

## **Mechanic 1101**

### **1101 Accumulation**

You have triggered an S-ranked Mission: Intelligent Plague!

Mission Introduction: An exploration team has dug out taboo antiques in the Ancient Star Desert, accidentally releasing a virtual virus aimed at artificial intelligences. The source of this virus is unknown, but it has an extremely high infectivity and permeability. It has spread rapidly through the domain of the quantum network, and once it breaks out, the underlying logic of countless artificial intelligences and machines will be rewritten to initiate a mechanical rebellion.

Mission Requirements: Clear the unknown virtual virus and remove the Intelligent Plague crisis.

Reward: Based on the Mission Rating, different rewards will be given.

Special Mission Requirement: Personally destroy the core data of the virus.

Special Mission Reward: Generate a Specialty related to yourself (Exclusive to the Mechanic Class)

An S-rank Mission... well, as expected.

Han Xiao was not surprised at all.

With the three Universal Civilizations barricading the entire Star Field, such a large move would naturally not be a small task. Given the spread of the virus, it was indeed worthy of the highest level of difficulty needed to completely eliminate it.

The majority of S-ranked mission requirements were usually ambiguous, with only a few prompts for the steps needed. One had to discover the method to solve the problem themselves. Generally, there would be more than one method to solve the mission, and one had to be easily adaptable to changes.

This was what had happened with Godora's [Bloodline] mission, so Han Xiao was already used to it.

What he was curious about was regarding the special mission requirements. It actually revealed a lot of information.

I originally thought that every individual virus was the same because that's how a virus usually transmits. I didn't expect that there would be a core. In this manner, the virus is more like a controllable Virtual Domain bioweapon...

If the core of the virus was an intelligent life form, it would definitely be hidden within the quantum network and not show itself. The threat of the virtual viruses would thus greatly increase as opponents with a self-consciousness were more terrifying than the objects that moved based on their instincts.

But there was another possibility, and that was that the core data of the virus was not an intelligent life form but rather an algorithm that was responsible for the coordination of the overall infection. It would command all its virus progeny according to its program structure without any self-awareness.

Hmm... why do I have a feeling this is like operating a plague company? Han Xiao scratched his head.

The special mission reward was the ability to generate a Mechanic class related expertise, not one extracted from a target. This made him feel that the virus core was more likely to be an algorithm. The generated expertise would not be any weaker than the huge movements from this mission and would also likely be related to Virtual Technology expertise.

“Phillip, prepare the spaceship and ask Reynold to choose a few mechanics to follow me.”

Han Xiao did not hesitate, putting on his coat and opening the door, striding toward the dock of the base.

This intelligent plague was an emergency, able to threaten the entire universe and disrupt his plans. He had to end his ‘vacation’ early, temporarily leaving the matters at hand and take his people to the Ancient Star Desert to complete the mission.

As someone who was in a high position, he could not remain uninvolved when faced with problems of this level.

Not long after, a fleet full of Mechanics from the army set off from Black Star Palace, shuttling like a group of meteors through the universe in the direction of the Ancient Star Desert.

At the same time, countless well-known mechanics throughout the universe also received the invitation of the three Universal Civilizations to move toward the Ancient Star Desert.

...

This matter concerned the safety of the entire universe, and the three Universal Civilizations were in a race against time, so they acted quickly. The Civilization Conference was urgently convened, and all the civilizations at the Star System level and above in the Ancient Star Desert were quickly identified.

In the conference hall that was full of remote projections of various civilization representatives, the leaders of the three Universal Civilizations appeared at the same time to announce their decision.

“Yesterday, the Federation of Light, the Crimson Dynasty, and the Arcane Church received reliable information that a special virtual virus has appeared in the Ancient Star Desert. This virus is extremely permeable and has inflected many areas. According to the judgement of experts, the goal of the virus is to rewrite the underlying logic for all infected machines, taking the killing of living organisms as their primary task.

“After much discussion, the three Universal Civilizations have rated this disaster as ‘World-Destroying Level’ and are activating the unified command to seal off all quantum network nodes connecting the Ancient Star Desert to the outside world. Troops will be sent to block the Star Field, and all civilizations of the Ancient Star Desert must cooperate with the actions of the three Universal Civilizations. These procedures are to be implemented immediately.”

Extraordinary times called for extraordinary measures. Without any long-winded talk, the three Universal Civilizations read out the notices rather than bills, requiring all civilizations within the Ancient Star Desert to comply without fail, with no room for negotiation.

Just as they finished speaking, the civilizations’ representatives, who were initially wondering why an emergency meeting was convened, turned pale.

The three Universal Civilizations were responsible for the exploration of the universe and had also set up a disaster rating system. According to the relevant laws and regulations, when the threat level of a disaster rose to a certain level, the three Universal Civilizations would have the high veto power and be qualified to coordinate all the civilizations within the universe.

It was just that such incidents were few and far between even throughout the long history.

As soon as the announcement from the three Universal Civilizations was issued, the galactic residents went into an uproar. No one had thought that a disaster of this magnitude would happen all of a sudden. The world was truly full of surprises.

For those ordinary citizens, this was just like any other normal day. The disaster happened silently, and if not for the early warning measures of the three Universal Civilizations, most people would only have reacted when the virus broke out.

Regardless of what the various civilizations within the Ancient Star Desert were planning in secret, they were extremely cooperative on the surface, cutting off all external links and blocking their own Star Field network in accordance with the requirements of the three Universal Civilizations.

With the three Universal Civilizations and the civilizations within the Star Field collectively acting, the scale of resources mobilized was beyond imagination. Things that were believed impossible in the eyes of normal people were easily achieved.

The Ancient Star Desert was quickly isolated from the entire galactic society and became akin to a quarantined city in darkness. All contact with it was forbidden, and the outside world did not know what was happening inside.

While the situation was temporarily under control, panic still spread throughout the universe. The sudden disaster robbed the Flickering World of its limelight, and countless people turned their attention away from the competition in the new Star Field to focus on progression of the situation within the Ancient Star Desert.

Compared to the calm and poise with which the civilizations handled the situation, the galactic residents of the Ancient Star Desert seemed to be chaotic and flustered. Even though the civilizations continued to appease the residents, there were still varying degrees of people fleeing to other planets to take refuge.

Due to the target of the virus being artificial intelligences, countless residents no longer placed their trust in their machines, thinking that they might possibly be a threat. They would rather regress back to the level of a surface civilization than continue to utilize the intelligent machinery. Some even destroyed their machines to eliminate any hidden threats.

A trend of machinery rejection was created in the Ancient Star Desert... but such chaos was long within the predicted scope of the advanced civilizations.

With the severity of the situation, the three Universal Civilizations did not choose to block the news but rather let everyone know the seriousness of such a situation. In this manner, the self-examination and supervision of the galactic residents could be strengthened. Besides, there would be no way to hide any movement of this scale.

The stargates were rapidly closed, the army moving into the Star Field to set up barricades. Countless people who wished to escape from the Ancient Star Desert were completely blocked.

This scene was something that also occurred during the era of the intelligent plague in his previous life. Now that this was pushed forward to the Version 4.0 era, a stormy undercurrent started brewing.

...

“The Ancient Star Desert has been sealed? Black Star has gone to aid them?”

In the free competition zone, the leaders of the Super Star Cluster met in secret within the Flickering World, their expressions gleeful.

“This disaster is too timely! With the three Universal Civilizations involved in disaster relief, they no longer have the time to contain us!”

Roddick of the Modo Civilization tightly gripped his fists, an expression of joy.

The majority of people in the universe were uneasy and panicking about the disaster, but for the Super Star Cluster Alliance, it was unexpectedly good news.

“That’s right. The Intelligent Plague can restrain and control the three Universal Civilizations, which will give us more time. This will increase our chances of winning!”

“The best would be for the Intelligent Plague to spread out and make the three Universal Civilizations suffer. The more chaotic the universe, the less time they have to deal with us. Only with chaos can we stand a chance.”

Everyone present was extremely excited, feeling as though it was some form of divine intervention.

“Say, what happens if the three Universal Civilizations fail?”

“That will put everyone in a terrible situation. We will suffer losses as well.”

“Without destruction, there can never be creation. Only when the foundations of the three Universal Civilizations are shaken will we then have the chance to rise. These are all necessary sacrifices.”

The eyes of everyone present flashed.

If the Intelligent Plague were to truly break loose, then the Super Star Cluster Alliance would also be damaged. However, the three Universal Civilizations would take the brunt, their prestige and dominance sure to plummet.

They believed that the advanced civilizations of the Ancient Star Desert would have their own thoughts as well.

However, right now, all they could do was discuss. The situation was not determined by them, so they could only wait and see.

...

As the entire universe was filled with anxiety, Mechanics from all over the universe rushed to the Ancient Star Desert one after another, arriving at the disaster command center that was temporarily established by the three Universal Civilizations.

One month later, a fleet cruised into the dock of the Disaster Management Command Center. Han Xiao opened the hatch and walked down the spaceship with a group of mechanics. He caught sight of Manison immediately.

“You’re finally here.”

Manison came up to greet him.

Since the establishment of the development union, Manison and Han Xiao had served as the President and the Vice President respectively. While they had different end goals in mind, they were currently strung together and thus communicated frequently.

“I thought you would arrive in your true body, but you’re still using your avatar.” Han Xiao clicked his tongue.

“... This is safer.”

Manison was a little speechless. A Mechanic was supposed to be a ‘paper[1]’ class. Han Xiao was an anomaly who ran around everywhere, not afraid of being killed.

After they exchanged greetings, they walked side by side, discussing the current situation.

“I rushed all the way here and could not get any news from the outside. How’s the situation in the Ancient Star Desert now?” Han Xiao was curious.

“Not too optimistic. While the three Universal Civilizations have already barricaded the Star Field, the virus is too contagious. Many nodes have already been repeatedly infected, and the virus has a terrible camouflaging ability, rendering normal scanning devices too inaccurate and inefficient. There are currently eight Star Clusters that show signs of infection, and the number of nodes... too large to estimate.” Manison shook his head.

Han Xiao understood.

Every terminal connected to a quantum network could be considered a node, meaning this included communicators, household appliances, spaceships, and so on. The number was humongous, and just the classifications would already tell one how terrible the workload was.

Even if the Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanic could easily remove the virus’ information packets, there were so many nodes that an individual’s strength was simply insufficient. The speed of removal would not surpass the infection speed, let alone factoring the issue of reinfection. At present, only the advanced civilizations had the ability to control the virus.

“The three Universal Civilizations are currently developing special anti-virus programs in order to improve the efficiency of removal. This is also the reason for them calling on us,” Manison said.

“Has this virus already been named?”

“Well, it was temporarily named the ‘Virtual Mutiny Virus’ on paper.”

Han Xiao glanced at him before raising an eyebrow. “I heard that you were the first person to discover this virus, immediately running over to the Federation of Light to inform them of this matter. What are your thoughts?”

“This is my business,” Manison casually replied.

“Take a guess to see if I believe it or not.” Han Xiao smirked. He knew Manison well and had not forgotten the previous incident with the federation. Why was he pretending to be a loyal minister now?

Manison shook his head, looking ashamed at being in his company.

“A youngster will always be a youngster. Your mentality pains me.”

Yes, pretend, continue to pretend... Han Xiao sniggered internally.

Seeing that Black Star still had an expression as though he would rather believe that Manison was a ghost instead, he shook his head before whispering, “This type of disaster is the stage for us Mechanics. The more important the three Universal Civilizations view it, the more prominent our importance will be to them. This will allow us to contribute to the universe and become a bargaining chip for us. On the other hand, if this virus cannot be resolved, the Mechanic department will be severely hit, which will not be conducive to our expansion.”

“This is more like you.” Han Xiao laughed. “You still wish to take the opportunity to study this virus, and if possible, master it so there will be an additional deterrent to the advanced civilizations, right?”

“Aren’t you thinking the same way too?” Manison shot back.

Hearing this, Han Xiao put on a righteous look, as though he radiated virtue.

“As the saying goes, with great power comes great responsibility. I do not wish for the universe to fall into chaos; this is my responsibility as a senior!”

“He he.”

Manison mirthlessly spat out two laughs.

I read you right, Black Star. We’re indeed all jackals of the same tribe.

[1] Gaming slang which means that the character has low HP and thus easily killed.

## **Chapter 1102 – The Undercurrents within different Parties**

The duo idly chatted as they walked into the spacious conference room.

At this moment, various races were sitting in the conference room, all of which were Mechanics from all over the world. The lowest tier here was the Calamity Grade, and several Beyond Grade A Mechanics were also present.

The dynasty’s [Illusory Deity] Kant, [Warship Emperor] Maximiler, and [Quantum Demon] Judith; the church’s Sun Hunter and [Mechanical Catastrophe] Francisco; the federation’s [Mechanic Empress] Mornisa, [Defender] Romo, and the [Lone Ranger] Jackornitz whom Han Xiao had just released.

Not all of them specialized in Virtual Technology, but as Beyond Grade A Mechanics, they had naturally dabbled in the Virtual Domain, definitely more than what the Calamity Grades would have.

In order to deal with the Intelligent Plague, the three Universal Civilizations had invited all sorts of well-known experts from different Star Fields to work together. This could be described as a grand gathering of the universe's mechanics. All sorts of talents gathered on this unprecedented occasion.

When Han Xiao walked in with Manison, everyone felt their breaths stagnate, their gazes landing on the two of them with emotions such as worship and awe appearing on their faces.

In the present Mechanic world, Manison was recognized as the pinnacle, whereas Black Star had an unstoppable rising momentum. Not long ago, he had set another stellar battle record. Coupled with his role as the Vice President of the Beyond Grade A Association, he was second only to Manison in the rankings of the Beyond Grade A Mechanics.

Watching the two of them walk in shoulder to shoulder, many of the Mechanics felt like they were meeting their idols.

"Oh, everyone is here."

The Beyond Grade A Mechanics were all in the first row. Han Xiao first greeted Kant and his other dynasty allies before turning his head to sweep the federation and the church's people with a glance.

Oh, it's confirmed. Everyone here has been beaten by me before.

As though perceiving the ridicule in Han Xiao's eyes, with the exception of Sun Hunter, the rest of the Mechanics naturally looked away, not wishing to make eye contact with Black Star.

This was especially so after being released from prison. Jackornitz, who was the latest to have been released, quickly turned his head to look at the ceiling, pretending to be distracted.

"Tsk tsk, don't be shy. We're all part of the same association now. Why are you still acting so cold, not even saying hello?"

Han Xiao leaned over, smiling as he draped his arms over their shoulders. Everyone's shoulders stiffed; they only helplessly nodded and greeted him, "Vice President."

Ah, how comfortable.

Han Xiao was satisfied, patting everyone's shoulders vigorously before taking a seat next to Manison. He pulled Kant beside him to discuss the changes behind the virus thus far.

After a while, Sidreun strode into the room, standing on the rostrum of the conference room. The whispering voices quickly abated, and everyone looked up toward him.

Sidreun lightly cleared his throat, solemnly speaking.

"Some of you might know me, but others don't, so I'll do a brief introduction of myself. I'm Sidreun, the Chief of the Federation of Light's Inspector Department. Everyone here is a Mechanic at the top of the universe and has accepted the invitation to remove the Virtual Mutiny Virus. The situation is urgent now, so I skip the formalities. Let me explain the current situation to you."

As he spoke, Sidreun called out the virtual screen showing the current infection scope of the virus, continuing in a grave tone.

“The Virtual Mutiny Virus is a new type of quantum network virus with a very high technology level. It has amazing penetration ability into normal firewalls. After the data packet has succeeded in penetration, it will disguise itself as normal data. There are too many variants of the package’s key data, thus its degree of concealment is extremely high. Once the node is successfully infiltrated, the difficulty of scanning will be greatly increased, which in turn consumes more computing power.

“Moreover, every information package of the Virtual Mutiny Virus is a source of infection, constantly self-replicating to create repeated infections. Thus, the efficiency of our conventional methods will be too weak. At present, we are analyzing the structural coding of the information packets, planning to create programs that can reverse the development of its three unique programs—namely scanning, anti-virus, and firewall. The problem is, the coding for this virus is different from our mainstream quantum network technology. Just the analysis is difficult, slowing progress...”

Hearing this, everyone nodded. This was a normal process when dealing with virtual viruses.

Virtual Mechanics could be said to resemble the medical experts from all over the world, gathering and working together right now to research and come out with a cure to a new infectious disease.

Sidreun said in a heavy voice, “At present, the Virtual Mutiny Virus is still within the incubation period. We managed to intercept many virus information packets that did not manage to completely self-destruct themselves. After interpreting the content, we have discovered the trigger mechanism behind the outbreak of the virus. However, the situation is not good.

“Based on the analysis of the algorithms, it shows that there are sixteen trigger logics for the outbreak of the Virtual Mutiny Virus, of which four are potentially troublesome. First, when the number of infected nodes reaches a certain scale, the virus will automatically break out. The second trigger is the removal of the virus on a large scale. The third logic is that once the infection rate of the virus slows to a certain scale or if there are repeated infections without any new nodes being infected, the virus will then break out. Lastly, if a single virus packet is isolated or trapped for too long within a node, it will implode on its own...”

While listening to Sidreun’s introduction, Han Xiao nodded to himself in understanding.

Viruses would not sit and wait to die. These trigger mechanisms were created to adapt to various situations. If they infected enough numbers, outbreak! If they were being killed en masse, outbreak! If the infection rate was restricted, outbreak!

The [Intelligent Plague] mission had warned him of the existence of a virus core, so most of the trigger mechanisms, including the three previously talked about, should be controlled by the virus core. Only the virus core could coordinate the overall infection trend. Information packets were like bombs, and the virus core was the remote detonator.

While disconnecting the quantum network could cut off the connection between the information packets and the virus core, the fourth trigger was introduced to prevent such a situation. Even without the virus core remotely controlling it, the infected node will self-detonate if left too long without any



new signal or information sources, akin to a timed bomb. Thus, it was also difficult to isolate and imprison the virus separately.

At present, the three Universal Civilizations could only cut off the connection between the Ancient Star Desert and the other Star Fields to prevent further infection, whereas the internal network of the Star Field had not been cut off, retaining the public base stations as well as the Star Field level quantum network channels.

It was not realistic to completely disconnect the network. Cutting off the link of each node would be equivalent to blinding themselves. In this manner, the three Universal Civilizations would not be able to monitor the rate of infection, let alone count the number of infected nodes.

Thus, only by developing an anti-virus with a three-pronged approach could the problem be settled once and for all.

“... The situation is severe. We’re fighting with time against the virus. While delaying the outbreak of the virus, we also have to speed up research and development. During this period, a mechanical rebellion could happen at any time, so we can only try our best to prepare and control the outbreak.”

Sidreun gazed around, his expression grave as he emphasized his point.

“We have to block the virus right here in the Ancient Star Desert, not letting it leak out to the outside world, else the crisis will be uncontrollable and evolve into a universal disaster. The consequences would be unimaginable!”

As his voice fell, the atmosphere of the conference room grew heavy.

Thinking about the potential impact, many of the mechanics present felt tremendous pressure. It could be said that the progress of their efforts was directly related to the number of casualties in the universe. If a mistake was made, there would then be countless sacrifices.

Han Xiao thought on it.

Has it reached such a state?

Even the three Universal Civilizations were having a headache, causing him to wonder which civilization this Virtual Mutiny Virus originated from as well as the creator of this technology.

Suddenly, Han Xiao’s eyes sparkled.

That’s right! If I utilize the [Bold Explorer] skill, I might be able to see through the origins of the virus...

...

After the meeting was adjourned, Sidreun took the group to the virus research department.

On the way, Han Xiao and Manison walked in front, entering the quantum network to chat privately in their minds.

“You came earlier than me, so tell me, is the analysis of the virus really that difficult?”

“It comes from an unknown civilization, with a never-before-seen encoding method. It’s already difficult to decipher, and coupled with the self-destruction mechanism, we only ever get incomplete information packets.” Manison shook his head. “With our strength, we can clear the information packets at will, but the current task is to create a three-pronged anti-virus kit that even ordinary people can use. Without advanced computing power, the requirements have to be more demanding.”

Han Xiao nodded, his eyes gleaming as he replied, “I feel that you don’t really wish to create the dedicated antivirus so quickly.”

Manison glanced at him, not bothering to reply directly. “This virus technology has the possibility to be weaponized. The information packet is being used like a missile head, and the content inside can be reprogramed, for example, to seize control of a machine. With the help of the high infectiousness of this virus, the invasion ability of us Virtual Mechanics can be raised to a whole new level...”

Hearing this, Han Xiao also clearly understood Manison’s plan.

This person wished to solve the disaster and accumulate achievements, but that was under the premise that he could thoroughly research and grasp this virus technology. In order to ensure the deterrence behind this technology, he did not wish to make a whole and complete antivirus, rather leaving a small loophole within.

Han Xiao secretly cursed this sneaky old man before narrowing his eyes and saying, “If you can control the virus core data and obtain the source code, then you can fully analyze this technology.”

“That’s right.” Manison nodded before glancing back. “It’s not just you and me, but every of the Beyond Grade A mechanics present, even those from the three Universal Civilizations have the same intention to obtain the virus core.”

On the way to the Ru0026D department, there was a huge crowd, and a large number of researchers were stationed here day and night to decipher the Virtual Mutiny Virus.

Everyone was assigned to their specific task, immediately beginning to work.

Some were in charge of scientific research whilst others did field work. They had to go outside to collect those infected nodes, acting as inspectors of the three Universal Civilizations to check how the other civilizations were handling the infected nodes.

As for the Beyond Grade A Mechanics, they acted as experts and consultants, staying within the headquarters to research. All of them had their dedicated rooms.

Taking his subordinates into the room, Han Xiao was assigned three information packages, of which the structural integrities were at 91%, 82%, and 75% respectively. These were the least damaged batches.

Han Xiao summoned Phillip, analyzing the information packages one by one against the currently deciphered part of the code comparison table.

As a Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanic, he was not worried about Phillip being infected. This sort of information package could not break through his own defense line.

Taking advantage of Phillip doing the hard work for him, Han Xiao slipped into the quantum network, capturing one of the information packages before activating his [Bold Explorer] skill.

...

At the same time, on the Star Arc Civilization's mother planet, a meeting was being held, and many of the upper echelons were discussing animatedly.

"Now that the three Universal Civilizations have blocked the Ancient Star Desert, disaster relief is the primary task for them, but they might also take the opportunity to deal with the Super Star Cluster Civilizations in this Star Field in the name of inspecting the infected nodes. They might request us to open our internal database, even taking advantage of this news blockage to achieve what they want!"

"That's impossible. The three Universal Civilizations aren't so stupid. If they take this opportunity to act on the civilizations that cooperate with them, it will only ruin their credibility and will only make us struggle to the death."

"But forcing us to open our databases is rather possible. If we choose to reject, once they have solved this disaster, the three Universal Civilizations will have a lot of room to operate. Whether it is to plant blame or for political accountability, they can attack all of the Super Star Cluster Civilizations in the Ancient Star Desert, using this as an excuse to begin a crusade against the Super Star Cluster Alliance."

"We can't rely on the integrity of the three Universal Civilizations. We have to prepare bargaining chips and secure our retreat in advance."

"That's right. We cannot just listen to the arrangements of the three Universal Civilizations. I suggest we secretly collect some infected nodes, keeping the virus as a trump card. We can even take a little risk to open the military's secret external communication network and pass the virus on to our secret forces within each Star Field as insurance..."

Suggestions spewed out quickly, and the expression of the head of the civilization was grave as he pondered.

The Star Arc Civilization was located within the Ancient Star Desert, and while it had cut off its connection with the outside world in response to the calls made by the three Universal Civilizations, there was no way a Super Star Cluster Civilization would be this honest and obedient.

To make them obediently give up on studying this terrible virus technology with just an order? What sort of joke was this? Did they think them innocent babies?

So what if the virus breaks out? It's simple, just lock up all the offending artificial intelligences. There will definitely be more solutions than difficulties.

While the three Universal Civilizations were mainly there for disaster relief and did not express any hostility, the blocking of the Star Field still left the Super Star Cluster Civilizations in trepidation. As a civilization, it was impossible for them to place their future in the hands of others. They had to plan ahead.

It was not just Star Arc Civilization; all the advanced civilizations were also secretly planning something.

...

On a certain planet within the Ancient Star Desert, a subdivision of Machinery Faith was located.

Above the holy mountain, in the Temple of God, many priests stood on the edge of the circular hall, surrounding the holographic projections in the center. Those were the data structures of the Virtual Mutiny Virus, expanded and amplified, looking like stars in the galaxy.

“Look at the structure of this quantum network virus. It’s like a thorny rose, coquettish yet dangerous. It’s able to set off a machinery revolution, possibly creating a mechanical kingdom...”

One of the priests of the Virtual School could not help but sing out, a pious expression on his face.

“Quiet.” The Grand Priest tapped the Machinery Scepter before slowly saying, “This virus is dangerous. We have to conduct research in a completely enclosed environment to prevent any leakage.”

“This is no virus but the will of God. Why not spread it out?” Another zealot spread open his arms wide as he babbled. “Rather than saying that it’s a disaster, it’s better to claim it as the gospel!”

“Have you lost your mind?”

Hearing this, most of the priests retorted.

“We’re the believers of machinery, not the emissaries of a disaster!”

The quarrel was fierce, and the Grand Priest had a heavy expression as he listened to the different factions arguing.

Any faith would have some zealots with distorted mindsets, and the Machinery Faith was no exception. Most of them wished to study the Virtual Mutiny Virus and did not want to cause a disaster.

However, a small portion of them did not think so. In their eyes, the Intelligent Plague was a god-sent message for revolution, allowing machinery to get rid of the shackles of being a tool and gain freedom to form its own Machinery Kingdom. In those zealots’ eyes, the Virtual Mutiny Virus was the will of God.

The Grand Priest turned his head, looking at the statues within the Temple of God. His eyes fell on the figures of Black Star and the Mechanic Emperor, and he prayed silently to them.

...

In another area of the Ancient Star Desert, a fleet was slowly cruising, within which was a bunch of players.

Now that the World Server was open, players from all Star Fields had gathered in the Flickering World. However, there were a few of the players that still chose to stay in their original Star Fields. Some of these people were happy being small-time characters, while others did not wish to travel all over the universe just to start from nothing once more. Thus, they remained in the Star Field to keep exploring.

The players in this fleet were an active guild based in the Ancient Star Desert, called the Western Sword Guild. They had been black market mercenaries for the past four versions, and everyone knew that they were Immortals.

The guild president’s ID was Melancholic Prince, and his character belonged to the galactic Blood Race, which referred to Vampires in general. They possessed pale white skin, skinny figures, and had a melancholic vibe.

The Blood Race existed in the universe, classified as part of the long-lived races, but they did not possess the famed talents such as blood recollection, transforming blood servants, and becoming bats. They also did not have the standard weaknesses such as garlic, silver, or Holy Relics.

There were many theories about the origin of the galactic Blood Race, which included genetic mutations, part of biological weapons created by higher civilizations, or even dark energy invasions. After years of natural selection, the blood race had also adapted to the Galactic Civilization, which caused them to no longer be afraid of ultraviolet radiation, surviving on synthetic blood as well. Ten Enas could buy a few tons of synthetic blood, which also came with a full set of seasoning as well as a fluffy mascot as a free gift.

However, this species was still unpopular in the universe, as no one liked a creature that drank the blood of others to replenish their physical strength.

Beep beep...

The spaceship's communicator rang, and Melancholic Prince opened his eyes in surprise.

"Brothers, someone anonymously sent us an employment task through the black market, with a remuneration of five million Enas! They are paying a deposit of a million in advance!"

Everyone gathered around in excitement.

"Such a big order! What are we waiting for? Let's accept it!"

"What does the employer want us to do?"

Melancholic Prince glanced through the employment list, and he laughed.

"Haha, interesting, someone wishes to hire us to smuggle an infected node of the Virtual Mutiny Virus out of the Ancient Star Desert."

Hearing this, everyone could not help but exchange glances.

They were also trapped within the Ancient Star Desert, so they were naturally aware of the danger of the Virtual Mutiny Virus as well as the scale of the three Universal Civilizations. Thus, they hesitated.

"President, is the risk too high? If we're exposed, we will immediately become wanted men."

Melancholic Prince waved his hand. "What are you scared of? This is five million Enas. There's no reason not to risk our lives for it. Accept the mission."

Everyone could only follow the order, but some of them had other thoughts and began to secretly think to themselves.

Their anonymous employer wanted them to perform this task mainly because they had taken a fancy to their identity as Immortals.

One could see that in the isolated Ancient Star Desert, undercurrents were surging.

**Chapter 1103 The sickle is accurate, a leak every slice**

After sacrificing sixty percent of his Luck attribute for fourteen days, which amounted to roughly zero points, the [Bold Explorer] skill was activated, and the world in front of Han Xiao's eyes changed. His sight panned out into outer space, and below him was a huge planet where its silvery gray earth extended all the way as far as his vision allowed. Blue and white dazzling lights covered the horizon, and the bright light from the photon energy tower stood out from the backdrop of the dark universe.

Han Xiao glanced downward. On the surface was a steel forest without any green vegetation, and numerous strange-shaped mechanical buildings occupied the area. The high mechanical towers shot into the sky, giving the planet a look like a mutated sea urchin wearing steel armor. The cold, heavy style brought with it an evil vibe.

At this time, the scene zoomed in, falling to the ground and focusing on the mechanical city at a low altitude. Han Xiao saw that the inhabitants of the planet were a group of mechanical bodies with varied appearances. There were almost no two identical individuals, their structures all complicated and exquisite. Their decals were all gorgeous, giving them a very advanced look.

"They're all mechanical life forms. Could this be a Mechanical Life Civilization?"

As a bystander, Han Xiao could not help but think of Psionic Prime's civilization under his banner. The two were very similar, with the difference that this machinery civilization revealed by (Bold Explorer) was far more advanced, already reaching its matured state.

Did the Virtual Mutiny Virus originate from this unknown mechanical civilization? Han Xiao thought while looking at the scene in front of him.

Right at this moment, something happened!

A piercing white glare that seemed to cover the entire sky swept past, and the giant planet was dead in the center of its blast radius.

A large shield covering the entire planet appeared in outer space, but the moment it came into contact with the light ray, the large shield disintegrated, breaking into countless energy particles.

The planet lost all its protection and was peeled off layer by layer, annihilated and decomposed in a short moment. The entire planet's existence was easily erased in the universe by this light ray.

By the time the attack was over, the illusion disappeared, and Han Xiao's vision returned to the room. He frowned.

The attack just now seemed to be an advanced energy rank directional gamma-ray burst. It might not have been a natural disaster but rather an attack from a weapon.

Gamma ray bursts were a common universal disaster, and evaporating a planet was like child's play to them. But with the shields that most civilizations had, they would be able to shield themselves against it. However, the ray burst in the illusion Han Xiao experienced was strange in that it directly disintegrated the planet's shield the moment it touched it, even though the machinery civilization in it was at an advanced level.

Most people would not be able to observe many details, but the senses of the Beyond Grade As were different. Han Xiao found that there was an additional material added to the Gamma Ray, which might make it a galactic weapon utilized by another advanced civilization.

The universe was full of radiation, and it was actually very lively and bright. However, ordinary people would only see a patch of darkness. As a person's life level changed, so did the world they saw around them. It was like everyone was looking at the world through keyholes, but those of a higher life level would have larger keyholes.

The information obtained through the skill this time is not enough. There's no clear direction...

Han Xiao stroked his chin with his thumb, summing up the information he obtained in the short illusion.

Firstly, there was an advanced civilization that was suspected of being a Mechanical Life Civilization. They had a large colonial planet that was extremely advanced in technology, but it was blown up by a Planetary Annihilation Weapon, proving that they had another advanced civilization as their enemy. The hostile civilization would at least be at the Star Cluster level, even possibly at the quasi-Universal Civilization level.

The creator of the Virtual Mutiny Virus should be one of these two civilizations. There was too little information about the other civilization, so Han Xiao ignored it. He mainly analyzed this unknown Machinery civilization.

There are many possibilities for the origin of the Machinery civilization. The most common is for a Beyond Grade A to bestow Mechanical Life, but there are other factors. For example, a biological civilization could also undergo Mechanical Ascension, placing the consciousness of their entire race into mechanical minds and replacing their physical bodies with machinery carriers to obtain immortality. It's also possible that this civilization is in the form of an AI civilization, a world dominated by artificial intelligence, and the machines are just carriers for them to walk around in...

What piqued Han Xiao's curiosity most was whether this happened during the era of the modern Galaxy Calendar. He did not know whether it was a lost civilization that had existed during the exploration era or an unknown advanced civilization in an unexplored region of the universe.

He needed to continue using (Bold Explorer) to obtain intelligence or maybe use more relevant items for his ability...

Han Xiao suddenly recalled something.

There was still the safe in which the virus had been stored, which was in the custody of the three Universal Civilizations. That might be a better goal!

Along the way, he could also visit Harrison and the others. These guys had been temporarily imprisoned due to the release of the Virtual Mutiny Virus. In the face of such a disaster, the inspector did not have the last say, so whatever promises he gave to Harrison and this team would definitely be blown away like farts in the wind.

The three Universal Civilizations were quite considerate to this group of prisoners as well, fearing that their bodies would rust due to the long prison life. Thus, they were interrogated daily at a high intensity to help them work their brains and stay healthy. Han Xiao left his subordinates and Phillip in the room to

continue analyzing the virus code. He left the R&D department by himself and strode over to the headquarters on the dynasty's side. The three Universal Civilizations had appointed their senior officials to take charge of the affairs of the Ancient Star Desert. With Han Xiao's position in the dynasty, he met with the supervisor without much hindrance.

The other party stood up to greet him, exchanging some niceties before they got down to business.

"Your Excellency Black Star, what can I do for you?" the inspector asked.

"I've read the information you've given and hope to study the device that was used to store the virus."

"That's easy." The dynasty inspector immediately agreed, giving him a lot of respect.

"In addition, I wish to contact the group of scavengers that unearthed this virus, and if possible, release them temporarily."

"You can see them at any time, but releasing them... is a little inappropriate."

"I know, you guys have been interrogating them, but this has yielded no results. They should just be unlucky fools that got trapped in this. There's no point continuing to imprison them."

The Inspector furrowed his brows as he insisted, "But the virus has caused such a big impact. This is a severe crime. Even if it was an accident, they have to take responsibility for it."

Han Xiao shook his head as he pointed out, "They might be of help actually. Let them stay by my side to obtain some merits. If they really manage to make some contributions, then we will have benefitted from it."

The inspector hesitated for a long while before finally agreeing. "... Since you wish for it, alright then. However, their identities will remain as prisoners, and they cannot have freedom of movement."

He only did so out of respect for Black Star's position. If it was some other person suggesting this, he would not even bother.

"Thanks." Han Xiao smiled. "I would also like to request to be allowed to go out on field work."

"You wish to perform field work as well?" The inspector was surprised.

Han Xiao nodded. "That's right. The research work here has Manison and the rest at the helm, so there's no need for me to devote myself to it. I'm wasting resources here, and in my opinion, there are two tasks that are both as equally important as developing an antivirus."

"Please do tell."

"The first would be the search for the virus' core. If the core can be located, most of the triggering mechanisms of the Virtual Mutiny Virus will be invalidated, which will be equivalent to destroying the opponent's brain. The threat of the disaster will also be reduced."

"This point is indeed important." The dynasty's inspector praised.



If the virus core could be controlled, the difficulty of solving this disaster would be reduced by more than fifty percent. However, the virus core had hidden itself too deeply. No one had any idea what sort of abnormal data it was, and the three Universal Civilizations were also unable to find it.

Han Xiao then raised two fingers and continued. "Secondly, in my opinion, it will be a matter of time before the virus is cracked, with the current abilities of the three Universal Civilizations and the Beyond Grade A mechanics. The real difficulty lies in those with unsavory plans."

Hearing this, the inspector also frowned.

"Countless lessons in history have taught us that the greed and suspicion of the human heart is always a catalyst for disaster. If it's not controlled, the small problems will eventually evolve into bigger problems that cannot be handled," Han Xiao slowly said. "Presumably, the dynasty also understands that the virus is not difficult to solve, but the real problem is in those people with ulterior motives. Having the Virtual Mutiny Virus is akin to them having a switch of disaster. Now that they have such a good opportunity, who does not wish to have a strategic weapon as a deterrent?" He could clearly see that this was an opportunity for anyone to easily obtain nuclear-level weapons at an extremely low cost. Which ambitious organization would not want to give it a try?

The inspector stood up, suddenly packing around, before solemnly speaking.

"You're right. The three Universal Civilizations have been concerned about this. We're all from the same team here, so there's no need to cover it up. The Super Star Cluster Alliance has been at odds with us since long ago and will not sit quietly and obey our commands. The dynasty's main Artificial intelligence, Heroic Soul, has already calculated the probabilities. Not only the advanced civilization within the Ancient Star Desert but even organizations from the outside world will hire countless black market mercenaries and wanted criminals to help them smuggle the virus out. This is also one of the main reasons the blockade was imposed.

"While we require the Ancient Star Desert to cooperate with us to destroy the virus, at the same time, we cannot be too harsh on them. This is especially so for the Super Star Clusters; they can reopen their own external quantum networks at any time. It actually is not up to us to control if the virus will be leaked or not... Of course, they do not dare make any rash moves. Thus, the three Universal Civilizations are attempting to control the situation by being careful and closing one eye so as not to make them anxious. This is also why we are in such a hurry to develop the antivirus. As long as the threat of the virus technology is fundamentally resolved, the small actions made by the advanced civilization will not affect us."

The inspector then stopped and emphasized, "Your Excellency Black Star, since you're willing to go out into the field, I will hand over three dynasty fleets for you to command. I hope you can try to catch as many of these b\*stards who are eager for profit and disregard the safety of the universe."

"Okay." Han Xiao stood up as well, shaking his head.

The other Beyond Grade As concentrated on research, wanting to understand this virus technology. No one wished to waste energy by going out to arrest people. In their opinion, this was hard work that they should not be responsible for.

But our Great Mechanic Han was different. He had the [Intelligent Plague] mission, so in order to raise his Mission Rating, he could not simply rely on research. After all, the credit for that would be shared by a large number of people.

In his opinion, the most direct way to improve the rating would be to catch the fish that slipped through the net with malicious intent. Furthermore, the special mission requirement was for him to destroy the virus core. He naturally wanted the reward and would not just stay in the command center to do research.

As for research, the more that everyone searched, the more they would share. He could wait till Old Man Manison had completely analyzed the structure of the virus to obtain the ready-made secondary research. Not only would this save a lot of his time, he could also relax for the time being.

After reaching a consensus with the person in charge, Han Xiao left the dynasty's office and went to the prison to visit Harrison.

Upon learning of Han Xiao's intentions, the Chief Warden immediately welcomed him in with enthusiasm, respectfully leading the way.

In the single cell, Harrison lay on the bed with his hands on his head, staring absentmindedly at the ceiling

"Is this how I'm going to spend the next half of my life?"

He sighed.

In this month that he had spent squatting in jail, not one day had passed when he had not expressed regret. His initial judgment was correct-digging out that triangular device would bring them huge trouble. If he had known that was the case, he would have not taken it out even if he had to risk his life.

The serious consequences brought about by this artifact gave him cold hands and feet. While this was an unintentional mistake, to have caused such trouble left him with a guilty conscience.

Not only did he bring about a disaster, he even threw his entire life away. His interrogators had let slip that this group of 'culprits' would be spending the rest of their lives in prison.

"If I knew this would happen, I wouldn't have come out to do archaeology. I knew it. Curiosity kills the cat. If I had stayed at home and inherited hundreds of millions of dollars from my family fortune, god knows how comfortable I would be now."

Harrison was disheartened.

Swoosh!

At this moment, the cell door opened, and two people walked in.

"Is it time for interrogation again?" Harrison sat up with a resigned expression.

Han Xiao glanced at him, piecing his young look with the old man in his memories before nodding.

"You're indeed Harrison." "Eh? You're not a jailer? Who are you..." Harrison raised his head, and taking in Black Star's features, he gaped in shock. "Black... Black... Black... Black Star"

Right now, Han Xiao's face was well known in every household within the universe, his reputation frightening. However, there were a few that had heard about him through the movie (Black Star: Origins) and thus mistakenly thought Feidin was Black Star himself.

But Han Xiao was very magnanimous regarding this. After all, both of them looked equally handsome and alike, so it was a common mistake to mix up both of them.

He had heard that the movie was released whilst he was rushing over here, and the response was excellent. Not only had his reputation skyrocketed, he had also made a fortune. His returns were hundreds of times his initial investment and were still rising. From this, the huge profits within the entertainment industry in the interstellar era could be seen.

Putting aside the distracting thoughts, Han Xiao patted Harrison firmly on his shoulder while saying, "The virus was dug up by you guys?"

Harrison was patted so hard he almost screamed in pain but quickly recovered. In front of a universally known figure like Black Star, he was a little cautious and nervous, nodding repeatedly.

"Good, then your teammates and you will follow me temporarily." "This... What do you mean?" Harrison had an expression of confusion.

Seeing his lost look, the prison warden snapped, "You'd better thank His Excellency Black Star. If not for him speaking up for you guys, you'd be sitting here for the rest of your miserable lives."

Harrison was stunned, an incredulous look on his face.

"Your Excellency Black Star, you... why did you save us?"

"Who said I was saving you? I just felt that you guys are good diggers and might come in handy... The warden will let you guys off later. I'm just here to meet you guys beforehand." "I can be of help?"

Harrison was lost, not knowing what he could possibly help with.

However, this did not prevent him from understanding that his own destiny was saved by Black Star. His eyes were filled with gratitude, and he wished to hold Black Star's hand to thank him, but due to their gap in status, he did not dare to act.

In his eyes, Black Star was an angel sent by the heavens to save him, shining with a holy light.

Just as he was about to fall into the abyss, a stranger came and gave him a hand. Harrison's emotions were surging, and he had the urge to slam his head on the floor in gratitude toward Black Star.

While it was the first time they had met, Harrison's favorability toward him was almost filled up.

Han Xiao smiled at him before turning to walk out of the jail cell. The moment his back faced him, he could not help breaking into a smile as he looked at the combat information on his interface. Harrison's attribute table was displayed there.

Just by standing by my side, you're already helping me...

In the attribute column, there was the skill (Advanced Luck Glow] in golden lettering!

The third golden leek has fallen into my hands...

Han Xiao took a deep breath of joy.

That's right. This should be the smell of luck condensing on him!

#### **Chapter 1104 Cancer of the Universe, the Catalyst of Disaster**

After meeting up with Harrison, Han Xiao ran back to the R&D department and found the Beyond Grade A mechanics.

"You wish to go out and do field work?"

Hearing this, Manison and the rest of the Beyond Grade A mechanics felt surprised. They did not understand why Black Star would leave his easy research work and do the troublesome manual labor.

"What sort of attitude is this? I responded to the call of the three Universal Civilizations and am leading by example to take the lead," Han Xiao said in a tone of righteousness.

"Then just go. Why did you come to us?" Manison did not even bother to entertain him, only glancing at Han Xiao as he tried to find out his intentions.

Black Star, this jerk, had never committed himself until success was certain. If there were no benefits, he would not have chosen to take up field work. He felt that Black Star's motive should be to find the virus core and also to take the opportunity to infiltrate the major organizations in the Ancient Star Desert.

To be honest, Manison himself had thought of this at the beginning as well. However, he had given up this thought after much consideration.

Right now, would the three Universal Civilizations allow the Beyond Grade As to continue strengthening their own organizations? It was most likely that they would have to surrender whatever they obtained from their operations, so even the dishonest Manison was silently only researching the antivirus. Besides, the attraction of new technology far exceeded his organization's strength.

At this moment, Han Xiao suddenly laughed, sticking out two fingers as he righteously spoke out.

"Since none of you are fighting, please aid me and lend me some of your troops."

Everyone stared in shock.

Lending you our troops is akin to sending lambs right into the tiger's den. Will we still be able to get them back?

How is this lending? You just want us to sacrifice a portion of our troops for you, you lowly peasant! "... How many do you need?"

"Eh, I don't have large demands. This is mainly the moment when the three Universal Civilizations will be able to see your sense of justice. You guys can decide, and please don't exceed fifty million per person. That would be too much for me to accept." Han Xiao 'modestly' waved his hands.

Pui, a scale of 50 million per person? Are you thinking about openly stealing so many?

Do you even feel shame?

Everyone secretly slandered Han Xiao but did not refuse his request. The three Universal Civilizations' mechanics and several neutral Beyond Grade As loaned a portion of their ordinary mechanical soldiers, which reached about eight million in number.

Among them, Manison was the most generous, lending 2.5 million units. To him, this number of soldiers was only a drop in the ocean.

The stingiest was 'Mechanical Catastrophe' Francisco; he only gave five thousand troops, doing so unwillingly. Even Jackornitz who was a Mechanical Pugilist and did not have much proficiency in Machinery manufacturing also donated more troops. The Beyond Grade A Mechanics all had illustrious backgrounds, so giving out some mechanical soldiers was nothing to them. They simply treated it as losing some troops in battle. However, it was more important to show some face to Black Star, as well as the three Universal Civilizations, to show that while they were too lazy to make a move, they still supported the field work.

Putting away the troops 'sponsored by everyone, Han Xiao was satisfied. While this number was a pittance, he just wanted to see the Beyond Grade As grit their teeth and feel helpless in front of him.

Upon arriving at the dock, Han Xiao boarded a flagship arranged for him by the dynasty and took over the commander's authority from the captain. Right now, the three dynasty fleets were temporarily under his command.

After waiting for a while, a guard hurriedly escorted Harrison and his party over.

"Your Excellency Black Star, the procedures are complete. I'll leave them with you."

"Alright." Han Xiao nodded at Harrison and team with a smile on his face, saying, "You guys are not free yet. You have to follow me. If you mess around, I'll just throw you back in prison. Do you understand?"

"Understood!"

Before Harrison could speak, all his teammates yelled out loudly, for fear that they would lose their only bid at freedom.

Han Xiao nodded, and after sending the guard away, he gave the command to depart.

The fleet slowly rose up, leaving the command center of the three Universal Civilizations and soaring into space.

At this moment, the captain spoke.

"Your Excellency Black Star, where are we heading?"

"How do you normally operate?" Han Xiao asked back.

"We usually patrol around the desolate universe belt or go check some planets that are confirmed to have traces of infection..."

As of now, there were checkpoints set at every stargate of any civilization in the Ancient Star Desert, the borders, and the transport hub planets. The spaceships had to be inspected, and for those unknown

spaceships that avoided the stargate stations and moved freely within the desolate universe belt, as long as they accessed the public quantum link of the Star Field, the three Universal Civilizations would track down their IP addresses and send people to stop them. Most of the field fleets were tasked with roaming around to perform such inspections.

Thus, the biggest problem would be for those spaceships that had shielded quantum network links and could enter stealth mode. They could only monitor the surveillance buoys located throughout the Star Field and try to find the whereabouts of these people.

“Let me think about it...”

After understanding the situation, Han Xiao pretended to ruminate, but he actually opened the players’ forums to scroll through.

The outbreak of the Intelligent Plague had drawn the attention of the players toward the Ancient Star Desert. The discussion on the Ancient Star Desert was a hot post on every major section of the forum.

Because the majority of players were in the Flickering World, they were unable to join the event since the Ancient Star Desert was immediately cordoned off after the occurrence of the Intelligent Plague. They could only use the discussion boards to vent their strong curiosities.

Han Xiao opened the top post, and the discussion of the players jumped into view.

Fart Pockets in Tights: I told you all. The first few versions all had more than one Main Storyline mission, and Version 4.0 is the same. The Intelligent Plague should be the second Main Storyline. Quadratic Formula: But we are not able to participate in this Main Storyline. We cannot even enter the Ancient Star Desert. Can we only watch from the sidelines? Three Gays Under the Moon: Didn’t you see the new update from ‘Galaxy Times’? They made quite a reasonable guess, saying that it is impossible for this Main Storyline to be only for our viewing. There will definitely be opportunities for us to participate, as the chances of the virus leaking are quite high. Only then will there be a continuation for us to act.

Four-Eyed Speculative Emperor: That’s right. Now there are many missions on the black market, all looking to hire people to sneak into the Ancient Star Desert. We players can do the same. Judging by our influence on the Main Storyline for the first two versions, this Intelligent Plague event could be decided by our actions as well. As long as someone succeeds in smuggling the virus out, this version’s event can sweep across the universe!

Undead Don’t Wear Underwear: Shall we let the disaster spread through the universe? It will indeed be the fourth disaster (:3] 2)

Sun Rider: This is too much. Wouldn’t it be better to prevent the disaster? Do you have to make it such that the world is chaotic? Don’t you have a conscience?

Sh\*t Smells Good: That’s right. Did you forget what the Army Commander taught us? To actually stab him in the back like that, killing the citizens of the galaxy...

On the forums, the players were divided into several factions, discussing the topic and cursing each other at the same time. The community was on fire. The players did not know that the Intelligent Plague was actually just a backstory in their previous lives, thinking that it was one of the Main Storylines of

Version 4.0. With the majority of people in the Flickering World, unable to enter the Ancient Star Desert, many of them were anxious at not being able to participate.

Some of them believed that the main storyline would not just be a cutscene, so they inferred that the Intelligent Plague did not need to be actively pushed by them and would leak by itself.

Others felt that this main storyline had to be fought for, taking the initiative to release the virus and let the disaster spread in order to obtain the Main Storyline mission.

There were, however, many players in the universe who supported the promotion of the disaster. Some wanted to participate in the Main Storyline, some wanted to earn rewards, and some just wanted to watch the world burn.

‘Indeed, the Cancer of the Universe...’ Han Xiao secretly shook his head.

As the players who were ruled by chaos continued to grow stronger, their negative impact on the universe would become more and more obvious.

However, he was also a little relieved. If the players in his previous life encountered the Intelligent Plague, more than half of them back then would definitely have supported the promotion of the Intelligent Plague. Now, with the Black Star Army as their moral guide, more people were considering the problem from the perspective of the overall situation, opposing the spread of the disaster. There were obviously fewer players within the Chaotic Evil Faction than in his previous life.

My faction guidance plan is still somewhat effective.

Han Xiao felt relief.

As he swept through the other posts, one of them caught his attention. It was titled ‘Ancient Star Desert Player Benefits! Employment task with a reward of five million Enas!

The poster triumphantly shared a screenshot of a mission, which was about smuggling the Virtual Mutiny Virus out of the Ancient Star Desert for five million Enas. For the players, this was a huge sum of money, enough to buy a dozen small and medium battleships.

Seeing that the players who remained within the Ancient Star Desert got such an opportunity to rake in the cash, many of the following replies expressed envy.

The poster was called ‘Depressed Prince’. Han Xiao could not help but narrow his eyes.

Five million in remuneration, along with a deposit, gives this whole thing a fishy air. It seems that the employers are aware of the players’ character and used them to their advantage. Humph, the players within the Ancient Star Desert aren’t able to keep their hands to themselves. I have to strike down like peals of thunder on them and destroy their disaster-supporting tendencies. Han Xiao made the decision in his heart to kill the chicken in order to warn the monkeys. This Depressed Prince who went around publicizing his tasks was undoubtedly an excellent goal.

Only through striking down harshly on him would the other players then see the ending of those who tried to cause trouble and would cause them to fear the repercussions of their actions.

At the same time, he could also trace the source and check up on the mysterious employer of Depressed Prince. After all, there was no harm if there was no demand or supply for it. The mercenaries only acted based on orders, and it was the employers with ulterior motives that Han Xiao was interested in.

While Depressed Prince did not disclose his coordinates, since the other party was a mercenary, he would have recorded his whereabouts in the universe. So long as the record of his most recent time was locked onto, the approximate search area could be derived from there. To a pinnacle Beyond Grade A mechanic, this was as easy as lifting his hands.

The intelligence channel in the Ancient Star Desert might have been blocked, but the player forums were not affected. With this extra information network, Han Xiao would be able to obtain information that others did not know.

That's right, I also have to search for one of the administrators of the black market in the Ancient Star Desert. These employment tasks for smuggling the virus will be issued through the black market. As long as I can control this channel, I will be able to monitor the movements of those restless organizations and cut off one of the channels for employment.

Han Xiao's eyes gleamed.

If the administrator of the black market did not wish to cooperate, he still had a trump card up his sleeve. There was no need to be soft-hearted. Even the three Universal Civilizations would be glad to have someone temporarily controlling the black market channels, reducing the likelihood of disaster.

Mindful of this, Han Xiao finally had a clear plan of action and turned to look at the captain. "Let's split up and act. The main flagship will follow me to capture some b\*stards."

Somewhere in the desolate universe belt, an interstellar fortress was suspended in the orbit of a desolate planet, with a spaceship patrolling nearby. Both of them had the same emblem, which was shaped like a roaring wolf's head.

This sign represented an interstellar organization named the Kepel Financial group, which was a legitimate financial group on the surface but operated as an arms dealer for the galactic black market in the Ancient Star Desert.

The organization was a family-run business, and the leaders were all members of the Kepel family. The current leader was called Kepel the Fifth, and he had the mutated bloodline of a Beastman, possessing a head that looked like a werewolf.

At this moment, in the office of the leader, Kepel the Fifth had just received a capable officer who had rushed back.

"I made you responsible for spreading the anonymous employment task on the black market. Has the mission been completed?" Kepel the Fifth said in a deep baritone.

"It's completed. Many of the black market mercenaries have accepted the task, willing to smuggle the Virtual Mutiny Virus out." "Very good. The Virtual Mutiny Virus is a strong weapon and will definitely have a market in the future. We need to control it!"



As an arms dealer in the black market, the Kepel Financial group had no reason to let go of the Virtual Mutiny Virus, which was a powerful weapon of war. This was just purely commercial considerations. "Leader, I've also specially employed some of the Immortal troops. I feel that it would be more likely for them to complete the task."

"Beautiful! The Immortals are money grubbers and born to be mercenaries. So long as we give them enough money, they would rather sacrifice their lives. Moreover, they have unknown information networks within their groups, which cannot be interfered with even with our quantum networks. Their capabilities will increase the success rate of our plan. If one can be shipped out, the virus can be infinitely replicated!"

Kepel the Fifth was very satisfied with how his subordinate carried out the task.

Most of the major organizations had studied the characteristics of players, more or less summing up some rules. The Kepel Financial group was no exception, mastering some simple ways to utilize the players.

At present, since the Ancient Star Desert was sealed, the various gray organizations could be thoroughly investigated by the advanced civilizations at any time. The Kepel Financial group had decided to transfer their assets to the outside world and destroy evidence of their gray business. Thus, it was determined to transport their arms, along with the Virtual Mutiny Virus, out of the Star Field.

### **Chapter 1105 Conspiracy?**

The Western Sword Guild's spaceship slowly flew through cosmic space. Inside the cabin, Depressed Prince and the other guild members stood around the 3D star map and analyzed the route.

"We're now here..."

Depressed Prince pointed on the star map and drew an illuminated path. It extended around a desolate universe belt at the edge of the Star Field in an arc, all the way to outside the Star Field. He then said, "In order to leave the Star Field, the only way is through the desolate universe belt. The encirclement the three Universal Civilizations had set up at the borders will definitely have flaws. Although we have their defense map and patrolling route, we still need some luck..."

Hearing the president explain the plan, the guild members nodded.

After accepting the anonymous hiring with a five million reward, Depressed Prince had thought of some plans in order to successfully transport the virus out. Among which, making use of the flaws in the encirclement of the three Universal Civilizations and smuggling it out was one of those more likely to succeed.

In order to not be located by the three Universal Civilizations, the Western Sword guild had already cut off their network and kept their spaceship in stealth mode.

Technically, they would not be able to receive any information from the outside world this way. However, Depressed Prince used the fact that he was a player, logged into the forums, and secretly hired other players to private message him on the forums to provide intelligence. This was how he obtained the defense map and patrol route of the three Universal Civilizations. Even though they had cut off their quantum network connection, they still had a source of information. This way, not only

could they avoid getting located by the three Universal Civilizations through the network, but they would also still be able to receive messages from the outside world. Compared to normal people, the players had a large advantage. No wonder the Kepel Financial Group specifically hired Immortals. "President," a player said, "the closer we are to the border, the denser the surveillance buoys will be. If we fail and are discovered, our spaceship will definitely be seized. We only have one chance."

"That's why we have a plan B."

With a confident expression, Depressed Prince smiled and said, "Once we're discovered by the buoys or the patrolling guards, we'll carry out the infiltration tactic. We'll leave a few people on the spaceship while the rest of us log out together. When the spaceship is locked up at the warehouse, the people who did not log out can then notify us to come online in the carrier and sneak into the enemy base. This way, we can bring in the virus-infected communicator."

The others nodded. This also relied completely on the players' specialty. This tactic was extremely suitable for infiltration, ambush, and smuggling missions.

There was also a plan if they turned out to be exposed after that. They would give up the spaceship, battle to their death, and then revive in their stronghold revival point. They could still think of other ways to complete the mission, and they had a very large margin for error. The reward was a total of five million anyway; as long as they could complete the mission, buying another spaceship was nothing

With so many advantages, the Western Sword guild members present were totally confident about completing the mission. They could almost see the five million Enas waving at them.

As for the possibility that they might become wanted criminals afterward, they did not care about it at all. They had always wandered in the gray area of the law, so they never even planned to become completely legit. In fact, turning into wanted criminals would even trigger a Milestone Mission, which gave them rewards as their bounty increased.

As for the damage that the virus leak would cause to ordinary people, they did not give a damn. Instead, they were even excited about the fact that they were playing a big part in the direction the world was going to take. Most players who currently supported the disaster's spread had the same thought.

Depressed Prince was confident. He smiled and said, "Alright, since no one has any objections, let's act according to this plan. As we can't use the stargates, we'll spend quite some time on the way there. The estimated time of arrival at the desolate universe belt is in seven days. Now..."

At this time, before he finished speaking, the spaceship alarm suddenly rang.

"Beep! Alert! Alert! The spacetime of this area has been stabilized. Hyperdrive is impossible. Exiting hyperdrive mode!"

The spaceship suddenly shook. The people inside had yet to react to it, so they all fell onto the ground, picking themselves up with shock.

"What's going on? There are spacetime stabilization anchors here? Whose trap did we fall into?"

Shocked, Depressed Prince hastily looked at the radar.

This time, light dots were appearing around them on the radar and surrounded his spaceship in the middle.

The people quickly came to the porthole and looked outside. Their expression changed drastically.

They were surrounded by dynasty battleships. All the barrels were aimed at their spaceship. "The Crimson Dynasty? Are they here to capture us?" Depressed Prince and the other guild members panicked.

"Did our whereabouts get exposed? But we did not bump into any buoys on the way! And how did they know we were planning to smuggle the virus out?"

After being stunned for a few seconds, Depressed Prince quickly regained focus and yelled hastily, "Stop daydreaming. Everyone, log out now. Don't get..."

Before he finished, a calm voice appeared behind them.

"Don't get what?" Everyone's body became stiff. They turned their heads slowly and looked at the middle of the cabin.

A tall, black silhouette had appeared in the spaceship. His lightning-filled eyes were coldly scanning them.

This face was way too familiar to the players!

"Bl-Black Star!"

Depressed Prince was in despair.

Everyone there was completely horrified. They originally thought that even if someone were to come to capture them, it would just be regular fleets and regular Supers. No one ever expected that someone as powerful and important as Black Star would personally act!

While shocked, Depressed Prince felt flattered for some reason.

The next moment, the lightning in Han Xiao's eyes flashed, and an electric shockwave exploded from his body.

Boom!

The energy shockwave slammed everyone into the wall.

Han Xiao controlled the damage so this shockwave was not powerful. Its main purpose was to force the players into Combat Status so that they could not log off any time they liked.

"I won't give up!" Depressed Prince clenched his teeth, made up his mind, and drew a long silver alloy sword. He then stabbed toward Han Xiao's throat.

The players were not afraid of death, so they dared to fight anyone. No matter how strong the opponent was, they would never stop resisting. In fact, Depressed Prince would rather get killed by Black Star. He would be able to revive somewhere else then and would not be captured. However, this mindset was transparent in front of Han Xiao, who knew how the players thought.

He casually pinched the sword with his fingers, easily splitting it in half. He then grabbed onto Depressed Prince's head and slammed it onto the ground, giving him a Stunned debuff.

Han Xiao carefully controlled his strength, worried he might accidentally kill him. Although the players were much stronger than before, they were still as fragile as paper in front of him.

Han Xiao did not let the others go either. There was no need to use any machinery; he could easily beat these players into a pulp with his fists and legs. He took out an electromagnetic restraining chain and tied them all up. The dynasty spaceships then approached and seized the spaceship. The dynasty soldiers boarded and searched it.

A ton of mechanical items piled up like a mountain. Han Xiao checked through and found a few communicators infected with the virus. He looked at the truly depressed Depressed Prince and the others and slowly said, "You're suspected of smuggling the Virtual Mutiny Virus, risking the public's safety and the universe's laws. You're now under arrest. Anything you'd like to say?"

"No, I'm sinful. People like me don't deserve to live in this world. I plead for the death penalty!" Depressed Prince said with a righteous tone.

Han Xiao rolled his eyes secretly.

This time, he suddenly paused, smiled, and said, "Are you guys very curious about how the dynasty found out you accepted the hire and set up a trap here?"

The Western Sword guild's people finally realized something. This was a hire from the black market and should have been very secretive. How did it get leaked?

"You have always been monitoring our communications?" Depressed Prince asked carefully.

"Nope." Han Xiao shook his head.

"Then... someone betrayed us?"

"Not that."

"What then?" Depressed Prince wondered.

Han Xiao smiled and looked at them. "That's because... the dynasty is the entity that hired you."

Like a streak of lightning, Depressed Prince and the others shivered. Their chins almost fell onto the ground, and their eyes opened so wide they were going to pop out. "What?" Depressed Prince almost jumped up. He could not believe it.

"Our anonymous employer is the three Universal Civilizations? Impossible! What reason do you have to do that?"

Han Xiao chuckled and casually lied.

"What do you think? The three Universal Civilizations knew all long there'd be people who ignore the big picture and try to hide and smuggle the virus. Therefore, the three Universal Civilizations also sent people to put up missions in the black market so that capturing those who took the hire is much easier.

Do you really think that in such a crucial time like this, the three Universal Civilizations would just let the black market be?"

Depressed Prince was stunned. Complicated emotions such as frustration from being toyed with, rage from being tricked, and regret from falling for it rushed into his head. At this point of time, he just wanted to roar.

This was a conspiracy all along! Looking at how furious they were, Han Xiao smiled even more.

Of course, the employer of these players was not the three Universal Civilizations, but he deliberately said that so the players would get the wrong idea.

As long as these people made posts on the forums and spread it, the chaotic evil players would calm down. After all, no one could tell for sure whether the hire they received on the black market was real or the three Universal Civilizations' trap.

Capturing these people would set an example and make things much easier.

In fact, the Great Mechanic Han was not lying just for that. He really wanted to do something similar.

However, in order to do that, he first had to control the black market. Otherwise, in order to protect their own name, the black market would definitely not cooperate with this plan.

All kinds of thoughts flashed past. Han Xiao took out the Spacetime Amber and smiled kindly at them.

"Since the evidence is sufficient... you guys can now start serving your sentences."

Depressed Prince was instantly horrified and started struggling with everything he had.

"No, no, no... I beg you, please don't use the Spacetime Amber. I beg for the death penalty. Please let me die! D-don't!"

However, Depressed Prince's struggle was useless. Watched by the rest, his expression was fixed, and he was locked in the Spacetime Amber.

Using the same method, Han Xiao sealed all of the Western Sword guild members who were begging to die, wiping out the entire guild.

That'll do. More than enough to intimidate the other players.

He had already tested the effects of the Spacetime Amber on the players. Of course, the players' consciousness would still be able to log in and out, but their body would not disappear like usual. Instead, it would be sealed inside the Spacetime Amber. This meant that they could not change the location to log in to, and no matter how many times the players logged in and out, they would only ever return to their body that was sealed inside the Spacetime Amber.

This meant that as long as they were sealed by the Spacetime Amber, the players could not use their own specialties to escape by logging in and out. It would be like their accounts were frozen due to them using cheats; they would never be able to escape.

One reason these players were still confident despite knowing the consequences of being captured was that they could revive somewhere else after dying, so the chance of them getting captured was very low. The other reason was they all thought they would be lucky enough, till disaster really arrived.

Han Xiao was not surprised about this. Just like some people who still used cheats despite knowing their accounts would be banned, they basically asked for it.

He did not plan to release the Western Sword guild easily. This was how he wanted to intimidate the other players. He wanted to show the others that their account could effectively be banned, so he could ease the tilted mindset of the players on the forums. This was like applying insecticide to his leek field so that his good leeks would not be spoiled.

He was not worried about these players making posts on the forums. After all, what else could they do?

Furthermore, given the characteristics of the players, these people would most likely take revenge. As long as they believed what they said, the only way they could take revenge would be to expose the so-called conspiracy and mess with the three Universal Civilizations' plan.

The situation was all within his control.

Han Xiao shook his head and smiled. He summoned Phillip to hack into the artificial intelligence of this spaceship and flipped through all the communication records.

The true identity of this anonymous employer was also a target he was going to go after. Phillip was very efficient. Through the quantum network, he quickly found a clue leading to the anonymous employer. "Master, hum... I've found it. This hire was published under a broker organization as the intermediate guarantor. This broker organization is one of the black market's managers. It has both a good name and reputation. It's trusted by countless black market mercenaries and employers. Basically, it's the Mercenary Alliance of the black market. Therefore, they should have information on this employer. However, this broker organization has been the black market manager for many years. As a very old intermediate guarantor, they won't leak their employers' names, hum..."

Han Xiao nodded. He had also heard about the name of this broker organization. Many hires on the black market came from them. It could be said that although this kind of organization called themselves neutral, without their approval, those anonymous hires regarding the virus would never have appeared on the black market.

They were undoubtedly responsible for this.

Looks like I'll have to start with this black market manager...

Han Xiao's eyes sparkled. He turned and tapped on the captain's shoulders.

"Depart. Destination, the headquarters of this broker organization in the Ancient Star Desert."

As the dynasty fleet was heading toward the next destination, filled with rage, Depressed Prince, who was sealed inside the Spacetime Amber, logged on to the forums and started making a post.

Just as Han Xiao expected, with the tone of a victim and the intention of warning the others as well as taking revenge on the three Universal Civilizations, Depressed Prince exposed the three Universal Civilizations' 'conspiracy'...

## Chapter 1106 Intimidation

“The Painful Truth! The Mastermind Behind the Intelligent Plague Conspiracy!

“Emergency announcement! Those black market hires to transport the virus are a trap! They’re very likely the three Universal Civilizations’ bait!

“I’m a player who previously shared the job I accepted to transport the virus on the forums. An hour ago, along with my guild, we moved into the edge area of the Ancient Star Desert. Suddenly, we were ambushed by the three Universal Civilizations. Black Star personally wiped out our guild. Now we’re all sealed in the Spacetime Amber, not knowing when we’ll get out. I’m probably done for.

“At the start, I had no idea how the message got out. Luckily, Black Star thought we had nowhere to run and felt that there was no way we would leak the information, so he told me about the three Universal Civilizations’ plan. I was totally appalled. Guess what, those among those anonymous employers on the black market, there are some who work for the three Universal Civilizations! Their goal is to lure out those who dare accept the mission and catch them one by one!

“It’s horrifying. Currently, other than the people of our guild, no one else knows about this secret. I’m making this post because I can’t bear to see other brothers get tricked by the three Universal Civilizations like we did. Therefore, I hereby am warning all of you not to fall into that old rascal Black Star’s tricks!”

To prove that what he said was true, Depressed Prince even posted screenshots and videos of Black Star speaking.

As soon as the post was uploaded, like a lit match landing in a pool of oil, the emotion of all the players was ignited.

Immoral Trilogy: What a shock, so those hires in the black market are conspiracies?

Important Things Need to Be Said Three Times: I knew it. It’s not possible for those lawful factions to leave such a huge flaw. Turns out they had other plans. The three Universal Civilizations are really wise (cunning) in this kind of thing. Well played.

Military Chief: Black Star is Black Star. After all, like his name, he really does have a black heart.

Green Dot: Haha, I can’t stop laughing. Where are those kids who were envying the Ancient Star Desert players? Why are they so quiet?

Human Slasher: If this is the case, the faction difference of this main storyline will be very clear. There are those of us who oppose the disaster, stand on the lawful side, and clean out the evil. If you support the disaster, you’ll have to become an enemy of the three Universal Civilizations. I really envy the bravery of those players who choose the latter.

The lawful faction players all started to gloat, while those players who had supported spreading the disaster earlier all went silent and had nothing to say.

Especially those players who were lured by the high reward and had already accepted hires on the black market, they were all terrified. Most of them hastily gave up the mission, worried that they might be baited by the three Universal Civilizations too.

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Calf: Let me see who's causing problems (Black Star looking out from the bush.jpg).

Army Commander's PP Big: Black Star: There, your account's gone! Long Live the Boot Lickers: Alas, if not for OP, we'd still have no idea and end up getting wiped out... I won't say much, thank you, OP, for saving our lives. Cheers, bottoms up.

Adult Site Senior Member: In order to get this information, OP has made a huge sacrifice. Here's to all kind people having a good life. Ps: If OP decides to create a new account, I'll kindly sponsor 100 Enas.

Feidin's Fan Group – Dual Cannons: A moment of silence for OP.

Fishes Don't Pee: A moment of silence +1.

There were people who doubted the authenticity of the post, but after seeing the screenshots and videos Depressed Prince posted along with it, they all had to admit it was the truth.

The Depressed Prince's post alarmed the players. Many people were indeed shocked and became much warier of things.

He thought he successfully broke the three Universal Civilizations' baiting plan, when his actions were actually all part of Han Xiao's plan.

Seeing that so many players believed this 'conspiracy' and gave up missions to transport the virus, Han Xiao knew that this measure of his worked. He smiled in satisfaction.

Depressed Prince was of great help, so he was thinking about taking a few minutes off his sentence. Although, this guy had no idea.

In the Ancient Star Desert, Planet Strange Gold did not belong to any civilization. It had been taken over by a few financial groups many years ago and modified into a neutral galactic port. Afterward, the Galactic Black Market had taken over and made it into a transit supply station for gray organizations. It was quite famous in the Ancient Star Desert.

Tracks of tons of gray organizations and wanted criminals could be seen there. Some gray organizations even had their headquarters or subdivisions set up there. Due to some sort of unspoken agreement and deals, the Galactic Civilization silently approved of the existence of gray transit stations like this and did not send out soldiers to wipe it out. Although places like this were extremely chaotic, it was not completely lawless. The big organizations in the black market would usually set the laws.

The organization stationed in Planet Strange Gold was a member of the black market managers-Black Index, a broker organization.

There were many kinds of black market manager organizations, such as mercenaries, armed dealers, miners, and so on. Among them, the ones who had the biggest power were the brokers. They took the high-class path, swinging between different civilizations and building very complicated connection networks. They provided protection and assurance for the other black market organizations.

The Black Index was one of them, and their business range was even wider. Using the name they had built for themselves over the years, they provided assurance for the hires and biddings done in the black



market. At the same time, they also functioned as the intermediate exchange. They were basically the bank of the black market.

Safety of funds was always a problem for the gray organizations, and the Black Index provided security and confidentiality for all funds transferred through them. An outrageous amount of money passed through them every single day and spread through the entire Galactic Black Market. Their power was reflected clearly just from this. Of course, this much power required an equivalent amount of strength to maintain, which was even truer in the gray world, where only the law of the jungle applied. The Black Index had plenty of funds, so they used a lot of it on building a powerful military force. At the same time, they also had a Beyond Grade A protector behind them. These factors made sure the Black Index maintained its superior position among the black market managers.

The upper echelons of the organization were called Indexers. Their leader was called the Chief Indexer, and below this leader were the Second Indexer, Third Indexer, and so on. There was a total of five vice-leaders, all the way to the Sixth Indexer, each in charge of a certain area.

Inside the Planet Strange Gold subdivision of the Black Index organization, the Third Indexer stood before the floor-to-ceiling window of his office and looked up at the starlight in the dark sky. He was frowning.

His aide-de-camp who was wearing an elegant silver-black uniform walked into the room, saw him like this, and asked curiously, "Third Indexer, what are you thinking about?"

"Nothing... I just suddenly don't feel at peace."

The Third Indexer massaged the bridge of his nose. His mind was wandering off a little. As a hybrid Eternal, the Third Indexer had the special talent of having a very sensitive sixth sense. He could occasionally roughly sense certain bits of the future.

Since a few days ago, he had started to often lose focus and feel uneasy, like something bad was about to happen.

"I shall bring you some medicine to calm you down," the aide-de-camp said and was about to turn around to leave the room.

"No need, I'm fine."

The Third Indexer called him back, turned around, and asked casually, "Tell me, do you have anything to report to me?"

"Well..." The aide-de-camp took out a report and said seriously, "I've noticed some rumors, saying that the three Universal Civilizations have been secretly putting up hires on the black market as bait to capture black market mercenaries."

"Where did you hear that from? Rumors on the net?" The Third Indexer frowned.

"No, no, there are no such rumors on the network of the Ancient Star Desert. I heard about it privately from some people, so I did some investigations and realized that this rumor got spread out from nowhere. I feel that this might cause problems, so I came to report it to you..."

The Third Indexer shook his head and said, "Your source of information isn't reliable, nor is it trustworthy. As guarantors of the black market hires, although we do accept anonymous employers to put out hires, we still do some investigations. Things like this will certainly damage our name. Maybe we can endure it happening once or twice, but if someone plans to keep using our name to carry out this kind of plan, there's no way the organization wouldn't find out about it." "You're right. I've worried about it unnecessarily." The aide-de-camp nodded.

"There's nothing wrong with being wary about things like this. It's a good thing."

The Third Indexer continued to look outside the window and said with a serious tone, "We're the lighthouse of the laws of the black market. One thing we rely on is our powerful strength, and another is the brand name and reputation we've accumulated over many years. The savages of the gray organizations trust in our professional ethics, and that's our core competitiveness. No matter what... even in the face of death, we can't break the rules of integrity, confidentiality, fairness, and safety. Otherwise, we'd be damaging the very foundation of the organization, as well as the laws of the entire black market."

"Understood." The aide-de-camp took these words to heart with admiration.

Swoosh! As soon as the aide-de-camp said that, a remote communication image suddenly popped up beside the two of them. The panicking face of an observation personnel appeared.

"Bad news! The radar has detected that a dynasty fleet is approaching. They did not attempt to hide their movements. Their destination is clearly Planet Strange Gold, and we did not receive any prior notifications!"

The Third Indexer's expression changed with shock. His sixth sense was tingling even more intensely.

Usually, the three Universal Civilizations would never visit a gray transit station like this so openly. Today, however, the dynasty fleet suddenly arrived. It was clear they did not come with friendly intentions.

He thought of the Intelligent Plague instantly

—there did not seem to be any other reason the dynasty would go to them. Nonetheless, the Third Indexer was not one to panic in the face of emergencies. Very quickly, he calmed down and said with a deep voice, "Ask around. Who's the leader of this dynasty fleet?"

The dynasty was extremely powerful, sure, but he was also someone very important with a lot of power and strength, and he had a Beyond Grade A protector behind his back. Therefore, the Third Indexer was confident enough to speak with the dynasty.

Having thought of that, he had made up his mind that if the leader of the dynasty fleet was not high in ranks, he would not feel a need to welcome their leader, and he would be waiting there for their leader to come to him.

The aide-de-camp made some calls. Suddenly, his entire body shook. He gulped and said while shivering, "T-Third Indexer, the commander of this dynasty fleet... seems to be Black Star."

As soon as he finished his sentence, the Third Indexer's expression changed dramatically, and he instantly lost his cool.

Without saying another word, he rushed out the door while hastily making orders.

"Quickly, prepare a carrier for me. I'm going to welcome His Excellency Black Star at the dock!"

If it was an ordinary dynasty officer, the Third Indexer might have wanted to maintain his arrogance.

However, it was Black Star who had come, the person who made the strongest protector of the black market part of his collection. How dare he stay there waiting for Black Star to come to look for him?

The dynasty fleet entered the dock. As soon as Han Xiao stepped onto the dock, he saw the Third Indexer and his subordinates welcoming him respectfully. The two of them met, and Han Xiao did not say much, only mentioning that he had a deal he wanted to make and told the Third Indexer to lead him to the conference room to speak.

Accompanied by the cautious Third Indexer, they entered the subdivision of the Black Index and sat inside the conference room.

After sitting down, Han Xiao looked into the Third Indexer's eyes and said slowly, "You're a smart person. You should know why the dynasty has sent me, so I'll just cut to the chase. The Black Index has provided assurance and guarantees for anonymous hires, which led to a lot of black market mercenaries transporting the virus in the Ancient Star Desert, increasing the risk of the virus leaking. Now, on behalf of the Black Star Army and the Crimson Dynasty, I'm requesting you to temporarily stop providing such services and publicize the information of these anonymous employers to aid us in capturing them."

"Impossible!" The Third Indexer rejected it without hesitation. "This goes against the purpose of the Black Index. We can never leak the information of our customers. We..."

Han Xiao interrupted him and said with a more serious tone, "Is the purpose of a black market organization more important than the ruling of the three Universal Civilizations? Or has the Black Index made up its mind to spread the disaster and cause the entire universe to be filled with death?"

The Third Indexer hastily denied that. "Of course not. We've just been remaining neutral. What we've been doing has not changed since the Intelligent Plague erupted. We're purely maintaining a platform..."

"Don't try to convince me with this kind of excuse." Han Xiao tapped the table slowly. "Your inaction means your approval of others leaking the virus. Your inaction is equivalent to helping the disaster spread. The current situation has no room for neutral parties. Be it me personally or the three Universal Civilizations, no one wants to see anyone being an opportunist during such a serious disaster."

Hearing this, the Third Indexer looked worried.

His bad intuition had come true. He felt that Black Star was using this as an excuse to take away the guarantor platform they had built up in the Ancient Star Desert.

If it was just Black Star alone, he would not be this powerless. However, Black Star had come under orders, which meant that he represented the three Universal Civilizations' attitude.

Sure, the Black Index's forces were spread across many Star Fields, but crushing it would still be a piece of cake for the three Universal Civilizations. Furthermore, the Ancient Star Desert was now in quarantine, so there was no way he could even seek help. The Third Indexer did not want to give in, but he had no other choice. He could not even contact the headquarters while being in the Ancient Star Desert, so he had no choice but to bring up his background.

"Your Excellency Black Star, are you sure you want to do this? His Excellency Uru is behind us. He's a Beyond Grade A just like you..."

Han Xiao found it quite funny. "Yo, what's this? Are you trying to threaten me or something? That's quite brave of you. Even disregarding the fact that your protector is away and can't make it back here, so what if he could?"

The Third Indexer clenched his teeth, looked at the dynasty soldier beside him, and said, "I know what you're trying to do. You're trying to use this opportunity to infiltrate the black market and take control of some channels. The three Universal Civilizations now approve of your actions, but what happens when the disaster is over? They won't watch you reach out this far, so they will certainly take what you've obtained. Hence, whatever you're doing now, the three Universal Civilizations will always be the ones benefiting in the end. Why put in so much effort?"

"How dare you try to pick His Excellency Black Star and the dynasty apart!"

The dynasty soldier beside him was furious and instantly pulled out his firearm, pointing at the Third Indexer's head.

This time, Han Xiao raised his hand, signaling for the dynasty soldier to holster his weapon. He smiled and said, "You don't know me. Although I always chase after profits, I will never pick the wrong side on this kind of huge matter."

The Third Indexer clenched his teeth and continued trying. "The three Universal Civilizations are only allowing you to be in charge of this matter because they're using you. You'll be the one who ends up having beef with the black market organizations, and the three Universal Civilizations will be the ones taking the victory fruits after. Is the powerful Black Star willing to be used like this?"

"Hehe, fighting evil is everyone's responsibility, and I don't mind having beef with people because of it." Han Xiao smiled with mockery. "Furthermore, using each other is a more suitable way of saying it. It's still uncertain who'll benefit more from it in the end."

He had made up his mind on this matter. Rather than calling it a negotiation, it was more like a notification instead.

The Ancient Star Desert was now an isolated island. During the disaster, the illusion of equality was completely ripped away, exposing the dictatorship behind it. With the three Universal Civilizations backing him, he had nothing to fear.

In situations like this, other than those Galactic Civilizations under protection, the rest of the private organizations were all just food for the big sharks. They would face their demise if they refused to cooperate.

Seeing this, knowing that there was nothing he could do and no words would change the situation, the Third Indexer gave up, leaned back, and looked hopeless.

“I can’t resist anyway. The connections the Black Index has in the Ancient Star Desert are all yours...”

Hearing this, the aide-de-camp looked at the Third Indexer with disbelief.

That’s not what you said earlier. What happened to never breaking the organization’s integrity and name even in death

Noticing the aide-de-camp’s look, the Third Indexer threw back an angry look at him.

What, can’t I bullsh\*t?

Black Star is right here, I treasure my life very much. Go ahead and die for the organization if you want to!

### **Chapter 1107 Filling the Flaws of Science with Superstition**

The Black Index’s Planet Strange Gold subdivision controlled half of the Galactic Black Market’s hires and funds in the Ancient Star Desert. Controlling this place meant that half of the black market’s movements were being monitored.

In the main control room, the Third Indexer ordered the operators to open up the firewall and let Han Xiao inject his data needle, planting a ton of surveillance programs while looking at the documents behind recent anonymous hires in the black market.

The Black Index’s internal database had records of the true identities of some employers, most obtained through investigation. As the intermediate guarantor, the reward of the hire would go through the Black Index before going to the mercenary. Therefore, following the source of the funds, it was not difficult to find the identities of the anonymous employers.

Han Xiao quickly copied the tons of documents the Black Index had accumulated in the quantum network. He glanced at the wary Third Indexer beside him and joked, “You guys aren’t as reliable as you say you are. Tsk, you’ve been secretly investigating the identities of those anonymous employers. These documents are all their weaknesses. Don’t tell me you guys collected these for fun.”

The Third Indexer wiped away the sweat on his forehead and said, “It’s just to audit the reliability of the trade and assess the employer’s integrity. We only collected this information but never shared it with anyone. As for weaknesses... ahem, well, we’re in the black market industry, so we must have some leverage.”

“Got it, got it. It’s the black market. After all, no one is clean.” Han Xiao chuckled. The Third Indexer had no choice but to laugh together with Han Xiao, bowing and showing a lot of respect.

The dynasty fleet was right on this planet. The only thing he could do was to be obedient.

Han Xiao caressed his chin and said, “Speaking of which, that reminds me, I brought the dynasty fleet here, and you came to welcome me. There are a lot of people on this planet, so this news will get out sooner or later. There’ll definitely be rumors saying you’re being threatened by the three Universal

Civilizations, which will lead to the mercenaries and employers lying low for a while, and the three Universal Civilizations' plan to lure out the uncertainties will end up being less effective."

"I-I suppose." The Third Indexer did not know how to respond.

"I think you should feel good about that." Han Xiao smiled. "You might even send people to spread the news on the black market, saying the Black Index is being forced to do this, warning the other black market members not to use the platform for hires. This way, the damage done to your organization's brand will be reduced."

The Third Indexer felt bitter. He did indeed think of that. Although he was forced to obey, he still wanted to control the damage.

"Don't worry, I won't stop you from doing that."

Hearing this, the Third Indexer was confused and asked, "Didn't you control us to secretly monitor the black market and lure out the uncertainties? If the news of us not being reliable gets spread on the black market and people stop using our platform, what's the point of you taking over?"

"Sigh, looks like you're very adept to identity changes and have entered the position of a partner very soon. You've even started to think for us." Han Xiao laughed and clapped.

The Third Indexer's expression became stiff. He was angry but did not dare to express it.

Han Xiao raised his brows, summoned the dynasty officer, and said with a smile, "Later on, split up the dynasty fleet to head to any gray transit station in the Ancient Star Desert where a black market organization is stationed. Remember to do it as openly as possible and let everyone see you." Hearing this, the Third Indexer roughly figured out Black Star's plans.

"You're deliberately letting the black market know that the Black Index has been compromised. You'll then negotiate with every black market organization to create an illusion of the three Universal Civilizations having full control of the entire Ancient Star Desert black market so that most people will become suspicious and cautious, right?"

This way, even if the other black market organizations did not fall into Black Star's hands, with the Black Index as an example, those employers looking for confidentiality and safety would definitely no longer take the risk, fearing being exposed. Black Star could certainly force all the black market organizations in the Ancient Star Desert to compromise, but he chose to take another path. From the way the Third Indexer looked at it, this was Black Star giving himself a way out. This method was not as aggressive and would not lead to Black Star offending all the black market organizations, so the three Universal Civilizations would not end up easily taking over the fruits of victory.

Some black market organizations might even think of it as Black Star holding back on them.

"I got it." The Third Indexer hesitated. "This method is indeed less aggressive, but there are both pros and cons..."

Han Xiao did not respond. He knew what he meant.

Aggressively taking over all the black market organizations was the best way to lure those uncertainties out. He would be able to capture a ton of people who were trying to cause trouble. Comparatively, although this method required much less effort, it would cause most people to be alarmed and not make a move.

However, from the way he looked at it, there was no way to capture all the uncertainties. No fish could survive in an absolutely clean pond.

As the saying went, for a high enough reward, there would always be someone willing to take the risk. If those black market mercenaries were not completely discouraged, someone would definitely be willing to risk it for the huge profits, which would lead to the Ancient Star Desert becoming a mess. In the end, the three Universal Civilizations would have no choice but to put a lot of effort into chasing after them. This was the con of the more aggressive method.

Furthermore, when more of these people were captured, the fact that the three Universal Civilizations had controlled the black market would still be exposed. Therefore, he might as well make it public in the first place to not give anyone the thought that they might be lucky enough to pull off a fluke, making them afraid of the consequences. This way, the plan would turn from luring out those who would cause a problem to preventing those people from appearing in the first place, reducing the number of people willing to take the risk from the roots.

Indeed, luring them out would be effective, but it would also produce more uncertainties. As the rulers, a more righteous method was more suitable for the three Universal Civilizations. Using dirty tricks like this might be okay once in a while, but it was not suitable in the long run.

Han Xiao put those thoughts aside, glanced at the Third Indexer who was looking very obedient, and said, "You're not bad. I thought you'd only compromise after a slaughter. I didn't think you'd be so understanding as to not even give me a chance to do that."

"... As long as you're satisfied," the Third Indexer replied with resignation.

"However, I do like you more when you are defiant. Come, show me again," Han Xiao joked.

When was I ever defiant?

The Third Indexer complained about Han Xiao's humor in his mind but still straightened his back as he was told on the surface.

This time, Phillip had completed filtering the documents and identified a ton of employers requesting to transport the virus. "Report this list to the three Universal Civilizations. Have their troops cooperate with the operation to destroy these organizations."

Han Xiao glanced through it.

The data was very detailed. The employers were from all kinds of industries. For these people, he did not plan to hold back. While making them examples for the others, he could farm the Mission Rating of [Intelligent Plague] at the same time.

He searched through for a while and found an organization that hired Immortals multiple times. This was a black market arms dealer named the Kepel Financial Group. They had hired Depressed Prince too.

“I shall deal with this organization personally. Remember to publicize the execution process on the net.”

On the dock of one of the Kepel Financial Group’s Ancient Star Desert bases, cargo boxes were being loaded onto the ships. Kepel the Fifth was patrolling with his subordinates.

“How long before we can take off?”

“About two hours.”

“Speed up as much as possible.” Kepel the Fifth’s tone was a little impatient.

About seven days ago, the dynasty fleet had visited the Black Index. This message was only spread out yesterday. All the anonymous employers who were giving out missions to transport the virus were appalled and instantly tried to save themselves.

Kepel the Fifth felt uneasy, too. Therefore, he decided to abandon this base and transfer his assets.

Currently, he was making his men empty the base.

While he was anxiously waiting, an observation officer sent him an urgent message.

“Alert, the exterior fleet has discovered a small Crimson Dynasty fleet approaching. We’ve sent a communication request but received no response.”

“The three Universal Civilizations’ men have come?” Kepel the Fifth was startled. Together with a group of officers, he hastily walked to the window and looked out into cosmic space. A few scattered dynasty spaceships appeared in their vision.

“There don’t seem to be a lot of people?”

“They don’t look like they’re here to fight.”

Seeing this, Kepel the Fifth was slightly relieved.

Since there were so few spaceships, he felt like they were more there to ask questions or negotiate. Having thought of that, Kepel the Fifth adjusted his clothes to look more formal. He then ordered with a deep voice, “Frigates, standby. Send a communication request in my name. I’ll speak with them and see their intentions.”

However, as soon as he said that, the dynasty spaceships stopped a distance away. “Hmm? Why did they stop?” Kepel the Fifth was confused.

However, the next moment, countless machines appeared out of thin air afar, quickly assembling into an enormous human-shaped machine that was wearing a cape and holding a longsword in its hand. It was so enormous that even the entire base was smaller.

“That’s...”

Before Kepel the Fifth and the others recovered from their shock, this enormous machine suddenly hurled the long sword forward, which easily sliced through all the frigates in its path like a hot knife cutting through butter, heading right toward the base. At this instant, including Kepel the Fifth, all the



people on the dock stopped what they were doing and stared blankly at the gigantic mountain-sized blade that was fast approaching

Their minds had all gone blank.

Swoosh!

The Celestial Punishment Edge easily penetrated the Kepel base. The blue psionic storm on its blade turned the base wreckage into dust. It was like a firework.

As if it had met no resistance at all, the blade continued to penetrate into the desolate planet below the base, through the ground, and came out the other side of the planet. It had given this planet a hole that extended from one side to another.

The enormous amount of psionic energy left by the Celestial Punishment Edge caused irreversible chain reactions inside the planet. Lava rushed up, and red cracks started appearing on the surface.

The next moment, a blinding white light erupted. The entire desolate planet expanded from within and shattered instantly. The shockwave from the explosion expanded, but the Mechanical Deity raised its Emperor's Cape and blocked the shockwave completely.

At the same time, it raised its hand. The Celestial Punishment Edge moved through the energy storm of the planet's explosion in an arc and returned to its hand. "This thing is quite powerful." Han Xiao somewhat understood why the Tyracles were so passionate about building equipment for the Mechanical Deity. There was no other reason except for it being so damn cool.

After playing with the Celestial Punishment Edge for a bit, the Great Mechanic Han reluctantly deactivated the Mechanical Deity and returned to the ship.

"Run a scan to see if there's still anyone alive."

What's the point?

The powerful light of the planet's explosion reflected on the dynasty soldiers' pale faces. The cabin was dead silent, as if they could hear each other gulping in fear. "Phillip, did you record that?"

"Yes, hum..."

"Upload it to the net, to intimidate those with ulterior motives and show them the consequences of what they might want to do."

Han Xiao waved his hand casually.

He did not plan to even speak with this organization. There was more than sufficient evidence. There was no point speaking, so he directly wiped them out with a slash to express his firm attitude.

After dealing with this small matter, Han Xiao waved at Harrison and the others, who were shivering by the side, signaling them to come over.

Harrison had just witnessed Han Xiao casually shattering a planet with his own eyes. The impact of it completely shattered his mental preparations for it before it happened. Even though he clearly knew Black Star was one of the strongest in the universe, he was still astonished.

Harrison's teeth were shaking. He cautiously approached Han Xiao and stuttered, "Y-Y-Y-Your Excellency Black Star, what can I do for you?"

"Why are you so nervous? I won't bite." Harrison chuckled and patted Harrison's shoulder.

"Discouraging illegal dealings is about done, so looking for the virus core needs to be brought forward. I want to ask you, where do you think the virus core is hiding?"

"H-how would I know?"

"Don't be so nervous. Just make a random guess. Where do you think it's hiding?"

Harrison calmed himself down, regained focus, and cautiously said, "Previously, you said that the virus core is just a pre-designed program used to monitor the overall infection progress of the virus. This means that it is definitely exchanging information with the other viruses, so to hide itself, it can't possibly be the terminal of that information exchange, or it would have been found long ago. Therefore, I think that through recording all the routes the viruses are sending data through and finding the overlapping spots among them, that's where the virus core might..."

Han Xiao interrupted him and said, "The three Universal Civilizations thought of this long ago and have been doing exactly that. Each virus sends out a large amount of fake data every now and then. The routes are extremely complicated, and there are too many overlapping points. Therefore, there's no way but to filter them. However, not only is the location of the virus core very difficult to find, it seems to be changing randomly. This is why the three Universal Civilizations have not been able to find it."

"T-then I don't have any ideas and, unfortunately, won't be able to help you."

"No, I don't need your ideas." Han Xiao smirked. "Next time the three Universal Civilizations come up with the new set of overlapping points, I need you to choose some of them. What if you're lucky enough to find it right away?"

"Stop joking with me..." Harrison was anxious.

"I'm not joking. Think about it, you dug up an antique randomly, and it just so happened to be the source of such a dangerous disaster. From a certain viewpoint, your luck is through the roof."

Harrison scratched his head and realized that did make some sense.

Indeed, I always seem to have been quite lucky. No matter what I asked my family's financial group to invest in, it always ended up making money. If not because making money is too easy, I wouldn't have come out looking for excitement by doing archaeology... Han Xiao did not know what he was thinking. Seeing that he was daydreaming, he gave him a few words of encouragement and started pondering in his mind.

He had a lot of faith in the Advanced Luck Glow. Even if it failed the first time, if he let Harrison try a few more times, the chances of succeeding were still much higher than others.

Furthermore, Han Xiao even planned to make a request to the three Universal Civilizations to contact the outside world, so he could look for Floating Dragon's old man Aesop to read some feng shui for him.

No matter how well the virus core hid, everyone was equal in front of luck and prophecy.

Since science did not cut it, he planned to make it up with superstition!

...

Galaxy Calendar Year 731 March 9th, Black Star visited the Black Index organization, which controlled the black market, as a Crimson Dynasty emissary.

The two sides carried out a friendly and peaceful meeting regarding the three Universal Civilizations' control of the disaster, successfully exchanging information. In the end, they happily came to an agreement. The Black Index's Ancient Star Desert person in charge, the Third Indexer, expressed that be it a black or white faction, every powerful civilian organization had a responsibility to protect the universe. Preventing the Intelligent Plague from spreading was a duty every galactic resident should carry out. Hence, the Black Index was willing to fully support the three Universal Civilizations' operations.

March 17th, Black Star announced that the Kepel Financial Group had hidden the virus. He wiped Kepel out with one attack, shocking the other organizations.

With this incident as the signal, the three Universal Civilizations worked together and wiped out tons of private organizations that were suspected to have hidden the virus over the next month.

In April, the Crimson Dynasty fleet visited all the black market organizations in the Ancient Star Desert, seemingly gaining control of all the black market connections in the Ancient Star Desert.

Black Star upheld the rules of no negotiations and no compromises. He led his fleet on frequent attacks, reducing the number of smugglers by a large amount.

June 25th, the research group led by Manison created the first version of the special anti-virus and scanning tool, which was widely used.

In July, the Intelligent Plague was briefly under control. The three Universal Civilizations started to search for the virus' core.

### **Chapter 1108 Great Machinery Sage**

Han Xiao's fleet had stopped at the Crimson Dynasty's temporary Ancient Star Desert military base to resupply and repair their armor.

Over the past few months, using the information he had gained through the black market channels, he had done a cleansing of the restless gray organizations in the Ancient Star Desert, creating an image of him being merciless. This successfully made the rest not dare to take the risk. They chose to obey and stopped touching the Virtual Mutiny Virus. Hence, the Star Field's situation was getting better.

While doing so, Han Xiao was also trying to find the virus core. He had let Harrison choose the overlapping data points multiple times with his Luck Glow.

However, for once, the Luck Glow did not work, and he was never able to find the virus core. Even old man Aesop could not 'prophecy' his way to the location of this thing.

He was in charge of cleaning out the uncertainties, while Manison was focusing on researching. Both sides had gotten some results. Currently, the Intelligent Plague was somewhat under control.

“... I thought you guys would be able to come up with the antivirus very soon. Turns out it took you months. Now this doesn't suit your level, Manison.”

Inside the lounge for upper echelons of the military base, Han Xiao was chatting with Manison's remote projection while snacking on some kind of seed similar to the Chinese melon seeds.

Manison shook his head and said, “Analyzing the virus' code wasn't easy. Plus, we had to prevent the virus from erupting, so we had to go around the conditions that would trigger it. We had no choice but to be extremely cautious. That's why it took us some time.”

Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanics could easily eliminate the Virtual Mutiny Virus, but the difficulty of turning their own ability into a tool that anyone could use was a completely different matter. For example, a man would be able to naturally walk and run, but if he was asked to build a robot that could do the same, he would definitely not be able to come up with it as easily.

“What are the three Universal Civilizations planning to do now?”

“The problem is still the conditions of triggering the virus eruption. In order to make sure it doesn't erupt, we can't cause the infection speed of the virus to plummet all of a sudden. Therefore, even if there are firewalls, we can't use them on a wide scale. For the time being, they can only be installed after all the infected nodes are cleaned. This is also the reason that despite the three Universal Civilizations' control, the Virtual Mutiny Virus has still infected more than half of the network nodes in the Ancient Star Desert over the past few months.”

son a

“If I recall correctly, cleaning out the virus on a large scale will also trigger it, right?” Han Xiao asked.

“Yes,” Manison replied. “Therefore, the scanning tool the three Universal Civilizations have asked us to build can't be discovered by the viruses. They plan to secretly lock onto all the infected nodes by scanning them, then implant antivirus tools with precision to clean all the infected nodes simultaneously. Afterward, they'll install firewalls immediately to prevent repeat infections. This way, even if the virus ends up erupting, the damage will be minimized.”

“Although this method is a little bit troublesome, it's safest.”

Han Xiao had no objection to the three Universal Civilizations' plan. It sounded quite reliable.

However, he had a question in mind. In his previous life, the three Universal Civilizations should have done exactly the same thing, so how did it still turn into a disaster for the entire universe in the end?

Could it be because I've done my job too well and changed some unknown details? For example, someone should have transported the virus out but has been stopped by me? Han Xiao put this question to the back of his mind.

Manison did not know what Han Xiao was thinking. He continued to explain the three Universal Civilizations' plan.

“Therefore, we have made various preparations. One is this plan to wipe out all the virus; the other is to locate the virus core. The virus core is the controlling terminal for most eruption triggers. As long as it's

eliminated, the risk will be reduced even further, and we won't have to worry about the viruses erupting when we attempt to wipe them out."

"Do you guys still have no leads on the virus core?"

"It's hidden itself too well." Manison shook his head and did not say much.

Han Xiao snorted softly. He felt that old Manison was not telling the truth. However, there was no point exposing him. The two of them were competitors in this respect. Manison would not be so kind as to share clues with him.

I were

Out of all the Beyond Grade A Mechanics who had come to help, all of them wanted to obtain the virus core to learn the full secrets of the Virtual Mutiny Virus technology.

Now that the pandemic was under control and the most dangerous period had passed, the competition revolving around the virus core had come to the surface. Even the three Universal Civilizations intended to compete for

it.

Han Xiao knew that he would not be able to get any information from Manison, so he skipped this topic and said, "Now that your work is done, are you still planning to stay in the research department?"

"No, I'm planning to go and take a walk. One reason is to find clues about the virus core. Another is that I plan to go and take a look at the Machinery Faith."

"Machinery Faith?" Han Xiao's brows raised.

He had never forgotten that the two of them had conflicts of interest due to this religion. Manison was always in the position of the main god. He wanted to keep most of their faith to himself to maintain the (Key of Adeptus Mechanicus] bonuses.

For that, Manison had struck more than a decade ago and made Han Xiao suffer a slight loss.

Back then, he had chosen to use his soul talent of not competing. After that, he had been growing stronger while keeping a low profile, at the same time maintaining a decent relationship with Manison.

"What, you have some thoughts about it?" Manison sounded like he was smiling, but he was not.

"Humph, can't I?" Han Xiao narrowed his eyes.

"Compared to about ten years ago, you have indeed improved. However, it's still too early for you to want to challenge me again," Manison said coldly. "Don't envy what's mine. We have quite a good relationship now; keeping things this way is good for you. Don't say I never warned you. I don't wish to see you have any contact with the Machinery Faith in any form."

Then, the green remote projection disappeared, and Manison had hung up the communication.

Han Xiao's face turned black. He was a little irritated.

What a b\*stard this guy is, changing his attitude like flipping pages of a book.

Also, when did the Machinery Faith become yours? Shameless! Speaking of, it's already been more than ten years since I last fought him...

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes and pondered.

He opened the interface, looked at the huge amount of EXP he had accumulated, and felt assured.

The Black Star Cup had been going on all this time, giving him bonus EXP for the past few months, which had stacked up to quite a huge amount. He did a slight calculation-it was roughly enough for him to level up from level 320 to between 335 and 337. Just a portion of this much EXP would be enough for him to obtain enough Potential Points to max all his class knowledges.

After farming for so long, I feel like I can have a rematch with Manison...

Han Xiao had decided to take a step back more than ten years ago because he wanted to become stronger first. Now that he had improved, his restless mindset once again seized control.

The competition around the Machinery Faith was one thing, but to Han Xiao, the other reason was the main reason.

I'm not happy. I have to fight that old man!

Last time, I was weaker, so I put up with it, but it's never too late for revenge!

In the past, you came to me and bullied my Phillip. Now, I have reason to be confident, so it's my turn to initiate the challenge and see the difference in our strength.

Due to the existence of the Beyond Grade A Association, the strength difference between individuals also affected the weight of their words. Although Manison's term was still long, he could totally make some early preparations for the next election.

Also, it was because of the development union that he did not have to worry about Manison's retaliation. As the president, Manison had to set an example and not cause trouble secretly, or it would go against the purpose of the development union. Although Manison provided some help to him during the attack on Hila, it was more of a win-win. To Han Xiao, favors and beef did not cancel out each other. He would repay Old Man Manison for what he did in the future at most.

All kinds of thoughts flashed past Han Xiao's mind. He brought up the ability list, selected a bunch of blueprint abilities, threw in EXP, and maxed out their levels. Notifications kept popping up on the interface.

You have maxed the level of one ability. You have received 1 Potential Point.

You have maxed the level of one ability. You have received 1 Potential Point.

Currently, Han Xiao only had three Ultimate Knowledges that were not at their maximum level. (Ultimate Mechanical Engineering) was at Lv.3, (Mechanical Life Tinder) was at Lv.4, and (Endless Material Science] was at Lv.2. They required a total of 144 Potential Points. Even though he still had some Potential Points left, he still had to max out more than a hundred abilities.

The more max level abilities he had, the higher the cost of leveling up the rest of the abilities, including even the low-level blueprints. Though, the cost did not increase as much as leveling up himself. This meant that although the players could utilize different levelling strategies, they would not have too much of an impact. They would still have to put in a lot of effort to receive more Potential Points.

His EXP gauge went down very quickly. Very soon, he had already spent more than half of it. When his remaining EXP was only enough for him to level up to 326, he finally had 144 Potential Points.

Although leveling up would also give him Potential Points, he did not want to wait any longer. He had tons of leeks and a continuous source of EXP, so being so calculative was not something he needed to do.

Furthermore, Han Xiao was also very curious as to whether Potential Points would still be of any use when all his knowledges were at the maximum level.

Looking at the 144 Potential Points, Han Xiao took a deep breath and spent them all on the last three Ultimate Knowledges.

You have leveled up (Ultimate Mechanical Engineering] to Lv.5 (Max)!

You have leveled up (Mechanical Life Tinder] to Lv.5 (Max)!

You have leveled up [Endless Material Science] to Lv.5 (Max)!

All 60 of your Class Knowledges have reached the max level!

You have received 1 (The First Sanctum) Ability Fragment. You have acquired talent (Great Machinery Sage]!

[Great Machinery Sage): +1.25 Total Machinery Affinity bonus multiplier; +3 levels to Mechanic Class related abilities (Not limited by the ability's max level); +40% production, enhancement, and repairing ability; +60% Virtual Technology effects; +15% Machinery basic attributes; +120% Machinery production speed; +3,000 INT. Remark: "In the machinery territory, you're an all-knowing sage."

The current Potential Points in your possession and the Potential Points you obtain in the future can be turned into 'Awakening Points' at a 1:1 conversion rate.

Usage I: 1 An Awakening Point can be converted into 100 Free Attribute Points (Irreversible).

Usage II: 1 An Awakening Point can be used to level up one maxed level ability by 1 level (Irreversible).

Usage III: Awakening Points can be used to increase the awakening process of Unique Talent. The amount increased by every 1 Awakening Point depends on the level and grade of the Unique Talent (Irreversible). 100 Awakening Points can be used to activate the brief structure of a Unique Talent (Custom talent direction).

Usage IV: Awakening Points can be used to increase the grade of blueprints. The amount increased by every 1 Awakening Point depends on the level and grade of the blueprint (Irreversible).

Usage V: Awakening Points can be used to increase the progress of inventing a blueprint. The amount increased by every 1 Awakening Point depends on the level and grade of the blueprint (Irreversible).

Your (Ultimate Mechanical Engineering) has reached the max level. [Inspirational Creation] activated!

Woah! Han Xiao was thoroughly surprised.

[Great Machinery Sage]'s effects definitely matched how difficult it was to obtain it. Not only did it provide very comprehensive bonuses, but the bonuses were also all quite large. Its impact on his strength was probably on the same level as (Perfect Mechanical Sense), increasing his overall strength by about ten percent.

I wonder if the suffixes of the talents given when all class knowledges are at the max level is the same for all the classes... The Magic Sage? Sounds fine. The Psychic Sage? Now that sounds a little weird...

The Esper Sage? Hmm...

The Pugilist Sage? Forget it, the Muscular Sage is definitely much better.

The talent was within Han Xiao's expectations, but the new use of Potential Points surprised him. No player in his previous life could level up all their abilities to the max level. This was a first even for him.

His Potential Points were now Awakening Points.

He carefully read its uses. The more he read it, the more excited he got. Compared to the one and only use the Potential Points had, the uses of Awakening Points were much more diverse.

Converting them into Free Attribute Points and increasing the upper limits of his abilities were clearly very practical and needed no further explanation, but what he was more impressed by were the other three functions.

Increasing the blueprint's grade seemed to be able to give him a stable stream of Gold blueprints. For example, if he kept throwing Awakening Points into just an ordinary low-level pistol blueprint, given enough Awakening Points, this blueprint might turn into a Gold blueprint!

And the type of blueprint would not change too much. It would only turn from a gunpowder pistol into a portable Planetary Obliteration weapon.

The Awakening Points could also be used to increase the progress of inventing a blueprint, which could be used together with [Inspirational Creation]. [Inspirational Creation] had been gathering dust in the interface. The prerequisite for activating it was max level (Ultimate Mechanical Engineering). The effect of this ability was to use EXP to assemble multiple blueprints into one or more improved or fused blueprints, with no upper limit on the number of blueprints. At the same time, a choice could be made for the improvement path of the fused blueprints, such as attack, defense, or support.

This ability made inventing blueprints more stable and ensured a result. It was also the only way the players in his previous life could invent Gold blueprints. However, the chances of doing so were extremely low. Most of the time, one would only obtain the brief structure of a Gold blueprint or Inspiration Fragments, which he could use Awakening Points to increase the progress of.

The last use of Awakening Point was what the Great Mechanic Han liked the most-it could be used to fuse Unique Talents!



Han Xiao's eyes sparkled as he mumbled, "Old Manison, Sorokin, and the others might have obtained their Unique Talents this way."

### **Chapter 1109 A Secret Only One Person Knows**

One Unique Talent for a hundred Awakening Points, this cost was certainly high. However, at least it gave him a clear path. Han Xiao did not trust his luck at all. If he only relied on his luck, he probably would not have a wisp of a Unique Talent even in a hundred years.

He had a guess that the way of customizing would be probably the same as how he created his own Race Talent back when he advanced into Beyond Grade A, by selecting his preferences then randomizing from those given conditions. The Unique Talent obtained after fusing would only have a brief structure. He would need to spend more Awakening Points to activate it.

Potential Points turning into Awakening Points after all class knowledges were at max level was probably the same with other Mechanics such as Manison.

The difference was, unlike him, Manison and the others could not freely choose what to use the Awakening Points on.

Therefore, since the other Mechanics could not decide where to use the Awakening Points, they were probably random. He guessed it would probably feel like a sudden flash of insight for them.

Although the cost is quite high, at least it's a stable way to obtain Unique Talents. Han Xiao was quite content. He had been eyeing this for many years, and now he had finally seen some hope. However, the quality-price ratio of it was still uncertain. A hundred Attribute Points was equivalent to ten thousand Free Attribute Points, and his Intellect right now was not even thirty thousand despite it being his highest attribute. If he used all those Awakening Points on Free Attribute Points, it would be a huge improvement for him. He would only not make a loss if he were to get a Molding Talent level Unique Talent.

However, since it would be a Unique Talent, its effects would probably be decent. After all, its effects had to match how difficult it was to obtain it.

The Great Mechanic Han still remembered Sorokin's Unique Talent (Swindler-Sorokin), which gave him a direct twenty-percent bonus just on his Intellect and Mystery attributes, along with a bonus seventy-five percent Esper Ability strength and four levels to all his abilities. It was extremely powerful.

Old Man Manison's (Virtual Technology Innovation-Manison) gave him a 1.75-times multiplier on his Virtual Technology abilities, on top of his 'Indestructible Mechanic Empire' technology.

Both of these were at the Molding Talent level.

You never know until you try it. Although it's quite costly, I'll still have to get one and see how it is.

He had just leveled up more than a hundred blueprint abilities and spent all the Potential Points, so his current EXP inventory was not enough to get him another hundred Awakening Points.

Alas, Awakening Points... What a suitable name. Here comes another bottomless pit for EXP. Let's just think about it after my Promotion...

Han Xiao shook his head. His main goal of maxing the level of all his class knowledges was that one extra God's Trait Transformation Point during Promotion.

Now that he had completed that achievement, the Promotion at level 340 became his top priority again.

Other than these changes, the interface also mentioned that he had obtained another Ability Fragment of (The First Sanctum).

The Great Mechanic Han had already found a pattern. Whenever he overcame a certain threshold of the Mechanic class, he would receive a (The First Sanctum] fragment.

The first piece came from when he activated God's Trait Transformation, the second came from the first Universal Treasure he built, the third came from the fifth stage of his main class' God's Trait Transformation, and this was the fourth.

I can't wait to see how many fragments it takes to make it whole. Better not tell me it's a hundred.

Overall, he was very satisfied with the bonuses that came with maxing the level of all his class knowledges. It had given him a new path to grow. This was the biggest difference between him and the other Beyond Grade As-his growth path was crystal clear.

At the same time, with (Great Machinery Sage), he had more confidence in challenging Manison.

Last time, I lost in the virtual world; this time, I've got to fight him in the real world.

Han Xiao was looking forward to it with high morale.

This mindset could be simply explained as: "Stopped, the rain has; stopped, the wind has; now I think, I can do it again!"

Du du du!

While Han Xiao was getting familiar with the changes in his body, someone knocked on his door. Harrison walked in.

Over the past few months, Han Xiao had upheld his belief of not wasting any resource and did not let Harrison get away with doing nothing. Even though this guy was still guilty, Han Xiao did not mind and gave him a job as his temporary secretary.

Other than to find Harrison something to do, this was also because he wanted to have him around so that benefitting from his Luck Glow would be more convenient.

However, only from the results, not only did he not benefit from it, he even somewhat neutralized it.

Of course, the Great Mechanic Han would not admit this. He strongly believed that it was just that Harrison's Luck Glow did not have a good quality.

Feidin's Luck Glow still turned out to be the best. It remained unaffected no matter how much of a burden he was.

Seeing that Harrison had walked in, Han Xiao closed the interface and asked casually, “Anything to report?” “Your Excellency Black Star, the dynasty fleet has told me to tell you that they’re going to temporarily leave your team and go back to their usual groupings to execute other missions.”

“What happened?” Han Xiao asked curiously.

“The captain has told me that this is a mission the dynasty upper echelons gave. Something has happened with a Star System civilization, and it’s not suitable for you to deal with.”

“What are the details?”

“I brought the information regarding the incident. Please take a look.”

Harrison took out a set of data and displayed it on the virtual screen.

Han Xiao quickly looked through and understood.

In the past few months, the various civilizations of the Ancient Star Desert had come to understand the big picture and cooperated fully with the three Universal Civilizations’ operations on the surface, not causing any problems like the black market once did.

However, when the three Universal Civilizations announced that the antivirus was complete, there seemed to be civilizations that felt that the pandemic was already under control and there would no longer be any dire consequences, so they started to stir things up.

There were three Star System Civilizations who were involved—the Tiger Race, the White Hair Race, and the Ferians. They were not transporting the virus but instead were suspected of using the virus to attack their enemies.

The Tiger Race and the Ferians were in the same Star System. Their territories were right beside one another. They were old rivals and often had conflicts with each other. The White Hair Race was in another Star System nearby, next to the Tiger Race but not the Ferians. Their relationship with the Tiger Race was relatively distant.

This was what the situation was roughly about. Not long ago, a machinery rebellion occurred on one of the important administrative planets of the Tiger Race. Those machines were infected by the Virtual Mutiny Virus, and because they had been disconnected from the network for too long, the trigger condition for the virus was met, and these machines were modified by the virus to hurt life forms.

The virus outbreak was only limited to this group of machinery. They were not large in number, and they could not connect to the internet either, so the other nodes of that planet were not affected. Therefore, the guards of the planet easily annihilated this group of machines. However, there were still civilian casualties.

After an investigation, a rather believable cause of this disaster surfaced on the network—that this group of machines were used by the Tiger Race to study the Virtual Mutiny Virus, and they accidentally lost control of them, which led to this disaster.

After this message got out, the Tiger Race civilians were in an uproar. Public opinion went out of control, and they all turned on their regime. The impact kept getting bigger.

The Tiger Race hastily said that this was just a rumor, that they did not study the virus at all. They said that these machines were hidden on the planet by an unknown force, who had calculated the day for the virus to attack to deliberately frame the regime and damage their credibility.

The civilians who were enraged felt this was nothing but excuses, so the Tiger Race had no choice but to request the three Universal Civilizations to judge it.

From the private report Han Xiao received, the Tiger Race explained to the three Universal Civilizations that this might be a conspiracy of the Ferians or the White Hair Race. The Tiger Race claimed that not only did both of those suspects want to frame them, but at the same time, the real culprit wanted to make the other suspect get the blame and stir up conflict between the Tiger Race and them, while they sat on the sidelines and benefited from it.

Both the White Hair Race and the Ferians had motives, but the Tiger Race was not completely trustworthy either. Hence, the three Universal Civilizations sent people over to investigate. Currently, the situation was still quite blurry.

The Star System Civilizations were protected by the Peace Treaty, so the dynasty did not let Han Xiao interfere with it. In this respect, the three Universal Civilizations did not allow any other organizations other than them to be the bullies.

The black market became obedient after what I did, but now the civilizations have started to cause trouble, I see...

Han Xiao frowned. Although this was not his responsibility, he still felt that something was not right.

He understood that the Ancient Star Desert being in lockdown had put the various local civilizations on alert, especially the Super Star Cluster Civilizations. The three bullies had lost their credibility during such crises long ago, so these civilizations had definitely prepared for the worst and gathered leverage. However, this was not helpful to the big picture at all.

I'll still have to deal with the virus as soon as possible. It can't wait. I shall use Bold Explorer one more time.

Han Xiao left the room and entered the warehouse.

Walking into the room, he saw the triangular device that had once stored the Virtual Mutiny Virus technology lying there immediately.

The dynasty had studied it but come up with no results. Seeing that Black Star had asked for it, they allowed Han Xiao to keep it with him.

Lately, as long as [Bold Explorer] was off cooldown, Han Xiao would use it on this triangular device. Sadly, he had only seen a ton of scattered images; none were of any value. He had only found out part of the virus' origin at most.

The machinery civilization he saw from the first time he used Bold Explorer was the creators of the Virtual Mutiny Virus. This was indeed a weapon. The very purpose of building it in the first place was to use it on the unknown civilization that used the Planetary Obliteration weapon to annihilate this machinery civilization.

The program of the virus was set to killing life forms, and the machinery civilization was clearly not in range. It was like a high-level war weapon that dealt no damage to their kind.

This machinery civilization, or more of an intelligent civilization, was the same as an artificial intelligence civilization. All of its citizens were artificial intelligence lives, only more advanced.

These machines roaming the streets were all shells carrying intelligent lives. They were basically their carriers for walking in the real world. They designed their shells themselves, so there were hardly any two machines that looked the same. Through using [Bold Explorer) time after time, Han Xiao had found out about some special language and symbols of this artificial intelligence civilization. However, after cross-referencing it, there were no related records in the three Universal Civilizations' database at all.

Either this artificial intelligence civilization was too ancient and even the three Universal Civilizations did not know about it, or it was an advanced civilization in the unexplored universe.

No matter which it was, it proved the fact that the source of the Virtual Mutiny Virus was a materialization phenomenon brought by an information state disturbance. Basically, it was a 'mirage' that interfered with reality.

Hope I can see something useful this time.

Han Xiao had Harrison beside him. He took a deep breath and prayed in his head to be blessed by the Luck Glow before placing his hand on the cold surface of the triangular device.

Buzz!

The next moment, the scene in his sights changed. He had come to a bright lab.

He looked up, and his eyes constricted with surprise.

In the middle of the room was the triangular device that was still not closed, showing the safe within it. Beside it was a group of mechanical lives who looked like researchers. They were operating their mechanical arms carefully and placing an almost transparent light-blue sphere of electrical sparks inside the device.

Is this when the Virtual Mutiny Virus was first created? Finally!

Han Xiao suppressed his joy and carefully observed this light blue sphere of electrical sparks. Tiny strings of electrical sparks swam in the air like a powerful electromagnetic field.

... This is the virus core?

Shouldn't it be a bunch of virtual data? Why is it a mass of electromagnetic energy?

Han Xiao was confused.

A monotonous electrical voice suddenly sounded. A mechanical life researcher by the side moved the camera to aim at him and said, "Experiment introduction: The Domino Virus, able to infect the quantum network and rewrite the fundamental logic of artificial intelligences. The current program is to kill all organic life forms.

“Raw material: One thousand mutated artificial intelligence lives with individual consciousness wiped, leaving only data structure and computing power. After 165 failures, the Domino Virus was successfully created. The virus’ initial state has extremely high stealth, infiltrative, and infective abilities.

“Virus core: Pre-designed program with no individual consciousness. As the control center, it follows the logic given and controls the Domino Virus, monitoring the infection progress and activating the virus at a suitable time. It also has the ability to self-evolve. When the opponent has invented a targeted firewall, the virus core will automatically analyze the data and find the flaw with its strong computing power, continuously updating and enhancing the viruses to carry out a new round of infection.

“Remarks: From the second-generation virus onward, all viruses are active by default. Once infected, they will immediately rewrite the target’s logic without an incubation period.

“Also, the virus core uses a lot of technology such as Virtual Soul, Bio-electricity Simulation, Electromagnetic Field Reformation, and so on. It has two forms. It can either exist as a virtual soul that lives in the quantum network or leave the quantum network at any terminal and enter the material world as an electromagnetic field life form.

“As the fundamental virus core is a virtual soul, when in the electromagnetic field state, it can infiltrate the quantum network at any time without coming into contact with any nodes. Due to this ability, the virus core has an extremely high escaping and hiding ability, as well as mobility.

“If used properly, one Domino Virus can shatter the majority of armed forces of a galactic civilization, causing the target’s technology to regress many generations. Due to its extreme power, it requires caution when used. Currently, the Domino Virus is sealed up. Without authority, do not use...”

Han Xiao’s eyes slowly widened.

He felt that his fragile mind had received ten thousand points of damage.

If not because he saw all this through (Bold Explorer), no one in the entire universe would have known the truth of the Virtual Mutiny Virus!

I’m the only one who knows all this now. Everyone else still has no idea!

At this time, a thought appeared in his mind.

Something’s going to go wrong! The three Universal Civilizations’ plan isn’t going to work!

This thing is tougher to deal with than we thought!

### **Chapter 1110 Countermeasures**

At this time, the image of (Bold Explorer] stopped, and his vision returned to the warehouse. He lifted his palm from the cold shell of the triangular device, stood in place, and looked at the device in silence.

He remained silent and did not move at all. Clueless as to what was going on, Harrison sensitively felt that the atmosphere had gradually become heavier, so he cautiously asked, “Your Excellency Black Star, did something happen?”

“...Nothing.” Han Xiao regained focus. He glanced at him and then walked out of the warehouse with wide strides. Harrison quickly followed after him. “Go do your stuff. You don’t have to follow me.”

“Oh, sure.”

Like he had just been spared his life, Harrison quickly left.

Although Black Star did not do anything, just being beside him made Harrison feel extremely pressured.

After getting rid of Harrison, Han Xiao returned to his room and thought of the secrets he had just seen. His mind started working fast.

The Virtual Mutiny Virus’s real name is the Domino Virus, it seems. What a terrifying weapon of war. Any organization that gets their hands on this technology will have the absolute upper hand in the information war...

He finally understood why the Intelligent Plague still swarmed the entire universe in his previous life. It turned out that it was not only because some people did not obey the three Universal Civilizations, but the three Universal Civilizations could not stop the Domino Virus’ invasion.

It was not because their technology was inferior, but they did not have enough information and got caught by surprise. After all, who would ever think that the Virtual Mutiny Virus worked this way? If not because he had seen the virus’ true identity from (Bold Explorer), he would probably have been in the exact same spot the three Universal Civilizations were in, still seeing the virus core as just a data program.

According to common sense, the virus core was supposed to just be the switch that monitored the entire infection progress. Hence, the three Universal Civilizations thought that they had nothing to be afraid of because they had already come up with the antivirus.

Of course, they had no idea that the virus core had the ability to update and evolve on its own. What they had under control at the moment was just the first-generation virus. As long as the core was not dealt with, there would still be the second generation, the third generation, and so on. Furthermore, there would be no incubation period next time; the virus would directly cause the machinery to rebel.

Not only was its infectiousness more horrifying than expected, but the virus core’s ability to escape was also astonishing. It was not limited by its data state and could even enter the material world, forming an electromagnetic field as the body to carry itself and switch freely between the virtual and the real world. It was not afraid of being locked in the network at all.

As the foundation of its existence was a virtual soul, the virus core did not need any physical node to enter the quantum network. It was similar to how Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanics could enter the quantum network anytime they wanted. It would only need a node as the exit when materializing, meaning that it could teleport between the various nodes using the quantum network.

No wonder I couldn’t find any traces of the virus core over the past few months. It’s probably not because Harrison’s Luck Glow isn’t good enough, but it simply can’t be caught on the network.

This ability was similar to his Void Dimension Jump. To the virus core, the quantum network was like another secondary dimension it could enter any time it wanted. This artificial intelligence civilization

probably did not reach the Universal Civilization level, since the three Universal Civilizations had the ability to analyze the Domino Virus completely. However, this needed time. Therefore, when facing this kind of weaponized virus, there would always be a period of time when there were simply no measures to deal with it. The specialties of every civilization were different. There would also be some civilizations that would invent some new technology. For example, the Kunde Race's Spacetime Splicer. The three Universal Civilizations were inferior in the virtual virus technology aspect. After all, even the citizens of this civilization were artificial intelligence life forms, so this was clearly their strongest suit.

Wait a minute, if the three Universal Civilizations successfully defused the Intelligent Plague in my previous life, the virus core was definitely dealt with, so the three Universal Civilizations would have certainly obtained this technology... But why did they not use it when fighting the World Tree Civilization?

Han Xiao had some suspicions.

Could it be that... the virus core did not end up in the hands of the three Universal Civilizations in the previous life but somehow got obtained by someone else?

The next moment, the image of an old man appeared in the Great Mechanic Han's mind...

Mechanic Empire Manison!

This b\*stard was the most suspicious!

One could not blame Han Xiao for thinking this way. Manison gave him too strong of an impression as someone who would do something like this.

Furthermore, the original material of the Domino Virus was mutated artificial intelligence life forms, and Manison just so happened to be in control of an artificial intelligence civilization.

It was horrifying to even think about it!

Han Xiao hastily shook his head, left these thoughts behind, and pondered.

The three Universal Civilizations made a lot of mistakes and learned a lot of lessons before finally understanding how the Domino Virus worked. Now that I've seen the truth in advance, I can skip that process and come up with prevention measures!

Having thought of that, Han Xiao was relieved.

In his previous life, the three Universal Civilizations had no choice but to learn through mistakes. Now that he, someone who had already watched the 'instruction manual' was there, the same thing did not have to happen again.

Maybe, the source of the virus might even be dealt with in the first generation. This way, the virus would have no chance of causing an outbreak, and the damage would be minimized!

When looking at it this way, the butterfly effects he had brought seemed to lean more toward the positive side.



The main issue now is convincing the three Universal Civilizations to change their plan of killing the virus on a large scale. If the virus core isn't dealt with, no matter how many viruses they kill, it won't make a difference. The virus core's ability is very tough to deal with, so I'll need the three Universal Civilizations' cooperation to deal with it...

Its ability to self-evolve was the most terrifying one. As long as that was dealt with, the rest would not be too much of a problem.

He was not afraid of the virus core escaping from the Ancient Star Desert. The quantum network of this Star Field was in lockdown. It was like an enormous LAN network, so it could not receive any feedback from the viruses within the Ancient Star Desert from outside it.

Even if the virus core really got out, it would still have to come back and log in to this sealed network to monitor the overall infection progress of the Ancient Star Desert.

This meant that even though the virus core could teleport in the quantum network, its range was limited to the Ancient Star Desert.

As for whether it would go out and spread the virus seed, Han Xiao was not worried either. Although the three Universal Civilizations lacked information, they were not useless. In order to prevent the virus from getting out, they were also doing large-scale scanning in the outside world.

If the first-generation virus infected the outside world, the three Universal Civilizations would notice it very quickly. There was no need for him to worry. After analyzing for a while, Han Xiao had some ideas. He summoned Phillip and said, "Contact the three Universal Civilizations' pandemic command center as well as the other Beyond Grade A Mechanics for a meeting. Tell them I've made a huge discovery about the virus core..."

After receiving Black Star's invite, the three people in charge of the department, including Sidreun, and all the other Beyond Grade A Mechanic dropped their work and arrived at the Intelligent Plague Pandemic Command Center's conference room in the form of remote projections. They were all there to hear Black Star's discovery.

As soon as Han Xiao's remote projection appeared, Sidreun could not wait and asked, "Black Star, have you found the virus core?"

"Not yet, but I've made a shocking discovery."

Hearing that Han Xiao did not find the virus core, the people present were both disappointed and glad, followed by the curiosity of the huge discovery Han Xiao spoke of.

"What did you discover?"

"Here's the thing..."

Han Xiao cut to the chase and directly explained the rough mechanisms of the virus core, mainly emphasizing its ability to transform freely between the virtual and the real world, as well as its ability to self-evolve.

The threat of the Domino Virus was too high. Working together to defuse the pandemic was the top priority at the moment, so he did not plan to keep anything to himself.

After hearing what Han Xiao said, everyone present became silent. They looked at each other and did not even know what to feel.

Seeing this, Han Xiao continued and said, "Therefore, your plan to kill the virus on a large scale won't work. The threat of the Intelligent Plague will only be removed when the virus core is found, so I suggest you take action immediately..." This time, Sidreun interrupted Han Xiao and said with a strange expression, "Black Star, I'd like to ask... Where did you obtain this information from?"

The rest of the people present had the exact same thought. They all stared closely at Han Xiao.

They had to be doubtful. This information was way too detailed... so detailed it almost seemed made up!

Are you messing with us?

It's not impossible given how cheeky you are!

This matter is huge, and there's no room for anyone to play tricks. We have to confirm the authenticity of the information. How can we just believe you if you don't show us some proof?

"I knew you'd say that." Han Xiao was not surprised at all and went on to explain, "Actually, I discovered the virus core's traces in the quantum network not long ago. I was just about to try to track and capture it when it disappeared from the quantum network without any signs, and the lead I had ended there... I'm a peak Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanic, yet it could still disappear into thin air right under my nose without me having any idea of how it did it. Some of you surely know how difficult it is to do that. That's when I started suspecting that it's not just a data program."

"Then? How did you discover this information?" Sidreun asked.

"Your documents should have recorded that I have the ability to passively see the future. A few days after I noticed that the virus core isn't as simple as we thought it was, I had a vision and saw the future. I saw how the Intelligent Plague erupted and how it killed countless lives. At the same time, I saw the true identity of this virus core." Han Xiao shrugged. "So, if you're asking for proof, I really can't provide any."

"That's... you're making it difficult for us."

The various people in charge from the three Universal Civilizations all looked troubled.

It was not that they did not trust Black Star, but foresight was indeed inaccurate sometimes. This matter involved the safety of the entire universe. It was way too risky to bet all their chips on a prophecy without any real evidence.

Han Xiao had no other choice. He did not have any real evidence, so what he said was certainly not going to be convincing enough. He could only use his ability of foresight as an excuse. After all, (Bold Explorer) was not something he could really explain, and it was not even as convincing as prophecies.

Nonetheless, although what he said lacked any real proof and was not convincing enough, with his current position, even if the three Universal Civilizations' people would not believe him immediately,

they would still definitely find ways to prove or disprove what he said. He did not have to do too much explaining

In the end, if what Han Xiao said was proved to be false, the three Universal Civilizations would undoubtedly trust Han Xiao less in the future. However, before that, they would not instantly take Han Xiao's words as false.

After so many things had happened, the name, reputation, and respect Han Xiao had accumulated in the universe was more than enough to have the three Universal Civilizations take his suggestions seriously.

At this moment, Manison slowly said, "I feel that Black Star's foresight does make some sense. In fact, I discovered the virus core's tracks some time ago. It also disappeared right before my eyes, and I suspected that it was not just a data program."

Hearing this, Han Xiao's eyelids twitched.

Him saying he had found traces of the virus core was completely made up, but Manison was most likely not making it up. I knew it. This old b\*stard really did make progress but never said anything about it. If not because I tricked him today, he would never have publicized this information on himself.

Phooey! You say I don't have enough resolution, but you're even worse, hiding such key information! The people exchanged looks and digested this impactful piece of information.

In the end, Sidreun coughed and said, "No matter what, we'll check out the content of His Excellency Black Star's vision. This is a very important piece of information."

While saying so, he secretly looked at Manison with derision.

The strongest Mechanic in the universe? How come you did not discover as much information as Black Star when the two of you had the same experience? Learn from him!

Manison looked directly ahead and acted like he did not notice Sidreun's gaze.

This time, Kant said worriedly, "If the Virtual Mutiny Virus is really as Black Star says it is, we're in big trouble. The firewall we've come up with this month will be useless before the next generation of the virus. By then, the disaster will sweep across the entire universe."

"Who in the world invented such a horrifying virus technology? Aren't they afraid of it biting themselves in the foot?" 'Mechanical Catastrophe' Francisco wondered. "Whether what Black Star said is true or false, we'll still have to come up with a plan." The dynasty's ally Quantum Demon showed his support.

Han Xiao spoke again with a deep voice. "That's right. It doesn't matter if my foresight is accurate or not. It won't hurt giving it a try."

That's true... The people in charge from the three Universal Civilizations exchanged looks and nodded.

"What plan do you have then?"

"I wouldn't call it a plan. It's just a rough idea."

Han Xiao paused and looked around. Seeing that everyone's attention was on him, he said slowly, "The mobility of the virus core is too high, so it's very difficult to catch it. However, it still has limits. It can

enter the quantum network anytime, anywhere, but when it leaves it and materializes, it has to choose a terminal node as the exit. This might be our opportunity.

“In order to receive feedback from the rest of the viruses, the virus core will return to the quantum network once every so often. This time, we really might have to cut off the network on a large scale and reduce the number of terminal nodes in order to restrict the range of the virus core’s ability to teleport within the quantum network. This way, when the number of exits is reduced, we can station people at every node and set up traps.

“The people stationed at each node have to be Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanics with the knowledge of ‘Virtual Paramount’. This is because after the virus core materializes, it doesn’t have to come into contact with any node in order to re-enter the quantum network. Therefore, the chance will only last for a short instant. At the instant the virus core materializes, the Beyond Grade A Mechanic will use ‘Virtual Paramount’ to lock up the virus core’s virtual soul so that it can’t escape its body temporarily, then capture it together with its physical body.

“The technology to seal the virus core already exists. That safe prevents the virus from leaking, so it can certainly suppress the virus core’s virtual soul and prevent it from entering the quantum network. As long as we parse that triangular container, we can obtain this targeted technology...”

Hearing this, the people all looked at Han Xiao with weird expressions once again.

Not to mention the feasibility of this plan of yours, just the fact that the people stationed at the nodes have to be Virtual Mechanics who have the knowledge of (Virtual Paramount), aren’t you being too obvious?

Virtual Paramount is an ability only Divine Throne Mechanics of the Virtual branch can obtain, so clearly only peak Beyond Grade As. You’re one, Manison is another, and that’s it.

So, you’re saying that only you guys can compete for the virus core. Even the three Universal Civilizations have to stand aside?

Are you really not tricking us? Manison, however, smiled and fully approved of this plan.

“Black Star is right. To maintain peace in the universe, we are more than willing to step up. How many terminal nodes are there to set up traps for? How about this, I’m willing to deploy fifty million spare Lord’s Avatars, ensuring that I can advent in any location the virus core appears. Is that enough?”