

The Mechanic 121

Chapter 121: Did Too Much Work, So I Couldn't Think of a Title

Han Xiao looked up from the scope, surprised. He was also shocked by the power of the three shots. The second shot was a critical shot, greatly weakening Bai Yu's attributes. It was as if the actual damage had doubled. The first two shots were so impactful. Han Xiao roughly estimated that a player like Bai Yu, who was at LV 48, was likely strong in offense yet weak in defense. Therefore, his HP would roughly be at around 2,500 after the second shot. Thus, he fired the third shot as the last fatal blow, killing Bai Yu in just mere seconds!

The key blow was the very first shot, which inflicted explosive damage on Bai Yu, causing him to crumble at once. He became an easy target.

You have gained 64,000 experience points by slaying Bai Yu (LV 48).

You surmounted the fourteen-level difference. You will get 360% additional XP bonus, bringing the total to 230,400 XP.

Your personal contribution rate was 100%!

You've gained an extra 230,400 (100%) experience points!

Han Xiao himself did not even think that he could successfully complete the leap-level killing. 300,000 XP in a matter of seconds made up for the XP that he had used up to for the fusion of blueprints to manufacture the Ghost sniper rifle. There was in fact an excess of XP.

He looked at the manor again and realized that it was all quiet outside.

Everyone stood rooted to the ground. They had originally thought that there would be an impending bitter fight and had braced themselves for it. Yet, things had happened in just a flash, leaving everyone stunned.

Pitter-patter...

Footsteps could be heard creaking through the forest, and everyone's eyes immediately veered toward the sound, full of curiosity, awe, and fear.

At that very moment, dark clouds gradually began covering the moonlight, and the silver moonlight faded into the clouds. Han Xiao, who was in a black suit, walked out of the forest with the moonlight shining on the bottom half of his face. The moonlight seemingly backed away as he advanced, and darkness was following his every step. It was as if he was bringing about nightmares with the darkness. He was a spirit concealed in the night.

This scene made him look ever so cool and led everyone to hold their breath for that moment. This very moment was deeply ingrained into everyone's memories.

“Mr. Black!”

“It’s him?”

Everyone gasped in shock, for they knew Mr. Black was extremely strong, but little did they know he was this powerful.

Bennett was surprised. He did not expect himself to be dazed by Han Xiao as well. Judging by the explosive destructive power of Han Xiao, it was more than sufficient to threaten him. And as Han Xiao walked closer, Bennett could not help but praised him. “Well done.”

“It wasn’t much,” Han Xiao replied, modest as always.

Looking around him, there mercenaries who gathered around were staring at him in silence. Han Xiao said sternly, “Don’t just stand there. Go do what you’re supposed to be doing.”

The mercenaries came back to reality as though waking up from a dream, and they hurriedly began to repair the fortifications of the manor. All of them accepted Han Xiao’s command without much thought.

Bai Yu’s body was then moved in, covered casually with a cloth. Nobody would forget that this was a supreme fighter, and every time they saw it, their respect for Han Xiao would grow even deeper.

The corpse of an enemy was a medal of accomplishment.

Han Xiao walked into the manor, and Wang Yuan came over. This time, his smile did not mean just a welcome invitation but also full of appreciation and sincerity. “Stunning three shots! This old man here was shocked by you as well.”

“You’re too polite.” Han Xiao waved his hand and glanced at Bennett next to him. “With him around, you won’t even be in any risk.”

Wang Yuan smiled. “I’ve checked the file. The Rothschild Family introduced you to this mission. Your strength widely exceeds the level of Dark. I will raise your level directly to Ghost.”

This was an obvious act to gain his favor. An immediate promotion to Ghost made Han Xiao surprised. He nodded, accepting Wang Yuan’s kindness.

...

In the woods, Di Su Su had solemnness written all over her face. She reported on Han Xiao’s performance.

“Mr. Black possesses immense sniping ability, and his lethality is hard to behold. I suggest that we add him to the extreme threats target file.”

“Permission granted,” Mo Ran responded.

Division 13 had a database for all extremely dangerous targets, and this was also called the extreme threats file. Han Xiao’s performance had already attracted their attention, especially the fact that he was a sniper.

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Early the next morning, Wang Yuan summoned all the mercenaries and declared that all guard duties were to end that instant. All the gains from the task would be directly credited to their accounts.

The traitors in the organization had already been captured. Wang Yuan's goal was completed.

As for the Invisible Demon, the owner had died, so it naturally stopped attacking.

Han Xiao checked the deposit—two million dollars, twice the initial agreement. This was likely Wang Yuan deliberately compensating him extra due to the performance of his last three shots, which was well worth the price.

The fifth round has been completed. You gained 30,000 EXP points.

The hidden request to ensure that Bennett did not join the battle has been completed. You gained 300,000 EXP points.

This time there was not an additional mission segment, which meant that the chain mission had ended. The level of EXP he had accumulated so far broke the one million mark! This mission's reward was way too fruitful.

Finally completed this mission.

Han Xiao felt more relaxed. He went on to find Bennett and gave him the Lock HOC sniper rifle.

"You're giving me another present?" Bennett was bewildered. Noting that this present was to his liking yet again, he could not help but ask, "What request do you have?"

"I would like to learn the art of combat."

Why is he saying this again?

Bennett's head hurt. After thinking for a while, he decided to teach a set of skills suitable for Han Xiao's sniper ability and began to explain.

"In my early years, I was once an assassin known for my stealth. Perhaps these skills can help you a little..."

After hearing Bennett's explanation for over an hour, Han Xiao was awarded with a new mission.

You have triggered level D mission [Night Stalker (Class Change)].

Task Summary: You have learned some special skills from Bennett's explanation, but you still need practice them to perfect them.

Mission Requirements: Complete 5 assassination missions in the dark (No limit on level).

Reward: [Night Stalker] Class

Night Stalker—this was a class that Han Xiao had long wanted to attain from Bennett to be able to learn stealth skills, critical strike bonuses from stealth hits, and other skills. Coupled with his Flaming Will and Ghost sniper rifle, he could perfect the art of stealth battles. Moreover, this would give him the chance to enable the [Fatal Shot] specialty.

This class was already extremely rare in version 1.0, and the attribute bonuses were not low. The experience needed to level up was less than the main profession, yet the sub-profession was able to be used for improving his combat skills.

After explaining, Bennett paused and said, “I can tell that your energy is not strong, but your lethality is unfathomable. Here’s my number; you can find me anytime you need me. Who knows, I may need your help in the future as well, what do you think?”

“Sure.”

Han Xiao blinked, promptly recalling one of Bennett’s main story missions. Since he had no objection to this, they exchanged numbers.

On a side note, the phone that Han Xiao was currently using was no longer the black brick machine that Division 13 had given him.

The defense mission had finally ended. The mercenaries all heaved a sigh of relief. They proceeded to pack up, and as they were about to leave, Han Xiao walked around to collect the phone numbers of the assassins and mercenary leaders. Who knew, maybe they would be of use some day?

Golden Fox took the initiative to give Han Xiao her number. She promptly left afterward, fearing the strength of Han Xiao. Furthermore, she could not stand his strange taste.

The manor became much calmer now with the crowd having dispersed. Han Xiao drove back to Seagull City airport and departed on Farian Company’s plane.

Having levelled up through two highly rewarding missions, Han Xiao had accumulated tons of experience. The big action plan that was about to start before the public testing began would likely be following the trend of reward-based missions.

I have already become a Ghost-level assassin with priorities in receiving tasks, commissions, and intelligence. Now that I have paved the way, I can definitely become a Legend if it all goes according to plan. All I’ll have to do is complete this final goal...

Screw Germinal!

I hope that you all can withstand the violent love I’ll be showering upon you.

Han Xiao laughed devilishly and rather coldly at the same time.

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In the Intelligence Headquarters of Division 13, the Intelligence Minister had received a file about the application for the transfer of Mr. Black into the extreme threats target file.

“Mr. Black, of unknown source and unknown origin, is currently a serial killer. Only completed two missions, smashed the Rose Militant mercenary gang of the Somar Desert, displayed extraordinary sniping ability when guarding the valley of Manor, caused the Invisible Demon to retreat, killed Bai Yu with just three shots.

“He possesses extreme alertness and excellent stealth ability (NB: He shook off the stalker of Division 13). He is also a mechanic, has high speed boots with sliding ability, and possesses shocking killing ability. He uses a special sniper rifle.

“Requires special attention.”

After reading the information sent by Seagull City, the Intelligence Minister felt a sense of looming imminent danger.

“Seems like another amazing player has appeared.”

He took out his stamp and stamped firmly onto the footer of the document.

“Entry file approved!”

...

Something big had happened in the underworld. The list of killers in the Dark Net had a shocking major change. An unknown killer by the name of Mr. Black was added, and among the thousand names, he skyrocketed to number 23 on the killer list.

“I’ve never heard of this name before, where did he come from?”

“The Dark Net’s list has always been fair. It was impossible that this is in any way untoward. Quickly, go ask around about this Mr. Black guy.”

People of various strongholds were on the phone, calling each other about Mr. Black. The underworld intelligence network began to collaborate with one another to find information about him. Some mercenaries and killers who had once fought aside one another at River Valley Manor spoke up about it.

Han Xiao’s extraordinary feat of killing Bai Yu in three shots sparked a commotion in the underworld.

Those who knew Bai Yu thought the news was fake when they first heard it, but the hard evidence of Bai Yu’s horrible death captured by the mercenaries proved them wrong. It was those three shots that caused his death.

The killers who knew about it were shocked. Even though Bai Yu was strong at attacking and weak at defense, he was still a high-level individual on Planet Aquamarine. He was not afraid of bullets. How could he have been killed in a matter of seconds?

More and more people went to investigate the origins of Mr. Black, only to realize that this person had simply appeared out of thin air. No one knew his identity. He was like a ghost, appearing out of the blue, floating around in the underworld.

Mysterious and powerful, Mr. Black's codename became known by everyone in the underworld. It entered the list of people to take note of for many forces.

Many old-schoolers would say that the killer should be hidden in the darkness—becoming famous was equivalent to failure. However, to the Blood Pact Society, with fame came greetings, and it was also a form of deterrence. Any enemy who threatened the Dark Net organization needed to take precautionary measures—could they withstand the continuous attacks from the killer alliance?

The Blood Pact Society had been weakening as the elder killers died, those who wanted to leave had left, and those who wanted to retire did so. Ever since then, the killer alliance's days had been numbered. With Mr. Black's new fame, Blood Pact Society was out to make Mr. Black their poster boy.

Chapter 122: Let's Create Some Trouble!

Thorns was traveling alone in the endless plains of Karst. The vehicle definitely looked scary and threatening, like a spiky porcupine. The vehicle was dragging a huge container as it travelled. It looked odd as if it had a light head and heavy torso. There were huge batches of raw materials worth millions stored in the container, all of which had been purchased by Han Xiao in a single consignment.

Han Xiao was the only one on the car. As he was driving, he was looking at the radar coordinates. He was heading toward the ruins known as Graymetal Ruins.

After completing the mission at River Valley Manor, there was a large increase in the affection of the Blood Pact Society toward him. The Blood Pact Society was now 'friendly' toward him. Based on his current progress, he would be able to hit the legendary level before the public beta. Also, he could complete the Class Change mission along the way and officially become a Night Stalker.

The side-profession he planned to attain was rarer in version 1.0. He planned to not only use it to attain new skills—he also prepared himself to advance up to level 40 and start another level-advancement mission. The maximum level of an apprentice mechanic was 15. The higher the level, the larger the increases in EXP points. Based on his current efficiency at gaining EXP points, adding a side profession was a good move. Also, the side profession allowed him to improve his combat style.

Before Han Xiao carried out the plan for his assault on the Germinal Organization, he planned to create a secret base for him to deposit supplies and round up weapons and essential equipment. That was to ensure that he had a place to retreat to if his mission failed.

Based on his current situation, the Farian Company seemed like it was able to provide a reliable hideout. However, Han Xiao had cultivated the good habit of preparing alternative solutions and redundancies. Although the possibility of getting into a conflict with the Farian Company was rather unlikely, he would still feel safer if he was completely in charge of his own fate.

Anything could change in this world, and it was especially so for relationships. Han Xiao had seen too many of such cases, especially the relationships with his ex-girlfriends.

More often than not, genuine feelings lost out to tactics in terms of attracting one's heart. If there was a color to 'love', it would be the color of 'forgiveness'. The world was just too much of a mess, such that

anyone could lose their footing if they were not careful. It was not worth mentioning, not worth mentioning...

Getting close to the ruins of the Graymetal Ruins.

The maroon soil looked like dried up spats of blood. Once the tires went past the dried-up hard blocks of soil, the sound of the friction between the tires and the soil could be heard. Through the window, one could also see the oddly-shaped plants that were sparsely growing on the plains. The land before his eyes indeed looked barren.

In the distance, he could see the silhouette of an abandoned city. Graymetal Ruins was a dead city that even the vagrants avoided. The only creatures that resided in the city were insects and animals.

Graymetal Ruins had once been the capital of an old regime, and green pastures had surrounded the city. When the fires of war reached the city, the place was reduced to rubble, and the green plains turned into a barren landscape.

Mighty civilizations and abandoned cities coexisted on this planet. The world was constantly changing, regardless of it changing for better or worse.

There was an abandoned base among the ruins that the outside world did not know of. The abandoned base was in fact Han Xiao's target.

As Han Xiao moved closer to the city, the scene before his eyes became more dilapidated. Vines could be seen creeping along the walls of the wrecked buildings. The streets were completely empty and covered with moss.

Only a couple of lizards hopped out from the cracks on the road.

The rumble of the vehicle's engine seemed to have awakened the city. Bugs crawled out from the buildings and cracks on the roads. They rested along the street, watching the vehicle speed past them. They used their limbs to scratch their eyes and moved their antennae.

On the south side of the ruins, there was a building that resembled a military facility surrounded by barbed wire. Fortunately, the wires were not charged with electricity. The interior of the building had collapsed.

Han Xiao drove his vehicle in and parked outside a bunker with the red label 'S-539'. There was only small entrance left into the bunker. Dust particles were floating in the air, filling his nose.

After Han Xiao alighted from his car, he took out the mechanical spider and threw it into the bunker. He had modified the camera on the spider. The spider was now equipped with thermal-vision and electromagnetic sensors. It even had hearing abilities.

Half an hour later, the spider reported that there were no signs of life in the bunker. Han Xiao then made his way into the building. He navigated through the darkness with his torch, making his way to a small room in the bunker. He found a small crack in the wall and pulled hard. An elevator well was revealed behind the wall.

The abandoned base that he was searching for was in the basement of the bunker.

Han Xiao knew this place very well. In fact, this base was also his in his past life. However, it was unfortunately taken over by a guild.

At that point in time, Han Xiao had still been a young lad who was easily bullied by others. However, when he looked at the base again now, he realized that the base had great defensive infrastructure in place. As long as he was able to supply electricity to the building, the base was practically impregnable to attacks. He only had himself to blame for giving in to his enemies in his previous life.

The underground base was very spacious and had two emergency passages. There were spider webs and dust everywhere.

I shall call this place the Graymetal Base. Han Xiao came up with a practical name for the facility.

There was no source of energy in the base. Han Xiao took out the flashlights that he had brought with him to light up the place. He then started to execute the most important task, which was the energy modification operation. The Graymetal Base previously had a cable that connected it with the power station. However, since the city was abandoned, the power station had stopped its operations.

The power station was located some distance away from the Graymetal Base.

Han Xiao entered the power station only to discover that most of the generators were faulty. However, he never planned to rely on the old generators. He had expected such a scenario to occur; therefore, he had spent a huge sum of money and bought a batch for solar-powered generators. He dragged these generators out of the container and altered the wiring in the power station. He switched out the faulty items in the power station and connected the electric cable from the military base to his new solar-powered generator.

When Han Xiao returned to his base, the base was already powered up. The lights were switched on, and the interior of the base was clearly shown before his eyes.

The base, which had been covered in darkness for so long, was finally embraced with light.

The solar-powered generators were clean, efficient, and discrete. The additional electricity that was not expended in the day would be stored in the batteries. The generated electricity would likely cover one full day of activity.

Han Xiao started to clean up the base. Due to the prolonged period of inactivity, everything was covered in a layer of filth. It was while he was cleaning that he started to miss Lu Qian, who had superb housekeeping skills. Han Xiao had not seen Lu Qian for some time, and her cooking was something he longed for.

“I wonder what her reaction is for leaving without a word.”

Thinking back to Old Man Lu’s repeated recommendation of his granddaughter, Han Xiao could not help but smile.

After the housekeeping session, he carried the supplies out of his vehicle. The material and spare parts were all sorted out and stored. The bottles of water and canned food were placed in the gigantic fridge. Following which, he used some of his EXP points to raise his [Basic Programming] to Lv.10. He then modified the main control room and created a chip to organize and store the data of all the

activities in the base. The main use of the system was to map out the energy usage so that electricity could be better allocated for the different activities.

For the next few days, Han Xiao was busy modifying the base, and it slowly began to take shape. The base was equipped with infra-red, thermal scanners. The defenses put in place were light machine guns and booby-traps. The bunker on the ground level was also repaired. Additionally, the large gate was fixed up so that the base was better hidden.

However, the most important point was that Han Xiao created three robotic assistants to serve as his workers.

The skill of [Elementary Programming] at the maximum level could create low-level chips that were able to store simple blueprints that the robotic assistant could follow and manufacture according to the plans autonomously. Han Xiao could also gain a part of the EXP from the items successfully manufactured by the robots. This meant that there would be incoming EXP for Han Xiao all day, every day. One robot assistant could generate 2,000 to 4,000 EXP, so three robot assistants could contribute a steady 10,000 EXP points.

There was a limit on the energy that could be used by the Graymetal Base, and the three robot assistants made it reach this limit. The stored raw materials and spare parts were also only sufficient for around ten days of continuous activity by the robot assistants. The logistical flow of the system he had set-up could not be disturbed. Han Xiao could also make use of this period of time to carry out his assassination mission and gain skills that could help him refine his process.

If the earlier players wanted to develop a base, they could only employ a team of mechanics to complete their base. That was because most players had certain gaps in experience that they could not fulfill themselves. They had different areas of specialties in terms of their knowledge, and that meant that there were also many areas they were unfamiliar with. However, my three separate branches of knowledge are upgraded together. That makes me master the different aspects of the job alone. However, my strategy has a huge flaw of requiring me to possess an especially large sum of EXP that is several times more than that of normal players.

Luckily for Han Xiao, he had his ways.

The Graymetal Base might not be the largest, but it was definitely one that had all the necessary items that were required. The base also looked new and tidy after Han Xiao's refurbishment and housekeeping. Han Xiao could feel a deep sense of achievement when he saw the fruits of his labor.

Finally, I am a man with some assets.

After completing the modification of his secret base, it was time for him to begin his assaults on the Germinal Organization. He had been left with no time to spare for the Germinal Organization lately, and that resulted in the organization recovering and growing from the previous damage that Han Xiao had caused. Indeed, the Germinal Organization had recovered by 0.01%.

However, Han Xiao was not worried in the slightest. The reason he decided to carry out his activities at the later stage was because he had set his sights far. He was no longer aiming for the smaller bases of the organization.

He wanted to do something big!

Han Xiao plan was simple and 'loud'. He released all the information he had collected about the smaller bases to the six nations!

Crazy but deadly!

The six nations were old enemies of the organization. The moment they got their hands on the weakness of the organization, they would not rest until they caused grievous damage. As long as he dared to do such a crazy thing, the Germinal Organization was bound to suffer intense damage. However, that would also destabilize the entire situation on Planet Aquamarine. It was even likely for a change in the original storyline to occur.

It was that which made the whole process exciting.

To be scared of a change in the storyline was not the hallmark of a strong individual.

A world that did not change was something a destroyer like Han Xiao was fond of.

Han Xiao clenched his fists. He could feel gushes of energy flowing through his body and confidence emerging out of his chest.

I am no longer a weakling who is afraid of everything like when I first entered the planet. I have the ability to challenge and battle most people on this planet.

Strength formed the base of one's power. To endure now was so that one could be powerful enough in the future, such that he no longer needed to endure.

Now, Han Xiao could defend himself, and he could finally accomplish the initial goal he set for himself!

Han Xiao connected his cellphone to the computer and created an anti-tracking application to disguise his actual number and address. He then dialed in a chain of numbers that he had memorized.

"Hello, who is this?"

Feng Jun's voice emerged out of the cellphone.

"Guess~" Han Xiao teased.

Feng Jun almost choked. The sly voice was too familiar to not recognize.

"You... How dare you call back?"

Feng Jun was dumbfounded.

Chapter 123: Germinal, There Is Something I Have to Say!

In Division 13's headquarters, Director Gu Hui and the Intelligence Minister stared at the phone on the desk, while Feng Jun stood to the side with a clear look of nervousness.

"Can we trace the location?"

The technician replied hesitantly, "We can't break the opponent's anti tracking protocol. He is a highly skilled hacker."

Gu Hui's vein throbbed with anger. *When did that guy become a hacker? How could I not know?*

After some deliberation, Gu Hui picked up the phone and said in a grave voice, "Han Xiao, you left Division 13 without permission. You violated the code of secrecy. This behavior is abominable!"

Han Xiao chuckled and laid bare Gu Hui's thoughts. "You want to ask me when I'm coming back, right?"

"You should know better yourself!" Gu Hui said.

"I am not going back."

"Are you defecting?" Gu Hui's eyes darkened, and his tone changed.

"You misunderstood," Han Xiao slowly said. "I still want to continue to work with you guys, but the way we work needs to change."

Gu Hui frowned. "What do you mean?"

The others in the room pricked up their ears to wait for Han Xiao's reply.

With a click, Han Xiao hung up the phone.

The intelligence minister was expressionless, but the twitch at the corner of his eyes revealed the storm in his mind.

Gu Hui took a deep breath and thought to himself, *I am the director; I cannot flip the table. I am the director; I cannot flip the table...*

Ding!

The phone vibrated with a new message notification.

Gu Hui narrowed his eyes and opened the text message. A page of dense information was thrown into his view. He was struck dumb by the content of the message.

It was all intelligence on Germinal's bases in Southern Continent. It was very detailed and complete!

Is this what he meant by changing the way we work? Gu Hui was uncertain. Nonetheless, his anger with Han Xiao dissipated.

This was the intelligence they had always wanted, and Han Xiao had actually given it to them so easily.

He's so sincere!

Gu Hui was lost in thought. Han Xiao had demonstrated unexpected sincerity. The issue would be how he should deal with Han Xiao's identity. If he were to say that he was a defector, his action would

benefit the interests of Stardragon. But to say that Han Xiao would be returning to Division 13 would be untrue. Han Xiao had personally said that he would not go back.

After some thought, Gu Hui made a decision.

“Stop searching for Han Xiao. Keep his official secret agent identity, and move his files to the field agent files.”

Feng Jun was taken aback. The director’s decision would mean that Division 13 was reconciling with Han Xiao. They would acquiesce to Han Xiao’s solitary behavior and regard him as one of their own.

Division 13 was in charge of the formation of field agents. Field agents were employed under the department, but they could move freely. Only some meritorious agent or retired agents could get such preferential treatment.

Although Feng Jun did not have a long relationship with Han Xiao, they were on good terms. Feng Jun was a happy; at least they would not become enemies.

With the information he needed in hand, Gu Hui was in a good mood. He praised the intelligence minister lightly and was about to leave when the bespectacled secretary in the intelligence group stumbled in, panting for breath.

“Director! Minister! The intelligence departments from Hesla, Maple, Ordina, Theus, and Raylen have all sent us a request for communication!”

The look in Gu Hui’s face hardened.

Only with truly urgent incidents would the intelligence agencies of each country contact another country. It had been many years since they had a meeting between the different intelligence agencies from the Six Nations. What had happened?

With a heavy heart, Gu Hui walked to the conference room. Five individuals appeared on the big screen. They were the heads of the intelligence agencies from the other five nations. They had the same rank in their respective agencies as Gu Hui.

“What happened?” Asked Gu Hui.

As soon as he spoke, he found the five heads of intelligence agencies stare at him with a very strange look, making him feel a little confused.

The representative from Ordina took the initiative and said, “Um... Division 13 Director, you... do you know Germinal’s top wanted man, Zero?”

Gu Hui stared dumbfounded. He had a bad feeling.

“What happened was, all five of us received intelligence from Zero, including maps of Germinal’s secret bases across the South, West, and North Continent. We have always been cautious about information from unknown sources, but he had added a line to his intelligence.

” *Stardragon’s Division 13 can testify as to the credibility of my intelligence.*

“So, we are here to clarify with you.”

Damn you! How could you even send the information to all the other nations and expect us to testify for you! Han Xiao, you just scammed us again!

Gu Hui almost fainted from the shock. He could almost see Han Xiao's sniggering face in his mind.

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His set of equipment—the incomplete Phantom Ghost Sniper, Electromagnetic Skateboard Shoes, facial simulator, and a full version of a Magnetically-Controlled Retractable Armor—would be able to fully support his variable sniping style of combat. This was a tactic that was very popular among the older Mechanics. Since the equipment he produced had properties way beyond what would normally be at his level, it was obvious that his combat capability would be way more effective.

With his enhanced equipment, his energy was about 1,100 ouna. He was considered upper-middle rank on Aquamarine. In addition, Han Xiao also had the NPC Molding Ability [Basic Strengthened Life]. He was definitely able to take some hits.

[Flaming Will] was upgraded to Lv5, and the lowest multiplier was increased to 138%. Although this did not sound like much, with sneak attacks and critical strikes on weaknesses, even with the lowest enhancement, he could boost his capability significantly.

As long as he avoided fighting someone crazily powerful like Bennett head on, Han Xiao should be able to cope with most face-offs with ease. So, the assassination mission from the Blood Pact Society would naturally not be too much of a worry for him.

Time flew past as Han Xiao completed more and more missions. He gained vast amounts of EXP and wealth, and he was growing stronger day by day. Mr. Black was also becoming feared by more and more underground forces. He had risen to the tenth position on the assassin leader board. He was finally gaining some fame.

Meanwhile, the underground world gave Han Xiao a new nickname—Black Phantom!

One could only take on a bad code name, not a bad nickname.

Planet Universal Reputation Legend (Aquamarine): Black Phantom (Dark Net Assassin List)

Legend has it that he comes from the darkness of the night with a thousand faces. No one knows when he will come. No one knows when he will leave.

When you see him turn away, the kiss of death has already been printed on your forehead, leaving fresh bullet holes in blood. He pays a bullet and takes away your life.

He sounds pretty cool...

In fact, when he learned that he had been given the nickname, Han Xiao did not know how he should feel about it.

Black Phantom... Why don't you call me White Yaksha?

Han Xiao had been one of the most active members in the underground world lately, and he was getting on the good books of the Blood Pact Society. They were even featuring him to attract talents. According to statistics from the Blood Pact Society, their business had finally stopped falling even since Black Phantom came around. Their business was even slightly on the rise, attracting other assassins to them. They were leading in transaction volume.

However, two months later, the attention of the whole world was on another big event!

As the last civilized countries on Aquamarine, the Six Nations were so powerful that whatever they did would affect every single person in the world. Be it the underground, rogue warlords, or various organizational forces, everyone was always looking to the Six Nations to observe their actions, especially in terms of their military operations.

After the wars of the old times, there was a delicate balance of order and chaos on Planet Aquamarine. Wars continued to break out occasionally, openly or hidden, and it was not in the Six Nations' interest to cover up and pretend it was all peaceful.

The delicate world situation tipped on this fateful day after two months. The Six Nations sent out troops almost simultaneously. The armies were sweeping across the three continents, wiping out Germinal bases one by one. It shook the whole world.

The war came without any warning!

The world fell into a turmoil. Many was starting to fear that the nightmare of a terrible war that happened decades ago would explode again. Their wounds from the war had not healed fully, and no one was too eager to be devoured by such a manmade disaster again.

Even within the Six Nations, thousands and thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the war, but the governments have turned a deaf ear. To them, Germinal was the root of a disaster. As a terrorist organization that had been created to subvert the Six Nations, the conflict between the Six Nations and Germinal could be traced back to the war of the old times. Germinal had been gathering outlaws and rebels who were determined to subjugate the Six Nations.

Until now, the two sides had been caught in a stalemate. It was such a good opportunity to crack down on the Germinal Organization; how could they possibly miss it?

For those who were more informed, they were not as surprised by the tough stance of the Six Nations as the intelligence they had gotten—why did the Six Nations act simultaneously, and how could they launch precise attacks on the hiding grounds of Germinal?

There was only one possibility—someone had provided a large amount of intelligence!

In another way, this mysterious person providing the intelligence was the real puppet master behind the war!

After many inquiries, the name of the man was leaked out from within the Six Nations.

Zero!

Germinal's traitor!

The underground world was shocked.

Among the outlaws taken in by the Germinal Organization, some were idealistic fighters while others were hooligans who had committed petty crimes. There were traitors in the past, but they had all hidden like street mice, afraid of being hunted down. Zero was the only person that had strike back on Germinal so openly, generating such chatter.

How did Zero get so much intelligence? Was he a high-level officer in Germinal before he defected?

Many were scratching their head over this.

All this was a mystery. There was no way anyone could get an answer, but that did not prevent all the major powers from adding the name 'Zero' to the threat list.

...

"A war is coming..."

Bennett looked up at the hazy sky with furrowed brows, his mood was as gloomy as the sky.

Wang Yuan whispered to him from the side, "It seems like we need to get the shelter plan up ahead of schedule."

"There are still a lot of things left unprepared..." Bennett shook his head. "I guess we can never be fully prepared. Let's roll out the shelter plan. Contact some allies and get strong independent fighters to join us. We must rally all our forces."

Chapter 124: Open Beta

In the Germinal Organization Headquarters at Andrea mainland...

BAM!

A fist covered with a black glove slammed against the wall, creating a sound like a steel rod being swung against a car window. The thick force made a large piece of the wall shatter and collapse, exposing the steel bars. His fist, however, was not injured.

The leader's body trembled with fury. His anger was obvious. His subordinates trembled next to him and dared not move an inch.

All the secret bases on the other three continents were being swept through by the Six Nations' armies, incurring huge losses every day. The Germinal Organization's base camp was located on the continent of Andrea. The secret bases on the three other three continents were intended to be the beachheads to nail the enemy in future wars. So, the loss this time was equivalent to the organization's painstaking efforts for many years being destroyed! It had severely wounded the organization.

"Zero..." The leader took a deep breath into the unfathomable depths of his lungs.

How much information does Han Xiao have? This was a question that the leader had always been suspicious about. He felt that Han Xiao was not in a position to be aware of key intelligence. He had once told the organization's hackers to check the program loopholes repeatedly, and there were no signs of hacking. He had also conducted multiple investigations on the top management. There were no traitors.

Zero's source of information was really too suspicious. It was as though he was a prophet.

In fact, the four bases that were lost, including the Dark Crow Valley base, were not of particular importance to the organization. Before the four secret bases were removed, the leader hesitated over whether or not to relocate other bases in Southern Continent, but he did not implement any action. It was not that he wanted to leave it to chance. He felt that moving other bases rashly would expose these locations and cause them to lose their secrecy. It was like abandoning the huge amount of up-front investment, wasting their finances and time. Perhaps, it was as Zero had mentioned, making a mountain out of a molehill.

However, the situation made it clear that Zero had mastered the detailed information of the organization, far more so than he had expected!

The Valkyrie experiment strengthens the brain, and awakens... Thinking of Han Xiao's performance, the leader felt as if there was a hint to the truth.

Zero has awakened the ability to predict!

No wonder he could get intelligence, escape from the lab, and avoid the tracking of the organization...

The leader closed his eyes and anger brewed in his heart. He felt that this was the only possible explanation. Zero was a monster created by the Germinal Organization, and all the organization could do was accept it.

Regret? The leader did not allow himself to have this kind of emotion. There was no room for regret.

This kind of character is too dangerous. If he is allowed to live, all the actions of the organization will be made known.

He has to be killed!

The pin drop silence continued for three minutes.

The leader's low, hoarse voice slowly sounded, and it spoke of deep savage intentions. Even though the Germinal Organization's members in the room knew that the leader was not targeting them, it still sent a chill down their spine.

"Move all the bases in the three continents. There is no need to care about the loss and damage. Withdraw whatever can be withdrawn. Start the crisis plan [Hibernation Project], and all activity is to be moved underground. All intelligence personnel are to thoroughly investigate Zero's tracks—not a single clue is to be neglected. Before we find Zero, the full-scale war plan is to be delayed... indefinitely!"

...

[Fall of The Germinal] current progress 13.8%.

At the Graymetal Base, Han Xiao lay on the sofa, sliding his fingers across the tablet and brushing through the information collected and organized on the Dark Net, almost all of which was related to the movements of the Six Nations.

Two months ago, he had provided intelligence to the Six Nations. Naturally, none of the Six Nations acted immediately. They first sent people to confirm the accuracy of the intelligence, then they secretly dispatched resources to prepare for the war. The military operation only became official two months later. The results were very gratifying. A large number of Germinal bases were removed. Yet, there were some secret bases that Han Xiao was not aware of. They were forces that had been preserved.

Han Xiao's mission profile had increased exponentially. Although the increment was reduced, he was winning by volume. With the actions by the Six Nations, he was progressing every day. The Germinal Organization was not a pig that would stretch out its neck dumbly to be slashed. They were determined to preserve their last breath by any means. They had evacuated all remaining bases and were trying to minimize losses. This was within Han Xiao's expectations. He was simply waiting to see how many battles the six countries could win next by chasing Germinal's trails hard.

With the momentum now, my mission progress is estimated to be more than twenty percent.

About fifty percent of the Germinal Organization's bases in the three continents had been conquered, whilst their base camp on the Andrea continent had only half its size left.

The morale of the Germinal Organization had been so badly hurt that it would not be able to declare war against the Six Nations in three months' time as per the original scenario. This had a far-reaching impact.

One such impact was that the Germinal Organization's sub-bases on the three continents had been removed, cutting off the channels for most players to join the organization. That meant that the players in Germinal's camp would be ninety percent less than originally! In Han Xiao's opinion, this was the biggest gain.

Taking advantage of the chaos, I can also personally intercept and kill countless disoriented troops and improve my mission progress.

Releasing information could only be done once, so Han Xiao was ready to make full use of this opportunity to strike against his enemy while it was at its weakest, hoping that his attacks would deal some serious damage and advance his level.

The small butterfly effect he had set off was rolling up into a storm, causing a huge mess in the quest between the Six Nations and the Germinal Organization. If one of the front-line events on Planet Aquamarine was accidentally annihilated, the players on this planet would become idle and start to freely explore.

Interesting... Han Xiao's face broke into a sinister smile.

His two-month killer career had earned him a lot of EXP. He had already unlocked [Night Stalker], providing him skills such as [Stealth] and [Steady Aim]. This sub-professional upgrade bonus had a slant toward agility. With this, Han Xiao's total level had reached LV 40, and he was stuck at his advancement.

The manner in which he completed his mission was a prerequisite for his next advancement.

[Second Stage Advancement]: Defeat three strong enemies beyond your level.

Note: Your opponent must be at least five levels higher than you.

Current Progress: 0%.

Defeating a higher-level opponent was a common requirement for class advancements. The difficulty was not high, and the player could compete in a team. This made it easier for Han Xiao. It was a pity that his previous such assassinations were not counted for his current task.

As his level increased, higher-level killing was becoming more and more difficult. With Han Xiao's level, he had to kill opponents beyond LV 45 at the bare minimum to achieve the cross-level standard. Moreover, these LV 45 opponents were already in the third stage of Planet Aquamarine's combat power, possessing ghostly powers.

Because he was stuck at advancement and could not upgrade to the next level, Han Xiao was putting all his EXP into developing his skills. He had managed to improve his combat sniping skills.

Before building a powerful machine that could become the core of his tactics, he was not going to change his strategy of using [Moving Snipe] for the time being. In addition, he had also incorporated new blueprints, improving his personal capability tremendously.

In addition to becoming a legend in the list of killers, Han Xiao had also unexpectedly become a legend for a different reason.

The Legend of Planet Aquamarine: The Mysterious Zero

As a traitor of the Germinal Organization, you have uprooted the solid foundations of the organization based on your sole effort. No one expected such a course of events. You have already become the arch enemy of the Germinal Organization. Perhaps you should protect your identity as there are many people who are searching for you.

The source of my legendary status comes from my intelligence that inflicted a great loss on the Germinal Organization and caused Planet Aquamarine to fall into a state of chaos. I think I figured out how to attain such legendary status. I guess I just have to disrupt the original quest of the camp, and that means to wreak havoc... I guess that is my strength. Han Xiao touched his chin in thought.

His relationship with the Germinal Organization had fallen to -3,000. He was becoming their arch enemy; the relationship was unsalvageable.

This hatred is really deep-seated.

Han Xiao furrowed his brows.

On the other hand, the Graymetal Base was also becoming better-equipped. Han Xiao had upgraded the energy source on the base. There were already eight assistant robots working hard. It was a stable source of EXP. The cost of manufacturing each assistant robot was about 200,000 EXP.

Mechanics could create assistant-type robots, but few people did it in the early days because it was not cost-effective. These robots cost hundreds of thousands of EXP to develop, but they would only provide a few thousand XP each day. One could easily attain that by completing simple tasks. Moreover, these low-level intelligence robot assistants could only complete simple manufacturing tasks. If spare parts were needed, players could directly purchase them from the player market. Even unions were unwilling to use the assistant robot in their early stages. They had their production team and were in no shortage of manpower.

Only when the mechanics learned how to manufacture intermediate-level smart chips to enable robots to perform more precise operations would these robot assistants gradually become the standard tools for mechanics.

But for Han Xiao, money was not that important. He took a brief look at his dark net account and a bunch of zeros leaped into his eyes. All these were rewards that he had collected from completing various assassinations. Well, it seemed that there were some orders from Division 13. He had almost forgotten.

Han Xiao looked at the interface, and it was the last thirty minutes before the public beta.

This day has finally arrived!

Over the past year, he had accumulated a huge amount of capital, way more than most.

Han Xiao's eyes were beaming as he nestled in the sofa, waiting silently.

The public beta countdown was counting down to the last minute.

Looking at the time—Galaxy calendar, July 3, 688.

Countdown!

Ten, nine, eight... three, two, one!

The public beta is now open.

Fetching data... Fetching data done!

Player Forum Open

Open beta duration: 1271 days

Welcome to Galaxy 1.0—Adventer!

Chapter 125: What Have We Missed!

Ever since Galaxy was in the research and development stage, the game had received wide attention with minimal marketing. Only basic information was provided on the official website. Even so, its popularity was continuously rising. Due to the many groundless rumors, Galaxy was shrouded with an air of mystery, fueling the players' anticipation and curiosity.

On the day of public beta, the enthusiasm of the players was exploding like the eruption of a volcano. Although the number of VR capsules in the first batch was limited and there was also a restriction on the number of purchases, the game was sold out in half an hour. Those who did not manage to grab hold of the game were utterly disappointed, whereas those who did get it could not wait to enter the game.

...

The day that the game was released, enthusiastic players rushed into the game. In Galaxy, there were dozens of players who came from different birthplaces, and this formed the first batch of players.

In the evening, more and more public beta players who had created their characters appeared out of thin air in the forest outside the settlement of Big Horn Village, looking around curiously.

"It feels so real!" exclaimed a player as he jumped around with ease.

"Quick! Look at the sky, there is actually more than one moon!" a player shouted out in excitement as he admired the scenery.

"Woah, can I take off my pants?" asked a muddle-headed player.

"Is there no novice village in this game?" Another player scratched his head, not knowing what to do.

As more and more players appeared, a huge crowd began to form. With more than a thousand people gathered, one could hardly see an end to the mass of players. There were thousands of players who had gathered. After some confusion, some observant players spotted the lights in the distance from Big Horn Village. Thinking that it was the novice village, the players rushed over en masse.

The guards at the settlement of Big Horn Village were shocked to see the group of ragged men and immediately blew the whistle to inform the rest of the population to lock their doors and stop this huge group of foreigners from entering their settlement.

The players were all stopped at the gate, and they started shouting out against the guards.

"What is going on? Why isn't the novice village open?"

"My hunger level is dropping; I will die if I don't eat something."

"The expressions of these NPCs are so lively."

Within the settlement of Big Horn Village, all the residents walked out of their house holding torches and weapons, and stood guarding the main door solemnly, preventing the mass of people from attacking the place. The village chief, Xander, gathered the few key personnel urgently.

“Where did this group of people come from? It’s almost 10,000 people!” Xander exclaimed.

“Is it a group of migratory vagrants?”

“Let’s just ask directly.”

Xander climbed to the watchtower and asked loudly as he looked down at the huge crowd of players, “Friends from afar, why have you come to us?”

The players looked at one another with confused faces, not knowing how to respond.

Xander then shook his head. “If you all do not state where you are from, I cannot let you enter the settlement.”

The public beta players were baffled. They were all new players who could not even understand the map. How would they be able to tell him their origin? Was that a joke?

Inside the settlement, the closed beta players found the whole situation amusing. It was like a show for them as they watched the situation unfold from the side. They had landed directly inside the settlement when they first arrived and did not have to go through the trouble that the public beta players who had landed outside the settlement had to face now.

Just then, they received a notification. It was a mission where they had to convince Xander to allow the public beta players to enter the settlement, and the prize was rather significant. There was a note that specified they had to make sure that their use of words would match the current game context.

“Interesting, there are no other games like this.”

The players inside the settlement were surprised by the creativity in this game. They could actually use their convincing skills to influence the NPC in this game. That was new to them.

After a few discussions, the closed beta players went up to Xander to start a discussion.

After what seemed like a long time, Xander finally understood. “Do you all know the group of people outside?”

One of the closed beta players answered with a straight face. “Yes, we used to be residents in the same settlement, called Earth Village. There was a disaster, and we lost all contact. This group of people outside are all as hardworking as us. Chief Xander, please accept them.”

“Earth Village? Why haven’t I heard of this settlement?” After some thought, Xander seemed slightly convinced. “There are too many of them. It is impossible to accept all of them.”

“That is simple. All they need is a job, some food, and basic supplies. You can think of them as cheap labor, and it is also an opportunity to expand the settlement.”

The closed beta players snickered, as they could not wait for the public players to be scammed.

Xander's eyes lit up. "You are right."

Soon enough, Xander explained the situation to the public beta players, and they all received a task each.

[The First Job]: You should earn some money through labor. Do not let yourself starve to death. Try to build a better relationship with our settlement so that you can be trusted.

With guidance, the public beta players started their tasks. Residents of Big Horn Village settlement eagerly provided different job opportunities, and the merchants also opened up their stores to the players, allowing them to use their own money to buy some food.

With a clear goal to work toward, the public beta players started to have a good impression of Big Horn Village. The public beta players formed a ring of tents on the boundary of the settlement, adding on to the construction of the settlement.

The same scene was happening for the newcomers at other settlements on Planet Aquamarine.

On the first day of the public beta, all the players were very excited, and they soon found out that there were camera and video functions, which added on to their excitement. The number of posts on social media exploded with players posting about the most miniscule of events. The following were some of the posts.

"Poor review! How can there be no excretion function!" The owner of this post obvious had ulterior motives, and he was obviously not really complaining about excretion.

"Taking on an alien body is so fun." Another post showed a picture of a Taurus male player shaking his tail.

"Almost got killed by a wild boar. It's so fun!" The post showed a picture of a female player making a peace sign with a wild boar chasing right behind her.

...

On the first day of the launch of the public beta, millions of players joined the game, and they were assigned to different planets, with at least around 100,000 players on each planet. As the news spread, the numbers rose at a rapid rate. With the next half a year, the numbers would likely snowball into tens of millions.

The public beta players were overjoyed with the game while some of the closed beta players were not having it so well.

...

In Dark Crow Valley, Jupiter and the other members of the guild looked at their surrounding forests with a blank look.

All around them, the woods were green, the evening wind lightly caressed their skin, and the calm atmosphere was like a gentle palm, warming their hearts and making everything seem so harmonious.

The view was amazing and pleasing to the eye.

But where did the base go?

Jupiter hesitated before he asked, "The place we are going to... should be the base, right?"

Everyone nodded in unison.

"There is no longer a connection with the camp!" Poseidon exclaimed.

Everyone then checked their interface and realized that their original [Dark Crow Valley Base Connection] was gone! Everyone was flabbergasted.

What is this situation?

"Quick! Check the tasks!"

Waking up from the trance, Jupiter checked his interface immediately, before heaving a sigh of relief.

"Fortunately, the mission is still there. Oh sh*t!"

In the next moment, everyone was shocked.

[Search for Zero (Level A)]: Zero, a mysterious traitor. He has caused the organization to suffer many losses. Find Zero, and you will become a great friend to the organization.

The level of difficulty had changed from B to A!

The task instructions had also changed; the location of Zero was no longer required as it was like finding a needle in a haystack. The Guild of Gods had made a lot of preparations, and the results of the discussion could fill up an entire blackboard. This change had caused all the preparation in the past few days to go to waste.

"What have we missed?"

Jupiter then thought of the official introduction of Galaxy and lost his voice.

"Don't tell me Zero is the main character on this planet!"

Chapter 126: What a Scam

"What shall we do now?" Poseidon asked.

"Let's go ask around."

Jupiter and his group returned to Dark Crow Forest Town, and upon hearing from the villagers that Dark Crow Valley Base had been destroyed by Stardragon, they were shocked. After getting a rough idea of what had happened, they thought to themselves, *How is it possible that the base could have disappeared just like that?*

Wow! Who knew this game would be so intense?

Last week's efforts had all been wasted, and their advantages from the beta-testing were almost all lost.

Now that Dark Crow Valley Base, the organization that had been issuing quests, was gone, even if they completed the quest, they had no idea who to get their rewards from.

Everyone looked at each other and cried in dismay.

How could this actually happen...

Jupiter felt terrible, but he was reluctant to give up on this Grade A quest. "The Germinal Organization definitely won't just stop here. Let's go look for other bases. There should be a way for us to return to Germinal Camp."

...

In the Western Capital...

In a blur of vision, Frenzied Sword realized that he had spawned in an alley that was not too far from the site where the beta-testing had gone offline.

Public testing has begun!

Frenzied Sword was so excited. Finally, he no longer had to worry about the time limitation and could wholeheartedly follow Han Xiao.

My dear Xiao, I'm coming!

Based on his memories, he found his way to Old Man Lu's repair shop.

"Han Xiao? That kid left long ago without even a goodbye. Who knows where he went?" Old Man Lu gulped down a can of beer, and his tone was a little depressed. He secretly doubted if his granddaughter's charm had truly lost its effects.

Upon hearing the news, Frenzied Sword's was struck dumb. He bore a sluggish face and stood rooted to the ground.

How could his master run away?

What am I to do now?

...

The forum's popularity continued to climb, gamers from different planets shared their own rumors. There were some gamers who were purely focused on trying and reviewing new elements of the game, and all seemed to praise it highly, even calling it a new era of gaming with true to life experiences.

It was merely a display background that was recently set, yet people were already fantasizing about it. It was a virtual game that was like no other; from the start to the end, there was only one world, so gamers all united in one place. There were different planets, which were equivalent to the different servers. Gamers very much looked forward to meeting fellow gamers from other planets.

This was not just the case in China; esports teams from other countries also flocked to Galaxy. Even though they did not communicate prior to this, among the esports powerhouses—America, Korea, France, England, and so on—all chose to develop themselves in their own planets.

Planet Aquamarine was one of the base camps that gamers from China chose.

However, this did not mean that all the gamers on Planet Aquamarine were from China. People from other countries could also choose to join Planet Aquamarine. There were leisure gamers, and there were also the European spies who came just to create trouble.

Electrolux, a retired professional gamer of America's Key Club who did not achieve anything much in his career, joined the club's studio after retiring. He joined Planet Aquamarine with such an ulterior motive.

Han Xiao was the only one who could recognize Electrolux. This scorpion was to become the first to rise up to the top sixteen in the First Professional League in the future, and in Planet Aquamarine's selection trial, the strongest sixteen that were selected to represent Aquamarine were usually all Chinese. This was going to be the Chinese professional gamers' base. Among the sea of Chinese one could easily spot the one American, Electrolux, who started the uproar with a swear word on the forum. The evil Chinese gamers all over the planet were out to kill him but all ended up dead under Electrolux's knife.

Although Electrolux had the American arrogance, his strength and vast resources gave him the courage to start in a random planet. His luck was good as well.

In one of the Germinal Organization's laboratories...

Electrolux opened his eyes wide and found himself soaking in a light blue solution. He was in a vat of nutrition fluid and was surprised that he did not need to breathe. He looked through the glass and saw a scientist holding a tablet, recording scribbles on the outside.

Realizing that he could not control his character for the time being, Electrolux waited patiently; according to his experience, this should be an intermission animation. After roughly a minute, a drainage hole appeared at the bottom of the nutrition tube, and the light blue solution disappeared. Electrolux could now move, and he saw a notification on the interface.

You have been injected with DNA Improvement Solution. Your total attributes have increased by 3. You have acquired the skill [DNA Regulation].

[DNA Regulation]: You have a much higher chance of awakening Esper abilities, and the power will be increased by 10%.

My God! Electrolux was overjoyed. Random openings are so awesome!

The nutrition cabinet opened, and the scientists came crowding. Electrolux did not resist, allowing the scientist to pull him over to the Golden Platform to do various instrument tests.

At this moment, Electrolux received another prompt.

The DNA Improvement Program is a biological research program that helps to cultivate superpowers. The success rate is extremely low. And you, being one of the few successful tests, will be valued much by the Germinal Organization. You can choose to stay or leave.

Previously Electrolux had chosen to stay, and afterward, he had become Germinal Organization's strongest player. He made a similar decision, for with such an amazing start, only a fool would leave!

This skill is specially tailored for me. Electrolux had originally planned to become an Esper, and without saying another word, he entered a shop in the interface. Using the funds given by the club, he bought an [Ultra-Perfect-Deluxe Gene Awakening Elixir]. He immediately chose the Awakening option, and after a long and nervous wait, the interface prompted that he had successfully acquired the Awakening Ability!

How smooth. Electrolux had a look of joy on his face. He felt like Lady Luck was shining upon him. He raised his palm, and his palm amassed a white whirlwind.

The scientists rejoiced.

"Eureka!"

"He's awakened!"

Electrolux knew that since he wanted to stay, it was best to show his potential. The scientists' reactions made him very satisfied. But the next moment he saw a scientist calling for the guards, leaving him puzzled. Why did he have to call the guards at such a nice moment?

Germinal Guards sped to the site, and without much effort, they handcuffed him. He was dumbfounded. Did they not say that they valued him? Why were they treating him like a prisoner?

When he entered another laboratory, Electrolux was locked down onto the brainwashing device. It was only then that he realized something was wrong. "What are you doing to me?"

The guard spoke in a chilled manner. "We have orders from above that every successful test subject must be brainwashed five times over and then observed for another month before they can move freely!"

Electrolux was stunned. *What logic is that? The reaction is simply too radical!*

He really was clueless. The original DNA Improvement Program did not need brainwashing. His random start was started by a European, and it was all benefits and no harm.

However, after their experience with Han Xiao, the Germinal Organization had implemented an extremely strict policy. They would rather kill than release, and no matter the research plan, the test subject was to be brainwashed and put under close observation for a month.

Little did Electrolux know that this was all because of Han Xiao. It was too late to regret, for he was soon to be brainwashed.

You are not exempt from the brainwashing. You have joined the Germinal Organization under a special condition.

As you have been brainwashed, you are unable to rebel against the Germinal Organization.

Electrolux panicked.

Being unable to rebel meant that he was unable to escape the one month of imprisonment, which meant a month of being locked up, not to mention levelling up. This would mean he would be much behind other gamers!

Which part of 'being valued' is this! What a lie!

He had clearly attained the ultimate awakening skill, yet he was stuck in this rot hole and had to suffer a month of being locked down and gaining no experience!

It was a perfect start, but now he was to fall behind all the other gamers!

Electrolux exploded internally.

Chapter 127: The Fangs of Capitalism

The golden rays of dawn were shining in the sky. It was a cool and refreshing morning.

Whilst driving a truck, Han Xiao made his way toward Big Horn Mountain. He had based his directions off a radar. Despite him driving all night, he was not tired at all. In fact, he was alert as he had pulled over to nap the night before.

The public beta had started a few days ago, yet the forum was already buzzing with comments. Han Xiao specially took notice of Planet Aquamarine's forum, and through the tags of the players, he managed to understand the situation of each and every newcomer. He had always wanted to join in the commotion.

The best chance to interact was when the players made their first appearance.

Just a few days back, Han Xiao had used his authority to obtain a tip-off from the dark web—there was a batch of newcomers in Big Horn Village. Hence, Han Xiao decided to advance toward Big Horn Village to get rid of them.

In the distance from Big Horn Village, one could see the silhouette of the settlements. Han Xiao could tell with one glance that the settlement was filled with countless tents, just like a refugee camp. A swarm of players could also be seen busy bustling about.

The moment Han Xiao parked his truck, he caught the attention of the players.

With a cigarette dangling from his lips, Han Xiao got out from his truck and leaned against it while puffing out a cloud of smoke. He put on an air of arrogance, misleading the players to think that he was an important character.

A deep understanding of players' mentality was Han Xiao's specialty. He had analyzed the situation. With the new game being released, all the players were thrilled. No matter what kind of tasks were given to them, they were all willing to try. This was known as the 'hunger' stage, and since there was an overwhelming number of new players, there would definitely be a few players who could not obtain any missions.

Therefore, Han Xiao knew that as an 'advanced player' character, he was influential. All he had to do was appear in front of the players, and he could definitely rile up the players. The players were all new and did not have skills yet. However, he could benefit from their large number. Han Xiao also happened to have a way to reap benefits from these newcomers, and he could take this opportunity to further test the functions on the NPC interface.

In Han Xiao's eyes, the players who were walking about resembled walking wallets.

After a while, the players were finally starting to get curious and some walked over.

Black Phantom – Unknown (Yellow Name)

Rank: Unknown

Attributes: Unknown

Risk Level: Extremely deadly

“What the heck? This is a high-level NPC!”

“This is the first time that I've seen one.”

“Why is there such a high-level player in a novice village? Is he the Boss?”

“Doesn't seem like it though. It looks like we can trigger a mission.”

The surrounding players were full of astonishment and were hesitating whether they should approach Han Xiao.

Han Xiao raised an eyebrow—he was now at LV 40, which was thirty levels higher than all the other players. This time around, he was fully aware of the players' abilities. Hence, he cleared his throat and said, “You all seemed to be a capable bunch of people, and I do need some help at the moment.”

After making his statement, Han Xiao sent out the missions that he had prepared earlier on.

The dozen players received their missions.

[Mysterious Stranger]: You have encountered a mysterious NPC, and he seems to have some work for you. Try to please him as much as possible, and you might receive unexpected surprises.

The mission was to collect a plant known as 'Snake Venom'. These players realized that the reward given was more generous than the novice tasks that they had received in Big Horn Village. It was reaching up to a thousand EXP. Thus, the players received their missions excitedly.

Snake Venom was a relatively common plant. This plant could be collected near Big Horn Village, and it was also sold in the settlement to make poisoned arrows.

At this moment, many players could not afford firearms; instead, they used cold weapons. Han Xiao set up this mission for the sole purpose of experimenting as well as to allow his subsequent activities to not be suspected.

The limit of my missions now is much higher than before; it has reached D-level.

With that thought in mind, Han Xiao opened the interface, and the detailed numbers appeared.

Highest reward limit: 36,940

Level 40: +12000 (Advancement Level Limit +300)

Rank D: +10,000

Camps:

– Germinal (Enemy): -3,000

– Division 13 (Friendly): 2,130

– Blood Pact Society (Respect): 3,950

– The Rothschild Family (Friendly): 1,300

– Farian Company (Friendly): 1,200

Universal Reputation:

– Black Phantom (Aquamarine) +5%

– Mysterious Zero (Aquamarine) +5%

The bonuses from his Universal Reputation was a ten percent on his current limit. Different regions had different Universal Reputation bonuses, but usually, the bonus from one Universal Reputation was 5%. In addition, the bigger the area, the higher the bonus.

The main objective of the Universal Reputation was for the daily limit; one Universal Reputation resulted in double the limit, and originally, his limit was a five times addition. Now, it was at seven times the original limit, nearing 26,000 experience points.

The players who had not received any missions huddled together and were quietly discussing among themselves while looking at Han Xiao curiously.

“This is the high-level NPC? It feels like he’s no different from us!”

“Black Phantom does sound very old-fashioned.”

“I wonder which profession he is from.”

It might not have been mentioned before, but most of public players’ profession was Esper!

The other four schools of players required basic knowledge to change their profession, but Esper was capable of many things. Of course, even though their abilities were strange, none of the players had the ability to use them. Espers required a huge amount of energy, and it was dependent on the players’ current levels. They were simply unable to use their powers and hence appeared very weak. The players were at most able to exert their power for around ten seconds, which meant that the players were weak and vulnerable.

Not long after, the players who had completed their mission were returning with a bunch of Snake Venom. Their faces were filled with excitement.

Once Han Xiao realized that there were enough onlookers, his eyes flashed. “I will stay here for a few days. I can provide some weapons for you should you need them.”

Han Xiao then opened the window containing goods that he could sell to the players. He had only set up a few types of weapons: Foldable Machete, ordinary pistols, and submachine guns. He did not sell other machinery as he knew that the novice players did not have that much money, but he was selling many types of ammunition and special ammunition.

However, Han Xiao also had a powerful setup called ‘Lightweight Mechanical Arm’, the price of which was so steep that the players were unable to afford. It was actually bait that was as effective as hanging a carrot in front of a donkey.

Offering the Lightweight Mechanical Arm meant nothing to him as it was useless to him because of two main reasons. Firstly, the equipment did not match his capability, and secondly, it was not a rare product to begin with. It was just introductory machinery, and since it would be developed by other mechanics in the future, it was better to release this machinery now to earn short-term profit.

One issue was that the Foldable Machete and Lightweight Mechanical Arm that Han Xiao had created in Stardragon seemed to have a risk of being exposed, but Han Xiao was not too concerned as Stardragon and him were not enemies. Furthermore, his own whereabouts were erratic. Even if his identity was known, it did not matter as the circulation of information between the players and the organizations was very slow.

Hence, his sale of this machinery in a short period of time would not pose any problem. The profits from the players' market was too awesome for him to give up, whereas in the future...

Once I'm stronger, there will be absolutely no need to continue hiding my identity.

Not to mention Han Xiao's psychological activities, but all the players who saw the equipment put out for sale were shocked!

"This is the mysterious businessman!"

"Lightweight Mechanical Arm! Oh my God, this is an artifact!"

"This machinery costs 20,000 dollars! This is way too expensive; who can even afford it? Besides, it requires twenty-five points of strength to use it; I think you would need to be LV 10 at least to reach this attribute."

"Those firearms are cheap though. They only cost 1,500 dollars for one!"

The player then called their friends and flocked over, eager to have a look. Han Xiao was surrounded by them in an instant.

The novice players were attracted to the firearms like a moth to a flame. Since they are using cold weapons now, it would require a dozen people to even defeat a weak beast. Not only were Big Horn Village's firearms expensive, they needed money for the ammunition too. The novice players simply could not afford it.

The cost of Han Xiao making a pistol was only about 800 Aqua coins, and the selling price was twice the cost price. He was considered kind because his price was affordable; he doubted that anyone could find a cheaper pistol than his. Furthermore, Han Xiao's pistols were of great quality. It was not as if he was trying to cheat the players' money by offering inferior quality pistols.

Because there were limited firearms, the players rushed to make a purchase. Those who managed to get their hands on the guns were exhilarated, while those who did not manage to get one were disappointed.

The closed beta players had also squeezed in with the crowd. SliceYouUp, who had killed the world guild's leader, bought a pistol from Han Xiao and realized that the quality was much better than the gun sold in Big Horn Village. How regretful he was! Had he known earlier, he would not have bought his weapons from Big Horn Village.

Having sold all his weapons in the truck, Han Xiao earned thirty thousand dollars in that short period of time. Yes, the players' funds were limited, but there were at least ten thousand of players in Big Horn Village, which meant the combined purchases were earning Han Xiao big bucks. After selling the

firearms, Han Xiao could use the cargo compartment in the truck to manufacture new firearms and ammunition.

The real profits from selling firearms were the sales from ammunition. Having bought the firearms, the players would have to buy ammunition as well. This was known as bundled sales, where one product generated the demand of the other because they had to be bought together. This was also what Han Xiao had realized previously when he had bought instant noodles without the seasoning from the shop downstairs.

The players loved their newly bought guns so much that they refused to put them down. Some were shooting at trees faraway; the recoil strength was so strong that the players' wrists shook, and the bullets flew aimlessly.

Those who had no shooting skills were unable to unleash the gun's power fully. A lot of the players realized they had this problem, and their excitement slowly turned to distress.

This was what Han Xiao had been anticipating. Now he could offer his after sales service!

Han Xiao smiled to himself and set up a window for shooting lessons. This time round, he did not announce it to the players. He set it in a way that to learn from him, the players would have to have a reputation of five points.

The players discovered this service almost immediately.

"We can actually learn skills from Black Phantom!"

"Oh my, there are so many abilities to learn."

"We need five reputation points to learn though. How do we increase our reputation?"

"I just discovered how; for every 500 dollars spent, your reputation with Black Phantom will increase by one!"

"It is still too expensive!"

The players only had a thousand dollars with them now, and they had accumulated this from completing missions. Han Xiao had a deep understanding of their financial status as he was, after all, once a novice player. This move was to enable the players to feel that learning a skill was not easy.

Humans are as such; they would not appreciate things that were given easily. Only when they are unable to obtain something instantly would they feel the need to upgrade themselves to get what they desired. In this case, once an ordinary player and a character developed a good relationship, it would also increase their reputation with the NPC. Of course, Master Han's main purpose was to also rake in a large sum of money from the players.

If I don't earn the players' hard-earned money, am I still human?

To continuously create demand from his customers and force them to buy products was a tactic used by businessmen. Han Xiao touched his chin and mused, *Oh if only I had gone into business instead.*

Chapter 128: All Linked

The players were hesitant, but Han Xiao was not at all worried. There would be someone who eventually decided to start eating the crab first.

Just as he expected, a cute girl with the ID 'Maple Moon' finally decided to do it. After she spent enough money in the shop, Han Xiao immediately raised the reputation of this player by five points. After which, he suddenly realized that Maple Moon... was someone familiar.

Maple Moon was shocked as she looked at the list of skills that could be learned.

"I can actually learn the basic knowledge required for class advancement!"

The moment she said those words, players began to chatter, and their level of excitement went through the roof.

Besides tycoons and those who were willing to spend a lot of cash in this game, most of the ordinary players had experienced problems with advancing as they still did not know to obtain the basic knowledge required. This mysterious NPC Black Phantom was willing to sell basic knowledge.

Players who were initially hesitant instantly made up their minds and were determined to raise their reputation with Black Phantom to five points. They were not willing to let such a good opportunity slip by.

You have taught [Basic Assembly]. You have obtained 1,000 EXP and 200 Aquamarine Dollars.

Indeed, compared to the beta testing phase, Han Xiao doubled the price of the basic knowledge, yet players were still highly enthusiastic to learn it. Although he would only gain 1,000 EXP every time the knowledge had been learned, the total amount would accumulate quickly with so many players here wanting to get the knowledge.

Originally, for Aquamarine players to advance, the most common way was to join a camp. It was rare for players to obtain the basic knowledge before joining a camp. By joining a camp and performing quests to get connections, players would be able to exchange their reputation points for basic knowledge. Of course, players could choose to purchase with cash, but it was not worth it. Han Xiao's action had saved many players from this trouble, and at the same time, it quickened their progress.

In a short while, hundreds of players had learned the basic knowledge. This meant that Han Xiao obtained hundreds of thousands of experience points. This number was still quickly climbing.

With his business booming, Han Xiao was like Jiang Taigong¹], calmly waiting for fish to fall for the bait.

While entertaining the players, he was casually scrolling through the forum.

All the players from the new planets were sharing this information. Players from Big Horn Village were all enthusiastically advertising Han Xiao on the forum. He was the first high-ranking character in all the

new planets that ever appeared in the Novice Villages; therefore, he quickly gained popularity. Many posts about him kept being bumped up in the forum.

“This high-ranking character sells inexpensive firearms and ammunition with excellent quality. Basic knowledge can be learned from him if the reputation is raised to at least 5 points. Other than common skills like Basic Shooting and other basic combat skills, a lot of mechanical knowledge can also be learned. Mechanic players can immediately go for their class advancement by learning the basic knowledge from him.”

“Woah. I haven’t seen such a high-ranked character before.”

“Even class advancement knowledge can be learned! Big Horn Village? I’ll go over right now!”

“Damn, I’m on another planet; I can’t go over at all.”

“Why has such a high-ranked character not been seen anywhere else?”

“Danger Level: Fatal? Any brave souls want to test out his power? If you die, I will pay you. I am not that rich, so I can only give an airplane for compensation.”

Many posts were also accompanied by images. The appearance of Han Xiao, who was in black, achieved a huge on-screen success. Many people were greatly impressed by his outfit, which included a black windbreaker and a pair of black gloves. He appeared both cool and handsome, and as long as his face was not shown, he could definitely be a male model.

Even players from the other beginner planets were discussing his combat strength enthusiastically. The forum had an automatic translation function, so there was no need to worry about language barriers.

Players are really interested in the combat power of this high-ranked character... An idea suddenly ran through Han Xiao’s mind, and he thought that if he could show off his skills, he might be able to attract more people to advance as mechanics.

Even though he was willing to share his basic knowledge, many people were still on the fence. After all, there were quite a few players that were not really interested in the path of a mechanic and were doubtful about their combat strength. Naturally, Pugilist and Esper were more fun to play, and therefore, more appealing to most players.

Indeed, they were right in their suspicion. Mechanics were not as strong in the earlier stages. However, this rule did not apply to Han Xiao. He smirked and decided to mislead the players. He understood the psychology of these players too well and knew that many would simply join whichever class they thought was the most powerful.

To Han Xiao, teaching the basic knowledge was an excellent way of earning profits. There were already hundreds of players who had acquired the mechanic’s basic knowledge. If he was able to trick half of the players from Big Horn Village into becoming mechanics, then he would easily obtain millions of EXP.

The profit in this market would be almost unbelievable!

Han Xiao was exuberant.

Just in time. The troops from the Germinal Organization will be arriving in a few days. This is a good time to carry out the plan.

...

In the Western Capital, Frenzied Sword felt exasperated. In the last few days, he had no appetite for anything. Days without Han Xiao were like a day without sunshine—each passing day was torture.

As Frenzied Sword randomly scrolled through the forum, he came across a bunch of posts by the players from Big Horn Village. The posts were about Han Xiao and the goods that he was selling.

“Lightweight Mechanical Arm?”

With a look of pleasant surprise, Frenzied Sword stood up suddenly.

He remembered that Han Xiao had previously exhibited this Mechanical Arm. Han Xiao was, too, always wearing a mask. As such, Frenzied Sword hazarded a guess.

Could Black Phantom be Han Xiao?

I have to find him!

...

In order to raise the reputation with Han Xiao to more than five points, many players had moved to the assembly point at Big Horn Village to do the quests and earn money. As such, the number of players surrounding Han Xiao increased significantly.

Your product [Lightweight Mechanical Arm] has been sold!

Han Xiao was shocked.

He had previously set the high price of 20,000 for this item, yet someone was able to afford it. He surveyed the surrounding players and found their leader. His ID was ‘Jade Green Sky’. The moment Han Xiao saw this name, he was immediately enlightened. Jade Green Sky was the chairperson of a guild named ‘Sky Territory’, and with the wealth of the guild, he would naturally be able to afford the item.

Jade Green Sky was wearing a set of hand-sewn leather armor, and his equipment was at least a grade better than the open-beta players. That was because he was a close-beta test player. During close-beta testing, he had brought some of the core members with him to explore the other places on the map. Through the mouths of the other open-beta players from his guild, he learned about Black Phantom, and he quickly brought the core members back to the village.

Even though Jade Green Sky had yet to advance in his class, he was preparing to be a Pugilist. He was immediately drawn to the stats of the lightweight mechanical arm. Although he was unable to equip the

item as of now, he decided to purchase it first and keep it in his storage, just in case Black Phantom disappeared suddenly and the opportunity was lost.

“There are quite a lot of good items.” Members of the Sky Territory guild muttered praise as they browsed through the list of items.

Unfortunately, in order to raise the reputation to five points, each member of the guild would have to spend 2,500 dollars. Despite being a large guild, the money that Sky Territory had was limited. The purchase of the lightweight mechanical had used up the majority of the guild’s cash.

Out of a blue, Han Xiao spoke. “There will be a troop from the Germinal Organization passing by here in a few days, and I need some people to help me set up the traps in the forest. Are you free to do so?”

With that, he set a quest and released it.

E-Level difficulty. The description was “Set up any kind of trap in the forest, and you will gain 500 EXP.” Additionally, Han Xiao offered three reputation points as part of the reward, just what the Sky Territory guild wanted.

Jade Green Sky responded decisively. “Everyone, accept this task!”

Han Xiao smiled to himself silently. By luring players to complete his quest using reputation points, he could both complete his quest and gain more business. It was killing two birds with one stone.

He could arbitrarily attribute the reputation points with a certain value. This method was like the theory behind paper currency, whereby something was made to appear valuable, but in actual fact, it was worthless. This could be effective in attracting the Sky Territory guild, Destroyer guild... any guild’s players into picking up the quest.

Han Xiao had always felt that the currency system was built on a bubble. With this thought in mind, he would spend any cash he earned.

Unspent money could become a hindrance to one’s motivation to work!

Most of the players went into the forest to set up traps. The traps that they could use were the more elementary ones—they were monster traps. Han Xiao took some time off and visited the forest. The forest was so full of traps that anyone with claustrophobia would have been triggered and covered with goosebumps instantly.

The retreating troops from the Germinal Organization would definitely be horrified when they entered the forest.

The monster traps that the players had set were very much useless and were mainly to attract attention. Han Xiao set up some other traps by himself, and those traps were the ones that would be the deadliest.

Chapter 129: Uproar in the Esports Circle

There were four continents on Planet Aquamarine and many more assembly points for novice players. There was a perennial stream of new players joining the open beta, so the total number of players kept

increasing. However, compared to the entire population of the planet, it was still an insignificant number.

The players were all doing beginner quests and advancing slowly. They mostly camped in the areas around the novice villages. The players in Big Horn Village had been envied by many since they encountered a high-rank character, Han Xiao, who could teach them basic knowledge, whereas the players in other novice villages could only advance slowly through grinding for the secondary class.

Generally, players could be divided into three types: casual players, studio players, and professional esports players.

On the forum, there was a live broadcast. A godly player from the Deluxe Sanctuary Club, who was ranked 2nd in the country's esports field and 21st in the world, had officially announced that he would join Galaxy! His ID was Song.

The number of viewers had already reached millions, and yet, it was still rising rapidly!

"Song, may I ask if your work from now on would be entirely focused on Galaxy?"

"May I know why you only chose to join during the open-beta phase?"

"May I know..."

Even when he was bombarded by questions from reporters, Song remained calm and charismatic, and he answered each and every question elegantly. He was a handsome young man who always wore a mesmerizing smile. Due to his excellent skills and dashing looks, Song had gained a huge fan base.

"Galaxy is the game of the century with unparalleled potential. It has countless possibilities, vast maps, and an incredible amount of freedom. From my personal point of view, I believe that Galaxy will become a phenomenal game. The World E-sports Association has already begun to prepare the first league for Galaxy, and it will be on a world-wide scale. Not only me, but all Chinese players will participate in this grand event to compete with players from America, France, Korea, and other great esports countries, aiming to win glory for our country.

"Yesterday, major America guilds like Key, Devil, and Thunder Snake also announced their entry into Galaxy. They chose the in-game planet with the greatest potential, Planet Winterfrost, to be their base camp. They will become tough opponents in the future. Our guild also contacted major e-sports clubs such as Long Sky and Thunder Storm to invite them to join the game. We, as a nation, will definitely not lag behind in this game!"

"Do you have any comments on the issue where your old nemesis, Lost Angel, claimed that he is going to defeat you in Galaxy?" one reporter asked.

Song chuckled before he spoke with a strong sense of self-confidence. "I will never be afraid of any enemy. I will be the best in Galaxy and lead the Chinese players to defeat every player from other countries!"

This conference was like a signal that hinted the rise of Galaxy. Its influence soared immediately after the conference. The entire esports field roared, and countless professional players announced their plans to enter the game.

With the arrangement of their respective clubs, players such as Sleepy Winter, Twinkle Fried Rice, and Rainy Kim, who joined the game during the close-beta phase, also held a press conference. This further fanned the enthusiasm in the e-sports field. The topic of the game became more and more popular, and the activity in the game forum was at a phenomenal level! Countess players were also looking forward to the sales of the second batch of VR capsules.

Just as the popularity of the game soared, Galaxy released its first official trailer. The trailer showed the different landscapes of the novice planets as if it was a documentary film. The different styles and appearances of the planets, coupled with magic and technology from both ancient times and the future, attracted countless eyes. This trailer was made from the collection of closed-beta players' clips, and they were all recorded from their point of view.

This trailer introduced the background and the environment of the world of Galaxy through moving images. Soon, Galaxy would release other similar publicity videos to introduce other aspects of Galaxy. They announced that the next video would show the battle scenes of different classes, giving players a greater insight into the variations of different classes and their fighting styles. Many were eager to watch this video.

The activity level of the forum was constantly through the roof, and Han Xiao kept an eye on the trends on the forum. Seeing the IDs of many professional players whom he had previously battled in his last life, Han Xiao felt a little emotional. He could still remember the times in his past life when he was an enthusiastic new player in the game. After many years, he had become a highly-experienced professional power leveler in the game, and then he was transmigrated. Things had changed so much for him—indeed, reality was more dramatic than a novel.

In his last life, he had been among the players who bought the second batch of VR capsules. Han Xiao was curious if there was another version of him in this world, which was why he always paid attention to the forum for any evidence of it.

Han Xiao had stayed at Big Horn Village for the last past few days, and during this time, there had been old players constantly visiting the village and new players been born here.

A group of curious new players who had just arrived gathered outside Big Horn Village. Their faces were full of curiosity. "This is the novice village, right?"

A player with a pistol around his waist walked past, and he immediately caught the attention of those new players.

"Bro, where did you buy that gun?"

"Oh, you must be newbies. You asked the right guy for this. A word of advice: never head to Big Horn Village to purchase a gun. Go straight west. There is a high-ranking character called Black Phantom who not only sells guns at a really affordable price but can also help you with class advancements," the player with the pistol said.

"Really? Let's go take a look now!" the newbies exclaimed as their eyes lit brightly.

"Go on, do not forget to thank me." The player with the pistol had a look of pride plastered on his face.

More and more players came to find Han Xiao the moment they arrived in the game before heading to Big Horn Village to receive quests. They then used all their hard-earned money from the quests to buy more items from Han Xiao to earn reputation points. They were just like hard working bees, promptly supplying Han Xiao with a large amount of money.

In just a few days, Han Xiao had earned more than 500,000 Aquamarine Dollars and close to a million EXP—such efficiency was unparalleled. It was also a much safer and more convenient way for him compared to earning money and EXP by doing quests himself.

The players now are all only newbies. Now is the best time to exploit them.

The features of an NPC offered him a tremendous advantage when facing players, but Han Xiao knew there was a prerequisite to extracting profits from them—he had to be ahead of players in all areas of advancement.

Although the current situation is really good, I cannot relax and stagnate, Han Xiao thought to himself as he took a puff of his cigarette.

Among the players in Big Horn Village, around twenty percent had chosen to switch to become mechanics while the other players were still on the fence. Only by showing off the combat strength of a mechanic would the other players start to budge.

Han Xiao glanced at the computer and read the intelligence passed from the Dark Net about the Germinal Organization. The retreating troops would be passing by Big Horn Village this afternoon.

As he was in the process of thinking, he heard a female voice.

“Black Phantom, why do you want to be enemy with the Germinal Organization?”

Han Xiao turned his head and saw a petite young female player. She was below his chin and had delicate short hair and watery eyes full of curiosity. Her face was just like an apple, which made people want to poke her cheeks. Her ID was ‘Maple Moon’. She was the first female player who learned skills from him.

I can't believe we've met again... Han Xiao raised his eyebrow as old memories started appearing in his head.

Maple Moon, one of the Mechanic representatives in the third Season, was originally a casual player. She became extraordinary in the third season competition and was then signed by a club to become a professional player.

In his past life, it was revealed on the forum that Maple Moon liked to dig into hidden story plots, and all the benefits she gained from doing so accumulated and compounded until the third season where it was advantageous for a mechanic. It was only then that she really showed her true combat prowess.

Han Xiao blinked and had a new idea.

Players like this seem to be able to...

Chapter 130: The First Step in Building a Large Network

Based on the quests that Han Xiao assigned to the players, Maple Moon had guessed that Han Xiao and the Germinal Organization were enemies. Most players would just want to complete the task and get it over with, so they would not even bother with understanding any background information about the quest. However, Maple Moon enjoyed exploring the story plot and became curious about the background story of Han Xiao. Black Phantom—this name made her think of all sorts of assassins and stories of vengeance. She believed that there was something she could dig further into.

She is the first player to interact with me outside of assigning quests and selling equipment. Han Xiao's eyes lit up.

Han Xiao pondered about his relationship with the players and concluded that they were not enemies—except for the players who took on missions that targeted him. He was able to not only extract profits from players but also train players with potential and let them become his allies. By exchanging help and resources, he could make these players willingly fight alongside him.

As the players could resurrect, it was somewhat unfavorable to Han Xiao. However, looking from another perspective, it also meant that the players were best used as fighters and cannon fodder. Although most players did not have principles, and therefore, using players in such a manner could be rather chaotic, Han Xiao was clear about the players' psychology and what motivated them. As long as he manipulated them properly, he could control the players' actions to a certain extent. If he made good use of this strategy, he could gain a huge advantage when fighting against NPC forces—the advantage could be as big as his advantage when interacting with players!

What's this called again—two-timing?

Nah, it should be called focusing on both sides!

A flash of thoughts sprinted through Han Xiao's mind as he glanced at her. He then suddenly walked up to the vehicle. Maple Moon was startled momentarily before she followed.

The vehicle storage compartment was a workshop full of spare mechanical components. Han Xiao casually pointed his finger to ask Maple Moon to sit wherever she wanted. He then lit a cigarette and began smoking. The smoke created a mysterious atmosphere, and Maple Moon, upon seeing this scene, knew immediately that something exciting was about to happen to her. This caused her heartbeat to thump rapidly. She was very expectant.

Han Xiao flicked the ashes off his cigarette as he said, "The Germinal Organization is an evil organization that is using the grief the people who lost their country to manipulate them into fighting for their personal gains. They outlandishly try to start a world war and add more scars to this world that is already covered in wounds..."

Han Xiao embellished the story with many details of the evil deeds that the Germinal Organization had previously committed, but he did not twist any facts around. The Germinal Organization had indeed committed a lot of bloody acts. Han Xiao was able to know all this based on the memories from his past life and by reading the relevant case files on the Dark Net. He gave a good account of all these incidents to Maple Moon.

As Maple Moon listened to Han Xiao attentively, her emotions fluctuated up and down. Her impression of the Germinal Organization plummeted as she felt the anger brewing within her. Maple Moon was the

kind of person who would get emotional from the storyline of a game, and she would always make decisions based on what her heart wanted. She had never been motivated by personal gains.

There were actually a lot of players like Maple Moon since most players were there to enjoy the game. A game was a story that people could easily immerse themselves in. However, most of such players were playing offline games, so it was rare to find players like this in an online game.

Han Xiao, in fact, found players like Maple Moon admirable. He coughed and asked a question that was clearly leading to a quest. “Would you be willing to become an enemy of the Germinal Organization?”

It was basically a yes or no question.

Maple Moon nodded solemnly.

Your reputation with Black Phantom has increased by 5 points.

After adjusting her reputation points, Han Xiao took out a mobile phone and handed it to Maple Moon. “Good, I have seen your courage. When you have grown stronger, contact me using this phone.

You received the quest [Black Phantom’s Invitation]. Reach LV 20, then contact Black Phantom.

Maple Moon was secretly delighted by her correct choice. She was right—there were hidden plots that could be triggered!

Han Xiao’s secretly chuckled as he saw Maple Moon’s delighted face. He was planning to spread a wide net to catch all these players with good potential. However, due to the limited number of players he could train, choosing each player carefully was a very important thing. Maple Moon would be a famous mechanic in the future and could be a good assistant for him. She was definitely a good spare tire... *Cough! I mean an alternative.*

As for the remaining candidates, Han Xiao had to think hard about them. He was prepared to choose the players who had good principles and potential. As long as Han Xiao showed players that they could trigger hidden missions from him, the rest of the professional players would automatically come to find him by themselves, and this would allow him to have more choices in picking the candidates.

A rough plan was generated inside Han Xiao mind, and he believed that it was rather actionable, but for the time being, the players still required a period of growth before he could proceed to the next step of his plan.

...

After he sent away the excited Maple Moon, he waited till noon before creating a new quest for the players.

[Hunting Germinal]: Follow Black Phantom to attack a troop from the Germinal Organization. This quest is a Prize-Pool Mission, and the base reward is 35,000 EXP. 500 EXP will be consumed by accepting the quest and be placed in the reward pool. The total reward will be split proportionally among the top 5 players (or teams).

Han Xiao had the ability to release different kinds of quests including a Prize-Pool Mission. Unfortunately, the reward he could dispense for a Prize-Pool Mission would still depend on the upper limit of a single mission. However, as the players were mostly around the level of four or five, 35,000 was still an astronomical number to them.

The players wanting to join the Prize-Pool Mission had to pay an 'admission fee'. Han Xiao tried and realized that he could not manipulate the EXP that the players put into the prize pool. He felt bummed, like he had lost another way to earn—scam—the noobs.

The Kill-all Guild was the first to discover the Prize-Pool Mission. They were shocked by the sheer size of the reward for the quest.

"This must be the first Prize-Pool Mission!"

"Oh woah! 35,000 EXP! Even for the base reward, it is way too much! The quests that I can do now only give me a few hundred EXP!"

"If more players accept this quest, the prize pool will accumulate to an astronomical number!"

All the members from the Kill-all guild could not contain their excitement.

SliceYouUp's eyes flashed, and he had a different thought. "No, we cannot allow other players to accept this quest!"

Members of the guild were shocked and asked the president, "Why not?"

Slicer eighteen spoke volubly, "Only five players or teams can receive the prize for this quest. The Big Horn Village has few hundred thousand players which even include some professional players. Rather than competing with all of them and rely on luck, why not just get the 35,000 EXP into our hand! If we are the only ones to accept the quest, we can easily manipulate the ranking and distribute the reward without the rest of our guild. Also, if we only win the quest as a team, each member will only gain an insubstantial amount of EXP. If we can distribute the EXP to a few individuals, it will be a lot more useful!"

He wanted to get several core members to complete the task and earn the huge amount of EXP—it was basically transferring the EXP that other members of the guild would gain to an elite few. If everyone in the guild were to gain the EXP, each person would only average about 500 EXP, which was insignificant. However, if the EXP were to be transferred to just a few members, their growth would be greatly accelerated.

The guild members look at each other in consternation. Although they were reluctant, they did not want to lose their job. It was only a little EXP; it would not matter that much. So, everyone agreed.

“The quest only starts in the afternoon, and Black Phantom will definitely set out in advance. As long as we do not let any players come into contact with him during these two hours, we are set!”

SliceYouUp ordered his guild members to hold up pistols and guard the area around Han Xiao. He then gave an order. “Warn any person that’s coming near him. If anyone defies the warning, fire immediately.”

The Kill-all guild had more than twenty core members located within Big Horn Village and more than a hundred secondary members. It was the biggest player faction at the moment.

These guilds working in a studio were different from casual players. They had a presence in many games, and only when they were certain that a particular game was valuable enough to have a great investment in would they then move their members based in other games into that specific game. The Kill-all Guild had a few thousand members, but there were only about a hundred of them based in Galaxy. More players from the guild would join the game when more VR capsules were on sale.

Players in this game could kill each other. However, the more people they killed, the more Sin points they would accumulate. The amount of EXP and equipment that a player would drop for dying was proportional to their Sin points.

...

Han Xiao realized that there was a group of guild players around him chasing the other players away, preventing anyone from getting close to him. They were rather aggressive and stern—those that got driven away were afraid to speak up.

He pondered for a moment and immediately understood what the Kill-all Guild was trying to do. His face turned black. “This guild to trying to swallow my Prize-Pool Mission alone—how fearless!”

His original intention of the Prize-Pool Mission was to get more players to join in and become his canon-fodder, but the Kill-all Guild was now interfering his plan.

A large group of players gathered on the side. They were indignant.

“They are too authoritative! I just want to buy some ammunition, that’s all!”

“What right do you have to forcibly occupy Black Phantom?”

At this moment, members of the Sky Territory Guild forced their way through the crowd and confronted the Kill-all Guild.

Jade Green Sky then shouted, “What are you guys trying to do?”

SliceYouUp was expressionless. He did not even bother to explain before he gestured with his hand; his members around him immediately aimed their pistol at Jade Green Sky. This immediately triggered the members of the Sky Territory Guild—they responded in kind.

All the other players were slightly shocked by this scene. They quickly moved backward, lest they got splashed with blood.

Jade Green Sky was hesitant. He had fewer people on his side, so he knew that he would be at a disadvantage once the battle began. He did not understand why the Kill-all Guild suddenly became so authoritative, but he was certain that something fishy was going on. Furthermore, with so many eyes around observing them, the Sky Territory Guild could not act like cowards.

Jade Green Sky and his members glanced at each other, confirming each other's thoughts.

Fight!

Tension was building on both sides.

Other players stretched their necks to watch the show—two big, famous guilds fighting against each other was not an everyday occurrence.

The battle was on the verge of starting.

Just then, every member in the Kill-all Guild received a notification on their interface.

Your reputation with Black Phantom decreased by 10 points.

Current Reputation: -5

Current Relationship: Cold

SliceYouUp was astonished!