

The Mechanic 161

Chapter 161: Order Born of Violence

Han Xiao smiled and said, "Time will tell you the answer."

Lu Cheng nodded, and he decided to suppress his questions regarding the refugees for now. He would get his subordinates to find some information regarding it.

He invited Han Xiao to his territory—the Black Pine Base—for a tour. Han Xiao said that there was no need to pay him back, but Lu Cheng did not dare take his word for it and insisted on offering his services.

Han Xiao did not resist further. His intention was to get to know Lu Cheng better anyway.

Before this, Han Xiao checked on the Dark Net. Lu Cheng was the one of the strongest vagrant warlords in the Southern Continent. Black Pine territory was so huge that small towns like Green Valley Ville would be insignificant placed next to it. Black Pine sat amid the ruins of a small city left from the Old Ages. It had been transformed into a settlement that tens of thousands of civilians resided in. There was a plethora of facilities, including even biological and weaponry research laboratories. Everything was really high end.

Territory owned by vagrant warlord and territory owned by vagrants were completely different concepts. The latter was formed with vagrants who band together against threats from the wild, with a responsible leader chosen democratically. There would rarely be hierarchies.

With vagrant warlords, they would be the leader who would use their resources to build a residential area. The area would be built such that it could take in some vagrants from the outside world, and the leaders could collect protection fees from them. The fees could be paid in the form of tax or labor. There would be purposeful usage of military power, for example to attack other warlords. Most of the soldiers were employed, but there were some who signed on voluntarily.

There were many warlords, and their territories, coming in all sizes, were distributed across every continent. Bennett's shelter plan was aimed at unifying all the warlords and creating a new mega city that stood apart from the Six Nations and provided shelter for all refugees. Naturally, this would clash with the goals of the warlords. Moreover, it would be a very large and tedious project.

Bennett's plan would provide help and shelter for all vagrants out there, not just from war but from other natural and wild dangers. It was nothing but ambitious.

Lu Cheng invited Han Xiao into his car and drove toward the Black Pine.

Green Valley Ville's players could still get quests from the town, and those who chose to defend the base were surprised and relieved to find out that their access to the town did not get revoked. They watched Black Phantom as he left.

...

There was one more person with them now that Bun-hit-dog had joined the team.

The scenery outside the window flew past. Han Xiao made a call and instructed the Dark Net helicopter pilot to wait for him at Black Pine. He told Lu Cheng about this, who acknowledged and ordered for a landing site to be prepared.

They were chatting casually while Han Xiao suddenly asked, "With your military strength, you could have attacked immediately when you came to the town, and the refugees could not have stopped you. Why did you give Balsas time to prepare?"

Lu Cheng shook his head. He had not known that players could revive at that time. He said, "Only people without faith would think that violence is the solution to every problem."

"Your soldiers' lives are lives too though." Han Xiao smiled.

"The strong ought to protect the weak." Lu Cheng paused and said, "I won't kill unarmed refugees; no warlord want to see the Tragedy of La Potter repeat itself."

"Tragedy of La Potter? What happened?" Bun-hit-dog questioned, still recording.

Lu Cheng thought Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog were Han Xiao's followers, so out of respect, he explained, "La Potter was once a huge Vagrant settlement in the West Continent. It was invaded by a Vagrant Warlord and his troops. Even though the military troops were supported by the locals, the enemies were too strong, and they were defeated. The warlord was upset that the vagrants dared fight against him, so he initiated a massacre of the helpless and unarmed civilians, raiding all their supplies and burning everything, killing countless innocent souls."

Bun-hit-dog was unimpressed. Massacres like this had occurred numerous times in history. He probed, "So what happened then?"

"Then, the warlord and all of the few hundreds of his professional soldiers died in one night twenty days after that, killed single-handedly by one superhuman. After that, no warlord had the guts to kill any innocent civilians."

Bun-hit-dog was puzzled. "Why though?"

Han Xiao answered, unfazed, "Because some people see themselves as heroes."

If it was the normal world, no one could fight against the cruel authorities. Nothing could be done. However, with superhuman powers, even in lawless lands, those with powers could technically become those in charge of upholding laws. Superhumans could easily kill those that they did not see fit, so what they chose to uphold became the standard law for everyone else on the planet.

So, what would they choose to uphold? It would be the issues that most people would agree on based on their moral compass.

Unless one could carry out genocide or murder on a massive scale without letting any news out, there was bound to be a superhuman to punish the instigator for his evil deeds. This could be seen as moral coercion. The weak had to follow the moral standards of the strong. Even though this in itself was questionable, it gave rise to a rough form of rules for the wild and indirectly protected the lives of vagrants.

Bun-hit-dog recorded all this. He loved this type of stuff that could spice up his content.

Han Xiao stroked his chin. The Tragedy of La Potter reminded him of another wild BOSS.

La Potter was a mess. The burned corpses were left unattended and attracted beasts. A new virus sprouted from the corpses and spread into the soil and water sources. All the beasts in the region mutated, and every once in a while, there would be a Beast King level wild BOSS found there, which could trigger a quest to kill the BOSS and harvest its mutated heart for a research group. This would lead to potions that could add on attributes and might even awaken potential talents.

The players could repeatedly fight the wild BOSS, but the usual process of grinding through quests would be inevitable.

In Galaxy, there were a few types of Instance Dungeons, the first being the special scene where monsters spawned endlessly, such as some magical realms or mock combat rooms in labs. Other than these special realms, in Galaxy's world, there were also important realms that were protected by military troops. Large-scaled battlefields could also be made into an Instance Dungeon. This type of Instance Dungeon was extremely random and could close anytime.

The second type would be Instance Dungeon Crystal, which was a special item dropped from special quests. Only players could use it, and it would bring the player back in time to a parallel world to experience events that had happened in the past. The Crystal would allow a player to enter different scenes based on the quest that the player came from.

The quests that awarded the Instance Dungeon Crystal would refresh once in a while, making this type of dungeon a readily accessible one. The players could also steadily grind to break the record of the shortest dungeon clearance time and other records.

Upon using the Instance Dungeon Crystal, others would see that the player had suddenly vanished. The player would enter a parallel universe and could not affect the original world. However, they could still obtain rewards from the Instance Dungeon. This type of dungeon was similar to magic teleportation and scientific time travelling. Han Xiao was not sure if he could use the Crystal as well, but he felt that it would be risky because he did not know the principles behind the Crystal. If it were to atomize the body structure, a normal player would be able to revive, but he did not have the luxury.

Some special items could be used by players only, such as the Gene-awakening Elixir that could be purchased from the vendor. A potion would appear out of thin air after purchasing it. There was also the Gene-blending Elixir that Han Xiao received as reward from the Rose Militant Quest earlier on. The Instance Dungeon Crystal fell under a similar category.

Let's not risk it in trying to get the Instance Dungeon Crystal.

Indeed, it would be a waste of time. He would rather complete main quests and hidden quests.

The car fleet drove on for a few hours, and the silhouette of the Black Pine Settlement appeared on the horizon. It was huge, almost like a small city. The scenery was very exotic; there were bricks, leather, and scrap metal lying around, and there were electric wires crawling along the walls. The path with barbed wire fences on its sides was the only path that led up to the main entrance, and there were many 'scars' of war on the metallic door, left behind by bullets and explosions.

Lu Cheng smiled and proudly said, "Welcome to Black Pine."

Chapter 162: Grouper Plague and the Grinding

"It's enormous." Bun-hit-dog gasped. "This can't be the place where newbies first enter?"

The main gate slowly opened as the car entered the gates. The first thing that came into sight was the magnificent lookout tower, sandbag barricades, and the barracks. Fully-armed soldiers were standing guard and patrolling the area. Further into the encampment, they arrived at the residential district.

The layout of buildings in the residential district was much sparser and more casual than the structured planning of cities. There were no tall buildings as well. Families were strolling through the streets, and there were even hawkers calling out and making sales. With the lively chatter in the streets, it was like a mini-market.

The car rolled to a stop as several people alighted. Lu Cheng ordered several of his men to prepare a feast. Since he had invited Han Xiao to be his guest, he brought Han Xiao and the other two around for a tour as the host. Occasionally, some residents would greet Lu Cheng. It seemed Lu Cheng was well-respected by his people.

"That's my weapon factory over there. I have a specialized assembly line to make guns and ammunition." Lu Cheng pointed to a restricted region that was barricaded with a barbed-wire fence. Behind it were his warehouse, workshop, and weaponry experimental laboratory, and smoke could be seen escaping from the chimneys.

On the other side, there was a second quarantined area. Inside, there were many tents and about a few hundred vagrants living inside them. Their exposed skin was covered in gray ash, cracked like rocks.

"What is that place?" Bun-hit-dog asked curiously.

Sighing, Lu Cheng answered, "The Terminal Quarantine Area. Any resident with Grouper Plague has to stay there to prevent infections."

Grouper Plague?

Han Xiao almost cried out in surprise. This type of illness was very infectious. In the version 2.0, it had spread and had caused some genetic mutations as well. He did not expect to find it here.

Just as he was about to say something, a sudden commotion could be heard from the Terminal Quarantine Area.

Sprinting in a frenzied manner, an infected resident rushed toward the barbed-wire fence. With all of his limbs, he tried to climb the fence to escape. However, the next second, a gunshot was heard. The security officer at the side reacted at lightning speed, firing at the man with his machine gun, turning this escaped resident into mesh as he fell to the ground. As he lay in his pool of blood, a viscous, yellow liquid could be seen pooling out from the corpse as well.

Several doctors in their white protective suits walked out and packed the corpse into a body bag. On the ground where the corpse was, they sprayed large jets of disinfectant.

The soldier who killed the escaping resident withdrew his gun, expressionless, as if he had just killed a worthless chicken.

The infected within the quarantine area watched this scene in silence, expressionless and numb. A thick atmosphere of despair hung in the air like a dark, heavy cloud.

“It is very hard to cure those who have been infected with this plague. To prevent them from spreading the plague to more people, we can only control it like this,” Lu Cheng explained.

Han Xiao turned to look. Nearby, the residents looked as though everything was as usual, without a single trace of empathy on their faces.

“That’s cold-blooded,” Bun-hit-dog quietly said.

“At first, there were only tens of people who were infected. One infected knew that he couldn’t be treated and escaped from the quarantine region, so the number of people infected increased to more than three hundred,” Lu Cheng said dryly.

Bun-hit-dog was speechless.

You have triggered the quest [Origins of the Grouper Plague].

Quest Description: Black Pine Settlement is troubled by the spread of the Grouper Plague. To control this plague, what do you think you can do?

Quest Requirements:

1. Find the source of the Grouper Plague
2. Control the plague from spreading
3. Treat all of the infected

Rewards:

Completed Requirement 1 – 20,000 EXP

Completed Requirement 2 – 40,000 EXP

Completed Requirement 3 – 60,000 EXP

All Requirements Completed –800 Black Pine reputation points, Vagrant Warrior Battle suit

Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog both received the quest as well.

However, Han Xiao did not intend to complete this quest. He was still in a rush to find more fools... No, to bring even more new players into the Mechanic Class. He needed to go to about ten or so novice villages, and a large wave of experience was waiting for him. Time was tight, and he had many things to do. How could he afford to slow down his footsteps?

Oh right, if the players complete their quests, can I claim the rewards, too? Han Xiao's eyes lit up. Looking at Frenzied Sword, who was completely unaware, he suddenly had a new idea.

"My men have prepared a feast." Lu Cheng sent out the invitation, and the few of them arrived at Black Pine's Central Building. It was like a mini castle, and the western point was called the Lord's Hall.

The dishes served in the feast were generous in quantity, meant to fill one's stomach. Black Pine Settlement had a harvest field where they grew their own crops, and they also had their own butchery, where they raised animals, such as highland cattle, chicken, and the black-haired short-snout hog. The vagrants' encampment consumed large amounts of resources every day. If they relied only on the Dark Net to obtain their resources, they would not be able to bear the costs, especially because it was extremely expensive. So, the residents learned to be self-sufficient, building their own tiny territory.

At the feast, Han Xiao and Lu Cheng were chatting casually when Lu Cheng eventually diverted the topic to the issue of repaying the favor to the Black Phantom. Dragging it on for so long, he felt very uneasy.

"Just take it as we've become friends. In the future, if anything crops up, feel free to look for me, and I'll help you out." Han Xiao left his phone number behind. He wanted to maintain his friendship with Lu Cheng so that he could find out when the Four Blueprint Quest began. Thinking for a while, he said, "Come to think of it, I need some help from you. I want to borrow your workshop and some materials to make something."

"No problem, I'll make arrangements right away." Lu Cheng felt more at ease. He felt reassured after Han Xiao finally brought up a request for him.

"Your territory has to deal with the issue of the Grouper Plague quickly, otherwise it might become a disaster. My friends will stay behind to help you out." Han Xiao suddenly slapped Frenzied Sword's back, who spat out all of the food in his mouth, coughing non-stop.

"Are you abandoning me?" Frenzied Sword asked disbelievingly.

I'm not interested in being your mom. Han Xiao held back his biting comments as he wrote up a few quests and tossed them out for Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog to complete.

The gist of the quests was to have the two of them remain at Black Pine, resolve the issue of the plague, and improve their reputation in Black Pine. Han Xiao spent 200,000 EXP, splitting it between the both of them. The quests were all long-term ones, and he intended for both of them to stay at Black Pine.

With the remaining journey and tasks at the novice villages, there was no need to bring these two players with him. It made going online and offline inconvenient and slowed him down as well. He might as well just leave them to complete their quests in Black Pine.

For the gifted players he had selected, he was not only going to train them himself, but there was another benefit. That was, they could follow him and gain exposure to high-level fights. Compared to other players, they could expand their maps earlier, which was the main attraction in allowing players to follow him. For now, allowing the gifted players to complete other tasks and train by grinding was useful in developing their individual unique skills. It could allow them to explore and tap into their potential. It also gave him more time to himself to do other tasks.

As for the rewards that these gifted players received, sooner or later, a part of it would come back to him. If Frenzied Sword completed the plague quest, Han Xiao could get some experience as well, and Frenzied Sword would use a portion of the money he earned to buy equipment from Han Xiao.

Not only did he want to earn players' gold, but through players, he could earn NPCs' second-hand gold as well!

If Han Xiao was a mother ship, the players that he took under his wing would be akin to a fleet of fighters. No matter how many achievements they obtained, they would still have to return to their home base and repay him. Of course, that was only under the condition of him being able to achieve and attain even greater benefits. On this note, he was still very confident. Other than the players themselves, there was no other person who understood players better than him.

I'm such a genius.

Frenzied Sword could only agree to Han Xiao's arrangements, and he was actually quite satisfied. Black Pine was a high-level map, and the rewards for each quest were quite generous too. Bun-hit-dog had even less objections. The materials he had looted were already enough. Staying in Black Pine meant that he did not have to worry about losing track of Han Xiao. He could focus on making the first episode of his video.

Lu Cheng felt that Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog's abilities were very mediocre and could not help much. But on Han Xiao's account, he expressed his thanks to them anyway.

At the dining table, they settled their plans. After eating, it was already past noon, and Lu Cheng went back to take a rest. The previous night, he had been battling and had not slept. In the morning, they were on the roads, rushing to get back, and he was thoroughly exhausted.

On the other hand, Han Xiao had slept on the car for a while and was in high spirits. He could move about Black Pine freely, so he gave some orders to the pilot of the Dark Net helicopter. Then, after bargaining with Antonio for ten over minutes, he arranged to lease the transport plane from the Fabian Company.

After that, under the Black Pine soldiers' lead, he headed toward the weapon factory area. The guards there received Lu Cheng's orders. Accordingly, they opened up the workshop for Han Xiao to use.

Lu Cheng had already arranged for his men to prepare the materials. Han Xiao began his work on the lathe. He needed to make some repairs to the Magnetically controlled retractable armor, and add on a load of ammunition and some Basic Storage Cubes, then create some small parts to be built onto the 'Sunworm' Flamethrower he had developed recently.

With its intelligence stat at 200, the machine's production speed was very fast, and there were other enhancing skills such as Machinery Affinity and Energy Stats Strengthened, which would create even better stats on the device to be created.

Sunworm Portable Flamethrower (Mini Flamethrower)

Grade: Blue (Good Quality)

Damage: 27–34/s (Fire)

Overload: 60s

Cooldown: 20s

Range: 7m

Power Output: 92

Fuel Type: HF Liquid Fuel

Energy: 210/210 (uses 1 Energy Point/s)

Weight: 9.4kg

Side Effect: Integration—Through additions to the energy box, it is assimilated with one's body, convenient to carry.

Side Effect: Concentrated Jet—Raise efficiency of fuel, +33% DMG, +25% range, one tick of Burn Damage per 0.6s and lasting 12s, uses 8 Energy Points/s. After 12 seconds, immediately enters overload.

Side Effect: Adhesive Burning—Extends target's burn state and increases effectiveness of burns

Remarks: Dancing flames, that is a warmth that is akin to romance.

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows. *What kind of messed up remark is that?*

Chapter 163: Exchange

Sunworm's nozzle, duct, and fuel tank were integrated as one. It looked like a heat insulating metal tube, about an arm's width. It could be tied to the arm or calf. It looked a little like a beetle, and its 'pincers' were used to stabilize the leather metal pins.

He tied the Sunworm onto the inner side of his left arm, and it seemed bloated. However, such a load could be ignored for a person with 69 Strength.

Sunworm is most suited to be used as mecha module, and it can be integrated into my self-created lightweight mecha. Han Xiao could not stop thinking of new ideas for his lightweight mecha. Since he already had ideas, as well as Fabian's transport aircraft on lease, he started fixing his mecha before travelling to the novice village.

At that time, an Asian man whose head was full of white hair walked toward him. He stared at Han Xiao's High Ghost sniper rifle and curiously muttered, "That's right. It is an electromagnetic weapon!"

He then turned and asked Han Xiao, "Can you sell this to me? I'm willing to pay 500,0... no, 1,000,000!"

Han Xiao observed him for a second and already had some gut feels. Yet, he pretended to be confused and asked, "Who are you?"

"I am Lei Zhen Yu. Lu Cheng invited me over as his Machinery Engineering consultant. You look like a Mechanic too. You should have heard of my name."

Han Xiao remained silent.

"Don't tell me you have not heard of my name. Or are you a self-taught mechanic? So unusual." Lei Zhen was surprised. He shook his head and said, "I want this electromagnetic sniper; how about you quote a price?"

"Do I look like I'm in need of cash?" Han Xiao pointed at that priceless components that were lying on the truck's seat.

Lei Zhen Yu then understood. "You are a self-taught mechanic. I can teach you some skills in exchange for this sniper of yours. You definitely need a master like me to guide you. Only through listening to the wise words of your seniors can you succeed. I can tell that deep down inside, you have always wanted to have a master to learn from. Here, the doors are opened for you. This is your chance. If you miss it, you will regret for life."

He did not know that this electromagnetic sniper rifle was made by Han Xiao. From what he knew, self-taught mechanics were often weak. Hence, he wanted to nab that sniper by teaching Han Xiao some new skills. As a mechanic master, he did not usually go around teaching other people. By giving Han Xiao the chance, he thought that it was worth it to exchange it for the electromagnetic sniper rifle, as long as the other party was humble enough.

Han Xiao's eyes twitched. It was the first time he had ever met someone who was so shameless and full of himself. With just a bit more, both of their skills would have been on par.

Actually, Han Xiao knew of Lei Zhen Yu's background. He was a well-known and skillful master mechanic in Aquamarine. So, he was not wrong about saying that he was a master. He belonged to the same era as Old Man Lu and had already retired decades ago. Both he and Old Man Lu did not have the master demeanor and looked disappointing to most.

Han Xiao knew why Lei Zhen Yu appeared at Black Pine. It was related to Old Man Lu's four blueprints mission, and coincidentally, Lei Zhen Yu happened to be part of this secret mission.

In the past, Lu Cheng abandoned his daughter, who was only a few years old, and left her in the care of Old Man Lu. He ventured into the wild and became a warlord. Because of this incident, he had a fight with Old Man Lu, who was unable to understand his choices at that time. The relationship between the father and son was so tensed that it was as though they were strangers.

Lu Cheng slowly climbed up and became the strongest warlord on the Southern Continent. He was always facing various dangers.

On the surface, Old Man Lu seemed as though he did not want any affiliation with his son. However, he was secretly following Lu Cheng closely and even requested that his old friend, Lei Zhen Yu, move to Black Pine to help and protect Lu Cheng. Lu Cheng knew nothing about the pact. He was shocked as he thought that he had managed to invite a great master all by himself.

This might be the moment for the four blueprints. Lei Zhen Yu had to leave Black Pine due to some other matters. Old Man Lu used another method to help Lu Cheng as he did not wish to meet his son in an awkward situation. He left the blueprints behind and left for the Western Capital, and his current whereabouts were still not known.

Maybe that's what they call a father. Han Xiao sighed. Why was Zhu Zi Qing's 'The View of my Father's Back' such a classic? Maybe because people with more experiences would be able to resonate with that story. Even Old Man Lu, a foul old stick, had his own worries.

Han Xiao calmed himself and said, "I can exchange with you. I want advanced knowledge.

Based on past memories, Lei Zhen Yu knew some advance knowledge. Yet, players were unable to acquire the knowledge from him. Even so, Han Xiao decided he want to give it a try.

Lei Zhen Yu earnestly said, "Kid, don't be too ambitious. You are a self-taught mechanic. Your standard is not enough for you to be able to understand advance knowledge. How about I teach you something else instead?"

"No, I only want advance knowledges."

"But you won't understand."

"That's even better; you don't have to worry that I will learn it. I'll just look at it for an hour. Take it as I am just being curious, okay?"

Lei Zhen Yu was speechless. Advance knowledge was very precious, and it could be considered a secret wild card. It was crucial that the knowledge was highly conserved. Even though he was really curious about the structure of the electromagnetic sniper, it was definitely not worth exchanging it with the priceless knowledge. Even though Han Xiao said he might not understand, he did not want to take the risk at all.

Lei Zhen Yu contemplated for a while and insisted, "I can't teach you the advance knowledge, but I can use the knowledges to create a weapon in exchange for yours."

Sure enough, it was not easy to get his hands on the advance knowledge. Han Xiao was already prepared for this outcome and was not depressed about it. Instead, he considered Lei Zhen Yu's offer. If he could create an item to exchange for another item of the same level, there was nothing to lose.

However, this Ghost sniper had only reached this level through several upgrades. Han Xiao still wanted to use it, so he decided to create a new one to exchange with Lei Zhen Yu.

Han Xiao nodded in agreement and said, "I'll create a new one for you."

"You made this sniper?" Lei Zhen Yu shouted in disbelief. He thought Han Xiao looked like a newbie, and given that he was a self-taught mechanic, he expected the gun to be made by someone else. Unfortunately, it turned out to be the opposite.

All the six nations were secretly trying to invent an electromagnetic weapon, and none had even reached the experimental stage. If it was just creating a stable electromagnetic weapon, Han Xiao and

Lei Zhen Yu were of the same standard. Lei Zhen Yu then remembered that he had portrayed himself as a 'great master' just now. Even with his old face, he felt ashamed and awkward.

How shameful to flaunt his skills in front of another mechanic of the same level.

Luckily, Lei Zhen Yu had thick skin. He corrected his attitude and treated Han Xiao as an equal.

At that time, the guards rushed over and whispered to Lei Zhen Yu that Han Xiao was also a legendary assassin.

Lei Zhen Yu was dumbfounded. He then observed Han Xiao for a while. Many mechanics were capable of experimenting. However, it was rare to find one who was also capable of fighting. His admiration for Han Xiao rose to an even higher level.

With good skills, one would be valued everywhere one went.

"Please come with me, I will show you my storeroom." Lei Zhen Yu coughed as he tried to change the conversation topic to avoid awkwardness. The way he spoke to Han Xiao was suddenly more respectful.

Both arrived at the restricted area inside of the arsenal area. This was where the high-ranking researchers lived. Lei Zhen Yu's home was a spacious suite with all sorts of daily necessities. There were even wine cabinets and bookshelves that were made of high-quality wood—all of which was not cheap. By the corner of the room, there was a small, simple bed. He seemed to be leading a great life.

Lei Zhen Yu drew the wine cabinet open and activated the secret door button. The wine cabinet slide to a side and revealed a secret storeroom. He then called Han Xiao over. Inside, there was a row of glass showcase shelves that stood by the wall and contained various weapons. Lei Zhen Yu headed straight for the innermost showcase shelf.

"I have four items that were created using the advance knowledges. Let me introduce them to you." Lei Zhen Yu pointed to the glass showcase shelf and started blabbering.

Lei Zhen Yu's advanced knowledges was geared toward miniature modifications. These four advanced weapons were all related to nano mechanisms.

'Type I Nurse' Bio-granule. It looked like a thick black substance, but in actual fact, it was able to divide into special nano-granules. They could then be inserted into one's body. When injured, poisoned, or bleeding, they would help one recover from the situation either by clearing the poison or speeding up blood clotting. It was a type consumable medical treatment.

U9 Colloidal Bulletproof Membrane. It looked just like ordinary glass on the surface. However, upon receiving any shock, it would briefly become non-solid to counteract kinetic energy and then solidify to trap any object. For instance, when a bullet is shot toward it, the bullet would be trapped, as though it was originally growing from within. Though it looked just like transparent glass, it was highly defensive and not easily damaged. It was most suitable for making bulletproof vests.

Fermi Condensate. It was a weapon that resembled the appearance of shaving foam and could be injected into a weapon to cool it down internally. It would reduce the cooldown time and then quickly degrade so as to prevent jamming up the weapon system. Sunworm's cooldown time, for example, was

twenty seconds. With the use of Fermi Condensate, the cooldown time could be reduced significantly to three to five seconds. The effect was remarkable. It could also be consumed.

PE-0 Nano-synthetic Fiber. Similar to the biological tendons of a living organism, it was a black, shiny, tough nanomaterial. Twisting or stretching it would result in an unbelievable elasticity.

Han Xiao could only exchange the sniper for one of those items.

Chapter 164: Endoskeleton materials

After pondering for a while, Han Xiao made his choice.

“I want the PE-0 Nano-Synthetic Fiber.”

“Wow, that’s smart. I thought a warrior like you, who likes to battle, would go for the Bulletproof Membrane instead.”

“To create something, I will need sufficient PE-0.”

“Alright.” Lei Zhen Yu nodded. He felt that out of the four weapons, PE-0 Nano-Synthetic Fiber was the most valuable one as this new material could be used for many more weapons. He realized that Han Xiao was indeed a skillful mechanic with keen eyes.

As they confirmed the exchange, Han Xiao returned to his truck and began creating a new Ghost sniper rifle. With the help of the blueprint, everything went well.

I’ve earned so much from this exchange!

The new Nano-Synthetic Fiber would play an important part of his lightweight mecha concept. It could be used as the tendon skeletal system of the lightweight mecha! As compared to the previous K600 skeletal system, PE-0 had huge improvements in almost all aspects. For instance, it was small, lightweight, and stronger. It was a great core material to create an outstanding lightweight mecha.

Python-Lightweight Mecha!

PE-0 should not be judged by its simple introduction. When it was used as the internal skeletal system, it would function just like muscle. Anyone who used it would understand.

As for the other three equipment, two of them were consumable—hence, they were instantly dismissed as options. The Bulletproof Membrane seemed reliable, but it contained Platinum, so it barely qualified for the bulletproof function.

To create a new Ghost sniper rifle, Lei Zhen Yu had also brought sufficient amount of PE-0 Nano-Synthetic Fiber and stored it in a golden metal box.

After the two had exchange the items, Lei Zhen Yu could not help but fall in love with the Ghost sniper rifle straight away. Even though his experimental direction was toward lightweight mecha, seeing how electromagnetic weapons could become the conventional weapon for the next generation, he had decided to study them too.

Back then, Old Man Lu had requested him to come over to Black Pine to help Lu Cheng. Since Lei Zhen Yu owed him a debt of gratitude, he had decided to help him then. Every day was boring to him, except for today, as he had encountered Han Xiao, a mechanic that was on par with him. This cheered him up to no end.

“I still need one thing, but there is no channel for me to buy it. I hope you can help me buy a ‘Bonfire’ Mini Reaction Furnace.” Han Xiao packed his box and spoke once more. This item that he needed was a module related to lightweight mecha.

Lei Zhen Yu was a mechanic master. Hence, he knew many people from the same trade and had many connections. He wanted knowledge beyond [Advance Material Study] to build his gun, so he was using Lei Zhen Yu as a channel to help him find some things.

“That item is not easy to get. Besides, even if I ask my friend from Ordina to sell it to me at cost price, it would still cost two to three million. Not to mention, extra time will be needed to make that item.”

“Money isn’t the problem.”

Han Xiao smirked and was full of confidence.

Lei Zhen Yu was a master in the mechanic world, so he knew many other mechanics of the same level. He was enthusiastic toward Han Xiao and agreed to help to contact the ‘Bonfire’ Mini Reaction Furnace seller for him. To Lei Zhen Yu, it was just a few phone calls.

After exchanging their numbers, Lei Zhen Yu took his Ghost sniper rifle and left, while Han Xiao continued with his work in the truck until midnight. After he was done with his work, he switched off the light and headed for his temporary residence with the guards.

The night was quiet. There was no night life in Black Pine settlement. When night fell, all residents would go back home to rest. In the dangerous wild, one would need to remain vigilant to know what to do in case of any possible danger. Also, entertainment was a luxury. In the wild, there were monsters, sickness, hunger, and various catastrophes. With that, warlords had already developed a vigilant attitude.

Due to certain circumstances, some people were forced into joining the Six Nations after the war, while other remained living in the wild as they could not let go of the hatred and would not give in even though their lives were harder. Some thought that it was foolish of them, while others saw it as a belief or even faith. It did not matter which country these people belonged to—patriotic people were always worthy of respect.

What was more important was that many vagrants had already gotten used to living in the wild. Even though their daily meals were not stable, and they might not know when they would ever be full, they did not have to follow any restrictions or rules. Instead, they were living freely. Despite knowing that joining the Six Nations would mean full meals every day, they were not willing to give up on their freedom.

In the age of peace, many people were numb toward life. In order to survive, they hunted like their ancestors and lived every day to its fullest. Even though most vagrants suffer from malnutrition, their physical fitness was better than that of the urban residents. They were strong and diligent.

The wild was regarded as wasteland. Many abandoned cities, battlefields, habitats of plants and animals, and even radioactive areas caused by the pollution from the war had become restricted areas. The Six Nations did not have any intentions of expanding into the wild at the moment, as the cost was too high, and its value was low. During the first few years after the war, the Six Nations decided to stabilize the situation inside their country first. As such, they did not have extra resources to expand their territory. Wild flora started growing on the abandoned land as a result, and it had become the territory of vagrants, warlords, and large groups of mercenaries. Just like the wind that blew by after destruction, the wasteland after the war was once again revived.

...

After a night of rest in his room, Han Xiao called for Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog the next morning.

"I will be away for some time. You guys can stay at Black Pine, and I will contact you later on."

Bun-hit-dog was reactionless while Frenzied Sword showed his unwillingness. He had only followed Han Xiao for a few days, and now, he was being abandoned again.

"You guys can think of ways to help solve the plague in Black Pine." Han Xiao pointed at Frenzied Sword. "I have confidence in you that you will show your true potential during this period of time. Maybe you have the ability to use better weapons."

Han Xiao took out two newly built large caliber pistols that were suitable for shooting within eighty meters. It was specially designed to strengthen the magazines and the attack damage. It was green quality and twice as powerful compared to the pistols that Han Xiao had sold to the other players. He then presented the pistols to Frenzied Sword, who was looking on with his jaw on the ground.

"Is this for me?" Frenzied Sword asked in disbelief.

Han Xiao smiled and nodded.

Frenzied Sword was overjoyed and could not help but start playing with his two pistols. He did not expect to receive such welfare. Han Xiao actually gifted him some equipment. Bun-hit-dog, who was standing by one side, was also shocked

Is this a benefit of the secret quest? As long as your performance is good, Black Phantom will reward you as and when he likes?

Han Xiao intentionally built these two pistols to aid Frenzied Sword in completing more tasks. To ensure that his workers did their best, they first needed their weapons. When giving rewards, Bun-hit-dog could also film it, and when it is aired, more players would witness the scene. Through that, many people would think that Han Xiao cared a lot about rewards and would be more eager to join his 'Secret Quest'.

All Han Xiao had to do was gift pistols that he could make easily, and with a little bit of generosity, he would be able to earn even more.

"I think you have great potential in wrestling, you should go learn some close combat skills," Han Xiao mentioned. Frenzied Sword was gifted in wrestling and should advance to become a Mechanical Pugilist.

He naturally hoped that Frenzied Sword could be strong like his previous life, where as a Mechanical Pugilist, he displayed his Martial Artist talent... hopefully.

What Han Xiao said struck a chord with Frenzied Sword. That was something that he was thinking about too.

After making his instructions clear, Han Xiao boarded the Dark Net helicopter and left Black Pine.

“Black Phantom has left,” the helper reported to Lu Cheng.

Lu Cheng nodded as he had a great impression of Han Xiao. He then said, “Take care of his two friends, and take notice of any weird villagers from Green Valley Ville. Find out about their background too.

...

When the helicopter arrived at the Fabian Company, Han Xiao board on the transport aircraft and headed for a new novice village in the Southern Continent. This time round, he would be occupying the aircraft for a long time as he even wanted to fly across the ocean to the novice villages in the Western Continent and Northern Continent. The Fabian Company did not have much power in the other two continents. As such, it would be expensive to occupy the aircraft for such a long time. Even after a friendship discount from Antonio, the price could still be jaw dropping—plain extortion.

His Dark Net’s account still had enough funds, and he had a lot of plans to accumulate more wealth. There was no need for him to worry about the funds.

Once he boarded the aircraft, Han Xiao began building his Mecha. The advantage of building his own mecha was that the different modules could be fixed separately and then combined together afterwards. This would reduce the risk, and the success rate for a self-created Mecha would be higher.

Even though he did not have the blueprints, he had his own ideas. The different functions of the self-created Mecha could be achieved just by mimicking the other Mechas from his memories. [Python Lightweight Mecha] was an advanced, more accurate, and rare piece of equipment. If anyone wished to obtain this blueprint in normal circumstances, one would need to combine four advance knowledges of different groups. Moreover, the conditions were extremely demanding. The prerequisite was that one needed to understand the functions of the various components inside the blueprints. So, all most players could do was try their luck.

Some other blueprints required the players to be able to understand the modules within the blueprints. This was common for blueprints of various robots, Mechas, armor, and transport vehicles.

Chapter 165: As Unlucky as Usual

Hopefully what I replicated is forty percent accurate—that will be enough.

Han Xiao’s advanced knowledge was insufficient; hence, he could only create a prototype with less functionality, just like the Ghost sniper rifle. However, there was an advantage for the mecha. Even if his version was a castrated version, it would not have various defects that the Ghost sniper rifle had.

Self-creating a mecha was a huge project and could not be completed within a short time. Han Xiao planned to finish his work on the various modules as he moved from novice village to novice village.

In addition, he would have to combine some new blueprints to improve the power of mecha.

The core source of the power would come from the 'Bonfire' Mini Reaction Furnace, and Han Xiao needed to wait for Lei Zhen Yu to place an order for him. This was also an advanced machine, so he was not able to build it on his own. Luckily, he had met another mechanic and could use some help from the other masters.

Talking about it, Old Man Lu's four blueprints were also rare items. The opportunity for the mission would be when Lei Zhen Yu left Black Pine. Hence, he had to wait a while longer. Those four blueprints could be combined to build an attack and defense system, which could be incorporated into the mecha.

The mecha was Han Xiao's second important piece of tactical equipment, and with the four blueprints from Old Man Lu, he would be able to start on the third. Han Xiao was excited. With three pieces of tactical equipment that complemented one another, all of which would have very strong mechanical stats, there would be no need to worry in battle—even against Bennett.

After finishing the visits to the novice villages and obtaining large amounts of experience, I can finally do some big things.

Han Xiao calculated his time and suddenly frowned.

If I'm not remembering incorrectly, the Alien event should be starting soon.

...

The Southern Continent had five novice villages. Besides Big Horn Village and Green Valley Ville, Han Xiao spent eleven days visiting the other three. Most of his time was spent on travelling. When he arrived at each novice village, he need not do anything; players would quickly crowd around him. Those who wanted to advance would advance, and those who had their own things to do would engage in their own things. It was super effective.

His popularity was all thanks to Galaxy Times and the advertising through the forum. Han Xiao had left a deep impression on the players, and they knew what he was capable of.

Han Xiao did some math—round 25% to 30% of players came to him to advance into mechanics. This ratio was way greater than that in his previous life. Even though there were only three main classes in Aquamarine, the ratio was not even. In his previous life, the ratio had been 30% Esper, 50% to 60% Pugilist, and only about 10% Mechanic. After Han Xiao's promotion, the ratio was three times greater!

Apart from Basic Knowledges, he also shared [Basic Shooting] and [Basic Combat]. These basic skills had attracted many novice players, and most had approached him to acquire these two basic skills. That was the real money tree!

Han Xiao was making a small profit from each novice player, and these small gains accumulated to a veritable fortune.

Three novice villages had earned him a total of 9.023 million EXP!

The efficiency was shocking!

With these eleven days of gaining experience at a rocket-like efficiency, he had earned an amount comparable to completing ten or so high difficulty missions! Players of the same level from his previous life would have needed to spend many months to acquire the same amount of experience!

The cumulative effect from the interface and the NPC template helped him improve tremendously. Well, at least he had found himself a steady channel for experience.

The player market had the most potential, and since he was able to monopolize it at the moment, the profit was simply amazing.

With countless experiences on hand, Han Xiao went ahead to level up his class rank [Mechanic (Trainee)] to Lv. 15!

When his level reached LV 55, he would need to advance in order to continue levelling up. In version 1, the level limit was LV 60, so he was five levels away. However, he was not restricted by the limit in this version. Han Xiao could in fact become the first character in Aquamarine to reach LV 60. Unfortunately, the advancement requirements were a real headache for him.

[Mechanic (Trainee)] levelled up to Lv. 15 (MAX).

+120 Energy, +1 DEX, +1 END, +4 INT.

Acquired 3 Unassigned Stat Points and 1 Talent Point!

Advancement mission: Create 5 [Admirable] quality machinery with an energy rating no lower than 60.

Damn, am I so unlucky? Out of so many advancing conditions, how unlucky am I to get the most troublesome one?

Han Xiao was stunned.

Admirable quality meant a grade higher than blue. Since he started building his machinery, his machinery was about 15% to 20% blue, and only 1% to 2% of his machinery might have reached purple.

A machine could be compared with the same type of machinery by its quality. For instance, there would be a huge difference in the stats of a white grade Foldable Machete compared to a blue grade Foldable Machete. The blue grade would have additional effects too. However, a blue type Machete could not be compared to a white grade Rover Robot.

For example, Cold Weapons, Guns, Grenades, Robots... these weapons were based on templates of the same kind. For example, a good quality razor could be used to shave comfortably; however, it could not be used to stir fry vegetables. Different kinds of equipment have their own uses and their own specialization.

The more high-end a machine was, the harder it would be to improve its quality. The intelligence stat affected the quality, and this was also the core attribute of mechanics. High-level mechanics could easily create high-quality, simple machines.

The requirement of 'energy rating no lower than 60' for advancement limited the possibility of him using low-level machinery as a shortcut. He had to create a purple machine that fulfilled the quality requirement.

This type of advancement requirement was considered the most difficult requirement. Normally, when one reached the level limit of an attribute, it would not be easy to build a stable machine of sufficient quality. It was either by luck or by improving his skills and achieving new abilities. No matter which route he took, he would need a lot of time.

The frown between Han Xiao's brows deepened like a great ravine.

Advancement was difficult. Moreover, he would need to use his experience points to level up his skills and fuse blueprints together. This could be a bottomless pit, especially for fusing the blueprints.

Levelling up by five levels had cost him almost five million EXP. As for the remaining EXP, Han Xiao kept two million for blueprints fusion and the rest on levelling up his skills. He levelled up [Mid-Grade Machinery Affinity] and [Molecular Refining] to the maximum.

Among the skills, Mid-Grade Machinery Affinity was a core skill; hence, the cost was higher. The effect was also naturally more remarkable. Since it affected a machine's grade, it was useful in completing the advancement task.

Experience come easily but goes quickly too.

Han Xiao let out a deep sigh. As he had spent a huge amount of experiences all at once, he felt a great sense of satisfaction.

Han Xiao had completed his visits to all the novice villages in the Southern Continent. Next, Han Xiao decided to visit the Western Continent. The Nations in the Western Continent were Maple and Ordina. He had stayed in the Southern Continent for too long, and he was finally visiting another continent.

On the way, I can also start on the secret quest. The tragedy of La Potter is set in the Western Continent.

...

Because there was a need to cross the sea, the transport aircraft stopped at one of Hesla port cities' airports to prepare for the long-distance flight and top up the fuel. This was Antonio's territory. Han Xiao spent a huge sum of money, almost emptying Antonio's warehouse, and filled up his aircraft with a lot of materials.

"You are going to the Western Continent?" Antonio held a thick black cigar in his mouth. With his bear paw sized hand, he patted Han Xiao on his shoulder. "A person like you—an assassin—will definitely be blacklisted by many nations. The special agents of Maple and Ordina might find you for afternoon tea. You will have no say over there too. Our power in the Western Continent is limited as well. A piece of advice for you: try not to expose yourself."

“And so?”

“Be careful.”

Han Xiao laughed and exclaimed in feigned surprise, “Oh, you can actually finish that in one sentence.”

Han Xiao patted Antonio’s strong arm and went up the aircraft. “Don’t worry, I won’t go crazy there.”

Filled with fuel, the aircraft took flight and disappeared into the air.

...

As Han Xiao visited all the novice villages in the Southern Continent, it created a huge discussion on the forum. The novice players from the other three continents were all envious and jealous of the players from the Southern Continent. They wished to meet the Black Phantom, too; however, it was not possible for them to cross over to another continent. As such, they could only watch helplessly as players from the Southern Continents boasted about it on the forum. This made them feel terrible, just like seeing photos of fast food in the middle of the night. Even if you were hungry, you could not eat it.

There was no point being envious, so all the helpless players could do was vent their emotions on the forum.

“Ah, I want Black Phantom!”

“I am suffering from a disease. I will die if I don’t meet Black Phantom.”

“Why are there no characters like Black Phantom in the continent that I got into?”

Players from the Southern Continent started giggling as they thought they were fortunate to have a great birthplace. Looking at players from the other continents grumbling about their lack of luck, the players in the Southern Continent felt a sense of superiority.

Man, luck is also part of power. Not that I’m targeting anyone, but I mean everyone here is trash.

By this point, the players from the Southern Continent all had inflated egos.

Chapter 166: Alien (1)

“The Black Phantom had gone to the Western Continent? Why is he there?” Bennett was shocked.

“I don’t know. He didn’t say.” Wang Yuan shook his head.

Bennett had no choice but to give Han Xiao a call. He did not answer. As Han Xiao was flying across the ocean, the reception on his phone was bad.

Helpless, Bennett shook his head. Stardragon’s material aid had arrived, and Hesla had loosened a little after some work. The shelter plan was about to be rolled out as a pilot project in the Southern Continent. He was planning to gather the strongest members of various organizations as the first layer of protection for the plan. Black Phantom was third on the list of people he was going to invite. However, before he could even invite him, Han Xiao had already left for the Western Continent.

The location of the first shelter had already been decided. It would be located in a large ruined city in the wild.

Bennett suddenly had an idea. “Maple refused to provide material aid, and that group of bureaucrats are not easing up no matter what we do. Luckily, Black Phantom is going to the Western Continent, so he can talk for me!”

...

The enclosed room did not seem to have a single light source and was separated from the outside world by a thick metal door. Through the darkness, there was only a streak of light peeking through a small opening. Electrolux was sitting in a corner, reading his interface in exasperation. His Esper potential rating was Grade A. However, after over 20 days of open beta, when most players had reached LV 8, he was still at LV 1.

The Germinal Organization said they would lock him up for a month, and they meant it. If it was not that Electrolux was reluctant to give up on his high potential Esper ability, he would have changed to a new account. After the members of the club learned of the situation of his account, they had all been very concerned. They told Electrolux to hold on, and they would invest resources into him when the restriction period was over. With that, he was able to persevere and come online every day to wait, hoping for a miracle.

At that moment, the golden metal door started opening slowly, and white light sprayed into the room.

Electrolux looked up and saw a man in white standing by the door. The man’s stared at Electrolux as though he was looking at something precious.

“I want to perform a little test with you.” A man in white smiled freakishly.

...

Cyberlos was joyous.

He was one of the top executives in the Germinal Organization. As a biologist, he had worked on various experiments for Germinal for many years. Before joining them, Cyberlos was a high-level researcher who betrayed Raylen. He was insane, and his mind was always full of crazy ideas. Even as a fellow human, it was impossible to stop his strong urge to dissect other human bodies. He also did not care about principles and would join anyone who was willing to aid him with resources. In the end, he joined the Germinal Organization.

As such, Germinal supported Cyberlos to experiment on his crazy ideas by sponsoring him with materials. He was responsible for Valkyrie, Super Soldier, and Genetic Improvement—all those projects that were totally unethical. There were even other more sinister experiments, and just by mentioning the names, it would make a normal person disgusted and the insane excited. For instance, Cross-Species Hybrid Breeding, Human-Animal Fusion...

Through years of research, Cyberlos had conducted over a hundred experiments and seen thousands of special and gifted human specimens. Among which, Cyberlos was excited about two of these specimens, and both were Espers.

One of them had bone marrow that had amazing healing functions. It could even revive thousands of dead bodies. However, since the souls were absent in these bodies, the bodies would not truly be revived. That was also the first time when Cyberlos discovered the notion of souls. He experimented more, but due to the lack of technology on Aquamarine, he was unable to gather any souls.

The other person had some power that could interfere with destiny. It was also the most incredible thing that Cyberlos had ever witnessed. This person could interfere with the course of an event just by commenting. It was something even more difficult to explain as compared to souls. This special ability could only be used when a person was clear and awake. A test proved that it could not work with hypnotism. This person was locked up around the clock and was made to wear a muzzle, which prevented him from talking. Due to negligence in the past, many scary incidents had occurred, and the most recent incident happened a year ago, when this person commented that a disaster would happen to the Germinal. With that being said, the Germinal Organization had indeed suffered a painful blow.

As for Electrolux, he was the third specimen that Cyberlos was interested in.

Cyberlos re-read and scrutinized the diary.

“Day 1: The subject was sent into the restricted room, monitored around the clock, including using night vision camera monitoring. Fed three times a day at 7am, 11am, and 7pm with no relaxation time given. Subject seemed anxious but has yet to show any after effects from the brainwashing session. Initial observation shows that subject has immunity. Recommended to perform Compliance Test on the subject.

“Day 2: 8am, went through the Compliance Test. Results shown that subject is highly obedient. Passed all the test, and the polygraph does not exhibit any abnormalities. Subject has accepted the new identity from the brainwashing. 11pm, abnormality started showing. Subject has vanished, and no signs of damage were observed in the restricted room. A search was conducted, subject not found.

“Day 4: Subject reappeared in the restricted room, the same location where he disappeared, with no warning. Footage data [Appendix -001]. We controlled the subject immediately and interrogated about the reason behind his disappearance and what he encountered after he disappeared. Subjected seemed confused, and the interrogation was recorded in [Appendix -002]. Increased the monitoring on the subject.

“Day 6: Used hypnotism to check if he was lying, and the subject spoke gibberish. Footage [Appendix -003]. At night, subject vanished again.

“Day 8: Subject reappeared. Interrogated and hypnotized, details [Appendix -004]. At 8pm, surgery was performed to observe the biology, and his physiology seemed normal. Surgery conclusion [Appendix -005].”

...

The observation diary contained observations from 22 days. Some of the vagrants in the Andrea Mainland also appeared to have similar symptoms as Electrolux. As such, this caught the attention of Germinal. They remained quiet and continued to observe secretly.

Immortal, able to resurrect, appear out of nowhere, unknown origin... If it was just one person, there was no reason to worry. However, thousands of people had shown the same symptoms, and this number was still increasing, as though it was spreading like an infectious disease. The leader was concerned and made Cyberlos in charge of conducting various experiments on Electrolux.

Electrolux was pinned down in the middle by the guards and was brought to the surgery theatre. Lying down on the surgery table, he was given the surgery task. The Germinal Organization had brainwashed him. As such, he thought all orders given were compulsory missions and violation would lead to heavy punishments.

Electrolux could only adhere to the instructions, and he was feeling frustrated.

Cyberlos suited up into his surgical gown and started dissecting Electrolux. Electrolux was given anesthesia and was unable to move. All he could do was watch the knife moving about on his body. As he realized he was being dissected, his body system started reacting when the operation started.

You died.

Electrolux was struck dumb, and he was revived in the room after ten seconds.

What in the world... Was I dissected and experimented on?

Electrolux froze. He had lost one revive for that week. However, his EXP did not decrease, and that might have been due to him dying under special circumstances.

This was the first time he had encountered such a situation. In the past, when he was playing other virtual online games, NPCs did not care about any special abilities that players possessed, which caused many people complained about it. Players who were more creative had even thought of dissecting these people to study them. He could not believe this was happening in Galaxy.

Cyberlos witnessed the whole procedure where Electrolux vanished and then reappeared again. It happened in a split second, and the blood stains could still be seen on the operation theatre.

"You... No, what kind of creature are you?" Cyberlos' eyes lit up.

Electrolux suddenly felt like pulling a prank. *What will happen if I tell the truth?*

Chapter 167: Alien (2)

"The world you live in is just a game. I am just a player..."

To his shock, Electrolux realized that anything he tried to say became gibberish. He was unwilling to give up trying, but he realized that if he wanted to reveal any information about the real world, the system would change his words.

Cyberlos shook his head. "It is the same as the hypnosis record, all nonsense."

Electrolux was shocked to find out that NPC could tell the uniqueness of a player. This must have been coded by the developer in an attempt to simulate more realistic characters.

It's so real. Electrolux was shocked. It made him felt as if the NPC was a real person. *Galaxy is such a realistic game.*

He finally understood the name for Galaxy 1.0 edition. The developer wanted to allow the players to become Adventers, to be the first people to experience another realistic world. Therefore, they did not allow the players to reveal truths of the reality in case they ruined the realistic feeling. He then remembered an old online game. There were also two camps of players, and the players from different camps were not allowed to communicate. It seemed to be called the world of the beast.

"It must be like that!" Electrolux exclaimed.

Even if he knew that the reactions that NPCs gave to the players were simulated, he was very impressed. Aside from his responsibilities as a professional player, Electrolux had formed great interest in Galaxy. He was even anticipating what would happen next. There would be more and more players, how would these NPCs react?

The guards brought Electrolux back, and Cyberlos stayed in the laboratory and collected blood traces on the operating table. The results of the test were so different from ordinary people, causing his eyes to flicker with curiosity.

"Let's say this occurrence is the appearance of an alien phenomenon. But why is this phenomenon occurring here, and why has it spread? Most of the aliens appear out of thin air, and there are no database records, unless there is a birth of a new civilization? Could there be a projection from another intelligent species?"

Cyberlos turned on his computer and brought up a highly confidential file. He verified using his fingerprint, his iris, and a password, which was changed on a daily basis, before opening a document—The Universal Treaty (7th revised edition). Aquamarine came into contact with the Kedolas civilization and had attained more knowledge. The Germinal Organization had a copy of this treaty as well.

It was stated on the treaty that a projection from a high-level civilization would occasionally interfere with a low-level civilization. The special characteristics of not dying was similar to the description of the projection technique on the treaty. If this was true, this would be the invasion of an advanced civilization. No, for the entity to invade, it would not be so troublesome. A logical explanation would be Aquamarine had become a testing ground for a certain civilization. Cyberlos was not angry at all. In fact, he was very excited by the unexpected phenomenon.

If the number of aliens continued increasing, the pattern of Aquamarine would have a drastic change with this characteristic of not dying.

The aliens can be brainwashed and are very subservient, but when asked about their place of origin, they talk nonsense, and this could be an instinctive reaction for them. This definitely requires more experimental evidence.

The transmission of this alien phenomenon was unknown, and it was impossible to determine if it was contagious or not. The results of the test were normal, and the occurrence for this phenomenon could not be explained—it could be an unique ability, disease, or genetic mutation.

The interesting thing was that no abnormal sleeping habits had been observed. From time to time, the disappearance could be the 'sleeping mode' of the aliens. Some aliens had other abilities, their strength was weak, and they seemed to have potential for other unknown reasons.

Is the appearance of aliens long term or short term? Will the numbers continuously increase? Is there a possibility of the beast infecting the aliens? In the long run, there seems to be some danger with this alien phenomenon, and it is necessary to implement some preventive measures as early as possible.

Writing down his conclusion, Cyberlos handed the report over to his leader. His leader's worldview was also slightly affected, but fortunately, he was determined. Due to a huge variety of Espers around, even the average person was very resilient, so they were used to all kinds of strange phenomenon.

"The Six Nations will notice the aliens sooner or later. With this phenomenon occurring, the fact that they are our enemy is not as important. They will definitely contact the interstellar civilization to ask for the reasons of this occurrence and will have no time to set off a war. Which means, we'll have time to breathe."

The leader was very curious about the appearance of aliens, but he was unable to contact the interstellar civilization. However, he noticed an important problem—the aliens could actually be brainwashed, and they were very obedient!

Thus, he reached the natural conclusion.

"They are natural cannon fodder!"

Andrea mainland was the territory of the Germinal Organization, and the leader ordered people to bring back research specimens to brainwash. There were also aliens appearing in the other three continents. It was a pity that the sub-bases had been uprooted, and no one was around to capture them. The leader only realized now that they had lost an opportunity all because of Zero. He was so angry that his teeth ached, and he even wanted to make use of the 'Son of Destiny' to lock onto the position of zero, but he had not yet made the decision to take the risk.

I don't know how the interstellar civilization views this phenomenon, is this rare or common?

...

There were four new novice villages in the Western Continent, and public beta had been open for more than twenty days. The average level of the players had also reached LV 10, so Han Xiao was prepared to include the [Energy Training Technique] into the list of skills. The asking price was 10,000 experience and 3,000 Aquamarine Dollars. Some players were able to afford it.

The plane had landed in Fabian's main base on the Western Continent, and as the climate of the Western Continent was very cold, Han Xiao felt uncomfortable when he first breathed in the air.

These few days, he created the parts of the python armor using the skeleton formed by the PE-0 Nano-Synthetic Fiber. It looked like thick black tights, and the outer layer was like muscles. Han Xiao tried it on once, and it was light. He had found his physical attributes improved. For example, when throwing a punch, the fibers would stretch and twist in the direction of the punch, increasing the strength of the attack. It was similar to getting a new set of muscles and tendons, but this was more flexible, and the user could do whatever they wanted.

In the debugging stage, it was necessary to prevent the loss of power with other materials. Han Xiao had spent quite a bit of experience, using [Advance Materials Science] with other knowledge, to attain certain materials.

The power system was the most critical for the mecha frame. The 'Bonfire' Mini Reaction Furnace was another equipment for advancement. The seller seems to be in the Western Continent, so Han Xiao had chosen to come here.

A mecha was a quick way to improve combat power, and as long as he could create the Python-Lightweight Mecha, his combat power could increase by a huge jump.

I'll go to the novice village and collect some experience first.

Han Xiao marked the location on the map and handed it to the driver. At that instant, his cell phone buzzed. He opened it and turned out to be a message from the Blood Pact Society.

"Black Phantom, this is a reward from the Dark Net. Your mission is to sneak into the residence of a few Maple officials and leave certain documents there. Someone will meet you at the Western Continent and give you the documents you will need, including the specific information of the location and some Maple officials."

Han Xiao raised an eyebrow and called Bennett. "Hey, what are you up to?"

It was beneficial to know someone on the top as one phone call across could get him information.

"Maple does not want to provide assistance, and it is because these few officials are getting in the way. You know the situation over in Maple—we would be touching the treasury of these officials, so they are fiercely opposing us."

"What assistance?" Han Xiao raised an eyebrow as he had an inclination.

"I have yet to mention to you, but the organization is planning a large-scale project—shelter. There was originally a year to plan, but as the war is about to start, we can only push forward with the plan and request aid from all the countries. Only Maple has rejected."

Han Xiao's eyes lit up. The shelter plan had started early. With his relationship to the Dark Net, he was confident in the plan and asked an obvious question, "What is the shelter plan? Do you need my help?"

Chapter 168: Novice Guides?

“I will tell you the details when you return to the Southern Continent, and yes, I need your help...”
Bennett paused. “Stardragon first promised to render their help, and the reason was you taking part in the battle of the Tedramira River. I owe you a favor.”

“Just give me a few small benefits.”

Bennett laughed. “This is exactly what I expected from you, let’s talk more when you return to Southern Continent.”

After ending the phone call, Han Xiao read the reward detail and triggered the mission.

You triggered Level C mission [Deterrent intimidation]!

Introduction: Some of Maple’s officials are corrupt, and it is time to let them know that holding on to the money bags will only get them bullets. We are not robbers, but we do not mind occasional guest appearances.

Mission Requirements: Enter the residence of five targeted officials and the evidence of the Dark Net.

Rewards: 120,000 experience, 500 Dark Net reputation

Without the special reward, it is just an ordinary task. I’ll just get it done and over with. Han Xiao nodded.

The transport plane took off with Han Xiao after a refueling. A few hours later, they arrived in a new novice village. It was not easy to find the airport in the wilderness. However, as the gyroscopic engines were equipped on the wings of the transport aircraft to provide vertical lifting power, it was safe for the plane to take off on the runway. The pilot was a veteran as well.

If Han Xiao did not have the discounts as an old customer, the price of chartering flights would have been several times more expensive. This connection was very important as it saved him a lot of money.

After using the Electromagnetic Hover-boots for a while after he alighted from the plane, Han Xiao soon reached the novice village. The players there were doing their missions passionately, and upon seeing the Black Phantom, they were stunned and gushed toward him.

...

Poseidon, a member of the Guild of Gods, hummed a song as he scanned through the forum posts. President Jupiter did not bother too much about the Rank A mission, and the development of the guild was on the right track.

In the second issue of Galaxy Times, the group had invited a beautiful e-sports player, the head of the rainstorm club, Rainy Kim. She shared her experience on the show and introduced Stardragon.

She had joined the Tedramira River Battle, so she revealed some information, including news of the Germinal Organization. After Jupiter learned that the Germinal troops from the Southern Continent had

disappeared, he lost hope for the A-rank mission. Dark Crow Valley Base had also been removed; thus, he concentrated on coordinating the guild and expanded toward Southern Continent's side.

In the second episode of Galaxy Times, professional players from different planets were invited for an interview, and these players had joined different camps on the map, allowing the players to attain more knowledge of the different planets. The conflict between the Six Nations and the Germinal Organization revealed the main plot to the players of Aquamarine.

Since the start, Poseidon had never approved of the Germinal A-rank mission; he felt that it would distract the group. Fortunately, Jupiter turned his back and gave up on the A level mission. In turn, the professional guild saw this mission and allowed the players to challenge this difficult task, thus handing over the task to the team.

After the discussion, they selected a player from Andrea Mainland to find the Germinal Organization and trigger the A-rank mission. The guild also provided resources and intelligence support to help the player complete the task. If anyone succeeded, the guild could have one more potential account, and there no losses even if they do not succeed.

The players were the face of the guild, and their status was higher than that of the guild. The first-line player was also famous as Poseidon asked him for a few signatures, which made him very happy.

The guild was pleased with the A-rank mission they triggered during the novice period and gave away some prizes.

The guild had passed the unlucky period, and Poseidon was in a good mood.

Speaking of the development of the guild, the Black Phantom could not go unmentioned. Since most of them were born in the Southern Continent, with the support of the Black Phantom, they benefited in one way or another. The Black Phantom only appeared in the Southern Continent, which gave the players a huge advantage, and the guild benefited a lot.

Many opponents were born in other continents, and with the guild in front, the situation was very good.

Looking at the jealousy and envy that the old player had, the members of the guild had a sense of superiority.

Suddenly, the forum started having lots of new posts published by Aquamarine. The content could be summarized in one sentence.

"Black Phantom is coming to the Western Continent!"

Poseidon snorted and hurriedly clicked and viewed a post. After reading it, he began sweating.

Don't tell me Black Phantom is running around every single Novice Village.

If this was to be true, everyone simply had to wait patiently, and the advantages of being in a guild would vanish.

Poseidon hurriedly informed the president and other core members in the channel. They were equally shocked.

Jupiter was extremely calm. “We can’t say things like that. We learned some skills earlier than others and were able to finish quests much earlier. There are bound to be some advantages for joining us. NPC’s actions can’t be controlled. Don’t try to force things.”

Upon hearing what the president had said, everyone calmed down. Poseidon glanced at the forum again and suddenly screamed, “What the... come look at this post!”

“What?” Jupiter doubted the post. It was a screenshot of Han Xiao’s skill list, and the focus was on an [Energy Training Method]. Seeing the skill’s effect, everyone was stunned.

“Magical!”

Energy was a key attribute. It directly affected combat strength. And with the novice players’ energy being so poor, they were usually unable to support an Esper’s consumption. Espers needed this skill for sure!

Jupiter was an Esper. He turned jealous and suddenly realized a serious problem. “Wait a moment. When we were in the Southern Continent, Black Phantom did not teach us this skill!”

Everyone stood silent.

Could it have been that when the Black Phantom was going to the Novice Village, he would give better things to them? In that case, wouldn’t players in the Southern Continent be disadvantaged?

This isn’t advantageous at all! It’s way more unlucky!

Among the core members of Guild of Gods, there was a player named Eggama.

This unlucky feeling... Why is it so familiar...? It’s returning! Everything is returning!

...

On the forum, Western Continent players were as if they were dogs that had eaten Spring medicine, jumping up and down, posting their videos, and showing off. They, who had been always on Southern Continent for so long, finally had something to show off. It was now the Southern Continent’s players’ turn to suffer. What they originally thought was exclusively theirs was actually given to everyone.

In particular, seeing the new skills taught by Black Phantom, the [Energy Training Method], the Western Continent players were extremely overjoyed and made the Southern Continent players very tired and uncomfortable.

What goes around comes around, and it was time for the players on the Southern Continent to watch in jealousy.

“Such luck, why didn’t Black Phantom have this skill before?”

“I want to learn it so much.”

“Isn’t he a mechanic instructor? He has such awesome skills! Even though I’m an Esper, I’m tempted, too!”

Beyond the posts that were either showing off or complaining, Black Phantom appeared in the Western Continent, and this had gotten all the players to start guessing. He seemed to aim to go through all the novice villages. Could Black Phantom actually have been the official novice guide? But other novice planets did not have one. The guesses were endless. Furthermore, there were players from other novice planets coming over to Aquamarine's forum to complain of unfairness. The novice guide broke the levelled playing field for many, but their voices would soon be overwhelmed by the everyone else.

Players from the Northern Continent and Andrea were the ones that greatly supported this statement. Looking at the movements of Black Phantom, they could very well be the next one, and they could not wait to bring themselves in front to the Black Phantom.

Do you see the huge anticipation in these small eyes of ours? Come on, hurry!

The Western Continent's players were almost celebrating like it was a festival; some of them who were about to leave the novice village to explore the map immediately reverted back to where they were upon hearing the news of Black Phantom. They hurriedly returned to their villages, waiting for the Black Phantom's arrival in great excitement.

[Energy Training Method] became a craze. Not only were some players wanting to change class, even Esper came to learn the skill. While the asking price was very high, this magical skill was worth selling one's every asset for!

Esper players desperately needed to increase their Energy, and to them, the [Energy Training Method] was like a Viagra pill. It allowed them to last much longer, and the difference was between that of a three minute and three second gap. Whilst short, the concept was totally different. This was the difference between one and many, between Heaven and Earth!

Chapter 169: First Episode of Galaxy's Exploration Journal

Han Xiao had already foreseen this type of situation; in the first advancement, everyone would learn [Energy Training Technique]. However, the players were unaware that for players at LV 8 or 9, this was a magical skill. The added strength exceeded whatever the player received for their upgrade. Also, some players did not advance in their main class; hence, they would need a skill that provided energy even more.

Aquamarine was the main planet for all the Chinese players. Han Xiao imparted a skill that all players were bound to learn, and while it might seem like he was scamming the players, that was not the case. It was important to note that obtaining a slight advantage in the early stages would enable one to snowball and grow stronger.

In other words, Han Xiao allowed the LV 10 players to acquire the skills that were only available at LV 20. This way, his actions were equivalent to a win-win situation.

Not only did he earn extraordinary amounts of EXP, he also enabled the Chinese players to gain an advantage over other planets' players.

Perfect.

Han Xiao was pleased with his plan. Why would he scam the players? All those perceptions were people's prejudices and misunderstandings toward him. He really loved his motherland; thinking back to the past when his father almost named him Patriotic Xiao, but under the authority of the tigress in the house, his father changed to his current name, Han Xiao.

[Energy Training Technique] required 10,000 EXP to learn, and the thought of the potential profits made his heart beat wildly. Only when the players advance for the first time would he then be able to impart [Energy Training Technique] and reap the profits. This was kind of a reckless deal; he would take whatever he could. Looking at the player's degree of enthusiasm, Han Xiao felt that the EXP he received in Version 1.0 would be an astronomical number.

While he was busy with the Western Continent novice village, Bun-hit-dog finally released the first episode in the forum.

Galaxy's Exploration Journal: Black Phantom (1)

...

Bun-hit-dog had a bit of a reputation, and the moment the video was released, his die-hard fans and curious passersby immediately clicked into it.

"Finally, this should be spicy!"

"A surprise release!"

"The subject is Black Phantom. Is Bun-hit-dog on his team now?"

The program was released in the forum's video section. The forum was not for tasteless gossiping only—it had other functions. In order to allow the players to pass the time while playing the game, the video traffic was huge, and with the addition of old viewers watching, the number of viewers increased quite a lot.

The opening titles consisted of the promo edit and some screenshots of the scenery before the video began. The first thing that appeared was the third person's perspective of Bun-hit-dog. This was the game's pre-installed viewing function, which could also be used to examine the exterior. The background was Black Pine Settlement. Bun-hit-dog waved in the direction of the camera, and his opening line was a soliloquy.

"The everlasting world produced Yin and Yang, the Yin and Yang that comes of all living things. The country's benefits are at the cost of my life, and every moment of spring is precious. Welcome to Galaxy's Exploration Journal, I am Bun-hit-dog."

The barrage was filled with ridicule.

"What is this dumb soliloquy?"

"I read a line of the poem at that time, if..."

"How confident I am in unifying my country is just like how the sun rises from the East, divine toad requires a thousand years to learn!"

Bun-hit-dog continued in the show. “There hasn’t been a new upload in a long time. Being the first episode of the Galaxy series, I’ll video a character’s perspective and let everyone have a taste of my expedition. This character left a lot of impressions on the players—Mechanic Master, Novice Leader, Mysterious NPC, Secret Quest. Presumably, the audience in front of the screen is curious about the identity of this character. That’s right, he is the person in the title—Black Phantom!”

“Wow, awkward talking time, I salute you!”

“Finally...”

“That’s what we came for!”

The lens switched over to show Bun-hit-dog’s perspective. The official content began now.

The video content consisted of clips recorded by Bun-hit-dog, and it became different segments after rounds of editing. The special effects and the narration were then added on later. Bun-hit-dog used a humorous style, explaining the first encounter with Han Xiao where Han Xiao resisted a pack of wolves in Green Valley Ville and stopped the confrontation between two warlords. Bun-hit-dog showed the first person’s point of view while the narration began to analyze Han Xiao’s influence.

“In one sentence, Black Phantom exhibited his influence by moving the two warlords away with just his words. Before I begin with the analysis, I would like to introduce the identities of the two warlords...”

The scene changed and arrived at Black Pine Settlement. Bun-hit-dog introduced Lu Cheng, who was the leader of this large-scale settlement. He possessed a huge army and tons of war chariots. Then, the topic changed.

“Lu Cheng possesses such great power, yet he was afraid of Black Phantom. Then, where exactly did Black Phantom’s influence originate from? Listen carefully to what I, Brother Bun, have to say.” He used Lu Cheng as bait to further the intrigue the audience had toward Black Phantom. The results were outstanding.

Frenzied Sword acted as an esteemed guest and appeared on this show. He analyzed Han Xiao’s identity in their conversation and slowly touched the tip of the iceberg of Han Xiao’s mysterious origins.

First, both revealed Black Phantom’s name, which seemed to be Han Xiao. Initially, in Stardragon Intelligence Agency, this was information that no one knew of, and in a flash, it captured everyone’s attention. The barrage became very sparse, and everyone was reading the content seriously.

Frenzied Sword had sucked up to Han Xiao during the beta-testing, but he was unaware of Han Xiao’s real identity. He only understood that Black Phantom belonged to Six Nations’ side. However, due to some reason, Black Phantom left Stardragon and joined the two organizations, the Dark Net and the Blood Pact Society. This information came from the [Extremely Fatal] powerful enemy—Liu Cheng. Even though he did not know the particulars of these two powers, he knew that they were huge backers, and they belonged to the high-ranking powers that players were unable to interact with currently. They were also among Black Phantom’s origin.

Bun-hit-dog and Frenzied Sword also thought that the crucial reason that people were afraid of Black Phantom was because of his capability. With the players’ current rank, they were unable to see the high-

ranking characters' exact stats. However, they had witnessed Han Xiao killing other [Extremely Fatal] NPCs more than once, and based on that, they felt among the NPCs, Black Phantom's capabilities were at the peak!

Becoming enemies with Germinal was Black Phantom's current biggest displayed goal. Due to the lack of clues, they were unable to understand the reason behind Black Phantom and Germinal's conflict. Frenzied Sword actually divulged the situation of the beta-testing. From beta-testing to public-testing, the game went through more than three months, and Han Xiao had taken on a new persona and become Black Phantom. The moment this information was released, it immediately evoked the audience's curiosity.

What exactly did he experience that made him the Black Phantom today?

Everything was just assumptions without evidence. The show was unclear, and Bun-hit-dog's real intention was to toss out this question to act as the show's hook to attract the audience's curiosity.

Continuing on, Bun-hit-dog and Frenzied Sword discussed the Black Phantom's actions of scouring novice villages and agreed that this was decisive evidence that Black Phantom was a novice leader. After twenty or so days of amusement, the players realized that the NPC's actions and thoughts were very 'real', and Black Phantom would shock players consistently. For what reason would the Black Phantom interact with the players frequently and also involve himself in obvious plans? There had to be a reason, yet the show only mentioned it in passing.

Bun-hit-dog expressed that both he and Frenzied Sword had triggered Black Phantom's secret quest, proving that he was able to shadow and report on Black Phantom. Also, he conveniently introduced all kinds of material benefits that they had received from Black Phantom, showing the scene where Han Xiao gifted Frenzied Sword two high quality firearms. They also followed Black Phantom and arrived at Black Pine, a map that was higher-ranked than a novice village and would issue missions with generous rewards.

The barrage was full of the material benefits being flaunted and the audience envied them to no end. Those who were able to trigger Black Phantom's secret quests were the luckiest people!

"To hell with you, bastard!"

"Sigh..."

"I heard that holding your breath allows you to take in some of that luck. I..."

During the show's ending, Bun-hit-dog said, "Black Phantom's series currently only has one episode. The next episode might be of other content. After all, Frenzied Sword and I have been left behind in Black Pine. However, you don't have to worry. I'll continue to pursue and explore Black Phantom's past life. Until then, I'll see all you Dog Viewers in the next episode!"

The audience, who finished the episode in one breath, had just one thought.

Exciting!

The scene was Bun-hit-dog's first-person perspective of exploring while the side explanation cut into Black Phantom's angle, which introduced a lot of information that ordinary people were unclear of. It

tossed out a lot of the world's background and knowledge, and this answered many perplexing problems.

Furthermore, the style was relaxed, and the content was mind-blowing. It provided all kinds of interesting assumptions, and the audience was fully satisfied. They went on to recommend it on other forums, allowing more players to join in.

The subject matter of Bun-hit-dog's first episode was well-chosen. Coincidentally, it was when Han Xiao visited the Western Continent and allowed everyone to know of his existence. It was a hot topic; Bun-hit-dog's video became extremely popular, and the viewer count surged.

The first episode went completely viral!

Bun-hit-dog was pleasantly surprised. His choice of this episode's subject proved to be a correct decision.

The video became popular because of Han Xiao's popularity, and not only that, it added greatly to Han Xiao's reputation.

Everyone's impression of Han Xiao in their hearts gradually moved from a Mysterious Merchant and Skills Trainer to an influential NPC. Guessing his origin gradually became an everyday topic.

Chapter 170: Trading Storm (1)

Other than the reconciliation of interests, some players had another mindset toward NPCs, which was admiration and adherence. This mindset came from the love toward a certain character, the popularity of the character, or players being fascinated by what the character had been through, which formed a group of fans for these NPCs. The classic examples of these are 'Dragonborn', 'Chloe von Einzbern', 'Medivh', 'One Punch Man', 'Kratos', etc.

By gaining admiration and love from players, the players might behave in a biased way toward the characters when making certain decisions, such as refusing to accept missions from the enemy camp or following popular NPCs to war. Ladies, weirdos, and overly powerful characters had congenital advantages in such things—Han Xiao was confident in that.

However, without real benefits, this kind of relationship based solely on admiration would not have any real meaning. To have players fight for him, perks and benefits were a crucial requirement. He knows how the players behaved; they might help out an NPC out of enjoyment, but only for a short period and would leave sooner or later if the player did not get any benefits from it.

Luckily, his plan consisted of both benefits and popularity, killing two birds with one stone.

Han Xiao has also watched Bun-hit-dog's video, which was exactly what he had hoped for—to gain the curiosity and interest of players by sending out a video with some clues in it.

The information flow between players and NPCs was restricted; they both had a different set of intelligence at hand, so leaking out his real name was not an issue.

The Germinal Organization knew that he was Zero and might even know the original name of his body, Han Xiao, but they did not know he was Black Phantom and Han Xiao

Stardragon knew that he was Han Xiao and Zero, but they were not sure if he was Black Phantom.

Players knew that he was Black Phantom, his name was Han Xiao, and he served the Stardragon before, but they did not know he was Zero.

Oh, players have yet to receive any information on 'Zero'.

Dark Net only knew him as Black Phantom.

Every organization only had a fraction of the information, and if his true identity was exposed one day, he would just have to change his face, and nothing would happen. He could even increase his legendary level by the time he was strong enough and choose to reveal all his identities.

Since the official launch, Han Xiao's name had always been on the top of the Planet Aquamarine forums, which made him quite well known. Just like celebrities, the more people that knew him, the easier it was for him to strengthen his impression on people.

The situation was going great for him, from what he had done and the help of various videos, his popularity was continually growing at a fast pace. But Han Xiao always has the habit of planning ahead. He had already started to feel an imaginary ceiling on the path of his increasing popularity.

Although the functionality of the game was praised by the players, it lacked interactive storylines, and the only way that could make players actively want to interact with him was through the main storyline. Therefore, Han Xiao decided to take on one of the main storylines from Bennett.

After going to two more novice villages, Han Xiao decided to take some time off so that the players could get some money, and he could have some time for himself to do other stuff. At the top of his 'to do' list would be to get the Bonfire Mini Reaction Furnace.

He called Lei Zhenyu to ask where the seller wanted to carry out the deal, and he gave him the seller's number

"Greetings," the person on the phone said. It was an electrical generated fake voice, so he could not figure out the age nor the gender—it was very confidential.

"How are we going to carry out the deal?" Han Xiao was very straight to the point.

"In three days. In a moment, I will send you the location. Bring your money, and I will bring the stuff," the person said.

"Okay, I will get one of my men to carry out the deal," Han Xiao replied.

Ten seconds after hanging up the call, Han Xiao received a message.

'Severus, the city near the border of Ordina.'

...

Financial organizations and families were deeply rooted in Ordina, so it was filled with competition and very clear class differentiation, as the country's policies were focused on the elites. Every city felt grand and solemn, and the regular rainfall created a light fog that made it look gloomy.

It was drizzling in Severus. The weather was damp and bleak, which suited the atmosphere of the city.

In a residential flat that had been made into a surveillance room that was connected to every traffic cam within three streets, a dozen or so men wearing black were busy doing something. Some were checking on the guns, some were looking at the surveillance screens, and some were going through the intelligence.

This was an intelligence action group in Ordina, together with six other action groups, which locked down three more areas nearby.

The agents gathered around to capture an escaped criminal who had stolen classified country intelligence. The target had been on the run for many years, and they had finally found a lead that he would appear in Severus to carry out a deal with a third party.

The intelligence source was trustworthy; it had come directly from the information division. They had hacked into countless phone lines and were able to pick out a few that were suspected of being important calls from the target.

"Continue your surveillance. Snipers get ready; take down the target once he meets the dealer. The higher-ups suspect that the target is dealing with a political finance organization, so we need evidence," the leader of the mission said through their earpiece. "The target is quite crafty. You're our last level of insurance Mr. Mag. Please be ready to act at all times."

"Yes," he replied in a very cold tone.

Mag was one of Ordina's aces; his position was similar to Mo Ran's. The fact that even he had been sent to ensure the completion of the mission showed how important this mission was to Ordina.

...

Airplanes were not allowed to dock at Ordina; therefore, Han Xiao travelled by Electromagnetic Hover-boots for a day after alighting to reach Severus.

Wanderers entering the city formed a long queue at the border of Severus while the soldiers of Ordina were patrolling the area. Their equipment was more refined than that of Stardragon, and their expressions were covered by a tactical mask.

Everyone was silent in the team, with the only sound coming from their foot steps.

The deal will be carried out in Severus, Han Xiao thought to himself. He had already changed his clothes and appearance, but his equipment was still with him. He would be looking for a beating if he went in the official way, so he had to be smuggled in.

With enough money and threatening from his gun, the smuggling process was smooth. Just like mankind never being able to kill all cockroaches, there would always be such smugglers no matter how tight security was at the border.

...

Han Xiao's clothing covered him from head to toe as he had to hide his equipment, and he carried a large backpack with his guns.

Light rain poured on his raincoat, and hiding under the cap was a different face that Han Xiao had changed into. The reminder from Antonio made sense, and he did not want to mess up this deal, so there was no way he would've appeared with the face of Black Phantom or his true face.

The location was a cafe at the side of the road, seat seven.

As the buyer, if he did not arrive first, the seller might not even appear. Therefore, he sat at seat seven and looked around the cafe.

The radio was playing slow music, and he could see the fog outside the windows, it was quite soothing. Half of the seats were filled; some were drinking quietly, and the others were looking at the newspaper or their laptop. The arrival of Han Xiao did not attract any attention, and they carried on doing what they were doing.

It was normal and peaceful.

Han Xiao called the server and ordered a cup of coffee while waiting for the seller.

He looked out the floor-to-ceiling window. People who seemed to be rushing home passed by quickly from time to time while carrying their umbrellas, and a few men at the other side of the road were hiding from the rain while playing with their phones. The drizzling rain fell from the ceiling and formed a puddle at the side of the street.

Han Xiao looked normal as he lowered his head to sip his coffee, but he had noticed something unusual.

The guy reading newspaper sitting three seats away is breathing heavily and has a much higher heartbeat rate than normal. The woman drinking coffee at the bar is sweating at the side of her head. The man that passed by the floor-to-ceiling window had a very steady pace but slowed down on purpose for 30% when he passed by the window. The second person from the left hiding from the rain is stamping the floor with the back of his feet, which is a sign of worry and nervousness, Han Xiao thought.

At LV 55, his senses were at a very high level. Through the tiny details of movement and expression of normal people, he was able to figure out their emotional state.

Someone is monitoring the café—seller or third party? Could I be the target? I don't think I've messed with anyone in Ordina...

The interface showed up when he notices the monitors.

Mission Introduction: The mysterious seller you're having a deal with is an outlaw of Ordina. Your deal with him has diverged. Unlucky for you, you're now also under surveillance, dragged into a storm that does not concern you.

Mission Requirement: Run away from Ordina's pursuit.

Reward: 65,000 experience

Bonus Reward: Unknown

I have been so damn unlucky recently. Han Xiao was upset. All he wanted to do was get the Mini Bonfire Reaction Furnace, but it seemed like he was now involved in a rather serious event. Could things not just be peaceful and easier for him?

The item was very important to Han Xiao; it was the core of mechanical suit. He did not want to give it up just because of a small risk. He was already involved anyways, and even if he left right now, they would still have their eyes on him, so he decided to stay put for the moment and react accordingly.