

L Hero

Chapter 911 Opening of the Pro League

The Black Star Army Badge: Evolution was a divine tool for completing missions and dungeons. In addition to this item, there were several items within each region that were banned.

“The qualifiers are almost over, and the Pro League opening is close.”

Han Xiao rubbed his fingers before reopening the forums, browsing through the information of the qualifiers.

All players were eligible for the qualifiers. After three versions, there were already many players signing for the third Pro League season. They were competing for forty team spots and sixty-four individual tournament places during this regular season, so the competition was fierce.

The saying ‘every version has its own generation of Gods’ was apt. With the compression technology, the Mechanic class that was originally weaker now started to rise in Version 3.0. Their average record in the team and individual games also improved significantly. This was especially so for the individual matches. The mechanics that were originally limited in the individuals now shone in the qualifiers. Their rating was re-evaluated as a T1[1] profession.

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The combat capability of a mechanic had started to shine. Unfortunately, it was too much of a money burner, and the players finally experienced this happy problem.

Throughout all the competition regions, the most powerful mechanics all came from the Shattered Star Ring, which had become a feature there. The Black Star Army was indeed one of the best camps for Mechanics.

Along with the rise of the Mechanic profession, many dark horses also appeared.

However, this did not include Maple Moon like in Han Xiao’s previous life, as she only took part in the Pro League for the first time in Version 3.0 back then. In this life, she had participated in the previous Pro League and had even finished in the thirties, so the effect was different.

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Because of her good relationship with Frenzied Sword, Rivervale had offered her an olive branch early on and chosen to sign her up before the Pro League started. Thus, Maple Moon was not considered a free player now but rather part of the professional players.

Regardless of her character attributes, equipment, or skills, Maple Moon was one tier higher than in her previous life, and she firmly gained a seat in the top sixty-four in the individual category, allowing her to qualify for the Pro League.

What was worth mentioning was that the Australian and Russian clubs that were based in Shattered Star Ring tried to send some of their club players to form a team to participate in the qualifiers, to try and eliminate the stronger teams of China.

While this was not considered outsourcing, it still triggered a lot of dissatisfaction among the Chinese players.

Your own professional players remain in their regions to play, but you actually sent over some ruffians to try and make a scene? And you dare claim to be some big club? You're actually just like a kid!

The Australian and Russian teams were targeted heavily by the Chinese players because they were not professional players and ended up being quickly eliminated during the qualifiers.

The candidates for the qualifiers in each region were mostly decided, and the Pro League would be their stage. Thus, a large number of players were analyzing the performance of these players in the qualifiers and posting their analysis videos.

Han Xiao was also deeply engrossed in this as he had received similar treatment.

After scrolling through the forums for a while, a new post suddenly appeared, and it was pushed to the top, attracting Han Xiao's attention.

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A glance at it told him that this was the new episode of Galaxy Times, which was the final promotion for the opening of the Pro League.

This was something our Great Mechanic Han had always kept tabs on, so he immediately entered.

"Hello players, this is Galaxy Times, dedicated to sharing first-hand game information. Your gaming career is our top priority," the male host greeted.

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"Now that the qualifiers are about to end, the countdown for the Pro League begins," the female host said. "Today, we have the honor of inviting various professional players from the clubs in the Shattered Star Ring for an interview. Please give them a round of applause."

Claps and cheers played in the background.

Everyone came online and faced the camera, introducing themselves.

"Welcome everyone to the Galaxy Times," the female host said. "On behalf of the majority of players, I congratulate you for qualifying in the Pro League. We have a lot of new faces in this version, and many say that this version is one where the dark horses will shine. Let me ask those players first, what do you think?"

The host began to interview a batch of newcomers. All of them were familiar faces to Han Xiao. In his previous life, these newcomers were people who rose up in Version 3.0, and a considerable number later joined as professional players, becoming important players or even the aces in their respective teams. Their future statuses were equivalent to Li Ge and Hao Tian. Looking at all these young people in the group, Han Xiao liked this fresh perspective.

After interviewing the newcomers, it was the turn for the professional players. This interview was the highlight, and the teams interviewed were Long Sky, Dynasty, and Rivervale.

“Hao Tian, King Admiral, and Frenzied Sword, the three captains. You achieved an excellent international ranking in the previous league. Now that the third Pro League is about to open, do you feel any pressure?”

Frenzied Sword nodded. “The pressure is real. The better one’s results, the more eyes will be on you. A small mistake will be magnified infinitely, but that’s where we have more motivation. We have a potential rookie, Maple Moon, and the team is good, so we are confident of going further in the competition and earning greater glory.” “That’s great, and we wish Rivervale all the best. How about Long Sky and Dynasty? As the Champion and the Second Runner-up, what goals do you have, and where do you hope to finish?”

“We only have one goal, to defend the championship,” Hao Tian replied. “Anything else is considered regressing.”

King Admiral smiled. “Coincidentally, our only goal is obtaining the Championship.”

“Seems like both captains are confident, and they wish to win the champion’s position for China.” The hostess quickly rounded off as the smell of gunpowder grew heavy.

After finishing this episode, Han Xiao glanced down at the players’ responses.

[If You Lick to the End, You Get Everything]: “We took three of the eight quarterfinal spots last version. If not for the fact that Dynasty had bad luck and fought twice with our country’s people, maybe even the Runner-Up position would have been ours!”

(Twin Lotus on a Stem): “What would be called a strong battle team?”

[A Cart of Bread]: “We have a great chance of defending our title. This version, the Mechanic profession rose sharply because of the Black Star Army, and our Mechanic profession is the most powerful! This is our advantage, and our overall ranking will definitely be better.”

With optimistic people, there would better be ones that badmouthed them, and however small they were, their existence could not be covered up.

[Rewind]: “Can you stop boasting? They were lucky and got the championship, and now they’re all arrogant. Hehe, don’t even know if they can get into the quarter finals.”

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[Father of DuDu: “I really find it revolting that they put these professional players on a pedestal. I don’t get what’s so good about them.”

Scrolling through all the comments, Han Xiao could not help but raise his thumb inwardly.

These people are really good at inciting hatred!

A few days later, the opening ceremony came as scheduled, and the long-awaited moment for the players finally arrived, causing the forums to go wild with excitement.

Before the competition officially started, the number of viewers on the live broadcast channel skyrocketed. Han Xiao, who was at the headquarters, also opened the forums to watch the opening

battle. [1] T1 = Main Tank, T2 = Sub Tank, and so on. The author mentioned this very early on in his series. So, this should be gauging the mechanic as being able to tank a lot now.

Chapter 912 Warning

“Welcome to the opening match of the Third Galaxy Pro League. I’m the commentator of this game, Wind Chimes.”

“Hello everyone, I’m a guest commentator, Bun-Hit-Dog.”

“I’m a guest commentator, Li Ge.”

The three of them were being filmed in a studio. This studio was located within a spaceship that hovered above the competition planet, overlooking the scene.

As soon as the live broadcast was connected, there was a barrage of pop-up comments flying across the screen. It was really lively.

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Han Xiao took out a bag of nibbles, and reclining in his chair, he ate as he watched in comfort.

“The two teams against each other this time are Long Sky and Dynasty,” Wind Chimes said. “They were the Champions and Second Runners-up in the previous Pro League. They last met in the semifinals, where Long Sky defeated Dynasty and made them miss the final, so there will definitely be some grudges. Their fans have been giving off the smell of gunpowder before this match. One side are the champions, who have to secure the first win, while Dynasty wish to wipe away their previous humiliation, so this match will be one of epic proportions. What say you two?”

“I feel that Long Sky might win,” Bun-Hit-Dog said. “Hao Tian is a typical example of a competitor who grows stronger the stronger his opponents are. I’m very optimistic about him.”

“There was some luck factored in during Long Sky’s last win,” Li Ge countered. “I’m more optimistic about Dynasty, as they will definitely have done more research after losing the previous time.”

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The three commentators debated for a few minutes before Long Sky and Dynasty finally entered the battlefield, waving to the audience and doing the self introduction before the match.

The hero who won the previous glory for China appeared, and it incited a large wave of pop ups, so much that Han Xiao could barely see the screen.

“Okay, we can see that both sides have already gotten on the battlefield. If that’s the case, then the Pro League officially... begins!”

The moment the voice sounded, both sides moved, akin to a lightning strike or a volcanic eruption. Compared to the previous version, the tactical methods and destructive power of these professional players had obviously risen to a whole new level, so the battlefield range had also become larger.

Long Sky had a sharp penetrative force, but Dynasty was more balanced overall. Their teamwork was nigh perfect, and they were skillful in team battles as well as capturing the flag. However, in terms of

individual strength, Long Sky-which had Hao Tian, Sleepy Winter, and Twinkle Fried Rice, three god-level players-slightly overwhelmed Dynasty. While King Admiral slightly exceeded all his opponents, it was difficult for him to support the entire team.

In this Pro League, the new formats for team battles and dungeon survival games also made their debut. Han Xiao was no stranger to this, but players found it new since it was their first time.

The selected dungeon was not fixed, and it was different each game. Before the game, several dungeon options would be taken out to allow players the time to study before one of these options was randomly selected. However, professional players were on a different level. When this rule was announced a year ago, the teams had already begun to do dungeon training and were familiar with most of the dungeons in this region. The team battle would be held in a normal level dungeon, while the survival battle would be held in a high-level dungeon. Coincidentally, the dungeons that Long Sky and Dynasty chose all had to do with Han Xiao.

The team battle was held in the secret war dungeon series, and both parties would be thrown into the same dungeon. The goal was not a time attack but rather to complete some special mission tasks, such as assassinating certain characters or drawing out hidden missions, testing the comprehensive quality in each team.

As for the survival battle, it was a copy of (Warfare: Defense of Planet Aquamarine), where the Calamity Grades of DarkStar ganged up against Han Xiao. Even though it was in Version 2.0, this dungeon copy was still a difficult one for the players.

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The focus of the dungeon battles was to test the wit and bravery of the teams. Utilizing everything within the dungeon to defeat their opponents would make the Pro League more interesting than just a basic battle. As for the survival battle, it was more of who could struggle longer to survive. Watching the professional players get abused was quite entertaining for the audience as well.

Long Sky's battle style was more reckless, as Hao Tian's specialty did not lie in strategy and was not suitable for the intricacies of team dungeon battles. While Sleepy Winter was accustomed to pretending to be a pig to eat the tiger, he was unable to shake the stability of Dynasty and was completely led around their nose by King Admiral, hammered flat.

When it came to the survival dungeon, the dungeon copy replayed the battlefield at that time, where the two teams came face to face with the three Calamity Grade DarkStar supers. The threat level was basically dying once they encountered them. Luckily, the copy of Black Star was also projected according to the original history.

Long Sky and Dynasty both materialized outside of the Sanctuary, with protective shields, and had to withstand the aftermath of the three Calamity Grades as well as the bombing of the mothership. The survival game allowed them to fight each other as well, but neither side had the luxury, only scurrying around with their heads tucked low. This was the complete opposite of the image of arrogance the professional players typically showed, which delighted the viewers to no end. The live broadcast was full of lively cheers and comments.

Both teams died in quick succession, and it was Long Sky that died first. They were not that good at dodging and were turned to ash by Ember.

The first victory of the opening game was thus won by Dynasty, which directly destroyed the chance for Championship for Long Sky. Han Xiao had to admit that King Admiral was a really good representative of the Chinese professional players, and he had once admired him. This guy was a true god-level player.

Leaving the live broadcast, he could see many more posts on the forums about the battle previously. The fans of both clubs were busy badmouthing each other, and Han Xiao only swept past them before closing the forums. As he put his snacks away, his mind started to reminisce.

In his past life, China was faced with a devilishly tight schedule, and their final result was dismal, not even squeezing into the semi-finals. There was no Black Star Army in his past life, so the strength of Shattered Star Ring was pretty weak. The situation is different now. China has won the championship once, and with the increase in power for the Mechanic profession, the odds of defending it are not small at all.

Ring ring! At this point, the communicator on his table rang. With a hook of his finger, he dragged the communicator over. The caller was from the Crimson Dynasty, and it was someone responsible for the Evolutionary Totem project.

“Your Excellency Black Star, I’m sorry to intrude.” The other party’s attitude was respectful.

“Any problems with regards to the business?”. Han Xiao raised his brows.

“Yes, as you know, some bandits recently snatched the Evolutionary Totems that were purchased by our allies. Some of these stolen Evolutionary Totems are now in circulation within the black market, and some were taken away by their secret employers. According to our sources, we think that the Blood Gold Organization is one of the suspects involved.”

Blood Gold Organization...

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Han Xiao remembered the past details. This was a member of the Lawful Evil faction. They were in charge of the galactic black market along with other gray organizations. They were also a black market mercenary group that players could enter, usually for those players who liked to cause trouble.

“The Blood Gold Organization is unlike the Fallen Ark. They have a set of rules to follow. As long as we warn them in the name of the Dynasty, they should know how to behave.” Han Xiao stroked his chin.

“That’s where the problem exists.” The tone of the officer dropped. “Based on our intelligence, our spies have discovered that there are radiation signals of the Evolutionary Totem on some planets of the Federation of Light and Arcane Church. They may also be buyers, and if that’s the case, the Blood Gold Organization will have their support.”

“Well... I suppose that’s still within my expectations.”

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes. The Federation of Light and Arcane Church could not get the Evolutionary Totem through conventional channels, so they searched for alternatives.

The Blood Gold Organization was also a large organization, with a wide scope of business, and they would definitely have their own agenda. But if the Federation of Light and Arcane Church approached them, even at the cost of them offending the Crimson Dynasty, they would still be willing to be chess pieces as it would allow them to get close to the other two Universal Civilizations.

Within the currently explored universe, the three Universal Civilizations were the biggest backers, so it was not surprising that the Blood Gold Organization was tempted by the olive branch thrown to it.

“So, you want to bring the knife to the Blood Gold Organization?” Han Xiao asked.

“That’s right. We hope to give them a good warning and need your help to collect some intelligence.”
“Got it.” Han Xiao nodded.

They exchanged the respective intelligence and ended the call.

At the same time, a new mission popped up on his interface.

(Warning]

Mission Introduction: The erratic movements of the Blood Gold Organization have impacted the dynasty’s important businesses, and the dynasty has decided to send them a warning, to kill the chicken in order to warn the monkeys.

Mission Requirements: Provide the dynasty with 3 high ranked members from the Blood Gold Organization.

Reward: 15,000,000 experience, +1,000 Dynasty Contribution Point, x1 Random Reward

Track the upper echelons of the Blood Gold Organization? It seems like the dynasty want to strike from the top. No wonder they asked for help. This is the expertise of a Virtual Mechanic.

Stowing his communicator, Han Xiao thought for a while before calling Sylvia.

“Sylvia, is there any news from the Rock Sprite Tribe?”

“They have decided to buy a new batch of Evolutionary Totems.”

Han Xiao rapped on the table. “Tell them, in order to prevent similar incidents, I’ve decided to send some of my mechanical army to follow their fleet, providing a free escort service.”

“Understood, I’ll relay the message.” Han Xiao nodded and hung up before connecting to the quantum network and calling Phillip. “In a while, hack into a black market account with a high credibility point, and anonymously hire the Blood Gold Organization to rob this batch of goods.”

Against such mercenary forces, the simplest method would be to drop some bait.

Over the next few days, while Han Xiao was waiting for the fish to bite, he was watching the Regular Season battles that were in full swing.

After a round robin battle, the Regular Season finally decided the participants for quarter finals as well as the top sixteen individuals, and entered the finals.

Dynasty ranked first in the team battles for points, while King Admiral was the first in terms of individual points. Dynasty had obtained a double first and demonstrated their powerful strength, obtaining the qualification to enter the International League.

Temple of God and Thunder Storm ranked second and third, while Long Sky was placed fourth. This result was a little unbecoming of the former champion, and they were somewhat sluggish.

Following that were Fried Eggplants With Fish and Rivervale, ranked fifth and sixth respectively. The seventh was a new club, which explosively entered the scene, named Long River, while ranked at eighth was Sky Palace.

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These were the top eight teams, and they would play in the division finals in best of five games.

Only the top four teams would be able to qualify for the International League.

For the individual battles, Maple Moon reached the top sixteen this time, obtaining the qualifications to compete in the International League, along with Frenzied Sword.

After the Regular Season, a buffer period was given.

During this time, the Blood Gold Organization finally bit on the bait that Han Xiao had cast.

Chapter 913 Entrapment

Near the borders of the Sea of Star Spirits, a fleet of over forty battleships was currently cruising. The battleships all had the logo of the Rock Sprite Civilization.

These spaceships were the long-distance spaceships created by the Rock Sprite Civilization. Their exterior looked a bit like a bloated mining spaceship with the main weapons of the spaceship being a lightweight Ion Cannon and a Particle Cannon.

A Star System Civilization would only be able to move around the Star System if they relied on their own technology, and even if they had a stargate from a higher civilization, a Star System Civilization needed to construct a special spaceship in order to conduct inter-Star Field travel. Resources and energy would be a huge barrier between the short-distance and long-distance travel spaceships.

To a Star System Civilization, long-distance spaceships were extremely precious, and the difficulty of constructing one was far more than that of a short-distance spaceship.

In order to transport the Evolutionary Totems from the Black Star Army in the neighboring Star Field, the Rock Sprite race sent out a long-distance fleet. Their previous fleet was ambushed by the Blood Gold Organization and was completely wiped out. This fleet was their second batch of spaceships, which had travelled in hyperdrive for a period by borrowing a stargate before reaching the Black Star Army base. After a long trip, this fleet had finally returned to the Sea of Star Spirits.

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In the command room of the flagship, a Rock Sprite commander instructed with a solemn expression, "Everyone, remain on high alert. Our previous long-distance fleet was ambushed around the border of

the Sea of Star Spirits. We have already received news of the enemy's operating region. Report any anomalies on the radar to me."

"Understood," the crew in the command room replied anxiously.

The civilizations of the Star Cluster grade and above were used to long-distance voyages, but to the fleet of a Star System grade civilization, every trip out of their own region represented unknown danger. After leaving their borders, they no longer had the protection of their civilization's fleet, and it was akin to entering the deep ocean.

The enforcement squad would not descend from the sky, and various galactic organizations were active within this region. They would never know how many eyes were looking at them.

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"There are still another eighteen days until our next stargate, and we will be able to jump past three Star Systems to leave this border region. The border is the most dangerous, and as long as we do not meet any enemies during this region, we should be safe," the commander said.

However, right as he completed his sentence, an ear-piercing alarm rang.

Spaceship signals appeared all round them, and they entered an encirclement that the enemy had prepared.

"Again? Who leaked our whereabouts?"

The commander gritted his teeth and cursed in his heart.

If not for His Excellency's Black Star help, we'd definitely suffer a huge loss this time.

...

The attackers had more than three hundred spaceships and were rapidly surrounding them. They immediately activated their equipment to jam hyperdrive and prevent their prey from escaping.

In the flagship of the attackers, a large crystal bodied organism was floating in front of the command room's window. His exterior appearance was a crystal with many edges, and he did not have any limbs or sensory organs. He only had two blue tentacles formed by Psychic energy that were wiggling around.

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This crystal lifeform was the leader of the assault fleet and was named Kelansta. He was a Calamity Grade Psychic and an experienced mercenary of the Blood Gold Organization. He was once the traitor of a crystal lifeform civilization because he absorbed a large amount of his race's own mental energy to become a Calamity Grade Super. As such, a bounty was placed on him, and he joined the Blood Gold Organization many years ago.

The encirclement was rapidly formed, and Kelansta made use of his Psychic energy to form soundwaves to say, "Release the magnetized radioactive waves to weaken the enemy's defensive shields. The vanguard force shall approach the enemy and enter close-quarters combat. Do not bombard them from long range lest we damage the goods. Our objective is to snatch the Evolutionary Totems."

The Blood Gold Organization had been eyeing the Evolutionary Totems in the black market. Not too long ago, an account with a high credibility rating issued a mission to snatch the Evolutionary Totems and revealed the whereabouts of this Rock Sprite fleet. The Blood Gold Organization then accepted the mission immediately.

They were not interested in the reward of the mission; their main aim was the Evolutionary Totems. Handing an Evolutionary Totem over to the civilizations that needed them would give them even more money, and they would even be able to gain the support of a backer. Han Xiao made use of the Evolutionary Totems to gain huge political support, and the Blood Gold Organization and other organizations snatching the Evolutionary Totems wanted to share this influence.

It would not matter if they were unable to complete the mission; snatching the totems was their main goal. However, the Blood Gold Organization was not planning to swallow the entire batch of totems for themselves. They only needed to give a portion of the totems to their employer and claim that the rest were destroyed in battle. The remaining totems would then go into their pockets. This was a standard practice of theirs.

Because of the robberies over the past few months, the civilizations purchasing the totem made sure to keep the matter a secret. As such, it was extremely rare to come across such information on the black market. There were few transportation fleets that had their location discovered, and this employment mission had revealed the whereabouts of the Rock Sprite fleet.

Because the Blood Gold Organization had previously robbed the Rock Sprite fleet, they had a certain degree of trust toward this information. They had also gotten a large intelligence organization in the black market to verify the information before taking action.

The fleet of the Blood Gold Organization was many times larger than the Rock Sprite fleet, and they were like wolves surrounding a herd of sheep.

The next moment, a radioactive pulse was released from the Blood Gold Organization fleet, and the defensive shields of the Rock Sprite fleet began to flicker.

Such a radioactive pulse was generated by a powerful electromagnetic field. It was capable of disrupting electromagnetic and ion shields. However, it was useless against psionic and dark energy shields. However, most Star System civilizations would mainly use electromagnetic and ion shields.

The distance between both parties rapidly shrank, and the Blood Gold Organization made use of their electromagnetic chains to latch onto the Rock Sprite spaceships.

The image of the spaceships being latched on was displayed in the command room.

“Report, I have boarded the spaceship, and everything feels good. I am heading toward the control room of the spaceship, taking out any resistance along the way.”

“Very good,” Kelansta replied slowly. “Speed up, I...”

Before he could even finish what he had to say, the screens in the command room all shut down, and everyone was stunned.

The next moment, the sound of intense battle could be heard from the communicators, followed by the sound of miserable groans.

“Enemy attack! There are other troops on the spaceships!”

“My armor isn’t listening to my commands!”

The sound of the battles lasted for a short while, and the communicator fell silent. The vanguard force was completely wiped out.

Everyone in the command room had a look of loss, and they looked toward Kelansta, waiting for his orders.

Kelansta was also in shock, and just when he was about to say something, a buzzing white noise could be heard from the screen on the command room.

Buzz!

The next moment, a human silhouette formed by white noise appeared on the screen and let out a mechanical voice.

“Following the orders of my Lord, I am taking over this region.”

“Who... are you?”

“Formless Ghost.”

After which, everyone in the room detected an anomaly. Something seemed to be flowing under the alloy walls around them as though snakes were slithering around their command room.

The members in the room immediately got away from the walls and stared at the walls with fear in their eyes.

“Just what is going... Argh!”

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Before they could finish their sentence, the metal floor beneath them suddenly changed shape, and a cactus-like iron tree grew in the middle of the room with many bodies hanging down from the branches!

Boom!

Kelansta released his powerful Psychic force and smashed the iron tree apart.

The shattered alloy then collapsed onto the ground and was absorbed back into the ground like it was liquid. Following which, the command room changed shape, and the alloy walls seemed to have transformed into flesh, contracting inward. The entire room came alive.

Kelansta immediately used his Psychic force to destroy the windows and entered space. Only then could he see what was going on.

The entire spaceship seemed to have been transformed into nanoparticles, and the alloy was being molded like clay. The few spaceships in the surroundings also had the same phenomenon.

Kelansta was shocked.

Formless Ghost was one of the Apostle Weapons. He had an infective nanoparticle virus that could live in any alloy or machinery to control it. At the same time, he was capable of transforming alloy into nanoparticles and becoming one with them to increase his body mass.

At the same time in the Rock Sprite fleet, a black tide of mechanical soldiers rushed out. These mechanical soldiers easily destroyed the many spaceships of the Blood Gold Organization.

Upon seeing the Black Star Army insignia on the mechanical soldiers, Kelansta immediately understood what was going on and fell into despair.

“Black Star?”

After realizing who his enemy was, Kelansta lost all motivation to fight back.

Formless Ghost led a long-distance fleet to escort the Rock Sprite fleet. With Han Xiao’s current strength, he would be able to easily wipe out the few hundred Blood Gold Organization battleships without even using Lord’s Descent.

The battle had no suspense, and all the enemies became his captives.

Kelansta also had nowhere to escape. Even if he was in the Calamity Grade, he was powerless against the mechanical army. He was captured, and his mental energy constrained.

Without his Psychic energy, he would even need help if he wanted to get up.

After the battle, Han Xiao’s consciousness descended upon a complete Blood Gold Organization spaceship through the quantum network, and he shook his head with a chuckle.

“These fellows indeed took the bait.”

“Lord, I completed your orders.”

The ground of the command room then transformed into a human figure, and the human figure knelt on the ground. This was Formless Ghost. His main body was made of nanoparticles, and he could exist in many different forms.

“It’s been tough for you.” Han Xiao praised him. “I shall take care of the rest.”

In the blink of an eye, Han Xiao’s consciousness went through the quantum network of the spaceship and infiltrated the Blood Gold Organization’s database. In the quantum network, physical distance lost all meaning.

In the eyes of a Beyond Grade A Mechanic, the firewall of the Blood Gold Organization was filled with loopholes everywhere.

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Not too long later, Han Xiao opened his eyes in the Black Star Army headquarters, and he smiled.

“Found it.”

“Lord, what should we do with the captives?” Formless Ghost asked.

“They aren’t anything good. Execute them all. Oh, apart from that crystal lifeform. Bring him back to me. I want to see if I can squeeze any juice... er, crystal powder from him,” Han Xiao replied casually and exited the quantum network. He then picked out the whereabouts of three Blood Gold Organization upper echelons and sent the data to the Crimson Dynasty official in charge of the totems.

The members of the Blood Gold Organization were extremely mysterious with their whereabouts unknown. But as long as Han Xiao set his sights on them, it would be incredibly difficult for them to escape.

If this mission was assigned to the players, it would be extremely challenging for them, and they would have to find clues from all around. However, it was an easy matter to him; he only needed a single clue to dig up all the intelligence.

After handing over the intelligence, a notification popped up on his interface.

[Warning] has been completed.

You have received 15,000,000 experience, 1,000 Crimson Dynasty Contribution Points, x1 Random Reward.

Not too long later, the dynasty replied to him.

“Thanks for your intelligence, Your Excellency Black Star.”

“It’s a small matter. How are you planning to deal with the three of them?”

“Haha, Your Excellency, you’re asking the obvious.”

“That’s true. Using such a method to find them isn’t an overboard method.” Han Xiao then added, “How about this? Let me take care of one of them.”

“Since you are interested, the dynasty has no issues with that.”

“Alright then.”

He then hung up, and Han Xiao sent the intelligence to Lothaire.

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Lothaire had joined the army one and a half years ago, but he did not have much to do most of the time. After all, the army did not really have any assassination missions for him to do, so this was a chance for him.

Han Xiao was planning to let Lothaire go out and exercise a bit so that his assassination skills would not turn rusty.

Furthermore, after a year of observation, he felt that Lothaire was now sufficiently trustworthy to set up an assassin organization on the outside. This plan of his could be brought forward.

“I will set off immediately,” Lothaire replied promptly.

He was not concerned about the reason behind the assassination. After a year and half of interaction, he already trusted Han Xiao and had a good impression of the army.

Chapter 914 Top Eight

Just as Han Xiao got Lothaire to assassinate a target, the Division Finals continued as usual.

After a series of battles, the top eight teams in the Shattered Star Ring had already been formed. Dynasty obtained their third championship and created their three-time championship era. Among the four great guilds, Dynasty had always been ranked first and did not have any obvious shortcomings.

The first runner up was Temple of God, and although the fans of Temple of God were considered satisfied, passersby could not help but lament with pity. The impression of Temple of God being a weakling during external battles was imprinted deep within their hearts, and sending Temple of God into the International League meant that China had one less team!

The second runner up was Long Sky. Although their performance was not good in the division matches, they entered into the International League and had the opportunity to show the world what they could do. The third runner up was Rivervale. Frenzied Sword, Evil Sword, and Maple Moon were the core of the team, and their strength was no less than the first three teams.

These four teams would be participating in the International League.

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Of the four great guilds, Fried Eggplants with Fish had once again missed the chance to participate in the International League.

It was said that the boss of Fried Eggplants with Fish felt that the name of their team was not auspicious enough and wanted to change the team's name. They were currently seeking opinion from the public, and the names suggested were all like dishes on a menu.

Without mentioning the fans of Fried Eggplants with Fish who were entertaining themselves in their bitterness, the majority of the players were rooting for the four teams that had made it into the International League. They had a huge advantage in this version. The Mechanic class had risen to prominence, and many large events in the Shattered Star Ring increased the benefits of the Black Star Army greatly. Thus, the Chinese players were extremely confident about emerging as champions. The god-level players in the clubs were all in their peak state, and all the players thus placed huge expectations on the Chinese teams. They looked forward to them displaying their brilliance in the International League.

In the Singles, Maple Moon got into the top eight. In this season, four of the top eight belonged to the Mechanic class, and the Mechanics finally made up for their weaknesses in the first two versions.

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The rankings for the eight other regions had also been released. Most of the teams were the usual teams that made it to the International League such as Devil, Key, and Thunderbolt Python from America; Tulips and Grapes from France; Rose Knight from Britain; Hydra and Vagrant from Japan; Kimchi and Samsung Bomb from Korea; Tomahawk from Sweden; Wings from Poland; White Emperor Sword from Russia; and Kangaroo Boxing from Australia. Many of these teams were the familiar faces from the previous International League. There was a total of thirty-six teams in the International League, and they were split into three divisions.

The division lineup truly excited the Chinese players this time. The strongest batch of overseas teams were all drawn into Division A, and only Temple of God was drawn into that division. Because the Regular Season relied on point accumulation, it would be difficult to pull apart the gap in points with too many strong teams in the division. As such, many of the strong overseas teams would not be able to arrive at the finals.

Long Sky and Dynasty got into Division B with only a few stronger teams such as Hydra, Rose Knight and Tomahawk. The two Chinese teams were hot favorites to win the championship, and it was highly likely for both teams to advance together.

Rivervale got into Division C, which was the weakest division of the three.

The random assignment of the teams was completely the opposite from the previous season. However, it was far more advantageous to the Chinese teams, and it was very likely for the scene of three teams in the top eight to happen again.

The Chinese players were overjoyed and almost set off firecrackers in the Shattered Star Ring to celebrate!

As for the unlucky Temple of God, the Chinese players were not bothered and even laughed at them.

You from Henan: "Sacrificing Temple of God to obtain three slots in the top eight. This deal is truly sweet!"

Li Ge's Life Is Filled with Darkness: "Sacrificing the noobest team to increase the average strength of China."

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Praying Under the Moon: "Is this Tianji horse racing?"

Senior War Official: "Haha, what a divine grouping."

Amid the cheerful atmosphere, the short break after the Division Finals ended, and the International League began.

There were millions of players watching the competition from the forums and discussing the competition excitedly.

The opening battle of the International League was the faceoff between the champion and first runner up from the previous season: Long Sky vs Devil. Long Sky's fans and the other viewers were all worried about this battle. Long Sky's performance during the division competition was not satisfactory, and it

was highly likely for them to lose this battle if they faced the previous first runner up. While it was not much to lose a single battle, it would dampen the team's morale.

Both parties used Dungeon Crystals to enter the battlefield. The Long Sky team was equipped with armor that had the Black Star Army insignia. The various armor types all had their own purposes, and this was akin to free advertisement.

Although the equipment of Devil was also extremely powerful, they did not look as uniform as Long Sky. In comparison, Long Sky felt a lot more like a proper army.

Black Star Army's fame was no longer limited to the Shattered Star Ring, and the other countries all knew that the Black Star Army was the largest player faction in the Shattered Star Ring. The Black Star Army had a complete monopoly and was the first faction that provided the players an opportunity to cross Star Fields. In the hearts of the various players, the Shattered Star Ring was akin to the Black Star Army's territory.

Usually, only a Universal Civilization or Super Star Cluster Civilization would have the privilege of being recognized as the ruler of a Star Field. Although the strength of the Black Star Army was far from being compared to these two factions, their fame among the players was no less than a Universal Civilization.

The curtains to the International League were drawn, and Long Sky revealed their fangs to fight an intense battle with Devil.

In this respect, Long Sky was the exact opposite from Temple of God. They were so-so in internal battles but extremely ferocious in external battles.

Long Sky beat Devil by a small margin during the previous season, but this time, because of the improvements to the Mechanic class and some players from Devil changing clubs, the difference between the two parties widened, and Long Sky seized their first victory in the International League.

The Chinese players all cheered with excitement.

The Regular Season of the International League then unfolded with many intense battles every day.

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The rankings had only stabilized after they fought the first half of the season. Because of the many strong teams in Division A, it was extremely difficult for the players of that division to gain an overwhelming victory, and their points were not too high. As such, the rankings did not display the proper strength of the teams. For example, teams like Devil, Tulips, Key, and White Emperor Sword did not manage to make it into the top four.

Dynasty and Long Sky had an easy time in Division B and managed to obtain first and fourth place. Rivervale harvested a great amount of points in Division C and managed to take second. Among the top four, only third place was Korea's Kimchi, which was also a member of Division C.

To the Chinese players, the situation was extremely good, and Temple of God, which was being abused, was completely ignored.

The huge advantage of the Chinese teams was not only because of the groupings but also because Capture the Flag and two dungeon modes were added into the competition. These modes were far

more suitable for a Mechanic to show off their skill, which gave Long Sky, Dynasty, and Rivervale a huge advantage. Their PvE strength was much higher than the other international teams, which allowed their scores to be pulled forward.

There was another reason... The dungeons chosen in the Regular Season would not be the dungeons from the respective regions of the participating teams to ensure that the teams did not have any disparity of information. As such, the Chinese teams would not experience the Black Star Army's perverse dungeons.

As for their friends from overseas, they could personally enjoy the usual life of the players in the Shattered Star Ring.

The difficulty of the dungeons issued by Han Xiao was not on the same level as the highest level dungeons in the other regions. Shattered Star Ring was the only region that had a Beyond Grade A dungeon!

Under Han Xiao's abuse, the Chinese players were used to being abused and could face the high-level dungeons of the other regions with ease. It was just like taking a vacation to them.

On the contrary, the teams from the other regions were abused to the point they wanted to puke when fighting the Black Star Army dungeons.

Being killed on the spot was commonplace, and their time spent in the dungeon would usually be the time of the intro clip.

Was this a dungeon for players to complete?

Was there a need to make the difficulty level so perverse?

As long as the Black Star Army dungeon was picked, the fans from the other teams would cry out with agony. The team would die too quickly, and there was nothing to watch at all.

During the second half of the Regular Season, perhaps because of the large disparity in points, all the teams had given up, and the Chinese teams were not targeted by the other teams like in the previous season.

Long Sky, Dynasty, and Rivervale stabilized their position in the top eight, and it was impossible for them to drop out of the top eight.

After the end of the final match, the rankings were finalized.

Rivervale obtained first place with the other members being, Kimchi, Dynasty, Hydra, Long Sky, Devil, Key, and Tomahawk.

China had three teams entering the top eight again and maintained their glory from the previous season. Furthermore, it was the same three teams that had made it into the previous top eight.

Dynasty and Long Sky were well established clubs, so there was no need to mention them. Rivervale was a newly formed club that managed to get into the top eight two times in a row. Their status among the players had been cemented, and there was a chance for them to become a new super guild.

Temple of God had no fate with the finals, but no one felt any pity for them. Everyone's attention was only on the winner.

This time, the matchups in the finals were much better than the previous season!

During the second season, because of the lousy matchup, the Chinese teams needed to fight each other twice. Dynasty and Rivervale were both eliminated by a Chinese team.

According to the current scores, the first place Rivervale would be facing Tomahawk, the third place Dynasty would be facing Devil, and the fifth place Long Sky would be facing Hydra.

This matchup made all the players cheer with joy. Compared to their bad luck in the previous season, they were truly blessed by the goddess of luck this time!

...

After the Regular Season of the International League was completed, the dates for the International Finals were fixed.

Lothaire was sent by Han Xiao to the other Star Fields, and after the end of the Regular Season, Han Xiao received Lothaire's message.

"Objective cleared."

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The message included a picture of the victim, and it was taken care of cleanly.

He only provided the intelligence, and Lothaire could work on his own without any help.

The Crimson Dynasty had also gotten rid of the other two Blood Gold Organization upper echelons.

With three upper echelons dead, all the upper echelons of the Blood Gold Organization were in shock.

The Blood Gold Organization could no longer sit still after being targeted by the Crimson Dynasty and Black Star Army.

Chapter 915 Surging Currents

In some secret conference room of the Blood Gold Organization, over ten upper echelons were meeting through long-distance projections. They were made up of organisms from many different races.

All those present in this room were not ordinary characters and were infamous in their respective regions. Most of them had high bounties placed on them by the various civilizations, and their combat capabilities were not weak in the Calamity Grade. They were now the leaders of the Blood Gold Organization and had various troops under their command. They rarely took action personally and were in a semi-retired status.

"I believe that everyone understands our recent situation. The Crimson Dynasty and Black Star Army have taken action against us. Marlowe, Vancesna, and Indir have been assassinated," the leader of the Blood Gold Organization said with a grave tone.

The current leader of Blood Gold was a male organism and a member of the Federation of Light. He was an elite being that went through genetic testing before. His appearance was extremely ferocious, and he was currently at the peak of his life.

As compared to the others present, his background was extremely clean, and he was not a wanted man. He was an elite brought up by the previous leader of the Blood Gold Organization. When the previous leader died, he took over the position as leader, and it had been thirty years since then.

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The Blood Gold Organization was a pretty old organization, and he was the twelfth leader.

The existence of the galactic black market was even older than some Star System or even Star Cluster Civilizations. The managers had been changed over and over again, and the Blood Gold Organization had only taken up the role of manager of the black market two hundred years ago.

“Poor Marlowe, I still owe him 7,203,050 Enas. He is truly a good man and died at the best time.” A squid like upper echelon rubbed his eyes to squeeze out some tears.

“This isn’t the time to joke. The Crimson Dynasty is obviously trying to scare us by killing the upper echelons of our organization and punish us for stealing the goods of their allies. They want us to retreat and not think about the Evolutionary Totems anymore. The problem is, how did news about the upper echelons leak?” a member of the Andor Bee Race said.

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The leader of Blood Gold then said, “Kelansta’s fleet met Black Star’s mechanical army a while back, and Black Star should have taken action personally to locate the upper echelons. It is usually us scaring others, but this time, some powers higher up have their eyes set on us. The Crimson Dynasty and Black Star Army aren’t easily provoked, and we have to consider how we should deal with them.”

“Humph, the Black Star Army is far away in the Shattered Star Ring, and the threat that they pose is limited. Furthermore, the Black Star Army is only a little bit more prominent in the Shattered Star Ring and does not have any forces in the other Star Fields. Their scale cannot be compared to ours; only Black Star is difficult to deal with. For now, we do not need to bother about them. The dynasty should be our main focus,” a pirate-like man with a large beard said.

“I agree.” The Blood Gold leader nodded.

Their Blood Gold Organization had operations across three Star Fields, and their scale was even larger than the Black Star Army. In their eyes, the Black Star Army was nothing to be afraid of; they only needed to be afraid of Black Star alone. It was the strict attitude of the Crimson Dynasty that truly worried them.

“The federation and church were the ones who approached us. If we continue to snatch the Evolutionary Totems, the Crimson Dynasty will definitely fight back. But if we stop, the federation and church will abandon us,” the Blood Gold leader said slowly.

"I was against interfering in the Evolutionary Totems back then. We are no more than a chess piece in the battle between the three Universal Civilizations. Our fate was no longer in our hands the moment we joined. We should've just operated in a low profile manner," one of the upper echelons grumbled.

"Humph, the federation and church came to find us. Do you think they'd give us the chance to reject them? We still have some hope of advancing if we hug their thighs, but we would've lost everything if we rejected them," the Blood Gold leader said coldly. "Manager of the black market? You don't even need to think about it. We'd slowly become an insignificant black market mercenary group waiting to be wiped out. From the moment they came to find us, it was impossible for us to steer clear of the matter."

The galactic black market had plenty of benefits, and every manager was a tyrant in the various gray operations. Among the managers of the black market, the one with the largest authority was the one in the broker business. They used many different means to persuade different civilizations to provide protection to the other managers.

If the Blood Gold Organization dared incur the ire of the federation and church, the aftermath of the matter would not affect them alone. If the other managers of the black market ended up being affected, they would kick the Blood Gold Organization out of the black market and not provide them with protection or support.

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Since the other party had chosen them, a gray organization unprotected by the galactic laws need not dream about maintaining neutrality!

The world was not that convenient!

"The Universal Civilizations are as tyrannical as always. This is the tragedy of a gray organization not protected by galactic law."

"Then what should we do? The federation and church won't just watch as we are all assassinated, right?"

Right at this moment, another two projections appeared in the room wearing the federation and church's uniform.

"I have already spoken to the federation and church about this matter." The Blood Gold leader stood up and said, "Let me give you an introduction. These two are the emissaries of the federation and church. He..."

Before he could finish, the Federation of Light emissary waved his arms and said, "Don't need to bother introducing us. Let's get straight to the point. The Federation of Light already knows about the price that you have paid and expresses our sympathy. As such, we will be providing protection to the upper echelons of the Blood Gold Organization. We will secretly bring all of you to the Abyss of Stars and Silver Arm. The Crimson Dynasty and Black Star Army won't be able to touch you in our territory. All of you can continue controlling the organization remotely and gather more Evolutionary Totems. We will provide you guys with resources as well."

The Ten Thousand Deity Scepter was a wedge between the federation and church. However, it did not stop them from working together for the Evolutionary Totems. After all, the Evolutionary Totems

involved the improvement of their entire civilizations' genes. It had a huge strategic significance. In front of benefits, there was no such thing as an enemy forever. However, both parties definitely did not get along very well.

Upon hearing that, the upper echelons of the Blood Gold Organization all heaved a sigh of relief. They would only be able to become a chess piece at ease if their own safety was protected.

Right at this moment, the upper echelon from the Andor Bee Race said, "Pardon me for being straightforward, but I have a question. Robbing the Evolutionary Totems that the other civilizations purchase is an extremely inefficient method. If we rob too many civilizations, the same situation will probably happen, and Black Star won't allow us to keep robbing his customers.

The Federation of Light emissary smiled and nodded. "You are right. This isn't a long-term solution. Just robbing alone won't be enough to satisfy our needs. What are your plans?"

"After EsGod was caught, the method of making the Evolutionary Totem was discovered. The most effective way to solve this problem would be to snatch the Evolution Cube from Black Star!" a member of the Blood Gold Organization upper echelons said with a cold glint in his eyes.

"You are right, but this method will not work for now," the Arcane Church emissary said coldly. "With the presence of the Evolutionary Totem, the strategic importance of the Evolution Cube is much higher than before. If we snatch away the Evolution Cube, there won't be any room for negotiation like the battle on Planet Lighthouse, and the moment we succeed, it will mean war. Until the last moment, our three civilizations won't start a war and let others benefit from the side.

"Furthermore, do you think that it is that easy to deal with Black Star? It's easy for you to say! If not for us knowing about the existence of the Evolutionary Totem, do you think we would have risked offending the dynasty and starting the battle on Planet Lighthouse? We have tried before, and there are still a few Beyond Grade As sealed up in Spacetime Amber. Do you want to go give it a try?"

"No no no." That upper echelon was completely speechless and coughed awkwardly.

What a joke. Black Star is a true powerhouse in the galaxy, and an ordinary Calamity Grade like me isn't even in the same league as him.

The Federation of Light emissary nodded and said, "He's right. We do not intend to risk stealing the Evolution Cube at this moment. That will be our final choice. There is still another approach for us to take at the moment. That is to get the dynasty to allow Black Star to openly sell the totems."

"Is this really possible?" the Blood Gold leader asked doubtfully.

"Humph, the current situation is like this. Black Star likely doesn't mind selling the Evolutionary Totems publicly, but because he belongs to the Crimson Dynasty faction, he cannot risk offending his ally and sells the totems privately. Thus, we should not be setting our sights on Black Star but the Crimson Dynasty.

"As long as the Crimson Dynasty gives in, we will have the chance to obtain a large number of totems.

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“There are a few ways for us to force the Crimson Dynasty to give in. Suppress them with force, exchange benefits, work together to pressure them... You should also know about the dynasty’s style. It would be a pipe dream to suppress them with force, and we will definitely suffer a huge loss if we want to exchange benefits with them. The dynasty will not agree unless we give them our core technological skills and resources.

“As such, we can only choose to work together to pressure them from the economical, trade, political, and security side. Your Blood Gold Organization will be a part of this plan.

“The Crimson Dynasty has invested a large amount of resources to develop the Flickering World, and they will be weakened in other areas. This is our best chance to pressure them, and we will be able to force the dynasty to compromise!”

One of the upper echelons then trembled. “Is it really okay to tell us such a secret...?”

“Ah, there is nothing secretive about this matter. The dynasty knew that this would happen the day they decided not to sell the Evolutionary Totems openly. Furthermore, you are working together with us, and there is no harm informing you about our plans,” the Federation of Light emissary said casually.

The Blood Gold leader then frowned. “What if the plan doesn’t work?”

The Federation of Light emissary then sneered coldly.

“If the dynasty refuses to give in, we will have to consider going for the source.”

...

In the Sea of Star Spirits was the Limitless Financial Group’s headquarters. Four figures were seated around a table in the personal guest room of the financial group’s boss.

“I heard that the members of the Blood Gold Organization’s upper echelons were assassinated recently. Your Federation of Light and Arcane Church won’t ignore them after getting them to work for you, right?”

Sorokin took a sip of his drink and sized up the other three at the table. Everyone present was a Beyond Grade A bigshot who could easily shake various large organizations.

One of them was ‘Mechanic Emperor’ Manison, who appeared in the meeting with a mechanical host. The other was the doppelganger of ‘Void Overlord’ Kasuyi from the Arcane Church. The last was one of the protectors of the galactic black market, ‘Beast Ancestor’ Gorutan.

All three of them had a common identity. They were the shareholders of the Limitless Financial Group!

“Such a small matter has nothing to do with me,” Manison said calmly.

Gorutan had a huge body, and he picked up his cup with his hairy hands. He poured all the drink into his mouth before saying, “I just received news that the Blood Gold Organization has met with the emissaries of the federation and church. They’ve come to an agreement.”

With the sheer size of the galactic black market, they naturally had a Beyond Grade A to support them. A portion of the galactic black market managers were Beyond Grade A organizations. The galactic black

market was an allied organization to protect the benefits of the evil factions and did not belong to a single person. There were many Beyond Grade As behind it, and Gorutan was one of them.

Sorokin's eyes then narrowed upon hearing that.

"If I didn't understand your words wrongly, the organizations behind all three of you plan to join hands?"

"You can say so." Kasuyi's voice had an ethereal feeling. "We have also sought you out because of this matter. You can treat us as emissaries."

Sorokin fiddled with the cup in his hands and said calmly, "I don't really want to interfere with this matter."

"Aren't you interested in the Evolutionary Totems?" Gorutan's voice rumbled like thunder.

"No, I believe that every organization in the universe is interested in the Evolutionary Totems," Sorokin said expressionlessly. "But according to my understanding of the Black Star Army, rashly intervening in this matter will be a huge risk. I do not like making a loss."

Manison nodded in response. "I understand. You don't only have business deals with the federation and church but also the dynasty. You do not wish to offend any party. Your Limitless Financial Group is different from those gray organizations and is protected by the law. You have the right to remain neutral."

"That's right. This is the case," Sorokin replied.

"Haha, don't worry. We will not ask you to do something too outrageous." Manison's mechanical host chuckled.

"Oh? Then, how can I help?"

"We hope for the Limitless Financial Group to invest in the Shattered Star Ring and compete with the Black Star Army using proper business means. This is only a small matter to the Limitless Financial Group. If you don't set your eyes on the Evolutionary Totems, the dynasty cannot disrupt your business."

Sorokin raised his brows and asked, "Why do you want me to do so?"

"This is a part of our plan to pressure the dynasty. The Black Star Army's opinion will influence the dynasty's strategy to deal with the Evolutionary Totems. We have to make Black Star know that he cannot think about swallowing such a huge business alone. Of course, other than these official matters, I also have a small conflict of interest with him," Manison said calmly.

Sorokin then chuckled and said, "So, it turns out that the Mechanic Emperor also has some conflict with Black Star. Ah ah, I also have some personal grudges with him."

"Does that mean that you agree?"

"I will definitely have to respect the views of three shareholders. However, it won't be so easy to snatch the Black Star Army's business," Sorokin said with a solemn tone. "I performed my research on the Black

Star Army before. Their development is rapid, and they manage a few dozen different operations. Their four main operations are armed employment missions, mining operations for the local civilizations, the exploration of the Flickering World, and the sale of the Evolutionary Totems. Forgive me for being straightforward, but the latter three are specialized businesses that are difficult for an outsider to enter. It is difficult to deal a heavy blow to his core operations, and our Limitless Financial Group can only do so in other areas.

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“Thankfully, the Black Star Army has only been around for twenty years or so, and their foundations aren’t too stable. However, this will still require a great deal of investment... At the end of the day, what is my benefit for doing so?”

Manison then waved his finger, and a virtual screen appeared. A long list was on the screen.

“Resources, political support, and many more. The details are all written within the document. You only need to risk the Crimson Dynasty reducing their cooperation to you. However, we are in the interstellar era, and the dynasty will not be able to cut off all ties with you completely. You can gain a deeper business relationship with two other Universal Civilizations...

“You believe in benefits and risk. I believe that you will be able to make the right choice. I can give you a month to consider the matter, and you can reply then.”

“I don’t need that long. I can give you an answer now.” Sorokin smiled. “This sounds like a good plan.”

Chapter 916 High Grade Mechanical Sense

On the second satellite of the Black Star Army headquarters was Training Ground 001. This was a training plaza far larger than the training rooms and could support large scale battles. Furthermore, it was constructed with high tensile alloy and was capable of enduring even more powerful attacks. It was constructed like an oval-shaped sports stadium with a large mechanical roof covering the battlefield. The roof was made using a nano mimicry screen and could simulate various battlefields. There were cargo lanes underground that were connected to a warehouse of training mechanical soldiers.

Han Xiao sat at the side while watching the battle going on. Lagi, Feidin, Reynold, and the others were all beside him, either standing up or sitting down.

At this moment, there was an intense battle going on in the training ground. A few exits for the mechanical soldiers opened from the ground, and an endless stream of training mechanical soldiers came out from them. There were knights, mechanical beasts, Hovering Shield Shuttles, and many other types of mechanical soldiers charging at the two individuals in the middle of the training ground.

This battle was a D Grade battle, and the mechanical soldiers were all low grade ones. They used gunpowder and electromagnetic weapons, and the entire ground was charred black from the intense battle.

One of the two figures on the battlefield was clad in a black heavy mechanical armor while the other had magical shields floating around him. They were Nero and Tomar.

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After learning from Reynold for a few years, Nero was now at Grade B. Apart from theoretical lessons, Reynold had also arranged for some combat training.

Nero was still young, and his body was still at the stage of puberty. But because he had consumed the Starry Spiritual Dragon blood and the life force potions bestowed to him by Aurora, his cell activity was extremely high, and his physique was comparable to an adult. Furthermore, the strength of his Mechanical Force had also exceeded his current Grade.

After two years of in-depth training, his [Middle Grade Mechanical Sense] had transformed into [High Grade Mechanical Sense] under the aid of his [Advanced Luck Glow].

He was not allowed to use any weapons given to him by Han Xiao during training, and all the equipment he was using had been crafted by him personally. Under the boost from his Mechanical Force, his weapons could unleash a powerful might, and the mechanical soldiers were all blasted into scrap metal by him.

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Han Xiao had gone over to watch the battle so that he could check on Nero's progress.

Tomar was also a protagonist-level character who had Luck Glow and had an extraordinary talent in magic. Spells that an ordinary Mage would take seven days to learn took him less than a day to grasp. His learning aptitude was stunning, and he grew up rapidly under Lagi's tutelage. He was also a talent who had a great deal of potential.

Boom!

Han Xiao stroked his chin as he watched the battle and said to Reynold, "His Mechanic abilities aren't too bad, but his close combat skills are so-so. The moment the mechanical beasts approach him, he ends up being flustered. This is a result of a lack of experience."

"This is my oversight. I only had my sights set on his learning of machines but overlooked his close combat skills. I will definitely increase his training on close combat," Reynold said calmly.

"Increase it greatly," Han Xiao said with a deep voice. "But you cannot neglect his machinery training."

"Understood."

Bennett, who was present by using a long-distance projection, revealed a gratified smile.

Feidin could no longer stand it and said helplessly, "A Mechanic's weakness is close combat battle. Black Star, not every Mechanic can be the same as you. Don't set your expectations so high."

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Han Xiao chuckled in response. "Dreams are necessary, and it isn't bad to have higher expectations of him."

He was truly happy in his heart. Nero's Mechanical Sense had already reached the high grade, and it was a matter of time before he obtained Perfect Mechanical Sense.

“Tomar’s improvements are also extremely great.” After thinking for a while, Han Xiao patted Lagi on the shoulder. “You’ve taught him well.”

“What’s the use of that? One day, he...”

Han Xiao’s face darkened, and he covered Lagi’s mouth. “You can keep quiet now.”

Not too long later, Nero’s ammunition was exhausted, and Tomar’s magic ran out. The mechanical soldiers all stopped moving, and the training came to an end.

Both of them then returned to the viewing gallery while panting and sweat covered.

Han Xiao smiled and praised them. “Not bad.”

“His Excellency Black Star has trained you well,” Bennett added. “In a few years, I won’t be a match for you.”

Receiving the praise from his father and Han Xiao, Nero’s face turned red, beaming with happiness.

Upon seeing that, Han Xiao nodded. He placed great importance in Nero not just because he wanted the [Perfect Mechanical Sense] but also because he hoped that Nero would grow to become a new pillar of the army.

After praising them for a while more, they all boarded the spaceship and returned to headquarters.

After two years of digestion, the Black Star Army had stabilized, and there were a few more satellite fortresses around the headquarters to hold the new members of the army.

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After returning to his office, Sylvia came to find him.

“Teacher, many people are asking me when Black Star’s Party will be held this year.”

Han Xiao thought for a while before saying, “How about in a few months? We can start to issue the invites already.”

The Black Star Army had already held two banquets to invite all those in cooperation with him to use the Evolution Cube. The banquet was becoming more and more solemn and influential. Many organizations were hoping to make use of this opportunity to build relationships with higher grade civilizations, and it was called Black Star’s Party. It was in a competitive relationship with the Tyrant’s Party.

The Evolution Cube did not only bring them money but gave the Black Star Army an opportunity to expand into other fields. The army had a powerful brand image, and there were few organizations in the Star Field that could compete with the army.

The benefits of the Evolutionary Totem created a snowball effect that allowed the Black Star Army to strengthen itself greatly. After two years of digestion, the operations of the Black Star Army had stabilized, and they were starting to look a bit more like a financial group.

Because of the Evolutionary Totem, there were more and more parties working together with the Black Star Army. The influence of the Black Star's Party grew, and they were gradually becoming a new faction.

If he released the restriction on the Evolutionary Totems, the profits obtained would increase many times over, but the pressure would also increase. Han Xiao was still satisfied with the current situation. The business pressure of the Evolutionary Totem was on the dynasty, and the army could avoid more than ninety percent of the risk.

"Alright, I shall go and prepare the invitations. There is something else. An organization that isn't cooperating with us wishes to participate in the Black Star's Party."

"The Black Star's Party will only invite those cooperating with us, and we can reject everyone else. This is a rule that we set a long time ago. Why are you bringing this matter up now?"

"Because the other party is a bigshot, so I cannot make the decision. Thus, I came to seek your opinion."

Han Xiao raised his brows, a little interested. "Who is the other party?"

"The Limitless Financial Group."

Upon hearing that, Han Xiao paused and fell into deep thought.

Sorokin's Limitless Financial Group?

Both parties had some conflicts before. Sorokin had once sent his subsidiary organization to probe the players of the army and had been warned by Han Xiao. It had been more than two years since then, so who knew what kind of objective the other party had for suddenly participating in his Black Star's Party?

"What's their reason?" Han Xiao asked.

"The Limitless Financial Group wishes to have business cooperation with our army and says that it is related to the Flickering World. They know that the dynasty will grant their allies some territory and want to work together with us."

"I see. That is reasonable," Han Xiao said.

Although the galactic financial groups could not be the first batch to enjoy the benefits of the Flickering World, their shadows could be seen in the future development plans.

The benefits of a new Star Field were extremely rich. Did the Limitless Financial Group want to seize the initiative?

Although the reason was believable, Han Xiao was still wary of the Limitless Financial Group because of their previous conflict.

After thinking for a moment, he said, "Send them an invitation if that's the case. Tell them that I want to make use of this opportunity to meet Sorokin."

The Pro League would finish in a few months, and Han Xiao was not afraid of the Limitless Financial Group creating any trouble.

Meeting the other party would be beneficial to him.

“Understood. I will take care of it.” Sylvia nodded and left the room.

Han Xiao then poured himself an alcoholic beverage and drank while going about his business.

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He managed to find the time to open the forums after a while.

Today was the first round of the International Finals, which was a best of five competition. The first round was Rivervale against Tomahawk, and the viewership rates of the match set a new record again.

With three Chinese teams making it into the top eight, the players from the Shattered Star Ring were all extremely excited. The way they saw it, if Dynasty, Long Sky, and Rivervale were all able to win the first round, there would be three Chinese teams in the top four!

At the same time, a portion of the players who did not think highly of the Chinese teams could not help but retort that all the three teams might end up losing in the first round, and not a single team would be able to enter into the top four.

At the finals, all the teams would no longer hide their trump cards, and the competition would be even more intense than before. Han Xiao was also pretty curious about the ranks that the Chinese teams could achieve this round.

Chapter 917 Indestructible Body !

The Rivervale and Tomahawk teams entered a jungle-covered planet for their battlefield.

The trees were as tall as the clouds and covered the skies. Only a bit of light could penetrate through the densely packed leaves.

Both teams appeared in different parts of the jungle, and the spectators could switch to different viewpoints of the players and teams.

“Good luck, Rivervale! Get rid of Tomahawk!”

“First place vs eighth place. Easy game.”

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“Go Maple Moon!”

The format of the finals was best of five, and they had to fight five matches every round. The five rounds were team fight, arena battle, capture the flag, dungeon competition, and dungeon generation.

The countdown of one minute came to an end, and the first round of the finals began. The two teams immediately sprang into action. Maple Moon from Rivervale threw out a compressed orb, which transformed into a pagoda-like base station. It was used to prevent the enemy from detecting their whereabouts and also to confuse the enemy. The logo of the Black Star Army was shining on the base station. It was a product of the Black Star Army, and the quality was guaranteed.

On the other side, Tomahawk had also begun hiding their whereabouts, but they used a magical tool instead. The leader of Tomahawk, Captain Viking, took out a black, magical scroll with golden inscriptions shining on it. He then tore the scroll apart, and a dense magical energy flowed out of it to cover the entire Tomahawk team.

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“Eh, isn’t this a sovereign mage scroll?” Han Xiao was also viewing the battle on the forums and raised his brows upon seeing that.

The materials used to craft such a magical scroll were extremely rare, and it was capable of storing even more powerful magic. It needed to be crafted by hand, and Han Xiao had seen Lagi craft one before. A grandmaster-level spell would be engraved on the scroll at the very least, and it was an expensive item. Tomahawk was obviously extremely rich for them to use such a scroll to carve a concealment spell.

“Now that it’s the finals, all the teams are bringing out their trump cards,” Han Xiao said with interest.

None of the teams would hold anything back in the International Finals and would go all out. Such a situation would only bring about more variables in the battles. The strength of the various teams would undergo a huge change, and it would be difficult to use a team’s previous performance to estimate their strength.

Different strategies would have to be crafted based on the field that they were battling in. Since they were in a dense jungle, it was important for them to conceal themselves and be the first to detect the enemy.

After concealing their own locations, both teams started to search for the enemy. Rivervale made use of a multi elemental radar while Tomahawk made use of a magic incantation that had many different aura detecting spells. Because of their culture, Tomahawk preferred to use magic instead.

Both parties moved forward slowly, and the atmosphere grew more and more tense as the seconds ticked by. A Chinese commentator then began describing the battle on the forums.

“Alright, both teams have already entered the battlefield. We can see that the mini map is split into sixteen regions. The top left corner region is A1, and the bottom right is D4. The columns shall be numbered one to four while the rows are lettered A to D. Rivervale is currently at A3, which is at the top of the map, while Tomahawk is at C1, which is at the bottom left side of the map. Let’s see what routes they will choose. Oh! Indeed, both parties have used flying devices!”

One of the Tomahawk members belonged to the bird race, and he spread his wings to fly in the sky. On the other side, Maple Moon threw up a few compressed orbs into the sky, which transformed into floating soldiers, patrolling the air at high speed.

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To the players at the current stage, flying was extremely easy. However, because of the trees blocking them, flying did not give them much of an advantage.

With the compression technology, it was far easier to bring along machines, and the deployment speed of a Mechanic also increased greatly. In the previous version, it would be impossible for Maple Moon to bring a few dozen different machines or easily deploy her machines with a wave of her arms.

The flying troops of both parties discovered each other very quickly, and the member from Tomahawk easily destroyed the floating mechanical soldiers, which did not have any Mechanical Force boost.

The commentator immediately exclaimed, "Oh! Both parties engaged in a short, intense battle! Let's take a look at what both parties will do next. It seems like Tomahawk has chosen to use a long-range raid strategy and are charging toward the location of their scout. What about Rivervale? Eh, they seem to have grasped the enemy's location and are currently going around in circles! Player Maple Moon had set up a large number of mines and mechanical traps along the way. She is trying to make the entire battlefield into her own territory! As long as a Mechanic is given enough time, she would be able to expand her geographical advantage. Tomahawk is currently on the passive side..."

The strategies of Rivervale revolved around the Mechanic class, and their own captain, Frenzied Sword, was a Mechanical Pugilist. After Maple Moon joined them, their strategies became even sneakier.

Tomahawk was very quickly hit, and they stepped on the mines that Maple Moon had planted.

After a series of explosions, a sea of flames engulfed the forest. Not to mention anything else, in terms of destructiveness alone, the Mechanic Class was the undeniable number one!

With the other party stepping into the trap, Rivervale no longer remained hidden and changed their route for a head on assault. The members of Tomahawk all had magical armor, but compared to the products of the army, their magical armor was on the losing end.

Frenzied Sword brandished his blade and sliced through the enemy formation. Their team then took down Tomahawk after paying the price of two members and claimed their first victory.

The Chinese players were all in a good mood after the victory.

"Haha, didn't I say so? Rivervale was definitely going to suppress Tomahawk. Their position in the Regular Season isn't just for show."

"The members of Tomahawk have experienced it personally."

"With little sis Maple Moon joining in, Rivervale is much stronger than before."

"Little sis is truly powerful. She has character but is still gentle. I am now a die-hard fan of hers! When will she be coming out with an album?"

"Aunty Rainy Kim is already an old lady. She isn't as young or pretty as little sis Maple Moon. I'm sorry, but I am going to change my taste. It isn't that you aren't good enough, but my sights are just set too high."

"Forgetting about your old wife after finding a new mistress!"

Amid the chattering of the audiences, both teams took a short break and started the arena battle. Tomahawk sent out an ordinary player to probe the enemy team, but Rivervale had actually sent out Frenzied Sword as their first player.

After winning the team battle, their captain was appearing first in the arena, and they obviously intended to suppress the other party in terms of aura. The players could feel Rivervale's confidence from their arrangements.

The commentator immediately fired off rapidly like a machine gun.

"Rivervale's captain, Frenzied Sword, requested to fight in the first battle of the arena. Although he didn't manage to enter the top sixteen for the singles, he was ranked eighteenth in the International Regulars. He may have been able to enter the finals if he was just a little luckier. Let's watch the battle now... Oh, just as I expected! Frenzied Sword easily ended his opponent. A Mechanical Pugilist has the advantages of both a Mechanic and Pugilist, and this Class has a huge advantage in this season."

Frenzied Sword fought the enemy head on without dodging or hiding. He threw out a bunch of compressed orbs to form various mechanical traps so that his opponent's path would be restricted. The control ability of a Mechanical Pugilist was far higher than that of a normal Pugilist.

After easily approaching the enemy, Frenzied Sword unleashed a flurry of attacks and decimated his enemy's health in less than a minute.

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He was both powerful and handsome. Although he was no longer a Pugilist, Frenzied Sword was still as elegant as before.

Tomahawk could no longer sit still, and Captain Viking came out next. It was a captain versus captain fight.

Captain Viking was a Pugilist, and he took off his heavy armor to activate all his buffs from an armorless state. Magical inscriptions could be seen all over his body to provide him with defense and recovery.

"Roar! Fresh blood and glory!" Captain Viking let out a crazed roar.

Frenzied Sword stood opposite him and had a speechless look on his face.

"He is a Pugilist indeed. His shamelessness resistance is truly high..."

Right at this moment, a muscular figure could be seen behind Captain Viking, and it disappeared in a flash. Following which, Captain Viking's muscles began to balloon up, and the Pugilist flames on his body exploded.

A new buff could be seen on his status panel. Captain Viking made use of a Character Summon Card!

The commentator then gasped. "Berserk from the Clan of Glory. +50% Close Ranged Damage, +30% Physical Resistance, +400 STR, +200 DEX, +20% Health, +40% Movement Speed, and an additional 300 Frost Damage for every attack. It actually lasts for thirty minutes! This Character Summon Card is so powerful!"

The chat immediately exploded with comments.

"The other party used a Character Summon Card. Victory is now up in the air."

“Let’s see if Frenzied Sword has a powerful Character Summon Card. If he doesn’t, he will probably be screwed.”

A Character Summon Card was extremely rare, and it was even more difficult to obtain a Character Summon Card of a powerful character. All professional players treated them as their trump cards. Now that they were in the finals, none of them would hold such a trump card back.

There was only a single region that had the [Black Star Army Badge: Evolution], so it was reasonable for it to be banned. However, a Character Summon Card was different, and every player had a chance of obtaining one. Thus, it was not banned, but there were some limitations.

The effects of the Character Summon Card could not be carried on to the next round. Even if Captain Viking achieved a complete victory in the arena with the effects of the Character Summon Card not ending, his status would have to be refreshed, and he would not be able to carry on the effects to the ‘capture the flag’ battle.

The Character Summon Cards that the professional players had were rare, and it was a feature that made the battle more interesting for the ordinary players. Such a rule provided greater excitement to the battle while reducing the influence of the Character Summon Card to the competition.

After all, there were fifteen rounds at the very least, and a Character Summon Card was untradable. It would be considered a skill if one could take out fifteen overpowered Character Summon Cards.

Upon witnessing the opponent’s changes, Frenzied Sword also activated a Character Summon Card.

A suave appearance then appeared behind him, and everyone squealed as they recognized the figure.

“Woah! It’s Black Star!”

“It’s here, it’s here! Just as I was saying, how could Frenzied Sword not have a Character Summon Card!”

“I remember Frenzied Sword using a Black Star Character Summon Card in the previous season as well.”

“Black Star is now a Beyond Grade A. Will the effects be the same?”

The players all became excited. They were only able to see question marks when viewing Han Xiao’s interface and only had an estimate of Han Xiao’s strength through the dungeons. Thus, they were truly curious about his strength.

A new buff could then be seen on Frenzied Sword’s status panel.

Character Summon Card – Black Star: [Indestructible Body]—You are immune to and will absorb 25% of all damage. 60% of the remaining damage will be converted into energy, and you can convert energy to health at the ratio of 1:9. You can recover a maximum of 35% of your health every second.

Duration: 10 minutes

Upon seeing the effects of the Character Summon Card, everyone exploded with excitement.

“WTF! What kind of perverse ability is this?”

“No wonder Black Star has such a nickname in the universe...”

All the players were dumbfounded.

Although the Character Summon Card that Captain Viking used was powerful, it was still acceptable. However, the effect of the Black Star Character Summon Card was completely out of their understanding, and the spectators were shocked!

Was this the strength of a Beyond Grade A? Just a single ability of his was so frightening!

His damage was high, he had many minions, and he still had such thick skin...

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With such an ability, not to mention now, they would probably never be able to kill such a terrifying boss!

“Eh? Why does he have my Character Summon Card?” Han Xiao was stunned for a moment. He did not remember issuing such a mission before.

After thinking for a while, he finally understood what was going on. Frenzied Sword probably obtained a blank Character Summon Card and imprinted his ability.

“Alright, I haven’t used this talent too much after my Promotion, so you are enjoying it first.”

Han Xiao shook his head and chuckled.

Chapter 918 Finals

With the buff of the Black Star Character Summon Card, Frenzied Sword abandoned over eighty percent of his defenses and concentrated on attacking.

He brandished his closed-ranged mechanical weapon without any restraint and blasted craters on the surface of the arena.

Captain Viking was reduced to a pathetic state and could only attempt to avoid all the attacks. He had activated the Berserk Character Summon Card with the intention of fighting Frenzied Sword head on, but he was completely unable to damage the enemy at all. Every time he damaged the enemy, his opponent’s health would be recovered the very next second.

As such, Captain Viking could only adjust his strategy and stall for time.

There was a time limit to the Character Summon Card, and although Frenzied Sword’s recovery was ferocious, his damage was not increased. As such, Captain Viking tried his best to stall for as much time as possible. The longer this battle lasted, the easier things would be for his teammates.

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Captain Viking activated a special skill, and the axe in his hands turned blue and transparent as though it had turned into an axe made from ice. His physical damage would be converted to ice damage so that Frenzied Sword’s speed would be lowered.

Frenzied Sword ignored all the incoming attacks and charged forward relentlessly. The mobility of a Mechanical Pugilist was far higher than an ordinary Pugilist, and even if his speed was restricted, Captain Viking would not be able to escape from him.

Kacha!

He swapped out for a gigantic alloy axe and waved it around crazily.

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Dang dang dang!

The alloy axe with Mechanical Force surrounding it clashed with the ice-like axe over and over again. Red sparks and blue frost could be seen flying in all directions, and a formless energy wave would be sent out every time their weapons met.

They were both Grade B Supers, so the special effects of the battle were pretty good.

Captain Viking could only try his best to last as long as possible, and his health fell to forty percent very quickly. On the contrary, Frenzied Sword was still at his peak, and every attack of his would still be at his peak.

Clank!

Right at this moment, the ground under Captain Viking's feet suddenly cracked open, and an underground spider shot out from the ground. A large electrical wave was released, which gathered beneath Captain Viking's feet. Captain Viking felt his legs go numb, and he entered a temporarily movement restricted status.

In the midst of the chaotic battle, Frenzied Sword had secretly released some mechanical spiders and released a control ability to restrict the enemy's mobility.

A Mechanical Pugilist had many tricks up their sleeves and was like the combination between a weapon master and hidden weapon master. The number of control skills that a Mechanical Pugilist had far exceeded an ordinary Pugilist.

Seizing the opportunity, Frenzied Sword switched out to his spear and attacked.

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Captain Viking could only raise his axe to block the incoming attack.

Clank!

The spear clashed with the axe, and sparks flew in all directions. Captain Viking could feel a powerful force coming from the axe with powerful vibrations included within the spear. The other party had obviously used a skill to complement his weapon's specialty. His axe was knocked aside, and he was left wide open.

The next moment, the mechanical spear suddenly changed shapes and broke up into four spider legs. The spider legs then penetrated Captain Viking's back and fixed him on the spot. It looked as though his spear had transformed into claws to hold the enemy in place.

At the same time, the spearhead transformed into a barrel, and an ion cannon charged up while aiming at the immobile Captain Viking.

Swoosh!

A brilliant blue ion cannon shot out from the barrel and penetrated Captain Viking's chest.

Frenzied Sword made use of this opportunity and unleashed a brilliant combo to wipe out Captain Viking's remaining health.

Because of the Black Star Character Summon Card, he was able to abandon all defenses and focus on attacking. Without having to bother about his health, his attacks were intensified by many folds, and he dared to take much more risks.

"This combo is truly amazing. The Mechanical Pugilist Class is truly impressive."

"I feel like training a Mechanical Pugilist smurf."

"Stop dreaming. A professional Mechanical Pugilist is completely different from a Mechanical Pugilist like you. A noob like you shouldn't have such dreams."

The next player then entered the battlefield and mimicked Captain Viking to stall for time. However, it was completely useless, and Frenzied Sword got rid of three people in a row.

With the Black Star Character Summon Card, his endurance was stunning, and he always had the initiative in his hands.

The Chinese players watched with excitement as they witnessed Frenzied Sword using the effects of the Black Star Character Summon Card. Suddenly, a strange question popped up in the heads of many of the players.

"Umm, Black Star is a Mechanic, right?"

"That's right. This [Indestructible Body] is far more powerful than the [Advanced Strengthened Life] from the previous version. It looks more like the core skills of a Pugilist instead..."

"I understand now! A Mechanic without Endurance doesn't have a soul!"

"I understand now. So, it turns out that being a tank is the best way to play the Mechanic Class."

The Chinese spectators began joking.

However, Frenzied Sword seemed to use Black Star's abilities every season, and they personally witnessed how the Black Star Character Summon Card became more and more perverse, from the Machinery Affinity boost in the first season to the [Advanced Strengthened Life] in the second season. Now, it was the [Indestructible Body]. Every season represented a huge improvement.

Perhaps this was considered them watching as Black Star rose to prominence.

Many players could not help but feel this way and had a sense of satisfaction as witnesses of a powerhouse rising to power.

The remaining battles were completely one-sided, and the other Tomahawk players didn't bother wasting any other trump cards. Frenzied Sword single-handedly wiped out the entire team and achieved another overwhelming victory.

Although it only appeared for a short time, the terrifying ability of the [Indestructible Body] was imprinted into the memories of the players.

Everyone was extremely curious about what other power abilities Black Star had on him. He was always able to shock them without fail.

Looking at the discussions in the forums, Han Xiao could predict that all the players would go to him if they had a blank Character Summon Card in the future.

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Following which, the 'capture the flag' battle became Maple Moon's stage. She set up a fortress at the very start of the battle, and Tomahawk would have to suffer a huge loss if they wanted to steal their flag. As such, the gap between the two parties grew larger and larger.

Rivervale did not give Tomahawk the opportunity to turn the tables around and seized another victory.

After winning three consecutive rounds, Rivervale's victory was already guaranteed. The next two dungeon battles were much easier, and Rivervale obtained the victory for their first round.

...

The first round of the International Finals was extremely exciting, and all eight teams went all out.

The result of the first round had truly excited the Chinese players.

Rivervale defeated Tomahawk with a score of three to one, Dynasty defeated Devil with a score of three to one, and Long Sky defeated Hydra with a score of three to two...

This meant that all three Chinese teams had made it into the top four!

Their score from the previous season had already been spectacular, and they had managed to improve this season and clinch three out of four of the top four spots. The only lonely one left was America's Key!

With the semifinalists being decided, the players from all the regions were shocked. None of them expected the performance of the Chinese to be so powerful this season!

They were demons!

The Chinese teams were truly frightening during this season, and Key became the only hope of the players from all the other regions.

Apart from the Shattered Star Ring region, the players from the other regions all had a common enemy and hoped that Key would be able to defeat the great demon king and obtain victory.

Compared to the other countries looking as though they were facing a desperate war, the Chinese players were all celebrating. Obtaining three out of the four spots meant that they were guaranteed a

spot in the final. Furthermore, there was a higher chance for both the champion and first runner up to be from China.

It would be a huge honor if both teams in the final belonged to the same country. If China could be the first country to achieve such a feat, it would be akin to creating history. As such, the Chinese players were all extremely expectant.

The expectations of the local players and enmity of the foreign players brought a great deal of pressure to the players of Rivervale. The opponent that Key drew for the semi-finals was Rivervale.

If they beat Key, everything would be good, and Rivervale would be the one to create history and find their chance to be a super guild.

But if they lost to Key, they would have wasted all the fame that they had accumulated throughout this season. This was a double-edged sword!

To all the players, the battle between Rivervale and Key was like the final of this season. As long as Rivervale won, the championship title would be in their hands for sure!

As such, all the players in the Shattered Star Ring began gathering information about Key and analyzed the enemy's strategies to provide intelligence for Rivervale.

Although Rivervale did not necessarily need all this, their passionate actions warmed the hearts of Rivervale and the others.

The semifinals finally started, and the attention of almost all the viewers was drawn to the battle between Key and Rivervale.

In terms of individual combat strength, Key had the middle-ranked players from Devil and their overall strength was definitely superior. They definitely were not ordinary since they could emerge victorious from Division A.

The leader of Key was Key of Solomon, and Frenzied Sword was his old opponent. Both of them had fought in the first season, and Key of Solomon had lost to Frenzied Sword back then. After two versions, Key of Solomon had also improved.

The battle was extremely intense from the very start, and four rounds went by quickly. The current score was two to two, and the final match started.

In the final round of the competition, the gap was not widened in the team fight and arena, but in the 'capture the flag' and dungeon rounds, Maple Moon displayed her might and took out all her trump cards. Even the Void Dragon embryonic mechanical suit made an appearance, and she aided her team to clinch victory.

The final result was three to two, and Rivervale won. Maple Moon made the largest contribution and had a large wave of new fans.

On the other side, Dynasty and Long Sky fought each other again like in the previous season. However, the outcome was reversed, and Long Sky lost to Dynasty this time.

Two Chinese teams would be facing each other in the finals, and a new milestone was created for the Pro League.

The Chinese players all heaved a sigh of relief and were extremely satisfied.

Because Key did not manage to enter the finals, the overseas players were all disappointed. With China fighting each other for the championship, the finals were not as exciting as the semi-finals.

Although both the Chinese teams desired victory, they did not have any conflicts and thus fought stably for victory.

It was a pity that Rivervale was exhausted in the semifinals, and they obviously were not in top condition. Dynasty had only fought four rounds in the semi-finals and had more time to rest.

Finally, Rivervale lost, and Dynasty took the title of champion!

The excitement from China obtaining victory was not as ubiquitous as the previous season, but there was a great sense of satisfaction. China now had top notch teams in the international scene, and while obtaining victory deserved to be celebrated, it was not that big of a surprise.

Compared to Han Xiao's previous life, the Chinese teams would not be challenging other teams; other teams would be coming to challenge them. This was the glory of the great demon king, and the Chinese players were truly satisfied about that.

Because Rivervale completed the milestone for China, the Chinese players were all very understanding toward them and encouraging even though they lost the final.

The players who did not think too highly of China before the competition now had nothing to say.

With China clinching both the championship and first runner-up, the players cried out with excitement on the forums, and Han Xiao was also pretty happy. However, this was a half-good and half-bad matter for him.

The results of the Pro League would affect the actions of the players. In the next version, when all the regions gathered in the Flickering World, the Chinese teams would probably end up being the public enemy, and the Black Star Army would probably be provoked by the other player factions.

Those foreign clubs would definitely rally together to snatch resources, missions, and territory from China.

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Version 4.0 was the version for the players to climb onto the stage of the universal factions. Han Xiao would not underestimate the billions of players from the other regions.

As such, he would have to build up a huge enterprise in the Flickering World during the version update period.

This would be his foundation for Version 4.0.

"This version update period will be the key to my development..."

Han Xiao then closed the forums and fell into thought.

Chapter 919 Prospect and Version Update 1

For the next ten or so days, a joyful atmosphere filled the Shattered Star Ring forums.

This was China's best result to date, and Dynasty, Rivervale, and Long Sky received a great amount of praise.

The players were still extremely excited about the Pro League, and the forums were filled with their discussion about the exciting battles.

The various teams would definitely carry out various promotional activities after the competition, and the various clubs rented a place at the Black Star Army headquarters to carry out a meet and greet session with the players.

At the end of the version, the Gulal civil war that the players had participated in was also going to come to an end.

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The Pro League lasted for a long time, and the players who did not pass through the preliminary rounds all returned to the Gulal Civilization battlefield. They watched the Pro League while working together with the fleets to snatch the territories of the Ancient Emperor Party and Descendant Party. After a long series of battles, they brought the Pioneer Party into power.

The Pioneer Party expressed their thanks to the Black Star Army for the army's assistance, and the employment fees were wired to the account of the army.

It was also considered the end of the player's mission, and the players were only left with the Flickering World mission that had yet to be completed. However, this long mission obviously would not be completed within this version, and the players were not anxious about it.

As such, many of the players began leading a relaxed life after the Pro League to reorganize their gains from this version. Even if they did not go out into the fields to kill monsters, there were many entertainment outlets in the universe.

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Plenty of events happened in Version 3.0. They personally witnessed how the Black Star Army became a Beyond Grade A organization and followed the Black Star Army to perform many missions. The sense of belonging that the players had toward the Black Star Army grew stronger and stronger, and this was a win-win situation for both parties.

Through the hard work of the players, the content of the Galaxy Chronicles increased greatly, and information about the Black Star Army also became more detailed. The players had personally witnessed the growth of the Black Star Army all the way from its conception.

Galaxy Times came out with a new program to interview the top four teams that made it into the International League. They also did a projection about what would happen in the next version. Han Xiao, who was currently supervising Sylvia's preparation of the Black Star's Party, also saw it.

...

"Hello players, this is Galaxy Times, dedicated to sharing first-hand game information," the male host said. "Your gaming career is our top priority."

"The third season of the Pro League has come to an end. Dynasty, Long Sky, Rivervale and Temple of God represented China to obtain spectacular results in this season of the Pro League," the female host said. "We are lucky to have the captains and teammates of the four teams with us to talk about their interesting encounters during the competition..."

The four teams then made their appearance and waved to the audience.

"King Admiral, how do you feel about winning the championship this time?"

"Dynasty's status has been extremely good during this season, and we displayed the strength that we ought to. The entire team is definitely excited about winning the championship," King Admiral lazily replied.

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Second Prince then coughed dryly and could not help but add, "We obtained the championship because of the good teamwork between our team. Everyone was able to do their own job well. This is the result of everyone's hard work... and definitely not because of the captain's leadership."

The host then asked a few more questions before turning to Rivervale.

"Team Rivervale, although all of you didn't manage to clinch the championship, your contributions can't be underestimated. Your team kicked out Key during the semi-finals and locked in the championship title for China ahead of the final. I thank you for your contributions on behalf of our audience."

"We only did something within our capabilities," Frenzied Sword said humbly.

"Rivervale is a new team but has shown rapid improvement. Your score has been rising over the three seasons, and many people feel that Rivervale is a new super club. What are your thoughts on that?"

Frenzied Sword nodded and said, "I will have to thank our fans for their love. During the semi-finals, countless individuals provided us with strategies and information. We were truly moved by that."

"In this season, Maple Moon made a large contribution for Rivervale. As the captain, what do you think about her?" the male host asked.

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Frenzied Sword thought for a moment before saying solemnly, "The best decision that Rivervale has made to date is signing Maple Moon. She has greatly increased the strength of our team and is an irreplaceable team member."

After three seasons, Frenzied Sword was no longer a new player in the eyes of the players but a god level player. His status was equivalent to Hao Tian, and Maple Moon had become a core member of Rivervale. Her status was like Second Prince in Dynasty and Sleepy Winter in Long Sky.

The host then continued the interview, and Long Sky was extremely bitter. Although finishing in the top four was not too bad, it was considered a step back for them.

It was finally the turn to interview Temple of God, and the comments section became active.

“How are your feelings as the sacrificial lamb?”

“I thank Temple of God for their contributions. They lit themselves up to shine brightly for others.”

“So, it turns out that I’ve always blamed Li Ge wrongly. You are truly sacrificial and a saint who can endure humiliation.”

“Everyone, cry out together with me, brother Temple of God!”

“Temple of God’s contributions are truly the greatest. If any of the other three teams had been picked to enter Division A, we would have wasted a slot. Temple of God would probably have been eliminated in the first round regardless. If Long Sky had been chosen, they may not have been able to make it into the top eight, and this would be akin to losing two slots... Since Temple of God entered Division A, we sacrificed our lousiest to ensure the smooth victory of the other three teams. Thus, it can be said that Temple of God is truly the biggest contributor to China!”

The teams then chatted about other interesting parts of the competition, and the interviews came to an end. They then started the next topic, which was the prediction for the next version.

“With the increase in Grades of the players, there are more regions being opened up,” the female host said. “We had predicted that the inter-Star Field travel would probably be activated in the next version.”

“There have already been examples of inter-Star Field travel in Version 3.0, and it was related to the Black Star Army and the Shattered Star Ring,” the male host said. “The Black Star Army once provided a channel to cross Star Fields for the players in the Constellation Corridor.

“At the same time, the players of the Shattered Star Ring could also enter the Flickering World Main Storyline Mission. With the scale of the Flickering World mission, it is very likely to be an important event for the players in the Shattered Star Ring during the next version.

“All these signs point to inter-Star Field travel being very likely during the next version. Furthermore, the Black Star Army will probably play an important role for this.”

Galaxy Times had once made such a guess when the players from the Constellation Corridor were allowed to cross Star Fields. They restated their prediction once again.

The presence of the Black Star Army was truly too great in Version 3.0. According to their experience from the previous two versions, the actions of the Black Star Army would usually hint at future development. As such, the actions of the Black Star Army were important evidence for Galaxy Times.

Han Xiao nodded and thought to himself, Because of the Main Storyline Mission, the players can guess that the Flickering World will probably be a big event in the next version. However, no one’s guessed that it will be a world server...

During Version 4.0 in his previous life, the Flickering World had completed their initial exploration phase and had been opened up to the outside world. Many factions began recruiting members to head toward the Flickering World to compete with each other while exploring new regions.

High mobility was a foundation of the galactic civilizations. Mobile residents, resources, finances, and so on were the blood and vessels that connected the various Star Fields. No civilization was a lone island anymore.

As such, a new Star Field would definitely open up to the outside. Furthermore, a new Star Field represented new opportunities for development, which gave some factions hope to gain a territory. As such, many organizations that no longer had a way to advance would migrate to the Flickering World and engage in a competition for territory and resources.

The Crimson Dynasty had the highest authority in the Star Field. They chose to open the Flickering World for two main reasons. First, it was the natural course of development in the current generation, and second, others would share the construction cost.

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The amount of resources and manpower required to develop was far greater than exploration. Even if they were a Universal Civilization, it would be an enormous project for them to build up a new Star Field from scratch. Furthermore, there were still two other civilizations eyeing them covetously from the side, trying to seize the opportunity to suppress the dynasty. As such, the dynasty needed to give the job of development to the countless organizations and use methods like tax to digest the benefits of the Flickering World.

The entire universe had their sights set on the Flickering World, and even the tyrannical Crimson Dynasty knew that they did not have the ability to swallow it all by themselves. Greed and poverty were two sides of the same coin, and the outcome of them trying to swallow everything by themselves was extremely clear.

The galactic society believed in free economic trade, and unless there was a need, the Crimson Dynasty would not restrict their allies from competing with each other. Besides, using competition to spur the outside organizations on was also a situation that the dynasty was willing to see.

The dynasty would only hold the most lucrative region in their hands and a portion of the Star Field would be controlled directly by the dynasty. As for the rest, it would be split among important allies of the dynasty like the Black Star Army to protect the Flickering World and ensure that the dynasty had control over the Star Field.

In such a situation, the players would have a large space for them to display their abilities. Even without a mission, the players would definitely compete with each other for sure.

Chapter 920 Prospect and Version Update 2

“The first exploration phase of the Flickering World will soon end, and construction will follow shortly after. At that time, a large amount of resources and manpower will be required. The army has no lack of funds, and together with the support from the Crimson Dynasty, there will be no need for me to worry about resources during the version update period.”

He had a monopoly in the Evolutionary Totem business, and it was his faction's specialty. It brought him a large amount of profit, and among the Beyond Grade A allies of the dynasty, he would probably belong to the group that had no lack of money.

In his plans, the mechanical civilization and the Black Spirit Race would be his focus for development. The former would be his source of high-quality soldiers while the latter had great potential. He would be able to allow them to grow without any hindrance and concern in his own territory.

He was no longer watching the Black Spirit Race develop but personally intervening in the development of the race. The Black Spirit Race had a strong ability to accept changes, and as long as their development was on track, they would definitely soar forward rapidly.

The version update period from Version 3.0 to Version 4.0 was a couple of decades. The players would return when the Flickering World opened to the outside world.

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With the experience from his previous life, Han Xiao knew which organizations would compete in the Flickering World, and this was a huge advantage for him.

During this version update period, the entire galaxy would be focused mainly on expansion. The Crimson Dynasty would probably face huge pressure, and Han Xiao himself would likely meet some trouble because of the Evolution Cube. However, with his current strength and status, there should not be that many threats from the outside.

The Black Star Army had only been around for roughly twenty years, and the version update period was going to last for a few decades. This would be a good time to let the Black Star Army solidify their foundation and transform from a 'newborn organization' to a 'veteran organization'.

"Hila is still continuing to grow, and although her growth speed isn't as fast as in my previous life, she has greater potential with my aid. During the version update period, it is very likely for her to become a new Beyond Grade A..."

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Han Xiao's eyes gleamed.

This way, his organization would have one more top combatant. Even if Hila chose to become independent, both of them would definitely remain allies.

At that time, the Shattered Star Ring would have six Beyond Grade As, and the army would be able to benefit greatly from it.

Psyker, on the other hand, definitely would not have a good time.

During the entire Version 3.0, Han Xiao had harvested a large amount of experience from the players, and it was stored in his interface. The players would be offline during the version update period, and huge events would be rare. This accumulated experience would be the strategic resource for him to last through this version update period.

At his current level, leveling up once would require a sky-high amount of experience. Although Han Xiao's stash was great, it would not be enough if he used it all to level up. A couple of decades was a long time, and he had to use his experience sparingly.

In his plans, he would obtain a new Class Advancement and Race Advancement after reaching level three hundred, and he would have to increase the level of his skills to obtain more Potential Points so that the levels of his new knowledge would all be increased.

The experience required to increase his level in the future would only increase, and developing more crop fields would aid in his efficiency of harvesting experience. Version 4.0 did not only have more competition from the world but also gave him the opportunity to develop a new batch of crops.

The players had settled the Gulal civil war a while ago, and the [Gulal Civilization: The Flames of Pioneers!] mission on his interface was also completed.

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The Mission Rating of this mission was dependent on the performance of an individual. He had thrown the mission over to the players and did not do it himself. As such, his Mission Rating was not high. However, the experience that he gained from the mission was not the main point. The experience that the players obtained would eventually flow back to him through their purchases, and that profit was many times that of the mission.

After three versions of hard work, the Black Star Army had developed to its current state, and Han Xiao was no longer as worried about the version update period.

"I am already fully prepared and waiting for the day the dynasty divvies up the territories."

...

After the end of the Pro League, the version update date drew nearer and nearer. The attention of the players was also diverted from the Pro League to the new version.

Many players kept a large amount of experience and wanted to use it to reach the next level limit in the new version.

The players were all gathered in the Black Star Army headquarters, chatting with their friends while waiting to go offline.

At the corner of the plaza, the professional players were gathered together, chatting among themselves.

"There are plenty of new players in this version. Did we see so many players in the previous two versions?"

Twinkle Fried Rice shook his head.

"The more the merrier. This way, the Pro League will have higher viewership rates." Li Ge chuckled.

"I wonder how long the version update period would be this time," Maple Moon said curiously.

“It shouldn’t be too long, right? Our Flickering World mission hasn’t ended yet. We will definitely get to continue the exploration during the next version,” Frenzied Sword replied. “I am truly curious to see what the Black Star Army will be like during the next version.”

The few of them chatted and suddenly saw King Admiral waving at them from afar. Frenzied Sword and the others then went over.

King Admiral chuckled and said, “Since everyone is here, let’s find a day to have a meal. We can take it to be a celebration for obtaining both the championship and first runner up.”

“Sure.” Li Ge was the first to agree.

“I remember that we did so after the previous season ended as well,” Sleepy Winter said while stroking his chin.

“That’s right. We should just make it a tradition. The champions shall be in charge of treating all the Chinese players. We can go for a vacation together.”

“Better treat us to something good. Don’t be like Long Sky and only treat us to some roadside store.”

“Dining at a roadside store is value for money,” Hao Tian said bitterly.

Everyone then cheered at the proposition, and King Admiral had no choice but to accept it.

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Very quickly, all the players went offline, and the entire plaza became empty.

A notification also popped up on Han Xiao’s interface.

Version 3.0 update activated.

Saving data... Save complete!

Player forums closed.

Update Duration: Unknown. Please wait patiently.

Han Xiao then looked up, and the player forum button had turned gray.

“The players are all offline...” Han Xiao took a deep breath. “It’s now time to start planning for Version 4.0.”

...

At the same time, at the entrance of the Shattered Star Ring stargate, a trade fleet had just exited the stargate. The spaceship had an egg-like shape with silver armor. It looked extremely simple yet high tech. The insignia of the Limitless Financial Group was carved out on the exterior of the spaceship.

The main flagship was a gigantic flying saucer. In the command room, a tall man stood in front of the window and looked out at the view.

His figure was slim, and his skin was extremely fair. He looked very gentle and did not have the pressure of a powerhouse. He was dressed in luxurious clothes from head to toe and was emanating with the feeling of wealth.

This man was the current head of the Limitless Financial Group, Sorokin. He was one of the richest men in the galaxy.

A secretary stood beside Sorokin and said softly, "Your Excellency Sorokin, we have arrived."

"Hmm..." Sorokin replied. "Follow our schedule and head to the Black Star Army headquarters. Get our Shattered Star Ring branch to show me information about their performance over the past five years."

"Understood."

The Limitless Financial Group had property everywhere, and the Shattered Star Ring was no exception. But because of the poor public security of this region, the Limitless Financial Group did not place much emphasis on the Shattered Star Ring, and their operations were not large there.

If not for the fact that he had accepted the proposition of his three Beyond Grade A shareholders, Sorokin would not have established a large scale operation over there.

Although his current goal was to make trouble for Black Star, they were not direct enemies in business competition. Sorokin was also interested in meeting Black Star.

The way he saw it, Black Star should be happy to meet a wealthy individual like him. Although one of his subsidiary organizations had been wiped out by Black Star, his identity was not revealed, and Black Star should not know that he was the mastermind behind the matter.

As such, this would be their first encounter in Black Star's eyes.

With Black Star being kept in the dark, he would have a slight advantage.

He could also make use of this opportunity to come into contact with the Black Star Army's immortals and complete his previous goal.

Just as Sorokin was in thought, the hatch to the command room opened, and a woman walked in. She was dressed in the manager attire of the financial group.

This woman came to Sorokin's side and lowered her head slightly.

"Father, what are your instructions?"

She was Lovell, Sorokin's daughter.

Sorokin had many children, and they took on various positions in the financial group.

Turning to look at her, Sorokin flipped open his communicator and sent an invitation to her.

"Take this Tyrant's Party invitation and go to Heber. Meet him on my behalf."

Lovell was startled and asked, "Didn't you want to invest in the Black Star Army?"

"I will only make a decision after meeting Black Star. Before that, we cannot let go of any other investment opportunities," Sorokin replied.

His deal with the three shareholders was a secret. Apart from himself, everyone in the financial group thought that he was making a trip to the Shattered Star Ring for an ordinary investment.

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Although he was planning to use money to compete with the Black Star Army, he needed to use the money wisely. While money would allow him to snatch a larger portion of the market, he did not like suffering losses.

Sorokin wanted both the deal with his shareholders and the opportunity to invest in the Flickering World!

As long as he invested in the right target, things would go smoothly for him.

He wanted to compete with Black Star head on but also not anger the dynasty. Thus, there was a suitable investment partner in the Shattered Star Ring.

After all, the Black Star Army was not the only organization that had the right to begin construction in the Flickering World.