

Mechanic 1081

1081 Milestone and Representative

[Void Conqueror] mission completed!

Milestone activated successfully!

Watching the last Void Duke get turned into a patty by the Mechanical Deity, Han Xiao finally heard the soothing notification sound from the interface.

In the past ten days or so, he had been taking Ames around to look for other Void Dukes for partnerships. He had been active in the various edge areas of the Void Dimension.

Since not everyone wanted to hire outsiders, the two of them wasted some time in between. However, overall, the mission was completed quite efficiently. As long as a partnership was agreed upon, Han Xiao would easily be able to wipe out the hostile Void Duke's forces.

"It's finally completed."

Han Xiao deactivated the Mechanical Deity and opened the interface to look at the reward.

The bonus from [Void Conqueror] was already in effect. His various void-related talents were all slightly enhanced. He received 1,600 Free Attribute Points and one God's Trait Transformation Point, as well as +20 starting Favorability with all void creatures. He also received a Legendary Point [Void Celebrity]. Its introduction was that the name 'Black Star' was now well known between the void creatures.

As usual, he stocked the Free Attribute Points up, of which he now had close to 4,000. As for the God's Trait Transformation Point, Han Xiao continued on the path of maxing one path first, so he used it on [God's Trait Transformation—Machinery] and unlocked the level four bonuses.

Stage Four: +3 Levels to abilities belonging to the [Apostle Mechanic] and [Emperor Mechanic] stages. +25% base success rate of inventing blueprints. +15% base success rate of improving blueprints. +3% base success rate of inventing Grade Gold blueprints. +1.5% rate of acquiring unique talents. +15% abilities of the sub-branches.

"Not bad." Han Xiao scanned through it.

The class abilities of the Apostle and Emperor stages were very crucial, so enhancing them was quite useful. According to the current trend, Han Xiao estimated that the next level would most likely enhance the abilities of the Lord and Throne Mechanic stages, which were even more crucial.

Overall, the bonuses of this level were mainly focused on enhancing his ability to innovate. After all, Han Xiao had no channeling bars like the players. At his level, innovating new blueprints from his class

knowledges was common, same with improving the base quality of blueprints. The blueprints he used often nowadays were all enhanced and improved versions.

What Han Xiao was more concerned about was the unique talent. It seemed like those old men like Manison and Sorokin all had their own unique talents. Since the players did not have this in his previous life, Han Xiao had no idea about how to acquire them, nor did the interface give any tips. Therefore, he could only figure it out himself.

As for the enhancements of the sub-branches, they enhanced Han Xiao's Armed and Energy Branch abilities, basically almost all the Mechanic abilities not belonging to the Virtual Branch.

Han Xiao was still looking at the interface when his current Void Duke partner finished consuming the enemy's core and came to beside him.

"Black Star, a Void Lord under the command of His Excellency Kasuyi wants to see you."

"Finally, I knew he wouldn't ignore my actions."

Han Xiao had expected this, so he was not surprised. Following the Void Duke's arrangements, he met with the Void Lord.

The Void Lord's body was enormous and seemingly extended from the ground right into the clouds. Its body's color was deeper than even the Void Duke.

As soon as he saw Han Xiao, he felt close to him for some reason he could not explain. Somehow, Han Xiao looked very easy to befriend.

Despite the rather good first impression this Void Lord had of Han Xiao, it did not affect his attitude when carrying out the mission for Kasuyi. He directly said, "Black Star, we've noticed your recent frequent battles in the Void Dimension. Are you planning to rule the Void Dukes and build your forces here?"

"Don't worry. Tell Kasuyi that I'm just signing contracts with some mercenaries and have no plans of building a force. In fact, I've almost achieved my goal, and I'm planning to leave the Void Dimension in just a day or two."

Han Xiao knew what Kasuyi was worried about, so he expressed that he was not there to fight for territory.

"That's best. As long as you don't interfere too much with the internal matters of the Void Dimension, we will always welcome you. Do come to us if you need anything."

The Void Lord was quite well mannered. As a subordinate of Kasuyi, he had some basic knowledge of the powerful people in the main universe. He knew that Black Star was not someone he could mess with.

"Sure, we might have the chance to do business in the future," Han Xiao said casually.

Kasuyi's territory had a stable production line that produced all kinds of void specialties. It was quite a good business. If he had any needs, he would not mind working with him.

This time, the Void Lord took out a tube that was filled with a light blue liquid that was giving off a dim light and said, "This is master Kasuyi's special present for you. It's liquid-form Void Essence extracted for the core of the dimension. It'll help in enhancing your void bloodline."

Han Xiao raised his brows, accepted the tube, and said with a smile, "Thank Kasuyi for me."

Clearly, this was meant as a farewell gift to tell him not to stay too long in his house. Anyway, Han Xiao never planned to, so he had no problem with it.

After a successful exchange, the Void Lord left satisfied. Han Xiao kept the tube too, which would most likely increase the attributes he would gain during the next Race Evolution.

"Finally done?" This time, Ames giggled.

Over the past few days, Han Xiao had been very occupied with doing the mission and did not fulfill his promise to Ames of traveling with her. He could not help but feel he had wronged her. Now that business was done, with a relaxed mind and mood, he waved and said, "Let's go. I'll accompany you to travel the secondary dimensions all you want."

...

While the two of them traveled the secondary dimensions, the situation of the main universe kept changing.

Although the plan of forming a Beyond Grade A Alliance in the Flickering World was not publicized yet, the unusual movements of numerous peak Beyond Grade As attracted attention from many well-informed organizations.

After the initiators of the alliance gathered, they started the first meeting.

Inside the round table conference room of a spaceship, the remote projections of the various initiators gathered and sat in their chairs. Most of them were peak Beyond Grade As.

At the huge round table, only one seat was empty. It was Han Xiao's.

Manison clapped, signaling everyone to look over, and slowly said, "Black Star went to the secondary dimensions and isn't available. We're the only ones attending this meeting today."

"He's the main initiator. Growing the association needs the Black Star Army's help too. Is it suitable to not call him for such an important meeting?" Secret Master asked.

The rest agreed.

Currently, Han Xiao's position was quite high among the Beyond Grade As. Although he did not come, no one could ignore his existence. Furthermore, with the irreplaceable importance the Black Star Army had in creating the Beyond Grade A Association, the various Beyond Grade As present all recognized his significance. Even though he was not present, they would still speak for him.

"Black Star said himself he isn't coming." Manison shook his hand. "He has already made his stand. He suggests everyone should focus on the agreement we had during the Meeting of the Gods, and once we come to a conclusion, just inform him of it."

He would never lie about such things.

“Alright then.” The rest nodded.

“Let’s talk business,” Manison said slowly. “Since we’re decided to form the association, we’ll first have to set down the rules, regularize the positions of the association, confirm the nature of the organization and its development direction, and decide on the laws its members must follow.

Kasuyi followed up and said, “That’s right. Our core goal is to unite the strength of all Beyond Grade As, be it now or in the future. The Ancient Ones’ structure is too lenient, and its entry point is too high, so this time, we can’t repeat their mistakes. We must have a clear set of laws and regulations.”

A peak Beyond Grade A said, “According to the proposal Black Star gave, the main use of the association is to solve conflicts between Beyond Grade As. I think that’s a good path, and it’s best we start there. For example, we can have the rule that members can’t easily initiate physical conflicts with other members except for the purpose of sparring, to maintain the image that the Beyond Grade As are united. Also, members shouldn’t be allowed to deliberately escalate the conflict and avoid peaceful compromises...”

Everyone started discussing their ideas one after another. The rules and regulations were being filled up very quickly.

This time, Sorokin, who was the major investor, suddenly said, “The rules are good indeed, but the biggest problem is to make sure the Beyond Grade As are willing to follow them. As everyone knows, Beyond Grade As all have their own pride and have been enjoying tons of privileges. It won’t be easy to make them follow rules.”

“That’s right. This is a core problem,” Manison said. “Not only must we make sure the members accept the restrictions from the rules, we also have to make sure that even after the outsiders see these rules, they’ll also still be willing to join the association. Not everyone agreed with what we said during the Meeting of the Gods, so in order to prevent others from just ignoring us, as usual, it’ll all come down to the use of intimidation and benefits. We have to let the other Beyond Grade As see the price of disobeying the rules while also understanding the benefits of joining the association.

“Intimidation is easy. We seniors won’t have to do anything. We’re a form of intimidation by ourselves. Benefits, however, must be displayed through many aspects. We shall build an interest network of Beyond Grade As, unite and share our resources, and provide help to each other through many means. As for the new members in the future, we can use our resources to help them to build their Beyond Grade A forces, as well as provide some guidance from the peak Beyond Grade As...

“Also, we can even include the Ultimate Knowledges of the five classes as a benefit.”

Hearing this, everyone was shocked.

“Ultimate Knowledges? This is basically fighting with the three Universal Civilizations in the market of recruiting Beyond Grade A allies. They’ll definitely object to it to an extreme extent. This isn’t a small issue.”

“Have you forgotten our initial goal so soon?” Manison said slowly. “If we can’t break the forced monopoly that the three Universal Civilizations have on the Ultimate Knowledges, even if the Beyond

Grade A Association is formed successfully, it'll still be controlled by the advanced civilizations. We'll have no choice but to continue working for them all the same."

Some nodded in agreement while more stayed silent. They felt that this was too big a step and too risky. Opinions were varied.

"Since you insist on doing so, the three Universal Civilizations will have a lot to say to us," Kasuyi said with resignation.

"Therefore..." Manison looked around and finally showed his true goal. "We need a leader. He must be able to take the pressure and never compromise, and I'm the only one who is able to take on that position."

Everyone glanced at him.

Someone started praising him and said, "Manison is strong. He has a lot of connections, a huge organization, and he's senior. He is indeed the most suitable candidate."

Quite a number of people there were invited by Manison, so they were going to support him from the beginning.

This time, another peak Beyond Grade A candidate said, "Who doesn't know what you're planning? We're all the initiators of the association. I think I'm more suitable than you."

Everyone there was a Beyond Grade A. One person speaking for everyone was impossible. Even the president would only be taken more seriously when it comes to making decisions but could never truly order around these people. Most decisions would still have to be made together by the elders. However, due to the unique nature of the Beyond Grade A Association, this kind of opportunity was extremely rare.

This time, Milizaus said slowly, "Although Black Star isn't here, he also intends to be a candidate. The forces the Black Star Army has in the Flickering World are unquestionable. Our organization will only be truly powerful with him as the president. Furthermore, the Evolutionary Totems will soon be sold to the public. At that time, Black Star will be much more important to the three Universal Civilizations. He's suitable as the lubricant between two sides and will be able to tremendously reduce the pressure the association will face... I vote for Black Star as the representative."

Han Xiao did not join the meeting because he wanted to let others settle the issue, but it was mainly because he was not willing to face the other candidates directly, including Manison. Since he could not compete with the others in terms of connections, all he could do was bring up the profit he could bring and let the others decide. This way, he would avoid direct conflicts with other peak Beyond Grade As. More importantly, he did not want to disrupt the Great Director Manison's plans.

"Black Star is indeed very useful, but he's far from experienced. I wouldn't want a youngster to stand above my head." Sierron snorted.

Everyone had different people they wanted to vote for, so they started arguing. Surprisingly, quite a number of people voted for Han Xiao, who was not even here.

After quite some time, someone said, "I think that the management structure should be balanced. The position of the president shouldn't be permanent. They need to be re-elected regularly."

This suggestion was agreed on by most. They only did not want to step up now, but it was certain that being the president would be beneficial once the association became stable. Also, in terms of maintaining balance, no one wished for one person to be the president forever.

This time, Manison looked at Kasuyi, who did not participate much in the discussion. He narrowed his eyes and said with a deep voice, "Vote for me this time. I'll fully support you in the next election."

Hearing this, for some reason, Kasuyi suddenly felt a chill up his spine.

Why do I feel like I'll have to keep my Psychic shield up at all times from now on?

1082 Return

Everyone there was standing at the top of the explored universe. They all had different forces under their command, such as armies, financial groups, and political powers.

These people did not like discussing nonsense, so the issues were solved very quickly. It did not take long for the rough structure of the association to be formed. On the surface, it was a platform to settle conflicts between Beyond Grade As, while internally, it served to unite the Beyond Grade As. The rules, regulations, and reward system all had a brief outline to be fine-tuned accordingly in the future.

At the same time, the official preparations for the organization were brought forward. These initiators started to relay the message to every Beyond Grade A to recruit members. At the same time, they had to choose a location to build the headquarters of the Beyond Grade A Association in the Flickering World, which needed the Black Star Army's help. Also, every Beyond Grade A would have to set up an agency in their territory to serve as embassies. It felt quite similar to the United Nations.

The preparations would have to take about several months. Before the official formation of the association, the management positions had to be decided. Currently, it was in the form of President, Vice President, and the Governing Council.

After their discussion, they decided to set the duration of one term for the president and vice president to be thirty years. One could only hold the position for three terms consecutively at most but would still be able to take on the position of director after stepping down. Once two terms had passed after stepping down, that person would be eligible to be re-elected for president or vice president.

The president had the most responsibilities. He had to both have appeal and the strength to take on pressure from the three Universal Civilizations. Currently, Manison had the most support, but no one would ignore Han Xiao and confirm the president before he returned.

As for the proposal Manison made to break the monopoly on Ultimate Knowledges, the opinions were currently diverted. In the past, the Ultimate Knowledges were only given by the advanced civilizations as a method to woo Beyond Grade A allies. Even if their allies learned them, they were not allowed to easily teach them to others. Han Xiao had experienced that in the past.

If the association turned the Ultimate Knowledge into one of their rewards, it would basically break the three Universal Civilizations' rules, which would cause severe responses from the three Universal Civilizations.

However, if it really worked, rights would be taken back from the advanced civilizations, and the Beyond Grade As would indeed be free from many limitations and become more independent.

This was an unavoidable step to increase the position the Beyond Grade As had in the universe so that the new Beyond Grade As in the future would not have to become allies of the advanced civilizations for Ultimate Knowledges. At the same time, the Beyond Grade A Association would be able to attract newbies much easier, which was extremely beneficial for those peak Beyond Grade As who had the full set of Ultimate Knowledges of their own class.

On this issue, what the people argued about was the timing. Some felt that this should only be carried out once the association had established a firm base, since this was basically directly confronting the three Universal Civilizations, and a new association would not be able to hold against such an intense conflict. Some felt that it should be carried out as soon as possible to regain their rights, emphasizing why this association existed in the first place.

There would be a lot of time to discuss these details. On the other hand, an excuse or opportunity for the outside world was needed to form this association. They planned to contact some Beyond Grade As to fake some conflicts with each other in the next few months and escalate the issues into physical fights. The key point of this plan was the impact it would bring. The Beyond Grade As involved would only be acting, but they would have to make sure that the conflict would damage different organizations.

Not only were they going to have a huge fight in the Flickering World, but they were also going to encourage their own organizations to cause friction in the various Star Fields, once again letting the other organizations realize how much the conflicts between Beyond Grade As could impact others. This way, the public would lean toward hoping the Beyond Grade As would stop fighting, which would set down the path to forming the association. This plan would both give the three Universal Civilizations pressure and face. Neither side wanted to expose the conflict of interests between them to the public.

After the bosses confirmed the strategy, they started executing it very soon. The Flickering World became even more boisterous than before, and the free competition zone became more chaotic. At the same time, Beyond Grade As started having conflicts with each other in various Star Fields at the same time.

Due to the appearance of this phenomenon, the three Universal Civilizations temporarily put their conflicts behind, and the upper echelons held a remote conference together to discuss how to deal with it.

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In the completely secured conference room, the remote projections of the federation, church, and dynasty gathered.

The dynasty's Ruler Urranrell, the federation's President Bader, and the church's Pope sat in each corner of the triangular meeting table with their own upper echelons.

In usual times, the three of them fought each other in every way imaginable, but when the explored universe started to become unstable, these three sides would come together and decide the fate of this universe.

Bader looked around and said, "I don't even remember the last time the three of us hosted a meeting like this."

"Of course you don't remember. The last meeting wasn't during your term," the church's Pope said calmly.

Bader gave him a glare but had nothing to say.

The Federation of Light was indeed the one that changed their leader most often. The federation's president had already changed many times before the church's pope even changed once.

"Let's get down to business," Urranrell said expressionlessly. "The unification of the Beyond Grade As is pushed by the big picture. If our objection is too forceful, the Beyond Grade As will strongly rebel. In order to avoid the fate of becoming mere tools, there'll be more new Beyond Grade As in the future who will decide to hide their strength and live a low-profile life. In that case, our efficiency in recruiting allies will increase tremendously. At the same time, recording the total number of Beyond Grade As in the universe will become more difficult."

Bader nodded in agreement. "We have to not let the Beyond Grade As smoothly form that development union or whatnot but not use extreme methods. We'll have to work together. We can't target our own allies, so we shall target each other's. The dynasty will target my allies, I will target the church's, and the church will target the dynasty's allies. This way, we can cause some trouble to some of the Beyond Grade As, especially to those who are still undecided."

"That will only act as an obstacle and make forming the union more difficult. It won't solve the root issue," the Pope said calmly. "If the Beyond Grade As unite as one, they'll have a horrifying amount of influence on all Star Fields. They'll even be able to shake the structure of the entire galactic society."

Bader shook his head and said, "Sadly, it's not possible to clear out all the Beyond Grade As. Not considering how big a price we'll pay, we still have to make sure those extremely powerful individuals exist in this explored universe. They'll apply pressure to those Beyond Grade As who've hidden their strength and escaped to the secondary dimensions, as well as act as a form of insurance for when we explore unknown territories. We never know when we'll run into another unknown advanced civilization, and we can't give up this advantage we have."

"In the calculated model of the galactic society, this is a problem that was bound to show up sooner or later," Urranrell said with a deep voice. "It's just like how the workers formed worker's unions in the early days to protect their own interests. The situation we're facing now is similar, only the targets have changed into special individuals with great strength. Since the exploration era, we've been oppressing them way too much. This day was destined to arrive."

"Therefore, we have to make preparations on both sides. If the formation of the union can't be stopped, we'll have to try to divide them. At their management level, there'll certainly be Beyond Grade As with different opinions and interests, whom we can either bribe or woo to be our eyes and ears. We can then use them to affect the union's decision making."

The pope narrowed his eyes, looked at the two of them, and said, "Speaking of which, the Mechanic Emperor and Black Star are the main ones who initiated this. Their opinions are divided to begin with... Humph, seems like both of your people are difficult to deal with. My Kasuyi is the best as always."

"Manison is very, very ambitious," Bader said with a displeased tone. "In recent years, he's been doing a lot of things behind our backs. It's very possible he wants to be completely out of the federation's control. Frankly, we can't really control him now."

The Pope looked at Urranrell and asked, "What about the dynasty? Your Black Star loves to cause trouble too. Are you going to teach him a lesson?"

"You guys don't have to be concerned with that. We have our own plans for Black Star. The Evolutionary Totem will be sold to the public as promised. You don't have to worry about that," Urranrell said casually.

The dynasty planned on continuing to ease the tension between them and Han Xiao, so they decided to be patient and wait for Gaud to grow till they could solve the technical issue of the Evolutionary Cube. This way, they would be able to reduce Han Xiao's control over the Evolutionary Totem business.

Of course, Urranrell was not going to explain this plan to others.

Seeing this, Bader changed the topic back and said, "Other than dividing them, we'll also have to infiltrate them and not let our people be stopped outside their doors. They want to form the association, so they have to give us some high positions in return and let our people have a say in the management level of their association. Basically, they'll be open spies who'll inform us of what they're up to..."

The three of them discussed the matter for a while, made various proposals for the measures they should take, and slowly came to some agreements.

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Time slipped by quickly while the structure of the universe gradually changed.

A few months later, in Black Star Palace...

Buzz!

With a flash of light, three people appeared in the army commander's office. It was Han Xiao, Ames, and the Mysterious Energy Host. They had returned from the secondary dimensions.

The two of their mechanical suits came off automatically. This time, a surprised voice sounded from behind.

"Hmm? You've finally decided to return?"

The two of them turned to look over. It turned out Sylvia was in the room and was lying comfortably in Han Xiao's chair. But now, she instantly jumped up like there were springs in the seat.

Seeing this, Han Xiao joked around and said, "Tsk tsk, not bad. Have you been sitting in my chair the whole time I wasn't here? What are you planning to do, take my position?"

“Of course not, I was just... just...” Sylvia’s eyes spun frantically as she blushed trying to find an excuse. Stuttering, she then said, “Ahem, it’s just that your chair is very comfortable to sit in.”

As she was speaking, her expression suddenly froze as her eyes moved down onto Han Xiao’s arm, which was wrapped around Ames’ waist. Ames did not, however, reject it as Sylvia would expect. It was as if she was already used to it.

Noticing her look, Ames moved her waist slightly out of Han Xiao’s hands. She then raised her hand and touched Han Xiao’s cheek. “Busy man, I’m going back to the Shattered Star Ring. Jenny is probably going crazy now.”

“Must be tough for you to remember her existence.”

Han Xiao smiled. He wanted to grab Ames’ hand on his cheeks but was a second too late after Ames had already moved it away. She blinked at him and smiled elegantly.

Then, Ames turned to look at the stunned Sylvia, smiled, and walked out of the room.

Sylvia stood in place, appalled.

These two had only gone for a tour in the secondary dimensions, and now their relationship had already become this much more intimate?

What happened?

“You, you guys...”

Hearing this, Han Xiao turned into a serious expression and said, “What ‘you guys’? Do you know your priorities? In the days I wasn’t here, how have things in the main universe been? What about Hila? What’s she doing?”

Seeing Han Xiao’s indisputable expression, Sylvia clenched her teeth, suppressed her boiling curiosity, and explained the changes that had occurred in the past few months.

Sometime earlier, Hila had inherited the Underworld dimension and formed a link with it, so she no longer had to stay in the Underworld to charge it. She had returned to the main universe long ago and was now in the free competition zone, continuing the exploration work.

In the recent few months, the heat of the ambush on Hila gradually cooled down. As the exploration progressed further in the free competition zone, many organizations were already going all out. Furthermore, with the ‘conflicts’ many Beyond Grade As had with each other, it was very boisterous.

The players’ level had increased quite a bit too, and their actions gradually grew more organized. Their presence had been steadily growing in the universe. It was said that there were some small to medium organizations that were already calling the players the Cancer of the Universe, which meant things were following the path Han Xiao was familiar with, only that this nickname was not publicly recognized yet.

The dynasty had also sent a lot of messages that were all related to the development union. Since Han Xiao had hidden for a few months, he had managed to dodge the dynasty’s direct questioning.

The preparation of the development union was almost complete. Recruitment was basically already done. The three Universal Civilizations had not held back on interfering with their efforts. The two sides had clashed countless times secretly. Many Beyond Grade As received oppression to various extents, which unfortunately for the three Universal Civilizations, was not very effective. Although Han Xiao did not participate directly, his influence impacted it to some extent. With his permission, the Black Star Army had provided quite a lot of help.

Meanwhile, Dark Lord had already escaped from the chaotic space streams and had publicly arrested another neutral Beyond Grade A. As a direct member of the dynasty, lingering in the Flickering World at this time attracted a lot of attention and hostility from many Beyond Grade As.

All these changes, however, did not affect the dynasty's plan to sell the Evolutionary Totems to the public. The army's logistics department had already produced a ton of Evolutionary Totems, waiting for Han Xiao to charge them. Countless organizations' preorders poured in like tsunamis.

Looking through the changes, Han Xiao thought to himself, Looks like things have been going well while I wasn't around. Manison and the other elderlies really are something... Alright, the formation of the development union is now certain. It's time I make a visit.

1083 Exchange and Formation

The fervor for the Flickering World was shared by countless organizations. As the exploration of new Star Fields progressed, the exploration area belonging to the free competition zone got deeper and deeper into the core at a speed much faster than the three previous stages.

Planet Finn was a hub planet of the Emerald Star Cluster located at a superior position where the exterior Star System and the Star System coincided.

Initially, this was first occupied by the Modo Civilization. However, the impact of the conflict between two Beyond Grade A organizations 'coincidentally' reached this location. The Modo Civilization's troops stationed there met with 'accidents', so this planet now had no owner again.

Not long after, the Black Star Army 'happened to' occupy this planet and generously used it as the future headquarters of the Flickering World Beyond Grade A Development Union.

This desolate island was already completely different. It was filled with marks of artificial modifications. Countless Black Star Army engineering ships were constructing all kinds of buildings on the surface and satellites.

The most conspicuous landmark was a skyscraper. This was the conference building of the development union's headquarters. It was shaped like a trophy. An enormous sphere hovered on top of it like a floating fortress. There were also a lot of facilities in that sphere, including the round table conference room exclusively for the Beyond Grade As to host meetings.

At this point of time, a crucial meeting was being held inside it.

After a slight flash before his eyes, Han Xiao's remote projection appeared in the round table conference room. He looked around and saw that many seats were already occupied while more were appearing.

This was the first time Han Xiao had joined the meeting since returning. All the Beyond Grade As who were willing to join the association had been invited to this meeting, not just the ones who initiated it.

Very soon, all the seats were occupied. Manison knocked on the table to signal for everyone to stop chattering.

“Everyone, Black Star is the one who made the suggestion to form the development union. Now that he’s back and all members are present, this will be our first full meeting. Some of you might not know each other, so let’s start by introducing yourselves.”

Even though some of the Beyond Grade As present never had been in contact with some others, they all knew who the others were. This was just a standard procedure, so everyone briefly introduced themselves.

Han Xiao looked around. Most had attended the Meeting of the Gods, but there were also some new faces, including the direct members of the three Universal Civilizations.

At the same time, some older faces did not show up, like those unlucky fellows locked in the Spacetime Amber. In total, the number of attendees was surprisingly fewer than the Meeting of the Gods.

Whenever they saw him looking over, they would all slightly nod at him as a greeting.

The direct members of the three Universal Civilizations are here too, Han Xiao thought.

The reason behind this was not difficult to guess. The development union had been in conflict with the three Universal Civilizations for a few months. Both sides ended up compromising somewhat. One of the terms agreed was having these direct members join the union. Although the association would not possibly let those people have high power, since it was called the Beyond Grade A Association, there was no reason it should reject any Beyond Grade As from joining, even if they were direct members of the three Universal Civilizations.

The initial goal of everyone there was to have a united battlefield for the Beyond Grade As and increase the position of everyone at this grade. However, skipping the steps in between was totally unrealistic. In the beginning stage, no one really planned to use all their cards, so compromising with the three Universal Civilizations was unavoidable. Anyway, this would not go against the initial goal. As long as this platform was created, a new profit network was formed, and the ability to de-escalate conflicts between Beyond Grade As was acquired, the Beyond Grade As would be able to ignore some of the conflicts that were due to their factions.

As for acquiring more power, that had to be slowly earned in the future.

Han Xiao had not come back for a few months, but he had always been paying attention to the preparation progress of the development union. He had quite a lot of intelligence about it and knew very clearly of the basic system and members of the association.

After a round of introductions, Manison looked at Han Xiao and said slowly, “Over the past few months, the preparation for the development union has been going quite well. Black Star, you’ve only returned recently. Do you have anything to say? You’re one of the main initiators, so we’d like to hear your thoughts.”

Everyone's attention instantly focused on him.

Han Xiao cleared his throat and said, "I don't have much to say. Everyone has done a good job. We've already spoken about this matter back during the Meeting of the Gods. At the end of it, it was decided that I was to be responsible for creating the communication platform, which is close to completion. As everyone knows, the top priority of the development union is to settle disputes and conflicts between Beyond Grade As. I heard that the relationships between some of you here have not been great lately, so I hope that this platform can be created as soon as possible. The entire universe is in need of a platform like this to bring peace."

"Black Star is absolutely right." Manison took over. "As you all know, there have been some obstacles on the path of creating the development union. Currently, these obstacles are already mostly cleared out. The only thing that's holding us back is the negotiation regarding the Ultimate Knowledges. We have to put this thing aside for the time being. The most crucial matter at hand is the members of the management level so that the development union can be officially formed soon."

As expected, the three Universal Civilizations did not compromise at all on the matter of Ultimate Knowledges. After a series of intense conflicts, both sides put the matter aside and decided to go for a negotiation. However, either side could give the other side what they wanted, nor could either side do anything more. Therefore, this matter would not come to a conclusion any time soon.

Due to this situation, some peak Beyond Grade As like Manison had changed their minds and decided not to let this matter delay the formation of the development union. Hence, this matter was put aside, and Ultimate Knowledge being one of the benefits of the association was not publicized. As for whether the knowledge would be taught privately was another matter.

The last thing standing before the official formation of the association was that the management position holders were yet to be decided, and the reason was that Black Star had yet to return. Now that Black Star was finally back, everyone could not wait to settle this crucial issue.

"That's right. It's time to decide who's to be the president..." A member of The Ancient Ones looked around. "Over the past few months, His Excellency Mechanic Emperor has been enduring a lot of pressure representing the development union. What he has done has been witnessed by all. I nominate Manison as the first president."

As soon as this was said, many supporters followed after. Suddenly, the entire place was discussing Manison.

In the past few months, Manison had been using the connections he had built up over the years. Not only were more than half of the peak Beyond Grade As supporting him, but he had also wooed many of the remaining Beyond Grade A members, especially members of the Ancient Ones. Most people agreed that Manison should be the president.

The other two candidates could not compete at all in the past few months. Knowing that they had no chance, they had basically quit the competition.

However, at this time, subconsciously or consciously, everyone was looking at Han Xiao. He had disappeared for a few months, and his opinion was the most unpredictable to the others.

Manison also could not help but look at Han Xiao. This was the one and only thing that might stop him from becoming the president. He had no choice but to take it seriously.

However, Han Xiao only smiled and did not speak, nor did he intend to.

Kasuyi looked back and forth between the two of them and said, "If there are no objections, let's start the vote. Who here agrees that Manison should be the first Development Union President?"

"Agree."

"Agree."

"Abstained."

"Agree."

Since there were not many people present and everyone there was important, a simple voting process was more than enough.

Everyone had voted, including Han Xiao, who abstained.

Seeing this, Manison was no longer worried. As long as Black Star did not interfere, this position was certainly going to be his.

The direct members of the three Universal Civilizations all abstained their votes. Clearly, they had an agreement. In the end, Manison easily won with an absolute number of votes.

Seeing this, Kasuyi took a deep breath and said with a deep voice, "It's decided then. His Excellency Manison 'Ancient One' Palpatine will, from now on, be the official president for the first term."

"Okay."

The muscles on Manison's face did not move at all. He maintained his poker face and did not say anything. He had no need to be humble.

Clap clap...

Those in attendance clapped a few times symbolically.

After the applause stopped, Kasuyi looked around and asked, "Now, as for the Vice-President, who..."

This time, Han Xiao suddenly smiled and said, "The formation of the association has relied a lot on the Black Star Army's forces in the Flickering World. I think that it's suitable for me to take this position. What do you guys say?"

Everyone exchanged looks and was not surprised.

With Black Star's strength and position, he would be a director at the bare minimum even without the crucial help the Black Star Army had provided. Therefore, of course, he had the right to be the vice president.

Actually, there was a reason Han Xiao did not fight with Manison. He had already decided not to compete for the position of the first president the moment he knew that the president position was term-based.

One of the reasons was that his connections were not as rich as Manison. Another was that he did not want to be the one getting the pressure during the initial stage of the association. If someone else became the president next term, he would have worked for nothing.

This was also one of the reasons Han Xiao had gone to hide in the secondary dimensions for a few months. He would not be able to become the president anyway, so he might as well let Manison and the others endure the pressure and come back later.

I'm the main initiator anyway, and the Black Star Army has provided a lot of help to the development union, so that's a big enough contribution.

Since he could still compete for the next term, Han Xiao was in no hurry. He did not want to directly compete with Manison, so he took the second-highest position as the vice president and planned to only compete for the position of president in the future.

Furthermore, even if he decided to directly compete with Manison now, he would not be able to succeed. Han Xiao never planned to compete with Manison in terms of connections but through the benefits of having him as the president, as explained by Kant and Milizaus. However, the people there still voted for Manison, which meant that they had already made their decision. Therefore, even if he had said anything earlier, these people would not have voted for him.

Although he did have some resources that he could use as chips to obtain some support, such as the Evolution Cube, there was no way he could do the same thing every term. Furthermore, much of those resources could only be used once. If he used it for this term, he might not be able to achieve the same amount of support next term.

Since he completely understood the situation, Han Xiao made the decision not to compete. He would only be able to wrestle with people on Manison's level when his connections and influence reached a higher level.

After all, he had leeks he could harvest, so he would grow much faster than everyone else. With such a unique advantage, this strategy seemed more suitable for him.

Quite a number of people had their eyes on the vice president position. Sadly, none were competent enough, and Kasuyi and the others had no interest. Since Han Xiao was the local, most people gave him face. Manison was in a good mood and supported him too. Therefore, Han Xiao became the vice president smoothly.

After getting this position, Han Xiao was relieved.

Now, this is what I call materialization of position. Getting the vice president position without spending anything is definitely much more cost effective than paying a huge price for the president position.

The director positions that came after had no suspense. They had been decided long ago and belonged to the group of peak Beyond Grade As. Other than that, there were also three 'Honorable Director'

positions that had no actual power. They were given to the direct peak Beyond Grade As of the three Universal Civilizations. Of course, this was one of the conditions of the compromises.

As the positions were decided, the date of the official formation of the development union was also decided. After these things were dealt with, the meeting ended. Remote projections disappeared one after another, leaving just Manison and Han Xiao's remote projections behind.

"Congratulations, president," Han Xiao said casually.

Manison gave a rare smile and said, "Don't be discouraged. This is too early for you. The future is yours."

Han Xiao blinked with a strange expression.

Although things were going in a different direction compared to the previous life, Manison's goal should have remained unchanged, so he knew about it.

In his previous life, Manison had both pride and ambition. He wanted to make all the Beyond Grade As his shield to help him enter the next territory.

The two of them had different but similar goals. At least for a very long time, Manison would not be able to achieve his goal. He would have to wait for everyone in this grade to become stronger as time passed by.

Han Xiao put this thought away, pondered for two seconds, and asked, "About the negotiation regarding the Ultimate Knowledges, what's the price the three Universal Civilizations have asked for?"

As this issue was brought up, Manison wiped the smile off his face and said meaningfully, "A Super Star Cluster Civilization."

Han Xiao understood instantly and shook his head with resignation.

So, this is what they're planning to do, killing two birds with one stone by using the association against more important opponents and ruining the association's name.

"Will you agree?"

"I don't know. I'll have to see." Manison did not give a response. After he said that, his projection went offline, and Han Xiao was the only one in the conference room.

Han Xiao looked at Manison's empty seat and suddenly chuckled.

Mr. Director, being in this position isn't going to be that easy, you know...

...

Galaxy Calendar Year 730, July 11th. A sudden news bomb exploded in the Flickering World.

Close to a hundred Beyond Grade As made an announcement together. Due to the recent frequent conflicts between them, they had decided to form a guild-type organization to settle physical conflicts between Beyond Grade As and reduce the public damage caused by their battles.

The organization's headquarters would be located in Flickering World, on Planet Finn of the Emerald Star Cluster. Manison would be the president, Black Star would be the vice president, and there would be close to a hundred Beyond Grade A members.

The three Universal Civilizations had also publicly announced that this organization was not illegal. At the same time, they encouraged the Supers in the universe to learn from this and reduce the damage caused by their powers.

The Flickering World Beyond Grade A Development Union was officially founded on this day!

A few months after the explosive news of the ambush on Hila, countless citizens and organizations of the various Star Fields were in an uproar once again!

Chapter 1084 Association's Impact and Holy Light Hos

"Have you heard? Close to a hundred Beyond Grade As have formed a new organization in the Flickering World..." In a military bar inside one of the dynasty's closed bases, the usual boisterous atmosphere was nowhere to be found. Some held their glass up but forgot about drinking it, some caressed their glasses subconsciously, and some were smoking cigars but hardly breathed.

The only common thing they shared was that all of their eyes were on the virtual screen on the bar's wall, which was now playing a political discussion show.

The show was hosted in a studio, where one host was leading the conversation with a few guests. The matter they were discussing was related to the recent big news.

Inside the quiet bar, the only sounds were the voices of the host and the guests.

"I know, the Flickering World Beyond Grade A Development Union, right? It was formed not too long ago. They invited tons of galactic media groups and made the announcement. Now it's spread across the entire universe."

"Almost all the Beyond Grade As in the universe have joined. Tsk tsk, these guys really can't seem to be out of the spotlight."

"According to the information we have," the host said, "the purpose of this organization is to mediate the ever more frequent conflicts between Beyond Grade As. On the day of its establishment, they hosted a meeting where all the members attended. With the galactic media groups as their audience, they publicly mediated more than a dozen conflicts using peaceful negotiations, successfully solving the disputes between tens of Beyond Grade As. As it seems, this method is very effective. Those people all stopped fighting with each other. The frequent Beyond Grade As conflicts lately have been effectively reduced, and no one was unluckily impacted by those conflicts."

"It seems that this organization is really quite useful." A guest who held a high management position in a financial group complained. "The destruction Beyond Grade As can bring is too huge. Conflicts between them have always caused a humongous amount of damage to the public. Either planets were destroyed, or onlookers were accidentally killed. Now that this organization has been formed, these things can be avoided."

“Exactly. I had a friend living in the Shattered Star Ring. He went to watch the battle between Black Star and the Tyrant some decades ago, and because he got too close, he, unfortunately, got killed. There was no compensation or whatsoever after that at all”

Someone said, “I have no idea what those onlookers are thinking. Do they think it’s a concert or something?”

“Have the Supers accidentally killed not enough ordinary people? This problem has existed in society for as long as Supers have. According to research, the number of ordinary people directly or indirectly killed by Supers in the entire universe every day is as high as around ten billion. Just let this horrifying number sink in. This is a huge problem that has everything to do with our daily lives.”

A guest complained angrily. He was the representative of an organization that supported equal rights between ordinary people and Supers.

“Therefore, I think that the purpose of this organization is much more important than it seems on the surface. Living up to their positions at the top of the Super Grades, the Beyond Grade As have made an amazing stand and set an example for all the Supers in the universe. It’s a very responsible act.” The host avoided this sensitive topic with a smile. He displayed Manison and Han Xiao’s virtual portraits on the screen behind and said, “The two main founders are Manison and Black Star, who have taken the position of president and vice president.”

“Oh, these two are the VIPs of VIPs!” A known celebrity made an exaggerated hand gesture and said, “Not much needs to be said about Manison. He’s a senior Beyond Grade A whom everyone knows about. No one finds it strange that he’s been chosen as the president. However, Black Star is someone who has only risen in the last few decades, yet he surprisingly surpassed the other much more senior members and took the second-highest position.”

A Slime wobbled and said, “Beyond Grade As are a group of people who heed strength above all. Not long ago, Black Star made a historical achievement by fighting twelve enemies alone, so whether he’s senior enough or not doesn’t limit him at all.”

“Speaking of which, it seems like that conflict was the fuse that led to Black Star proposing to form the development union, and Manison is only a partner he brought in.”

“No no no. From the way I see it, signs were already showing during the Meeting of the Gods. They’ve been planning this since long ago. Black Star is the one who contributed most to forming the association, so he became the vice president. As for the goal of the Beyond Grade As, who knows? Maybe they’re planning to shuffle the deck using this opportunity during the exploration of the Flickering World.”

“I’ve done some research. Black Star has been very active lately. Not only did he take the lead in forming the development union, but he also became a new shareholder of the Limitless Financial Group. The date when the dynasty planned to officially sell the Evolutionary Totems to the public was also brought forward. He even stepped into the entertainment industry. In the files of the Galactic Cinematic Association, the movie adapted from Black Star’s true story has already been filmed. The director is the renowned Beny Travol. Maybe we’ll see the rise of Black Star very soon on screen.”

The host and the guests chatted.

Pa!

This time, a dynasty army officer slammed his glass on the table, curled his lips, and said with disdain, "What bullsh*t mediating. Just a group of Beyond Grade As putting up a show. Only idiots would believe what they're saying."

The people in the bar laughed.

Everyone there was a soldier of the dynasty who had a much clearer view of the matter than ordinary people and was on the dynasty's side. With this army officer starting the conversation, the others all started chattering.

"This can be basically considered as the official association of the Beyond Grade As, looks like they finally are planning to take some of their rights back from the three Universal Civilizations."

"I didn't expect Black Star to be the main founder. Tsk, outsiders really can't be trusted. To think I actually admired him for some time in the past."

"Nothing weird about it. He isn't a citizen of the dynasty, so there's no reason to demand his absolute loyalty."

"The future of the three Universal Civilizations is going to be tough from now on. They're going to have another powerful competitor."

Hearing the discussion between his comrades, Gaud shook his glass filled with amber-colored wine and silently stared at Han Xiao's portrait in the show with unknown emotions in his eyes.

"Your position is getting higher and higher, huh..."

Due to the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy being snatched away, Gaud had been paying close attention to Han Xiao. He had been watching Han Xiao continuously getting more and more resources, acquiring a higher and higher position in the universe.

The ambush on Hila some time ago had shocked him when it revealed how fast Han Xiao was growing.

Gaud stopped shaking his glass. The wine spun in it and formed a vortex. He looked down at the vortex and smirked.

"Manison has planned this long ago. Now the chance had finally come. The development union is not a bad excuse. I'll most likely join it after becoming a Beyond Grade A too. But I didn't expect you to support this idea too. Do you agree with that theory about the shared battlefield for Beyond Grade As Manison gave, or... have you discovered that too?"

...

In Black Star Palace...

"Looks like the first appearance of the development union is very successful..."

Han Xiao leaned back in his chair, rested his legs on the table, and looked through the news from the various media in the quantum network with a satisfied expression.

Not long ago, the development union had officially announced its creation to the outside world. As the vice president, he had also made an appearance at the ceremony.

To normal people, the development union was suddenly formed out of nowhere. The movements of close to a hundred Beyond Grade As attracted all the attention, so as soon as the news was out, the entire universe started discussing it.

The majority of the forces in the Flickering World were the most shocked by this sudden event.

There were a lot of organizations exploring the Flickering World, but to these organizations, the true situation in the free competition zone was actually split between three sides. The dynasty was one, the federation and the church shared another side, and the Super Star Cluster Alliance was the last side.

Comparatively, the rest of the organizations there were scattered. The difference was like the conflict between companies and between nations.

Originally, although there were many Beyond Grade A organizations, they all belonged to different sides. However, as they united, if they formed a profit union, another huge force would appear. The situation would turn from the conflict between three sides into four sides.

However, this was just the speculation the outside world had. Neither Manison nor Han Xiao planned to make any aggressive moves. In the negotiation with the three Universal Civilizations, they tried to ask them to deal with the Super Star Cluster Alliance. Although Han Xiao was quite tempted to use this opportunity against the Modo Civilization, for the sake of the big picture, he could only reject it.

As per their plan, the biggest purpose of the development union currently was to provide a communication platform. Its top priority was to slowly connect the resources of its members and form a profit union between Beyond Grade As. After this huge profit network was formed and its foundation was built, creating a shared battlefield would finally be meaningful. Otherwise, the development union would only be an empty shell.

“Achieving this will take a very long time, and the three Universal Civilizations will definitely try to slow it down nonstop. Therefore, before it’s done, the development union won’t be able to do anything else. Even if those Beyond Grade As have their own plans, they won’t show it at the initial stage and will only support uniting the resources, achieving a win-win situation,” Han Xiao murmured.

The Beyond Grade A Association had just been formed, so there was still a very long road ahead for both Manison and his goals. This was a long-term plan that would take decades at the minimum and could not be hurried, so there was no need for him to keep thinking about it.

What was worth mentioning was that, using money and connections, as the only exception, Sorokin was able to acquire the position as a director where everyone else was peak Beyond Grade A.

After hearing about Sorokin’s acts from Traveler, he looked unaffected, but he actually secretly paid a lot of attention to this guy. As a shareholder of the Limitless Financial Group, Han Xiao did not act against Sorokin as it would only make Sorokin alarmed.

However, all things aside, Sorokin really had a knack for making money.

“This way, my goal is basically achieved. When the Calamity of the Supers erupts, I will be able to heavily interfere with it and even guide the main storyline of that version...” Han Xiao exhaled with a relaxed mood.

As the peak of personal strength, Beyond Grade As were the idols of countless Supers. Hence, Beyond Grade As uniting could guide the movement of the entire Super society to a certain extent. This was also one of the most important reasons why, when the Calamity of the Supers erupted, the influence of the Beyond Grade As quickly became stronger in the entire universe.

Temporarily putting this matter aside, Han Xiao opened the forums to look at the players’ opinions.

As expected, the focus of the players was not the meaning of the development union but the names of this many Beyond Grade As.

At this moment, Aurora walked in.

Han Xiao waved at her and said, “Come here.”

Aurora walked toward Han Xiao. She had suddenly been called to the office and was quite confused.

Han Xiao suddenly grabbed Aurora’s forearm and pressed on it softly, all the way up to her shoulder.

Aurora’s body was stiff, but she did not move away. She was both curious and anxious.

“W-what are you doing?”

Han Xiao sized her up, took his hands off her, and said, “I’ve noticed that your physique is very special.”

“W-what do you mean?”

Pa!

Han Xiao took out the containment device of the Holy Light Particle and slapped it on the table.

“When I went to the secondary dimensions, I found a new Primal Esper Ability Entity. I’m hoping to put it inside your body. What do you think?”

After thorough consideration, he had decided to find a host for the Holy Light Particle.

He acknowledged the potential of the new power system brought by the Holy Light Seed, but it would consume its core essence. Therefore, finding a host who could heal its kidney deficiency was better than creating an Energy Host.

Hence, Aurora was the top choice.

If she turned out to be incompatible, Han Xiao would consider its host from his previous life, Evans.

“Primal Esper Ability?” Aurora curiously looked at the gold energy inside the containment device with her eyes wide open.

Unhappy, the Holy Light Particle sent a resentful telepathic message. “Hey, this is the host you’ve found for me? She’s too young!”

“Young? She’s just about ten years younger than me.” Han Xiao rolled his eyes.

“What? A Beyond Grade A like you must be at least a few hundred years old!” The Holy Light Particle was even more enraged. “Then, isn’t she a few hundred years old too? Shameless! Still acting as if she’s so young!”

“... Can I strangle it?”

Aurora was speechless.

I am young! What do you mean acting!

The Holy Light Particle was still complaining. “I need a strong male host. Only then will he be able to match my power!”

Knowing his personality well, Han Xiao said, “Stop spitting nonsense. One more word and I’ll give you to the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy to let him have his way with you.”

The Holy Light Particle shut up instantly.

Han Xiao pressed on the containment device and a needle came out of it. Seeing this, Aurora reluctantly reached out her hand, bit her lips, and let Han Xiao plug the needle into her.

Boom!

The next moment, a strong blinding light exploded in front of Han Xiao!

Chapter 1085 Perfect Host and Bait

As the Holy Light Particle was injected into Aurora’s body, it started to fuse with her cells. The Vital Energy Esper Ability inside her also started to react to it quite vigorously. A pale-golden light shot out from every inch of Aurora’s skin. She turned into a bright mini light source, as if every string of her hair had turned into light beams. She floated into the air, releasing an elegant and holy aura. Han Xiao was paying close attention to Aurora and held the empty containment device in his hand. If he saw any signs of Aurora being damaged by the process, he would suck the Holy Light Particle out instantly.

Thankfully, the fusion process went very smoothly. When the light dissipated, Aurora finally descended to the floor. She looked like she had yet to regain focus from the state she was in earlier.

Pa!

Han Xiao snapped his fingers and said, “How are you feeling?”

“Somewhat... good?”

Aurora pressed on her heart and was uncertain.

“Since you were not hurt by it, you’re now the host of the Holy Light Particle. Can you feel its power?”

“Are you talking about this?”

Aurora closed her eyes to sense it for a moment, before extending her hands with palms up. She shook them, and a cluster of gold light appeared. It had tiny dots like a group of fireflies.

She's able to use it this soon? There's usually an adjustment period after the host fuses with a Primal Esper Ability.

However, I heard that the shorter the adjustment period is, the more compatible the host is.

The Vital Energy Esper Ability and the Holy Light Particle are indeed quite compatible. Maybe some kind of chemical reaction occurred. If that's the case, I will be able to make use of the Holy Light Particle to the maximum, and my plan will be easier to execute...

Han Xiao caressed his chin.

He reached out to touch the cluster of light on top of Aurora's palm, but this cluster of light actually dodged aside. Finding this quite funny, Han Xiao smiled and said, "Ah Ho, I know you can share the senses of your host after the fusion and can hear me speaking. Stop hiding. How's this host?"

"Hmm..."

The Holy Light Particle appeared and yawned like a cat in the middle of a stretch. No longer looking down on Aurora, it immediately changed its attitude.

"It feels way too good. This is the first time I've sensed such rich life force. This is the best host I've ever had..."

"Humph, that's not what you said earlier," Aurora said unhappily.

"I was wrong. You're the best. No one else could be nearly good enough." The Holy Light Particle's light cluster circled around Aurora like a puppy.

Han Xiao curled his lips.

Tsk tsk, weren't you very tough just moments ago?

Aurora practiced for a while and was soon able to fully control it. In her senses, it was like she suddenly had an extra arm. Controlling it was a piece of cake.

"Go back and practice it more. The Primal Esper Abilities all have multiple uses. With the Holy Light Particle, you'll be able to protect yourself from more dangers," Han Xiao said.

Aurora's job was to heal since her Esper Ability lacked destructive power. Now that she was the master of the Holy Light Particle, she would acquire many new abilities such as a stronger physique, high-speed flight, dimension traveling, punishing evil, and many others.

These abilities would increase her survivability by a huge extent, especially the ability to travel between dimensions. She would be able to escape much easier in the future if she was in danger.

However, the most important ability to Han Xiao was the ability to provide Holy Light Seeds. After he tested it, to his absolute surprise, his theory was right—Aurora's Vital Energy Esper Ability could indeed replenish the energy the Holy Light Particle spent in giving out Holy Light Seeds. This meant that the new power system with the Holy Light Seed as the core could totally work.

This was extremely useful to the Black Star Army. It could both act as encouragement for the army's warriors and attract ordinary people by letting them see the hope of becoming Supers.

Han Xiao briefly explained his plan. A little shocked, Aurora said softly, "So, you're trying to spread it out..."

"Something like that. However, you're the host now, so I'll have to get your permission."

Aurora wanted to say something but did not.

She had tested the ability to give out Holy Light Seeds earlier. Although her body could endure it, it would spend quite a lot of life force. If used often, she did not know if the life force she had been naturally accumulating would be enough. She might have to experience the feeling of being sucked dry every day.

After hesitating for a while, Aurora suddenly made up her mind. She closed her eyes and said firmly, "Okay. I—I can take it!"

"Why do you look like you've just decided to sacrifice yourself?" Han Xiao squeezed her nose and said with a smile, "Don't worry, I won't make you work for free. You can retrieve those Holy Light Seeds, which will not only make up for the life force you've lost but also help your life force grow at a rate much faster than you accumulate every day."

"I'm not sure if it's good to just snatch away what others worked hard for..." Aurora rejected it slightly. This went against her principles.

"Hahaha..." Han Xiao laughed out loud and said with the tone of a rich man, "That's easy! Money can't solve everything, but it definitely can solve most things. I can hire a group of people to raise Holy Light Seeds specifically for you to harvest, which isn't different from any other jobs at its core. I'm basically paying them for their time to create value for me. As long as the salary is good enough, it'll be a totally legitimate exchange on both sides, so you don't have to feel bad about it."

"That does make sense..." Although Aurora leaned toward the lawful kind side of things, she was not stubborn. After hearing Han Xiao's explanation, she did not reject it much anymore.

Snatching away the fruit of others' labor without saying anything and telling others this was a job from the beginning were completely different things. Growing the Holy Light Seeds with meditation and other methods was just like any other job; the workers were no different from the other employees of the army.

Han Xiao chose Aurora to be the host not only because she might be able to use the Holy Light Seed ability to the maximum but also because he wanted Aurora to benefit from the fast growth provided by harvesting the Holy Light Seeds so that her level would increase faster.

Anyway, Aurora's growth had no limits, and harvesting leeks would be countless times more efficient than naturally accumulating life force. She would basically have a group of people earning EXP for her. It had a Shadow Clone-vibe to Han Xiao.

If Aurora could step into the next level, the Black Star Army having three Beyond Grade As would really become a reality.

Han Xiao already had this thought when he came across the Underworld dimension. His goal was not for Aurora to gain a stronger healing ability but access to the functions of the Underworld. 'Edo Tensei' could only be achieved if Aurora became a Beyond Grade A too.

Compared to her healing ability, Han Xiao was more interested in those powerful individuals sleeping in the Underworld. They would be a very strong force.

What a little genius I am... Han Xiao chuckled in his mind.

The only problem was the Holy Accord organization. These people seemed especially interested in Primal Esper Abilities. If they discovered that the Holy Light Particle was in Aurora, they would most likely try to take it from her.

On the other hand, this would be quite a good bait too, he would not be able to find the Holy Accord if they decided to keep hiding. The Holy Accord might not dare to attack him, but they would definitely dare to attack the Supers under his command.

As for Aurora's safety, of course, Han Xiao was not going to forget about it. He planned to give Aurora a King mechanical suit.

Not only that, he was even planning to build a few spare King suits and put the Throne on different people to ensure he could arrive at their locations anytime. He totally took the King as a teleportation device.

The King was extremely costly to build, so doing this was very luxurious. However, with the extravagantly profitable business of the Evolutionary Totems and as a shareholder of the Limitless Financial Group, he would earn an outrageous number of Enas every year. Therefore, he was not short on cash.

Han Xiao then told Aurora to go and learn to use the Holy Light Particle better and that the Holy Light Emissary plan would be carried out once she was ready.

Watching Aurora leave the room, Han Xiao could not help but think of Evans.

"How's Evans doing?"

Phillip appeared and said, "He's still getting to know his Esper Ability, hum..."

Han Xiao turned to look at the surveillance image. Ever since he sent Evans back, he had been undergoing secret training. Since Han Xiao did not give any orders, he had yet to replicate any Esper Abilities, so he was completely powerless and was still at the lowest Grade E.

"Have you found the targets I asked you to find?" Han Xiao asked.

"Immortals with compatible abilities have been selected. This is the list, hum..."

A mini bookshelf appeared beside Phillip. He searched around and picked out a deck of data. He then threw it up into the air. The flying pieces of paper turned into individual virtual screens, showing the records of different people to Han Xiao.

Han Xiao glanced at him.

Kiddo, what's with all these flashy tricks? Showing off?

While rubbing Phillip's face on the table like a toy, Han Xiao quickly read through these documents.

His New EsGod Cultivation Plan followed strict rules on what Esper Abilities to absorb. In order for Evans to have a perfect growth path, he had always been looking for Esper Abilities that were suitable for Evans in the early stage. The players in these files were all Espers under two categories—physique enhancement types and psychological enhancement types.

Since Evans was only Grade E, absorbing two Esper Abilities was the most suitable. Physique and mind were the most basic attributes, so this was the best combination. With his help, Evans did not have to take the path of killing like EsGod did. Therefore, he would not have to worry about his combat capability in the early stages and could focus on building a strong foundation.

“These two will do.”

Having picked two players with the best abilities. Han Xiao told Phillip to give them the specific missions.

At this time, a notification suddenly popped up on the interface.

[Liberate Beast Ancestor's Organization] Completed!

“Oh? The team I sent a few months ago has succeeded?” Han Xiao's eyes sparkled.

Before he traveled to the secondary dimensions, a group of Beast Ancestor officers led by Jotina had come to join him and made a request to liberate the Beast Ancestor's headquarters.

Back then, Han Xiao had given this mission to the people who were in the Shattered Star Ring base. Now that a few months had passed, the results of that had finally come. It seemed to be quite successful. There should very soon be a group of people coming to join him.

...

The last planet of the Beast Ancestor's headquarters was covered in flames like its ground was burning. The planet's defense measures were already all destroyed, and a ton of spaceship fragments floated in the planet's orbit.

Black Star Army battleships hovered above the planet, sucking up a huge amount of resources and countless captives using absorption beams. Most were rescued females and clueless offspring.

In the cabin of one transport ship, captives of a variety of races cowered in tiny groups, filled with fear. Groups of Black Star warriors separated them into warriors, females, and offspring.

“Don't move! Stand still!” the captain of the transport ship commanded.

To the side, wearing a black battle suit rather similar to Hila, Mia held a bag of snacks in her hand, leaned on a mechanical spear, and scanned the big group of captives before her while occasionally putting the sugar beans into her mouth.

Beast Ancestor soldier captives were absorbed into the cabin. They seemed agitated and ready to retaliate whenever. However, when they saw Mia standing near the wall, these captives all shivered and wiped that thought from their minds.

In the battle earlier, they had seen a Calamity Grade officer stationed in the headquarters get violently chopped into pieces by Mia with their very own eyes. No one dared resist in front of her.

At this time, a commotion occurred nearby. Mia turned to look over, and to her surprise, a few rescued females were arguing with the Black Star warriors and resisting their orders.

“Who the hell are you? Do you have any idea who our partner is? How dare you do this to us!”

“Let go! Stop dragging me!”

“When Master Beast Ancestor comes back, he’ll crush you all!”

These people who were yelling were grouped along with the others but were still yelling and scolding, mentioning Beast Ancestor’s name every other sentence.

Seeing this, Mia curled her lips and shook her head.

This time, the captain beside her sighed and said, “Pitiful, aren’t they? These females who are imprisoned by Beast Ancestor are basically completely cut off from the outside world. To most, that’s a dark life filled with nothing but despair, but there are also some twisted ones who somehow began to admire Beast Ancestor and became honored by their identity. Although rescuing these females is our mission, maybe many of them don’t want to be saved. They only want to continue their old life.”

Mia glanced at him and said, “Do your job. The mission is all I care about. I’m not interested in these things.”

Have a bucket of cold water poured on him, the captain did not carry on chatting with Mia and continued to direct his subordinates.

This time, Mia’s communicator rang. After she picked it up, Jotina’s wild face appeared, only it was now shining with holy and motherly love.

“How are the women and young offspring? Are all of them safe?” Jotina asked immediately.

Mia smiled and replied, “Don’t worry, we’ve rescued them all. They’re all very touched.”

“That’s great. I’ll share this good news with the army commander right now!” Jotina was overjoyed. “By the way, after you return, I’ll teach you some strong moves.”

Before waiting for a response, Jotina had already hastily hung up the communication.

“How impatient.” Mia chuckled.

Although Jotina publicly made the request to reproduce with her direct boss and appalled everyone present, after spending some time together, the army officers had realized she was really easy to befriend, being direct and decisive in everything. After a few months, she had left a good impression on many of them.

Mia was the closest to her. Both of them were 'muscular ladies', so they had countless shared interests.

Putting the communicator away, Mia looked at the group of people in front of her, scanned past the panicked or lost expressions, and exhaled.

"Nero, your godfather is really admirable. No wonder even Her Excellency Hila is willing to follow him..."

Although Black Star eliminated Gorutan out of personal revenge, judging from the results of it, this was indeed a great deed for the entire universe. Mia admired him from the bottom of her heart.

Chapter 1086 The Definition of a Qualified Second in Command

As the silver alloy gate slowly slid open, inside was a room fully made of polymer materials. The walls and the floor were all cream-colored, reflective, and smooth. Five enormous showcases were displayed in the middle of the room, with a Beyond Grade A sealed by the Spacetime Amber inside every one of them. All of them were in different postures, all of their expressions fixed on their faces. Other than these, there was nothing else in this room.

"This is my collection room."

As the group walked into the room, Han Xiao spoke. Behind him were the former officers of the Beast Ancestor, including Jotina.

As soon as the field team destroyed the Beast Ancestor's headquarters, Jotina led her sisters and brothers to express their appreciation to Han Xiao. Han Xiao remembered that he had promised to take them to see Gorutan, so he took them there.

This was the collection room he used to hold his five Beyond Grade A captives. There was the name of each captive on every showcase. They were the church's 'Red Devil' Tolaen; the federation's 'Lone Ranger' Jackornitz, 'Energy Soul' Womre, and Hades; and 'Beast Ancestor' Gorutan.

The five Beyond Grade A specimens displayed there were the best proof of his achievements. Just this scene alone was enough to shock everyone.

Jotina's eyes locked onto Gorutan immediately. Seeing that this man she had hated and feared all her life was locked inside the Amber, joy filled her heart.

"You deserve it!"

Jotina clenched her fists with excitement. She felt that this was the happiest day of her life. The dark times in her past seemed to have all been forgotten. The world in her eyes seemed to be colorful once again.

It was like a breeze of fresh air blew past her mind, bringing the mountains of hatred, despair, anger away with it, only leaving the refreshed feeling of hope for a new life.

She turned to look at Han Xiao. Her eyes were filled with admiration and gentleness.

In her eyes, Black Star seemed to be glowing with holiness, like he was the light that would lead her toward a new life.

Feeling Jotina's passionate sight, Han Xiao's face trembled slightly.

He did not have much contact with Jotina, but he had a very vivid impression of how direct and passionate she was.

The reward of [Liberate Beast Ancestor's Organization] had already been given. He had received a lot of Favorability, and he was guessing that Jotina's loyalty meter to him was almost going to explode.

Han Xiao coughed and said, "Some of you don't have an exact position yet. Since we just rescued a large group of Beast Ancestor's young offspring, I shall leave them to you guys to guide. Any problems?"

"Not at all!" Everyone nodded, quite happy about this arrangement.

"Take your time and look around. I have some things to attend to."

Han Xiao found an excuse to leave alone. Jotina and the others had been troubled by this hatred for many years, so he did not want to disturb them from venting it. Anyway, Phillip would be watching over them. He did not have to stay there.

After returning to his office, Han Xiao pondered about the human resource distribution of the army.

"Currently, the top-tier Calamity Grades under my command are only Hadavy, Lothaire, Feidin, and Jotina. The other ones with potential have yet to grow up. These more than a dozen Beast Ancestor officers are quite important. Together with this group of young children of Beast Ancestor, they will surely form a new faction in the army in the future..."

There were all kinds of factions in the Black Star Army, not including Han Xiao. They could be classified into a few big groups.

One was the elder faction led by Herlous, among which were smaller groups such as Sunils, Godorans, Aquamarinians, and so on. This faction represented the senior members of the army. Another was the academy faction led by Lagi and Nero, formed mostly from the graduates of the Super Academy. They were quite active. Third was the mainstream faction led by the Calamity Grades who joined later on, which was also the largest faction mainly made of official warriors and mercenaries with no backgrounds. Fourth was the political faction led by Sylvia and Reynold, mainly consisting of those who did not take part in the battles but took care of the army's other matters. They managed the army's day to day affairs, logistics, economics, and so on.

Jotina and the others would most likely form a Beast Ancestor faction after they stabilized their positions in the army.

As for Hila, since she was always alone, she had no faction. The Black Star Guards had limited influence on the various departments of the army, so they did not form a faction too. Lothaire, who was managing the Assassin's Society outside the army base, was a secret, so he was not in any factions.

These factions would have conflicted with each other privately, but with Han Xiao's existence, they all held themselves back. All big organizations had continuous internal conflicts as they expanded, but the Black Star Army was considered a new organization in terms of how long ago it had been formed, so the internal conflicts were not large, limited to internal business conflicts.

Completely getting rid of internal conflicts was impossible. Everyone had their own mindset, and there was no way to ask people to give themselves selflessly. Even pillars like Herlous had their own personal goals—for example, to obtain more benefits for his Sunil race.

Power could change one's mind. The longer the high-level officers worked for the army, the more they would want to obtain. Furthermore, those Supers who joined the Black Star Army later on came to search for a brighter future in the first place, so no matter how large the cake was, the competition would never disappear.

"It's the same for the development union. It's only just been created, so the factions have not formed yet. Once the resources are united to a certain extent, there will definitely be factions..."

He could guess that the three Universal Civilizations would try to infiltrate the Beyond Grade A Association by dividing it, as there would definitely be some who did not agree with the shared battlefield for Beyond Grade As theory. These people would be easier to woo.

Beyond Grade As were all full of pride. The root of factions being formed was the different opinions people had to begin with. The development union was fated to be full of arguments since it was created, but the upper echelons above the position of director all knew how important it was for them to unite. The stage where the association's resources were linked and united was crucial.

As the vice president, although his position was lower than Manison's on paper, it did not mean much. How much weight his words carried depended on two things—his overall strength and his influence in the association.

"The resources uniting stage is my chance. I can use my advantage to meet more members and form my own faction, slowly expanding my network to catch up to Manison. As long as there are enough people who support me, I'll be able to have as big an impact on day-to-day decision making as Manison. It will also be beneficial for me to have consecutive terms in the future too. Furthermore, if I don't do anything, I might not even be able to maintain the vice president position..."

Han Xiao pondered. He had chosen to take a step back because he wanted to slowly accumulate his advantages.

And now there was a great opportunity right in front of him. Although the three Universal Civilizations had accepted that the development union was legal, Dark Lord's mission had yet to end.

This meant that Clotti, who was an honorable director on paper, would still attack other members. This would undoubtedly damage the development union's credibility. This was an act of provocation and contempt from the Universal Civilizations, as well as a way of testing the waters.

"Since this is the case, those neutral Beyond Grade As hired by Super Star Cluster Civilizations will probably be very afraid. This looks like a good opportunity for me to cut in. If I'm able to convince the dynasty's upper echelons to stop Dark Lord's mission, not only will I be able to display how important I am as the vice president, but I will also receive favorability from those neutral Beyond Grade As..."

Having thought of this, Han Xiao told Phillip to send a message to all the neutral Beyond Grade As in the association. The message started with some formal greetings and routine questions like "Have you eaten?". He then brought up the matter regarding Dark Lord.

Although he decided to personally settle this issue, Han Xiao did not want to keep it a secret. Only spare tires would help others quietly in the dark. As for him, he would either not do it or let everyone know he was the one who did it.

Therefore, the Great Mechanic Han first planned to contact these neutral Beyond Grade As who were possible targets of Dark Lord and tell them to bring this matter up in the next meeting when everyone attended. All the Beyond Grade A members would host a meeting together once every so often. The development union made this kind of act official, which was also one of the initial reasons to form this communication platform.

“Speaking of which, Dark Lord captured Traveler, and Traveler put the blame on Sorokin, so the dynasty definitely won’t let this slip easily. I wonder how they’re going to punish the Limitless Financial Group.”

Han Xiao chuckled.

Beep beep!

Right at that moment, his communicator rang.

The federation and the church had sent him a message one after the other. The content was the eleventh revision of the terms of bailing their allies.

Han Xiao looked through them. Compared to the initial version, the compensation the federation and the church offered was much richer.

Since he had never given any suggestions, the ones who were in charge of drafting the terms on both sides were almost going mad.

“It’s been quite a few months. I’ve tortured them enough. Time to bring this to a conclusion.”

Han Xiao tutted and changed some terms on both sides, such as swapping some resources compensations into gold-grade blueprints.

The two Universal Civilizations both had a very rich inventory of gold-grade blueprints, so the blueprints they would be willing to give out were not crucial ones. However, this was not important to Han Xiao at all as it was just a source of God’s Trait Transformation Points.

As soon as the two price lists were sent, the people of the federation and the church were immediately overjoyed. With no hesitation, they sent a communication request and started an official negotiation with Han Xiao.

This time, Han Xiao did not torture them. After some negotiation, an agreement was made. He would receive three Universal Treasure Grade blueprints.

The captives he planned to return first were Tolaen and Hades, one for each side.

He did not sell the federation’s allies to the church. Although this would be quite a useful move, it had its cons.

Anyway, he still had two more federation captives. What Han Xiao needed now was influence over the Universal Civilizations to improve his position in the development union, and the best way to do that

was to not make any moves. As long as the captives were still in his hands, the Federation of Light would have to give him face to a certain extent, and the church would still have hope about him selling the federation's allies to them. Therefore, he was not going to let go of all the captives easily.

After confirming the agreement, Han Xiao looked at these two relieved diplomatic officials and slowly said, "I shall wait for the day of your public apologies."

Public apologies from the federation and the church were the first terms on the compensation agreements.

"Surely, please pay attention to the news."

The two diplomatic officials bade farewell in their own traditional ways before ending the call. Their remote projections disappeared.

Han Xiao leaned back, crossed his legs, and murmured, "The federation and the church have compromised. For the time being, the dynasty will also follow through with their decision to make selling the Evolutionary Totems public to mend their relationship with me. They won't be targeting the development union on the surface. From the way it looks, the three Universal Civilizations are not going to cause any problems for quite a while..."

He knew the characteristics of the three Universal Civilizations very well, so he knew that this peace would last a few months to a year.

However, this would only be calm before the storm, as the three Universal Civilizations still had an arch enemy to deal with—the Super Star Cluster Alliance, which had been keeping a low profile and expanding in the free competition zone.

Once the three Universal Civilizations were ready, they would certainly deal the Super Star Cluster Alliance a heavy blow, and it would not be the same gentle way they dealt with the development union. They definitely would not hold back, to eliminate the unrealistic ambition of these Super Star Cluster Civilizations. It could also be said that the three Universal Civilizations were only forgiving about the Beyond Grade As because the Super Star Cluster Alliance was their top priority.

"In this brief window, I'll have to keep building my advantages."

Han Xiao looked at the interface. He had been receiving tons of EXP every single day. Although the cost of leveling up from level 320 to 340 was outrageous, in the face of his merciless leek harvesting machine, he would have enough sooner or later.

The players had become familiar with the Flickering World version, exploring while fighting one another. It was intense.

Han Xiao planned to make their game experience richer, so he wanted to host the Army Tournament that he had come up with some time ago and make it a large festival event for the faction.

The happier the players were, the more motivated they would be to contribute more EXP to him.

...

At the same time, at a certain hidden location in Black Star Palace, a player called Paradise Disco was led by two mechanical soldiers through multiple security checks and down a dark corridor.

There were no decorations in this corridor at all, only pale white lights that extended deeper ahead. At the end of the corridor was a metal wall and a turning corner. No sound could be heard other than their footsteps.

Feeling the cold and frightening atmosphere, Paradise Disco could not help but ask, "Buddy, where are we going?"

The two mechanical soldiers had no intention to reply and continued walking in synchronized steps.

"What's so secretive?" Paradise Disco opened the interface and mumbled, "What on earth is this mission anyway?"

On the mission list, a mission called [Special Experiment] was glowing.

To Paradise Disco's recollection, this mission was suddenly triggered, and he did not do anything. It asked him to follow random mechanical soldiers to the destined location to carry out a special experiment, and that was all the introduction the mission had. The reward was exorbitant. It was about the reward of seven to eight Grade B missions.

Curiosity drove him to accept the mission, and on the way to the destination, he never stopped guessing.

Did I come across the secrets of the Black Star Army?

Has the army actually been carrying out some kind of forbidden secret experiment?

Why did I trigger it?

While he was making wild guesses, the mechanical soldiers in front of him stopped, and before them was an ordinary alloy gate.

After passing the identity scan, the gate opened. Paradise Disco quickly looked in, and a white lab entered his sights.

At this time, there was another player in the room, and he looked over too. The two of them looked at each other and were both slightly stunned.

"You accepted the mission too?"

"Special Experiment, right?"

"Yes, yes, that's the one. Do you know the details?"

"No idea, I've only just arrived too."

"It's so mysterious. I love it."

The two of them chattered and exchanged information. They became even more intrigued.

Since they had come to such a secret place in the headquarters, it could be no ordinary matter.

At this time, a team of mechanical soldiers pushed two life-sustaining cabins in. Two mechanical soldiers then took out two facial devices that blocked the wearer's senses and passed them to the two players.

The leading mechanical soldier captain said, "Lie in the cabin, wear the mask, and wait for the experiment to start."

The two players exchanged looks and, suppressing their curiosity, went inside the cabins.

Paradise Disco put on the mask and instantly fell into darkness. His vision, hearing, and smell were all gone. He had no way of knowing what was happening in the outside world.

Both of his hands and legs were locked up tight; he could not move at all.

Time went by extremely slow in this state. Every second felt like years.

Paradise Disco became even more curious. He almost wanted to break the restraints a few times and see what was happening. However, the heavy failure punishment of this mission discouraged him from doing so.

Just as he was about to get impatient, a notification suddenly popped up on the interface.

Your Grade B+ Potential Esper Ability [Physique Enhancement—Bone and Muscle Inflation] has been taken away!

You have entered [Ability Frozen] state. You are not able to use any abilities related to your Esper Ability.

Duration: Infinite

"W-what?"

Paradise Disco was shocked and appalled.

1087 Made Friends

"Where's my Esper Ability?"

On the interface, a ton of abilities were now gray and frozen. Even the passive attributes given by the Esper Ability were gone. Paradise Disco immediately panicked and tried to leave the cabin.

This time, a cold metal hand pressed onto his chest and held him tightly in place. It was a mechanical soldier stopping him from moving. Paradise Disco was wearing a mask that sealed off all his senses, so all he could see was darkness and nothing else. He had no choice but to give up struggling and anxiously wait for the experiment to end.

Not knowing how long had passed, Paradise Disco suddenly felt that the devices that locked him in place opened up. He instantly stood up and took off his mask. He then looked around nervously, only to realize he was at the same place he was before, and the mechanical soldiers looked like they had never moved at all.

“My Esper Ability is gone. Is yours too?” Another player taking part in the experiment was released too and spoke with shock.

“That’s right. Mine is gone too.”

The two of them quickly exchanged information and realized that they were both in the infinite duration [Ability Frozen] state. They were both in a state of panic.

Paradise Disco hastily asked the mechanical soldier on the side, “What have you done to us?”

Following the answer Han Xiao had set for them to give, the mechanical soldier said monotonously, “It was just an experiment. The army is developing a special device to suppress Esper Genes. It might be widely available in the future.”

I knew it’s an experiment involving secret weapons!

The two of them exchanged and saw the same emotion in each other’s eyes. Paradise Disco quickly asked the question they both cared most about.

“Will our abilities recover?”

“Of course. In the research plan, Immortals are the best experiment targets. According to the logistics department, the Immortals only have to die and revive to refresh their body state and recover their ability. In the future, the Immortals in the army might be equipped with this kind of weapon,” the mechanical soldier replied emotionlessly.

Hearing that their abilities could recover, the two of them immediately breathed a sigh of relief.

The two of them had absolutely no doubt about this explanation. After all, the ‘Black Star Army Badge: Evolution’ had already happened, so developing secret weapons sounded just like what the army would do.

In the players’ eyes, this somewhat evil style completely aligned with the Black Star Army!

“This is the army’s secret plan. You have both signed the confidentiality agreement. Remember, do not tell anyone about what happened here,” the mechanical soldier said with a serious expression while returning their communication devices to them.

Paradise Disco took the communication device, looked at the player beside him, and saw suppressed joy in his eyes.

Confidentiality agreement? Hehe, that won’t stop us. You think taking our communication devices away will prevent this from leaking this? Impossible, the army has no power over the forums.

As if the army will find out if we make a post about it.

The two of them were secretly excited and were already thinking about how they were going to share this secret on the forums. This was not because they wanted to get in the way of the army’s interests but because their impulse to leak spoilers just could not be stopped.

Didn’t you hear the mechanical soldier? He said that this kind of weapon might be widely available to the army in the future. Won’t it be another type of suicidal attack like the explosion backpack and the

army badge? We've come to know about it much earlier than the others. What reason do we have to not show it off?

Of course, the two of them had no idea that this was just an excuse Han Xiao had made up. He did not want to expose Evans' existence, so he made up a reason not to let the outside world have any suspicion.

He purposely let the mechanical soldiers tell the two of them because he wanted to use them to spread misleading information, making the players think that this was a research and development project of some kind of secret weapon. This way, when the players took part in it in the future, he would not have to find another excuse again.

After the mission completion notification popped up on their interfaces, the two of them took their things and were too lazy to go back the way they came from, so they asked the mechanical soldier to help to send them to the afterlife.

With a flash of white light, the two of them revived in the populated base hall and checked their status immediately.

"My ability really came back."

Paradise Disco was now finally relieved. He instantly opened up the forums and wrote down what he had just experienced. He added the title 'Shocking! The army's secret weapon turns out to be...' and posted it.

As proven by facts, there was a reason this type of intriguing title had always been popular. This post attracted the attention of some players very quickly, and people started to comment on it.

"Is this true? Why have I never seen this mission before?"

"Suppress Esper Genes? I seem to recall that Black Star once had a house of happiness that was used specifically to produce Genetic Medicines out of galactic pirates. Is it now improved?"

"If we have this kind of weapon, won't beating the other factions' Esper players be a piece of cake?"

"Come on, have some ambition and imagination. This kind of treasure might be able to allow us to even defeat NPCs, making those strong NPCs powerless and unable to resist whatever's done to them."

"Stop it. I'm already starting to imagine the adult parodies in my head..."

"Come to think of it, the secret weapons the army has been inventing seem to be becoming more and more evil. The aberration one was already bad enough, but now they're even inventing this... Are we the baddies?"

"The Deputy Army Commander is an Esper. Could it be that the Army Commander could not conquer her, so he's planning to invent this kind of equipment and use force?"

"Black Star-Hila shippers are furious!"

"We live and die with Hila!"

...

While the players were pondering and making wild guesses, a secret door of a secret training room deep in the base opened. A man wearing a black hood walked out. He took off the hood, revealing his face. It was indeed Evans.

This training room had a secret path that led directly to the earlier lab. He followed what Han Xiao told him, sneakily went over, and absorbed the Esper Abilities of the two immobilized players. Before that, he had confirmed with Han Xiao again and again that the Immortals would only lose their abilities temporarily.

“So, this is the feeling of superhuman power...”

Evans raised his right arm and clenched his fist. A small stream of energy flowed out from his cells into the muscle and bones of his arm.

Boom!

The next moment, his arm bloated visibly like air was pumped in. His bones became tougher too, and his raw strength increased a large amount.

In his hands, this Esper Ability only had Grade E power. With his pitiful amount of energy, he could not even afford to pump up his entire body. He swung his arm a few times and made sounds of the sound barrier breaking. Just this one arm’s strength was close to double his original strength.

Esper Abilities all had potential grades, and usually, this grade signified the highest Grade the Esper could achieve. Although the players were not restricted by this rule, the potential grade still represented the growth speed and rarity of their Esper Abilities. The rarer, the stronger. Some players even continuously opened up new accounts and topped up real money just to get a rare Esper Ability.

Physique enhancement was a large branch in the Esper Abilities. Even Esper Abilities with the same prefix had many variations. Some ordinary physique enhancing abilities might only have Grade D or Grade C potential, but [Physique Enhancement—Bone and Muscle Inflation] had Grade B+ potential, meaning this was a rather high-quality ability among its branch.

This Esper Ability was also a semi-shapeshifting kind. Once activated, even skinny bamboos would instantly turn into muscular men.

The psychological Esper Ability that was absorbed also had grade B potential, which was still quite high.

Among the players, grade A potential was already extremely rare, so although grade B potential was one grade lower, it was plenty good enough.

According to the plan Han Xiao made, giving Evans these two high-quality abilities would not waste his slots. This combination of abilities was beneficial to increasing his basic attributes. As long as his own Grade increased, these two Esper Abilities would keep giving him bonus Strength, Dexterity, Endurance, and Psychological Resistance.

Evans loved these two abilities and could not stop using them till his energy ran out, but his eyes were still glowing.

He had been ordinary for decades. This was the first time he had enjoyed this feeling of fulfillment brought by this power. The shortcut of robbing abilities from others was extremely tempting, as if every

single potential desire in his body was pushing him to take that path. Evans felt a sense of hunger coming from every cell in his body, instinctively thirsting for new abilities, like a hungry man's insatiable craving for food.

"Hmm, His Excellency Black Star said that the changes in my body will bring changes to my mindset too. This should be the change my Esper Ability has caused in me..."

Evans thought about it. His strong heart developed through hardship made him suppress this sense of hunger brought by his Esper Ability.

He was not someone who had boundless greed. Black Star had changed his life and given him a righteous path to becoming strong. All he was thinking about was studying and training hard so that he could return this favor in the future. All he wanted was not to disappoint the hope Black Star had for him.

...

The last few months had not been peaceful. First, the federation and the church cooperated to attack the Black Star Army's stronghold but were forced to retreat by Black Star. Then, the Beyond Grade A Association was formed. Therefore, the three Universal Civilizations had been at the center of galactic attention.

Today, the Federation of Light and the Arcane Church had finally made an official response regarding the attack on Hila a few months ago.

The two of them used different words but conveyed the same message, saying that the incident a few months ago was 'an act of impulse led by misunderstandings'. At the same time, they publicly apologized to the Black Star Army, expressing that they would pay for the losses as well as give extra compensation.

Actually, as early as a few months prior when the incident occurred, the black markets at various places had opened a bet on whether the Universal Civilizations would apologize to the Black Star Army. The odds were sky-high, and most galactic residents felt that even though the Universal Civilizations were wrong, they would still be firm about it. They did not think the Black Star Army would receive apologies from the federation and the church, only private compensation at most.

Therefore, after this announcement was made, most galactic residents were astonished.

In the history of the three Universal Civilizations' rule over the known universe, extremely rarely did they lower their heads against other organizations. After all, a public apology would harm their authority. However, the federation and the church shockingly had decided to do it this time, and the Black Star Army became one of the extremely few private organizations in the universe that had this honor.

The dynasty did not want to be excluded from this matter. Right after the church and the federation made their announcements, they officially opened up the Evolutionary Totem business, announcing that the product would no longer be limited and controlled, putting it onto the free market and allowing it to be bought and sold freely.

Countless civilizations had been waiting for this day. The Black Star Army's email inbox exploded. The inventory the army had built up was being depleted continuously while enormous amounts of money flowed into the army's account like a river.

Of course, the smarter people knew that the Crimson Dynasty did this to be closer to Black Star. As the three Universal Civilizations expressed their kind intentions to one person at the same time, Black Star's reputation and position grew once again, even in the Beyond Grade A circle.

Not mentioning anything else, at least Han Xiao's words carried heavier weight as a vice president in the development union.

The players now, of course, would not miss out on this kind of matter. The Flickering World panel in the forums was soon filled with discussion.

Green Dot: "Army Commander is indeed admired by all."

First Name: "Any old players that still remember 1.0? Who could have guessed that Black Star would turn out to be such an important NPC? Look at those protagonist characters in the novice planets. Which one of them turned out as successful as Black Star?"

Hesitant: "Why do I suddenly feel touched? Four versions passed so fast. It's like watching our kid grow up to be a man."

Army Commander's Big PP: "My son Black Star is destined to be the king!"

Important Things Need to Be Said Three Times: "Upstairs, you tired of living?"

The players had already been shocked when Han Xiao defeated twelve Beyond Grade As. Having witnessed such an astonishing event, they were much calmer now.

As the federation and the church carried out their terms, Han Xiao also kept his promise and released Tolaen and Hades.

...

On a sealed dock of Planet Black Gate, the officials of the federation and the church were waiting. They stood clearly apart and did not communicate with each other at all.

These groups of people were there to retrieve their own captives. For that, they had come to the Black Star Army's territory.

After waiting for a while, a Black Star fleet approached from afar and stopped at this dock.

Woosh!

The hatch of the main ship opened. A group of mechanical soldiers carried the amber specimens of Tolaen and Hades down from the spaceship. They then placed these two works of art on the ground. Han Xiao walked out after.

Seeing this, the people of the federation and the church approached quickly, gathered around Han Xiao, and greeted him respectfully.

“Your Excellency Black Star.”

“Hmm.” Han Xiao looked around casually, waved his hand, and said, “Since you’re all here, quickly take your men away.”

He signaled everyone to get back. He then blocked their view with nanoparticles. He took his time for a few minutes before breaking Tolaen and Hades out of the amber.

Pa!

Having just regained freedom, the two of them staggered and almost fell.

Seeing this, Han Xiao snorted and coldly said, “The federation and the church have bailed the two of you out. Be careful in the future. If you dare mess with me again and end up in my hands, don’t blame me for picking off some parts from you.”

Tolaen shivered and uncontrollably took a few steps back. Fear lingered on his face as he looked at Han Xiao with horror-filled eyes. He did not dare talk back at all.

These past few months had been hell. He felt that if it had carried on, he would have been driven mad inside the amber. He never ever wanted to experience it again; he just wanted to get as far away from Black Star as possible.

Hades, who was standing to the side, was fearful too, but he could still control his expression, just about.

Nonetheless, he was extremely sorrowful inside. He had thought that he would at the very least gain some reputation through that operation. Never did he expect to fail so miserably.

Although being defeated by Black Star could not be considered shameful, this tag would probably follow him for a very long time.

He had yet to even make a nickname for himself. Nothing he had done was worth mentioning. What should he say when someone asked him about what he was known for? Was he going to proudly say he had been locked up by Black Star before?

Seeing that the two of them stood in place and did not move, Han Xiao raised his brows and joked, “What, don’t feel like leaving? Want to stay a few more months at my place?”

Hearing this, the two of them instantly shivered, quickly returned to their own welcome groups with tails tucked between their legs without saying a word, and boarded their respective spaceships.

The officials quickly took off.

Inside the church’s spaceship, Tolaen was looking down.

“Six people from the church went. I’m the only one who was captured. Why am I so unlucky?”

While he was blaming himself, a few communications were picked up by the spaceship. They were from Sagman, Taylor, and Mercer, who had also taken part in the attack on Hila. Their remote projections appeared in front of him.

“Hehe, are you alright?” Sagman said with a smile.

“Not at all.” Tolaen was miserable.

“Don’t have to be so pessimistic. We were locked up by Black Star once too, and we’ve all got over it.” Taylor smiled and comforted him.

“... You guys are quite generous.”

“After you come back, let’s find a time and place to meet up,” Mercer said.

Tolaen looked at the three smiling faces in front of him, and it suddenly occurred to him.

That’s it. We’ve all been to the prison, so we have common topics. Could this be what inmates feel like?

He had not joined the church long ago. Before that, he was a wanted man, so he could not squeeze into the Beyond Grade A circle of the church. He was like an outsider.

To his absolute surprise, after being locked up by Black Star this time, he obtained acceptance from a group of ‘former inmates’.

Tolaen’s mood suddenly became better.

I’ve finally made some friends...

1088 Holy Accord’s Pain

After releasing the two captives, Han Xiao did not leave Planet Black Gate immediately but instead summoned the person in charge of the planet and inspected the railway construction progress. He shared some experience and gave some guidance on the construction.

On the way back, Han Xiao also inspected the operations of the stargate toll booth.

The stargate commute network in the Black Star Army territory extended from the Garu Star Cluster all the way to the free competition zone, quick and convenient. It was currently one of the exceedingly few complete transport routes in the Flickering World. There were a large number of people using it every day.

Of course, any outsiders who wanted to use this route had to pay a fee. Han Xiao fully utilized the Chinese talent buried deep in his soul of ‘build a road if you want to be rich’. He had set up toll booths at every stargate.

With a natural money maker like this, within a year of the Flickering World’s opening, the army had already earned back the cost of building the stargates. This outrageous profit margin proved a fact—buying land was much more profitable than operating businesses.

After returning to Black Star Palace, the first part of the bail from the federation and the church came. The federation paid the most. All of the three gold blueprints came from them, and this was the first gold blueprint.

“Mechanical Deity exclusive weapon, Universal Treasure grade mechanical item, Celestial Punishment Edge.”

Inside the office, Han Xiao chewed on the lava-flavor condensed nutrition bar while reading through the blueprint data from the Federation of Light.

The blueprints the federation agreed to give him were mostly weapons. This was what Han Xiao selected.

According to the information provided by the Federation of Light, this was an idea from the Saint Tyracles, those admirers of the Mechanical Deity. The federation inherited their knowledge and improved on it, fusing some of their special technology into it, and finally turned this incomplete idea into a blueprint.

On the blueprint was the complete design diagram of this weapon. It had some similarities to the Emperor's Cape. Its appearance was a long mechanical sword with complex interiors, equipped with powerful close-range combat technology. It could also turn into a giant cannon mode and release various long-range attacks. As its name suggested, it was built to destroy celestial bodies.

Like the Emperor's Cape, the Celestial Punishment Edge was also a mega machine, which the Armed Branch excelled in. Although Han Xiao was not, he would still be able to build it with the needed knowledge.

Why did these Saint Tyracles love to design close range combat weapons so much? Did all the true Mechanics have a hidden Pugilist desire inside them waiting to break free?

Complaining was one thing, but he would still undoubtedly have to build it. Han Xiao told Phillip to add the materials for the Celestial Punishment Edge to the next bulk purchase list.

After handling this matter, Han Xiao checked his inbox.

He had received replies from those neutral Beyond Grade A members of the association who were hired by Super Star Cluster Civilizations that he had messaged not too long ago. Most people were worried they might become the target of Dark Lord; only a few were not concerned.

"If there's a demand, there'll be a solution."

Han Xiao's eyes sparkled. He chatted with those Beyond Grade As separately for a while, including 'Leader of Colossuses' Garoze, whom he had once intimidated into retreating.

These people understood what he meant instantly after he gave a subtle hint, and they clearly expressed that they were willing to support Black Star as much as they could in the development union in the future.

Most of these Beyond Grade As did not become allies of the three Universal Civilizations because they did not want to be controlled. However, this would not happen in the development union. They were just normal members of the association, so they had limited control over it. Therefore, they needed an upper echelon with power who could represent their interests and give them better privileges. This was a win-win deal.

Including Garoze, these Beyond Grade As agreed to bring up this matter in the next plenary meeting, and Han Xiao promised to operate around it to eliminate the threat they were facing.

After bringing those people to his side, Han Xiao contacted the dynasty, planning to first notify them.

He expressed his intention, and after waiting for a while, the secretary connected his communication request to Urranrell.

As the scene around him changed, Han Xiao's remote projection appeared in the Dynasty Ruler's office. Before him was Urranrell, who was sitting behind her desk.

"Your Excellency Urranrell." Han Xiao nodded respectfully as a greeting.

"Black Star." Urranrell greeted back, stared into Han Xiao's eyes, and cut to the chase. "You want me to call Clotti back?"

"Yes. The purpose of the development union is to eliminate physical conflict between Beyond Grade As. Clotti is now an Honorable Director, so if he attacks the members, it will go against the association's purpose..."

With an expressionless face, Urranrell said, "On what grounds are you making this suggestion to me today? As an ally of the dynasty or as the vice president of the development union?"

"Both," Han Xiao replied.

"Black Star, in the past few decades, how have you felt about the way the dynasty has been treating you?"

"Win-win." Han Xiao smiled.

Urranrell paused and slowly said, "I must remind you, the Evolutionary Totem business and the territory in the Flickering World, these are all benefits only our allies can enjoy. The dynasty regards you very highly. I'm sure you're aware of that."

Some things could not be said directly. The dynasty did not oppose Black Star becoming the vice president of the development union, but they did not want to see Black Star lean toward it too much. They hoped that between the positions of a dynasty ally and the vice president of the development union, Han Xiao would lean toward the former.

The Mechanic Emperor was an example they could learn from. He had made too many contributions and received too much credit. The federation had no choice but to keep rewarding him and supporting him. This had led to the Mechanic Emperor slowly getting out of control. The dynasty did not want to create another Mechanic Emperor.

As if he did not hear Urranrell's words between the lines, Han Xiao continued what he was saying.

"Clotti has captured Traveler and another Beyond Grade A, reigniting others' fear of him. The mission is actually already complete. If he continues to attack others, it might be too much. Furthermore, when I was in the secondary dimensions, I helped him, or things would have turned out differently."

"Hmm... that makes sense too." Urranrell thought about his words.

Seeing this, Han Xiao's eyes sparkled, and he said, "Clotti should have reported the results of Traveler's interrogation, so you must know that Sorokin played a part in this too. Does the dynasty plan to put him on the list of targets?"

“The authenticity of his testimony has yet to be investigated. Sorokin’s motive is still unknown. It’s not suitable for Clotti to act.” Urranrell waved her hand. “If there’s enough evidence, the dynasty will deal with him.”

Hearing this, Han Xiao secretly gloated.

Sorokin had always been swinging between the three Universal Civilizations, and now Traveler’s testimony might cause a huge problem to the position he had maintained for a very long time.

He wondered if the dynasty would use forceful means like when they dealt with Traveler. If that was the case, the true strength Sorokin had been hiding would probably be exposed.

The two of them chatted for a while. Urranrell did not give a direct response, only saying that she would consider the proposal of stopping Dark Lord’s mission. Han Xiao knew where to draw the line and bade farewell on good terms.

...

A few days later, in the Beyond Grade A Association’s headquarters on Planet Finn, remote projections of close to a hundred Beyond Grade As gathered to attend the routine plenary meeting in the round table conference room.

Currently, the development union was uniting resources, so the focus of the discussion was the partnership plans between the various Beyond Grade As.

The atmosphere was heated. Everyone there was a leader in their own field. They could make big decisions on the spot, so the process was quite smooth. Everyone made their own proposals and collaborated with other members who possessed the resources they wanted. Slowly, everyone’s businesses started to connect, forming an enormous profit network. To normal Beyond Grade As, this was an excellent opportunity to partner up with other large Beyond Grade A organizations and achieve mutually-beneficial agreements. With just a recommendation from others, they would receive huge profits.

After the day-to-day affairs were settled, Manison changed the topic.

“In the next meeting, the development union is going to welcome two new members, Tolaen and Hades. Due to some personal reasons, they missed the timing when the association was created. They have now gone through the necessary procedures, and they’ll be attending the next meeting.”

The people could not help but look at Han Xiao, who was sitting in the vice president seat. Everyone knew about the ‘personal reasons’, so the atmosphere in the room was quite funny.

After that, Manison looked around and slowly said, “If there’s nothing else, that shall be all for this meet...”

This time, Garoze raised his hand and said, “I have a question I’d like to ask Honorable Director Clotti.”

Everyone looked over. Clotti, who had been keeping silent, opened his eyes and glanced at him.

“I’d like to confirm one thing. We’re all members of the association now, and we’re to obey the rules and regulations. Therefore, Your Excellency Clotti, you can’t attack any members, right?”

"I only listen to the dynasty's orders," Clotti said with an expressionless face, not caring at all.

The atmosphere immediately became tense. The direct members of the three Universal Civilizations, who were originally resting with their eyes closed, looked interested too.

With courage, Garoze said in a deep voice, "I hope the association will take care of this and ensure our safety. I wouldn't want His Excellency Dark Lord to suddenly have a wild idea one day and blame me and attack me for a crime I've never committed."

As soon as he said that, many neutral Beyond Grade As expressed that they agreed with him. It was clear this was planned.

"Hmm..." Manison narrowed his eyes.

The association's position was rather strange. Although these three Universal Civilizations' direct members had joined the association, it was obvious they would not listen to the association, and this proposal had brought this problem to the table.

While the request of these neutral Beyond Grade As was totally logical, it was not a decision the association currently had the power to make. He had no right to tell Clotti to stop.

However, the very purpose of the development union was to resolve conflicts between Beyond Grade As, so it had to live up to that. Manison could not possibly say that he could not do it, or it would shake the foundation of the association and make people worry about the association's ability to obey its own rules.

"I'll do my best..." Manison planned to first agree and think of a solution later.

However, before he could finish, Han Xiao suddenly interrupted him.

"Leave this problem to me. I'll deal with it."

Garoze and the others understood and all thanked Han Xiao. "Then we shall leave it to you, Your Excellency Black Star. We'll be waiting for the good news."

Clotti gave Han Xiao a meaningful look and did not speak.

Han Xiao smiled at Clotti and did not intend to speak either. Both of them knew that the one who could make this decision was not present.

Han Xiao even pretended to comfort Garoze, finishing the show.

This time, Manison figured out what was happening and gave him a meaningful look too.

Manison did not mind Han Xiao building connections and establishing his reputation. To him, Black Star was on his side. As long as he could do the job, there was no problem.

...

After about a week, Clotti received an order from the Dynasty Ruler to stop the mission. He then led the captives back, leaving the Flickering World.

This message quickly spread to all the members. In their mind, Han Xiao became much more reliable.

By actively taking responsibility for this matter and successfully dealing with it, Black Star proved his ability. Knowing that, the others would naturally come to respect him. This would work just about anywhere.

To Han Xiao, this was just a small matter that did not cost him too much. As his position became higher, his opinion became more and more influential to the dynasty's decision-making on some unimportant matters. The Dynasty Ruler gave him face, too. Making a dynasty ally sitting in the vice president seat more powerful in the association was clearly better than having the federation's Manison have full control over it.

Meanwhile, after more than half a month's time, Aurora had already fully mastered the Holy Light Particle. Without further ado, Han Xiao instantly announced the existence of the Holy Light Seed to the outside world. He emphasized the importance of the new class system granted by the Holy Light Seed. He stated that all army members would be able to acquire Holy Light Seeds after earning merits.

This new source of power made both the players and the Supers interested, but that was all it was, interest. The ordinary people had the strongest response; it was like a storm to them.

Almost everyone hoped to possess powers beyond ordinary men, and this was the best shortcut to it. As long as they awakened Super Genes, they would instantly be promoted into the Supers society and enjoy its privileges.

However, people were born different. Restricted by predetermined talent, most people were destined to be ordinary their entire lives.

Now, however, there was an opportunity to change their fate right in front of their eyes. Furthermore, it was not beyond their reach. As long as they worked for the Black Star Army and made enough contributions, they would have a certain chance of obtaining extraordinary power!

As soon as this announcement was made, countless ordinary people went haywire. The sensation it caused was even more incredible than all the things the army had done in the past added up. After all, the things the army had done were just that, but this announcement was related to the interests of everyone.

The ordinary people had their own way of living. No matter how amazing the Black Star Army was, there were only very few that were willing to work in an armed force. However, it was all different now. The Black Star Army's appeal to ordinary people instantly exceeded ninety-nine percent across all industries.

In just five short days, the number of ordinary people requesting to join the army had already exceeded the current number of members of the Black Star Army!

The number of ordinary people in the universe far exceeded the number of Supers.

...

Within a secret research base of the Holy Accord organization, a researcher placed a cooling container in front of Law and Fay, opened its cap, extended his hand into the white cold fog, and took out a device that looked like a mini radar.

“Your Excellencies, this is the detection device I’ve invented using the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy’s characteristics. It’s used to sense the Holy Light Particle.”

Law clapped with encouragement. “Good job. This way, we’ll be able to find the Holy Light Particle.”

“The Holy Light Particle has been hidden for many years,” Fay said. “It’s probably sleeping in a certain secondary dimension and has no master now. This is our chance. Is the range of this device long enough?”

The researcher replied confidently, “Don’t worry, this device can be used together with the cross-dimensional radar. It’s definitely long enough.”

“Good.” Fay nodded with satisfaction.

Law hurried them. “Quickly equip it. We have to acquire the Holy Light Particle as soon as possible.”

“Understood, I’ll...”

Before he finished, an assistant hastily ran in holding a communicator in his hand and said, “Y-Your Excellencies, look at the news.”

Law and Fay looked over and were stunned.

The image the communicator was displaying was the announcement Han Xiao had made.

“Sh*t...” Law murmured.

Not just the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy but even the Holy Light Particle got taken by Black Star?

What kind of luck is that?

Last time, they could only successfully attack Black Star because Black Star was not prepared and knew nothing about their weapons.

The two of them initially thought they would never cross paths with Black Star ever again, so they did not worry at all. They never expected Black Star to have another Primal Esper Ability they needed.

The two of them exchanged looks and saw the powerlessness in each other’s eyes.

Another Beyond Grade A would have been fine, why did it have to be Black Star?

Black Star was alert now. The risk of carrying out the operation again would be at least ten times higher. They would be dreaming to think that doing the same thing as last time would work.

“So... are we still going for it?”

“Don’t drag me down if you want to die,” Fay said with a scornful tone.

“What should we do then? The Holy Light Particle is in his hands. We’ll have to find a way to take it back.”

“How would I know?”

The two of them were at the edge of collapsing.

What should we do?

The researcher looked left and right before asking,

“Erm... this detection device I’ve invented, should I still install it?”

“What the hell do you think?”

Chapter 1089 - Black Star Cup

1089 Black Star Cup

This is unfair! This is unfair!

Inside the exclusive training room in Black Star Palace, Mysterious Energy Host stood by the door and complained furiously to the two people in the room nonstop.

Han Xiao raised his hand and shattered a holy light shockwave from Aurora. He then scratched his ear, feeling like he was almost going deaf.

Ever since Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy found out that Han Xiao had found the Holy Light Particle a master, he instantly went mad.

Initially, he wanted to drag his old friend down so that they could happily be locked inside machines together. He did not want to feel lonely anymore. However, to his shock, although he was the one who led the way to the Holy Light Particle, the Holy Light Particle received much better treatment.

Why do you have a master by I have to be locked inside this metal?

I want a master too!

Lately, as long as Han Xiao called him out, the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy would nag nonstop around him.

“Master! Master! Master!” Han Xiao said with resignation. “Can you stop complaining?”

“No!”

A vein appeared on Han Xiao’s forehead. His patience had reached the limit. “Are you forcing me to turn on silent mode for the Mysterious Energy Host? You won’t even be able to speak at all then!”

Hearing this, Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy finally shut up.

Being trapped in a tool was bad enough. He could only speak because Black Star was kind enough to let it. If he was not even able to speak, he would have zero means of entertainment.

However, Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy was still frustrated. After less than a minute, he uncontrollably spoke again with a soft tone like a wronged wife. “But I really want a master...”

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes and said, “How old are you? Can you have some pride? Are all Primal Esper Abilities as shameless as you?”

Holy Light Particle who was watching the show from the side heard that and said, “Bullsh*t, most Primal Esper Abilities have class. It’s the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy who spoiled our name!”

Furious, the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy yelled, “Shut up! You’re not much better than me!”

“Alas, it’s so comfortable to be inside my master, so much warmer than being in a metal tin,” the Holy Light Particle said with a lazy tone.

Staying in Aurora’s body and being nurtured by her Vital Energy was as comfortable as enjoying hot springs. No matter how the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy yelled at him, he always used this response to make the Primal Chaos Mysterious Energy even more frustrated and irritated.

Listening to the two Esper Abilities fight, Han Xiao could not help but massage his temples.

These two must be the floor of virtue among the Primal Esper Abilities...

“Alright, alright, that’s it for today.” Han Xiao waved.

Hearing this, Aurora obediently deactivated her ability. Like a duck that got suffocated, the annoying Holy Light Particle suddenly shut up and went silent.

“Erm... uncle, how did I do?”

Aurora looked a little anxious.

She had not been a combatant in the past, so she rarely accepted combat training from Han Xiao at all. The only times she did was as Hila’s support, and that was many years ago.

During the combat training, Han Xiao was not as kind and gentle as usual. He was quite strict.

Aurora did not have many opportunities to take part in direct combat, so her combat experience was limited. Therefore, she was worried she might not have done well.

“Not too bad. You need to make smarter choices...” Han Xiao called Aurora close and guided her step by step.

After Aurora learned to control the Holy Light Particle, she had the ability to take on direct battles. Although she would still not really have the chance to fight, Han Xiao still trained her personally to help her master the combat techniques of the Holy Light Particle.

While doing so, Han Xiao also tested the Holy Light Particle’s special ability to ‘punish evil’. This ability was completely subjective. Whether something was evil or not completely depended on the feelings of its master and the target.

The punishment effect Han Xiao received was very weak. According to the Holy Light Particle, in Aurora’s heart, he was a great man, and she had never once felt he was evil. The weak damage mainly came from how Han Xiao felt about himself. He had never felt he was a righteous man.

After a bit more guidance, Han Xiao sent Aurora away, summoned Phillip, and looked at the changes that had occurred in the army after the Holy Light Seed system was announced.

Quite a few days had already passed after the Holy Light Seed announcement. The impact was enormous. Many people had applied to join from every Star Field. Therefore, the army had to, of course, filter the applicants. Also, the cost of recruiting and paying salaries to those people was not a small amount.

The good news was, most ordinary people came for the chance of acquiring extraordinary power, so their goal was clear and straightforward, meaning they were resilient to pressure.

Therefore, without any internal moral conflict, Han Xiao told Sylvia to lower the basic salary of these newcomers to cut costs. This way, the army would be able to recruit more people at a lower cost. Anyway, these people were not here for the money, so it was a great opportunity to let the army acquire a large amount of cheap labor. Furthermore, in order to gain merits, these people would definitely work hard.

What? This is oppression?

No, no, no, this is called fighting to make their dreams come true.

Showing them what they could obtain by working hard was a must-learn for leaders.

Seeing the rocketing business performance across all industries, Han Xiao nodded with satisfaction and asked about another matter.

“How’s the Army Tournament plan I told Sylvia to come up with? Let me take a look.”

The virtual screen before him turned into a plan drafted by Sylvia.

Han Xiao looked through it in detail. Sylvia basically followed the structure he gave. Sparring was just one of the many programs. There were also all kinds of technical, sports, and entertainment competitions. Of them, the sports and entertainment competitions were the highest in number.

Furthermore, the army members could also request certain competitions. As long as they were not nonsense, there was a chance these requests would be approved. Han Xiao had no doubts the players would request soccer and play some ‘Shaolin Soccer’.

Based on the strength of army members, each Grade was classified into a group, ensuring that the participants would only meet competitors of the same Grade. At the same time, he also gave the players the freedom to choose either to join their own groups or the NPC groups.

Of course, encouragement measures could not be left out. No matter what group or program, as long as the participant’s placement was high, the army would give out a grand reward. This would ensure that most army warriors would be interested in taking part.

In order to let members who did not take part or were eliminated early still participate in some way, Sylvia suggested opening up bets for all the programs and competitions.

This way, it would receive attention from the entire army. As an armed force, there were tons of gambling addicts. Even those who did not gamble normally would also be influenced by the atmosphere to place some bets.

At the same time, this would also earn back the cost of hosting the event. Sylvia even planned to sell tickets, broadcast it across the entire universe, and charge for it. She had a way of making money.

Han Xiao thought this was a good idea. He could use this opportunity to start a competition league, like the sports competitions in his previous life, building a platform where Supers could display their prowess. This might be quite popular.

In the future, perhaps other Beyond Grade A organizations could take part. Since the development union prevented physical conflicts, this might be one way for the Beyond Grade As to display their strength, by letting their subordinates earn some honor for their organizations.

“According to this plan, this is going to be a festival the entire army will take part in, which will affect business operations. However, the sense of unity brought by this kind of large faction event is quite impressive. Not only the players but the normal army members also need ways to relax outside of work,” Han Xiao murmured.

To the players, the focus of the Flickering World version was to ride the tide of the era and fight each other, carrying out the first round of national wars on this grand stage. The clubs’ final goal was to be placed high in the International League.

Hence, if he, an NPC, hosted an even larger competition in the early- to mid-stage of the version, it would definitely be loved by the players as a warmup for the Pro League. This way, the appeal of his faction would evolve from a powerful organization with a lot of benefits to the host of a competition in the players’ eyes.

In order to take part in the Army Tournament, one naturally had to be in the army. No players from other factions would be able to take part in it. Therefore, once the players recognized the importance of the Army Tournament, the army would become a faction many players had to join like when it was the guiding faction in Version 2.0.

“This kind of large-scale faction event is not suitable to be hosted too often. Once every five to ten years should be best. Also, it needs a better name. ‘Army Tournament’ lacks personality.”

Thinking of his pitiful talent for naming things, Han Xiao was not confident and called Phillip out.

“Give me a name.”

Phillip tilted his head and said, “How about... Army Gala, hum?”

Han Xiao’s face trembled. Why not just call it the Spring Festival Gala?

“Too boring, give me a cool and flashy one.”

“Then... Galaxy Super Clash! Top of the Universe, Black Star Army Peak Tournament! Hum!”

What the hell? What stupid information did those players share with Phillip?

“Let’s not make it too flashy...”

Phillip gave another few names. In the end, Han Xiao officially decided to call it the Black Star Cup Army Tournament, or Black Star Cup in short. Simple and easily understood, it even included his name.

Han Xiao then made some adjustments to the plan and sent it to Sylvia. He decided to make an announcement about the first Black Star Cup another day. A lot of time was required to prepare for such a large event, so he decided to announce it first to preheat it like the players’ Pro League.

The scale of the Black Star Cup was so much bigger than the Pro League. The Pro League only included the players, while the entire army could take part in this. Although there were more than eight million army players, this was still a small number compared to the total members of the army.

However, most players had reached Grade B. Their importance was completely different compared to before. They could already be considered a very important force in the army.

In the universe, Grade Bs were considered the backbones of their forces. They were powerful in any non-Beyond Grade A organization. Even many Beyond Grade A organizations did not have as many Grade Bs as there were army players.

In the past few months, he had attracted a lot of attention, so he needed time to digest the influence it had brought. This was a good opportunity to direct all the attention to the army, so it was the best time to host the Black Star Cup.

Furthermore, Han Xiao had another more important goal.

The period of time when the players had the strongest desire to spend was before the Pro Leagues of every version. The players would only spend without hesitation to turn their money into strength before a large event.

Currently, the Flickering World was going from the early stage to the middle stage. Although no player had reached the maximum level yet, after accumulating for close to a year, many players had quite thick wallets.

“Some leeks... are ripe.”

Han Xiao sighed.

His scythe was ready.

1090 Announcemen

In Emerald Star Cluster, on a certain planet was a desolate desert filled with strangely shaped rocks. Hundreds of shuttle-shaped, low-altitude battle carriers were fighting intensely, crisscrossing between mountains and cliffs, using them as cover.

Light beams crossed each other, landing on the cliffs around, causing landslides and rocks rolling down the slopes.

There were four different symbols on these low altitude carriers. One was the guild symbol of the Rivervale guild, and the other three were all symbols of different foreign clubs.

Rivervale was not in a good position right now. They were being attacked by three foreign clubs together. They had no choice but to flee while fighting back, or they would be surrounded.

Maple Moon was piloting one carrier. Her hands grabbed onto the sphere-shaped control devices on two sides specially made for Mechanics. Sparkling Mechanical Force connected the device to the spaceship, making the spaceship her extended body and allowing her to control it with ease. The spaceship swiftly made a turn, avoiding a round of fire while shooting a Main Cannon, which blew up one of the enemy spaceships.

However, a few visible black silhouettes flew out from the flames of the carrier's explosion. They were the players on the ship. Among them, a Mechanic player threw out compressed orbs that turned into a new carrier, and they continued the chase.

Seeing this, Maple Moon spoke in the team channel with resignation. "Sword, there are too many enemies. Our inventory will run out sooner or later if we continue like this. Should we just die? We can leave these resources."

"Hold on for just a while longer. Our allies are rushing here."

Frenzied Sword focused on dealing with the enemies. He was quite frustrated.

This planet was originally controlled by a small mining organization. Rivervale, Long Sky, and other guilds partnered with it by providing armed defense in exchange for part of the mining profit. This was a common scheme for the player guilds in the free competition zone.

However, a few middle-level officers of this mining organization were bought by a few Southeast Asian clubs. They helped them hide on this planet. When Frenzied Sword brought his men and came to collect this batch of resources as usual, the three clubs who had set up an ambush jumped out and surprised Frenzied Sword and the others.

The mode of conflict between players had been becoming more and more complicated as they learned to make use of smaller organizations more effectively. They acquired skills such as bribing and threatening the NPCs. This incident was just a small one; the bigger guilds were already involved in infiltrating, backstabbing, and many other things.

The carriers of Rivervale were being destroyed one after another; the players had no choice but to land on the ground. Maple Moon led the Mechanics to build a fortress to attack the enemies in the sky. The enemies then also sent a group of players down. The two sides started slaughtering each other on the desolate land. As Rivervale was at a numerical disadvantage, their situation was quite worrying.

After fighting for a while, a few battleships suddenly appeared deep in the starry sky and quickly approached. They were the Long Sky and the other allied guilds. Seeing this, these three foreign clubs instantly took off and returned to the spaceships that were on standby in the outer atmosphere. Before reinforcements arrived, they escaped with hyperdrive in a very well-practiced manner. It was clear they were prepared.

"Are you guys okay?"

Hao Tian and the other Long Sky members landed beside Frenzied Sword's side. They looked around at the mess around.

"Alas, they got me. We've lost quite a lot this time. Some died multiple times and lost EXP too," Frenzied Sword said with resignation. There was a limit to the number of times the players could die each day, and the punishment increased gradually after every death. The players were not afraid of death, but they had to die for a reason. Clearly, dying like this without getting anything in return was a huge loss.

"These foreign clubs have their eyes on us Chinese clubs now. They've been working together to attack us," Maple Moon complained.

“Well, it is what it is. We’re making the most profit, after all, and our faction is the strongest.” Sleepy Winter shrugged.

Currently, thanks to the Black Star Army, the Chinese clubs were having the best time in the free competition zone. Naturally, along with the benefits they received, they were also targeted by the foreign clubs. These clubs’ plan to stir up hatred between nations failed, so they could no longer use the players in the Black Star Army. Hence, they had no choice but to do it themselves. They had been harassing the Chinese clubs frequently over the past few months, attempting to slow down their growth.

Frenzied Sword was a little worried. “It wouldn’t matter if it was just during normal times, but if we get harassed even during the Pro League, it’s going to be very tough for us to achieve something this season.”

“If we get a champion this season too, China will have acquired the champion three times in a row. The clubs from the other countries definitely won’t want to see that,” Rainy Kim said calmly.

Participating in the competitions was a way to acquire fame. Fame meant traffic, and traffic meant profit. The ultimate goal of all clubs was to make profit.

The International League was the only large-scale open competition for the pro teams to increase their fame. There were no other platforms that had as large an audience.

Therefore, if the Chinese had it all, it meant that they had obstructed the others’ way of making money. No clubs from the other countries were content with just participating, so some of them were causing problems for their opponents by any means necessary. They were all competitors, and when one side became too strong, the others would definitely come together to be against it. It was unavoidable.

Beep beep beep!

At this time, the communicators of everyone present suddenly rang simultaneously.

They exchanged looks of surprise and looked at their communicator. When they saw what it was, they were all slightly stunned.

“Black Star Cup?”

On the communicators was a new army announcement.

Army Announcement—The Black Star Cup Army Tournament

To the entire army, the Black Star Army has been walking the path of high-speed growth. As our business expands, so does the number of members. In order to let the members of the various departments get to know each other more, increase our unity, and select talented people from the various trades, the army has decided to host an event with the nature of a military parade. The preparation for the first season of Black Star Cup Army Tournament starts today. For details, refer to the Competition Rules and Regulations (Expand/Collapse).

All members of the army are able to take part. If you can achieve excellent results, the army will not be petty about the rewards. You're welcome to participate.

Army Commander, Black Star.

The people did not feel much by just looking at the content of the announcement. However, when they expanded the competition's rules and read the contents, their eyes became brighter and brighter as they were shocked by the scale of the Black Star Cup.

"My god, the scale of this faction event is way too big!" Maple Moon covered her mouth in shock.

"We can even request certain activities?" Twinkle Fried Rice's eyes widened.

The players present were overjoyed just by reading the introduction. They could not wait for it.

Compared to the scale of the Black Star Cup, the International League was tiny.

Frenzied Sword and Hao Tian exchanged looks. Both of them thought of the meaning of this event beyond the surface.

"This is an amazing opportunity to increase our fame!" Frenzied Sword's tone was excited. "Events like this definitely don't lack spectators, and there are close to ten million army players as the default audience."

"That's right. Although this is an event hosted by an NPC, as long as it's popular, it'll also bring traffic. It might be an even better replacement for the International League!" Hao Tian expressed his agreement.

Hearing this, the look in everyone's eyes changed. The way they looked at this announcement was as if they were looking at a mountain of gold.

Everyone had noticed that this was probably the new platform for professional players to shine. Furthermore, it had way more activities than the International League, which would bring an extremely high amount of exposure.

Although the clubs in the other factions could not participate, which meant that the Chinese clubs had no competitors and it was not as competitive as the International League, was this not an exclusive exposure opportunity to the army players?

Also, it was now the early to middle stage of the version, so the Pro League was still far away. This was the exact time the players needed an entertainment show, and the Black Star Cup filled this void!

If it was popular enough, they were even willing to bring out as much passion as during the International League to prepare for the Black Star Cup, turning their accumulated EXP and wealth into strength.

Why do we make money? To spend it when needed of course!

Such an amazing opportunity has landed on us Chinese players again...

Thinking of this, they could feel the blood flowing in their body turn warm. They were touched.

Black Star might be a member of the Communist Party!

...

“Black Star Cup?”

Seeing the army’s public announcement, the many foreign clubs were filled with jealousy.

Every club knew that this was an excellent opportunity to gain exposure. This was exactly the stage they needed.

However, only the Black Star Army members could participate in the Black Star Cup. These clubs belonging to other factions could do nothing but watch this opportunity slip by.

The foreign clubs could still put up with the mission benefits the Black Star Army was already getting, but now such an amazing exposure opportunity had appeared, the determination of many clubs not to change factions was shaken.

Why can the Black Star Army hit our soft spots so easily?

Should we just... give in?

...

“What is Black Star doing?”

On the other hand, some Beyond Grade As were confused about this.

To some of them, not only did events like this damage profit and affect efficiency, it would also eat into a lot of time that could be used for work.

However, after some thinking, quite a number of Beyond Grade As felt they understood Black Star’s intentions.

With the development union, the chances for us to take part in battles in the future will probably decrease, which is not beneficial to maintaining our individual image. Black Star might be searching for a new way for us to display our strength to the outside world.

Quite a number of Beyond Grade As were touched.

The Vice President is thinking so far into the future. Now this is what it means to help us obtain more benefits!