

L Hero

### **Chapter 1011 I'm Going to Beat You Up. What Are You Going to Do About It?**

The Flickering World's Dawn Star Cluster was an area completely controlled by the army. It was also the first station after entering the Flickering World. As the fleets of countless organizations swarmed in, this Star Cluster became countless times more boisterous, gradually turning this place into part of the galactic society.

There was profit to be found everywhere in the Flickering World at this time; all of the Star Clusters had demands that were not met. The outside organizations mainly had to choose where to set foot.

The transit stations at the entrances of the Star Field contained huge profits. Many organizations and galactic residents scattered and headed right toward the transit stations as soon as they entered the Star Field, while more organizations went other ways to the further Star Clusters to look for opportunities.

Among which, the Modo Civilization was one of the organizations that headed to the further Star Clusters. Their goal was to develop the territories of the third and the fourth phase.

The reasoning was simple—the further the Star Clusters were, the less they had been developed, which meant that not only would there be more holes to fill in the various industries, but the dynasty's control would also not be as strong compared to the earlier Star Clusters. And this was extremely important to Super Star Cluster civilizations.

The Super Star Cluster civilizations knew very well that the dynasty would definitely not let them develop comfortably. Therefore, almost all the Super Star Cluster civilizations gave up on the first and second phase territories.

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Even an ordinary person could see that the few Star Clusters that were about to be explored in the fourth phase would become crucial stages of competition for the external organizations.

Inside the main ship's command room, a tall man stood before the command post, looking up at the star map. His face gave off a cold and tough vibe, and his expression was solemn.

He was Roddick, Senior General of the Modo Civilization, currently the commander of the 'Expedition Fleet'.

'Expedition Fleet' was the name of this fleet, a new fleet the Modo Civilization had built just for the Flickering World. They had gathered a large number of elites, among whom Roddick stood above all and took on the responsibility of commanding this crucial fleet. Clearly, the upper echelons of the Modo Civilization had high hopes for him.

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A member of the Modo Race who was wearing a government official uniform asked, "Commander, how long till we cross the first and second phase areas?"

This man was a senior officer of the Modo Civilization. His name was Lagos as translated into the universal language. He was given the position of the inspector of the Expedition Fleet, responsible for monitoring Roddick.

Lagos did not have much power in his hands, so he could not interfere with Roddick under normal circumstances. His main job was to report the situation to the upper echelons, as well as contact the temporary stronghold the Modo Civilization had built in the Shattered Star Ring. He also managed the resources and manpower.

Hearing the inspector's question, Roddick stared at the Star Cluster and replied without turning his head. "The time spent in the first and second phases was the longest. The Crimson Dynasty and their allies had already built full sets of long distance portals long ago. Travelling was very convenient, so it should only take about seventeen days to arrive at the third phase territory. Most of the time will be spent on the area between the stargates."

Then, Roddick squinted and added, "Actually, the quickest route is through Garu. The Black Star Army's territory is connected in one line by the stargates, so the transportation there is even easier. But, as you know, the risk of that is too high, so we have no choice but to take a detour."

"Well, I can only say that's karma," Lagos said with resignation.

The Modo Civilization knew very well that they had already insulted the dynasty because of what happened with the Kunde Race, so they knew clearly that the dynasty would target them in the Flickering World.

The best route toward the further Star Clusters was through the Black Star Army's territory, but Roddick did not dare go close to the Garu Star Cluster, so they could only take another route that was not as popular and convenient.

Lagos shook his head and said, "The dynasty might send people to attack us. Stay vigilant."

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"I know. The military equipped us with such a strong defensive force because of exactly that. There are plenty of armed fleets and high Grade Supers. The Expedition Fleet's size is sufficient to even participate in a galactic war."

"Hmm, you're right... But the dynasty will definitely not send their official army to attack us in the Flickering World. Even if someone does come for us, it'll definitely be the dynasty's ally," Lagos said.

Roddick frowned. "Usual enemies are not a problem, but a Beyond Grade A would be very difficult to deal with."

"Don't have to worry about that. The upper echelons have already made private agreements with some Beyond Grade As to provide us with help." Lagos smiled with confidence.

"Who are they?"

Roddick, however, was not surprised. Super Star Cluster civilizations making short-term deals with Beyond Grade As was nothing new. This was also a form of business for some Beyond Grade As.

Given how important the Flickering World was, it was impossible for the Super Star Cluster civilization to not make any preparations. They all brought out tons of resources to hire top-tier combatants, which led to some Beyond Grade As earning quite the fortune. Many of them also accepted jobs from multiple civilizations at the same time.

“Those Galactic Black Market people with Beast Ancestor and Secret Master in the lead, as well as some neutral Beyond Grade As... Oh, some of the Beyond Grade As of the federation and the church have also made deals with us privately... Hehe, they were probably given orders by their leaders to use us to attract the dynasty’s attention.” Lagos could not help but sneer.

The federation and the church’s intentions were as clear as day, but the Super Star Cluster civilizations did not mind being used, as they would benefit from it temporarily as well.

“Even though we have allies, that’ll only help us when we pass through the first and second phase territories. I’m worried the dynasty might attack before that,” Roddick said with a deep voice. “After all, most of the organizations are taking the Black Star Army’s route. There aren’t many allies who are taking a detour like us.”

“One of the hired Beyond Grade As is coming behind us just to protect us. The upper echelons convinced him to make a detour.”

“Who?”

“The Blackhole Edge’s neutral Beyond Grade A, Garoze, nicknamed Leader of Colossuses.”

“That Summoner? I’ve heard about him.”

Roddick operated the star map for a while, marking the location of Garoze’s fleet, which was not far behind the Expedition Fleet.

This made him feel less worried.

“This way, we won’t have to worry about someone attacking us,” Roddick said coldly. “With our armed forces, as long as the dynasty dares to send someone here, they’ll see that they might not be the stronger side.”

At this time, a communication request came. It was from one of the Three Kings of the Modo Civilization.

The two of them immediately straightened their backs and put on serious expressions. They then accepted the communication request, and people appeared on the virtual screen.

The two of them saluted. “Your Excellencies.”

“What’s the situation now?” one of the Three Kings asked.

As leaders of the civilization, asking about the situation this soon after the Expedition Fleet entered the Flickering World seemed too impatient, but the Flickering World was way too significant to the Super Star Cluster civilizations. This was an opportunity to completely overthrow the situation they were stuck in; no amount of attention seemed too much.

Furthermore, they had angered the dynasty not too long ago. Now that their forces entered the dynasty's territory, the Three Kings were even more on edge.

"We're still on the way," Roddick answered formally.

"Have you encountered any problems?"

"Everything is normal."

"Hmm, no matter what happens, focus on protecting the logistics team," the leader of the Modo Race said.

The armed fleet existed to protect the logistics team, which carried all kinds of necessary resources and devices to develop a Star Field. The armed spaceships could be depleted, but it would be extremely problematic if something happened to these important resources. Although they would still be able to resupply from their temporary stronghold in the Shattered Star Ring, it would tremendously slow down the speed of the development.

All the forces in the Flickering World were competitors. Every second wasted meant profit lost, which would then affect the Modo Civilization's strategy.

Roddick nodded before speaking with a serious tone. "Your Excellencies Three Kings, don't worry, I won't let our enemies..."

Boom!

Before his sentence even ended, the entire main ship trembled. The crew in the command room fell to the ground!

Roddick staggered, too. He grabbed the table to regain his balance.

"What's going on?" He was shocked and furious.

"Commander, many unknown ships are approaching at a high speed and have attacked us."

The radar showed that fleets appeared from every direction, surrounded them, and fired at them.

Furthermore, the alarm also mentioned that the opponent had deployed a large number of Space Stabilization Anchors in the area. This meant that they had charged right into a trap, and their hyperdrive was completely stopped, which was what caused the trembling. Even the stabilizing device inside the spaceship could not fully resolve the shock from suddenly stopping at such a high speed.

"We're still some distance away from the next stargate. Is this an ambush?" Lagos was stunned.

They were just discussing the fact that there might be enemies, and speaking of the devil...

"What's the enemy's identity?" Roddick questioned.

"I—I don't know. The spaceships they're using are general models. There are no symbols on these ships, so we don't know which organization these belong to," the observer said with a nervous tone.

The communication from the Three Kings had not ended yet. They all saw this and frowned.

The leader of the Modo Civilization said with a deep voice and a grave expression, "Roddick, I'll leave this to you. You must defeat the enemy."

"Understood." Roddick had a decisive look on his face. He immediately started to command the fleet and gave out orders one after another.

The Expedition Fleet responded quickly. It shrank its formation to protect the logistics team while firing back. Neither fleet was huge. In fact, the Modo Civilization's fleet was a little larger.

Roddick showcased his excellent commanding talent, and the Modo Civilization firmly stood their ground.

Although they were ambushed, Roddick did not choose to break away but remained in place.

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His confidence came from both the fact that his armed fleet was stronger and the Beyond Grade A Garoze who was not far behind. As long as Garoze arrived at the battlefield, he would be able to fight back using the strength of a Beyond Grade A.

Roddick's style was tough and unbending; he was one to always take revenge. He was furious about being interrupted out of nowhere while speaking with the Three Kings. Compared to escaping, he would rather defeat the enemies.

"I'll let Garoze join the battle immediately." Lagos hastily took out his communicator to call for backup.

"Okay, do it quickly." Roddick sneered. "No matter who they are, they're not leaving easily."

...

At the same time, Garoze's fleet, which was not far away, noticed the situation as well.

"Someone really attacked them? I thought they were paranoid."

Inside the command room, Garoze murmured to himself.

This was not his first time accepting a job from a Super Star Cluster civilization. As a neutral Beyond Grade A with no background, this was a key source of income for him. He had also accepted jobs from seven other organizations to protect their fleets.

Everyone knew that due to the competition in the Flickering World, this place would very soon become a heaven for mercenaries. Even many Beyond Grade As had joined in.

"Your Excellency Garoze, what do we do? Should we go over and help?" his assistant asked.

Garoze nodded. He was hired, so he had to do his duty.

However, just as he was about to make the order, the sound of a communicator ringing suddenly appeared in the room.

Beep beep beep!

Garoze looked down and was surprised.

It was his private communicator!

Who would call at this time?

As he took out the communicator to take a look, Garoze's pupils constricted.

The caller was shockingly Black Star!

The two of them did not have much interaction in the past, they had only met during the Meeting Of The Gods and exchanged their private numbers.

I wonder why he is calling me...

Suppressing the doubts in his mind, Garoze walked to the side, picked up the communication, and asked carefully, "Your Excellency Black Star, what is it?"

"I have one thing I need your help with." Han Xiao's voice came out of the communicator.

"Please do tell."

"I need you to do nothing."

"Do nothing? What do you mea..."

Initially, Garoze did not understand, but then, it suddenly occurred to him.

"The fleet that attacked the Modo Civilization, it's..."

Han Xiao interrupted him and asked calmly, "Can you do that?"

Garoze was extremely troubled. With the Black Star Army's interference, this matter was no longer simple. The Modo Civilization would most likely be devastated, and from the depths of his heart, he did not want to take part in this.

However, he was right beside the battlefield. If he did not take action, his reputation would definitely be tainted.

Garoze looked a little troubled. "Your Excellency Black Star, I've already accepted the job from the Modo Civilization. If I don't do anything..."

With an expressionless face, Han Xiao coldly said, "If you don't want trouble, back away. This is not something you can interfere with."

Then, he hung up without waiting for Garoze's reply.

In my territory, you listen to me! Han Xiao did not even bother with bullsh\*tting with the Modo Civilization. I'm going to beat you up, that's all!

What, you're not happy? Sure, don't come to the Flickering World then!

The army was now the biggest organization in the Flickering World after operating there for so long. If he did not act like a menace, who had the right to?

Garoze's face became stiff as he was secretly shocked. In his mind, Black Star was a very friendly person who made friends everywhere he went. He did not expect Black Star's tone to be this firm.

Looks like this is more serious than I thought. If I interfere, it probably won't turn out well for me.

Also, if I ignore Black Star's threat, won't I follow the steps of that seven-eyed dude?

Garoze trembled uncontrollably.

The assistant came over and said, "Your Excellency, Lagos is already hurrying us. Are you going to give the order?"

Garoze hesitated for a few seconds before suddenly waving his hand. "Don't help, just watch from here."

The assistant was stunned, but seeing how firm Garoze was, he could only tell the fleet to standby at the edge of the battlefield.

"Sigh. This is a big loss." Garoze smiled bitterly in his mind.

He was just an ordinary Beyond Grade A. There was no way he could mess with someone like Black Star. Be it in terms of his strength or organization, he was far inferior.

It was shameful to be forced away by just a few words. Garoze had his pride too, and he did not want to be a coward.

But, facing Black Star, how could he not back down?

After having been a Beyond Grade A for so many years and still not having improved much, Garoze knew long ago that he could not mess with the peak Beyond Grade As. He was just a neutral Beyond Grade A without any background. If Black Star wanted to kill him, there would be nothing holding him back at all!

Furthermore, during the Meeting of the Gods not long ago, Black Star had taken on the task of maintaining communication between all the Beyond Grade As. He had to give Han Xiao face even just because of this.

...

As time passed, the Expedition Fleet and the ambush fleet fought intensely.

In the main ship's command room, after Roddick gave a few orders and finally had a little bit of time, he immediately turned around and yelled at Lagos.

"What's going on with Garoze? Why isn't he here yet?"

Lagos was covered in sweat. "They just stopped there. I've already hurried them many times, but they refuse to join the battle no matter what. I—I don't know why either!"

Seeing their reinforcements back away right before them, he was stupefied and utterly confused.

"Outsiders are not reliable at all!" Roddick was furious. He slammed the table and said, "We're not going to wait for him! All units, listen. Change the strategy and charge toward the enemy's formation!"

However, before the order was sent out, a sudden change occurred!

Unrest suddenly erupted in the logistics fleet that was protected behind multiple layers of armed fleets.

The logistics spaceships suddenly pushed away the armed spaceships in all directions, instantly causing chaos on their side!

“What’s happening?”

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Roddick’s expression changed drastically.

“R-report. The operating artificial intelligences of these logistics spaceships were infiltrated and have gone out of control. We’ve lost contact with the crew!”

Like he had just awoken from a dream, Roddick clenched his teeth filled with rage and squeezed out the words from between his teeth.

“God damn it, it’s a Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanic!”

### **Chapter 1012 The First Shot in the Flickering World**

The logistics fleet was made up of mainly transport ships, cargo ships, and industrial ships, which were all rather large. Although they were also equipped with weapons and shields, their mobility and firepower could not match up to the combat spaceships with the same technology level. Therefore, they hid in the center of the formation, protected by the armed fleet.

At this point of time, some of the logistics spaceships were virtually hacked, bashing at the guard ships, instantly tearing up the Expedition Fleet’s formation. And these ships’ weapons were put to use, too, firing continuously at the back of the guard ships.

As the exterior part of the armed fleet did not put much energy into their rear shields, they were immediately damaged. Many divisions burst into panic.

“Control these spaceships, hold on! Other spaceships, strengthen the artificial intelligence firewall immediately, and increase the system self-check frequency!” Roddick did not have time to think about anything else. He quickly commanded the fleet to deal with this sudden situation.

Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanics had always been weapons of mass destruction in galactic wars that no fleet would want to face.

The most direct solution would be to turn off the artificial intelligence on all of the spaceships, but in that case, the chain of command would collapse, which would be no different from suicide.

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Currently, controlling the spaceships and their communication with the quantum network was the best method. Although other methods such as magic or biological systems existed, they had more shortcomings.



For example, magic could be used to modify spaceships into an organism, but the cost of doing so would be many times more expensive, and the efficiency in controlling such spaceships was much lower than the quantum network technology, not to mention their vastly inferior communication distance and efficiency. Also, they would not be as secure as the firewall of the quantum network and would just be as fragile when facing Mages or Psychics.

All the civilizations in the universe had methods to prevent Virtual Intrusion, but whether it would work or not depended on how strong the opponent was.

Facing Han Xiao, who was now a peak Beyond Grade A, the artificial intelligence defense measures of the Modo Civilization clearly could not last; it could only stall for time until the other spaceships were hacked but not truly prevent Han Xiao from intruding. No matter how much they struggled, their lines of defense would still be penetrated one after another.

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As for the spaceships that Han Xiao had already gained control of, taking them back was an almost impossible mission.

In the battlefield, the Expedition Fleet was being attacked from both sides. They had no choice but to send a part of their fleet to turn around and contain the panic caused by the haywire spaceships. The situation became very chaotic, and the Modo Civilization fleet was slowly losing their grip.

Some of the out of control spaceships penetrated the formation and were obtained by the attacker. The rest launched suicidal attacks not just on the guard ships around but also on the other logistic spaceships that had yet to lose control.

To prevent more damage, Roddick had no choice but to order the destruction of some logistic spaceships. Watching those logistic ships with key resources turn into fireworks in the cosmic space, his face was almost twisted.

There were people everywhere in the Flickering World. Although this route was unpopular, there were still people who passed by. The impact created by this battlefield spread out and very quickly attracted the attention of quite many fleets that passed by.

Most did not want to get dragged into this mess and hastily left.

But there were also some organizations that cautiously moved closer to watch from afar. Seeing the symbol of the Modo Civilization on the fleet, they chattered in the public communication channel.

“The Modo Civilization’s fleet has been attacked?”

“Who did this? Who dares mess with a Super Star Cluster civilization and still seems to have the upper hand?”

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“We’ve just entered the Flickering World, but this attacker already has such a large fleet, so it can basically be confirmed that the attacker is from the dynasty.”

“The attacker hid their organization symbol, so we don’t know who it is.”

“Tsk, the very reason they hid their identity is to make sure not to leave any evidence. Watch what you say, and don’t get into trouble.”

Although these organizations that were passing by were gossiping, none of them would interfere—no one wanted to get into trouble.

As the intense battle carried on, Roddick made his fleet keep moving while fighting. The battlefield kept moving closer to the location of the next stargate station.

There were dynasty fleets stationed at the stargate station. Although Roddick knew that the attacker definitely had something to do with the dynasty, the dynasty could not attack the MODO Civilization publicly, or the negative impact would be too big. Not only would that affect the dynasty’s promise to open the Flickering World freely, it would also be a stain on their politics.

Growing up in a Super Star Cluster civilization, he knew all too well about what the three Universal Civilizations were like. In his eyes, not only were the three Universal Civilizations bullies, they also wanted to maintain a good image so that their position as rulers would be approved.

With such a large crowd watching, Roddick knew that the stargate station’s dynasty fleet had to reinforce him. Therefore, as long as he could move close enough to the stargate station, he would be able to force the attacker to retreat.

After the battle lasted a while longer, the attacker finally stopped the attacks and backed out of the battlefield. The fleet then entered hyperdrive one after another, turning into streams of light and disappearing.

“They’ve run away.” Seeing this, only then did Lagos’ uptight body relax. He said with hesitation, “Shall we chase them?”

“We can’t. This isn’t our territory.”

Although Roddick was furious, he did not lose his senses. He clenched his teeth and said, “Clean up the battlefield, and calculate the losses.”

The losses were very quickly calculated. The aide-de-camp walked to his side, not daring to look into Roddick’s eyes, and cautiously reported.

“Sir, we have lost eight percent of the armed guard ships. Twenty-nine percent of the armed guard ships suffered various extents of damage. They’re currently being repaired. The logistics fleet has lost thirty-seven percent of its spaceships, fifteen percent of which were captured by the enemy, mainly transport ships...”

Roddick almost fainted.

The logistics fleet had lost more than one third of its spaceships all at once. This ambush had caused seriously heavy losses!

“Unbelievable!” The Three Kings’ expressions were as furious as could be. The communication did not hang up throughout, and they had witnessed the entire process of the Expedition Fleet being heavily damaged.

The three of them had high hopes for the Expedition Fleet and Roddick, yet they had suffered such a huge loss so soon after entering the Flickering World. The Three Kings' disappointment and anger at Roddick was clearly expressed in their tones and expressions.

"Sorry, this is a dereliction of duty on my part." Roddick hastily turned around, clenched his teeth, and accepted this as his fault.

As the commander, there was no way Roddick could get away from being blamed for this. It was not like he could blame the enemies for setting up a trap there. No matter what justifiable reasons he had, a huge loss was a huge loss, and not being able to protect the logistic fleet was a fact. If he still tried to reason, it would very easily give the Three Kings an impression of him 'making excuses'. Therefore, no matter how justified this loss was, he could only put up with it and accept the loss.

"We let you lead the Expedition Fleet because we trusted your abilities, but your performance is making us doubt if this was the right decision," one of the Three Kings growled.

Roddick did not dare talk back to his leaders at all; he could only stand there, take the scolding, and promise that he would definitely keep in mind in the future.

After giving Roddick a scolding, the Three Kings of Modo then told him to quickly settle the following issues before ending the call.

Roddick finally stood up. He was about to explode with rage.

He knew that he had left a bad impression on his bosses because of this. If he could not make up for it, his future would undoubtedly be filled with darkness.

The room was filled with a cold atmosphere. Everyone present looked at Roddick while shivering. Roddick was supposed to give the next order to the fleet, but no one dared get on his nerves now.

Lagos coughed, having no choice, and said, "The dynasty only has so many Beyond Grade A Mechanics. Although the enemy used Virtual Intrusion, he did not appear. According to the enemy's Virtual Intrusion speed, I'm guessing it's most likely Black Star."

"You don't have to guess. It's him!" Roddick's tone was cold and filled with rage.

"Sadly, we don't have any evidence. He..."

"So what if we do have evidence?" Roddick interrupted him and ground his teeth.

Even though they knew that the attackers were almost definitely the Black Star Army, it was no use. The Flickering World was their territory. With the forces he had here, messing with the Black Star Army would basically be suicide.

Earlier, Roddick had tried to board the enemy ships and capture the opponent's crew as evidence, but the attackers kept their distance and did not allow him to do so. To him, even if there was evidence, it would not affect the Black Star Army much if at all. In the Flickering World, the Black Star Army could do almost whatever they wanted!

Although the Modo Civilization was a Super Star Cluster civilization, their base was in the Primeval Star River, which was far from the Shattered Star Ring and the Flickering World. No matter how strong their

forces were, there would be nothing they could do to the Black Star Army. Furthermore, they were not universal civilizations, which had a ton of Beyond Grade A allies, so there was nothing they could do to Black Star personally.

So, they knew who the attacker was, but there was nothing they could do. They had no choice but to watch themselves get targeted.

Roddick took a few deep breaths, suddenly turned around, and glared at Lagos. "Contact Garoze. I want to question him personally about why he didn't join the battle!"

He had no choice but to vent his anger on someone. Nonetheless, Garoze was indeed partially responsible for not joining the fight despite being so close. Roddick had no idea what the hell was wrong with Garoze. His rage was reasonable.

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Lagos then contacted Garoze again. The call quickly got picked up, and Garoze appeared on the screen.

"Give me a reason!" Roddick yelled furiously.

Garoze frowned and coldly said, "Watch your tone."

When facing Black Star who he could not mess with, his attitude was full of respect. However, when facing Roddick, he immediately found the pride of a Beyond Grade A.

There was just one word to describe him—pragmatic.

"Why did you watch on the side?"

"I'll cancel the job with your boss." Garoze did not explain himself and immediately hung up the communication.

When he accepted the hire, he thought that the mission would just be to deal with the competition with other outside organizations. Never did he expect to have to deal with Black Star. Hence, this job became unprofitable, so he did not want to do it anymore. Even if he would incur some losses due to breaching the contract, it would be better than getting involved in the conflict between the Modo Civilization and the Black Star Army.

Since he was about to cancel the job, of course, he was not going to expose Black Star. It would be idiotic to offend both sides. Since he had chosen to be on one side, he was going to stand by it.

Furthermore, he did not want to admit that he was afraid of Black Star, so he did not want to tell any outsider the reason.

However, this arrogant and superior attitude made Roddick's blood pressure, which had just decreased a little, skyrocket again!

Oh, so you think that my position is not even high enough for you to give me an explanation?

"\*sshholes!"

Roddick was trembling with rage, and his fists were clenched tightly.

“We have lost a lot of devices and resources, so we can only turn to the supplies in the stronghold in the Shattered Star Ring, which will definitely slow us down. This will have way too big an effect on our plan,” Lagos said with a frown.

All the organizations were competing. By being behind others from the start, how much potential profit would they lose? Lagos did not dare think too much about it.

It could be said that the Modo Civilization’s plan in the Flickering World was completely shattered by this attack!

At this time, the dynasty’s patrolling fleet that was responsible for maintaining order finally came. They sent a communication request, and a dynasty officer appeared on the screen.

“We have detected energy reactions of a battle. What happened here?”

Roddick took a deep breath and explained what had happened with a long face.

The dynasty officer nodded. “We understand the situation and will immediately send out men to track the attackers. We will notify you as soon as we find anything.”

Then, the dynasty’s patrol fleet turned around and scattered in the attacker’s direction.

It looked like they were sincere, but Roddick and Lagos both knew that this would certainly not lead to anything at all.

...

At the same time, some of the attackers stopped in a certain area and entered stealth mode. They then gathered the seized logistics spaceships together and started moving the resources in them.

The captured Modo Civilization crew members were all chased into a spaceship with its communication signals cut off, and all their devices were confiscated. These captives looked around at the armored warriors with panic.

This time, an armored warrior stepped forward, took off his helmet, and exposed his childish face. It was Nero.

Seeing him, the crowd immediately made a fuss. Some of them had seen Nero’s data before, so they instantly knew that the attackers were from the Black Star Army.

Nero looked around and tried his best to make a serious expression, which only made his childish face more adorable.

“Now, there are two paths ahead of you. First, death. Second, give up your freedom in exchange for your life and work for us forever.”

The crowd went silent. At this time, a voice sounded.

“Are you not afraid of us betraying you?”

Nero squinted. “Who’s talking?”

A short man walked out and softly said, "I'm the vice logistics manager of this fleet, also the leader of the engineering technical team. I'm a high-level engineer."

Nero's eyes sparkled.

It seems like we captured one of their high-level technical officers.

"You don't have to worry about that. You won't have any chance to come in contact with the outside world. You'll forever become the shadows of the army," Nero said slowly. "Those who are not willing, we won't force you. The hatch is right there; jump into the cosmic space yourself. Make your choice now."

"Looks like we don't have a choice," the vice logistics manager said with resignation.

The people exchanged glances. Without much hesitation, all of them chose the second option.

Very soon, Nero picked out the technical personnel. They were all useful people who would be secretly working for the army to make use of their remaining value.

As for the other crew members, following Han Xiao's orders, they would be sent to the Kunde Race's planet. Whether they became slaves or were torn into pieces by the Kunde Race, it made no difference. One way or another, they were tools for the Kunde Race to vent their anger.

Since these people had taken part in the Modo Civilization's expedition, they were mostly soldiers. Maybe they did not know about the Kunde Race incident, but they were definitely not innocent. Whatever their civilization owed, they would be the ones paying for it. Being soft hearted did not exist in the process of revenge.

...

Han Xiao, who was heading toward Black Star Palace, received Phillip's brief report. He nodded with satisfaction.

"Now it will be even more difficult for the Modo Civilization to develop in the Flickering World."

Han Xiao had ordered a fleet to hide their identity and attack the Modo Civilization's expedition team. As long as they did not leave any conclusive evidence, even if the Modo Civilization knew that he was behind this, he would not be affected.

He did not plan to wipe out Roddick's fleet—he could not completely annihilate the Modo Civilization's hope.

He would only be able to carry out long-term revenge if the Modo Civilization continued to put resources into the Flickering World. If they really decided to give up on the Flickering World, he would have to go to their territory in the Primeval Star River to deal with the Modo Civilization, which would be way too troublesome.

Cutting meat with blunt knives was the most torturous...

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According to his memories of his previous life, the competition between external organizations would only become more and more intense. There would be many more incidents where people hid their identities to attack other organizations.

Today, this is me firing the first shot in the Flickering World...

A flash of light sparkled in Han Xiao's eyes.

So, just you wait. This is only the beginning. There's plenty more to come.

### **Chapter 1013 What a Good Man!**

Beep beep!

While Han Xiao had these not so righteous thoughts in his mind, his communicator suddenly rang. It was a call from Tarrokov.

As he picked it up, Brother Tar's old face appeared on the screen full of smiles. Without any formal greeting, he immediately started praising Han Xiao.

"Black Star, amazingly done. I love it when you're this decisive."

The external organizations were not sure who was really behind the organization that attacked the Modo Civilization. The dynasty, however, of course knew it was the Black Star Army.

"So, you don't love me otherwise?" Han Xiao looked calm but chuckled in his mind. "Don't forget to keep your promise and give me the resources we agreed on."

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Taking revenge on the Modo Civilization was also the dynasty's request. The dynasty planned to make an example out of them.

Since the dynasty doing things themselves was not suitable, they borrowed Han Xiao's forces. Of course, they were not going to let the Black Star Army work for free and had signed a contract long ago. The Black Star Army would be responsible for educating the Modo Civilization with violence, and the Crimson Dynasty would compensate them with resources.

To the dynasty, they were hiring allies to strike enemies. To Han Xiao, he was taking the dynasty's money to do his own missions while also earning some favors, which really was pretty nice.

"Don't worry, we've never not kept our promise." Tarrokov smiled before asking, "What do you plan to do with those captives of the Modo Civilization?"

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"I'll keep some of them in the army as secret manpower, and the rest will be thrown to the Kunde Race."

Old Tar nodded and reminded Han Xiao, "No matter what, make sure to take away all of their means of contacting the outside world."

“The chances of them breaking through the measures I put in place to block their communication is infinitely close to zero. You don’t have to worry about that.”

“You’re right. You’re a Virtual Mechanic after all. I’m overthinking it.” Old Tar chuckled. “Actually, that was pretty much the only reason I called, just to remind you... Anyway, please go harder on the Modo Civilization. I shall hang up now.”

He then ended the communication. Han Xiao tutted in his head.

To disturb him for something this trivial, it was most likely a form of hinting, saying that the dynasty knew the movements of the Black Star Army. This was basically to tell him not to mess with anyone other than the Modo Civilization. The Meeting of the Gods might also have been a factor that affected this.

“Tsk, making me read between the lines again.”

Han Xiao put the communicator away and placed this matter at the back of his mind.

All the players were heading toward the Flickering World. The Shattered Star Ring was the closest Star Field, so it would not take long for the army players to arrive at the Flickering World.

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As the version had just started, the players would need some time to get used to it before things got on track.

In his previous life, the players fought their own factions. Other than some famous national war incidents, the usual reasons behind fights were mission conflicts and resources. In an environment like this, the solo players’ lives became tougher and tougher. Gathering in groups became a trend, and more and more players started to create guilds.

According to the official statistics, the number of player guilds increased exponentially during Version 4.0. The more time passed, the more guilds there were. There was one famous event that caused the number of guilds to increase explosively in a short term. With a few large American professional guilds in the lead such as the Devil club, they formed a formal organization that became recognized by the outside world. They then obtained an extremely rare opportunity that other players had been trying to obtain for a very long time, which led to them being officially recognized.

After that, guilds became even more important to the players. They started to gather in large groups, and guilds started to form alliances and official organizations recognized by the outside world. They then formed partnerships with other organizations in the universe through business and diplomatic means using their organization.

With that, the benefits of guilds were extremely clear, as they would be able to obtain plenty more resources compared to ordinary players.

This function had existed in the previous few versions too, but it only showed its true potential in Version 4.0, leading to a turning point in the players’ careers. The main reason was the increase in the players’ strength in Version 4.0. Their influence throughout the universe was on a completely different level, which was why the organizations they built were taken seriously.



“Now, because the faction benefits that I’m giving to the army players are too useful, the players of the other Star Fields might work together to suppress the army players’ advantages. When everyone gets used to the new version, the army players are bound to suffer some losses. After all, there are too many who are against us.”

Since the army players had the advantage, he did not mind pushing it further so that the army players would always be in the lead.

Initially, all the players would have to take some time to get used to the version before entering the stage of forming guilds and organizations on a large scale, so Han Xiao wanted to let the army players enter that stage in advance.

This needed some adjustments in the system that would encourage this behavior.

Han Xiao thought about it for a while before summoning Phillip. He thought of a new system that would only be targeted at the players, which meant the Immortals.

---

Those who are promoted to high positions through making contributions, or farming Contribution Points, and have reached Grade B or above will be allowed to create a new type of combat team. The team shall consist of two or more members with no upper limit of number of members. The division name can be chosen freely. After forming such a team, they can report it in the army. Every month, according to the missions completed and total Contribution Points obtained by all the members, they will receive special Team Merit Points.

Team Merit Points can be used to purchase large amounts of resources, including equipment, knowledges, and abilities. They will also have a crucial use—to purchase the positions to manage the various businesses of the army on behalf of the army, as well as to bid for certain special projects, or exchange for the mining right of some resource rich planets.

Not only that, but with enough merit points, they can choose to become a subsidiary organization under the Black Star Army and be considered semi-independent. For those teams, the merit points can be used to request the army’s reinforcements, use the army’s name to execute legal strategic actions, or submit a request to have both sides work together for a certain matter. They will basically be semi-independent organizations that are partners of the Black Star Army.

---

“This should be about it...”

Han Xiao then looked through the main structure of the new system a few times and nodded.

This system would ‘legalize’ the players’ guilds.

Originally, guilds only existed between the players and were not recognized by the galactic society. For example, the NPC had no idea the Temple of Gods Guild existed, nor did they know who the members were. This system would make the players’ guilds be recognized in the army’s systems, so they would become official organizations with proper documentation.

This way, the players’ guilds would become organizations that actually existed in the universe.

The use of the Team Merit Points would encourage the army players to create guilds without needing to get used to the version. There would no doubt be many who tried this out, especially those official guilds of large clubs.

During Version 4.0 in his previous life, there were always players who left NPC factions to create their own. With this new system, however, it would at the very least tremendously reduce the players' need to do so.

The price, of course, was that with the independence granted to the player guilds, the army would suffer a certain amount of unrest. Nevertheless, at times like this, giving the players more freedom was the path that had to be taken.

With more strength, the way to treat them had to be improved too. Han Xiao was no evil boss; he gave the players enough benefits even though he would also gain every benefit he could from them.

Version 4.0 was the turning point for the players. From here onward, the players would truly be difficult to control. They would start to spread the seed of anarchism everywhere. There was no way he could control the players as much as he did in the previous versions.

He planned to change that long ago, to give the players opportunities to grow their guilds and provide more resources to them. Only then would he be able to make the players continue to work for him willingly despite their growing strength.

At the same time, this system would also attract foreign players.

It was killing two birds with one stone.

"Master, hum... Are you sure about implementing this new system?"

Phillip, who was like a little fairy, sat on Han Xiao's collarbone with his big eyes sparkling and looking up at Han Xiao's cheek. His two tiny legs waved left and right in midair.

"Announce the preview first." Han Xiao planned to officially implement this system only after all the players arrived at the Flickering World.

Before that, he wanted to let the players have time to prepare and gather their friends.

"Okay, hum..."

Han Xiao paused, suddenly thought of something, and said, "Some time ago, I studied Risda's logic structure and had some new ideas. I'll give you some updates in a few days' time to increase your speed."

Hearing this, Phillip's eyes sparkled, and he flew up to Han Xiao's face, hugging onto Han Xiao's nose and staring into his eyes.

"Phillips loves my master the most, hum!"

"Stop acting cute." Han Xiao raised his brow and flicked Phillip away from his nose.

...

The news about the Modo Civilization's significant loss spread in the Flickering World. Many organizations talked about this privately. The other Super Star Cluster civilizations heard about this too.

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Many Super Star Cluster civilizations had a meeting immediately.

"The dynasty is most likely the one who attacked Modo. We didn't expect the two of them to start fighting this soon."

"Could this be the first step of the dynasty's plan to target us Super Star Cluster civilizations?"

"Doesn't look like it. It seems to be a private matter between the dynasty and Modo."

"Hmm, after we pass the areas of the first and second phase, we should help Modo when we can. We can't let the dynasty beat them up too badly."

As they knew the three Universal Civilizations would not let them comfortably develop in the Flickering World, most of the Super Star Cluster civilization had already formed secret alliances to fight against the three Universal Civilizations' hostility together.

As Modo was attacked, according to their alliance terms, the other Super Star Cluster civilizations all decided to provide help when suitable.

Although this did not seem to have anything to do with them, the Super Star Cluster alliance did not want to give the dynasty the chance to break them one by one. Although the Modo Civilization was their competitor, fighting against the three Universal Civilizations' pressure was the top task in the eyes of the Super Star Cluster alliance. Therefore, they did not mind helping their competitor. Only then would they be able to break through the three Universal Civilizations' control of the new Star Field.

...

With assistance from the army and the dynasty, no witness discovered the attackers. After some days, the Black Star fleet that had attacked the Modo Civilization finally rendezvoused and returned to the Garu Star Cluster through a secret route. The selected captives were then sent to the Kunde Race's planet in the Odoran Star System.

With help from the Black Star Army, every colonial planet now had plenty of cities. They were not short of resources.

The Kunde Race had been peacefully resting for more than a decade. Although they had yet to recover from the wounds of the war, many chose to enjoy the peace and new life.

In the past, the communication from all these colonial planets toward the outside world was blocked. The residents of the planets could only log into their planet server network. Therefore, they had absolutely no idea what was happening in the outside world. It was like they were stranded on an island in the universe.

The army and the dynasty had control of all the media channels and did not allow the existence of civilian media corporations. The Kunde Race members could only accept the cultural transformation

from the dynasty in the form of literature, music, and entertainment. The various entertainment sources would slowly change their ways of thinking.

Living so peacefully and not having any chance to resist, they could do absolutely nothing even if they were furious. Many people could only accept their fate with resignation.

Today, however, the official channel that had been playing cultural transformation shows every day suddenly announced a piece of news that made countless Kunde Race members thrilled.

His Excellency Black Star kept his promise back then to avenge the Kunde Race, and he had now captured the captives of some of the people behind their tragedy. These people would be sent to the Kunde Race colonial planets very soon.

This piece of news immediately caused a sensation!

The Kunde Race of this generation could not resist, but they did not forget their hatred. Compared to the dynasty, they hated the people who used the Kunde Race back then even more.

As the date approached, countless members of the Kunde Race arrived early at the designated dock and looked up at the sky, waiting for the arrival of these captives.

Whoosh!

More and more spaceships penetrated the atmosphere and quickly landed on the dock.

As the hatches opened one after another, batches of Black Star Army warriors escorted the unarmed captives out.

The captives that were sent there were all filtered, so no strong soldiers were present. They all wore the same prison uniform, and all their possessions were confiscated. They carried no threat at all.

The Kunde Race around them were innumerable. As the many captives saw so many ferocious looking creatures surrounding them, they became uncontrollably nervous, and their bodies started to stiffen.

“What planet is this? Why were we sent here?”

“What are these creatures? Beasts?”

“They’re wearing clothes. They’re intelligent.”

“Why are they all staring at us? It’s a little horrifying.”

Using the Kunde Race was a secret only the upper echelons knew, of course, these normal soldiers had no idea. Many did not even recognize this species at all. They were lost and had no idea why these intelligent beings were staring at them.

At this time, a stone suddenly flew out from the crowd and landed on a captive’s head.

Pa!

This captive grunted and quickly covered his head.

Before his other friends could respond, countless objects flew out from the crowd and were thrown at all these captives.

Whining and wailing sounded immediately. The captives were bleeding everywhere. The Black Star Army warriors watched coldly from the side. After they had been attacked for quite some time, they finally activated their shields to block all the flying objects. The floor was quickly covered in random objects.

Although no lives were lost, the captives were still frightened.

“Why are they hitting us?”

“Why did the Black Star Army send us here?”

They were making a fuss. As they looked around with terror, they finally understood the look in the members of the Kunde Race’s eyes around them—they were filled with hatred and rage.

At this time, an army warrior snorted and coldly said, “They’re the Kunde Race, a native civilization of the Flickering World. During the second exploration phase, the Modo Civilization secretly used the Kunde Race and provoked them to fight the dynasty, causing the Kunde Race to be eliminated. All of you are their enemy. Stay here and pay for your sins.”

After hearing this, the captives went silent with their eyes widened.

Sending us to the territory of the people who hate us... You’re using us for them to vent their anger!

We were promised to live, but this is worse than dying!

W-we’re done for!

The captives were filled with negative emotions. They did not dare look up as they were pushed forward onto the land transports toward the prisons.

The land transport slowly departed from the dock. From start to end, the Kunde Race around had always been staring at the captives.

The crowd did not dissipate. After some time, someone finally spoke.

“Black Star promised to bring us justice back then. It’s actually true...”

“Black Star has been keeping his promise.”

“I misunderstood him. Turns out he’s someone so noble.”

Many Kunde Race felt the same way.

In the past decade or so, the Black Star Army had managed the planet and provided them with countless resources. Together with the promotion in the media, the Kunde Race was already quite familiar with the army.

In terms of emotions, the Kunde Race did not have much hatred for the Black Star Army, but not many of them believed Han Xiao’s promise back then.

After all, the Kunde Race was just a group of ‘prisoners’ who could not fight back; why should Black Star waste his energy to bring them justice? After more than ten years, they thought that he had already forgotten this.

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However, Han Xiao had proved to them that he was not joking with results.

In the eyes of the Kunde Race, Black Star immediately became the only hope to bring justice for their race.

While shocked and surprised, a sense of appreciation grew in the hearts of the Kunde Race, together with more hope.

Black Star, what a good man!

### **Chapter 1014 Picking Up the Old Profession**

The stargate tunnel built by the Black Star Army was the top choice for countless external organizations. It had become the most popular and most convenient route. There were countless spaceships passing by every second.

One reason was that the Black Star Army’s territory was huge, including border Star Systems at two different directions with direct stargates, so it would save a lot of time.

Another was that Han Xiao’s edge of knowing the star map well was taking effect. Within the territories he had chosen, there were a ton of transport hubs and strategic points, which had been the most prosperous locations in his previous life. Now, they had the same importance as in his previous life. These financial groups who invested in the Black Star Army were also starting to get their returns. Han Xiao promised to give some of the businesses in his territory to these investors to manage; now, there were countless financial groups operating in the army’s territory, quickly filling up the businesses.

More than half of the outside organizations chose to take the Black Star Army’s route. Han Xiao, of course, would not provide free services. A huge number of spaceships were entering the Garu Star Cluster every single day, and the profit from that was exploding.

Countless streams of light escaped from the entrance stargate, turning into blurry silver rainbows that lingered in space.

This time, spaceships with the Black Star symbol flew out from the stargate one after another, following the crowd and slowly moving forward.

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“So, this is the entrance of the Black Star Army’s territory.”

There were plenty of army players on every one of these ships. They were all squeezing in front of the porthole and looking outside with curiosity.

When Planet Black Gate entered their sights, compared to the deserted image the players had of it, the Planet Black Gate now could not be more boisterous. Countless spaceships landed on and took off from

it, so the traffic flow was very dense. The surface of the planet was filled with buildings. The countless lights shrouded the planet like a curtain made of jewels.

On its side, a silver stream of light extended in the cosmic space all the way to the end of their sights. This was made up of the flame trail of the countless spaceships entering the border. These spaceships passed through in hyperdrive like meteors, and as it was too frequent, these trails did not dissipate for a very long time. It was like someone used a silver pen to draw a line that could not be erased along the entire stargate route. It had almost become the guide for the route.

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“Planet Black Gate, belongs to the Black Star Army, a large border entrance transit station landmark of the Garu Star Cluster.” Maple Moon read the data shown on the communicator.

“It’s so boisterous. It’s completely the opposite of how it was last version,” Frenzied Sword commented.

He could only feel how dreamy the change was after arriving at the army’s territory.

Frenzied Sword was the earliest player to follow Black Star. He experienced every single step of Black Star’s rise. It was hard for him to imagine how his own faction really grew to this point and have such vast territories.

Just the size of the territories was equivalent to ten Star System civilizations, which could even match up with some Star Cluster civilizations. It was stunning.

In his eyes, Black Star became even more dependable.

While he was still deep in thought, Maple Moon said, “The Flickering World is the world server, we’ve arrived earlier than the players of the other Star Fields, so this time advantage is very crucial. Do you have any plans?”

“Don’t worry, the guild will be going to the army to register as a subsidiary organization. We will then follow the guild to do things. We should be going to the fourth exploration phase’s area to grab the opportunities before others,” Frenzied Sword said.

“I didn’t expect the army to announce such a revolutionary system. This is almost as if he’s letting the guilds split from the army. This will completely change the way we play the game... Of course, it’s a good thing for us, but from Black Star’s perspective, I have no idea what he’s thinking. Why is he willing to give up power?” Maple Moon mumbled. Even though it had already been a few days, she was still surprised.

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“This means my speculation in the past was correct, of course. As the Grade of us players increases, the influence we have on the universe will increase too. Seems like this version will be the turning point of that.” Frenzied Sword had a smug look on his face.

Originally, many players were lost about how to make full use of their advantages in the Flickering World. However, the new system Han Xiao announced not long ago immediately showed all the army players a clear path.

The Team Merit Point system was almost specially made to aid in the growth of guilds. Almost every known Chinese guild decided to register as an official organization in the army. At the same time, this had also created a trend of creating guilds. Just during the time they travelled there, countless army players had already called up their friends to create guilds. Han Xiao's plan was proven to be very effective.

The fleet flew for some days before arriving at the Black Star Palace. This was the first time the players had seen this new main base built during the version update. Its magnificence amazed many players.

This group of players who arrived first came to the most outside base and gathered in a hall. Phillip had summoned them here to have them be inspected.

After just a short wait, two people walked in. The players all looked over and were excited to see who they were.

It was the Army Commander, Han Xiao, and the second Beyond Grade A of the army, Hila.

"Wow, Hila has become even more beautiful."

"The face! The body! The aura! Please let me die here!"

"Save the nonsense, it's no use."

"Ah, how I miss the feeling of being killed by Hila. Maybe this is what love is."

"No, this is being a pervert."

"Woman? Boring, strong men like Black Star can make you hard to breathe."

A big group of players rushed toward them with their desire to farm favorability written all over their faces. Hila was surrounded by even more people than Han Xiao.

Han Xiao complained about s\*xism in his mind. Before Hila started to slaughter everyone out of impatience, he repelled everyone away, saying with a deep voice, "Silence. I have serious matters to announce."

The players gradually quieted down and looked at Han Xiao with curiosity in their eyes.

Han Xiao cleared his throat and slowly said, "Currently, the Flickering World is open to the outside world. With the outside forces entering, the exploration of the new Star Field has entered a new stage. The peace that once existed is no more. In the future, countless conflicts will erupt surrounding the resources in the new Star Field. And we, the Black Star Army, have to adapt to this change.

"I believe everyone already knows that the army announced a new system recently. This is the first step of the change. You're all from my home planet and my comrades who grew alongside the army. The term 'Immortals' has a very important meaning to the army. You've all made a lot of contributions. Therefore, I've decided to give you more independence, and I hope you can make full use of your talents to achieve great things."

As soon as his sentence ended, shock appeared on many players as they exchanged looks. They were very surprised.



This seemed to be the first time Black Star had called them Immortals.

Before this, although they were working for the Black Star Army, they did not feel like they were very important. Although the outside world called them Immortals, their Army Commander did not seem to have said anything about this in any public occasions and had always been treating them like the normal members.

In Version 1.0, the Germinal Organization had studied the players, and similar situations still existed. All the players knew the fact that they were immortal might pique the NPCs' interest, but to most people, this was just a way to improve the sense of realism. They did not pay too much attention to it.

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Now, however, having suddenly heard what Black Star said, the players present all had a strange feeling as if something they had ignored for a very long time had resurfaced again—the fact that they were really special. In their eyes, Han Xiao's image became more alive.

Other than this strange feeling, the players were also glad to hear their faction leader Black Star personally saying they were important to the army. Many people were very motivated and felt a subtle sense of achievement and belonging.

Han Xiao looked around and saw the expression on everyone's faces. He suddenly smiled and said, "You don't have to be shocked. Although both Hila and I are Beyond Grade As now, you're all my people from the same mother planet. In this cold universe, we're on the same side. Therefore, you don't have to be too cautious in front of me. I have high hopes for you. Remember, the Black Star Army will always have your back."

Everyone was thrilled to hear this.

From the same mother planet... that's right, how could we forget that? We and Black Star have this bond!

Seeing Han Xiao's attitude, everyone felt that Han Xiao had become more friendly.

Inside the crowd, Maple Moon quietly poked Frenzied Sword's waist and softly said, "Why do I feel like Black Star seems to have changed?"

"Changed? Haha, you're wrong. He's not changed at all!" Frenzied Sword was filled with excitement.

"This is the Han Xiao in my mind, not that cold and beyond-reach important Black Star!"

His voice was so loud that many professional players around looked over.

"He's right. How long has it been since Black Star has had close contact with us?" Second Prince murmured.

"With Black Star becoming stronger and stronger, it has been very difficult for the others to come in touch with him. To think that he's still as friendly and down to earth as he was in Version 1.0. Looks like he really sees us as one of his own." Sleepy Winter smiled.

Many people were discussing this quietly, while Bun-Hit-Dog focused on recording this moment with joy on his face.

Han Xiao very discreetly glanced at him shortly and nodded in his mind.

In the previous versions, with the rapid increase in his position, the opportunities for the players to come in contact with him had constantly decreased. After two versions, his image had already become cold and beyond reach.

However, in Version 4.0, as the players would become much more useful, Han Xiao decided to be more down to earth and close the distance between him and the players. This would strengthen the players' emotional attachment to him, which was a key factor in influencing the players other than profit.

After all, he was a player himself in his previous life. How could he not know what the players liked?

Seeing the players were filled with joy, Han Xiao coughed and spoke again, finally getting to the point.

"The competition in the Flickering World has become very intense. I will be deploying some fleets toward the fourth exploration phase's area to compete with the external forces. You can choose to participate. As long as any member of a registered subsidiary organization participates, the organization will receive more Team Merit Points depending on the number of members participating and will be allowed to build strongholds on the planets in the army's territory. At the same time, they will all enjoy a thirty-percent discount in the military supplies store for all items."

As soon as he stopped speaking, a faction mission popped up on the interfaces of the players. Many players' eyes instantly brightened.

Not only would there be a massive scale faction main storyline mission but also thirty percent off in the faction store. They would even be allowed to build official guild strongholds in the army's territory...

Black Star really is the same old Black Star—a walking bag of profit!

Seeing that everyone was excited, Han Xiao called an end to the meeting. The players scattered almost immediately and headed right to the military supplies store to shop. They still had the money they saved from the last version, most players had a lot to spend, their purchasing power was ample.

The thirty percent off was a promotion method to encourage the players to spend. Although the players were focusing on leveling up, with such a big discount, they would definitely be influenced. This was to harvest the players' experience.

Han Xiao had stockpiled Mission Completion Cards for twenty years. He was now LV 307, so he would be able to go through his Promotion as long as he reached LV 320.

The few Star Clusters in the fourth exploration phase would be where the competition would be the most intense, as well as the main stage of the conflict in the World Server between the players. This move also served to encourage the players to secure their advantages before going to the fourth exploration phase area, helping the army players keep their lead so as to avoid them being bullied by the foreign players working together.

Allowing these guilds that had registered as official organizations to build guild strongholds was also a profit bundle.

With their homes in my territory, the cost of them leaving my faction will be even higher.

All ploys and tricks, I'm such a bad man...

Han Xiao shook his head and chuckled.

He led Hila out of the hall, and the two of them walked in the army while chatting. This time, Hila suddenly said, "Black Star, I plan to go to the fourth exploration phase area too, to take part in the army's exploration in the front line."

"Are your hands getting itchy?" Han Xiao glanced at her.

"Hmm. I'm not you. You can remote control your avatar while being at home. I want to fight with more Beyond Grade As, and now is a good opportunity." Hila nodded.

After reaching Beyond Grade A, her motivation did not disappear at all. Knowing that the difference between herself and Han Xiao was still vast, she wanted to become stronger.

Shattered Star Ring was not suitable for sparring. Now that they had reached the Flickering World, it was a good opportunity to improve herself.

"Alright, you shall take the position as the commander of the fleet. Just a reminder, dozens of Beyond Grade As will be fighting in the fourth phase areas. For a very long time in the future, that will probably be the most dangerous place in the entire universe. If you meet anyone you can't deal with, tell me. My avatar will be following the fleet at all times," Han Xiao said.

All these Beyond Grade As were not there to sightsee; they were all there to fight for the profits in the new Star Field. Without Han Xiao's restraint in the Flickering World, these people would have fought all the time. Not just Hila, Han Xiao planned to let his avatar be stationed there for a long term as well.

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After splitting up with Hila, Han Xiao walked to his room and opened the player forums, browsing the movements of the players in the various Star Fields and enjoying the nonsense of the idiotic comments and posts.

While he browsed the posts and relaxed, a new post was suddenly pinned.

Han Xiao looked at it and his eyes sparkled. It was the first episode of Galaxy Times since the new version!

"After more than half a month, it's finally here, huh?"

### **Chapter 1015 The Great Mechanic Han's Control from Behind the Curtain**

Han Xiao clicked into the post, and as soon as he opened the video, the two new hosts appeared on the screen, still one male and one female.

"Players and friends, good evening, I'm Ah Wei," the male host said.

"I'm Flower," the female host said.

"This is the Galaxy Times, dedicated to sharing first-hand gaming news. Your gaming career is our top priority."

After the usual opening, the two hosts started the show with the usual awkward conversation.

“It has been more than half a month since the start of the new version. The players of the various nations are all trying to adapt to it. Compared to Version 3.0, 4.0 comes with a lot of changes. Just a preview, the content we have today is very rich. We’re going to tell everyone about the way to play this new version.”

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“Speaking of the new version, that reminds me of something. I have a friend...”

Before he finished, Flower interrupted him and said, “I got it. That friend is you. Please carry on with your performance.”

“... That friend of mine had a ghost-related incident happen to him recently.”

“Where did it happen?”

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Ah Wei replied, “On this one day, when my friend returned from working overtime, it was already late night. His family was sound asleep. He washed up then went straight to bed hugging his wife to sleep. Then, at midnight, he suddenly heard footsteps outside the door, and he...”

Flower suddenly interrupted again and said with a strange expression, “Wait... what does this have to do with the new version again?”

“Ahem, I was just looking for an excuse to start the topic. Don’t mind these details.”

“... Go on.” Flower rolled her eyes.

“I... My friend and his wife were the only ones in that house, so he thought a thief had broken in. He quickly got out of the bed to turn on the light, only to realize that there was no one else, and the gate was properly closed. So, he went back to sleep. However, when he woke up the next day and went to work, he realized that the gate was open slightly, but nothing was missing from his house. He thought that he had only dreamed about the previous night, so he woke up his wife to ask her if she had heard anything last night, to which she replied no. Don’t you think that’s scary? It’s definitely a ghost.”

“Eat more greens and vegetables in the future; it improves mental stability,” Flower replied.

“So, what would you do if you really encountered a ghost?”

“I’d beat it to death, of course. Do you think my materialism aura is fake?”

After this interaction, the two hosts successfully pulled the players’ excited mood back to regular standards, all turning from thrilled to poker faces.

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As Han Xiao listened through the awkward conversation stage, the two hosts finally entered the main theme.

“Back to business. It has been more than a half month since the start of Version 4.0 [Flickering World], and the uniqueness of this version is already showing... that’s right, it’s the world server!” Ah Wei said.

“Yes, after three versions, the players from all nations can now finally gather in one place and interest in the same Star Field,” Flower continued. “This is a major play style revolution. We can see that this version will be exceptionally boisterous. There’s the possibility of national wars happening, so it will be a giant battleground for the players from all nations.”

“Speaking of what might happen, I recall the speculation we made in the last episode of Version 3.0. Back then, we speculated that Version 3.0 would fully open the function of cross Star Field traveling. Now, our speculation has proven to be half correct, only that we did not guess the opening of the world server.”

“Due to the appearance of the world server, the Shattered Star Ring players now have two natural advantages. One is their geographical location, as these two Star Fields are next to each other, which means the Shattered Star Ring players can arrive in the world server earlier than the players from the other Star Fields. Another is that the Shattered Star Ring players have exclusive faction advantages.”

“That’s right. Among the factions that the players are able to join, The Black Star Army is the only one that made contact with the Flickering World in the previous version. The players followed the army to participate in the first exploration phase of the Flickering World and built their foundations.”

“Not only that, the Black Star Army has already become the strongest force in the Flickering World in this new version, apart from the dynasty. I can still remember the Black Star Army being the guiding faction for the Shattered Star Ring players in Version 2.0. Now that they have grown to become such an enormous organization, they will provide tremendous help to the Shattered Star Ring players in the Flickering World, giving them exclusive advantages.”

“Nonetheless, I feel that there are two sides to everything. The Shattered Star Ring players who have such clear advantages might become the joint target of the players from all the other Star Fields.”

“As for the play style of the world server, there have been many posts analyzing it across various boards. According to our conclusion, the competition in Version 4.0 might revolve around guilds. The players without guilds will have more freedom and more choices, but the efficiency in obtaining resources will not be comparable to guilds.”

“The source of this is the system the Black Star Army recently announced...” Ah Wei suddenly paused, hesitated, and said, “Speaking of which, how many times have we made version speculations based on the Black Star Army’s actions?”

As soon as this was said, the players who were watching the show started a rampage. Countless comments flew across the screen.

“Too true. Everything starts with the Black Star Army. Without the army, the Galaxy Times wouldn’t even know how to do their shows.”

“Ah Wei: Making speculations is easy, just see what the Black Star Army is doing.”

“Trash show. Completely reliant on the army :)”

“Black Star: That’s right, I’m the most handsome man in the Shattered Star Ring.”

As the viewers started to joke around again, Han Xiao smiled.

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This compliment feels quite good. The benefits I’ve provided all along to guide the versions didn’t go to waste.

Flower coughed and said, “Alright, back to the main topic. The Black Star Army is indeed an important factor when it comes to predicting version development. The core mechanism of the new system they announced some time ago turns guilds into official organizations in the universe and allows the players to become somewhat independent.”

“The independent playstyle has always been unpopular in the previous versions, mainly because the conditions had yet to mature. However, in Version 4.0, with the increased maximum level, the influence the players can have as independent organizations has increased. This playstyle might become very important.”

“The Black Star Army has led this playstyle, and according to what they have done in the past, this will very likely become the mainstream play style of Version 4.0, encouraging more people to create guilds.”

“However! Attention to all players! Becoming independent through normal processes will require you to leave your original faction. As of this moment, the Black Star Army is the only faction that has a system of semi-independence. This means that only the army players can be independent while still getting to keep their identities as members of the Black Star Army! This is another unique and exclusive advantage!”

“We still don’t know if this is one of the specialties of the Black Star Army. If the factions that the players in the other Star Fields are in don’t have this system, I feel that many foreign players will join the Black Star Army... Therefore, here comes the problem. If they become players in the same faction, will national wars still happen?”

Quite accurate analytics, Han Xiao thought.

This was a good thing for him. It would help to promote how superior his system was so that the players would better understand how amazing the army was, increasing the appeal of the faction.

The show went on to analyze the possibilities of the world server in detail, as well as what was happening to the players in the various Star Fields. Han Xiao watched from start to end, mainly to see the movements of the players of the other Star Fields.

Unlike the Shattered Star Ring, the players in the other Star Fields did not have a unified faction. They belonged to many different factions and were on their way to the Flickering World with their factions. There were also many solo players who quit their factions, mainly Americans and Europeans. After all, the love for freedom was in their blood and bones.

The exterior factions that had players were worth paying attention to, but they were mostly small organizations.

Small organizations were nothing to worry about. The Flickering World had way too many powerful organizations. The methods of joining them in Version 4.0 would increase drastically. The players would not be able to resist the temptation to join bigger organizations.

Furthermore, some might even sell out their old boss in exchange for Contribution Points from the new boss.

Han Xiao could recall many examples where players deliberately used small organizations' names to mess with enormous organizations. They would then betray the small organization while bringing the small organization an undefeatable powerful enemy, which led to their doom. Afterward, the players would then join the new hostile faction with a higher position and salary, and this was the definition of completely shameless anarchism.

To many players, virtue was complete horse sh\*t. Small organizations were unattractive and weak, so players would not miss them or be attached at all. A large faction like his, however, would mostly be treasured by normal players, and they would not cause such trouble.

Other than medium and small organizations, there were also foreign players who worked for powerful organizations such as the Limitless Financial Group, Galactic Black Market, Extinguish Army, and some Star Cluster or even Super Star Cluster civilizations. Depending on the location, they had differing numbers of 'Immortals' from different nations working for them.

"Especially that piece of sh\*t Sorokin. He recruited quite a number of players and even tested the army players in the past. He might poach my people in the Flickering World." Han Xiao curled his lips.

The Limitless Financial Group was mainly recruiting in the Sea of Star Spirits, which mostly included Japanese and Korean players. The Extinguish Army was a key faction for the Americans. The players under these organizations should be the highest in numbers other than the Black Star Army.

Speaking of the Extinguish Army, Han Xiao was reminded of Beyoni. Beyoni was the leader of the Pyre Demon Tribe, while the Extinguish Army consisted mainly of the Ice Demon Race, so the two of them were considered enemies. Beyoni controlled the Land of the Fire Core, while the Extinguish Army controlled the Land of the Ice Core. Even their race treasures were similar.

While thinking about that, Han Xiao suddenly felt something and opened up his attribute interface. His EXP gauge was increasing at an astonishing speed.

"Hehe, my promotion is working."

...

The top tier professional clubs such as Dynasty, Temple of God, Long Sky, and so on had all registered as official organizations in the Black Star Army. Their organization names remained unchanged and could be used as their guild name.

Having been ordered to do so by Han Xiao, Phillip quickly processed the procedures of guilds becoming official one after another. The organizational structure of the army players changed drastically as they officially became recognized subsidiary guild organizations and had documents in the army.

After the registration, these guilds immediately told some of their members to take part in the main storyline exploration mission so that they could receive the many discounts Han Xiao had mentioned. To these large guilds, they could also use these discounts to attract many players who did not have a guild yet to join them. It was a win-win.

Through the hard work of the logistics department in the past twenty years, the various models of equipment in the army were all the latest, while the items the players had were all abandoned models from twenty years ago. They needed to upgrade. Plus, with the thirty-percent discount, their desire to spend was at the peak. A shopping spree started in the military supplies store very soon.

To the Great Mechanic Han, the Enas earned from the players now was just small profits. What was important was EXP. He had added EXP price to more items in the faction store and introduced a new system. The players could choose one of two purchasing methods—Enas or EXP. If they had no money in their pockets, they could use EXP to buy things.

In the eyes of other army members, this would look a little strange, as if equipment were given out for free. However, Han Xiao did not have to be as careful about the way he treated the players as he was before, given how strong he had become. All he had to do was say that the Immortals had privileges, and no one would ask any more questions.

The result of that was the explosive increase in the efficiency of harvesting EXP. EXP was a special type of currency only belonging to the players. Currently, only the Black Star Army had the service of using EXP to buy things; the other factions would not be able to do it even if they wanted to.

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Millions of army players arrived at Black Star Palace over several days, while the players from the other Star Fields were still on their way. According to the schedule of these players, the players that would reach the world server the second-fastest should be the Southeast Asian players in Blackhole Edge, mainly Thais, Vietnamese, Indonesians, and Singaporeans. However, that was still many days away. The Chinese players had more than enough time to exploit their advantages.

As deployed by the Black Star Army, many players were split into mostly two directions. One group followed the fleet led by Hila toward the area of the fourth exploration phase, ready to interfere with the competition between the outside forces. The remaining players were mainly guild members who made use of the benefit Han Xiao promised and went to build guild strongholds in various locations of the army's territory. At the same time, they used Team Merit Points to purchase resource points and the operation rights for various businesses, starting to build stronger foundations for their guilds.

With Han Xiao's control behind the curtain, all the army players had moved. This was developing according to the path he had pointed out. The mainstream play style proven by what happened in his previous life was expanding his lead in the world server step by step.

At the same time, the fleet led by Hila arrived at the area of the fourth exploration phase together with other organizations.

## **Chapter 1016 Gorutan's Provocation**



The exploration area for the fourth exploration phase was four Star Clusters. They were considered as the center of the Flickering World in terms of geographical location.

Opening the new Star Field to the outside world was the dynasty's way of splitting the cost of construction. The third phase areas were basically properly split and highly controlled, so they were considered areas with high security. These four Star Clusters, however, were areas for all the forces to compete freely. The dynasty did not restrict the outside organizations from fighting for territory, so they were low security areas.

The external organizations would choose one or more Star Clusters to explore while at the same time fighting for their territories. At the initial stage of the exploration, these organizations focused on occupying their territories first before slowly exploring the further unknown areas.

It had not been long since the countless outside organizations had arrived there, so the exploration area was still limited to the edges of the four Star Clusters. However, the situation was already looking complex and chaotic. If there was a star map that marked the territories the various organizations now occupied in detail, that would be the most complicated star map in the entire universe.

Most organizations had already foreseen the intensity of the competition and formed various alliances here and there. Roughly speaking, the main factions that were active in the free competition zones could be classified into the following categories.

The first category comprised the 'local snakes', consisting of the dynasty and its allies. They all had some territory at the edge of these four Star Clusters, so their position was quite above the others. After all, most of the outside organizations did not want to fight with them, and the organizations belonging to the dynasty did not put too much effort into exploring as well, so they did not participate in the intense competition.

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The second groups had alliances of different civilizations, among which, the Super Star Cluster alliance stood at the top. The rest were the Star Cluster civilization alliances of various Star Fields. They had been expanding ruthlessly and occupied plenty of areas that were close to each other. These alliances were strong contenders in this free competition zone.

The third category covered the financial groups, who mostly had mercenaries under their command, mainly focused on making money. The territories they occupied were quite scattered. The fourth group included the external Beyond Grade A organizations, which were also very strong contenders, but there were not many of them.

The last was the civil organizations from all over the universe. This group had the most complex composition and the most scattered territories with the most conflicts that often changed ownership in the previous life.

As for the federation and the church, they were both keeping a low profile in their corners and did not seem to intend to expand. They were only letting their allies take part in the competition freely.

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The three Universal Civilizations had the silent agreement of giving the stage to let the other organizations fight and compete.

Currently, although there were occasional conflicts in the free competition zones of the four Star Cluster, there had yet to be any large scale armed conflicts. The exploration had only just started, so there were still plenty of unknown areas. Everyone was exploring further from the edges of the Star Cluster; the organization structure was far from saturation.

Currently, these organizations mainly feared the dynasty's stand on this, but the fight would start sooner or later. With the Black Star Army firing the first shot in the Flickering World, this process would be sped up tremendously.

In one of the free competition zones of the fourth phase within the Emerald Star Cluster, the enormous Black Star Army exploration fleet rode out of the dynasty's military stargate and arrived at the border of the Star Cluster.

Inside the command room, Hila stood before the operation console with a poker face, carefully looking at the holographic star map before her.

She had changed her clothes and was wearing a combat suit made of nanomaterials that Han Xiao had specially made for her. It was a black uniform with two rows of buttons. Its style was the luxurious version of the army officers' military uniform, skintight, showing her beautiful curves. The army's symbol was on her collar, and there was also a wide high-collar cape behind her in the color of black and gold with magnificent patterns. The inside of the cape was red. This set of clothes suited her unique vibe and elevated her aura.

The combat suit's model was 'Crimson Snake—First Gen', Beyond Grade A equipment. It consisted of tons of top-notch technology. Its usual mode was like a piece of normal clothing, but when in combat mode, it would showcase its powerful performance as a Beyond Grade A mechanical suit.

This combat suit was not built at the last minute. In fact, Han Xiao had made this equipment long before Hila returned. When Hila received this gift, although she did not say much on the surface, she had been wearing it since. She clearly liked it a lot.

"Deputy Army Commander, where are we going now?" the female aide-de-camp beside her asked.

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Hila pressed on the holographic star map and zoomed in on one area. This was a planet at the edge of the Emerald Star Cluster called Planet Phiri. Its location was a little rural, so no one had occupied it yet.

"Here, to build a bridgehead," said Hila.

She was now the commander of the exploration fleet. Han Xiao had given her a lot of freedom in terms of making decisions, only limiting the army's exploration target to be the Emerald Star Cluster. The details would all be controlled by Hila.

The reason Han Xiao had chosen the Emerald Star Cluster was that this was also the main exploration target of the Modo Civilization, as well as a relatively prosperous area in his previous life. He remembered that there were also some hidden factors in the region. There was the wreckage of an old

civilization that was discovered in this Star Cluster, and it was quite an advanced civilization with plenty of technical information. It caused conflicts between countless organizations in the previous life, but he did not know the exact location of it.

Most importantly, the Emerald Star Cluster was one of the locations where the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy might appear in.

According to EsGod's heritage, there were many coordinates the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy might appear at, and Han Xiao could not judge which one was real. Since EsGod did not die in his previous life, this information was not leaked, and he had secretly secured the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy without attracting the attention of the outside world. Even the players did not know much about it.

Nonetheless, Han Xiao had always been secretly monitoring Evans' whereabouts. This man who was the owner of the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy in his previous life found a job after he was freed from prison and became an ordinary member of a financial group's exploration fleet, responsible for cleaning and repairing spaceships. The fleet he was in had come to the Emerald Star Cluster.

Therefore, Han Xiao was quite sure that the Emerald Star Cluster was where the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy would appear. After all, after the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy was defeated by EsGod, it had definitely found an owner nearby, so the area where Evans was in had the highest possibility.

Of course, Hila did not know about any of that yet. She casually issued orders and commanded the fleet to head to Planet Phiri.

Meanwhile, some player guilds did not follow the main fleet but spread out on their own.

These guilds that had completed their registration had the authority to move on their own. In order to obtain their own stronghold, they did not want to move together with the main fleet. This was approved by Han Xiao silently. Furthermore, he even prepared quite a number of missions just for the players in the army interface, which had rich rewards. This was to encourage the guilds to move on their own and expand their lead.

...

Somewhere in the Emerald Star Cluster, Beast Ancestor Gorutan's fleet was stationed on one planet, building a bridgehead.

Although Gorutan was the protector of the Galactic Black Market behind the curtains, he also had his own organization. If there was anything special about this organization, it would be that most of its members were his offspring.

Gorutan stood at the peak of a mountain, looking down at the ground that was slowly being covered in metal. Above him was the dark galaxy, and northern lights flew in the sky.

His muscular and fearsome body was completely nude. The lion-like fur all over his body swayed with the corrosive wind, and dots of light surrounded his body, each of which was made of highly condensed Pugilist flames.

As a peak Beyond Grade A Pugilist, his training method had ascended from purely training his body. He had to use every inch of his body to feel the way the universe operated; it was very mysterious. Gorutan had stopped taking baths in Fixed Stars like Heber long ago.

This time, numerous meteors flew over from the sky and landed behind Gorutan. They were all Calamity Grade officers, and there were more than forty of them.

Everyone lowered their head and spoke with respect at the same time.

“Father!”

These officers were the Beast Ancestor’s offspring, and they all had different appearances as if they were different species.

Gorutan really lived up to the ‘ancestor’ in his nickname. In fact, he had a more down to earth nickname among the civilians—Seed Spreader of the Galaxy.

After he evolved to become a Beyond Grade A species, he had obtained a very powerful reproductive capacity. His genes had extraordinary adaptability. He could have offspring with most species, and his way of expanding his race was brutal and simple. He captured females of different races for mating to give birth to all kinds of hybrid species.

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If there were any outstanding mutants in his offspring, he would then turn that offspring into his mating machine to breed even stronger offspring. This way of doing things contradicted the ethics of some races, so Gorutan was disliked by quite many civilizations who felt he was like a savage beast. However, many races did not care about it. After all, the ethics of every race were different.

Gorutan turned around, not minding the fact that he was fully nude in front of his offspring, and said with a deep voice, “What is it?”

An offspring stepped forward. This offspring had the appearance of a spider-like insect but had a human-like face. His six pedipalp-like arms held a communicator at the same time to express his respect to Gorutan. “Father, Sorokin is looking for you.”

Gorutan took the communicator, and Sorokin’s hologram appeared before him.

“What’s this about?”

Sorokin smiled calmly. “Remember my plan for the Black Star Army? It’s time. When the Limitless Financial Group firms its ground, we will start to target the Black Star Army’s businesses in his territory. Before that, we need to restrain the army’s exploration.”

“And you need my help?”

“That’s right. Right now, the Black Star Army’s exploration is heading to Planet Phiri, which is not far from you. I hope you can occupy Planet Phiri in advance. Their leader is Hila. Test her depth. Best to force the Black Star Army to retreat and delay their exploration progress while damaging their reputation.”

“Why not do it yourself?”

“My original body isn’t in the Emerald Star Cluster. Plus, I can’t beat Hila.” Sorokin smiled.

“Humph, we made a deal with you because I don’t want to deal with the Black Star Army personally, but now you’re asking me, the employer, to help. Why is that so?” Gorutan snorted. As a peak Beyond Grade A, he was not afraid of offending Black Star. He just did not want to work for free.

“My abilities are limited; I only have some strengths in terms of operating a business,” Sorokin slowly said. “If you don’t help me, I won’t be able to restrict the Black Star Army’s exploration. By then, don’t blame me for not giving Black Star enough pressure... Also, I can leak this information to you; the federation and the church have plans to get rid of Hila.”

“Oh? Are they not afraid of enraging the dynasty and starting another Tragedy of the Pinnacles?”

“Well, the fact is, Hila belongs to the Black Star Army; she did not agree to join the dynasty. So, killing her will only enrage Black Star. Hila becoming a Beyond Grade A is an unforeseen issue, but it has also shown us a new way to damage the Black Star Army.”

Gorutan squinted. “Have you forgotten what Black Star said during the Meeting of the Gods? There are too few Beyond Grade As. Anyone dying won’t be beneficial to us.”

“Haha, is that really the case?” Sorokin smiled. “The Mechanic Emperor is extremely ambitious. He hopes to gather all of the Beyond Grade As to obtain more things, but when you think of it, aren’t we being used by him? My thoughts happen to be the complete opposite of his. If there are fewer Beyond Grade As, those who are left will be safer. They’ll be more important to the advanced civilizations.”

Gorutan frowned. “Are you betraying the shared battlefield of the Beyond Grade As?”

“There has never been such a thing as betrayal. What have the others got to do with us? Is the situation the Beyond Grade As are in now not good enough?” Sorokin did not care at all. “When we plot to obtain things that don’t belong to us, this kind of ambition will only lead to our demise.”

“Don’t ever say something like that to me. I’ll take it as if I didn’t hear what you just said.” Gorutan waved his hand impatiently. “For the sake of our relationship, I’ll help you this time. I’ll visit Planet Phiri, but double my dividends for the next quarter, or there’s no deal.”

“Okay.” Sorokin smiled.

Gorutan ended the call and looked back at his many offspring. “Prepare the spaceships and follow me.”

This time, one offspring could not help but ask, “Father, for us to mess with the Black Star Army in the Flickering World, is it really worth...”

“You think Sorokin is the first person to have asked me to do this?” Gorutan snorted. “Hehe, in the Flickering World now, there are all too many organizations that want to deal with the Black Star Army...”

...

In the middle of their travels, the Black Star Army exploration fleet suddenly received a piece of information.

The female aide-de-camp hastily rushed into the room. "Your Excellency Deputy Army Commander, there's a situation."

Hila who was meditating opened his eyes, frowned, and said, "What is it?"

"Planet Phiri was occupied by someone before us. It's Beast Ancestor Gorutan's fleet. S-should we take use another planet as our stronghold?"

"Gorutan?" A tint of coldness flashed past Hila's eyes. "We did not hide our whereabouts, so the outside world knows our target, yet he deliberately snatched Planet Phiri. This is a provocation to the army! If we take a detour, it will damage the reputation the Army Commander has put a lot of effort in to build."

"But Gorutan is a peak Beyond Grade A. Y-you..." The aide-de-camp did not dare continue.

"Your Army Commander is also a peak Beyond Grade A. There's no reason to back away!" Hila stood up and said with a deep voice, "Advance at full speed!"

So what if it's a peak Beyond Grade A? It's not like I haven't been beaten by a peak Beyond Grade A before!

She was not someone like Garoze, who had already reached his peak. She was not afraid of challenging someone strong.

She believed that only fighting with strong people could stimulate her own potential.

...

At the same time, Han Xiao, who was counting his EXP with a grin every day in the Black Star Palace, received Phillip's message too and was slightly surprised.

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"Gorutan? When did I offend him?"

Han Xiao scratched his head and was a little speechless.

Although he did not know the reason behind this, he was not a nobody anymore. There was no reason to back away.

Well, since you've decided to cut short your life span, it has nothing to do with me.

### **Chapter 1017 Pinnacle Tier Pugilist**

Streams of light flashed across the universe, stopping not far from the planet. It showed itself as the exploration fleet of the Black Star Army.

"Deputy Army Commander, we're here."

On the bridge, Hila gazed at Planet Phiri through the porthole and saw Gorutan's fleet docked in orbit, facing them directly.

"Open the wide-area communications and contact them." Hila decided to be show manners before they acted.

The signaler sent out the message, and after a while, the communication call popped up on the screen. After connecting, a bestial humanoid's picture appeared on the screen. It was a Calamity Grade Officer.

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"I'm Gorragon's, the son of the Beast Ancestor. I pay respects to Your Excellency Hila."

"What is the meaning of this?" Hila frowned.

"Lord Father hopes to invite you for a meeting in Planet Phiri, and he's waiting for you on the surface right now."

"Discuss what?"

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"I do not know of Lord Father's thoughts. The issue here is, do you dare to come?" Gorragon aggressively replied.

"Alright, then clear the path for my fleet to land. We can talk after."

"Apologies, but Father has mentioned that he will only allow you to proceed. The rest of the fleet must remain."

"Then ask him to scram," Hila immediately replied in a decisive manner. "All battleships, heed my order. Advance forward, and annihilate any that dare to block us."

At this moment, the communicator's screen flickered, and Gorutan's figure appeared.

Facing someone of the same level, appearing completely nude would be too impolite, and thus, he had put on a simple, sleeveless tunic, standing with his arms crossed and an impassive expression.

"Not bad. It seems like the Black Star Army has a tough Deputy Army Commander."

Seeing this, Hila immediately raised her fist, stopping all orders. She narrowed her eyes. "Gorutan, I'm very curious. The Black Star Army and you have no conflicts, so why are you provoking us?"

"Do you want to know why? If you meet up with me, I'll tell you," Gorutan replied. "Depending on whether you have the courage, I'll be waiting on the surface of the planet with the answer."

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As he spoke, Gorutan's fleet took the initiative to shift away from Planet Phiri, putting the planet in between both fleets. Right now, Gorutan was left alone on Planet Phiri.

Hila thought for a moment before turning to address the vice fleet commander. "Activate a full scale detection of Planet Phiri and its surroundings to check if there are hidden vital signs or energy sources."

The commander nodded and sent down the order. He came back moments later with a report. "The surroundings are clear, and there's only a life signal on the planet representing Gorutan. How about it? Should we fire?"

Before his superior could give any orders, this vice commander was already thinking of ambushing and getting rid of Gorutan.

“Since he has shown such sincerity, I want to hear what he has to say. Wait on standby and keep the weapon system on alert mode. The moment the enemy’s fleet shows any abnormal reactions, just fire straight at them.”

Even if her fleet attacked, it would not deal much damage to Gorutan. Since he dared do such a thing, he was definitely prepared for all consequences, so Hila could only meet with him since she could not guess his intentions.

Maybe Gorutan wanted to set the battlefield to attack her, but she was not anxious. This was what she wanted; even if she could not beat a Pinnacle Beyond Grade A Super, she still had the confidence to block their attacks for a period of time.

Hila sat in a small spaceship and rapidly descended the atmospheric layer of Planet Phiri, stopping at a high altitude.

Shua!

The hatch opened, and Hila stepped out onto the air, looking down on the surface of the planet.

Within the rugged barren plains, Gorutan sat on a boulder, with his elbows placed on his knees. He looked up at Hila as he slowly spoke.

“As an Esper, the fact that you dared come so close to a Pinnacle level Pugilist shows that you have courage.”

The sound that came out from his mouth seemed to cause the air in their surroundings to oscillate, spreading out far like the echoes of thunder.

Hila did not land, choosing to remain floating in the midair as she replied, “Get straight to the point. What did you want to meet me for?”

Gorutan stared at Hila before explaining, “I don’t know how people will look at this, but in my eyes, you have the most potential among this batch of new Beyond Grade As.”

“So?” Hila raised a brow.

“Someone with your talent will rise to a higher realm in the future. There’s no need for you to remain as someone’s subordinate. Moving out as an independent entity would suit you better.” Gorutan drily spoke.

Hila’s eyes flashed dangerously, and she coldly snapped, “Who are you representing in trying to drive a wedge between Black Star and me? The three Universal Civilizations?”

“I’m only representing myself and the Galactic black market’s Management Committee. You can just take my words as a sincere suggestion.”

“Don’t you think that you’re meddling too much?” Hila snorted.



"I can see that you're someone who is extremely stubborn and does not like to heed the commands of others. There will be a day when you'll eventually choose to be independent." Gorutan had a look of interest in his eyes. "When that day comes, I'm willing to give you an invitation to become one of the members of the Galactic black market."

Not only was he sowing discord, he was also trying to poach her.

However, Hila showed an expression of indifference. "My communicator is on. Black Star can totally hear your words."

"So what if he hears them?" Gorutan did not mind it. "You have the freedom of choice; you're not his slave."

"I'm not interested in your invite." Hila remained unmoved. "Are you done? If so, you can take your troops away, and we'll take it as though this provocation did not happen."

"I don't think this is provocation. Planet Phiri does not belong to your Black Star Army. It's a free competition zone, not your territory. No one stipulated that others could not occupy the planet that you guys are interested in." Gorutan shook his head.

"You long had the intention to occupy this planet, but you chose to wait for us to make our choice before you took it for your own. If this is not provocation, then what is?" Hila said.

"Don't be too overbearing, little kid." Gorutan grinned. "It's first come, first served, so it's you who needs to leave. Go find another planet. This is my stronghold now."

The moment he spoke, the atmosphere became tense as both people faced each other.

He had been entrusted with this by others, no matter what Hila's reaction was, but he would not have given way either. His goal was to force Hila's hand so that he could test out her skills.

In his view, this mission was very simple. He just had to fight with Hila, allowing the Black Star Army to suffer some losses. Then he could decide if he wanted to withdraw or not.

While this type of conflict and provocation would draw Black Star's ire, it would not be to the point of wanting the other party dead. He was certain that just as he did not wish to make an enemy out of Black Star, Black Star did not wish to make an enemy out of him. Both sides were not so easily provoked.

Hila's expression turned frosty. Gorutan was right. The Black Star Army was being unreasonable. However, if they retreated, the other party would not only not praise them for being reasonable, but they would treat them as weaklings.

If all problems could be solved through reasoning, there would be no need for disputes and wars.

Since neither side wanted to retreat, the only solution left was to use force.

Looking at Gorutan's expression, which bore no good intentions, Hila fell silent for a few seconds before she suddenly moved!

Boom!

A tremendous death energy storm swept through, turning into a tornado as it blasted downward!

“Pretty scary.” Gorutan twisted his neck a little before stepping down hard.

Bang!

The earth cracked, and he stomped upward, leaving a huge ring-shaped crater on the ground, scattering dust everywhere.

He seemed to have turned into a comet, slamming into the torrential rain of death energy. The dark-brown Pugilist flame wrapped around his body, revealing a wild, arrogant temperament.

Bang!

Before Hila could react, the fist wreathed in pugilist flames landed squarely on her stomach.

The shield surrounding the battlesuit was shattered, and there were even cracks on her outer armor. Hila was slammed outward like a bullet, her speed breaking the sound barrier.

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“Insane strength, insane speed...” Hila’s expression slightly changed.

The shock absorption properties of the battlesuit could not withstand such a strong impact, and Hila could only feel that her internal organs seemed to have been flattened by this blow. The pain was overwhelming, and she only managed to stabilize her body in midair after much difficulty.

Both Gorutan and Black Star were at the pinnacle of Beyond Grade A, but the feeling she got from crossing blows with Gorutan was completely different from Han Xiao.

Han Xiao had displayed a complete suppression, where he was without weaknesses, controlling the battle from start to finish as though he could just adapt to anything. However, Gorutan’s battle style was complete savagery, just like the invincible rampage of a beast.

Hila’s impression of Beyond Grade A Pugilists mainly came from Heber, but fighting pinnacle level Beyond Grade A Pugilists was a totally different ball game, and they could not be seen as being on the same level.

Be it speed, strength, or energy intensity, there was a qualitative change. Objectively speaking, one Gorutan was enough to pummel three or four Hebers to death!

Only upon reaching the SS tier would someone be considered at the pinnacle of Beyond Grade A, and this battle strength was nothing to be joked about.

After his hit, Gorutan did not pursue her but rather remained floating, his head lowered as he observed the death energy eroding his body.

Because of his tanky body, the majority of the attacks were blocked purely by his body’s strength. The damage done to the body was small, and only a few layers of Death’s Erosion had stacked.

“A corrosive energy related to vitality... It seems like the rumors were true. You used such a method to gravely injure Tolaen. The more you accumulate, the stronger the power.”

Gorutan glanced at Hila before covering himself with a jet of energy. It shattered the Death's Erosion stacks, directly dispelling them. As Pugilists relied on their bodies, they naturally had many skills to dispel negative statuses.

"This is going to be tricky..." Hila gritted her teeth, but her eyes lit up.

She found that Gorutan's combat capability was overwhelming, but this did not make her back down, instead increasing her fighting will.

The next moment, Hila took the initiative to start another round of attacks, and the death energy surged like a wave, attacking while wrapped around her.

The tsunami-like crimson wave surged over, and Gorutan launched himself into it. In an instant, an invisible shock wave was generated and exploded in midair, enveloping the incoming death energy.

Boom!

The vibrations echoed around the entire space. Gorutan's lunge was actually a skill, which caused the particles in the space in front to oscillate at high frequencies, collapsing the layers of incoming death energy.

"It seems like your strength is unworthy of your attitude."

Gorutan's expression remained indifferent, and his figure disappeared suddenly as he started to move at full speed.

Whoosh!

The difference in their speed was too great. Before Hila could react, he had already arrived beside her, and his leg containing great power whipped and slammed hard on her back.

Boom!

Her entire body arched like a bow from the impact, shooting up like a cannonball all the way out of the planet's atmosphere.

"Cough cough... I cannot fight him in melee battles." Hila felt as though dozens of bones were broken just from that kick, and she immediately changed her strategy.

When faced against Tolaen, she could still rely on her vampiric abilities to hold on, but comparing him with a pinnacle level Beyond Grade A, her attributes differed too much, to the point that she could not even see his figure!

In melee battles, a pinnacle level Beyond Grade A Pugilist was nigh invincible, and forcibly going head on with them was just asking for death.

"In a one-to-one battle, I have no way to retaliate. I need to complicate this battlefield."

As Hila thought about the possible battle tactics, the built-in communicator rang, and Han Xiao's voice came from it, with a tone that seemed as though he was smiling.

"How is it? Have you felt the power difference? Do you need help?"

“No need.” Hila shook her head. If she always relied on Black Star for help, how could she grow?

“But you’re not his opponent. If you can’t do it, just let me take over.”

Han Xiao raised a brow. He had known long ago that Hila would not be able to cope against Gorutan.

During the Meeting of the Gods, he had collected the attribute information of Gorutan, and there were a great deal of question marks. Even he himself might not be able to beat Gorutan head on, so Hila would have it worse. If a pinnacle Beyond Grade A could be dealt with so easily, there would be no need to use them as deterrents.

But he knew that even if Gorutan could not be beaten, Hila would not be the one at a disadvantage, so he did not interfere to allow Hila to gain more experience.

“Humph, wait till I’m almost beaten to death before you help.”

Hila stabilized her body and turned around. While using her death energy to attack and contain Gorutan, she tried to increase the distance between them.

This was not even considered a struggle, merely a unilateral beating. If not for Gorutan deliberately slowing down the offensive to force out Hila’s abilities, she would probably have already been beaten up. The high speed and strength he possessed was enough to break through most methods.

But truth be told, Gorutan did not have it easy either. After suffering from the repeated attacks of death energy, he felt a slight fear toward it.

“What a strange ability. If I couldn’t forcibly crush it with my strength, her abilities would put me in a lot of danger...”

Just as he knocked Hila back with yet another punch, he discovered that Hila had tweaked the direction of her knockback, flying toward his troops.

“She actually took the initiative to fly toward my troops? Isn’t she afraid of being besieged?”

Gorutan stopped in shock, but this time, Hila suddenly made a different gesture, and a sudden surge of mental energy burst out.

The world before his eyes warped and turned into an inky black space.

Lowering his head, all he saw were the grudges of countless creatures.

[Abyss of the Dead!]

While Pugilists would also temper their minds, their Psychological Resistance was not high to begin with, so Gorutan easily fell into the mental attack, freezing on the spot.

Taking this chance, Hila accumulated her death energy and ran straight through the shield established by the Gorutan fleet, rushing right into the fleet formation.

“What is she trying to do?” Gorraron, who had previously spoken with Hila, stood in the command room of one of the spaceships, looking confused.

Before he could take any action, Hila raised both her hands, and the death energy exploded, enveloping the entire fleet.

“What?!”

Gorragon got a shock, immediately commanding the fleet to retreat and avoid it.

However, his command had yet to be sent out when the dark red energy encompassed his entire sight.

Gorragon’s eyes widened.

Bang bang bang!

In a flash, countless battleships were chewed up by the death energy like biscuits, and countless children of Gorutan were reaped.

With the [Vampiric] effect, she obtained enough vitality to recover her HP.

Just that short exchange previously made Hila clear that she was far from being Gorutan’s opponent if they fought head on. With her own HP, she could not sustain the battle for a long time, so the only way was to enhance her endurance by turning it into a group fight, absorbing more vitality for herself.

Her combat capability in a large group fight was much higher than in single target battles!

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Hila ran rampant within the fleet, killing wantonly, and her status quickly picked up even as countless screams were drowned in the explosion.

At this time, Gorutan finally got rid of the mental attack from [Abyss of the Dead]. The moment he returned to his senses, he was greeted with the image of Hila slaughtering his descendants, His expression warped in fury.

In his view, Hila was killing his descendants to vent her anger!

“You dare?!”

### **Chapter 1018 Confrontation**

The death energy ravaged the fleet, eroding and penetrating the outer armor of every spaceship. They burst apart like fireworks as Hila’s figure sailed through.

Uncountable troops on Gorutan’s side were killed by the mixture of physical and mental damage. The death energy sapped their vitality, supplementing Hila’s HP instead, and their soul fragments were absorbed by her to enhance her powers.

After receiving this attack, the fleet was in chaos for a short moment, but they quickly retaliated and fired a volley at Hila. However, most of their attacks were evaded or blocked by her death energy shield, and only a small portion caused damage.

In front of Hila’s highly efficient vampirism ability, those injuries were healed in the blink of an eye.

Gorutan's eyes seemed like it was about to spit fire, his anger reaching extreme heights. He suddenly raised his speed, almost instantaneously breaking through the death energy barrier surrounding Hila. This time, he did not show mercy, raining blows on Hila's body, pummeling her.

Boom boom boom!

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Bursts of compressed air blasted out from his fists, shattering Hila's internal organs and bones. The angered pinnacle Beyond Grade A pugilist's fists exuded great killing intent, as though he wished to beat her up into a ball of flesh.

However, Hila had received stolen plenty of vitality from the people she had just killed, so her HP constantly dipped and soared, barely supporting her through the intense attack.

Hila continued to dodge the blows as much as she could, and she even opted to retaliate at times, trading injury for injury.

"You're seeking death!"

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Gorutan's fury knew no bounds, and as he pummeled Hila, he gazed with killing intent over at the Black Star Army's fleet.

Since Hila had dared to kill his subordinates, he could do the same to 'pay respect' to the Black Star Army.

But his eyes soon narrowed, as he saw that within the Black Star Army's fleet, a mechanical troop flew out from within one of the spaceships, standing at the very forefront. The lead mechanical soldier gave off frightening energy fluctuations. It was likely that Black Star had chosen to descend as an avatar.

Han Xiao's mechanical army remained in position, without any intention to save Hila, but Gorutan knew that if he were to attack the fleet, then it would become a two against one scenario.

There's only one of me, and I can't even summon an avatar. If I attack Black Star's fleet, I'll have to face off against him. Hila will then be able to freely slaughter my subordinates.

As this thought flashed through his head, Gorutan could only dismiss the thought of attacking the Black Star fleet, becoming even angrier in the process.

He was a dignified Pinnacle Beyond Grade A, so why did it seem like he was being forced to train the enemy?

Black Star, do you think that I really won't kill your subordinate?

Good! Since you are not going to act, I'll beat your Deputy Army Commander to death!

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From the time Hila began to slaughter his men, the degree of conflict had escalated, and Gorutan no longer held the mentality to test out her skills but rather had the intention to kill...

I shouldn't provoke Black Star? So what! We're both Beyond Grade A pinnacles. Does Black Star think that I'm afraid of him? This daddy here also has a temper!

Gorutan immediately stepped up his offensive, bombarding his opponent in front of him.

Such a mad attack would mean that he was more prone to vulnerability. Hila was bleeding all over, but she ignored the pain and kept calm, staring at the increasingly intense death energy on Gorutan's body. Her eyes flickered with an unknown light.

At this time, Gorutan's fist swirled with a violent aura, and after utilizing his skills, the power surged. Space seemed to warp around his fist.

Swoosh!

The fist passed through Hila's chest, as though piercing through it, separating the red ocean of death energy surrounding her.

But Gorutan's eyes narrowed. He did feel as if he had hit something concrete.

Hila's body dissolved into a mass of death energy, and disengaging from Gorutan's arm, the ocean of death energy took on the shape of a humanoid, reshaping into Hila's body.

[Advancing in the Dead Sea]!

Hila could turn her body into an energy life form and perform teleportation in any area filled with death energy with just a short cooldown. This was one of her few displacement skills.

Gorutan frowned. After beating his opponent for such a long time, he had assumed that she had no ability to teleport and dodge.

Just as he was about to pursue her, Gorutan felt his fist sinking. In that instant, Hila had commanded the death energy to wrap around his fist, releasing a huge attractive force that was forcing his arm to sink in the ocean of death energy.

At the same time, the [Death's Erosion] stacks on his body soared from ten to fifteen stacks!

[Extradition of the Dead]!

Hila's method of superimposing the [Death's Erosion] stacks was not just based through general attacks. She had the ability to stack multiple Death's Erosion instantly onto a target, and this skill was one of them.

She had initially been hiding her skills, all for this sudden blitzkrieg. She covered all fifteen stacks on Gorutan in one swoop before detonating them using [Reaper of Souls].

She had only attacked Gorutan's fleet to activate her vampiric effect, creating a battlefield that was conducive to herself to improve her endurance, as well as to attract hatred.

In her point of view, only by using a decoy and provoking Gorutan's anger would he reveal flaws for her to obtain the opportunity to attack. As long as he stepped up his offensive, the energy spent toward defense would weaken.

Hila's eyes were calm, and the moment the skill came into effect, she did not give Gorutan time to react, seamlessly connecting it with [Reaper of Souls], detonating all fifteen stacks.

Boom!

Gorutan exploded with a dazzling red light!

Hila took the opportunity to back away, distancing herself.

However, a dark brown pugilist flame wave burst out from within the explosion right after, evaporating all the death energy along its way as it slammed directly into Hila. It pushed her all the way toward Planet Phiri.

The brown ray of light penetrated Planet Phiri like a toothpick going through an orange.

The next second, the light fully pierced through both ends of the planet and began to expand rapidly, revealing the red glow of the planet core.

Buzz!

Everyone's eyes were greeted with an expanse of white, forcing them to subconsciously close their eyes. If the battleship porthole did not have the function to automatically adjust spectrum and brightness, this level of light would have been enough to burn the eyes of the majority present.

"Warning! Warning! High energy reaction detected! Reaction output level: Planet Annihilation!"

A harsh alarm sounded on every ship, and when everyone reopened their eyes, the huge planet had disappeared as though it had never existed.

All that remained were some bits of dust floating in its place. The entire planet had been collapsed and annihilated, and Hila was nowhere to be seen.

This moment, the death energy from Reaper of Souls collapsed, revealing Gorutan's body, which was covered in corrosive wounds and slowly healing.

Because his level was too high, the judgment of death was unsuccessful, but he had still lost twenty percent of his HP from that one blow!

Ever since he had stepped into the pinnacle level of the Beyond Grade A realm, Gorutan had rarely suffered such a serious injury. He had expected it to be a simple matter to deal with this newly born Beyond Grade A; he did not expect to suffer from such a loss.

In this fury, Gorutan had activated one of his aces, his self-created pugilist technique [Beast Ancestor Style—Light of Annihilation]. This was not just a pure Pugilist skill but also contained the laws of the universe that ran through his body.

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On the surface, it seemed to just be a pugilist flame beam, but it actually stirred up the space around it, creating a terrible radiation energy to amplify its damage. Hitting the planetary core would cause a chain reaction to occur, resulting in planetary obliteration.



Hila's HP was not full to begin with, and with this blow, it was likely that she would have been instantaneously killed.

Gorutan's murderous eyes turned toward Black Star in the distance, the aura around him rising exponentially.

Having killed the Deputy Army Commander in front of him, Gorutan did not think that Black Star would remain unmoved, so he began to prepare to face this formidable foe.

However, much to his surprise, Han Xiao and his mechanical troops did not rush over as expected but rather turned to watch the smoldering wreckage of the planet.

Just as he was feeling puzzled, specks of gray shone around the wreckage of Planet Phiri and gathered to form a whirlwind. Hila's spiritual body was within that whirlwind, and this also attracted Gorutan's gaze.

The next moment, Hila's body reformed within the whirlwind, and the death energy draped around her like a cloak, only revealing a face that was deathly pale.

One of the mechanical soldiers threw out an Army Emblem, which Hila activated, turning it into countless nanoparticles that formed a Crimson Snake battlesuit around her body. Immediately afterward, the life potion of Aurora that was built within the suit was injected into her, and Hila's sluggish state after defying death quickly vanished, her HP recovering to more than half.

"Not dead?" Gorutan's eyes narrowed, his expression sinking.

If he had not intended to kill Hila, that would have been all good, but since he had already revealed his killing move, this only made Gorutan feel even more humiliated.

But Black Star had already intervened, so continuing his attack was out of the question. Gorutan frowned, choosing to rearrange the formation of his fleet instead. In his view, since Hila did not die, Black Star definitely had to give him an explanation.

On the other side, Hila flew back to Han Xiao's avatar, and Han Xiao glanced at her with a slight smile on his face, "How is it? Do you want to continue being beaten up?"

Hila shook her head. "I can't beat him, but I managed to give him something to remember."

She felt that this battle was quite rewarding, allowing her to accumulate more experience and lessons on dealing with other Beyond Grade As. At the same time, she had harvested a lot of the opponent's troops, and her ability strength was slightly enhanced.

In particular, there were several Calamity Grades who had died by her hand, so the bonus provided was quite impressive, better than the beasts she had slaughtered during her training.

As she spoke, Hila suddenly paused and said with some uncertainty, "This time... did I cause trouble for you?"

In order to reverse her disadvantage, she had attacked the other party's fleet. This sort of combat method made it too easy to incite hatred, so Gorutan would probably have a deeper hatred against her.

Of course, Hila had no intention of apologizing to Gorutan at all. The moment she entered a fighting state, the enemy's life was nothing but a mere blood bag in her eyes. She would only apologize to Han Xiao.

My character seems to make enemies easily. Perhaps staying in the Black Star Army is the wrong decision...

Hila could not help but think that way, pursing up her lips.

She was still the same Goddess of Death who treated life like weeds. This could be a characteristic brought by abilities. The only thing that was better was that she would not kill ordinary people indiscriminately, and her cruelty was only aimed toward the enemy.

Han Xiao knew that Hila was not good with words. She spoke her mind frankly, and expecting her to stay her hand was impossible.

Han Xiao shook his head, answering with an unquestionable tone. "We'll talk more when we return. Just go and rest. I'll deal with the rest."

Hearing this, Hila opened and closed her mouth repeatedly, but in the end, she nodded quietly and boarded the spaceship.

Han Xiao controlled his avatar to move slowly toward Gorutan's troops.

Upon reaching the center of the two fleets, the troops threw out a multitude of compressed orbs, which transformed into a small floating sanctuary of around a thousand square meters. The door of the base opened wide, and Han Xiao made an inviting gesture toward Gorutan.

The latter narrowed his eyes but flew into the base. The sanctuary was full of fresh air, and in the middle was a long conference table, with a high seat at both ends.

Han Xiao sat on one of the seats, nodding toward Gorutan.

"Please sit."

Gorutan plonked down on one of the chairs and grumbled, "Black Star, your Deputy Army Commander is really brave. I haven't seen such a Beyond Grade A who seeks death so readily. Does she think that she can do as she pleases with you as a backer?"

"Haha, what sort of words are those? She has always been bold, and it's nothing to do with me." Han Xiao shook his head.

"I don't want to continue talking nonsense with you." Gorutan waved his hand. "I'm giving you face by not wanting her life. But she killed my descendants, and this debt must be settled. Let's discuss how to solve this."

"I think it's simple." Han Xiao controlled the avatar to stroke its metallic chin. "You take your troops to leave this place, and I won't pursue the matter any further. How about that?"

"What did you say? Say that again!" Gorutan glared furiously, his pugilist flame raging around him.

“Don’t get too agitated.” Han Xiao waved his hands to placate Gorutan. “I don’t think Hila promised to challenge you, so who is to blame for this? And I think you probably discovered it, but she attacked your fleet not to vent her anger but rather to show her abilities and create a favorable battlefield for herself. After all, she’s not your match, so of course she needed to utilize her surroundings. From my perspective, it seems like it was your entire fleet facing off against her. Isn’t that more unfair?”

“I’ve not come into contact with you much before, but it seems like your reputation really precedes you. You’re every bit as shameless as the rumors say.” Gorutan coldly laughed.

“Is that so?” Han Xiao clicked his tongue. “A pinnacle Beyond Grade A bullying a newly born Beyond Grade A, is that very glamorous? I have no grudges nor hatred with you, yet you choose to provoke and bully my Deputy Army Commander. Of course, she is not your opponent, but you actually didn’t even allow her to create a favorable environment for herself. If that’s not bullying the weak, what is?”

Gorutan’s words were stuck in his throat, and he finally growled in a deep voice, “No matter what, many of those killed were my descendants, and some were even Calamity Grades that I’d painstakingly raised. She attacked my fleet first, so this matter was incited by her. I won’t let this go!”

Han Xiao laughed in response. “Wasn’t this entire thing started by you? Why is it now our problem? Furthermore, you actively provoked me first, and now you’re saying that my subordinates have gone too hard on you. I feel that you’re more shameless than me.”

Bang!

Gorutan slammed the table heavily as he stood up, the fury apparent in his expression.

“Black Star, watch your attitude!”

“Alright, let’s say that you make sense. Then, what do you want us to do?”

“Of course, I want compensation!” Gorutan coldly replied. “I won’t force you to repay a life with a life, but I want you to compensate me and make Hila apologize to me.”

“Oh, sounds reasonable.” Han Xiao smiled. “But I refuse.”

“Black Star!” Gorutan smashed the table between them into smithereens, bellowing, “You wish to make me an enemy?”

At this moment, Han Xiao’s pleasant tone turned cold. “You think you’re the only one who’s angry? You bullied my old friend and even wanted to poach her. I haven’t settled this with you! And also... what sort of mistaken notion makes you think that I cannot afford to make you an enemy?”

The Lord’s Avatar slowly rose up, floating until it came before Gorutan. The two of them stared straight at each other, and their gazes looked as though it could wipe out planets with it alone.

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Han Xiao slowly spoke.

“It’s far from your turn to manage my people!”

As he spoke, he raised a hand, poking at Gorutan’s chest as his voice grew steely.

“You people come and test my patience and limits every day. You think that I’m without a temper? This daddy here has killed your people! You want to play with me? I’ll play to the end with you. Can you even afford that?”

### **Chapter 1019 Shortened Lifespan, Dark Clouds**

The moment he spoke, the atmosphere turned sharp like drawn daggers.

The anger in Gorutan’s eyes almost condensed into reality, and his energy fluctuations continuously rose, exuding huge pressure on their surroundings. The surrounding metal walls gradually cracked as they vibrated from the high frequency.

“Want to attack?”

Han Xiao’s eyes crackled with electricity, his whole body flickering with blue-gold electrical serpents, producing harsh popping sounds.

This stalemate continued for another ten seconds or so before Gorutan suddenly collected his energy outburst, and the pressure in the room drastically lessened.

The rage on his face quickly faded, and he coldly said, “Black Star, you really gave me quite the surprise. You’re really unyielding.”

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Han Xiao crossed his arms and replied in a level tone, “We can speak more of whether I’m unyielding in the future. Right now, what do you intend to do?”

Gorutan remained expressionless, only wagging a finger toward the avatar.

“I’ll remember the matters today. We still have scores to settle.”

He turned and strode away, leaving the sanctuary and flying toward his own fleet.

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“You’re really good at spitting vicious words. I really thought that you would take action just now.” Han Xiao shook his head. He walked to the door, watching as Gorutan led his fleet and vanished from sight.

This minor conflict had ended with Gorutan’s retreat, so Han Xiao withdrew his machinery, controlling the Lord’s Avatar to return to the main flagship. Hila had been waiting for him the whole time.

The moment he entered the command room, Hila came up.

“What sort of conditions did you promise him, or did you force him to retreat?”

Han Xiao shook his head. “It was nothing like that. He left on his own.”

“Gorutan had eaten such a loss. Could he even swallow his anger?” Hila was suspicious.

“At least on the surface, he has not taken a loss. He has annihilated the planet we chose and delayed our exploration speed. We have no choice but to change our target and find another planet, and you have killed some of his subordinates in return, so we should be considered even.”

“Will he take this lying down?” Hila frowned.

“Of course not. We’ve already formed a grudge with him, and he will not leave things be.”

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Hila slowly spat out a breath, whispering, “I increased the conflict between us and got a new enemy for the army. I...”

“Don’t blame yourself. You did what was necessary.”

Han Xiao interrupted her as he waved his hands in dismissal. “Gorutan’s challenge was a kind of test. Just like how the winds howl around the highest peaks, the number of people who wish to test us are numerous. Behind Gorutan might exist even more organizations and forces. If we are not tough and vicious to them, every organization will think that we’re easy to provoke. Furthermore, the strength between both of you is too vastly different, and he challenged you to bully you. Thus, there’s no need to feel bad since you got beaten up by him, or else the prestige of the army would have fallen.”

Hila stared at Han Xiao, her eyes shining with a weird light as she tilted her head.

“So, you don’t care if I make more enemies?”

“The part I like about you is your ferocity,” Han Xiao casually replied. “So what if Gorutan was just testing you out? Are you going to obediently accompany him to put on a show, then let him leave after patting his butt? Remember this, he actively sought us out to make enemies of us; it was not you who sought him out. If one is not vicious, they cannot stand firmly in their territory. I brought you over to the competition area not to let you be a softie but to crush through all that blocks your route.”

Right now, the status of the Black Star Army was different from before. It possessed the largest territory in the Flickering World, and it naturally had more responsibilities such as bringing benefits and prestige to the dynasty since it was holding the fort there.

“Really?”

“Of course.” Han Xiao smiled, patting her shoulder.

You’re an important fighter of mine, and the main thing that is needed is to have deterrence. If I don’t defend you, should I speak for the enemy instead? Wouldn’t that be ironic?

Originally, Han Xiao only wished to borrow Hila’s Esper Ability to let Gorutan suffer some losses, provoking Gorutan was out of his plan. However, while things had gotten to this point, he had no fear. Since the other party had chosen to provoke him first, getting beaten to this point was his just desserts.

Hearing Han Xiao reassure her, Hila’s expression relaxed a little. She paused before asking, “So, what did you say to him just now?”

“I just...”

Han Xiao simply narrated the prior events.

Hearing this, Hila could not help but smirk, and she wondered, “You were so unyielding, but he actually did not start fighting with you, huh?”

“I’m still a pinnacle Beyond Grade A after all.” Han Xiao laughed. “Furthermore, it’s because of you that he did not make a move.”

“Me?”

“We have two Beyond Grade As here, so a battle wouldn’t be in his favor. Furthermore, Gorutan is not in his peak state; making a move would bring him more disadvantages than advantages.”

If it was just a normal Beyond Grade A, Gorutan might not have cared, but Hila had used [Reaper of Souls] to inflict heavy damage, which provided a strong deterrent effect. This resulted in Gorutan’s HP not being at maximum capacity. If he faced off against Black Star as well, the risk for him was a bit too high.

Han Xiao hypothesized that this should be the reason for Gorutan’s withdrawal. While Pugilists had heads of steel, they also knew how to judge the situation. In the face of an obviously unfavorable situation, it was better to retreat.

He also did not wish to force Gorutan, as a pinnacle Beyond Grade A Pugilist had a lot of burst power. He was there as an avatar, not his true form. Furthermore, with his reputation as a tank, Gorutan would definitely choose to attack Hila first, and with her [Death Immunity] skill still on cooldown, it would be more dangerous.

Both sides had their own reservations.

After a pause, Han Xiao said, “Gorutan will come at us again, so it’s important to pay attention. There’s a high chance he will target you.”

“Maybe we can take the initiative and launch an attack.” Hila’s thinking was forever that extreme.

“Launch an attack? Depends on the situation.”

Han Xiao shook his head. It was not that the idea was not possible, but he needed more assurance.

Now that the players had returned in Version 4.0, he could finally continue his rapid upgrades, and his stagnated level could finally increase once again.

Based on his current strength, it would not be so easy to deal with Gorutan. He hoped to complete one or maybe even two more advancements before resolving this matter.

Other than his plan to make Gorutan an enemy, Han Xiao had been lying low for over twenty years, letting the outside world think that he was also facing a bottleneck. But the moment he exchanges blows with another pinnacle Beyond Grade A, he would have to reveal his current strength, and that old jerk Manison would be sure to come out once more.

It is safer to first complete my advancement at level 320. This is the most important thing currently, Han Xiao thought to himself.

If he foresaw things properly, the worst-case scenario in this matter might result in a dangerous chain reaction.

He needed to be stronger to deal with it!

When the conversation ended, the Lord's Avatar fell dormant once more, and Hila returned to her position.

Since Planet Phiri had already been reduced to dust, they had to look for a new planet to build a stronghold.

...

On the other side, Gorutan's fleet was returning to their planet that served as their stronghold.

Gorutan reclined in the tall throne, holding a huge cup that fit his figure and continuously poured a special spirit down his throat.

Several of his female descendants were around him, some holding medical tools to treat his wounds, whilst others held scissors to help him trim the hair near his wounds. The rest were in charge of massaging him.

"Lord Father, is it comfortable?"

"Use more strength."

Gorutan wiped his mouth, throwing the empty cup to the side. He looked down at the Calamity Grades standing below the dais and coldly said, "Is the casualty report out?"

"It's already out. Please have a look." One of the Calamity Grades walked up, passing him a communication terminal.

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Opening the virtual screen, he glanced at the figures and snorted. "She actually dared to kill five of my Calamity Grades. I'll kill that Hila sooner or later! Then there's that Black Star b\*stard. To dare be so unyielding! If not for my minor injury, I would've torn his avatar apart!"

Seeing Gorutan in a rage, everyone wisely kept silent.

"Don't think that it's because I'm afraid of Black Star. He does not have the ability to force me to make concessions. I blasted Planet Phiri apart and slowed down their progress. I have accomplished what Sorokin requested." Gorutan coldly snorted.

He had chosen to stay away from Han Xiao's sharp edge because of his current condition, as well as the fact that there was no need to fight Black Star alone. His original goal was just to slow them down and test out the other party's skills.

Thus, if he wanted a better way to level the playing field, he would have to follow Sorokin's recommendation and approach the federation and church to get rid of Hila, since they already intended to do so. He would not need to move.

Gorutan then changed the topic. "Since a batch have died, raise another batch of hybrid descendants on our home planet and bring them here."

"Are you personally going to spread your seeds?"

Gorutan waved his hand. "Just use those from the storage."

In his main camp, there were females responsible for bearing descendants at all times. After all, their efficiency of mating and multiplying offspring was too low, so a large amount of Beyond Grade A DNA from Gorutan was stored in a freezer to be used for reproduction. It had extremely strong vitality and adaptability, and using artificial insemination would allow them to produce offspring on a larger scale, supplemented by hormones such as oxytocin to help accelerate childbirth.

After many years of experimenting, he had accumulated a variety of hybrid combinations that would allow them to produce excellent offspring. Through mixing with different species, he could produce offspring with various racial talents, so females were hoarded in his camp to be used as a medium for offspring.

As for the origins of these females... as a Beyond Grade A who sat high above, he naturally would not waste time falling in love with so many females. Some came willingly, others less so... None of the people who ran the Galactic Black Market were clean people anyways.

At this moment, Gorutan coughed twice.

"Lord Father, your injuries..." one of the officers muttered in a worried tone.

"Hila's Esper Ability has a strong lethality and high-explosiveness to wound even me." Gorutan frowned. "During the battle just now, I did not feel it, but my body is a little weird."

As he spoke, Gorutan closed his eyes, diving into the cellular level to observe his body's situation. Among the Super systems, the Pugilists had the greatest degree of control over their bodies.

Everyone turned silent for a while before Gorutan suddenly snapped his eyes open, abruptly standing up. The female descendants around him were all thrown back.

"Dammit, her Esper Ability can weaken the vitality of cells!"

Gorutan's expression distorted. He almost turned mad with fury.

Even when that batch of elites had died under Hila's hands, he had not been so mad!

The vitality of a cell was related to the number of cell divisions it could make, and this sort of property was extremely secretive, to the point that Beyond Grade As normally could not sense it. It was only now that he discovered that his lifespan had been cut!

Not merely just his lifespan, but fertility was also closely related to the vitality of his cells. With the reduction in vitality for his DNA, there would be a decline in the quality of his progeny!

Boom!

In his rage, the pugilist flames erupted, strong pressure forcing all his descendants to sprawl on the ground and tremble.

"Such a devilish damaging Esper ability..." The veins of Gorutan's forehead throbbed as his hatred for Hila practically overflowed.

He did not expect that this operation would actually result in his life span being reduced.



An absolute loss!

Gorutan's chest heaved up and down violently, and his breaths came out in gasps as he entertained the thought of rushing back to kill her.

"L-Lord Father..."

At this time, his descendants started to plead with him. Seeing the situation, Gorutan could only reluctantly reduce his anger, and the raging Pugilist aura slowly calmed down.

"All of you, scram!"

Everyone rushed to get out of the room as fast as possible. They were aware that they should not be around their father when he was angry.

Only Gorutan remained in the room. He sat on his throne for a while before picking up the communicator and calling Sorokin.

After three rings, the call connected, and Sorokin showed himself on the screen, smiling as he spoke.

"Your Excellency Beast Ancestor, how's the situation?"

Gorutan coldly glared at him for a while before finally saying, "The matter has been settled. I blasted Planet Phiri apart and have also tested Hila out. However, I lost quite a few of my descendants in the process, and I also almost got angered to death by Black Star."

"That's great. Your Excellency is indeed reliable. I'll compensate you for any losses. So, what is the result of your test?"

"Hila's Esper Ability is extremely dangerous, possessing frightening explosive power..."

Gorutan relayed his discoveries in battle, pausing at the last part before continuing in a deep voice.

"Her Esper Ability also has a terrifying property. As long as it hits a life form, it will be able to reduce the cell vitality and the life span of the target. I suffered a huge loss for this discovery!"

Sorokin paused, his smile vanishing immediately. His expression also turned grave.

"Are you serious?"

"I shouldn't have told you this and allowed the federation and church to activate their people. After they discover that they have shortened their life spans, they'll blame you for the information lapse." Gorutan coldly snorted.

"... I understand." Sorokin narrowed his eyes.

"I hope that you will truthfully tell the people in the federation and the church what I've said. Don't play any tricks. Or else, even if I'm a shareholder of the Limitless Financial Group, I'll still beat you up!" Gorutan's eyes were cold.

"Relax. I have integrity." Sorokin solemnly nodded before cutting the call.

Gorutan threw the communicator to the side, his expression cold and his eyes gleaming with an unknown light.

By allowing the federation and the church to know that Hila's Esper Ability had the power to reduce one's life span, two things could happen.

One, because of fear, they would give up on targeting her.

Two, because of fear, they would not allow her to continue living.

Based on what he knew of the federation and the church, the latter had a ninety-nine percent chance of occurring.

If Hila had such strength, the universal civilizations would not allow her to grow.

In the past, Hila had belonged to the Chaotic Evil Faction, and there was no clear distinction in their powers. Furthermore, most people were reluctant to provoke such a crazy woman and dying in vain.

But the situation was different. Hila was a member of the Black Star Army. She was a stinger that belonged to someone and would only point her deadly stinger toward her enemies.

As a result, the organizations and powers opposing Black Star Army would feel an immense threat.

In terms of targeting the pinnacle combatants, Hila was like a formidable chronic poison, causing a dark cloud to form over everyone's head. No one was willing to have their life span reduced!

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Nobody was willing to have this dangerous character oppose them, let alone see her continue to grow.

Such Super High Risk Esper Abilities, whose very existence was a sin, should be killed as soon as possible!

Gorutan was certain that, as long as the news spread, most Beyond Grade As would not want to see this ability grow!

This would also help solidify the federation and the church's intentions to kill!

### **Chapter 1020 Don't Blame Your Brother for Not Having Values; Blame Your Wife for Being Too Alluring**

Everyone had their own way of survival, and in the eyes of the top organizations, Sorokin was a miraculous existence.

He was obviously hired by the federation, the church, and the Galactic Black Market, yet he could slowly penetrate and become the middleman of all these influential organizations.

Under his manipulation, Gorutan's testing of Hila quickly spread to the federation and the church, immediately attracting the attention of the upper echelons, who convened their allies for an urgent meeting.

The main base of the Arcane Church was located in another Star Cluster within the free competition zone. At this time, the projections of the majority of Beyond Grade As affiliated with the church were gathered, and there were also several important bishops and officials present.

After circulating the intelligence on Hila, everyone had a noticeable change in their expression as they read it.

Tolaen jumped up, his face pale. "Hila's Esper Ability can reduce the lifespan of Beyond Grade As?"

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He was not a Pugilist, so he did not have the ability to look into the microscopic changes in his cellular activity. Before this meeting, he did not know what had happened to him!

Not only did he lose in a fight with Hila, he even lost God knew how many years from his life. This was such a huge loss for him!

Tolaen felt intense regret. How could he have been so unlucky as to meet such an opponent?

Even fighting would reduce his lifespan, so who would want to do that? Even the craziest person would think twice! If he had known, he would not have agreed to the duel. No, if he had known, he would not even have sought Dragon Emperor Ames out!

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I'm going into closed door cultivation...

Everyone shot him a pitiful glance, which lasted for about three seconds, then they no longer bothered with him, instead beginning their discussion.

"I didn't expect this new Beyond Grade A to have such a strange Esper Ability. This resembles the Power of Death on the list of Super High Risk Esper Abilities." Sun Hunter was sat at the table. "I remember this being the ability of one of the Primordial Ones, but now it has resurfaced once more."

"That's right. I also remember the file. What was their name again..."

Kasuyi cut in. "Nerkese, the Controller of Death. She had an elder sister who was dubbed Mother of All Things, and she could spread her life force to any living organism."

"Right, right, it's those two! They were pretty famous among the Primordial Ones, being born from different civilizations. While they had no blood ties with each other, they happened to meet by fate within the vast and endless universe. Their Esper Abilities, which were completely in line with each other, allowed them to become sisters even without a blood tie... Ah! What an artistic legend, totally revealing the atmosphere of the exploration era, perfect," one of the Beyond Grade As exclaimed emotionally.

His name was Lawrence, and he had a subclass of an artist. He was always dressed flamboyantly, full of 'impact' to one's eyes.

"Eh? They weren't blood sisters?" One of them scratched his head.

"That's not true. After so many years, the legends have long been distorted. Those that are kept in our base are the truth," one of the senior officials commented. "Your Excellencies, can we return to the topic of Hila now?"

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'Child of Light' Sagman nodded. "The Power of Death is a Super High Risk Esper Ability that can easily reap lives. If we sit and watch Hila mature, once she loses control like Thousand Shadows one day, that will be the disaster for the entire universe."

"This is secondary. The greatest problem is... she's under the Black Star Army, which is our enemy." 'Sea Spirit' Dylan gritted his teeth.

"Such an ability is dangerous. If not handled well, when Hila matures, we'll have to worry about such things when we deal with the Black Star Army," 'World Gate' Taylor added.

They were all participants of the Planet Lighthouse battle and had suffered a loss to Han Xiao. They had the strongest hostility toward the Black Star Army and always wanted to give him a slap back.

Psyker thought for a while before nodding. "That's right. To us Beyond Grade As, a decrease in lifespan is too scary."

Sun Hunter threw him a sideward glance. "I don't think you need to worry about this problem."

"Eh?" Psyker jerked back. "What do you mean?"

"Based on the strength that Hila showed when fighting against Gorutan, if you were pitted against her, you would probably be beaten to death immediately. Thus, a reduction in your lifespan should not matter to you."

"..."

Psyker thoroughly felt the evil of this world in this very moment and turned his head to follow Tolaen, going into closed door cultivation.

"Stop fooling around," Kasuyi blandly said. He turned toward the officials. "How do the upper echelons of the church view this matter?"

The few officials exchanged a glance before one of them solemnly said, "They hope for you to persuade Hila to join us, to become our ally. If it doesn't work, eliminate her."

Everyone's eyes flashed. They thoroughly understood why the Arcane Church would think this way.

In addition to the threat she posed, her very presence in another faction would also affect the recruitment of Beyond Grade As, as newly born Beyond Grade As would choose to join the faction that she was in so as not to face her.

While Hila belonged to the Black Star Army, she had yet to officially join any advanced civilizations, so the Arcane Church naturally hoped to obtain her allegiance and grasp this lethal weapon. This was something Gorutan did not think about. Only when it was impossible for them to obtain her would they choose to destroy her.

The Beyond Grade As even thought another layer deeper.

If Hila's skill only affected Beyond Grade As due to their long lifespans, would that mean that the Arcane Church planned to use her to act as a deterrent for all the Beyond Grade As present?

If this was in ordinary times, no one would have this thought, but everyone present had coincidentally attended Han Xiao's Meeting of the Gods and had been instilled with the same ideology by Manison, the idea that all Beyond Grade As were standing on the same front line. Thus, everyone could not help but think deeper.

The entire place fell silent as many of them struggled with their internal thoughts.

Kasuyi's expression remained unchanged, however. He glanced around before saying, "I feel that we can put the plan of pulling Hila over into action immediately, but as for elimination, we must think twice. While we're all in the Flickering World, and gathering is convenient, our every movement is more likely to be watched. Killing Hila will also provoke Black Star, so it's better to wait and see what the Federation of Light does. After all, they received the same intelligence as us."

"I understand." One of the officials nodded. "We have yet to be repaid for the loss of Ninja, so we do not wish to work with the Federation for now. It's indeed better to wait and see. However, when we decide to move, I hope everyone will readily participate."

"No problem!" Other than Psyker, the rest of the participants of the Planet Lighthouse battle expressed their fervent attitudes.

Kasuyi did not speak, his eyes flickering with an unknown light.

...

On the other side, the Federation of Light had also convened a meeting, but the topic was vastly different from that of the Arcane Church.

"Hila's ability is indeed dangerous, no doubt, but dealing with her will incite the wrath of the Black Star Army, and that is not worth it," Hades replied.

One of the elders frowned. "But in the long run, Hila is obviously more threatening. Incurring the wrath of the Black Star Army is worth it."

"Are you sure?" Hades shot back. "Have you forgotten about the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter?"

Once these words were spoken, everyone in the Federation of Light jumped before falling into deep thought.

"The Ten Thousand Deity Scepter possesses a similar level of threat. In fact, it even has a higher priority level than Hila. This might be an opportunity for us to reach a deal with Black Star to unlock the Spacetime Amber seal for us. It will be profitable for both parties," Hades said bluntly.

At this moment, Manison dryly added, "That's right. I feel that we need to consider Black Star's attitude. The Ten Thousand Deity Scepter is more important for now."

Everyone turned to look at him, some with surprised expressions, while others seemed to know his underlying meaning.

Many of the Beyond Grade As knew that Manison had expressed his intention based on the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, but in actual fact, a great part was due to the impact of the Meeting of the Gods.

Manison was the main proposer of all the Beyond Grade As sharing the same battlefield, and he also valued Han Xiao's influence within the Flickering World. He hoped that Han Xiao could build an interaction platform based around this shared battlefield, so he was unwilling to antagonize him.

Speaking of which, if not for Han Xiao organizing the Meeting of the Gods and having spoken about the shared circumstances of the Beyond Grade A, the Beyond Grade As would probably not have had many reservations about dealing with Hila. Could this have been within his plans as well?

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After considering the matter, the Chief Elder replied after a pause, "Indeed, if we're able to undo the seal on the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, then the problem of Hila can temporarily be placed aside, but our chances of success are close to nil."

He paused and slowly added, "The Arcane Church will definitely take action, trying to poach or eliminate her, and we can warn Black Star of this, but this isn't great leverage. Behind Black Star is the dynasty, and they do not require our help in terms of combat strength. Furthermore, being an ally of the dynasty, he will definitely have his worries that if the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter is unsealed, we can use it against him. Under all these circumstances, there is no way he will agree to deal with us."

Hearing this, everyone nodded. From the perspective of Black Star, he would not possibly agree to this. The main point was that the federation's leverage was not enough to move him.

In fact, the federation had always wanted a good relationship with Han Xiao, so as to be able to unlock the seal on the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, something they currently could only see but not touch.

However, the Evolutionary Totem was a strategic asset related to the future of their civilization, and it was countless times more important than the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter. Thus, the federation could only temporarily suspend the matter of the scepter at that time, targeting the Crimson Dynasty and the Black Star Army.

However, Hila's problem now allowed the federation to see another chance at obtaining a deal with Black Star.

"We need more leverage." Hades' eyes flashed. "For example... Hila herself."

Everyone felt their hearts stir.

"You mean, we should capture Hila alive and use her to deal with Black Star, exchanging her for undoing the seal of the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter." The Chief Elder sighed before beginning to feel as though this was a headache inducing matter.

This plan would not require any killing, no incurring of Black Star's wrath, and it would even allow them to unseal the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter. The plan also seemed easy enough, a good idea.

If this plan succeeded, the federation would earn the most, being able to utilize the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, giving the green hat to the Arcane Church.

Though, it was not their problem whether the Arcane Church profited or lost.

It's better to die without friends than to die poor!

To understand this concept, just look at Hades who suggested this idea.

Tsk, what a lowlife.

The Chief Elder coughed. "Since Hila's skills specifically deal with living life forms, the best class to take her down would be a Mechanic. Mechanic Emperor, would you..."

"I have no interest in bullying a new Beyond Grade A," Manison said.

As a Mechanic surrounded by plenty of armor, he was naturally unafraid of Hila's ability to deplete his life span, but he was not willing to bully a newcomer. This old man could not wait for more newcomers to appear, so why would he go and suppress them?

"Alright then, someone else go." The Chief Elder could only shake his head in resignation. They did not have the ability to force Manison.

One of the Beyond Grade As helplessly said, "To have so many people targeting a single person, the last person to have this treatment was probably EsGod."

"She can only blame her life for this."

...

The free competition zone was currently chaotic, and the movement of the local tyrants such as the Black Star Army were all closely monitored. Very quickly, news of the spat between Gorutan and the Black Star Army spread.

Planet Phiri, which was chosen by the Black Star Army, had been destroyed, and they could only choose a new stronghold, but Gorutan did not get off lightly either. He had lost quite a few subordinates, so they counted it as a tie.

Hila and Gorutan's battle was considered a normal result by all means. She would never have been the opponent of a pinnacle Beyond Grade A, but Gorutan suffering an injury was not something any newcomer could cause, so many organizations secretly raised the value of Hila's combat power in their files, thinking that she could very well be the strongest person among the recent newcomers.

As for Hila's ability, the intelligence was only circulated among the three universal civilizations and a few advanced civilizations. The rest of the world remained blissfully ignorant, unaware of the violent undercurrents.

After the fight between the Black Star Army and Gorutan, the rest of the foreign organizations that had conflicts no longer curbed themselves, all beginning to fight over the scarce resources.

This battle resulted in a rapid increase in armed conflicts, and the law and order crumbled like an avalanche. However, there were still many empty areas, and there was much room for exploration in this fourth exploration phase. Thus, the conflict was kept at a manageable state, far from the intensity in Han Xiao's previous life.

As for the guilds that had broken away from the army, they had also begun to exert their independence, joining in the competition as formal organizations!

...

Somewhere within the Emerald Star Cluster, a small fleet was slowly inching forward, its outer armor engraved with various emblems of organizations, with some of them being emblems of the guilds. After completing their registration through the army, they would be able to customize their own organization name and logo, and the guilds would naturally use their own emblems.

This fleet included the guilds from the well-known first tier clubs such as Long Sky, Rivervale and Thunder Storm, acting together.

In the version currently, the efficiency of making money for the players was much higher, and if they gritted their teeth to save money, buying an ordinary spaceship was not a problem. The first-tier guilds had even more funds, so even with the suicidal price of 130% of the market rate that Han Xiao gave, many of the players still managed to purchase small spaceships.

At this moment, the core members of the various guilds were gathered on the battleship of Long Sky for a meeting. Many of the Pro League players were present.

“We’re not far from Planet Harker. Our estimated time of arrival is in half an hour. Let’s go through our plans,” the President of Sky Territory, the official guild of the Long Sky Club, Jade Green Sky said.

Twinkle Fried Rice recalled the memorandum and recited, “Planet Harker should have sufficient resources and is currently occupied by seven small organizations. There are three financial groups, two private armed forces, and two Star System level civilization gathering teams present. They are unable to drive each other out, so they can only try to snatch as much as they can. Our objective is to strike a deal with the financial group and establish a resource base on this planet, laying the foundation for construction.”

“The most important thing now is how to negotiate with them,” Sleepy Winter said.

“Leave that to me,” Maple Moon replied. “I know what to say.”

Everyone nodded, giving her a few words of encouragement.

With Han Xiao’s secret hints and guidance, the players in the army were the first to understand that the focus of this version was to build up the reputation of their own organizations and interact with the NPC organizations.

After experiencing a few versions, the players were already aware that the actions of the NPCs were no different from real people. Every word and action would trigger a different reaction and response, and the freedom of this open world was off the charts. Thus, they had to use proper words on the negotiation table, and the higher one’s charm value, the easier it would be to negotiate.

In the guilds, there would definitely be someone who was good at negotiating. As someone who loved games for the plot, Maple Moon was keen to interact with the NPCs.

The new style of the army had given them the status of a semi-independent unit, and coupled with such freedom, these guilds had begun to exert their initiative, proactively analyzing intelligence and looking for opportunities.



While it was safe to follow a large organization, their movements would be restricted, so players had the mentality that they would rather be leading a small group than be nobodies in a large force.

This was exactly the situation that Han Xiao wanted to see. He had released many incentives in the form of missions to encourage independent movement, trying to spread the army players to penetrate more sites. This would allow for an expansion of advantages and the tapping of new interests in different territories rather than sticking by him.

These guilds acted in concert with each other to increase their strength. Instead of following the majority, they chose to head to Planet Harker to compete against the smaller forces, precisely to maximize their own advantages.

At present, most of the players in the guilds were at Grade B, which could be regarded as the backbone of a fighting force. As a subsidiary organization under the Black Star Army, just their name had plenty of influence on the smaller organizations. Borrowing their backer's prestige, they could increase their leverage during negotiations.

After a while, the fleet began to decelerate, and Planet Harker drew closer. There was a scattered defense fleet suspended in outer space, belonging to various organizations.

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Seeing the players' fleet, the defense force of Planet Harker activated a defensive position, initiating a communication application.

Frenzied Sword patted Maple Moon's shoulder and whispered, "They're all yours."

Maple Moon spat out a breath of air, blowing a raspberry as a form of warming up, eager to try it out.

"Relax, watch how I fool with them!"