

The Mechanic 211

Chapter 211: The Real Killer (6)

“You bribed Miri to bring Black Phantom to the scene as soon as the assassination was discovered, wanting to spark a conflict so that the scrimmage would bury more clues. You also arranged people to kill Miri during the battle.”

Xiao Jin listed many pieces of evidence. Su Dinghua closed his eyes in pain and softly spoke to himself. “I knew this day would come. Being found out means death.”

Then, Su Dinghua looked at his assistant and said, “I did kill our leader, but I’m not the mastermind—he is. Raylen gave me many benefits and promised me even more, so I did things for them. He’s a spy sent by Raylen to monitor and control me—this plan was also suggested by him!”

The assistant looked at Su Dinghua in anger and said, “You’ve lost your mind...”

“You think there’s a way to get away alive?” Su Dinghua stopped him and said, “I did things for you people because of the benefits you gave, which won’t be of use to me anymore. Now that I’m exposed, Raylen won’t have an easy time either.”

The assistant’s eyes suddenly turned white. His lips became purple, and white foam came out of his mouth. He died while twitching. When Su Dinghua was talking, he knew that he would definitely die, so he crunched down on the poisonous capsule between his teeth and committed suicide. The guards all followed his lead.

The people of Raylen were known for being cold-blooded and loyal, so no one was surprised.

Han Xiao stood aside and watched with no intent to stop them. Very soon, Su Dinghua was the only one left alive.

Xiao Hai sneered and said, “It’s too late to save yourself.”

“I’m not planning to. I know that death is my only option.” Su Dinghua shook his head.

Xiao Jin cut in and said, “Su Dinghua, you have been a member of Alumera for a very long time. The leader treated you well, so why did you do it?”

“Hahahahaha!” Su Dinghua suddenly laughed so loudly that even tears came out of his eyes. He said with a mocking tone, “Xiao the second chair, this doesn’t seem like something you would say. Your blood is much colder than mine.”

Xiao Jin remained expressionless and was not affected by it, but Xiao Hai slapped Su Dinghua and said, “Seems like you want a slow death.”

The people from other factions have arrived for quite some time. They watched this scene in shock and confusion.

Su Dinghua laughed for a while, then suddenly said with sorrow, “I will apologize to the leader myself.”

Xiao Hai took out a whole set of torture devices and said coldly, "Then you have a lot of time to think about what to say."

"Enough, he has already confessed. Bring him back then interrogate him," one of the chieftains of the Northern Faction said. Su Dinghua was a high ranked official of the Northern Faction, so interrogating and torturing him in public would bring a lot of shame to the Northern Faction.

Su Dinghua was a traitor who did not represent the Northern Faction's position, but it did bring them shame.

Xiao Jin looked at Han Xiao with inquiry in his eyes. The others looked over as well.

Black Phantom was the one that had been framed, so his opinion was very important.

"The real killer has been found. Anything other than that has nothing to do with me," Han Xiao said. He then turned away and left.

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The real killer that assassinated Darryl had been found. The whole plan had been Raylen's, and Han Xiao was cleared of suspicion.

Su Dinghua died in the interrogation. He spat out quite an amount of intelligence before he died. He was a very important chess piece to Raylen, and the assassination was to spark conflict between Alumera and Dark Net, but the plan had gone south. Han Xiao's strength was far beyond their expectations. They had thought that Black Phantom would be captured or even killed, so the hatred between Alumera and Dark Net could not be resolved easily, but to their surprise, Han Xiao had the upper hand.

The assassination only went so well because of Su Dinghua's years of planning. Raylen suffered a huge loss when he died.

Xiao Jin was a huge contributor to finding the real killer. He gained a large amount of prestige, and the Home Faction had to thank him even if they did not want to.

Everything was settled. However, Black Phantom, who had cleared his suspicion, decided to stay. No one knew what motives he had. The factions did not have time to care about him since they were all busy with the election of a successor.

In the room, Han Xiao looked at the mission [The Real Killer] on his interface. Su Dinghua had been caught, but he did not turn in the mission.

This thing has yet to end.

A flash of coldness appeared in Han Xiao's eyes; one thought had become clearer in his mind.

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Three days after capturing Su Dinghua, Xiao Jin brought Xiao Hai along and came to visit.

"Why are you looking for me?" Han Xiao asked.

"I should be the one asking. What's your goal in staying here?" Xiao Jin asked back.

"I was framed out of nowhere, and your people wanted to kill me. I need compensation."

Xiao Hai was shocked and angry. "This whole thing was planned by Raylen, and you even killed our people. How dare you ask for compensation?"

"Raylen is too far away, so I'm getting money from you guys first."

"You're robbing us!" Xiao Hai was filled with anger.

"That's correct." Han Xiao nodded calmly. He looked at Xiao Hai mockingly and said, "What can you do about that?"

Xiao Jin pulled the furious Xiao Hai back, then wrote a number on a piece of paper and said, "I will compensate you personally. Is this amount enough?"

Han Xiao gave it a quick look and said, "Barely acceptable."

Xiao Hai was frustrated. He did not understand why Xiao Jin was willing to pay; there was absolutely no need to in his eyes.

"There's another reason for you to have come to find me, right?" Han Xiao crossed his legs.

"Indeed, I have something to ask your help for. Darryl is dead, and the leader position is now vacant. Alumera is a large family, so there needs to be a leader. In two days' time, an internal election will be carried out in a vote from the high ranked officials. Todd from the Home Faction, Se Qi from the Red Island Faction, and Angleton from the Northern Faction are all strong competitors. When I was focused on investigating Darryl's death, they were already approaching the high ranked officials and drawing votes. I'm now at a disadvantage, so I hope you can help me," Xiao Jin said in seriousness.

"Why should I help you?"

"For the sake of me helping you clear your suspicion, please help me."

"I need a reward," Han Xiao said coldly.

"How ungrateful. If it wasn't for Father, you would still be the biggest suspect. Don't push your luck!" Xiao Hai could not take it and yelled in anger.

Han Xiao looked at him and said calmly, "You should be grateful for me not killing you, or you would all be corpses."

Xiao Hai's expression turned twisted and furious. He trembled in anger because of Han Xiao's attitude. He could only look at Xiao Jin, hoping that his father would do him justice. However, he was bound to be disappointed. Xiao Jin had remained calm all along.

"How much do you want?"

Han Xiao touched his chin, pointed at the piece of paper, and said, "Three times this."

"Maniac..." Xiao Hai was stunned. This request was outrageous.

However, Xiao Jin accepted the terms without hesitation and said, "No problem."

“Father!” Xiao Hai yelled in disbelief. He could not understand why Xiao Jin kept listening to Han Xiao. “It’s no use getting help from him. Outsiders cannot interfere with internal elections. He has no position in the internal meeting no matter how strong he is!” Xiao Hai said hastily.

“I have a way,” Xiao Jin replied coldly. “Mr. Black Phantom, are you willing to join us Xiao Faction?”

Join the Xiao Faction? What does that mean?

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows and asked with interest, “What do you mean?”

“Join my family with the same seniority in the family as me. My children will be your stepchildren.”

The atmosphere suddenly turned weird.

Xiao Hai almost staggered and fell. He was completely shocked. Xiao Jin had never discussed this with him, and now suddenly he’s going to have a stepfather?

“Damn, you can do that?” Han Xiao’s eyes twitched. Xiao Jin’s level of shameless exceeded his expectations. “Would such a childish method work?”

“Politics has always been childish,” Xiao Jin replied coldly. “As long as you join the Xiao Faction, you can attend internal meetings. Your strength will signify your power, and as long as you appear, it will represent a threat. However, you will be a part of the Xiao Faction by then, which means you’re not an exterior threat. The other factions will give up automatically in fear.”

The meaning of a family member and an outsider showcasing strength was different. One was an exterior threat and would only attract displeasure, but if it was a family member, it would mean that Xiao Jin’s power had grown tremendously and that he had earned a strong ally for Alumera in the big picture. It would mean a huge contribution for the family. Given the power that Xiao Jin had gathered through the years and the recent prestige that he earned by finding the real killer that assassinated Darryl, the other factions would wisely give up.

Up till now, Han Xiao had already gotten a basic guess of the entire situation. He smiled and said, “I see no benefits in joining the Xiao Faction, why should I do it?”

“You join the Xiao Faction, and when I become the leader of the family, Alumera will become your ally.”

“Seems like you’re willing to pay everything to become the leader.” Han Xiao laughed. He then said teasingly, “Okay, I will join the Xiao Faction and reluctantly become the stepfather of your children.”

Xiao Hai was so angry that he was losing his mind. He had to give Han Xiao benefits just to become his stepson. He had never been in such a shameful situation before, and the part that angered him most was that Xiao Jin had actually agreed. He began to suspect that his father had been brainwashed.

Han Xiao looked at Xiao Hai and smiled mockingly. “Come, let me hear you call me stepfather.”

Xiao Hai’s face turned green. He was an arrogant person, so this was a fate worse than death. However, he saw Xiao Jin’s strict face, then suppressed his anger with all his might and forced the words out through gritted teeth.

“Stepfather.”

Han Xiao dug his ears and teased, “I didn’t hear that clearly.”

“Stepfather!” Xiao Hai yelled. He used so much strength that blood came out of his teeth, and a metallic taste filled his mouth.

“Hehe, good boy.” Han Xiao could not control his laughter in his heart. His body’s origin was Xiao Hai’s younger brother. What would Xiao Hai think if he knew the truth?

Xiao Jin reached out his hand and said, “I look forward to working with you.”

Han Xiao accepted the handshake.

The father and son of the Xiao family stood up and left, neither of them saying a word as they did so.

After returning to Xiao Faction’s mansion, Xiao Hai could not hold back his questions. “Father, why did you do this?”

Xiao Jin replied without an expression on his face, “Black Phantom is greedier than I imagined. I thought that clearing his suspicion could make him grateful, but I didn’t expect to spend so much for him to join us. Anyway, it’s worth it. At least we are the only faction that could approach Black Phantom and get his help. When I become the leader, these losses can be made up with ease.”

“I see, when you become the leader, you won’t have to care about Black Phantom anymore,” Xiao Hai realized.

Xiao Jin suddenly turned to look at his son and said with a strict voice, “You’re wrong. There’s even more need to fulfill Black Phantom’s terms after I become the leader. It’s suicide to kick someone to the curb when they’ve outlived their usefulness. This is a world where the strong live, and the weak feed. Black Phantom is standing at the peak with his strength; his personal strength is as threatening as an organization. As long as Black Phantom is part of the Xiao Faction on the books, we can rely on him, and the other factions won’t dare step out of line moves. I know that you don’t accept this deep down in your heart, but don’t act on your impulses and ruin my plan.”

Xiao Hai had objections in his heart, but he could only clench his teeth and accept it.

“Yes, Father.”

Chapter 212: The New Successor

The factions were all making moves in the dark. Xiao Jin had given Han Xiao the information of the other factions’ movements over the next two days, and he wired the agreed compensation and reward into Han Xiao’s Dark Net account—a total of 8,000,000 Aquamarine Dollars.

Han Xiao had a huge amount of money, a total of more than 40,000,000 dollars, more than ten times what he used to have. With such a large sum, he could splurge freely on machinery and carry out some of his ideas such as the robot army style that he once thought to be too expensive.

Two days passed in a blink of an eye. The internal meeting was carried out in the Alumera meeting hall as scheduled. High ranked officials across all the factions gathered within, and the guarding power was high.

Han Xiao wore a hood and disguised himself as an ordinary high ranked official of the Xiao Faction. He entered the meeting hall without attracting attention and sat down.

In the heart of the meeting hall was a circular shaped table. The leaders of various factions sat around the table, and the other high ranked officials sat on the more exterior seats. Those belonging to a faction sat behind their leaders. The factions were separated distinctively, forming smaller areas at different angles.

It was snowing lightly outside, but the meeting hall was warm thanks to the air conditioner. The people took off their coats and started talking among themselves. It soon became rather noisy.

Dang, dang!

Todd rang the bell on the table, and the meeting hall turned silent quickly.

“The meeting will now commence,” Todd said with a serious expression. “There are four candidates for the successor for the leader: myself, Xiao the Second Chair, Se Qi the Third Chair, and Mr. Angleton. Start voting when you’re ready.”

“I would like to say a few words before the vote starts,” Angleton said as he stood up and started his speech. It was a standard procedure to do a speech before the vote. Although the seated high ranked officials already had a basic idea of who they were going to vote for, this step was still not to be omitted.

Very soon, the four candidates finished their speeches. Todd looked around the table and said, “The voting shall begin.”

The high ranked officials spoke their choice.

Todd was nervous. He had been contacting other high ranked officials over the past few days and promised them many benefits. They had all agreed to vote for him when they had the discussion, so he could easily beat the other candidates in the number of votes.

But soon he became stunned. The high ranked officials who promised to vote for him all voted for Se Qi without even looking at Todd.

How did this happen? Todd was shocked and angry.

Se Qi had a bright smile on his face. He smiled at every high ranked official who voted for him. Watching his vote count becoming impossible to be beaten, his heart was relieved.

As soon as Darryl was assassinated, Se Qi had realized that the successor election was an opportunity. He had been in communication with Theseus secretly, and they had agreed to help him for the promotion, and he, in turn, promised many benefits to them if he successfully became the leader.

Although Alumera was Theseus’s partner, Theseus was very aggressive. They had been secretly wanting to control Alumera from the inside, and they had gotten into contact with Se Qi the Third Chair, who

was not satisfied with his position. Theseus made use of their relationship network and discreetly drew in many high ranked officials to give Se Qi an advantage.

And for Angleton from the Northern Faction, he was basically there to watch the show. Even the people from the Northern Faction did not vote for him except for a very few—he sat in his seat with awkwardness on his face.

Angleton had been elected by the Northern Faction to just be a representative—he did not want to give up on fighting for the leader's position, but he knew that he did not have a chance. Thus, he had mixed feelings about the matter.

Se Qi's vote count was way ahead, and soon, it exceeded the half mark. The election was settled.

"Haha, thank everyone for your support and love. I shall not disappoint." Se Qi stood up full of happiness on his face. He could not hide his satisfaction at all.

This time, Xiao Jin spoke. "Wait."

Everyone looked over immediately with various looks on their faces, Xiao Jin was a powerful candidate as well, but he had not done anything up till now. They were very curious about what he was planning.

"Xiao the Second Chair, do you have any problem?" Se Qi's heart skipped a beat, and he emphasized the words 'Second Chair'.

Suddenly, a voice that was unforgettable to the seated high ranked officials came out of the Xiao Faction area.

"I have a problem."

Everyone's eyes widened, and their expressions turned into horror. They recognized that this was Black Phantom's voice!

Xiao Faction's members spit open and showed Han Xiao, who was hidden. Han Xiao was wearing the same black windbreaker and black gloves. His arms were crossed, and he said expressionlessly, "Xiao Jin is more suitable to be the leader."

Se Qi was stunned for an extended moment till he regained his focus. "Xiao Jin, how dare you let an outsider interfere with our family issues. Are you intentionally breaking the rules?"

"Black Phantom is not an outsider; he is a senior of my Xiao Faction. He is the stepfather of my children."

As soon as Xiao Jin finished his sentence, the youngsters of Xiao Faction all bowed toward Han Xiao and yelled stepfather simultaneously, almost as if they had been practicing it.

The others were stunned in shock.

How shameless... Todd's face was twitching.

According to Black Phantom's previous actions, his stand was above all, and he did not care about Alumera's internal changes at all, but now, he was suddenly interfering.

They gave it a thought and realized that, when Black Phantom was suspected, Xiao Jin was the only one that spoke for him, and it was Xiao Jin who discovered the real killer in the end, which cleared Black Phantom's name. However, during that time, the other factions were all focused on drawing votes from the high ranked officials.

Then it occurred to all the factions that Xiao Jin might have gotten in touch with Black Phantom only because of this, which was why Black Phantom was willing to help Xiao Jin.

Also, Xiao Jin had definitely paid a huge price to attract Black Phantom into having diplomatic relations with the Xiao Faction.

Although the other factions were not happy, they could not deny the fact that Xiao Jin had increased Alumera's overall strength by doing this, as this meant that Black Phantom had become an ally of Alumera.

Han Xiao sat down casually and scanned the entire place with a dangerous look.

The high ranked officials all turned away and did not dare look him in the eyes.

Words were not needed; Han Xiao's intentions were clear just by sitting here.

A silent threat.

The atmosphere got awkward. The high ranked officials who had already voted became anxious and exchanged looks secretly.

Finally, a high ranked official could not take it anymore. He wiped his sweat and said hesitantly, "I've thought carefully and feel that Xiao Jin is more suitable as the next leader. Can I change my vote?"

Changing the vote was not allowed according to the rules. However, the host of the meeting, Todd, was cursing in his mind. Black Phantom was right in front of them, so he did not dare to say no. Thus, he nodded in dismay.

After the first, the second and the third followed, and soon came the rest. Han Xiao scanned around the room; whoever came into his sights immediately changed their vote. It was like his eyes had magic in it.

Se Qi did not admit defeat yet. He wanted to have a final struggle but realized that Han Xiao had looked over with eyes that were so sharp that they pierced right through his heart. Horror filled his mind, and he closed his mouth in fear, watching the position that had belonged to him moments ago slip through his fingers.

The result was a definite—Xiao Jin won with an overwhelming number of votes.

The people of the Xiao Faction were smiling brightly while the others had to suck it up and congratulate Xiao Jin one after another.

The Xiao Factions' ways had the other factions feeling very uncomfortable, but the result was not unacceptable. After all, Xiao Jin was a very senior member of the family and had made a lot of contributions.

Who knew that Xiao Jin would win in the end? Todd's heart was bleeding. The Home Faction had controlled Alumera for all these years, and now, they had lost their power all of a sudden.

Todd knew that from that day onward, the Home Faction would slowly become a vassal.

Seeing that things were settled, Han Xiao left. The crowd split open automatically, and the high ranked officials who were congratulating Xiao Jin also stopped to look at Han Xiao as he left.

Although Xiao Jin was the final winner, in the eyes of everyone else, the center of this meeting was Black Phantom. All he did was show up, and it decided Xiao Jin's position.

This was the power of overwhelming strength.

The people were all very jealous of Xiao Jin. As long as Black Phantom remained in the Xiao Faction, Xiao Jin's position would be forever stable.

Chapter 213: The Fight Between the Sandpiper and the Clam

The structure of Alumera changed. Xiao Jin became the leader, and the other factions all congratulated him. The power to make a lot of important decisions has been moved from the Home Faction to the Xiao Faction.

At night, Xiao Jin invited Han Xiao to his mansion. All the high ranked officials of the Xiao Faction gathered around. Xiao Hai and the other children were there, too. They bowed to Han Xiao and called him stepfather when they saw him. No matter what these youngsters of the Xiao Family thought in their heart, they had no choice but to maintain respect for Han Xiao on the surface.

The butler led Han Xiao to the book room and closed the door, leaving Xiao Jin and Han Xiao alone in the room.

Xiao Jin's wish had been granted, and he had become the leader. Although he was still expressionless, one could tell he was happy and satisfied from the feeling he gave off.

He did not forget the benefits that Han Xiao had given him, and because Han Xiao said that he was leaving the next day, Xiao Jin dropped everything else and invited Han Xiao over to express his appreciation on the first day of becoming the leader.

"I really appreciate your help," Xiao Jin said sincerely.

Han Xiao did not sit down. He stood in front of the bookshelf, played around with the small items in the drawer, and said casually, "Get to the point."

Xiao Jin took out a bottle of wine and poured two glasses. He then walked to Han Xiao and handed one glass over.

"Our agreement remains unchanged. If there's anything you need me for, I'll provide help." Xiao Jin smiled. His tone was more confident now that he was the leader.

The wine was amber and fragrant; its taste was smooth and soft. This was Xiao Jin's very high-quality collection that he treasured. It would only be opened for extremely important guests, and it had been stored for many years before that day.

Han Xiao took the wine glass but did not drink it. He just swirled the glass around and said coldly, "I've been thinking recently and have come up with a very interesting theory. You knew Su Dinghua was going to assassinate Darryl a long time ago, but you didn't tell anyone and let it happen because there would only be a chance to become the leader after Darryl died.

"Then, when everyone was suspecting me, only you insisted to help me because you knew who the killer was, and it was a good opportunity to gain my favor. Later, when other factions had already established a bad relationship with me, you found an opportunity to throw out Su Dinghua as a clue and became the one who found the real killer, largely increasing your prestige while simultaneously starting good relations with me.

"You used that as a reason to gain my help to win the leader's election by using my strength to overpower all the other factions. You're not the real killer, but you're an opportunist who acted while riding along the waves and harvesting the final fruit of victory."

Han Xiao turned his head and looked at Xiao Jin. "What do you think about this theory?"

Xiao Jin shook his head in laughter. He sipped the wine and said, "It's interesting, but it's not true."

"I think it's true." Han Xiao's expression resembled a smile, yet it was not a smile.

Xiao Jin's expression changed slightly and said, "That's just your speculation..."

Han Xiao walked toward Xiao Jin. His body was leaning forward, and the pressure forced Xiao Jin to step back continuously until he hit the table.

They stood extremely close. Xiao Jin could only look at Han Xiao in his eyes because he had nowhere else to look. He felt a cold murderous intent in Han Xiao's eyes, and cold sweat started dripping.

"I don't need evidence. If I think it's true, then it is," Han Xiao sneered.

Xiao Jin had to tighten his facial muscles to control his expressions, and his heart began to sink.

"Remember, whatever you borrowed from me, I can take it back anytime."

Han Xiao's fingers pressed two times on Xiao Jin's chest strongly. The act was provoking.

Xiao Jin had been promoted with the help of Black Phantom, and Han Xiao could do the same thing for the others anytime. Xiao Jin had no doubt that the other factions would be willing to spend a huge sum to make Black Phantom their ally. With Black Phantom's strength, he could even duplicate the assassination. If their relationship turned bad, there was no way Xiao Jin could protect himself against a legendary killer every single day and night.

Xiao Jin understood what Han Xiao meant—threaten, intimidation, and blackmail!

Black Phantom was more fearsome than he had expected. This partnership with Black Phantom was catching a tiger by its tail.

The atmosphere became more and more intense, and when Xiao Jin was almost suffocating, Han Xiao took a few steps back to ease the atmosphere. He played around with the wine glass and said coldly, "What are you going to do with Raylen?"

Xiao Jin sighed. He knew that this was the time for him to show his stance. "I will make them pay. I'll pursue and kill all of their intelligence agents, attack the organizations they support, and destroy their bases in the wilderness."

Originally, it was not suitable to start a war right after he became the leader. His original plan had been to stabilize the internals in six months. However, Han Xiao's threatening made him understand that he had no choice. He could only listen to Han Xiao and retaliate against Raylen immediately. Alumera's damage was not in his consideration anymore; he had to listen to Han Xiao no matter how much heartache he felt.

"Very good." Han Xiao gave a faint laugh then left and said, "Enjoy your time as the leader."

The wine glass was placed on the table. Han Xiao did not drink any from the start to the end.

The sounds of the youngsters yelling "Stepfather!" outside the door grew faint and distant. Xiao Jin only sat down after the sound disappeared. The happiness of becoming the leader became weaker because of Han Xiao's threats.

"He's got my weakness." Xiao Jin laughed in bitterness and called Xiao Hai in.

"Father, Black Phantom left." Xiao Hai could not hide his happiness. The position of leader finally belonged to the Xiao Faction.

"Pass my order down. The out of town divisions will be launching a full attack on Raylen's forces in the wilderness!" Xiao Jin was back to expressionless.

Xiao Hai's smile froze. Waves of shock filled his heart, and he said in disbelief, "Father, you've just become the leader, and the structure has yet to stabilize. If we start a war at this time, the power of the family will be hugely damaged, and our position will be even more volatile. The priority right now should be to stabilize the internal matters! Although Raylan set us up this time, there's no need to seek revenge immediately. There are many more days to come, and there's no benefit to what you're doing!"

"Stop talking, do as I said," Xiao Jin said coldly.

Xiao Hai was stunned.

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You have unlocked the Alumera Family. Current relationship: Respect (3000/6000) – [Partner of Xiao Faction].

The starting relationship is 'respect'. Seems like Xiao Jin gave in. Han Xiao was very satisfied.

He did not threaten Xiao Jin out of nowhere. The deduction earlier was made from his speculation through the pieces of evidence. Firstly, Xiao Jin's actions were all very goal oriented and connected with each other, and these actions all brought him a benefit, which was very suspicious. Secondly, [The Real Killer] was a puzzle mission, but Xiao Jin found Su Dinghua straightaway. Thus, the mission had been completed too easily, which made him feel that Xiao Jin knew who the killer was all along.

If Xiao Jin knew that Su Dinghua was going to assassinate Darryl from the start and did not do anything about it, then the character that Xiao Jin played was neither the real killer nor the mastermind, but someone who waited for the opportunity to take on the position of the leader.

Han Xiao had already thought of this when Xiao Jin came to look for his help, and he had planned this back then when he agreed to help.

He acted like he did not know and let Xiao Jin use him to increase his rank, but at the same time, Xiao Jin had to rely on him to do so. Therefore, Han Xiao turned around and threatened Xiao Jin because, unless Xiao Jin wanted to give up his position as the leader, he had to listen to him and almost become his puppet.

From Xiao Jin's actions, he was an ambitious guy who knew how to analysis his situation. The chance of him compromising was more than eighty percent. He definitely could not let go of the leader's position that he had worked so hard to get.

Furthermore, Raylen was the mastermind who framed him, and there was no way Han Xiao was going to let them have an easy time. Therefore, he had ordered Alumera to clash with them without considering the costs for them. The people of Raylen would definitely not expect Alumera to counter-attack so strongly; it went the exact opposite way that they wanted it to go, and they had brought fire to themselves.

This way, Han Xiao could take revenge on Raylen without getting blood on his blades, and he did not even have to do anything.

It was easier to fight a large organization with a large organization.

During what happened in Alumera, Han Xiao had been watching like a bystander and only showed his teeth in the end.

The fight between a sandpiper and a clam benefitted the fisherman in the end!

Of course, there was a possibility that his guess was wrong. Xiao Jin might not actually have been someone who knew all along and acted on the opportunities that surfaced.

However, this was not important at all. It was as he had said before.

I don't need evidence. If I think it's true, then it is!

It must be!

Xiao Jin did not have a choice.

I should complete the mission. Han Xiao opened the interface.

Please state the real killer's identity.

"Su Dinghua, Raylen..." Han Xiao described the situation. The mission requirement was to find out the mastermind who framed him, which was Raylen without a doubt.

[The Real Killer] has been processed. Determining...

Requirements met. Mission complete.

You have received a chance to learn a random ability or talent. Please select.

Han Xiao pondered for a moment. He felt that a talent would be better; there was a chance to get a rare talent or even a molding ability.

"Talent."

Randomizing... Completed. Please choose from one of the three below.

Duplicate Channeling: 2% – 8% chance of duplicating the ability during channeling. Triggering the ability depends on Luck.

Call of the Wild: Increases default affinity with beast type monsters with a chance to communicate. Charisma increases the chance of communication.

Frost Resistance: +35% resistance to ice element and makes it harder to receive debuffs from ice element such as slow or frozen.

Chapter 214: Leaving

Between these three random talents, the one with the highest practicality on the surface should be [Frost Resistance], which had a very specific effect. However, in terms of usefulness, Han Xiao felt that [Call of the Wild] had a broader area of application.

Beast type monsters were a very large monster group. Other than planets that had been highly modified or had very little life, every planet across the entire Galaxy would have some beasts. Beasts were a very important part of the biological chain, and there were many types of beasts living across land and sea. There were even some stronger beast species that lived in space, unharmed by the radiation, meteoroids, and many other forms of danger existing in space. These types of species were all BOSSes that would appear in later versions of the game.

As for [Duplicate Channeling], it was a sorcerer talent. It did not apply to any ability other than magic, so it was completely useless for Han Xiao, who was a Mechanic. If it was not for the random factor, Han Xiao would have never gotten in touch with any talents from another class.

After some consideration, Han Xiao decided on [Call of The Wild]. Although his Charm was a little low, it was still a rather useful talent.

Planet Aquamarine in version 2.0 would be filled with monsters, beasts would be crawling across the planet. Han Xiao had a feeling that [Call of The Wild] would be useful by then.

His plan was to leave Planet Aquamarine before version 1.0 ended, but he had a thought in his mind. The main storyline of version 2.0 was [Mutation Disaster]. It was a virus that came from space and caused mutations in many planets, including Planet Aquamarine. The cure was later invented by a higher civilization. Han Xiao was thinking that he could return with the cure in the future and bring an end to the storyline earlier.

After he spread intelligence of the Germinal Organization before the game's official release, Han Xiao knew that there were a lot of benefits to bringing large impacts to the main storyline.

This was just a blueprint of the future; Han Xiao was still focusing on the current issues.

The accident in Alumeria had come to an end, and the result was satisfactory.

Not only did he not lose anything, he also gained quite a number of benefits. Although his schedule was delayed because of the days that he stayed in Alumeria, no one disliked having more side missions; the more side missions there were, the more benefits they would bring.

The players would always be there, and they were not complaining or anything, so there was no rush for Han Xiao.

The next morning, Han Xiao left Alumeria. All the high ranked officials came to see him off.

The cold of the north seemed to have pierced into the hearts of Alumeria's high ranked officials. They held on tightly to their beast hide coats.

Black Phantom had become a member of their family on the books, so this outsider was now the strongest in the family. The high ranked officials were willing to suck up to him, and they gifted him an SUV to save him the trouble of walking.

Everyone in the Xiao Faction arrived. They all greeted Han Xiao with manners and respect, displaying their closeness by having their youngsters calling Black Phantom 'stepfather' one after another. The other factions despised this yet were jealous of it. If they could get Black Phantom's support, they would do the same willingly. They sighed in their hearts—that Xiao Jin had grabbed the opportunity before them.

Xiao Jin was having mixed emotions. He looked Han Xiao in the eye and nodded lightly. Only they themselves knew the deals that they made behind everyone else's back.

Although Xiao Jin's wish came true, he could not help but feel some bitterness deep in his heart.

Han Xiao waved as he got into the SUV and left in the wind and snow.

“He finally left.”

The tensed bodies of Alumera’s high ranked officials all relaxed. It was like a huge stone had been removed from their heart, and even breathing felt easier.

Not far away, the players of the Bamboo Rain Guild cheered with joy; their mission was finally completed.

Black Phantom captured the real killer and brought a huge impact to Alumera’s structure. As his helper, you witnessed the entire process. Bonus reward: 15,000 experience.

The experience from this mission was a lot for the players at the time, so they were very satisfied.

“By the way, Xuan, didn’t you make a recording of Black Phantom?” Guild Leader Bamboo Rain Fragrance asked.

Bamboo Rain Xuan said with pride, “I’ve already sold it and emailed it to Galaxy Times. They have given me a reward.”

The mechanical suit, men’s romance.

The background of Galaxy had players guessing about all sorts of combat system, and the mechanical suit was a very popular topic among them. Articles about mechanical suits created countless fans, and many players looked forward the day of them battling in a mechanical suit. Between the five main classes, only the mechanic class fit the speculations, but since the official release, no one had seen an NPC that fought in a mechanical suit.

Han Xiao was the first person who had showcased the mechanical suit, and he had created another first without noticing.

The impact of this on the players would only show after the next episode of ‘Galaxy Times’ was released, but before that, it first impacted the local organizations.

When Han Xiao killed Luann and Vanessa, he had used his mechanical suit. It had been recorded by the people of Alumera and leaked into the Dark Net, which triggered waves of shock within the organizations.

Everyone could see that Viper had an astonishing level of performance. It was a very advanced mechanical suit. Black Phantom was a Mechanic, so this had undoubtedly been built by himself, possessing a higher quality than the military experiments of many large nations.

Han Xiao was famous for his identity as a killer, but he had shocked the world again with his standard as a Mechanic. The organizations immediately updated his documents.

At the same time, there were also many organizations who were interested in obtaining this mechanical suit.

One of them was the Germinal Organization!

“This is a very advanced single unit combat mechanical suit. If we can gain control of it, the strength of our soldiers will increase tremendously, and the chances of winning this war will be higher.”

In their headquarters in Andrea, the leader and Cyberlos were watching the short combat recording on a large screen. Cyberlos’ eyes opened wide and were filled with fanaticism.

The leader, on the other hand, thought of something else.

“The guy who claimed to be our member and made a mess in the Louis Research Institution was wearing this mechanical suit, too. Turns out it was Black Phantom.

“During the evacuation in the Northern Continent some time ago, Black Phantom was involved as well, and he took us as an enemy.

“Not a guy to be easily messed with.” The leader frowned. “His mechanical suit is of high importance to us, but we don’t have enough forces in the other continents, and his movements are difficult to predict. Unless we send the strongest executive officers of the organization, no one can fight him.”

The leader did not want to give up easily on Black Phantom’s mechanical suit, but his senses told him that he would have no chance to deal with Black Phantom once the war started unless Black Phantom came to the battlefield.

The leader shook his head. The chances of that were close to none.

...

Two days later, Han Xiao accepted the reward mission for Invisible Demon in one of Dark Net’s bases of the Northern Continent and only handed Invisible Demon away after a notification popped up on the interface.

Interestingly, the person in charge of the stronghold was very confused.

“Mr. Black Phantom, where’s the Invisible Demon who you’ve mentioned?”

Han Xiao pointed at an empty space on the ground and said, “Right here.”

The person wiped off his cold sweat and said, “I—I can’t see him.”

Han Xiao used more than ten torturous ways to prove Invisible Demon’s existence, and after the heavily wounded and mind broken Invisible Demon was retrieved, the mission was completed.

More than 200,000 experience and 150,000 Aquamarine Dollars. He had made another fortune with Invisible Demon. Although Han Xiao had amassed a small fortune, he was not going to give up any opportunity to make more—it was an accumulation process.

The players with the top spot on the level leaderboard had reached level 20 and were such on the class advancement missions, and at this time, Han Xiao had arrived in the last novice village of the Novice Village and made it in time for the last opportunity to make a huge amount of experience.

Upon arrival, Han Xiao realized that he was even more popular, especially among the male players who all surrounded him.

“What the name of your mechanical suit?”

“Do you sell the mechanical suit?”

These questions appeared the most. Han Xiao browsed through the forum and noticed that ‘Galaxy Times’ had released a recording of him battling in his mechanical suit.

This episode of ‘Galaxy Times’ was not as interesting, but this recording became the highlight of the episode. The quiet comments section exploded upon seeing the recording.

No wonder the players are so excited. Han Xiao could understand. When he was a new player, if he had seen a mechanical suit, he would have reacted the same.

The most direct influence was that players had even more of an interest in the mechanic class. More people came to this novice village to change their class, which in turn increased his sales.

An official announcement showing the various statistics of the game would be released some time after the official launch. Han Xiao was looking forward to seeing the percentage of players that chose the Mechanic class. In his previous life, this percentage had been a single digit, but now, with his influence, he was expecting it to at least double.

The more mechanic players, the brighter Han Xiao’s business future was.

Duu—Duu—

His phone suddenly rang.

Han Xiao looked at his phone, and it was Hao Tian who sent a text message. He had completed the mission, and he was the first among all the other highly skilled players who had taken on the [New Era—Origin] mission!

Not bad, no wonder he’s a god-tier pro. Hao Tian’s eyes twinkled. Hao Tian had completed the mission before he had even left the Northern Continent, and the players who had accepted the mission much earlier in the Western Continent had yet to do so.

Hao Tian accepted the mission [Ending of The Survivor], whose the requirement was to retrieve [Sully—Document 485]. The text content was the entire process of Hao Tian completing the mission, and the information included in the document was included as well.

Chapter 215: Flow of the Main Storyline

In the age of virtual gaming, interaction was very important. The players felt that Galaxy had done an exceptional job in that regard. The interaction with NPCs was very free, and players could casually write text messages, emails, and such sorts to communicate with NPCs from a far range.

The popular games at the time all had a certain extent of reality and virtual socializing functionalities. There was an old but always popular game, Ruthless, that was very good in this regard. Text messages could be written freely even though it was a single player game.

When VR-Capsule technology was invented, Ruthless designed a version for it as well. At the time, due to the level of reality and the rough play style of Ruthless, a debate was triggered, and the NPC Protection Society that people had only talked about was actually really created. It was a very interesting phenomenon.

[Ending of the Survivor] completed.

One of the five requirements in the hidden main storyline turned green, which represented its completion.

You have received [Sully—Document 485]. From the document, you acknowledged a buried past.

This mission has a commentator, damn. Han Xiao was surprised.

The document recorded an old action plan, with a lot of information missing. Before the war of the old era, a country sent a team to a village in Andrea for a secret mission. What happened afterward was unknown, but all the residents of the village were killed by gunfire. That country is already dead now.

That's it? Han Xiao was confused. This description was a clue of the mission, but it was way too vague. He thought about it and sent it to Hannes. That old guy had more information on hands—maybe he could discover something more.

Completing the mission was enough for Han Xiao.

...

Hao Tian stood beside the mission character 'Old Devin' and stared at his phone, waiting for Black Phantom's reply.

This mission had been very cumbersome. Old Devin had the document, so he had needed to gain Old Devin's trust first, which he had done by completing many chore missions. The difficult part was that Old Devin suffered from mental illnesses. He had Paranoia, Amnesia, Schizophrenia, was prone to anger, spoke nonsense, and dozens more. He would quickly become anxious, and he would mistake a trash can on the road for bomb and passers-by for enemies who were chasing him.

Old Devin had been a member of this plan, and from what he said, after he completed the mission, the nation had killed his family and hunted him down. The hiding and stress he suffered through the years gave him the mental illnesses.

“Do you know why war broke out during the old era?” Old Devin would always look around his surroundings and make sure that there was no one before he started chatting with Hao Tian. “It was because of me. Every nation was looking for me, so they fought each other. Enemies were everywhere. They still have not given up. Look at these surveillance cameras in the city. They are all set up for me.”

Of course, Hao Tian did not understand a single word he said, and he did not care about the story anyway. He was just doing the missions, and with his high efficiency and strong will, he completed the mission.

Hao Tian soon received Han Xiao’s reply and the notification of the mission being completed, and a sense of relief washed over him.

‘You’re the first to complete the mission. I feel that you have quite the potential. Are you interested in helping me?’

“Sure.” Hao Tian gave a very simple reply.

“Wait at the border of Raylen, coordinate R1565.842. I will bring you along when I leave the Northern Continent.”

“Sure.”

Although Hao Tian had a very steady personality, he still felt a sense of excitement when he thought of the benefits of Black Phantom’s hidden storyline in the forums.

...

Han Xiao finished his journey of making a crazy amount of profits when he left the last novice village in the Northern Continent. Before leaving the Northern Continent, Han Xiao came to an ice field where high-level ice bears lived. He spent a few hours and used the Ghost sniper rifle to fulfill the requirements for [Lethal Shot].

Lethal Shot: 12 – 25% chance to activate true damage with the first shot on target. This cannot be reactivated on the same target within 5 minutes.

By changing the target, the talent could be triggered multiple times, which was very useful. Although it did not quite meet the standards of Bennett’s cheat-like molding ability [Legendary Battle Techniques], it was still a rare attacking talent.

After counting, Han Xiao had twelve talents, which was exceptional in version 1.0. Half of that would already be very high for a LV 55 player.

Han Xiao also gave the recently obtained [Call of the Wild] talent a try. The ice bears above level 50 was not affected by it at all—they were still as aggressive as they had originally been.

He lowered the level of his targets and realized that a bear cub was very friendly toward him. It was white, chubby, and furry, only as tall as his waist level. It hugged his leg and showed off its cuteness.

There's quite some use to this talent. The cub is only at level ten-something, but there should be other hidden elements to the Call of The Wild. Other than it being affected by Charm, the level difference between me and the beast should also be part of the reason as well as the characteristics of the beast.

Han Xiao contemplated the matter. Suddenly, he saw this furry ball trying its best to climb up his leg. The Great Han Xiao squinted and kicked the cub away.

The white and chubby cub rolled over a few times and then came back again. Han Xiao just could not chase it away no matter how he tried; it was very clingy.

Its furry butt kept shaking, and it looked stupid. Its small, black eyes were filled with innocence.

Tsk, how adorable. Han Xiao could not resist its cuteness. He held the cub upside down and gave it a look. *And it's a female.*

They looked at each other for some time, then Han Xiao reached out his arms. The cub climbed up laboriously to Han Xiao's shoulder and hung onto it like a swing.

"You definitely have some koala blood. Didn't expect you to be a cross-breed," Han Xiao said in surprise. He twisted his arm, and the cub shook swung around it as well. It was like he was carrying a bag.

I shall bring it along as a pet.

Raising a pet was a spice of life. With a pet, Han Xiao suddenly felt much more relaxed. No wonder people in the big cities liked to have pets—it was such an effective stress reliever. When they were unhappy, they just had to bully their pet, and they could find back their sense of superiority as an intelligent species.

This was a Sharp Claw Ice Bear cub, only a few months old. Han Xiao was too lazy to give it a name, so he just called it Bear Cub.

Bringing along Bear Cub, Han Xiao boarded the plane to the border of Raylen and picked up Hao Tian. Following which, he immediately headed toward the Southern Continent.

On the plane, Hao Tian lived up to his image of a highly skilled player and kept silent, did not ask about their destination, and did not make any interactions. Han Xiao saw that he had nothing to do, so he gave him a mission to take care of Bear Cub. Hao Tian's expression became interesting on the spot.

Galaxy's details were all very real, especially the look and smell of urine and feces.

Flying from the Northern Continent to the Southern Continent required a little over half a day. Han Xiao received a call from Hannes on the way, saying that Old Devin's document filled missing information of

their clues, and it was a very important finding. Han Xiao knew that this would affect the next round of the hidden main storyline missions.

The earnings in the Northern Continent were not lesser than the Western Continent. Han Xiao's experience and money had all almost doubled. Every time Han Xiao looked at the accumulated experience in the interface and the total of his Dark Net bank account, he would feel a surge of happiness.

...

When the plane landed in the Southern Continent, Antonio was waiting. Han Xiao saw his rough face as soon as he came out of the plane.

"Welcome back, my friend." Antonio laughed out loud and gave Han Xiao a bear hug. The strong odor on his body almost made Han Xiao lose his health points.

"Hug a while more, and I'd be dead." Han Xiao rubbed his nose with a frown. The odor was lingering in the air.

"Only out for a month, and look what you've done!" Antonio said with surprise. He remembered that Han Xiao said that he would not get into trouble, but it seemed like Han Xiao's standard of trouble and his were very different.

Things about Black Phantom had been spreading like a disease recently. Many organizations had to spend some of their focus on Black Phantom; the man had most likely become one of the top names in many organizations' threat lists.

Black Phantom had officially reached the top of Dark Net's killer leaderboards.

After chatting for a while, Antonio noticed Bear Cub. His eyes immediately twinkled, and he ran over to pet it. Han Xiao was not surprised that Antonio liked furry things judging from his appearance—the two furballs were probably cousins.

Han Xiao walked aside and called Bennett.

"I've returned."

Bennett breathed a sigh of relieved and said with a hint of sorrow, "I've waited for you for so long."

Han Xiao went straight to the point and said, "The 'Shelter Plan' you talked about, what help do you need from me?"

Bennett was very touched. Han Xiao mentioned about helping the first thing after he returned, how noble!

In the society of lies and deception, people who had such good qualities were going extinct.

This was a friend that was worth building a stronger relationship with!

Bennett decided to make Han Xiao one of the people in charge of the plan and share even more details with him. "Let's talk when we meet—I have a very important mission for you."

Hearing that, Han Xiao knew there was a chance and got excited. He was very familiar with the main storyline [Shelter Plan], and he knew how much benefit there was in becoming a core member.

The Six Nations had been making a lot of moves in the dark recently—the preparation for expedition war was almost complete, and the expedition would probably officially commence in that month. The Germinal Organization was finally about to meet the disaster that had been created by Han Xiao, and the war was going to break out in Planet Aquamarine. The wanderers, militaries, warlords, financial organizations, secret organizations, and all the other organizations were nervous about it.

To open the [Shelter Plan] main storyline at this time completely messed up the sequence of the storyline, but its benefits were also clear. Under the threat from the war, Bennett would do anything to carry out the plan.

And the players' attention would also be diverted by the main storyline [Shelter], which would reduce the number of players taking part in the main storyline of the war between the Six Nations and the Germinal Organization, which was beneficial to Han Xiao. The smaller the impact that the players made, the more advantages that the Six Nations had.

Chapter 216: Dark Net Director, Third Sanctuary

The invitation from Bennett signified his trust. The meeting point this time was the first shelter that Dark Net was building, located in a city ruins named 'Ruins of Lloyd' in a wasteland in the Northern Continent. It had once been the financial center of a dead nation in the Northern Continent.

Han Xiao sat in Bennett's private helicopter. When he looked down at the city from the sky, he could see the building process of the shelter. The first thing he saw was the tens of meters tall enormous wall that was being built. In the areas that had yet to be completed, he could see workers welding steel bars together onto the scaffolding. The concrete of the wall was mixed with other materials and had a metallic feeling to it. With Han Xiao's professional knowledge, he knew that the wall was so strong that smaller rockets would at most only leave traces of burn marks on it. The wall was built to the standards of a fortress; it was extremely expensive.

The Dark Net's symbol was painted on the wall in dark red together with the new name of this city.

Bennett Sanctuary One!

The helicopter flew past the wall, and the construction machinery came into sight, clearing the roads and the abandoned buildings. Countless workers in gray uniforms ran around doing their job to lay the foundation for the new buildings and planning the layout of the city. Steel bars, bricks, wood, and other stacks of industrial building materials lay out in the open, and it looked exactly like a gigantic construction site.

"You named the shelter after yourself." Han Xiao patted Bennett's shoulder with a smirk. "I didn't know you're this shameless."

Bennett slapped the palm on his shoulder away and said, "Let's go. Come to the high ranked officials meeting with me."

“What has the meeting got to do with me?” Han Xiao asked in surprise.

Bennett shook his head and laughed. “You’re a high ranked official, too.”

Han Xiao blinked.

Bennett cleared his throat and said, “I strongly recommended you to be a director personally. You won’t disappoint me, will you?”

Dark Net had recently reconstructed their high ranked officials, with the highest ranking being the founders such as Bennett and one level lower being the various directors.

“What are you talking about?” Han Xiao asked with a serious face. “When did I disappoint you?”

Bennett did not know whether to laugh or cry. He led the way, and Han Xiao saw the construction of the shelter at a close range.

“Sanctuary One is our test. I’ve put in plenty of resources, and it’s progressing quite well. The basic layout should be completed within a year. The layout of the shelter is divided into a few sections. In order to have enough basic infrastructure to meet the requirements of its residents, the plants and livestock also needs to form a self-sustained ecosystem so that even if war breaks out in the outside world, the shelter can provide for its own, and the defensive measures are, of course, to defend against enemies.”

Boom!

An abandoned building in front was being demolished, and dust filled the area as it fell down.

Han Xiao waved the dust away and said in awe, “Just this shelter would’ve cost you a huge sum.”

“The Six Nations’ resources can only support two to three sanctuaries,” Bennett said with his hands behind his back. “My plan is to build at least three to five sanctuaries across the continents.”

“That will be outrageously expensive.”

“This sum of money is insignificant when it comes to preserving our civilization.”

“Wow, I could almost see the halo above your head,” Han Xiao mocked.

Bennett’s mouth twitched.

After arriving at the new fortress, directors of the Dark Net gathered in the meeting hall. They stood up and bowed slightly to show their respect when Bennett and Han Xiao walked in.

Black Phantom had displayed his strength and was now the top fighting force of Dark Net, and with Bennett’s support, the high ranked officials present all agreed that Han Xiao’s position was at the same level as theirs.

The high ranked officials reported the progress of Sanctuary One in turn, and when Bennett was done settling them, he said, “Sanctuary One has been proven to be practical. The message has been sent out. Many wanderers came to look for protection upon hearing the message. With more residents, the building progress can be sped up.

“At the same time, we can give them job opportunities to take part in the construction process of the shelter, which will aid in strengthening unity. I foresee that in the months to come, as the message of the shelter gets spread out further, more wanderers will come.

“The construction of shelter has to start sooner rather than later; I have decided to commence the construction of Sanctuary Two and Three immediately.”

The high ranked officials exchanged looks, and one of them asked hesitantly, “Mr. Bennett, wouldn’t that be too much of a rush? Why don’t we wait for Sanctuary One to be completed?”

“Because we don’t have much time. We need to speed up the progress.”

“Sanctuary needs someone to be in charge. Who will be in charge of Sanctuary Two?”

“Xena will be in charge of Sanctuary Two,” Bennett said. Xena was currently the highest director of Dark Net and had been recommended by many senior officials. Of course, no one opposed this decision.

“As for Sanctuary Three, Black Phantom will be in charge.”

Han Xiao’s eyebrows shot up. He did not expect Bennett to trust him this much and let him be in charge of an entire shelter. The power of this was very huge.

The directors were shocked as well.

Black Phantom had just become a high ranked official, and now he was in charge of such an important issue. It seemed to many that he was not senior enough to do so. Many directors wanted to object, but Bennett had already seen through their thoughts. One simple sentence made their mouths shut.

“Each shelter needs someone with extraordinary strength to guard. If any of you have the confidence that your subordinate is stronger than Black Phantom, feel free to object.”

Stronger than Black Phantom? The directors laughed bitterly. Across the entire Dark Net, other than Bennett and two others who had already retired, no one could beat Black Phantom.

Bennett ended the meeting since no one opposed the decision and brought Han Xiao to a private meeting room. They chatted for a while before Bennett stopped debating with Han Xiao over if there should be a reward for being the person in charge of Sanctuary Three. He faced Han Xiao’s look of contempt without any shame and showcased the detailed plan of Sanctuary Three.

“Sanctuary Three’s construction is basically completed. Its location will be in Graymetal Ruins.”

Han Xiao thought that place sounded quite familiar, and then he remembered that Graymetal Ruins was where he had set up his secret base. It was quite a coincidence.

Bennett briefly explained the layout and that Han Xiao’s mission was to sit in, monitor the construction team, and when any threat arose nearby, he could settle it entirely by himself. There was only one requirement—complete the construction of the shelter.

Han Xiao almost fell asleep because of how boring and tedious the explanation was, and at this time, a notification popped up in the interface. Han Xiao was immediately awake.

You have unlocked a new organization, [Dark Net Organization]. Subsidiary [Blood Pact Society] detected. Relationship status: Respect (4450/6000) – [Rank One of Killer Leaderboard]

[Dark Net Organization] initial relationship: Friendly (2225/3000) – [Director]

Part of the reason Han Xiao was able to become a high ranked official of the Dark Net was because of Bennett. If a player wanted to gain a high position in Dark Net, the relationship had to be at least Respect, and to become a high ranked official, it had to be at least 'Reverence'. However, the prerequisite for Han Xiao was not that strict, which was a benefit of being an NPC. It was not restricted by the rigid requirements in the interface.

You have triggered the rank-A mission [Sanctuary Plan — Sanctuary Three]!

Seeing the mission requirements, Han Xiao smiled. It was as he expected. As the person in charge of Sanctuary Three, his mission was construction, and the mission type was also a series mission that was divided into tens of requirements. Each of them was one part of the construction blueprint. For every part of the construction that was completed, one requirement would be considered met, which included defensive measures, residential areas, bases, buildings, cleaning the ruins, plantations, farms, and many more. It was like modifying a city.

The mission also notified him that if an unexpected situation appeared, he would also be entirely in charge of solving it, and the grading might become lower or higher depending on the situation and results.

The more requirements that were completed, the higher the completion grading would be, and the rewards would be given based on the grading.

For the players, they could take on this main storyline normally, but their situation was completely different from Han Xiao's. The players had to take on different missions from the lowest ranked or middle ranked personnel and take part in the construction from side missions. On the other hand, Han Xiao received the overall mission, which included all the side missions and main storyline missions. This was a benefit of becoming the core member of the plan—he was very clear on what needed to be done.

Also, his reward was far greater than the players'. The fragmented missions that players completed would all be considered as part of the construction in the end, which indirectly met his requirements. As mentioned before, the requirement for the same mission might even differ based on who was doing it, and with the special relationship Han Xiao had with Dark Net, he received this mission that had loads of benefits.

"However, there are some problems." Bennett cleared his throat and said, "Due to funding constraints, the resources are concentrated in Sanctuary One and Two. Therefore, there might be not as many people who will be working with you to build Sanctuary Three."

“How many?” Han Xiao suddenly had a bad feeling. Sanctuary One had tens of thousands of workers, so he would require a similar workforce.

“About a thousand...”

Han Xiao squinted with an expression that said, *Are you kidding me?*

“It’s mainly because of the flow of the funding not reaching its destination,” Bennett said awkwardly.

“This will only be the case for the first month. We will hire more people to help you afterward.”

Han Xiao picked Bear Cub, who was sleeping on his laps, and threw it toward Bennett. Bear Cub fell onto the sofa upside down and finally opened its eyes slowly.

“Hit him.” Han Xiao pointed toward Bennett.

Bear Cub blinked in confusion and only understood after staring at Han Xiao’s finger for a very long time. It then turned over and slapped Bennett’s left cheek.

Bennett laughed bitterly. He rubbed Bear Cub’s furry buttock then pushed it aside and said, “I know it’s difficult, but you’re the only person that can help me. No one else has the ability to.”

Han Xiao pondered for a while before he nodded and said, “No worries, I will be able to build a basic layout within a month.”

Bennett’s requirements for Sanctuary Three were very low. As long as the construction was stable and the ruins were cleaned within a month, it was more than enough. He took Han Xiao’s words as a joke and didn’t take it to heart at all.

“By the way, I have another requirement,” Han Xiao said.

“What is it?” Bennett replied.

Han Xiao laughed and said, “Sanctuary Three has to be named after me.”

Since Bennett had already done that, how could the Great Mechanic Han Xiao not received the same treatment? And by naming the shelter after himself, it would definitely create a strong, long-term impact.

Chapter 217: Class Advancement of the Players

Many of the directors were not happy with the fact that Black Phantom was in charge of Sanctuary Three, but when they heard that Sanctuary Three was short of labor and that Han Xiao had actually received a very difficult task, they felt much better.

That should be the right way, letting the newcomer do the difficult jobs.

However, Bennett gathered the directors and announced an appointment.

“Black Phantom is my friend, and he doesn’t have much experience. Everyone here was involved in the construction of Sanctuary One, so I will appoint one director to be Black Phantom’s consultant and assistant.”

The directors panicked for a little. They exchanged looks discreetly, all hoping not to be appointed.

Going to Sanctuary Three was like being sent to the borders; there would not be any contribution within a month, and there was really not much benefit in being Black Phantom's assistant. There also was not much credit to working under someone. All in all, it was a terrible job, and they would much prefer to stay and wait for other opportunities.

Although the motive behind Bennett's Sanctuary Plan signified greatness and justice, the directors under him did not feel the same. All they saw in the shelter plan were the benefits that they could garner from it. In their eyes, this was a new round of power reshuffle, if they could be in charge of a shelter, the weight of their words would become much heavier in the future.

Bennett knew what these high ranked officials were thinking, but he did not give any explanation because the benefits could motivate the directors to work harder. Bennett did not expect everyone to be so noble; this was all part of his plan.

Not many people could catch Bennett's eyes, but Han Xiao was one of them. This guy was really a great friend. All he wanted was to help, and even when he mentioned rewards, it was mostly in a joking manner—he never insisted on it

Bennett was someone who took profits very lightly, and he noticed that Han Xiao had a similar quality, which was why he felt a sense of closeness toward Han Xiao.

He decided to appoint someone who was very capable to be Han Xiao's assistant.

Bennett looked around and said, "Huang Yu, you'll help Black Phantom."

The face of the guy called Huang Yu immediately dropped. He answered unwillingly, and when he saw the gloating faces of the other directors, he became even more unhappy.

Among the directors of Dark Net, Huang Yu was someone with very high capabilities. He was often entrusted with important issues as he excelled in taking care of all types of cumbersome issues and had always arranged them very neatly. Yet, this time, he had been appointed by Bennett to be an assistant. He was not happy and was not willing to do it, which would, of course, lead to him not taking things seriously. He had already decided to face Black Phantom lackadaisically and pass the one month without being serious. He took it as giving himself a holiday.

...

The idea of shelters had appeared in the minds of others during the old era war as well. Back then, when the nations were busy with the war, many people had lost their homes and wandered the streets. Therefore, one private group started to build a shelter and helped war refugees at all costs. It succeeded initially and protected tens of thousands of people.

However, because of the shortage of resources, the food distributed to the refugees became limited, which sparked unhappiness among them.

Humans cannot be content, especially during times of war, and even a slight idea of malice will be expanded indefinitely.

Those refugees had forgotten the people who helped them in their time of need and fought back. In the end, they took over the shelter and killed its original owners.

In such a chaotic world, things like that happened very often. It was not the shelter that did not work, but the old era did not allow it. Coincidentally, the person who created the shelter during the old era was Bennett's friend. Bennett had never given up on the idea, and he felt now was the right time.

Han Xiao was familiar with the storyline. He knew that Bennett's Sanctuary Plan had succeeded, and it grew like a snowball. Even the people in the cities were willing to move to the shelters; it was so successful that it was almost on a trend to become a nation, which caused an alarm within the Six Nations. If it was not for [Mutation Disaster] during version 2.0, the Six Nations might even have become hostile toward the shelters.

The shelters only fully utilized themselves during version 2.0. By then, they were considered to have lived up to their name.

"I'm now in charge of Sanctuary Three. This time, it's truly a large part of the main storyline. The manpower assigned to me is not enough, but I still have the players."

Han Xiao had already thought of how to do the [Sanctuary] mission a long time ago.

A helicopter landed in Sanctuary One. Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog walked out and looked around in curiosity. They trotted toward Han Xiao with smiles on their faces as soon as they saw him.

Frenzied Sword had a lot of questions to ask, but it all stuck in his mind when he saw Hao Tian who stood on the side

"God— God Player Hao Tian?" he exclaimed in surprise.

Hao Tian gave him a faint look and did not say anything—too cool.

"Wow, legend!" Bun-hit-dog widened his eyes and asked, "Did you trigger the hidden storyline as well?"

Hao Tian turned his head and did not reply.

How cold of the legend. Bun-hit-dog was speechless, and Frenzied Sword was much better after all.

This time, Bear Cub made a sound.

Hao Tian immediately dashed forward and picked Bear Cub up. He took out tissues from his back with seriousness on his face.

The duo suddenly understood why Hao Tian did not want to speak. They discretely took a few steps backward; the smell was really bad.

Seeing Hao Tian's serious expression and skilled actions, Frenzied Sword felt respect toward him. *What a true legend, doesn't even change his expression.*

The first meeting between the players was very peaceful to Han Xiao.

He looked at Bun-hit-dog. This 'reporter' would be of use for what he was going to do next.

...

Three days later...

“Congratulations to the player [White Mask] for completing the first class advancement!”

Every player received a notification from their interface. The first player to reach LV 21 in the level leaderboards, White Mask, was a foreign player. He shared the changes after his class advancement on the forums.

The players on Planet Aquamarine suddenly discovered that [Energy Training Technique] would automatically be awakened with the class advancement!

The people had doubts at the start, but as more and more players advanced in their class, it was proven that everyone would awaken this ability after their class advancement.

The players on Planet Aquamarine was stunned. The ability that they had spent experience to learn was actually an ability that would automatically be awakened after class advancement.

Was that bad?

Many players did not think so. To learn a high-level ability in advance did not seem like a bad thing—it was a growth ability after all, and it had a very good effect. It could largely increase one’s strength during low levels, which was very useful for these players who were discovering new locations.

The people who really suffered were the players in the Northern Continent who only learned it at LV 18 or 19. They had wasted their money on an ability that they would very soon awaken upon class advancement. They were filled with grief.

The Southern Continent players, who had been depressed for a very long time, suddenly realized that they were not the unluckiest, and they suddenly felt much happier.

Although the truth of [Energy Training Technique] was revealed, many low-level players still felt that it was worth it to learn this ability in advance.

Therefore, many Andrea players were still waiting for Han Xiao’s arrival, but what they were faced with was only shock.

Black Phantom had returned to the Southern Continent!

He was not going to Andrea anymore!

When Han Xiao had been in the Western Continent and the Northern Continent, players in Andrea had anticipated that they were going to be the last ones, but the truth was too cruel—Han Xiao was not going there at all.

Their hope had resulted in disappointment; the players in Andrea were full of sorrow.

The Planet Aquamarine section on the forums was heated—even foreign players from the other planets joined in—yet players in Andrea had no position to say anything.

It had almost been two months since the official public launch. The average level of the earliest players was close to 20. With more and more new players joined the game, the number of players on Planet Aquamarine had reached hundreds of thousands, and it was still growing. The high-level players started to slowly interfere in the storyline of their planets, digging through the history, the environment, and joining the main storyline.

It was the same for Planet Aquamarine, more and more players were recruited by the Six Nations to be a special unit. The players had heard from the NPCs that the Six Nations' expedition against the Germinal Organization would commence at any moment.

However, the interface had notified them that their level was not high enough to meet the prerequisites for the expedition mission, which meant that even if they followed the army to join the expedition, most of them would not receive any rewards.

Most importantly, with the current strength of the players, they would be easily slaughtered by the army.

This was the effect of Han Xiao bringing the main storyline forward; the players had lost the time that they should have had to become stronger and join the war immediately.

Also, the organizations of Planet Aquamarine had finally noticed that there was a limit to the number of times the players could revive, which made them more relieved. They felt that at least the Inhumans had flaws; they were not as nervous as before and started to take the Inhumans as a special kind of mercenaries.

At this time, a new issue of Bun-hit-dog's 'Galaxy Exploration Journal' was released.

Chapter 218: Didn't Know You Are This Kind of Black Phantom

Wild Boy, a member of Sky Territory Guild, was a loyal fan of Bun-hit-dog.

There were many types of Galaxy video hosts on the forum, but Bun-hit-dog was the only one that had first-hand information about Black Phantom, which meant that he was always ahead of other video hosts. Wild Boy liked videos about Black Phantom very much; he was really attracted to the dark and mysterious feeling that Black Phantom gave.

As soon as Bun-hit-dog updated, Wild Boy saw it. He clicked into it immediately and commented before the video even started. "International rule, ask for new updates before watching!"

The video started playing, and Bun-hit-dog's bitchy voice appeared.

"Pure white legs and cherry red lips, rip your skin and harden your bones, take off these clothes and these pants, drunk by choice but not by booze, cup of Viagra is all I need—I will last through the night! Hello everyone, welcome to the Galaxy Exploration Journal. Audience, this is me as always, the different kind of Bun-hit-dog!"

Wild Boy spat out a mouthful of water. It was a standard procedure to always start with a poem every episode. The words used became more and more shameless. Even Wild Boy, who had a strong ID, could not take it anymore.

The comments would always explode when the poems came. It was so much that even the screen was obstructed.

“I once had both knowledge and fighting skills, but now I can only yell 666.”

“Clear theme, good poem.”

“I’m calling the police!”

“I sang along although I’m a girl...”

“Extraordinary level of dirtiness!”

“I can’t stop singing it!”

“Please be considerate toward the feelings of lady fans!”

“Reported, you’re welcome!”

The last episode had been about Bun-hit-dog and Frenzied Sword making a mess in Black Pine. This episode was a continuation, and the audience enjoyed it very much. When the mission was completed and the show entered the second half, the scene suddenly changed to a city that was being built. The large ‘Bennett Sanctuary One’ came into audiences’ sights.

In the scene, Han Xiao wore a black coat and stood with his hands behind his back.

The comments stopped for a moment before suddenly exploding.

“Wow, I get to see my Uncle Black again!”

“Great video host, have a recommendation ticket.”

After so many days, Black Phantom could finally be seen in Bun-hit-dog’s video, and Bun-hit-dog was the only person who could do this. The audience felt a sense of grace; it was like seeing someone they knew.

Since the public launch, Han Xiao had been in the sights of the players, and he had already made an impact and occupied a special position in the hearts of the players.

Wild Boy opened his eyes wide; he did not want to miss even one second.

“Black Phantom brought us into a special scene going during construction. During this time, I discovered main storyline missions from Black Phantom...”

The audience discussed among each other within the comments. The players knew that Han Xiao gave out main storyline missions, and the requirements for receiving the hidden storyline were very high. Could this main storyline mission be a different one?

Bun-hit-dog showcased his mission list, and a new mission appeared within, [Black Phantom Sanctuary Three]!

“What’s this?”

“There’s Black Phantom in the mission name...”

“What’s a sanctuary?”

“It is very similar to the name of this place.”

Bun-hit-dog explained the inside information with excitement. Dark Net was building shelters, and Black Phantom had brought a group of thousand people to Graymetal Ruins to build a city. This information had been gained from Han Xiao himself.

There were not any prior requirements this time; the mission could be triggered easily.

After the mission introduction ended, the comments section was filled with shock once more.

“It’s the construction of a city. My god, that’s such a large main storyline! Almost as huge as the expedition war.”

“This should be part of the Planet Aquamarine main storyline, too!”

Wild Boy paused the video. He read the mission requirements carefully again and again then swallowed his saliva before playing the video.

Without even having time to think about what the sanctuary actually was, he saw in the video that Han Xiao was yelling at the people below him.

“The overcast of war obscured the blue skies like the wings of death, and the scars of the previous war have been torn apart before they could even heal. Only a few decades have passed, but no one has forgotten the pain that the war cast upon the land. Up till today, it is still affecting the ground under us and the skies above us. Radiation, specks of dust, wasteland, and dead nations!

“How ridiculous! After the old era, our civilian technology regressed, but the military technology that is used against our own kind has been advancing continuously. They fight for their ideals and the nations’ benefits; they used iron and fire to spread death!

“For these empty and false reasons, they slaughtered those of their own kind who had no power to defend themselves! Countless people have been killed in the fires of war! The world became wounded and broken because of them, and it is on its way to the end. The ending of the world might quietly be upon us one day. The construction of the shelters is for preserving our civilization. Even if the world ends tomorrow, I still want to save the last bit of tinder for the civilization!

“I don’t possess greatness, but too many are small.

“If no one wants to pay the price, okay, I will be the first!

“But I know, I won’t be the last!”

Han Xiao’s tone was filled with cadence. Wild Boy felt short of breath. Although he was watching a video, he could feel his blood turning hot in his heart—that raw emotion was extremely infectious!

Wild Boy was not the only one who was shocked by this. The comment ‘I don’t possess greatness, but too many are small’ passed by the screen with three exclamation marks behind. It looked very impactful.

“Didn’t Know You Are This Kind of Black Phantom!” Many comments similar to this also flew on the screen. In the players’ mind, Black Phantom was quiet and did not speak much, but this speech that he

had given had turned this impression completely upside down. Many players felt more familiar with Han Xiao—they had not expected Black Phantom’s ideals to be this great.

Wild Boy was very excited after he finished watching.

This time, he saw Jade Green Sky announcing a message in the guild channel.

“Attention everyone, the guild will be collecting Graymetal Ruins’ location and information. The intelligence provider will be rewarded.”

...

One day earlier...

Han Xiao gathered the group of a thousand people who followed him to build the city and gave out the speech in the video. Bennett just wanted him to say something casually at the time, but he did not expect him to say this much. Bennett was as shocked as the players.

The workers around stopped what they were doing and gathered. The number of people became more and more. They all looked up at Han Xiao, who was standing on the tall platform.

Seeing the crowd turning excited, Han Xiao knew that it was extremely effective. This paragraph had been copied from Bennett’s speech in the future, and its intention was exactly to shock everyone. Back then, Bennett’s position in the hearts of the players had been decided because of his noble ideals. Now that Han Xiao had said it first, no matter what happened in the future, the players would be reminded of him when they brought up Bennett, which would make stronger impacts in the impression the players had of him, making himself more valuable.

He knew that players liked to see such things. A character with noble ideals was usually very popular, and Bennett did not need to care about the players’ impression of him, so Han Xiao grabbed the opportunity.

At the same time, Bennett would be touched as well. Doing this had many benefits.

Players all love the story that a character has as it shows unique sparkling points of their personality. Han Xiao nodded discreetly. He wanted the players to seek him out after the impression that he had created, and whether or not those were his real thoughts, no one would know if he did not say.

Han Xiao turned around and saw Bennett’s expression. It was filled impassioned; these words had really expressed his mind.

Of course they would since they originated from him.

Bennett was very touched. Han Xiao had voiced the deepest thoughts in his mind. He realized that he was beginning to like Han Xiao more and more.

It was like rain and poured on the desert in his heart, Bennett realized that he was not alone anymore; he had found someone that was walking down the same path as him.

It’s all for the continuation of the civilization—he understands me. Bennett gave Han Xiao a pleased look.

Speech is a very scary ability; it can encourage the hearts of the people.

Originally, many workers there went for the money, but now, they felt like their hearts were filled with something more, and they became much more motivated.

The directors were shocked as well. They did not think that the Black Phantom, who had killed countless people, had such ideals. Despite their own motives, they were immediately impressed.

...

The next day, the construction team of Sanctuary Three gathered. The enormous convoy crossed the desolate wilderness and disappeared over the horizon, leaving only dust behind.

The convey was equipped with a scouting helicopter that was flying at a low height. It was the ride for important personnel so that they could escape in the face of danger. However, Han Xiao decided to take the car. Huang Yu, on the other hand, took the helicopter without hesitation. He was not going to be sucking up to Han Xiao.

Han Xiao sat in the back seat. He felt the vibration of the off-road truck and browsed the information of the team.

A notification popped up on the interface at this time.

Current Target: Protect the convoy until it arrives at Graymetal Ruins.

Current Population: 1,034

Upon arrival at the destination, 250,000 experience will be rewarded if the damage is below 20%. Mission grading will also be increased.

Current grading: E

A sudden notification of the mission goal. This is a characteristic of long-term missions. Han Xiao raised his eyebrows. Suddenly, he realized that he has been moving his eyebrows too much recently. That was not good; he needed to be more serious.

[Sanctuary Three]'s mission grading changed in real time, and the grading could be seen to increase when a requirement was met. The mission had just started, and nothing had been done yet. Thus, it was at the lowest grade, E.

700 people in the team were workers and technicians. The rest of the 300 were soldiers and guards. Divided into teams of 20, the guards stationed around the exterior of the convoy.

Military power is not enough. I have to strengthen the team.

The power of one person was limited. However, he was a Mechanic with a lot of assets.

Chapter 219: The Brutal Force of Mechanic!

It required four to five days to travel from Sanctuary One to Graymetal Ruins across the wilderness, so the convoy could only camp in the wild.

At around dusk of the first day after departure, at Han Xiao's orders, the convoy found a safe terrain in the wild and settled down. It was dangerous to travel after the sun set, and many beasts were active during the night.

The soldiers of Dark Net patrolled the surrounding areas in shifts. Han Xiao gathered the important people in the team for a meeting—Assistant Huang Yu, Head of Construction Coney Fury, and Guard Captain Liu Zhao.

The blueprints of the Graymetal Ruins Modification Plan were laid out on the table, and Coney Fury was speaking.

"The initial modifications of the entire city were estimated to be completed in three months, including weeding, getting rid of the beasts, cleaning of ruins, then completing the basic layout of the shelter, planting of the electricity network and water pipes, etc. But this is a plan based on 30,000 workers. We only have 1,000 in the first month. There's nothing we can do, not even cleaning the ruins." Coney Fury sighed.

Han Xiao nodded without giving approval or denial. He looked at Huang Yu and asked, "Do you have any suggestions?"

Huang Yu said perfunctorily, "No."

Noticing the careless attitude of Huang Yu, Han Xiao roughly guessed what he was thinking. But Han Xiao didn't care about it; it was not like he needed an assistant. He turned his head and said, "Manpower is not a problem—I plan to complete the blueprint construction within a month."

Coney Fury was stunned. "That will need at least 100,000 workers. Even Sanctuary One doesn't have that many workers."

"I have my ways." Han Xiao did not explain his plan in further detail.

Huang Yu stood by and watched. The amount of money needed to hire 100,000 workers was extremely large, and even with so much money, it was not certain they could hire that many workers. He did not understand where Han Xiao got his confidence from.

Liu Zhao suddenly pressed his headphones and said hastily, "Mr. Black Phantom, an airplane is closing in!"

"Let's go out and take a look."

Walking out of the camp, the guards looked at the sky on alert. In the dark night sky, a large airplane flashing signal lights was heading toward them—whether it was friend or foe was unknown.

"It's ok." Han Xiao smiled. "That's the airdrop I called."

The plane flew past above their heads and dropped a few huge resources boxes that were tied together. The parachute opened, and it landed not far from the camp. The symbol on the boxes belonged to the Fabian Company.

Han Xiao made use of his relationship network and had Fabian's plane airdrop him a large number of mechanical parts. It definitely was not free, but Han Xiao had a lot of money. Such a small spend meant nothing to him.

Everyone was relieved upon hearing that it was a false alarm.

Huang Yu was secretly surprised. To be able to call an airdrop from the renowned munitions company Fabian, Han Xiao's relationship network was broader than he thought.

These parts were worth millions of dollars. Han Xiao ordered people to load them onto the resources vehicles and started to build a large amount of machinery. He was very rich now, so he could build all sorts of combat machinery, and they could be used to protect the team as well.

The most famous combat style of Mechanics was the sea of machinery.

Han Xiao stayed in the car and worked for the next two days of the journey.

...

The convoy had arrived at the desert. The sun shone brightly in the sky, and the high temperature had turned the sand as hot as burning steel. Even light was distorted around the air not far from the ground.

The convoyed stopped under a Barbera tree. This type of tree was unique to the desert of Planet Aquamarine. It was also called 'umbrella of life'. Its shade was like an island that insulated the heat, and its juices were plenty and sweet, which could be used to quench thirst immediately.

The people were very thirsty. The soldiers patrolled around, and everyone was covered in sweat.

Boom!

The desert far away suddenly turned into waves. A huge number of enormous beetles crawled out of the ground. Each of them over half a meter long, they had brown and shiny shells, six feet, and two claws. They moved toward the Barbera tree like a wave.

"Beast attack!"

The alarm was activated. Three hundred soldiers immediately stood in position holding their guns. When they noticed that the sea of beetles had surrounded them from every direction and there was nowhere to escape, their faces became horrified, and their hands started trembling.

The Desert Blood Shell Crab was a strong predator in the deserts that destroyed every life form wherever they passed by, and there were at least 10,000 of them here.

"Into the cars and drive open a path!" Huang Yu yelled hastily. He then rushed up the helicopter and hurried the pilot to take off immediately.

No one had the thought of fighting when they faced this many bugs. When they heard Huang Yu's order and were just about to enter the cars to escape, Han Xiao walked out of the car and said, "Don't panic. Everyone stand in position. Get ready to face the enemy."

"The number of bugs is too huge," Captain Liu Zhao said hastily. "Our defense can't cover all directions. We will most likely suffer a huge loss if we fight."

"Black Phantom, come to the helicopter quickly," Huang Yu shouted.

Han Xiao waved his hands.

Huang Yu cursed in his head. Seeing that the sea of bugs was coming even closer, he told the pilot to take off immediately without caring about Han Xiao. The pilot was afraid as well; therefore, he followed the order and piloted the helicopter off the ground.

The troops on the ground did not dare disobey Han Xiao's order. They stood their ground and watched nervously as the swarm of bugs rapidly approached.

At this moment, Han Xiao took out his laptop and pressed a few buttons.

Hum!

Twelve Combat Rangers drove out of the logistics vehicles as fast as normal cars. Everyone's face was filled with shock as they looked at these rover robots rapidly spreading out into all directions like guards of iron. The cold metallic color reflected the light shining through the leaves like pieces of golden scales.

These rovers were the newest and improved generation 2.5. Han Xiao had leveled up the blueprint many times. The basic attributes of the machinery that he had built was much higher, and its quality was at blue as well.

The Generation 2.5 Rovers were all equipped with an auto fire control system, which improved its firepower and magazine continuation ability. They were around the same height as humans, and their mobility was much higher because of the triangular caterpillar tracks that they were equipped with, which could traverse much tougher terrain.

Han Xiao knew that it would not be peaceful during the journey when the mission notification showed up, so he had called for airdrop and built a lot of machinery over the past two days.

Han Xiao's building speed had become much quicker, and the rover robot that would have taken him days to complete at LV 20 could now be completed in just tens of minutes.

When the building speed of a Mechanic exceeded a certain limit, they would be able to build on the spot in the battlefield. With enough materials, weapons could be built non-stop. Only high-level Mechanics could have this ability after learning [Instant Assembly]. This was also a very important factor in the rise of Mechanics in version 3.0.

"Unload all the round metal plates in the car and place them in every direction."

The Dark Net soldiers completely followed whatever he said. They immediately did as they were told and placed the twenty round metal plates on the ground. Han Xiao activated the program, and the plates started to transform. Their base fixed into the ground, and the stacked modules assembled into gun barrels. The entire process only took four to five seconds.

These were Mini Folding Batteries. Han Xiao had also leveled up the blueprints, and they now had smart firepower control.

Seeing the thick, black, and long gun barrels, the soldiers felt safer.

When the swarm reached within 400 meters, the generation 2.5 Rovers and the mini batteries fired simultaneously. With the camp under the Barbera tree as the center, a storm of bullets bloomed toward every direction.

The sound of fire was in sync, and the rain of bullets spread all over the place!

Ta ta ta ta!

In an instant, green-colored gunk exploded within the swarm as steel and fire penetrated the huge beetles one after another. In the face of the killing machines built by mankind, the shells that the Desert Blood Shell Crabs were so proud of were as fragile as egg shells.

A trench had formed 400 meters away from the camp, filled with corpses of the bugs, stopping the swarm from moving closer. Even the desert was damped by their blood. After a round of fire, the swarm became at least a third smaller.

A few Rangers drove out of the camp. They were equipped with Sunworm flamethrowers. The cone of fire covered the swarm, and the sound of bugs being burnt alive soon reverberated in the convoy's ears. The claws of the Desert Blood Shell Crab could not harm the platinum alloy armor of the Rangers at all.

With the fearsome firepower, it was a one-sided slaughter.

This was the brutal force of a mechanic!

Group combat was the advantage a Mechanic had. Esper and Pugilist might be very strong fighters, but their physical strength had its limits.

However, money was the limitation for a Mechanic. That machinery had cost millions of dollars, and even a max level player in version 1.0 could barely afford it. The ammunition cost was also extremely expensive as thousands of steel core armor piercing bullets were used every second.

Money had been a problem for Mechanics since the beginning. Building an army of machines was a very strong combat style of the Mechanic class, but it was also the most expensive one.

When the average level of the enemies become higher and they become stronger, the machinery army had to have higher standards and technology in them, which meant that their cost would increase as well.

Normal players could not master the army combat style very well. Even if they used all their money to build an army, they would not be able to withstand the cost of repairing the damage after combat. The army style was usually used as a last resort. However, Han Xiao was not bothered by the money problem

since he had his ways of making a lot of money. He still did not want to go for the army combat style—he just wanted to build a simple guarding team that had enough firepower in times of need.

Liu Zhao held his assault rifle all the time and waited to fire when the swarm entered the range of 300 meters, but the swarm was completely stopped at 400 meters away by the rain of iron.

His hands were even tired from holding the rifle, yet he still did not see any need to fire.

This firepower is way too strong.

Liu Zhao looked at the batteries beside him that were firing bullets continuously, their bolts moved front and back automatically, the bullet shells poured onto the ground, some even hit his face.

With surprise, Liu Zhao realized he had nothing to do, Black Phantom's machinery had dealt with all the enemies; the guards assigned by Dark Net had been of no use at all. There were completely not any need for them.

Chapter 220: Arrival

The battle only lasted for fifteen minutes. The waves of iron slaughtered the entire swarm, and white slurry covered the ground, giving off an extremely stinky odor as it was vaporized by the high temperature.

The team was completely unharmed. The people looked at Han Xiao, who was calmly smoking a cigarette, and felt very safe. They had been rather afraid when they left the sanctuary, as the wilderness of Planet Aquamarine was filled with danger, but with the way they looked at it now, there would not be any danger as long as Han Xiao was around.

Liu Zhao realized that the team of guards that he led had become the ones being guarded instead, and admiration toward Han Xiao blossomed in his heart. The strong would always be admired.

Your machinery killed Desert Blood Shell Crab (LV 15). You Received 10 Experience.

When one's level was too much higher than the monster killed, the experience received would be largely reduced. One bug only gave 10 EXP, but there were at least 10,000 of them. Han Xiao looked at the interface—he had received more than 100,000 EXP.

The circling helicopter landed. Huang Yu had been watching from the helicopter earlier on, and he was overwhelmed when he saw the endless swarm falling like patches of wheat being cut down, the endless rain of bullets blooming like flowers, and the camp remaining completely unharmed.

Huang Yu had actually been planning to escape in the helicopter, and he had almost wanted to leave the others behind. Now that danger has been averted, his expression became quite awkward. It felt like the surrounding people all looked at him with disgust and unhappiness in their eyes.

The Mechanic class is actually this strong... Hao Tian contemplated as he held Bear Cub. He was a Pugilist, and now he was unavoidably worried about his future in the pro scene.

On the other hand, Frenzied Sword, who had been a godly Pugilist player in Han Xiao's previous life, was even gladder that he had chosen the Mechanic class.

More material. Bun-hit-dog's face was filled with happiness. He did not have to worry about finding contents for his videos as long as he followed behind Black Phantom.

The three players who had triggered the mission to protect the team received a rather good amount of experience without having to do anything. Frenzied Sword and Bun-hit-dog were used to this uncommon occurrence, but it was the first time for Hao Tian.

Seeing the experience bar growing a rather large amount, Hao Tian had mixed feelings. The amount of earning that he had gotten from doing missions tirelessly was not even worth it compared to following Han Xiao and doing nothing.

No wonder so many people wanted to trigger Black Phantom's hidden storyline—even a godly pro player like him almost wanted to do the same.

The danger of the wilderness came from beasts, robbers, and radiation, but with the iron war machines protecting them, the numerous beast attacks that they met along the way were all easily resolved. It was a scary journey indeed, but there was no real danger.

...

When they were just one day away from arriving in Graymetal Ruins, the convoy set up camp.

It was a night with clear skies, and if one looked up the skies, the entire river of stars would be reflected in one's eyes. The technological environment of Planet Aquamarine was similar to Earth, but its nature was more beautiful.

In Star Zone 9 of the Garton Galaxy, the civilization density of the star zone was very low, but the planets were very concentrated. Many empty planets were caught by planets with higher density and started to orbit around them. Planet Aquamarine was one of the planets orbiting around a fixed star at a distance just nice to have the temperature suitable for human habitation. There are also a few natural satellites orbiting around Planet Aquamarine, which were 'moons' that reflect light from the fixed star to the planets at their dark side of self-rotation.

Before the old era, there were countries that had built a rocket ship to land on the natural satellites, but they were desolated.

The opportunity that made the Godoran Civilization contact Planet Aquamarine happened when one of Godora's Interstellar Spectrometers captured the waves in space made by Planet Aquamarine's primitive rocket ship.

Godora was a galactic civilization in the Garton Galaxy. The areas that they explored included many star zones of the Garton Galaxy, but they were more of a law enforcing organization, contacting civilizations with friendly motives.

Recently, Han Xiao had read a bit about the research that the nations in Planet Aquamarine had regarding astrology. The players could access this information through various sources as well, and it was incredibly detailed and real, which made the players feel a very strong sense of reality. With the perspective of an NPC, Han Xiao could see more information.

In the camps, as Han Xiao and Coney Fury were discussing the blueprint, a guard came in to report.

“Your Excellency, we captured a wanderer. He has been lingering near our camps.”

It was a teen wanderer with worn out clothing. He had a double barrel hunting gun, which had been confiscated by the guards. Upon seeing the camp that was filled with armed guards, horror showed on his face, and he started trembling.

Han Xiao had an idea and asked, “Is there a colony nearby?”

Liu Zhao looked at the map and said, “There are a few medium-size colonies.”

Han Xiao nodded and looked at the teenager with a pondering look. The teenager felt that the eyes of this man in black before him were so pressurizing that his legs started to soften. Before Han Xiao questioned, he explained in tremble and said, “I’m a wanderer from a nearby colony. I was out to hunt for food and coincidentally saw you guys passing by, so I wanted to take a closer look.”

Han Xiao touched his chin and contemplated for a while. Seeing this teenager looked undernourished and emaciated, he said, “Liu Zhao, get him some food.”

The teenager was stunned for a moment.

“Return to your colony and tell your people that my team will be building a city in the Graymetal Ruins. We will provide a large number of paid jobs. They’re also welcome to join us. Let your chief know my intentions. We hope they can move in and take residence.”

The heavy bag of food brought the teenager back to his senses. His face was filled with relief and surprise.

He was a hunter of the colony. With very little prey recently, the people in the colony had not eaten much food and had been starving—this food could give them several filling meals.

The teenager had been very scared when he was captured, but now that he had found that these people were not evil, he was much more relieved and started to consider Han Xiao’s suggestion.

Most of the wanderers did not have the luxury to enjoy full stomachs, so the prospect of work in exchange for food was indeed tempting.

After having someone send the teenager away, Han Xiao took out the map and said, “Graymetal Ruins is isolated. There’s no human habitation within thirty miles, but there are about more than a dozen colonies further away, mostly small ones, totaling at about two thousand to three thousand people. Liu Zhao, take some people and food along with you, and spread the news about us building a sanctuary.”

The original intention of a sanctuary was to protect wanderers in the wilderness. Thus, it was normal to attract wanderers to move in. Huang Yu thought that he had seen through Han Xiao’s plan and thought to himself, *He actually wants to hire wanderers as workers, but it’s still too few.*

Han Xiao wanted to complete the basic layout of the sanctuary blueprint in a month, which needed at least 100,000 people. There were way too few wanderers for that.

Huang Yu shook his head. He felt the one-month plan would very most likely fail. It would not damage the organization, but it definitely would damage Black Phantom's prestige and face. Being unable to live up to his word, other high ranked officials' impression of him would definitely worsen.

I will appeal to return to the headquarters after staying for a month anyway, Huang Yu thought. There were no opportunities to contribute or gain benefits, so he did not want to waste his time being an assistant in Sanctuary Three.

Concerned with that arrangement, Liu Zhao said, "But if we spread out the guards, the defensive power of the team won't be enough."

Han Xiao pointed toward the Generation 2.5 Rangers that patrolled the camp with their preprogrammed routes and gave a faint laugh.

"I'll give you another chance to respond."

"I ensure the completion of the mission." Liu Zhao changed his words immediately and stood straight.

...

The endless plains of Karst were maroon and looked like coagulated blood. Han Xiao had returned once again; it was a familiar view.

Come to think about it, I haven't been back to my base for quite a long time, Han Xiao thought. His base had been in standby mode as he did not really use it.

The outline of the Graymetal Ruins appeared in sight.

There had once been a broad road on the plains, but after years of no maintenance, it was now filled with weeds. The concrete had cracked open, and greens grew from within. Old newspapers flew slowly on its roads, and the long extinguished street lights were covered in vines.

It was a view filled with despair.

The entrance of the Graymetal Ruins was a broad abandoned road. The convoy moved forward along the road, and the only sound was the sound of the engine and the wheels pressing on the roads.

The huge amount of work needed to turn this abandoned city into a sanctuary had the people feeling greatly pressured.

You have arrived at Graymetal Ruins.

Current Population: 1034

Damage: 0%

Target complete.

You have received 250,000 Experience.

Mission Grade has become D-.

The main storyline mission that Han Xiao had received was [Construct Sanctuary Three]; it was a large mission that oversaw the entire process. Therefore, according to the tens of building types that a sanctuary required, it was divided into tens of construction requirements.

The current mission target changed.

Current Target: Complete blueprint construction in three months

Current Time: Day 1

In three months, complete all the 13 construction requirements as stated below: [Expand/Collapse]

Rewards: 800,000 Experience, +1250 Dark Net Prestige, Increased Mission Grading

Extra Requirement: If construction is completed in advance, bonus rewards and grading will be awarded based on the number of days. Experience reward: +10% per day