The bloodline belief they have is against the nature of reproduction. This twisted mindset is exactly what created us. After their confession, I will make them swallow the fruit of their thousands of years of the pureblood belief. DarkStar will build a new Godora above their ruins!

“Then, there will be no more pureblood; no one will feel superior for their blood. Discrimination will no longer exist; no one will be born lower than another!”

Those were the DarkStar leader’s hopes for him when he was young, and he had always remembered them in his heart and made them his faith.

“Godora will definitely host a ceremony to announce to the entire Star System that they have defeated DarkStar and that the purebloods’ reign is still strong...” Ember clenched his teeth. “When you people think that everything has ended and are celebrating your victory, I will tell the entire Star System that DarkStar has yet to disappear.”

He decided to go to Godora’s Mother Planet.

When Godora was holding their ceremony and was watched by the whole Star System, he would use his Esper ability and start a slaughter, destroying Godora’s victory announcement.

However, Godora Mother Planet was very dangerous, so he had yet to figure out a way to get in. There would definitely be a lot of Calamity Grade Godoran government officials at the ceremony as guards, so him doing so might cost his life.

As Ember was having a thousand thoughts and was about to make a decision, his communicator suddenly rang. It was a communication request from the DarkStar leader.

That’s right, the leader is still alive!

He came up with a better idea!

Ember’s mind recovered, and he was overjoyed that he had found someone whom he could rely on.

Chapter 585: Mastermind

“Ember, are you the only one who escaped? What’s the situation now?”

The projection of the DarkStar leader appeared. Not too long ago, he had received many emergency messages from the upper echelons of DarkStar and found out that all the DarkStar motherships were being ambushed by Godora.

If Godora was able to lock onto their coordinates through some unknown means, DarkStar would not have anything to rely on anymore, and the situation would definitely be grave. He had tried contacting the various upper echelons to find out the news of the battle, but many of their numbers did not even respond.

After waiting for a long time, the DarkStar leader finally managed to contact Ember and immediately asked about the situation.

“All the motherships have been destroyed, and only a small number of people managed to escape. Our fleet is already gone...” Ember described the situation honestly with his fists clenched tightly and his teeth clenched.

The DarkStar leader fell silent before letting out a long sigh.

Their organization did not have any territory to their name, and those motherships were DarkStar’s moving bases. All their production, research, and training capabilities were concentrated within those motherships. Their many years of accumulation had been destroyed in a single battle. Their losses were incomparably heavy, and their foundations were completely destroyed.

Their entire organization no longer had any armed forces and was only left with the leader and a few escapees.

When the Mutation Disaster was resolved before the expected timing and they were forced to make a change in their plans, the entire plan was no longer within their grasp. Even if their plan was stopped midway, Godora would still be the loser, but now, Godora had actually managed to turn the tables around and launch an all-out attack to thoroughly destroy them.

As such, Godora’s losses had not been suffered in vain, and they had become the outright winner.

Who would have thought that the Mutation Source plan would become the final plan of their organization?

After pausing for a while, the DarkStar leader asked, “What are your plans?”

Ember hesitated for a moment before saying that he wanted to unleash a massacre at the Godoran ceremony.

“Ridiculous.” The DarkStar leader immediately rejected this plan. “With our fleet completely wiped out, we have to make further plans. Leave the Garton Star System first and meet up with me.”

Does this mean that I have to escape?

“Alright then.”

Ember was reluctant in his heart but could only swallow that feeling. He adjusted the course of his spaceship and set course to the nearest planet on the border of the Garton Star System.

As long as the leader is still around, we have a chance to rise up again.

...

In the Colton Star Cluster, in some Star System, the spaceship of the DarkStar leader was currently drifting in space.

After getting off the line with Ember, the DarkStar leader tapped on the spaceship’s control panel in deep thought.

After pondering for a long time, he stood up and left the control room. He then came to another walkway that was made from an alloy. When he walked to a specific location of the walkway, he knocked a few times on the wall. The spot that he knocked on did not seem any different from the wall around it.

Ka-cha.

The alloy panel slid open and revealed a secret chamber. An odd-shaped communicator was located within it.

An ordinary Galactic Communicator had many different designs. They could be worn on the wrist or even shaped in the form of glasses. There were some that were extremely simple spherical designs, and others followed civilian wristwatch designs. However, the communicator in the secret chamber was an old-fashioned design from many years back that seemed bulky and unwieldy.

Upon activating the communicator, lines of complicated encryption could be seen on the screen. The DarkStar leader keyed in many different passwords and confirmed his DNA before he could turn on the communicator. However, it seemed as though all the functions of the communicator were blocked, and he could only dial a single number.

Di di di...

The time spent waiting for the transmission to go through seemed extremely long.

Du...

The screen of the communicator then turned black, and a hazy, mosaicked face appeared on the screen.

The other party remained silent, and the DarkStar leader was the first to speak.

"Godora destroyed my fleet, and all my subordinates are dead. Only Ember is confirmed to be alive."

The hazy figure on the screen moved, and a mechanical voice sounded from the communicator. "Got it."

"I need a sum of money to build a new fleet," the DarkStar leader said with a deep voice.

"This isn't the time. Since you have failed, lie low for a while. You haven't been caught yet, so Godora will be on guard against you. You cannot restore DarkStar to its former heights any time soon. If not, there will be a risk of exposing the source of your funds."

"How long will I have to wait for?"

"The day Godora forgets the name of DarkStar will be the day for you to make a comeback."

"I do not wish to continue waiting," the DarkStar leader said in a depressed tone. "I have already been under your control for a very long time. When will it end? All of you are extremely clear that I can only create destruction and cannot truly destroy Godora entirely. Just when will all of you be satisfied?"

"You will know when the time comes."

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“Humph, you guys provided me with resources very willingly in the past. Now that my organization has almost been wiped out, you are starting to shrink back. Do you think that I have lost my value and wish to go back on our agreement?” The DarkStar leader raised his voice slightly.

“Are you threatening us?” The hazy figure fell silent. “I think that you are getting your target wrong.”

The face of the DarkStar leader changed slightly, and he said humbly with his head lowered, “My apologies, I spoke wrongly.”

“We will evaluate whether or not the transaction has been completed. Do not rush us. Remember, you were the one who chose to make this agreement with us; we did not choose you,” the hazy figure said. “Even without you, we can have a second DarkStar. At that time, the agreement will naturally be cancelled.

“So, you’d better watch your attitude...”

“You’d better wait if we tell you to.”

“I understand,” the DarkStar leader said with a soft tone.

The hazy figure paused for a moment before saying, “In any case, this isn’t the time for us to make an appearance. You should leave the Shattered Star Ring and rebuild your forces in other Star Fields.”

The DarkStar leader nodded.

“Hmm... we can introduce you to another big shot in a different Star Field. If you can gain his aid, you may not need to lie low for too long. However, you have to prepare a sacrificial offering for him.”

“Sacrificial offering?”

“A Super who has a sufficiently powerful Esper ability,” the hazy figure said slowly. “You should understand what I mean, right?”

The DarkStar leader was startled.

He understood what a sacrificial offering meant. At the same time, he could also faintly guess the identity of that ‘big shot’.

I heard that he is a crazy man who wants to form the ‘Super High Risk Esper Ability Restriction Treaty’.

“There are some rumors that the Crimson Empire is dissatisfied with the peace treaty,” the hazy figure said. “While they are located far away, if trouble really breaks out in the Crimson Empire, the Shattered Star Ring will be affected as well. That may be the best opportunity for you to stage a comeback and also a chance for us to complete our agreement. You will only be able to complete your side of the agreement if the situation is sufficiently chaotic.”

The eyes of the DarkStar leader lit up. While this might only be an excuse from the other party to console him, he did indeed regain some confidence.

“Don’t contact us again before you are prepared.”

After cutting off the communication, the DarkStar leader closed the secret chamber and returned to his room. Every time he contacted the other party, he would feel a sense of pressure that came from the other party's strength, status, and authority.

I hope that they will fulfill their end of the deal...

The DarkStar leader shook his head. What he was doing was no different from making a deal with tigers.

However, even if he was worried, he could only choose to make a transaction with the other party. The DarkStar leader had stepped onto this path very early on. No one in DarkStar was aware about this matter. In his eyes, this was the only hope for the mixed bloods.

Many years ago, he had come to understand that it was no more than a pipe dream if he wanted to overthrow the rule of the purebloods and create a new Godora for the mixed bloods. While it seemed to be an extremely moving slogan, it was not a practical reality. The discrimination toward the mixed bloods would never disappear.

Regardless of the policies that the regime attempted to push forward, the long scales or tails of the mixed bloods were things that the purebloods just could not accept. Regardless of how good an upbringing they had, as long as the differences existed, the deep-rooted discrimination would never disappear. With the purebloods forming the middle and upper ranks of society, the outcome of this discrimination was not that simple.

The future of the mixed bloods was not in Godora.

If DarkStar was not the terror organization that it was but a kind organization that took in the mixed bloods to build an empire of mixed bloods...

He would only die a faster death.

Without a sufficiently powerful backer, they would not only have to face the Godoran army but also the alliance of different regimes.

Their only way out would be to gain support from an even higher place. Just DarkStar alone would not be enough to accomplish all that.

Right at that moment, these individuals had come up to him with an irresistible offer that gave him hope.

In the end, the leader of DarkStar had become a pawn for the other party to fight for another opportunity.

The DarkStar leader had once asked the other party why they chose him. The other party had said that just creating destruction and a systematic plan of destruction were two entirely different affairs. In most cases, only the latter was a threat. Thus, they had chosen DarkStar.

The initial goal of an organization would always initially be clear, but as time went on, their path slowly strayed from their original one. The focus of the DarkStar leader had already shifted to how they could create more destruction for Godora and incite hatred between the purebloods and mixed bloods. By pushing the mixed bloods to stand against Godora, it created disharmony within Godora and supplied him with fresh troops.

DarkStar had already become a blade in the hands of others. However, the entire organization apart from himself was unaware of this.

However, the DarkStar leader believed that this was the only path that would give him a chance of building a homeland for the mixed bloods. If he wanted to reap the rewards, he would have to first pay the price.

...

The mother planet of Godora was a gigantic planet. Even outside the atmosphere, traces of modifications could be seen. The more developed a civilization was, the greater the modification to their mother planet.

Spaceship after spaceship docked at the various ports of the planet, and the mercenaries all disembarked from their spaceships. The Black Star Army was mixed among the people with the players forming the largest group. The officers following behind Han Xiao looked around curiously as though they were tourists. The only thing that they were lacking was a tour guide at the front hoisting up a flag.

Han Xiao walked at the very front and was chatting away merrily with the other Army Commanders. All of them were invited to participate in the victory ceremony, and the officials of Godora were already waiting by the dock.