

## The Mechanic 131

### Chapter 131: Bloodshed

“Oh My!”

“What’s the matter?”

“How did my reputation drop!”

Players from the Kill-all Guild were all confused. They immediately turned back to look at Han Xiao, only to find him looking in their direction with a look of indifference. This time around, no matter how thickheaded they were, they could figure what was going on. They observed curiously and suspiciously from the side.

SliceYouUp was extremely troubled. How was he to know that such actions would cause Black Phantom’s unhappiness? Wasn’t it normal for guilds to hoard resources in the game? Why was this NPC so intelligent?

The reputation earned these few days was all gone, and it even dropped quite a bit!

The members around him gave him looks of disapproval. It was too late for regret for SliceYouUp. He could sense that his authority as a leader had decreased a level. He was stuck in a very difficult situation, and he could only quickly withdraw from the scene with his men.

The players around him were baffled. They did not know why or how the previously arrogant Kill-all Guild cowered in a matter of seconds.

Jade Green Sky thought that Kill-all was afraid of their Sky Territory.

*What’s happening? When did my Guild become this cool?*

With no one blocking the way anymore, the players realized there was a Prize-Pool Mission. They finally realized Kill-all Guild’s motive. They were filled with righteous indignation, for that was totally unfair.

“Look at them trying to claim the entire Prize-Pool!”

“Gross!”

After crusading against Kill-all, the players then turned their focus to the Prize-Pool Mission, becoming increasingly attracted to it. Everyone accepted the quest, all wanting a slice of that huge cake.

The Prize-Pool slowly amounted to over 500,000 EXP, and to those players, it was simply an unthinkable sum, to the point that just thinking of it would make them stop breathing.

There were only five people that would be entitled to the Prize-Pool rewards. The ranking depended on the energy expended. Compared to the number of participants, five was undoubtedly a small number.

But the problem was that everyone thought they would be the lucky person. Even though it was almost as unlikely as winning the lottery, there was still that glimmer of hope that shone in their eyes—if they were chosen, it would be like hitting the jackpot.

The players were not even at LV 10 yet. Their combat strength was extremely low, but the good thing about them was that they were not afraid of death. With a pistol, they could deal a bit of damage. At least with everyone around, they could combine their firepower. This was why Han Xiao thought of the quest.

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The forest of Big Horn Village was vast, and the huge amount of information on the Dark Net helped mark the exact route of the Germinal Organization's evacuating troops.

Everyone arrived at the place where the trap was marked. Players teamed up and spread out to ambush. Among them, the players from the closed beta were obviously preferred as teammates. Of course, those with a guild would be the most advantageous.

Teaming was the best advantage one could have. Everyone knew that solely relying on one's efforts alone would never get one onto the list.

Maple Moon was a little down. Every player had a team. She was just a step slower and did not manage to find anyone to team up with.

Han Xiao noticed and called Maple Moon. He took out his modified sniper rifle, as well as several rounds of ammunition, and handed it to Maple Moon. "I'll lend you this gun, stay by my side."

Maple Moon clasped her two hands over her tiny mouth in surprise with a cute look of shock. She had thought that this was the benefit of triggering the secret quest. But upon seeing the traits of the sniper rifle, she was stuck in a difficult position. The sniper rifle required an attribute of at least Lv.1 in [Sniper].

Maple Moon pouted. "But I don't know how to use this."

Black Phantom has imparted the ability [Sniper] to you. Do you want to expend 2000 EXP to learn it?

Han Xiao had not taught the gamers about this sniper ability. Maple Moon was shocked and happy at the same time. She agreed without a second thought.

Since Maple Moon was worthy of training, Han Xiao naturally became biased toward her. Of course, this was a secret between them. If other players felt that it is unfair, what can they do but restrain their complaints? In this materialistic society, people without resources had no say!

...

A gust of wind whistled through the forest.

The ambushing players all had nervous yet excited faces. It was the first battle for many of them.

Jade Green Sky brought Sky Territory's members to camouflage themselves in the forest. It was a must for him to attain one of the top three prizes from the Prize-Pool Mission. He thought to himself, *My biggest rival should be Kill-all. First place is bound to be either of us.*

On the other hand, SliceYouUp was still extremely troubled by Han Xiao's extreme drop in reputation, but the quest still had to be done. He took a look at his dejected guild members. "Don't think too much. Just finish this quest first. We cannot let Sky Territory's members get ahead of us."

The passing time was like a sharp knife, killing any warmth in the atmosphere.

Han Xiao took out the report he had gotten from the Dark Net. He took one final look. There were two combat executives in the evacuating troops, Freire and Seiberre. The two of them had once been part of the same elite army squad, each over LV 30, but they were of no threat to him.

Woo woo—

The sound of the engine came from far away. The sniper rifle's electromagnetic scanner showed the Germinal Organization's troops on its radar.

Han Xiao reoriented his vision, becoming extremely alert.

Maple Moon followed Han Xiao's every word and action, sprawling on the ground with the sniper rifle. Suddenly, Han Xiao seemed to have disappeared. He was clearly right in front of her; how could he have vanished from her vision? This made her very uncomfortable.

You have entered [Stealth] state. Agility stats +8%.

Your next strike will have a Sneak attack effect.

You have entered [Steady Aim] stat. Your next shot has +15% shooting power.

[Night Stalker] had bestowed Han Xiao with many hidden skills, and accompanied with his [Flaming Will], anybody shot was bound to be destroyed.

*There was the Little Li Flying Dagger in the past. Today there is my deathly blow. Haha, this sounds so good!*

This shot was specially prepared for the executives. Han Xiao held his breath and aimed steadily like a patient hunter awaiting his prey.

The Germinal Organization's evacuating troops entered the trap and were almost immediately caught off-guard by the many animal traps set up. But they were also puzzled by the animal traps. Was this really a trap?

If this was not a trap, how fierce was the beast in the area to require so many animal traps? And if this was a trap, who would be stupid enough to use animal traps to deal with an armed force? It was so obvious as well.

Freire, the conductor, felt something was amiss. He said in the intercom, "Be careful, there is a possibility of an ambush. Deploy minesweepers."

The troops slowed their advancement. Carrying the metal detectors, the minesweepers overtook them.

The Germinal Organization had been shifting their bases in massive operations, and many troops had been intercepted. Their enemies were not just from the Six Nations. There were other enemies looking for revenge taking advantage of their current situation. When Germinal was still strong, these enemies did not dare make any move. But now that they were met with such a good opportunity for revenge, they all got excited.

Freire and Seiberre had been caught in an ambush during their journey, and they had all raised their alertness greatly since.

Beep beep beep.

The metal detectors flashed in red, indicating that there were mines underground. At the same time, the scouts also found traces of human activity.

Freire's expression darkened. "Enemy ambush ahead!"

Just as the Germinal troops were sweeping the field for mines, the players who were hiding in the bushes spotted their enemy as well. The heavily armed Germinal soldiers and armored vehicles looked formidable. The players dared not anger them.

But at the slightest thought of the huge reward-pool, the players were unable to resist. Some jumped out of the bushes immediately, firing their pistols from afar.

The Germinal soldiers habitually wanted to sprawl down and hide, but they realized that the enemies' bullets were almost going into outer-space. Their aim was just so bad.

"Counterattack!"

The Germinal troops returned fire without hesitation. The submachine guns fired away, the armored vehicles' machine guns roared, and some heavy firepower guns could be heard, too.

The fierce artillery instantly tore the players running toward them into pieces.

### **Chapter 132: A Death God**

"What the hell is this damage!"

"I died instantly when the explosion blast grazed me!"

"My EXP's dropped so drastically!"

The first wave of players eliminated died tragically, leaving the rest of the players in awe of the Germinal Organization's firepower.

SliceYouUp gritted his teeth. "Task requirement is to achieve highest damage. Doesn't matter if you die, just deal damage! Go!"

The penalty in Galaxy for dying was not light to say the least. EXP was deducted proportionally to a player's level, and the player could only be revived up to a maximum of ten times within six days. With

every death, the waiting time before the next revival would increase. After hitting the limit, there would be a temporary ban on the player. Despite all this, it was worth dying once or twice for the Prize-Pool Missions.

The players from Sky Territory also had the same thoughts, and all the other players followed suit and fearlessly, albeit tactlessly, made their attack on the Germinal soldiers, giving the latter a shock.

“All these enemies are rushing to die?” Seiberre was surprised; he had never seen such a fearless army, like a pack of starving wolves, dying to get a piece of them.

Their spirit and momentum were impressive, but in terms of combat ability... they were shamefully pathetic.

“They are just a motley crowd, let’s satisfy them since they want to die so badly!” Freire snorted and promptly commanded the surrounding troops. Since there were mines buried in the forest, the Germinal troops stopped their armored vehicles and started using as their armored vehicles as a temporary base for their counterattacks, killing off waves of players with ease.

“Shit... Can’t even touch them!”

“I already died twice! Goddammit!”

The Germinal troops was dominating the fight. The other players were being massacred, yet they refused to give up in the hope of dealing some damage to claim the quest rewards.

“I will give them a surprise.” Seiberre smirked. He saw absolutely no threat from these enemies. He was itching to toy with them.

Freire frowned slightly. “Don’t go crazy, we are in a rush.”

“Humph! I’m always quick with my kills.”

Seiberre hopped off the armored vehicle. With his strong physical attributes, all he needed was a slight push against the floor with his feet, and he was off dashing toward the players like a cannonball. His foot landed on a player and instantly caused the poor soul’s chest to cave in before the player was sent flying, hitting against a tree with an explosion of blood and flesh. The shooters dealt no damage to Seiberre, since he would dodge away before they could aim. Even if some bullets did hit him, it would be nothing but single digit damage.

Seiberre went on a killing spree like a tiger among the sheep, and the players were desperately trying to retreat. However, Seiberre would catch up and kill them before they could react. Many tried to assess Seiberre’s stats.

Seiberre – ?

Level – ?

Class – ?

Threat Level – Extremely fatal

Another extremely fatal dude! No one knew what this threat level meant until this moment, but the contrast in skill level was apparent.

The combat strength of a high-level character was indeed to be feared.

*Black Phantom and Seiberre have about the same combat strength.* This thought flashed across the minds of many of the players.

Seiberre was covered in his enemies' blood, like a ravaging beast. The scene looked so realistic that it scared some of the more timid players, who quickly adjusted the graphics to PG mode to reduce the gore. Some turned on the recording function to capture this highly bloody scene.

A panic-stricken player fell, and Seiberre, in the midst of his killing spree, laughed as he started to crush the poor player like a cockroach. Suddenly, blood spilled out from Seiberre's chest, and a gaping hole appeared at the place where Seiberre's heart was supposed to be.

Seiberre stopped moving, his entire face frozen. Then, he collapsed and fell to the ground without a sound.

"Is he... dead?"

"He just got killed in one shot!"

Everyone was thrown into shock and confusion. How did the blood-lusting monstrous enemy just get defeated in a split second?

Then, the electrical current buzz of a sniper rifle from afar came within earshot.

Jade Green Sky, SliceYouUp, and all the other players that were still alive glanced unanimously in the direction of the rifle. Everyone remembered that it was roughly where Black Phantom was camping.

This snipe kill was by Black Phantom!

"Even such a vicious enemy was killed by Black Phantom in one shot!"

The players all gasped in disbelief. Black Phantom was also extremely fatal in terms of threat level, but this was way more fatal than Seiberre!

Black Phantom was obviously on a higher level than Seiberre, but it was still incredible that the fearsome Seiberre got killed in a single shot. Han Xiao left a mysterious and immeasurable impression on everyone.

Nothing was scarier than a killer who could instantly kill his victims.

*Seiberre is very strong in terms of Energy attributes. How could he have been killed instantly?* Freire was shocked.

*This shot sounds familiar... the ability to instant-kill a Superhuman... Only one person is capable of doing this.*

Freire's face changed immediately.

“Must be the Ghost-level Black Phantom from the Blood Pact Society! Goddammit, why is such a high-level monster finding trouble with us? I thought he only does bounty hunting?”

Black Phantom’s reputation preceded him in the Underground World in these two months because of his amazing stats. He had killed ‘The Raging Bolt’ Bai Jin in an instant. Even the famous Invisible Demon was running for his dear life from Black Phantom. It was no wonder that Black Phantom rose to fame as the best assassin in the Blood Pact Society and his name began to instill fear in many.

The Germinal Organization gave a command long ago, asking its members to avoid direct conflict with Black Phantom. It would be troublesome to deal with this type of super assassin, even for big organizations.

Freire wanted to retreat, and he ordered for it with no hesitation. “All force retreat!”

It was too late!

Han Xiao activated the EMP Disruptor he had buried. Some of the Germinal troops’ armored vehicles were in the effective range of the disruptor, and they broke down immediately, crackling and sizzling with electricity. One third of the vehicles were fortunate enough to be outside of the effective range; Freire’s was one of them.

Freire could not be bothered with the rest of the troops. He knew that he needed to retreat.

*Don’t even think about escaping after you have entered my sight.*

Han Xiao’s glaze was as cold as the frozen ice as he activated a particular program. Having max leveled [Basic Programming], Han Xiao could bind most mechanical control systems to his computer.

Three metallic plates were lying at a spot three hundred meters horizontally away from the Germinal troops. Suddenly, they all cracked open from the center and started a series of self-folding, forming a multi-barreled heavy machine gun, with the metal plate as the base of the battery. This was the foldable portable battery that Han Xiao had buried beforehand. They were equipped with automatic firing systems, and the ammunition loaded was all highly explosive and could pierce through armor. The firing range had a five-hundred-meter radius.

The portable battery was one of Han Xiao’s new blueprints. It was the product from a mixture of various technology—a fixed battery combined with folding technology and many other designs. Han Xiao had spent a lot of effort and had failed countless times before arriving at the final model, which was very handy. He could have arrived at something similar by merging different ideas, but inventing the fort by himself saved him from using EXP.

As Han Xiao learned more and more blueprints, it was becoming obvious that he was capable of grasping the functionality and usage of knowledge.

Within the last two months, he already bought the last three types of basic knowledge that he had yet to acquire from the slightly friendlier camps. They were [Basic Energy Conversion], [Basic Thermodynamics], [Basic Acoustics]. To learn all fifteen types of basic knowledge was a feat even for some full-level players, not to mention players under level forty.

The multi-barreled machine gun aimed at the Germinal troops, who were a few hundred meters away, automatically, warmed up for one second, and fired away. The fiery metallic storm blew all the trees in the way to bits, and the immobilized The Germinal troops' armored vehicles could not escape the same fate!

There was nothing but screams of agony and firework-like explosions.

The cost of a small foldable battery port was high, as was the ammunition. Wars fought by Mechanics were all expensive like this, but with sufficient funds, Mechanics were capable of having dominating firepower. Only a rich and resourceful guy like Han Xiao was able to fully utilize the abilities of a Mechanic to the fullest extent.

The firepower from the battery turret gave the rest of the players a huge shock, but this shock quickly turned into a craze over Han Xiao.

“So, this is how Mechanics fight!”

“One guy soloing against the whole army!”

“He is way too strong!”

Han Xiao did not idle either, he began sniping the enemies one by one. He smiled upon seeing the excitement among the other players. He did not have to use the battery turret against the small Germinal troop, but he did so anyway for the sake of demonstrating the destructive power of Mechanics.

However, looks could be deceiving. When the players went to research about the actual cost to play as a Mechanic, they would find the painful truth behind this vocation—“Using Ona to create happiness, GTFO if you don't have money.”

Mechanics would be very weak in early games because most mechanics were poor.

With the enemies mostly defeated, the rest of the players realized that it was the best time for them to deal extra damage, and they all began to rush forward to attack the army. Maple Moon also started firing. Her sniper scope was equipped with Electromagnetism Detector and aim assist, so almost every shot of hers could hit the Germinal soldiers. She gained momentum, and her damage output became steady.

Although the realistic battle scenes were too gory for Maple Moon, she got used to it quickly as she had experience with gory scenes from other games. Moreover, she could change the game setting to make the graphics less bloody.

Han Xiao shot through Freire's knees but spared his life. Then, he switched to Red Falcon and started clearing the remaining Germinal soldiers at a rate much more efficient than normal players. One shot, one kill.

The sound of gunfire gradually ceased; the battle had come to an end. Many seemed like they wanted to watch more.



The paralyzed Freire could not be bothered with his own agony but looked at the crowd of spectating players in shock. He had been watching the battle very carefully, and he noticed that many of the players, who were killed earlier on, came back.

“Are they zombies or what?”

Freire was confused.

Han Xiao, clad in full black, appeared. The players started to quieten down despite their excitement.

He stood in front of Freire, squatted down, and stared into the latter’s eyes that were filled with shock and anger. “Where were you all heading toward?”

“Black Phantom, Germinal will never let you off!” Freire was furious.

“You got it wrong.”

Han Xiao expressionlessly dragged Freire into the forest by his collar. Shortly afterwards, bone-chilling screams could be heard.

It was not difficult to imagine that Freire was being tortured, and everyone felt a shiver down their spine.

After ten minutes, the screaming finally ended. Han Xiao reappeared but without Freire.

He wiped his hands clean of blood using a rag. He glanced around and saw that all eyes were on him. Now that he had the information that he wanted, he was free to end the mission.

All the players received a notification simultaneously.

[Hunt Down Germinal] has been completed. The Prize-Pool has 520,000 EXP.

Damage Output Ranking:

- No. 1 – Maple Moon (Solo)
- No. 2 – Jade Green Sky (Team)
- No. 3 – SliceYouUp (Team)
- No. 4 ...

Reward pool will be allocated 30%, 25%, 20%, 15%, 10% of EXP accordingly.

Everyone was shocked. No one expected this ranking.

“She overtook Sky Territory and Kill-all.”

“Hitting the scoreboard with solo output. Incredible!”

“Who is Maple Moon? Is she a professional player?”

“I never heard of this ID before though.”

The crowd was going crazy.

### **Chapter 133: Mechanics Are So Powerful**

Jade Green Sky and SliceYouUp were shocked.

A solitary player’s output was actually higher than that of a guild. The EXP earned by a team had to be divided equally among the players, but Maple Moon could keep the hundreds of thousands of EXP to herself. What this meant was extraordinary! In an instant, she had exceeded all the players to hold a safe lead, and that included the other novice planets.

Maple Moon was hit with shock by her unexpected success, her face full of disbelief as she stared at the EXP bar on the interface. She had used a sniper rifle with firm and stable output through the battle and did not expect that she would emerge as the top player. She knew her limitations well. This was only possible because she had relied fully on Black Phantom. This was obviously a benefit that came from triggering the secret quest. Maple Moon made up her mind; she had to persist in unearthing the secret quest. Black Phantom was such a powerful aide, so she had to stay on good terms with Black Phantom.

Han Xiao returned to the car, and Maple Moon immediately returned the sniper rifle.

Some players followed them and were surprised to realize that Black Phantom was actually interacting with Maple Moon on close terms.

Jade Green Sky immediately reacted. “There is a secret quest!”

“She is so lucky.”

Everyone stared enviously at Maple Moon. Maple Moon was not used to the attention from the crowd, so she blushed and hid in the car. Han Xiao saw this but did not chase anyone away. Instead, he started driving his car back to Big Horn Village. The players had no choice but to follow on foot.

As he was driving, Han Xiao scrolled through the forum. Suddenly, a new post was pushed to the top of the forum—“A high-ranking NPC’s combat capability!”

Clicking into the post, the battle scene that just occurred popped up on the page. Some players uploaded their recorded videos. The Germinal Organization’s troops were displaying their formidable combat capability. When Seiberre was murdering players, there were a few barrages. The audience felt as if they were present at the scene—they were tensed up with nervousness. However, the next moment, Seiberre was killed in one shot. The shot blew out explosively, and blood was flying everywhere. Then, the portable battery demonstrated its prowess, crippling the Germinal troops in an instant. The scene was even more shocking.

Responses to the post were posted in the dozens every second, and it soon accumulated a few thousand responses.

“That character was so powerful, but he got killed in one shot!”

“Isn’t Black Phantom the advanced NPC from Big Horn Village? What is his level?”

“Mechanic is so powerful. I think there’s great prospects!”

“Damn, I’m in a planet with a magic background; there are no Mechanics”

Scrolling through the responses that were marveling at the scene, Han Xiao smiled to himself.

*Faking it... bah, the idea of showing my strength really worked.*

The effect was apparent. Once he got to the settlement, the players that had hesitated in switching their Class were now fervently picking up the basics. Prior to this, the entire Big Horn Village had only twenty percent of players choosing Mechanic. After the video went viral online, players’ excitement for Mechanics was just breaking through the roofs. The players swaying precariously between Classes immediately switched to Mechanic.

A hundred, five hundred, then a thousand ...

The EXP on the Interface was just piling up like crazy. Han Xiao kept his face straight to not smile. In the short few days at Big Horn Village, he had collected two or three million EXP just by lazing around, and that was comparable to accumulating EXP through four or five missions. This was way safer and more efficient.

The player market was indeed a market with the most potential. The NPC functions were really useful. Imparting skills was allowing him to gain great profit without any cost, and that was only possible because he owned the interface as well as the NPC functions.

Han Xiao knew that you could not be impatient in grooming students, so he only imparted basic skills. The players that were convinced to switch to Mechanic would come to be his key customers in the future. After all, Han Xiao’s was a Mechanic.

After these version 1.0 players gained a deep understanding of Mechanics, they would realize that they had been scammed. By then, it would be too late. Even if they lamented to heaven and knocked their heads against the earth, it would be pointless. They could only choose to continue or start from nothing again. In this way, Han Xiao’s goal would have been achieved—as long as these players wanted to improve their combat effectiveness quickly, they can only rely on him to buy advanced machinery.

*You want to become strong?*

*How can you not spend money?*

Han Xiao took a smoke, and he thought to himself, *After a few versions, you will be thanking me...*

In this way, he brushed off his sense of guilt.

...

On one side, Jade Green Sky approached Maple Moon and asked politely: “Babe, I wonder if you’re free now.”

Maple Moon looked up doubtfully and saw a group of male players with a look of thirst in their eyes. She stepped back nervously and warned, "What are you up to? I warn... warn you, this game prohibits any sexual harassment!"

The members of Sky Territory were at a loss whether to laugh or cry. *Babe, we are curious about your secret quest, not in you!*

Jade Green Sky coughed. "I only want to ask how you triggered Black Phantom's secret quest. Don't worry, we'll reward you fairly."

Maple Moon shook her head, rejecting his request without a pause. She enjoyed unearthing secret quests, but that was not because of the profit, and she did not want Black Phantom to dislike her.

With no alternative, Jade Green Sky could only give up and walk away. Just then, a member suggested, "We could ask around to see if there were other players who overheard the conversation between Maple Moon and Black Phantom."

Jade Green Sky's eyes lit up, and he nodded in agreement. And there were really some results. They managed to find out 'the secret way to trigger secret quests' from a player.

Han Xiao was sending off the last few players who had come to switch to Mechanic when Jade Green Sky rushed up to him. With the question that Maple Moon had asked in mind, Jade Green Sky asked, "Black Phantom, why are you enemies with the Germinal Organization?"

*Oh, someone is rising to the bait.*

Han Xiao looked at him. Although Jade Green Sky was the leader of a guild, his potential was not good at all. It was better to answer directly.

"What does it have to do with you?"

Jade Green Sky was at a loss. Why was he getting a different reaction compared to the response Maple Moon had gotten? Was he cheated?

Not willing to give up, he kept on changing his lines. Han Xiao cast his eyes downward and refused to play along with him. In the end, Jade Green Sky could only give up in frustration.

"Unless it depends on the gender?"

This thought suddenly came up in Jade Green Sky's mind. He stared at Han Xiao's unattractive face for a long while, and he felt like he was enlightened.

...

The player's market potential in Big Horn Village had been temporarily exhausted. It was still only the open beta—the players were rather fresh, and their lack of unity resembled a plate of loose sand. With growth, as they completed more missions, Han Xiao would have more opportunities to exploit them.

Han Xiao had a set of 'commercial' plans for players, and this was only the initial link. As players advanced, his plan could then be gradually implemented.

He was not in a hurry to go to the next novice village. He had a friendly chat with Freire and fished out some information on the Germinal Organization's withdrawal route in South Continent. This is a large-scale war, which meant that he could probably get quite a number of A-level missions. With his character, he was sure to get a foot in. What would become of him if he did not try to get involved?

With the wistful gaze of players in the Big Horn Village, Han Xiao drove his vehicle away.

Maple Moon looked at the car driving off into the horizon and told herself that she would wait until she reached LV 20 before she contacted Black Phantom.

Just half an hour after Han Xiao left, Frenzied Sword arrived at Big Horn Village, panting furiously. He grabbed a player and asked, "Where is Black Phantom?"

"He has already left."

Frenzied Sword's face turned white. He was late by half a day because the Western Capital was under martial law to search for Germinal spies.

He felt like weeping but had no tears left! How infuriating!

...

The battle video stayed as the top post on the forum. Han Xiao was the strongest fighter the players had seen so far. He could kill a strong enemy in one shot from hundreds of meters away. Not only that, he could also deploy a portable battery turret. Players were very envious of his capabilities. Whenever he appeared, he was like a dark phantom, omnipotent and mysterious. If not for his unappealing look, due to the Facial Simulator, he would have many female fans.

The first player to upload the videos was Mu Chen. He never had received any responses for his posts in the past, but this was his first time experiencing the feeling of having ten thousand people replying to his post. He was reading through the replies enthusiastically.

Ding Dong.

He received a notification from the system.

Mu Chen was puzzled. He had not added any friends. Who would send him a message?

Dear esteemed player,

Your video has been selected as promotional material for version 1.0. The reward will be sent to your account within one working day. Do look out for it.

– Galaxy Official.

Mu Chen was completely caught off-guard by the pleasant surprise.

**Chapter 134: Finally Found You**

The vast majority of players were still busy with missions, but players in teams—essentially serious guilds or professional players—were more purposeful in their actions. They planned their developmental pathway carefully and worked steadily to advance.

But the Guild of Gods was in an awkward situation. Jupiter had dumped all the daily administrative work to the Vice President. He could not give up on the A-level mission. He had been leading a group of people to search high and low for Germinal's bases but to no avail. Without any other means, he could only focus on the forum to see if any players were in contact with Germinal.

Despite all odds, Jupiter managed to find a lead.

"Andrea Mainland is Germinal's base camp. Any player who arrives on Andrea Mainland can join Germinal's side easily."

But this lead was useless for Jupiter.

The core members of the A-level mission were all in Southern Continent, and Zero was more likely to be in Southern Continent too. However, Jupiter could not possibly bring a team over to Andrea Mainland. Most importantly, they had no access to another mainland.

In fact, they could actually take cruise ships or aircrafts, but none of the players had reached this level.

The most popular post on the forum was the battle scene recorded by the players at Big Horn Village. Jupiter had not seen it before, but he was finally opening it to take a look. He was caught off guard by shock. Just as he was about to close the post, he suddenly had an outlandish thought. He paused the video and scrutinized the scene. He finally concluded that the troop that was attacked had the Germinal Organization's emblem on them.

He had finally found the organization!

Jupiter almost burst into tears before it occurred to him that the troop had been destroyed. His face changed suddenly. He quickly read through the content of the post, but unfortunately, the user did not elaborate on the details.

Jupiter was eager to find out what had happened, so he had members contact the players in Big Horn Village.

The guild was so efficient that he soon got to know that the troop that had been attacked was in fact an evacuating Germinal Organization unit. He was dumbfounded.

"Evacuate? Why are they evacuating? Where are they evacuating from? What is the scale of this evacuation—a single unit or a full battalion?"

Jupiter gulped nervously. He had an ominous feeling in his gut... *Seems like we won't be returning to the Germinal Organization any time soon.*

This A-level mission was such a scam. Jupiter was so frustrated. Before the team could start on the mission, the organization that had issued the mission had run away.

...

In the evening, the setting sun covered the earth in a blood red glow. The outlines the moons were looming in the twilight sky.

In the woods outside Big Horn Village, Frenzied Sword was walking down the path, downcast in despondence.

"I must find him." Frenzied Sword quickly broke away from his despondent mood and was talking to himself to boost his own spirits.

"Are you looking for me?" A voice came from ahead.

Frenzied Sword looked up. A truck was parked a few meters ahead with a man in black standing by it, staring at him intensely.

Black Phantom!

Frenzied Sword was ecstatic with excitement.

Every cloud had a silver lining!

"You, you... Have we met?" He could not be certain that Black Phantom was in fact Han Xiao. With much worry and fear, he felt like he was almost waiting for a verdict after he had asked the question.

Han Xiao smiled, revealing a tinge of amusement in his eyes. "What do you think?"

That familiar look! The look that made his hair stand on end!

Frenzied Sword was seized by joy; he was certain that this person was Han Xiao!

*I'm so glad that I didn't give up, and I finally found you! Oh, Savior!*

"Come with me." With a faint smile on his face, Han Xiao gestured toward his truck with his head. Trying his best to conceal his excitement, Frenzied Sword followed closely behind and got into the truck.

He did not care where Han Xiao was taking him as long as he could stay with Han Xiao...

Han Xiao smiled to himself. After spending some happy days together, he remembered Frenzied Sword well. But this was not the reason he chose to bring Frenzied Sword along. Frenzied Sword had great potential, and he was worth grooming.

In addition, having a player by his side meant he could send him to check out unknown and dangerous areas. Frenzied Sword would not die anyway, so he could be assured and use him well.

Han Xiao could use Frenzied Sword's help in his next moves, so when he found that Frenzied Sword was following him, he stopped to wait for him.

Frenzied Sword did not realize that he was being treated as a lab rat again. He was full of excitement, checking out the truck with much curiosity. He remembered that Han Xiao was a member of Stardragon's intelligence agency during the closed beta. How did he become Black Phantom out of the blue?

But that was not important. As long as he could be with Han Xiao, Frenzied Sword would be content.

“What are we going to do now?” asked Frenzied Sword after his excitement died down.

“Something evil.” Han Xiao took out a tablet and opened the map. He drew a circle around one region and threw it to Frenzied Sword.

Frenzied Sword took a brief look.

“Tedramira River, what kind of place is that?”

“A battleground,” Han Xiao replied calmly. He stepped firmly on the accelerator, and the truck raced off.

...

Tedramira River was a large river in Southern Continent connected to the sea.

In the darkness of the night, a long line of boats was cruising down the river. This was a huge fleet of ships disguised as fishing boats. The boats were actually Germinal warships, well equipped with various weapons, anti-detection jammers, machine gun arrays, and so on.

As a result of the Six Nations’ clean-up campaign, the Germinal Organization’s bases had begun to withdraw. A small number of important personnel was taking the air route. Most of the resources, transportation vehicles, and ordinary armed personnel were evacuating via a water route.

The evacuation was nearing its end. This fleet was the last remaining unit to withdraw from Southern Continent. The outer layer of frigates was guarding the barges in the center that were ferrying vehicles and armed personnel.

The evacuation plan was to go out to the sea along a tributary of the Tedramira River and join forces with other ground troops near the mouth of the sea. The ground troops would then board the ships.

The person in charge, Lin Yu, was the Chief Officer of the largest Germinal base in Southern Continent. Now he had taken the role of a commander and was also within the fleet.

Lin Yu was a middle-aged man, yet he was also an Executive Officer that was combat ready. He was analyzing the map with a solemn face in the command room. There were many links in the evacuation plan. The fleet and the ground troops had to ensure that they arrived at the mouth of the sea at the same time because the fleet could not possibly stay put.

During the evacuation, a large number of Stardragon and Hesla fighter planes were performing aerial reconnaissance. The fleet’s whereabouts had likely been exposed, and fear on the fleet was rising.

Lin Yu knew very well that Hesla and Stardragon would have set up a trap near the mouth of the sea to capture them. Their navy, air force, and army would be waiting to intercept their fleet and capture them all at once.

But from the very beginning, Lin Yu knew clearly that it was impossible to evacuate sneakily. A bitter battle was inevitable. Only by tearing past the blockade line could his troops escape alive.



“As long as we follow along the Tedramira River to the sea, we can get out of this nightmare, but don’t hold the illusion of a smooth passage. Lads, we will be facing a premeditated ambush. The Stardragon and Hesla Navy will do whatever they can to sink us near the mouth of the sea!

“I’ve been through thirteen wars. Some of them were big battles, others small. Some of you may be veterans like me, and some of you may be new recruits. Regardless, our destiny is the same. Break through the blockade line, and we can stay alive. If you are captured, even if you can survive, you will face indefinite imprisonment by Stardragon and Hesla. You can say goodbye to freedom in the sun!

“The Six Nations are a group of hypocritical and insidious villains who speak of peace and freedom but started a war. Don’t forget that your motherland was destroyed by the guns of the Six Nations. Never forget that hatred of blood!

“We have no choice but to fight till the very end!”

These words were Lin Yu’s speech for his subordinates. The armed personnel on board knew that there was going to be a fierce battle ahead, and they were all ready to fight.

There was a number of Germinal Executive Officers in the fleet, and Hila was among them. She was worried and apprehensive about the impending fight. In her opinion, it was a naïve hope to think of breaking through the blockade of Stardragon and Hesla’s ships.

Many of them would perish, and only a small number of people could survive.

However, Commander Lin Yu seemed to have it all worked out. Thus, Hila could only suppress her unease and conceal it from others. On the outside, she seemed the stoic person she had always been.

In fact, for Hila, even if every Germinal member on the fleet died, she could not care less. She hated the Germinal Organization, but she could only survive with the help of these Germinal soldiers.

She knew that her hands were covered in blood, and she had never shunned it. Self-reproach and compassion belonged to good people. These emotions were too costly for her. From the day of her Awakening, she knew that she could never be a good person.

To rule death meant that she was destined to be banished to hell.

But her sister, Aurora, was completely different. She was an angel who used her love for the world to touch everyone she met. The only thing Hila regretted was that she did not protect her sister well, resulting in her falling into the hands of the Germinal Organization.

*No matter what, I have to live on...*

Only by surviving and demonstrating her usefulness could she help to reduce her sister’s suffering.

Anyone that stopped her would be an enemy.

Staring at the waves of the river, Hila was cold and stoic.

## **Chapter 135: Ah, What a Familiar Taste**

**Translator:**Atlas Studios

**Editor:**Atlas Studios

The Tedramira River branched out into the sea. The fleet of Stardragon and Hesla ships formed a tight blockade, and the riverbed of the estuary was also planted with many mines.

Both countries knew the whereabouts of the Germinal Organization's evacuation troops. Stardragon and Hesla regarded this battle with high importance as it was an excellent opportunity to eliminate an army of the Germinal Organization.

The inescapable net had been laid. In the eyes of the two countries, Germinal was a trapped beast; even if it knew there was a hunter trap waiting, it would have no choice but to approach it.

The battlefield was divided into two areas, and each country was responsible for one of the two areas. Hesla was mainly responsible for the sea blockade, while Stardragon's forces were in charge of land interception. This method of cooperation split the responsibility and prevented command conflicts.

Considering the individual combat effectiveness of the Germinal executives, Division 13 also sent secret agents to act as an emergency team and an assault troop. They would take on special tactical tasks and were waiting at a small dock near the estuary to be dispatched by the army commander.

Zhang Wei's team was among them.

A row of boats meant for assault had docked neatly, and green military tents were hidden in the grove behind the dock.

Despite the two months, the team had not changed much. Zhang Wei was as serious as before, Li Yalin was as sexy as ever, Lin Yao still looked mistreated, and Lambert was as silent as a stone.

The only change was the addition of a young new face.

"Hou Yue, you've been with us for a month now and have been through enough training. This mission is really important, so do not make any mistakes," Zhang Wei instructed the newcomer Hou Yue in the team's tent.

Hou Yue was a thin young man. He had two guns around his waist. With long, flowing hair, he was quite handsome. He nodded and smiled arrogantly. "Leader, you worry too much! During this past month, which task have I not completed successfully?"

Zhang Wei nodded in agreement. Hou Yue was an agent trained in Division 13 and had filled the vacancy of Han Xiao by joining the team. He had been performing well and did not cause Zhang Wei any worry.

Li Yalin hugged her hands to her chest and sat one side with her legs folded. She was frowning and appeared to be in a bad mood.

The truth was, after Han Xiao had skipped town, the agents who had lost their deposits all came to get their money back, and since then, her mood had never been good.

Hou Yue came over and sat next to Li Yalin. He teased, "Beauty Li, what are you thinking about?"

Li Yalin glared at him and retorted, "Are you a curious baby? How is this any of your concern?"

Hou Yue wanted to get close to Li Yalin badly. When he first joined and laid eyes on Li Yalin, he was stunned by her beauty. It pleased him to no end that he was teammates with someone this beautiful. Hence, he frequently tried to strike up conversations with Li Yalin. However, after being fooled by Han Xiao, she had developed a strong dislike toward newcomers. Thus, whenever she saw Hou Yue she would think of Han Xiao, so naturally, she did not have a good impression of Hou Yue.

Li Yalin was so annoyed by Hou Yue that she suddenly smiled menacingly. "You love talking, right?"

While speaking, she clenched her fists and cracked her knuckles. One could almost see the anger fumes rising from within and forming in her fists.

Hou Yue recoiled immediately. He knew that once Li Yalin showed this expression, she meant to beat people up. When he first joined the team, he had experienced it first hand and spent three days in the medical department.

Lin Biao, who was watching from the side, shook his head and feigned maturity. "Little monkey, you are still too terrified. In terms of courage, I only admire Brother Xiao."

"Who exactly is Brother Xiao?"

Hou Yue was puzzled. Since joining the team, he had learned that this team's full strength was six, but there was always one person missing. It was reasonable to cross out those players who were missing, but in this team, the sixth spot was always kept.

Also, he always heard the team speak of 'Brother Xiao'. This made Hou Yue extremely curious about this sixth person.

Li Yalin exploded immediately and fumed, "Do not mention his name in front of me!"

"Do not forget that we still have a mission to complete. You can't punch me!" Lin Biao looked composed, but his legs were trembling.

Hou Yue felt that Li Yalin's reaction was slightly exaggerated. Based on his experience, this was exactly the reaction of a resentful woman who had been abandoned by her man.

On second thought, maybe a heavy debt could result in the same reaction as well.

Zhang Wei shook his head, let out a breath, and explained, "Han Xiao was originally our teammate. However, he left because of some special reasons."

"Special reasons?" Hou Yue used his imagination and probed, "Was he sent to carry out a special mission?"

Zhang Wei shook his head.

"Was he transferred to another team by the superior?"

Zhang Wei shook his head.

"Then where did he go?" Hou Yue was bewildered.

Li Yalin huffed. "He could be dead for all we know."

"Who are you kidding? Why keep his spot if he really is dead? You all speak as if you all hate him, but why do I feel like you all actually miss him a lot?"

Silence.

After a long time, Li Yalin stood and smiled slightly.

"Choose a way to die."

Hou Yue scampered off.

Lambert shook his head and kept his sword sheathed.

...

Stardragon's infantry army was lying in ambush in the valley near the estuary. The goal was to intercept Germinal's infantry troops that had come to converge. Sleepy Winter, Twinkle Fried Rice, and Rainy Kim served as backline support.

The three had joined the Stardragon Army during Beta-testing but had since changed their professions. Twinkle Fried Rice and Rainy Kim were in the martial arts line while Sleepy Winter's character had exploded and awakened his ability using the store's DNA.

As recruits, they were also appointed to act as backline support in this battle. What pleased them was that they managed to spark a Camp-destroyer series quest, [The Battle of Tedramira River].

However, they soon became frustrated. This series had more than a dozen targets. They could only complete the few backline support targets in the series, which were the simplest and had the lowest rewards. Other tasks such as killing ten Germinal soldiers, assassinating a Germinal executive, or destroying transport vehicles were completely beyond their capabilities.

"This does not seem like our level of mission," Sleepy Winter grumbled.

Both Twinkle Fried Rice and Rainy Kim agreed. They had been drawn into a difficult mission that was totally beyond their current level. Looking at their novice level, it was simply none of their business.

The three of them had no idea that the Germinal Organization and the Six Nations had a head-on conflict that happened three months after the beta game. At that time, the players had a basic understanding of the world structure, and they also possessed some combat strength. The conflict between Germinal and the Six Nations started happening on a very small scale, and bit by bit, it enabled players to become involved and have a chance to show off.

However, Han Xiao had completely disrupted the whole process. He had brought forward the conflict between the Six Nations and the Germinal Organization, leaving the current players totally incapable of participating. To be exact, the players had been cheated of their original main quest.

This benefited Han Xiao as it decreased the variables bought by the players.

Whoosh!

Two heavy-duty transport helicopters bearing a Fabian logo landed slowly in a valley. The wind was so strong that the grass at the landing site swayed in all directions like a wave.

"Old Black, we've arrived," Pilot Antonio lazily called.

"I can see. Also, do not call me Old Black!" Han Xiao retorted. "Call Black Phantom if you must—foolishly calling me Old Black will affect my luck."

Antonio removed his earmuffs and puffed out a cloud of smoke. "Forget it, you don't have much luck anyway."

"Get lost," Han Xiao said irritably.

In the past two months, Han Xiao had maintained a good working relationship with the Fabian Company, and Antonio was warming up to him day by day.

Frenzied Sword hid in a corner on the helicopter, shivering while he watched the two 'extremely deadly' godfathers talk and laugh merrily. Frenzied Sword had thought that Han Xiao would drive to their destination, but with just a phone call, two helicopters came to pick them up. At this moment, Frenzied Sword thought even higher of Han Xiao.

Employees from Fabian carried down the supplies from the helicopters, and most of the items were weapons that Han Xiao had deposited with Fabian. He thought that he could use these weapons for this mission. There was also a disassembled truck that Fabian's maintenance team was working on reassembling. All the while, Han Xiao and Antonio were chatting at one side.

Antonio had always thought that Han Xiao was only interested in the bounty and asked curiously, "I heard Stardragon and Hesla are planning to intersect the retreating Germinal Troops in the Tedramira River, but what bad blood do you have with Germinal?"

"How do you know which side I'll be helping?" Han Xiao chuckled.

Antonio held a cigar in one hand while the other tucked in his jeans pocket, and he frowned. "Are you thinking of helping Germinal instead?"

Although the Germinal Organization was big in the underground world, other forces always kept a respectful distance from them. Ultimately, the underground world preferred to coexist peacefully. After all, only a stable situation would lead to profits. The Germinal Organization was seen as a group of bandits who used hatred as motivation.

Han Xiao refused to comment and walked to one side. He took out his phone and dialed another number, and the voice of Blood Pact Society's personnel could be heard.

"Mr. Black Phantom, may I help you?"

Ever since Han Xiao made it to top ten of the killer list, the Blood Pact Society valued him greatly and gave him special treatment; there was someone on standby 24-hours to answer his calls and provide special services.

*Yup, decent and proper services.*

Part of the status came from his capabilities, and the other part was from his good relationship with Bennett, which was valued by the Dark Net Organization.

"I need the latest movement of both the retreating Germinal Troops as well as Stardragon and Hesla's troops.

"Sure, I'm accessing the documents now. The information will be sent to your computer shortly."

"Ok, I also need a helicopter on call at the small dock near the estuary of Tedramira River."

"As you wish."

Frenzied Sword, who was listening at one side, heard everything clearly. From his tone, he could really feel how powerful and strong Han Xiao was.

After hanging up, Han Xiao noticed Frenzied Sword, who was idling at one side. He thought for a bit and decided to give him a mission that he just came up with.

Mission: [Get High!]

Requirement: Dance sexily to brighten the mood."

Frenzied Sword's face was full of tears.

*Ah, the familiar taste of evil pranks!*

### **Chapter 136: On the Verge of a Battle**

Tedramira River divided into branches flowing through Cloud Valley and eventually reaching the sea.

The location where Han Xiao had landed was on the edge of Cloud Valley. According to the information from the Dark Net Organization, Germinal's evacuating land troops would converge with their maritime troops after passing through the valley.

Han Xiao's target was to intercept the land troops. He was clear that the two countries would have planted their land troops in ambush; it was highly possible that the troops were placed within Cloud Valley. If he got any closer, he would be discovered. At this juncture, he did not wish to be in contact with the two countries.

*Looks like I'll have to choose a good spot.*

With that thought in his mind, Han Xiao folded his arms and watched Fabian's team assemble the truck's front and frame. They also hung up the mechanical equipment in the cargo properly. While they were working, they were shockingly watching Frenzied Sword seductively dancing at one side.

"The item is delivered. I'll get going now."

"Alright, send Matthews my regards." Han Xiao nodded with a smile.

Antonio waved before rising into the sky on his helicopter and disappeared swiftly over the horizon. The Fabian Company was only responsible for the transport of weapons and ammunition and had never taken part in battles.

Han Xiao sat inside the truck and took a look at the detailed map that had been sent over through the Dark Net. He was about to drive off when his phone rang.

“Hello.”

“Black Phantom, you’re joining in the Germinal commotion?” Bennett asked over the phone, surprised.

“Yes, you should come and play, too,” Han Xiao jokingly replied.

“The Dark Net has always been neutral; don’t go overboard. The Germinal Organization is a crazy bunch of old hags; they’ll attack whoever they see. I’m very frustrated because of them,” Bennett said helplessly.

“Don’t worry, I’ve never cheated my teammate.”

Bennett doubted his words. “Forget it, anyway, I will need your help with some matters later on.”

Over these past two months, Han Xiao had often called Bennett to keep in touch since he had Bennett’s number. Furthermore, with Han Xiao’s growing fame, Bennett was more than happy to converse with him. Hence, the relationship between the two of them was good.

After pocketing his phone, Han Xiao shook his head, stepped on the accelerator, and drove along the edge of the valley toward the area of his selected spot.

...

The river flowing through Cloud Valley provided moisture for the fertile soil. The terrain was relatively diversified; there were plains with shallow grasses, forests and hills. The scenery was beautiful; it calmed and relaxed one’s mind, compelling people to put down all their hatred and troubles.

Stardragon had a massive amount of land troops lying in ambush in the area, and they were armed with all kinds of battle equipment—tanks, attack helicopters, a coverage array of medium-distance guided missiles, and also a large number of minefields.

The commander of the land troops was a Stardragon official known as Huang Qiuming who had over twenty years of military service. His style was serious and meticulous. The reason Stardragon’s higher-ups had decided to use him was because they had taken a liking to Huang Qiuming’s stable style. As long as this battle followed the plan, victory is assured.

In the command vehicle’s position, Huang Qiuming looked at the map filled with markings and nodded expressionlessly.

“Everything is in order; the first layer of ambush is a minefield. If Germinal do not come in, they will miss their chance to meet with the maritime forces. Therefore, even if they are aware of the traps, they will still have to advance forward. The armed helicopter troops are always on standby; they can attack the minesweeper enemy troops from above, and the array of missile vehicles is always aiming at the edge of the woods. Once the enemy crosses the woods, we can strike...”

As long as everything went according to the plan, the enemy would have no way to escape.

...

The evacuating Germinal troops in the Southern Continent formed a large fleet with hundreds of different tanks; this huge army consisted of all the survivors of the retreating troops.

Lin Yu was the chief commander while the person in charge of the land troops was a white man known as Ugar.

Ugar was well aware that the troops were about to be ambushed. In order to keep up with the maritime forces, they had to pass through Cloud Valley. Hence, they were unable to avoid this confrontation. However, he had already made preparations for it; the evacuation troops of these bases carried with them new weapons, and some were rather formidable, definitely able to catch the enemy by surprise.

All these experimental weapons were important goods, and they even had some secret weapons who had undergone human experiments, specifically, the [Super Soldier Project].

...

After one big lap, the truck stopped at the edge on the other side of Cloud Valley. The tip-off had shown that this was a route that the Germinal land troops were unable to take as it was very far away.

Han Xiao did not enter the woods and took out a pile of spider detectors, more than forty in fact. They were activated through his tablet computer and started vibrating. They looked like a bunch of troops waiting for orders.

After two months of accumulation, Han Xiao's skills had improved again; thus, his existing machinery had been renewed and strengthened. The spider detector was equipped with a low-level smart chip that automatically detected threats and fed them back to the computer. Hence, there was no need for Han Xiao to constantly refer to the screen. By adding a new drawing SUI anti-radar detection coating, it could better conceal its tracks, which was suitable for designated surveillance.

Han Xiao sent most of the spider detectors into the woods and left a few to advance in the opposite direction to scout for the Germinal Organization's arrival.

While doing this job, Frenzied Sword got off the truck and noticed an extra line of words appearing in the status column.

You've gained [Severe Car Sickness].

30% deducted from all attributes.

"What the hell is this?" Frenzied Sword was flabbergasted. The experience feel he set was twenty percent true. He did not fully experience the thrill of the old driver's driving skills, but the interface showed his physical state truthfully.



“Need me to do anything?” Frenzied Sword asked, thinking he could trigger a mission.

Han Xiao shook his head. “Not at the moment.”

Frenzied Sword’s combat strength was too low for this type of battle. He would only be useful as fearless cannon fodder.

Various minefields and radar detections had been laid in the woods a long time ago. Anyone entering the area would draw attention. Patience, adequate preparation, perfect planning, and calibrating other mechanical weapons were all he needed to do for the time being.

There were still a few days before the arrival of the Germinal Organization’s troops. Han Xiao had been preparing and waiting in the van. Frenzied Sword was by his side, receiving small tasks from him every day.

Even though he thought that Frenzied Sword had potential, he would not groom Frenzied Sword fully. The EXP he gave Frenzied Sword was limited compared to those players in the same period, yet Frenzied Sword was extremely satisfied.

Han Xiao was also reading the forum every day; the players were still as enthusiastic as before. He mainly paid attention to the Aquamarine section to know the progress of the players. It was still the novice phase. After they had grown, there would be a huge event that targeted the players waiting for them, and that was the prelude to the chaos.

*Does me disrupting the quest mean that the player’s misfortunes will be delayed... or will they be brought forward?*

Han Xiao rubbed his beard stubble, silently pondering. That was the first time the players had raised the attention of major forces on the planet. He still remembered that the previous generations had caused a ruckus that resulted in an extensive discussion, which was highly praised.

...

The moon was covered by dark clouds, and there was a thick fog that made it impossible to make out one’s own hand.

Spider No.1 was in the plains under the night sky, motionless, and faithfully executing the orders in sequence.

Boom!

The ground suddenly vibrated, and Spider No.1’s sensor felt the tremors. The detector immediately charged toward the direction of the vibrations.

A huge fleet of Germinal Troops could be seen in the distance, and Spider No.1 was right in their path.

Spider No.1 loyally transmitted out an alarm signal in the form of electric waves.

The vehicle was nearing, yet Spider No.1 foolishly remained, not knowing to hide.

Whoosh!

The huge fleet rapidly rolled passed, leaving a cloud of smoke behind.

It was not until the smoke and dust dispersed that the appearance of Spider No.1 could be made out.

Its body was covered in dust, yet it was not damaged in any ways; it seemed like the compressed wheels surprisingly did not grind over it at all.

Spider No.1 moved its limbs and turned around before continuing to follow its orders and dumbly following the fleet.

### **Chapter 137: A Wild Black Phantom (1)**

Han Xiao's tablet received real-time alerts from Spider No.1. He immediately hopped off the driving seat of the truck and signaled Frenzied Sword, who had been waiting online for two whole days. Han Xiao remembered that the VR-Capsule of this era had yet to perfect the body analysis and nutrients-balancing functions.

*No wonder he is a professional player. Guy's got great kidneys.*

"Let's go," Han Xiao said.

"Okay..." Frenzied Sword was confused, but following Han Xiao would never be a bad choice.

The pitch-black truck had a layer of SUI anti-radar paint coated over it. Han Xiao came up with this using the basic theory of Spatial Sensing, and it had been effective at reducing the chance of being discovered by radars.

The second the armies from Stardragon and Germinal met each other, a massive war would break out; that would be the perfect time for a third party to take advantage of the situation.

First, they needed to find a suitable hideout to snipe from. It needed to be some distance away from the battlefield. Han Xiao had found a spot long ago, and it was a cliff along the mountainous range in Cloud Valley. That location was perfect for aiming at the barren fields beyond the forest. This meant that the moment the Germinal Organization's troops stepped out from the jungle, he could start firing away.

The only problem was that he had to arrive at the mountain range fast and avoid getting detected by the army radars in the process. The painted layer could not guarantee evading detection, so there were risks of getting exposed. However, Han Xiao was not too worried because by the time Germinal's troops drew near, the army in the valley would be too occupied to be bothered with him.

The truck sped into the valley jungle.

...

"Commander Huang! The radar is showing a suspicious target!" shouted a soldier in the Stardragon Strategic Department tent.

Huang Qiuming strode over to the radar display screen, which was showing a flashing light entering Cloud Valley region. The signal was inconsistent and weak, and it seemed that the target had a certain

level of anti-radar capabilities. It only showed up because Stardragon army was using an army radar this time, which was extremely powerful.

“Only one target?” Huang Qiuming’s eyebrows were tightly knitted together. He felt that it might be a Germinal scout, but the location of target was very far-off from the path that Germinal was taking.

“Whatever it is, just deal with it first.” Huang Qiuming did not want any unwanted surprise elements to hinder the plan, and he was about to send out a stand-by troop when all the radar detection screens blacked out simultaneously!

“What’s happening?” Huang Qiuming shouted.

Soldiers rushed to recalibrate but to no avail.

“Reporting to you, Sir. The radars have been deactivated by very strong electromagnetic radiation, which is coming from the direction of the Germinal army. We found the Germinal army’s tracks three minutes ago, and the preliminary conclusion is that they have some sort of advanced device that can destroy radars!”

“They want to take away our sight. Activate the spare radars, mute their electrical signals. Make sure they are powered on randomly once every five to twelve seconds.” Huang Qiuming seemed composed and quickly issued his commands. As for the suspicious target, he could only leave it aside. It was more critical to deal with the huge Germinal army at this point in time.

Whoosh!

Suddenly, a screeching sound could be heard coming from the horizon.

A dozen mid-range missiles were steadily approaching Stardragon camps, leaving fiery trails behind them. These missiles suddenly split into countless bullet heads in midair and started raining down.

...

At the same time, the Germinal army emerged from the jungle region on the edge of Cloud Valley.

Ugar’s face was dead serious. The vehicles were carrying anti-radar equipment, created by the Germinal Organization, that was still in the experimental stages. It was capable of catching radar detection and emitting strong long-distance EM radiation waves that could destroy radars that were in use, all while simultaneously detecting the exact location of the enemies’ radars.

Ugar decided that he had found the enemies’ base, so he ordered for the beehive-type missile assault vehicle to launch attacks, firing the cluster munition missiles, which was a mature weapon that had already gone past the experimental stage.

What he did not know was that he had indirectly done Han Xiao a favor by destroying Stardragon’s radars.

Surely, such attacks could not injure the Stardragon army. Indeed, the Stardragon army aimed and fired their missile intercepting machine guns toward the cluster ammunition, creating explosions and intercepting the bullets in mid-air.

Both sides were ready for the battle. The only question here was: who was more prepared?

“Enemies will soon reactivate their radars. We don’t have much time left; we need to launch attacks now!”

Ugar commanded in a dead serious tone, “Bomb-detecting team, you go first!”

With the vehicles carrying portable bomb-detectors leading the way, the Germinal troops were able to quickly detect where Stardragon had planted bombs and detonate them with their machine gun. Germinal was steadily and safely advancing.

This time, when the anti-radar equipment discovered signals from Stardragon’s radars, it was unable to destroy the radars as Stardragon’s radar would switch off before anything could be done to it. Ugar knew that the real fight would be starting soon.

The helicopters’ rotors were roaring as they flew close to the ground. The Germinal troops had to advance against the merciless firing.

Among the flames and explosions, Ugar commanded in fury, “Fire the graphite missiles!”

A handful of graphite missiles soared through the air, landing among the helicopters. Graphite missiles could cause local short-circuit, hitting the helicopter squad hard, causing many to malfunction. The enemy firepower was reduced significantly.

“Mihawks, after your troop gets out from the jungle, lead the assault troops to fight the enemies head-on! Your task is very important; you have to distract the enemies!” Ugar spoke into the walkie talkie.

Mihawks was sitting in one of the transport vehicles, and he replied with a light grunt. Mihawks was extremely well-built, and he was a master of martial arts. His strategic task was to lead a few teams of elite fighters to assault the enemy camps with bombs. His agile combat style, coupled with bulletproof vest, allowed him to dive smoothly through the bullet storm.

Superhumans were mainly assigned to assault and assassinate on the battlefields.

At the Stardragon base, Huang Qiuming stared at the Germinal army expressionlessly as they trod through the jungle. “Artillery, get ready; armored vehicles, stand by; elite team, prepare to fight the enemy assault team!”

Stardragon’s elite team consisted of the strongest and the best soldiers, including Superhumans who were biologically equipped with skills to fight. Stardragon was very prepared for this battle.

This large-scale battle scene left the logistic team leaders—Sleepy Winter, Flash Fried Rice, and Rainy Kim—in awe. Judging from the intense atmosphere, hazy smoke, and deafening explosions, they knew that the battle was too high level for them to join in.

“Thought I was going to die when the missiles flew over just now.” Twinkle Fried Rice heaved a sigh of relief.

Sleepy Winter laughed bitterly. “Let’s just stick to delivering resources. No way we can handle any battle tasks.”

Rainy Kim's expression was calm. With a hint of determination, she said, "I want to give it a shot."

"We only have a few handguns, what can we do?"

"I want to try."

"Forget it. If we go, we will just court our own deaths!"

"I. Want. To. Try."

Sleepy Winter and Twinkle Fried Rice made eye contact and relented. "Okay, okay. You're the boss; you are the prettiest. We'll follow you. Let's go together."

Expressionless, Rainy Kim started walking right away after getting their agreement, and the other two could not do anything but keep up behind her.

...

It was a party of gunfire and explosions. Han Xiao slowly drove his car to the target location on the cliff, where he could see the grand fireworks in the distance in the jungle.

There were spider detectors hidden in the jungle. Some of them had been destroyed, but some lived and were loyally updating the battle situation for Han Xiao. Judging from their location, Germinal troops were going to get out of the jungle and into the open fields very soon.

In the distance, on the Tedramira River, explosions appeared on the surface of the water as well. Han Xiao took out his binoculars, and he could see that the Germinal ships were also getting attacked, and the attack was worse than the one they were facing in the valley.

Germinal ships had yet to reach the straits, and they were already getting bombed heavily by fighter jets. The missiles rained down like a storm, and the machine gun interceptor array would not stop even for a second. Huge fiery explosions lit up the night sky and seemed just like fireworks.

"It's time to get ready."

Han Xiao took out a few foldable battery ports, came up with a task with decent rewards, and issued it to Frenzied Sword.

Tasks like setting up traps and stuff were obviously for these fresh, young players.

As Frenzied Sword rushed off to set up the traps, Han Xiao took out a mechanical neck brace and wore it around the back of his neck. It was a soft layer made from unknown material. He turned it on, and a numbing electric shock started to spread from his neck to his brain. Han Xiao shivered slightly and felt adrenaline rush through his body.

You have entered [Excitation] mode.

All attributes +5%

Duration: 20 minutes

This machine was called [Electromagnetic Pulse Controller]. It was a special piece of equipment that used EM waves to adjust biological conditions and improve the user's attributes. Han Xiao had gotten this blueprint from talent fusing by accident.

After getting ready, with all the needed attributes turned on, Han Xiao lay down with his Ghost sniper rifle in hand and the Red Falcon lying next to him. His eyes were sharp as eagles, and they were glued to the battlefield.

BOOM!

An area of trees was blown up. The Germinal troops had finally made it out of the forest.

"Come on, baby."

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes and aimed.

### **Chapter 138: A Wild Black Phantom (2)**

"Airstrike!"

Stardragon's missile-carrying vehicles fired mercilessly at the Germinal troops. The missiles approached with high-pitched screeches, adding to the heavy atmosphere

Ugar did not panic; he commanded the troops to close up the gaps in their formation, with the vehicles carrying multi-barreled machine guns at the front, forming an assault formation. This reduced the area of target, and the machine guns destroyed all the missiles in the area in midair, forming a vacuum, allowing the troops to smoothly sail through the explosion waves.

Huang Qiuming paused.

He had just received news that the battle at Tedramira River was at a heated stage; the strategic team had primarily marked out a few locations where Germinal teams could have gathered. The strategic team advised him to change from the original plan to use Plan B. Huang Qiuming made some rearrangements and instructed the interception ring to leave a gap.

At the same time, Rainy Kim and the others made it to the front line. Large number of soldiers gathered with proper attire and equipment, armored vehicles had their engines running, and elite soldiers were standing by.

"How are we going to join in the fight?" Sleepy Winter asked helplessly.

Rainy Kim frowned and thought for a while before nodding. "I don't know."

*Then why are you nodding?* Sleepy Winter wanted to bang his head against the floor.

Twinkle Fried Rice suddenly pointed to the battlefield and shouted, "Someone is coming! Oh sh\*t! It looks like a high-level player!"

The other two turned to look in the same direction. They watched as a buff man led a team of well-armed soldiers on heavy-armored motorbikes to separate from the main troop. They sped toward the Stardragon base while smoothly dodging all the bullets.

...

Mihawks dodged a series of attacks on his heavy-armored bike, but he inadvertently triggered a mine, and his bike was blown apart. He began to run, at a speed almost as fast as the motorbikes, through the bullets. His task was to deliver the bomb that he was carrying to the Stardragon base.

Superhumans usually fought in assault teams on the battlefields. Mihawks could see that the enemies had sent their elite teams toward them.

He concentrated expressionlessly and adjusted his inner energy to save up for later.

Suddenly, Mihawks instinctively felt that there was imminent danger, he reacted extremely quickly, pushed hard with his legs, and was going to change direction.

But he was not fast enough.

A bullet with blue light trailing behind it hit Mihawks' neck from the side and caused a huge splatter of blood. He was critically injured. He groaned and spat out mouthfuls of blood. There was absolutely no cover on the fields; his only choice was to keep running forward, but his wound caused him to slow down significantly.

A combat fighter, who could fight through gunfire, had been critically injured by one shot!

Huang Qiuming was shocked.

"That was not us. Who's the sniper?"

He remembered the suspicious target that had been detected at the start and felt that this shot seems really familiar. He pondered for two seconds, and his eyes widened.

Only a monster sniper could critically damage a superhuman—the Black Phantom that only recently had become involved in underground activities.

*Bullet with blue light, it must be him!*

*What is he doing here? Why help us?*

"Commander, what do we do now?" the vice-captain asked.

Huang Qiuming considered and made up his mind decisively "He doesn't look like enemy. Don't care about him; focus on fighting Germinal."

Usually, snipers' skills would be of very limited use in this kind of battle, but when super snipers like Black Phantom came into the picture, it would be a completely different story.

The Stardragon did not know why Black Phantom was helping them, but needless to say, this helped them greatly!

...

Ugar was furious.

“One shot to critically injure Mihawks, that must be that damned Black Phantom! Not long ago, he got Freire’s team too. This monster must have joined the fight at Stardragon’s request!

Ugar felt immense pressure when he thought of Black Phantom’s kill statistics that had been circulating on the Dark Web. He had been crowned a ‘Superhuman killer’—way too dangerous. Even though Ugar was stronger than Mihawks, he did not want to have a taste of Black Phantom’s strength.

Mistaking Han Xiao for someone on Stardragon’s side, Ugar angrily commanded, “Team 3, locate and terminate the sniper. Take the test subjects with you; you must at least divert his attention away from us!”

One armored vehicle left the main troop and sped toward Han Xiao’s location.

...

You have dealt 1,297 actual damage to Mihawks (LV 40)!

You have critically damaged Mihawks!

Mihawks has entered a weakened state. All attributes have decrease 50% for 10 seconds.

*Wow, this guy is quite tanky.* Han Xiao was surprised. This shot’s theoretical damage was 1,600. Taking combat fighters’ body attributes into consideration, it would be about 1,300. This had knocked out Bai Jin, who was LV 48, in one hit, but Mihawks was still up and running. Combat fighters are indeed very tanky.

This time [Flaming Will] was not too good; it only buffed his attack by 148%. His Ghost sniper rifle had been maxed out in all its attributes after the strengthening. None of the EXP earned had gone to waste. Han Xiao either saved the EXP or used it to level up skills, talents, and equipment, which were the key to having strong firepower!

After his first shot, Han Xiao activated a new task.

[Tedramira River Warfare (Misc.)]: You have joined in the battle between Stardragon and the Germinal Organization. Since you have chosen your side, see what you can do for your allies.

This was a class C mission. The player had to kill Germinal soldiers and prevent them from escaping. Reward would be based on task performance.



*The reward EXP shouldn't be less than three hundred thousand.* Han Xiao was satisfied that he could earn EXP by being a busybody.

Han Xiao fired single shots at Mihawks, who could not escape the fate of being swallowed by the explosions and shots. His death was tragic.

This marked the end of a combat fighter who was even stronger than Pan Kuang.

*Combat fighters are great in close quarters against few people, but if you want to deal with armies, even if it's not technologically advanced, you must at least be half as strong as Bennett,* Han Xiao thought to himself.

*Combat fighting makes use of energy. Everyone wants to be a hero, and combat fighting allows fighters to dominate whenever and wherever, without the need of weapons.*

*However, even though this style of fighting is very strong, one must have gone through the necessary growth. C class marks this line, the level cap for players of in the 1.0 version.*

...

The snipers had greatly weakened the assault team, which had been caught by the counter troops from Stardragon. The assault plan had barely started and was already failing terribly under Han Xiao's intervention.

At this moment, he noticed that a troop had veered off from the Germinal main troop and was moving toward him. He changed his target and started firing using the Red Falcon sniper gun. Because Stardragon was also present, Han Xiao intentionally avoided using the high-explosive bullets.

A sniper rifle could only deal limited damage to armored cars, so Han Xiao activated the portable battery that had been set up beforehand.

Three hundred meters in front of the Germinal troop, four portable batteries transformed into small multi-barreled machine guns. They fired rapidly, and some of the armored vehicles exploded on the spot. The remaining soldiers had to spread out and launch counterattacks on the portable batteries.

Once the team spread out, the portable battery was a lot less effective because it had to rotate and aim instead of aiming at one spot.

The portable batteries did not have defensive mechanisms, even if Han Xiao used platinum as the surface material, and two out of four were blown to bits very quickly. Overall, the result was good. More than half of the vehicles were destroyed, and the enemies were significantly weakened.

At this moment, the troops did something that Han Xiao did not expect. They opened the rear of one of the armored vehicles. Three humanoids jumped out of the car and ran toward the portable batteries at a speed faster than car. They looked really strange, and Frenzied Sword was taken aback.

"What in the world are those things?" Frenzied Sword wanted to use detection on them but was informed that he was too far away.

The three humanoids were well-built and expressionless. There were large amounts of metallic joints and structures inside the arms, legs, and spinal regions. The metal was fixed into the bones at joints,

such as in their knees and elbows. As they were running, the metallic joints would have blood seeping out. There was no doubt that every movement would inflict great pain, but the trio seemed emotionless as if they could not feel any pain.

Moreover, there was a layer of thin armor growing from the skin of the humanoids.

Han Xiao recognized the humanoids the second he saw them.

### **Chapter 139: A Wild Black Phantom (3)**

*Germinal's super soldier project has been brought forward a year?*

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows.

This project was originally intended to create humanoids with battle potential. Through exoskeletons cybernetics, they improved test-subjects' physical capabilities by experimentation. Through the pure strength of the technology, it supported their physical body, and as a result, warriors with the battle power of super-soldiers could be mass-produced.

However, the technology was still in its infancy. The process was very painful because the exoskeleton had to be directly connected to the nerves, and various mechanical parts had to be implanted into the body to strengthen the physique.

Only experimented Valkyrie specimens whose mental resilience was strengthened could withstand such modifications. At the end of it all, their sense of pain would fade away, and they would only move on instinct.

By the whole of Galaxy's standards, it was a very undeveloped modification technique and had already been eliminated long ago. But on Aquamarine, the Germinal Organization was able to develop the technique further by neglecting the physical condition of the test-subjects.

The exoskeleton was not only a piece of equipment that could be worn externally, but it could also be infused as a part of the body. Doing so would connect one's nerves to the armor, giving the person greater mobility. However, the Germinal Organization had yet to develop the technology to maturity. By experimentation, they only managed to develop to infant stages of the technology.

Aquamarine's major players each held one or a few advanced skills, and [Nerve Integration] was an advancement knowledge that was in Germinal's hands.

The advanced skill that Han Xiao had learned was only [Advanced Material Composition]. For the players on Aquamarine to obtain the advancement knowledge, they had to have a large contribution after entering the camp. Han Xiao set his sights to the very distant future. Advancement knowledge was very rare on Aquamarine, but in the long term, one could also spend some Aquamarine dollars to obtain it easily. If he were unable to obtain other advancement knowledge from Aquamarine, there would still be other opportunities to do so in the future.

In the original plan, these super soldiers had special effects, but the three experimental super soldiers before him were not yet complete. The bodies even had a large amount of heat armor equipped, and

these three were only using the external exoskeletons to strengthen their physiques, which were also incomplete.

*Looks like Germinal's experimental project hasn't matured yet. Exoskeletons... Come to think of it, when I was escaping the lab, I left a Lightweight Mechanical Arm behind. Seems like Germinal has been using it to experiment.*

Han Xiao's eyes lit up. Such a thought was not without reason. The three test-subjects' mechanical arms resembled the Lightweight Mechanical Arm. They were very sturdy and even had extendable golden shields embedded that could block shots fired by the portable batteries.

The three test-subjects separated from the vehicles and started spreading out the firepower from the portable batteries. The three successfully drew close to the portable battery, bombarding it with countless attacks using their fists wrapped in exoskeleton armor. The exoskeleton that was rooted to the joints released smoke. As they used more power, they instantly destroyed the portable battery, causing it to fall to its side as it cracked open.

After taking down the remaining portable batteries, the three sprinted toward Han Xiao, each step moving them seven to eight meters ahead, with an overwhelming killing intent completely directed toward him.

Han Xiao's gaze remained unfazed as he pulled out his tablet, quickly unleashing another hidden weapon.

The trailer shook violently as two Second-Generation Rovers rushed out to Han Xiao's side. Instantly, they activated [Furious Fusillade]. With both hands, the machine gun released its rounds, as their chests shot out mini rocket missiles, ravaging the three test-subjects. The damage was dealt heavily but was almost entirely blocked by the exoskeleton armor, with only its endurance dropping.

The three test-subjects' stats were also exposed.

Based on your level, you acquired the following information:

Super-Soldier Experimental Body (042)

Level: 40

Classes:

– [Special Agent] Lv.10

– [Low-level Machine Equipment] Lv.30 (Endurance to Health Conversion Ratio 1:10)

Attributes: 51 STR, 54 DEX, 70 (80) END, 25 INT, 8 MYS, 4 CHA, 6 LUK

Energy: 0

Energy Rank: 500

Grade: E

Health Points: 534/650

Status: [Violent Modifications]: Health Point -150, Endurance -10

Abilities:

– Low-level Spiritual Resilience: +3 Psychological Resistance

– Effective Training: +100 Health Points

– Immunity to Pain: Injuries do not affect combat ability

Skills:

– Basic Close-Quarter Combat Lv.7

– Basic Shooting Lv.5

– Capture Lv.3

– Precise Shooting Lv.1

Equipment:

Crane Exoskeleton Arms:

Lightweight Mechanical Arms, equipped with extendable golden shield.

Grade: White

Basic Stats

– Damage: 32–45

– Defense: 20–24

– Power Level: 45

– Endurance: 250

Ability effect: +8 Strength

Predator Power Legs:

Lightweight Cyborg Legs increase sprinting speed.

Grade: Gray

Basic Stats

– Damage: 27–31

– Defense: 15–18

– Power Level: 53

– Endurance: 230

Ability effect: +8 Dexterity

P-2 Embedded Armor Inserts:

Implanted lightweight gold in the skin, provides some defensive ability.

Grade: Gray

Basic Stats

– Defense: 15–20

– Endurance: 500

The three test-subjects' stats were considered extremely low for LV 40. With such a high level but low-level stats, it meant that they had no potential.

Individually, their health points were very low, but the defense and endurance provided by the exoskeleton was able to reduce the damage to the body to a large extent. Han Xiao did some calculations and realized that this set of exoskeleton armor provided 1,460 endurance points, and nearly 100 defense points. This was the effect due to the equipment. If they only looked at the health points, one would think that it was just a useless clothed armor.

The Second-Generation Rovers fired several rounds, which only took off a fifth of their health bar.

Han Xiao realized that Experimental Body (044) was actually at LV 45, and his stats were at an even higher level than his two counterparts. Perhaps he was the leader of the three.

Meanwhile, Germinal's vehicle team circled back. With the two rovers' firepower, it was difficult to monitor both sides. Han Xiao immediately made a decision.

"Take the briefcase with the red-triangle marking from the trailer. I have something I want you to do!"

Frenzied Sword instantly carried out the orders, carrying the briefcase in hand. Inside it was a bomb with massive destructive power. Han Xiao quickly scribbled down the task and tossed it over.

[Brave Sacrifice]: Take your unfulfilled dreams and explode into glorious sparks!

Frenzied Sword unconsciously gulped down his saliva.

“Go for it, youngster. I’ll leave the stage to you,” Han Xiao casually remarked as he continued to barrage the test-subject with attacks.

“I... I got it...” Frenzied Sword clenched his jaw. The rewards from the task were extremely attractive and could definitely make up for the death penalty.

The strengthened Red Falcon released a series of shots, leaving bullet holes in the three experimental subjects’ bodies. Han Xiao’s aggressive abilities had already reached the maximum level. Through the cracks in the exoskeleton, he dealt damage straight to the flesh. His attacks were on point, restricting the three test-subjects.

Soon, No. 042 was shot in his vitals by the barrage of attacks. His health bar receded to zero as he fell to the ground, dead. The other two, however, were nonchalant to the death of their ally, continuing to charge forth.

On the other side, the other military truck closed in rapidly toward them. Han Xiao redirected the Second-Generation Rover toward it, opening fire against several military vehicles. The tightly packed firing left red streaks amid them, as though it was a rainbow that linked them together.

The rover’s endurance rapidly fell. Seeing that they could not withstand the attacks, Han Xiao commanded the rover to dive into the team and execute the self-destruct function. The enemy, unable to react in time, was enveloped in striking flames that swallowed up several vehicles as a series of explosions ensued.

Both sides were decimated at once.

With the loss of two Second-Generation Rovers, Han Xiao remained unfazed. Technology-based warfare was just like that, money-burning... But he was indeed generous. If it was another player, they definitely could not bear to do such a thing. However, Han Xiao had all the money he needed.

The sniper rifle had a limit to its firing speed. Finally, both test-subject were within fifty meters of him.

Frenzied Sword remembered the contents of the task. Steadying his heart, he leaped forward, lunging onto No. 043 as a fist pierced through his chest. He spat out a mouthful of blood and clenched his teeth as he activated the bomb in the briefcase.

Boom!

A mini mushroom-shaped cloud rose up into the skies. The sweltering wave of hot air mixed with dust exploded, and the fully-equipped Han Xiao was splattered with dirt.

Through the smoke, the debilitated No. 044 Experimental Body rushed over again. In the moment when the explosion took place, No. 043 was ahead of him in the rush and exploded into nothingness. No. 044 immediately dropped to the ground and was still able to move as his gaze oozed with bloodlust.

With only the last ten meters left, in a second, he would be able to lodge his steel fist into that foul sniper!

At that moment, [Flaming Will] finished its cooldown!

Han Xiao suddenly threw aside Red Falcon, reloaded the Ghost sniper as he activated [Overload], reinforcing it with [Flaming Will], and fired.

The bullet, with blue light trailing behind it, disappeared from sight as it shot straight through No. 044's head. Blood spurted out like an arrow, leaving a thin, long streak of blood on No. 044.

No. 044 took several steps forward without losing momentum. Suddenly, his body tilted, falling to Han Xiao's feet. Just one more step, and he would have been able to reach Han Xiao. His still eyes had a trace of unwillingness.

This scene was far too familiar to Han Xiao. Fighting with a Mechanic, distance was always the determining factor between a win or a loss. Many other enemies had fallen right before reaching their target, just like this.

*It's a shame. Even if you managed to engage me in close-quarter combat, you wouldn't have lived.*

Han Xiao shook his head. There were still many cards that he had not shown yet. These immature test-subjects were far from his match.

[Second Advancement]

Current Progress: 1/3

The battle this time could be considered an easy fight. Mass-produced assembly line soldiers were the easiest enemies for him to take on.

*There's still two more.*

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes. He only needed two more higher-level kills before he could increase his rank. The interface displayed a sea of EXP, and he was looking forward to advancing his skills.

Frenzied Sword sacrificed his virgin death. Ten seconds later, he was revived next to the trailer. Looking at the quest rewards and enemy kill experience, he could not hold back his grin.

The Germinal team that had come to intercept him had been eliminated. The heated battle grounds were already at the pinnacle of its battle. Stardragon's and Germinal's foot soldiers had both been massacred. The battle was at a standstill and in a complete mess. Han Xiao spared a few glances and decidedly knew that he would no longer get a chance to interfere.

After contemplating for two seconds, he quickly made a decision. He beckoned the grinning Frenzied Sword onto the car.

The vehicle continued to travel onward, circling around the heat of the battle, and headed in the direction of the Tedramira River.

...

In the battlegrounds, Sleepy Winter taunted, "Did I see that right? Is that Frenzied Sword?"

Han Xiao's battle was very conspicuous. They saw Frenzied Sword's ID floating above his head and got a shock. Twinkle Fried Rice was at a loss; even the cold, prideful Rainy Kim had her mouth wide open.

Sleepy Winter remembered that even at the internal examinations, Frenzied Sword rejected his goodwill and did not enter the Stardragon Army. So, how could he be on the battleground now? And by self-destructing, he defeated a high-level monster; they saw all of it happen!

"If my eyes didn't play tricks on me, that black-clothed person he's following... that was the Black Phantom, who appeared a while ago at Big Horn Mountain," Rainy Kim suddenly said.

"Are you sure about that?" Sleepy Winter asked.

"I recorded the entire battle just now. Just watch it and you'll know," Twinkle Fried Rice said.

Sleepy Winter seemed to be a little depressed. Frenzied Sword and the three of them had started on the same foot, but now he seemed to have gotten way ahead of them. It made Sleepy Winter feel a little pressured... and curious as well.

*No wonder he didn't want to join us during the internal beta. What exactly happened to Frenzied Sword? Why is he with Black Phantom?*

#### **Chapter 140: Backup**

The battle was raging on the Tedramira River.

Hesla was responsible for securing the waters. A naval formation was stationed at the estuary, and a huge portion of them were battleships loaded with large-caliber artillery. The Germinal Navy was bombarded from a distance of over ten kilometers away. The cannons firepower could reach ten over miles, piercing through the air at high speed, forming a parabola in the night sky. This brought significant damage to the Germinal fleet.

The destroyers in the formation launched several homing missiles at the beginning of the battle, but they were intercepted by Germinal Fleet's cannon in the air. They were now useless. All they could do was maintain the defense line.

The command ship, Scyther, positioned itself in the center of the formation.

"The enemy is roughly twelve kilometers away from the water mines near the exit of the sea. Don't give the enemy any time to break out of the trap." Scyther's Admiral assigned the tasks in a swift and decisive manner. "Deer, Carp and Shark units have been preloaded with torpedoes. Await Germinal's entry and then fire away! Feed them full with a round of firepower.

"As for the offense formation, maintain the intensity of firepower; no change. Sonar scanners take note of the surrounding waters; there could be a chance for Germinal reinforcements to appear. Inform the Stardragon's men to release some infantry units whenever necessary. Delay the Germinal Navy's time...

"Transfer this message to Stardragon's Commander: We need their assault troops to be on standby!"



On the other side, the troops that were deployed to fight the battle surrounded and harassed the Germinal fleet. Using bombs as their main form of attack, this caused quite some trouble for the Germinal fleet. There were bound to be some lucky cannon balls that escaped their intercepting fire, and when this happened, three of their ships sank. As the fleet's main purpose was to evacuate, their weaponry was not sufficient to wage a war. They were not even able to lock on to the high-speed battleships, let alone trying to deal any damage.

However, Germinal still had a plan of their own!

A fighter jet poured another wave of ammunition, and while the pilot was preparing to make another round, a shroud of dark fog exploded around him all of a sudden. A figure appeared out of thin air. It was a demon with dark eyeshadow and ear studs, with a sharp blade in his hand. He quickly sliced through the pilot's throat, splashing blood upon the window.

The fighter jet crashed down in the water with the pilot's corpse. The demon smiled coldly and disappeared, leaving only a dash of black fog.

Teleportation ability! Germinal Organization executive officer, Renette.

...

Hila stepped onto the bow of the ship. The wind was blowing through that red hair of hers. She took in a deep breath, raising both her hands as though worshipping the sun. Gray air slowly flowed through from the fresh dead bodies in the battlefield. It gathered from all directions and tingled Hila's five senses.

Her face flushed as if she had breathed in God's medicine. She closed her eyes and then opened them even wider than before. An invisible sound wave rose from her lungs out to her throat, and she screamed.

"Ah—"

It was like a ghost's piercing scream.

The eyes of the pilots in the sky burst, their ears bleeding. Their brains were shaken into a state of confusion. The pilots fell one after another like broken kites, crashing onto the ground and water. They were fried into balls of fire.

A no-fly zone had formed in the sky, and the fighter jet formation had single-handedly been taken down by Hila! The remaining fighter jets received orders and hurriedly retreated!

This was the horrible threat of military operations. They required people to operate the machines. If the operator was too weak, Hila's killing threat could disrupt their mind. Aquamarine's technological advancements did not hold much against Hila's mental disruption skills.

Only a few reconnaissance drones continued to track and observe the sky.

Renette teleported to Hila's side, with one hand painfully rubbing his head. His nose was bleeding, and he had a dark, gloomy expression. "Were you trying to kill me as well?"

Hila gave him a cold shoulder, refusing to answer. Renette could only swallow this breath, not daring to provoke her.

In the command room, Lin Yu did not really pay much attention to the battle. He looked at his watch and whispered to himself, "It's almost time."

The Germinal Organization's infantry had broken through the defense line and was now rapidly approaching their intended destination. Stardragon's army executed according to plan; they opened the gates to allow water to gush in. They wanted it to be a naval battle. Hila would take over the confrontation after the infantry units had boarded their ships. These infantry units would just be useless in a naval battle; they would also become a burden. They were reducing their death toll but weakening themselves too.

There was a new type of missile up on the destroyer ship that could cruise and split and avoid attempts to intercept it. The very moment Germinal's fleet and their infantry linked up, they would fire, and one round of it would cause major deaths to Germinal's fleet. The Germinal troops would then begin to flee. Division 13's ambush units would then board the ship and slaughter everyone aboard.

That was the next step of the plan.

However, in reality, things never went according to plan. Accidents were bound to happen.

Dududu!

The piercing sirens upon Hesla's command ship sounded. The radar detected dozens of targets approaching at high speed underwater.

Ghostly torpedo!

Where did it come from!

It was too late to intercept it. A warship near the seaport exploded, fire spurting everywhere.

Hesla's high-ranking officers had been paying close attention to the battle. The naval formations made them extremely furious.

"Anti-sonar submarines? How did the signal not sound anything at all? How far is the enemy's range?"

These could only be Germinal's submarines. Where did they come from? Could it be that Germinal had planned this all along, to withdraw some troops from Andrea? Or was there a secret base on an island nearby?

No matter the reason, the enemy had reinforcements, and they now needed to deal with the unexpected situation!

"Where are our submarines?" Hesla's officers roared. They had planned for several submarines in the vicinity as backup and immediately activated them to search for the enemy's submarines.

The navy suffered heavy losses and were busy tending to emergency repairs. They could not proceed with the missile strikes. This caused strategic disruptions, and the situation was getting out of hand.

Germinal's fleet took this chance. They changed their formation. The ship sailed to the shore, opened up, and lowered the slats, providing a bridge for the ground troops to cross. The edge of the stern

dragged along the shore of the beach. This method came with a huge risk of beaching the ship. Other ships would throw a hook to link the ship. That way, even if the ship became stuck, it could be pulled back to sea anytime.

The root of Lin Yu's confidence came from their submarine team. They were reinforcements that Germinal's forces had called for early on. They relied on this ambush, breaking Hesla's blockade and strategic formation!

In order to break through Stardragon's ambush, Ugar had lost more than half of the troops, and when this opportunity arose, he immediately ordered the team to speed up and rush toward the barge ship.

Stardragon's assault troops, which were on standby, became anxious. They followed Hesla's plan to launch a round of missiles first before rushing up. If there was no such link, rushing up would simply be equivalent to committing suicide!

"What shall we do?"

If they waited any longer and the Germinal Organization's forces manage to link up successfully, there would be no more chances.

The assault troops were all from Stardragon's Division 13. They were all specialists and elites. They could hear their superior's command. It was only one word.

"Forward!"

There was no hesitation. The assault teams rushed forward. Germinal's Navy fired a round of missiles at once, and the ambush troops forced their way through the gunfire. Fireworks lit up beside. Their comrades fell and exploded, but they remained unfazed. They were fearless.

As a soldier, they always followed orders. Even if it was a magma in front of them, they would still have to jump. It was with this steel-like will that Stardragon stood out from hundreds of countries since the beginning, becoming one of the last six winners.