

The Mechanic 221

Chapter 221: Gathered Players

These thirteen construction requirements were all basic tasks, including evicting the beasts, cleaning the ruins, and building the water and electricity network, residential areas, and walls. There were tens of requirements for [Sanctuary Three]—these were only part of it.

Construction of the blueprint was originally a three-month plan. The target is to complete the basic layout within that time. It took Sanctuary One a month to complete around half of the basic layout. Using them as a reference, three months seems plenty.

Han Xiao suddenly remembered something and thought, *No, Bennett has tens of thousands of workers over there; I have only one thousand for the first month. There will not be enough time if the missions are done the regular way.*

Suddenly, the noisy sound of human voices came from the front. The convoy stopped hastily—thousands of people had gathered at the entrance of the abandoned city.

“There’s a problem!”

The guards got out of the cars immediately and surrounded the team in the middle. The group of people had also noticed the convoy and started moving toward them.

The people of Dark Net immediately recognized their identity by their strange clothing.

Inhumans!

Nervousness filled their hearts. Everyone felt a lack of confidence when they faced the mysterious Inhumans. Inhumans were much more dangerous than beasts because they could come back to life! Just by depending on the machinery that Black Phantom had built might not protect everyone.

Huang Yu was shocked.

“So many Inhumans? Why are they gathered here? The organization sent people to the Graymetal Ruins to investigate the terrain not long ago, and there was no one here!”

In Han Xiao’s eyes, the concentrated and large number of IDs above these players’ heads made him dizzy. He then flipped the corner of the coat to the side and walked out of the car with a lot of style. He walked out of the crowd and stood at the front of the convoy with hands behind his back.

Standing in between the two parties, his standing posture was like a javelin that pointed straight at the sky. A gust of wind blew on his coat, and it waved in the air like a black flag. Just with this awesome and stylish appearance, all eyes were focused on him.

What happened next had the people of Dark Net stunned. The Inhumans stopped as soon as they saw Han Xiao.

“Black Phantom, we’re here to do missions,” said someone straight in front of him.

“Heard you are building a sanctuary. We are here to help,” said by someone who seemed to be role playing.

“I almost thought it was fake news after waiting for so long,” commented one relieved player.

With his hands behind his back, Han Xiao stayed in character and gave a faint nod. “I appreciate everyone’s help; it’s all to serve the people. Our convoy is going to enter the city. Please open a path. After we settle down, we will plan the construction targets of the city. There will be many job opportunities then.”

The players followed his order and opened a path in between.

The people of Dark Net opened their mouth very widely, their faces filled with surprise.

These Inhumans have come here just to help Black Phantom, since when did Black Phantom have so much influence among the Inhumans?

Huang Yu was stunned. Han Xiao had the confidence to complete the basic layout in a month because he could order the Inhumans?

To Planet Aquamarine, the appearance of the Inhumans was a very strange phenomenon. Everyone was wary about them, and those who came in contact with the Inhumans all did it with caution and a cold attitude. Therefore, Huang Yu could not believe what he had just seen.

How did Black Phantom do it? Why do the Inhumans respect him?

I have to report this to Mr. Bennett.

With the players joining in, the team multiplied in size, and they entered the Graymetal Ruins.

The convoy found a place and stopped before Coney Fury asked hesitantly, “Your excellency, we need to first clean out a place for a temporary residence. It’s getting late, and it’s best to complete that before dawn. We don’t have much manpower, so we’ll have to start now.”

“You, ask for help from the Inhumans.”

“Me?” Coney Fury was a little scared.

“I’m here, what are you scared of?” Han Xiao patted his shoulder.

Coney Fury did not have anything else to say. Without a choice, he went out of the car, took out a horn, prepared what he wanted to say, and loudly declared, “I need some people to help me clear out a safe area nearby big enough for everyone to camp in temporarily. Since all of you are here to help, I would like to trouble you guys.”

These words triggered missions immediately; every player received it. They split out within seconds and started work right away.

The surroundings became a construction site in a flash—the cleaning of the area and eviction of beasts had started.

Coney Fury’s face was filled with surprise as he did not expect these Inhumans to give him so much face.

He turned around and looked at Han Xiao. He knew that it was not him whom the Inhumans gave face to but this mysterious boss of his.

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With the help from the players, a safe area had been cleared out by evening. It was a stadium, naturally suited for camping, and the dangerous insects and beasts around had all been chased away by the players.

The people of Dark Net received permission from Han Xiao and placed the mini batteries around the stadium for guarding purposes, and it attracted many players' curiosity.

The camps were protected by vehicles, which acted as barriers, and the players were resting in the remaining areas. The inside of the stadium was filled with people. Thousands of players conversed with each other—many of them knew each other, and some people even started a store. The despair in the air of this abandoned city had been taken over by liveliness.

A sound had appeared again in this ruins that has been silent for decades.

“Le—legend!”

Hao Tian heard someone calling him when Bear Cub was walking him. He looked back, and Jade Green Sky and a few core members of the Sky Territory Guild were all behind him, looking at him with excitement.

Hao Tian nodded. He looked at them and said, “Thanks for your hard work.”

“It’s what we should do.” Jade Green Sky was filled with excitement. The Sky Territory Guild was under the Long Sky club, and Hao Tian was a pillar of Long Sky, so they were colleagues and knew each other.

Club Guilds had to provide help to the pro players because they were the face of the club. Hao Tian’s position was even higher—he was also an idol to their guild members.

A very important reason that Jade Green Sky had brought people to the sanctuary without hesitation was because he knew that Hao Tian was with Black Phantom, and he hurried over to provide him with help.

Among the players who came to the sanctuary, Sky Territory was the only large guild—most of the others were casual players. Bun-hit-dog was instantly recognized. As the most popular video host at the moment, he had many fans, and they were very ‘passionate’.

“Dog author, stop running!”

“Reach out your head, I will show you something special!”

“Taste the anger of Africans!”

“Still not an update? I’m going to break your leg!”

A group of fans filled with hatred chased after Bun-hit-dog while yelling. The other players gave them a path and rubbernecked from the sides. There were even people who started selling snacks. There was a loud commotion, and phrases like “Kill him!” could be heard multiple times, together with laughter.

Bun-hit-dog did not forget to record even as he was running. He yelled at the camera lens, “This meeting has been going very well; the fans are very passionate.

“You know what they say, beating signifies closeness and scolding signifies love. I am indeed very pleased at heart.

“Come on, smile at the camera for your daddy.”

Bun-hit-dog turned the lenses to record the players who were chasing him, living up to the phrase ‘not knowing what death is’. This was a well-known culture among video hosts—how else would they be able to capture moments that normal players would not be able to witness if they were afraid of trouble?

“Eat my axe!”

Huuu—

An axe flew past his head rubbing against his scalp.

Bun-hit-dog retracted his head in fear then escaped in a flash without turning back. The players chasing him all became short of breath.

“What the hell, how does he run so fast? My stamina is almost finished.”

“He followed Black Phantom after all. His level is higher than any of ours.”

“Ah, damn European!”

The players outside the camps were joyous, but Frenzied Sword was facing a very important and serious decision.

He had successfully advanced his class and was torn between the three paths—Cannon Master, Mechanic, and Mechanical Pugilist.

The power of Mechanic that Han Xiao had displayed was scarily strong, but Frenzied Sword was more interested in Mechanical Pugilist personally. His intuition told him that the Mechanic path was not suitable for him.

Han Xiao had given him a suggestion before as well, saying that he had more potential in close ranged combat, which hinted that the Mechanical Pugilist path was more suitable for him.

This main account was the one that would join pro leagues, so if he made a wrong choice, the disadvantage would be way too vast when he created another account. Therefore, this decision was extremely important.

Frenzied Sword could not make a decision, so in the end, he decided to toss a coin...

They say that the moment the coin is tossed, the answer will appear in one’s heart.

As the players were not allowed to enter the convoy's camp, the players formed a fair near the camp and waited for Black Phantom to come out and give missions.

A petite and delicate female player walked in the fair carrying a backpack that was bigger than herself. She looked left and right in curiosity.

Crossing through the fair, Maple Moon stopped outside the camp. She took a deep breath and held tightly onto the phone in her hand.

"Level 20 finally."

A hint of nervousness and anticipation appeared on her lively, adorable face.

Chapter 222: Arrival of People from Everywhere! (1)

In the center camp, Han Xiao looked at the blueprint on the table and wondered how to maximize the advantages of the players.

His mission reward limit had increased—his single mission reward limit was a little more than 60,000 experience, coming up short of a C-ranked mission with 80,000 experience. The daily limit was seven times the single mission limit, which meant that he could give out missions worth up to 420,000 experience daily. He realized that the easiest way to increase this limit was to build relationship points with organizations. Level and ranks would come naturally, and the legendary level could not be gained easily.

Any experience points given out as a mission reward would not be deducted from Han Xiao's own experience points as long as it was within the stated limit.

For such a large mission like constructing a city, his own quota was insignificant. Thus, Han Xiao pondered carefully and decided on the way that he was going to distribute the missions. That was to divide the construction of Graymetal Ruins into many different departments to take charge, then assign one person to each department who would be responsible for the distribution of missions. That way, he did not have to use his own quota.

Constructing Sanctuary Three was a main storyline, and since he could give out missions to the players, logically, the other NPCs in the team should be able to do so as well.

This should resolve the problem of mission quotas. Although the other NPCs don't have an interface, they definitely can distribute missions since they are part of the construction team.

The other NPCs would not be limited by his quota when publishing missions for him, and it would still contribute to his mission progress as the mission that he had received was an overall mission. Therefore, the final result of the city that the players helped to build would also be his final result. This difference in the mission was an advantage that Han Xiao had being the overall in charge of the sanctuary; it was the difference in their identities.

Han Xiao suddenly had a new idea—if he ever faced this type of large mission again, he could duplicate this and use his advantage as being an NPC to gain a higher relationship with organizations, thus becoming the distributor of missions and using the players' power to achieve his goals.

By doing that, I only need to manage the people that are in charge of distributing missions and nothing else. Then, I will have a lot of free time to build machinery to try to meet the class advancement requirement of building five purple quality equipment, Han Xiao thought as he nodded to himself. He could do main storyline missions and also have time to make his own progress at the same time. It was perfect.

Furthermore, this was not an act to con the players. The players could also do missions and benefit from it. Them joining in with the city construction would build a sense of unity. All of the people that took part would have a sense of achievement when the sanctuary was completed, and they would feel honored with the thought— *This city was built by us, the players.*

It was a win-win!

Han Xiao had an ambitious idea.

I could maybe make this sanctuary into something like a main city for the players, and that would remarkably increase my influence. Everyone that comes to the sanctuary would see my name!

Having decided on the details, he summoned the cadres of the construction team and guard team for a meeting.

Han Xiao looked around and said, “Where’s Liu Zhao? Why isn’t he attending this meeting?”

The people could not react for some time. Then someone carefully said, “You sent him out to approach the wanderers.”

“Nonsense, you think I’d forget that?”

Han Xiao gave a stare. Before anyone could react to it, he coughed and said in all seriousness, “It’s an enormous construction project to start building a sanctuary from nothing. I have divided the blueprint into thirteen departments. This is the information for the construction, exploration, and so on. Every department will have a head who will be in charge. My target is to complete the blueprint construction as soon as possible, best in a month.”

“We don’t have that much manpower, even if we include all the Inhumans outside,” someone said.

“Don’t worry about that. There will be more people sooner or later,” Han Xiao said. He knocked the table with his fingers and asked once more, “All clear?”

Everyone had no choice but to nod. One month was way too much of a rush, but since it was an order from a higher-up, they had to do their best, otherwise they would be in trouble. Although Han Xiao was considered to be rather easy going, no one had forgotten the fact that he was one of the strongest in the organization, a legend who had killed countless people and had the top spot in the current killer leaderboard.

Han Xiao then names the heads of departments. Huang Yu was not mentioned.

Huang Yu was happy that he had nothing to do. Although thousands of Inhumans had come to help, it was still far from being enough. It was impossible to complete the basic layout in a month, so Sanctuary Three would still end up doing it the regular way and take months to complete its construction. By then

Sanctuary One would have long been completed. As an assistant, he really did not have many benefits, so he did not even plan to help.

When Huang Yu informed Bennett of how the Inhumans came to help Han Xiao, which Bennett was very calm about and did not have any problems with. It was clear that Bennett had a very close relationship with Black Phantom and trusted him a lot. From that, Huang Yu also had a rough understanding of why Bennett assigned him to be Black Phantom's assistant—it was because Bennett wanted a capable assistant to help a friend of his.

Sighing, he lamented, *It's all because I'm too capable.*

The meeting was coming to an end. When Han Xiao had finished clearing up all the responsibilities of the various departments, his face then turned very serious, and he said in a low voice, "I've said all the things I needed to. Now, there's this extremely urgent mission that must be done first."

Seeing the seriousness of Han Xiao's face, everyone became nervous as well.

Han Xiao looked around the table and said seriously, "When you write the name of the sanctuary, remember to include my name."

The tightened expression on everyone's face instantly collapsed.

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The heads of the various departments left the camp and organized their men orderly, following Han Xiao's instructions. The long-awaited players immediately rushed over and triggered different city construction missions based on their own likings.

The Graymetal Ruins was divided into five distinct areas—North, South, East, West, and Central. The missions that were given to the players were also divided according to the areas. Upon receiving the missions, the players immediately formed teams among themselves and started doing mission together. The night was even more lively than the day.

The first and most important task was to expel the beasts and clean the ruins, only then could the construction commence. Teams of players spread out from the stadium into the various areas of the Graymetal Ruins.

The sound of gunshots could be heard very often—there was quite a number of beasts that lived in the Graymetal Ruins, so the players had plenty of opportunities for combat.

Those construction missions could be repeated, and the rewards were quite handsome. Also, the interface informed the players that they were taking part in the construction of Sanctuary Three, and there would be a large amount of bonus experience when it was completed, which made them even more motivated.

Black Phantom Sanctuary Three—the name of this city had the words 'Black Phantom', so the players' impression of Han Xiao became even deeper.

Having one's name in the sanctuary sounded very honorable.

By the night of the first day, the players had already cleared out a very large area. Their efficiency had the people of Dark Net completely stunned. This could match up to the amount of work from ten thousand workers!

The players were all superhumans, which enhanced their working ability, and they had guidance from the interface, which gave them very clear and straightforward goals. Every action they made was to complete that goal.

When the players and the Dark Net construction team was busy with the construction, Han Xiao received a call from Maple Moon. He remembered that he had given her a mission to find him when she reached LV 20, so he brought her into the camp.

After a long time apart, Maple Moon looked left and right curiously. Han Xiao also called the other three players—he was going to give these four some extra missions.

The four spare tires had finally met. With Hao Xiao's ability at the moment, it was more than enough to cultivate four players—Frenzied Sword and Hao Tian, both god players in his previous life, now a Mechanical Pugilist and a Pugilist; Maple Moon, one of the first Mechanics in his previous life who had risen to the pro scene; Bun-hit-dog, a well-known video host.

These four people all had their own uniqueness, and they could assist Han Xiao in different ways. They stood in front of Han Xiao and looked at each other.

As the only female player, Maple Moon received special treatment. The other three nodded toward her as an act of showing friendliness.

“Ah, so cute!” Maple Moon stared at Hao Tian with sparks in her eyes. Her expression looked so thirsty it was like she was going to eat Hao Tian alive.

Beads of sweat rolled down Hao Tian's forehead. He stood straight and still as he watched Maple Moon dashing toward his arms... more specifically, Bear Cub, which he was holding. She rubbed and stroked Bear Cub and would not let go.

Bear Cub was very confused. It shrank into Hao Tian's arms and gave Maple Moon's fingers a few light bites.

“Ah, this is way too cute.” Stars appeared in Maple Moon's eyes. She looked up and pleaded with Hao Tiao, “God Hao, can you let me hug it?”

“Be clear next time.” Hao Tian's expression was stiff. He immediately passed Bear Cub to Maple Moon and took two steps backward in relief.

Bun-hit-dog came over, too. He reached out his fingers and teased Bear Cub. Bear Cub was cute and stupid, so its reaction was always a second slower. Its paws kept slapping away the hand that rubbed his butt. Frenzied Sword stood on the side and looked straight at Han Xiao all the time, looking like he was always awaiting an order.

“Enough, enough, stop playing with my bear.” Han Xiao coughed to stop them and said, “I'm building a sanctuary. You guys go help too.”

As he was speaking, he designed extra missions for the four people, which gave them bonus rewards if they complete a certain number of missions from the various head of departments.

Other players did not have this kind of special treatment—Han Xiao only did this because these four were his people.

Naturally, the four did not have any objections. They accepted the mission and walked out immediately. However, Maple Moon stayed. She cautiously asked, “Can I learn abilities?”

Han Xiao nodded and opened up the interface for her. He could teach abilities anytime to these four players. Other than the abilities at the bottom of his chest, the others could all be used to earn him experience.

Maple Moon had also chosen to become a Mechanic, so he could cultivate her like an apprentice. Maple Moon was a casual player who preferred real-life simulation type of gameplay. It was very smart a choice to train her into an assistant. Han Xiao was not stingy about it anyway, plus he quite liked Maple Moon.

In his previous life, Han Xiao had started playing during version 1.0 as a completely new player. He had also chosen the Mechanic class and had experienced losing streaks during PVP[1. PVP stands for player vs player.]. There was a time when he had lost hope in the Mechanic class despite how much he liked the class, and he had almost even changed his account. Then, later on, during the pro competition in version 3.0, Maple Moon became a completely unexpected black horse in her first competition, which signaled the rise of Mechanic class and gave a lot of encouragement to Han Xiao. He had even been a fan of Maple Moon for some time when he was young.

Later, when he got more and more skilled, he became one of the masters that represented the Mechanic class. Although he did not become a pro player, legends of the Great Mechanic Han went around. There were always discussions on the forum regarding what a non-pro master player could achieve in a pro league if they had gone, and the Great Mechanic Han had been a constant hot topic.

Great Technician Han grew stronger with time, but Maple Moon was like a comet, leaving an unforgettable mark in the milestones of gaming history then soaring through the sky and disappearing in a flash, only shining during the third and fourth versions of the game. Maple Moon was a casual player after all, so her skills in PK grew at a very slow pace—not everyone had so much interest in improving in a game like the Great Technician Han.

In the later versions, Maple Moon disappeared from the pro scene. It was said that she had discontinued the contract with her club, so her light only lived in the memories of the old players.

The Maple Moon in front of him was pretty and cute, and Han Xiao could not associate her with the person in his memories who had caused a storm in the pro league. Looking at Maple Moon, who was torn between which skills to learn, Han Xiao had complicated feelings.

What will happen this time?

With him changing the storyline, would Maple Moon’s future still be the same as it was in his previous life?

Chapter 223: Arrival of People From Everywhere! (Two)

The sanctuary construction was enormous, it has always been difficult to start from nothing, but Coney Fury was quite good in what he did, the plan was detailed, the construction was orderly, and the division of work between departments was clear.

The Sanctuary main storyline had created a storm in the forums, it was the first large main storyline mission since the expedition war was still in preparation, the attention of the players was immediately attracted to it, and with the thousands of players that were already part of it, it was proved to be a reliable piece of information.

Since this was a large main storyline mission, the number of players participating would never be too high, since the more players there was, the faster it would be completed.

The Sanctuary Three became lively all of a sudden, the players called their friends and headed towards Sanctuary Three in groups, it became a huge festival, the number of players in Sanctuary increased like a snowball.

There were hundred thousands of players in Planet Aquamarine at the moment, and more than a hundred thousand just in the Southern Continent. After only two days, more than 20,000 players came to Sanctuary Three from various places, the attractiveness of Han Xiao and the main storyline missions had exploded the amount of passion the players had.

The 1000 Dark Net people that were present since the start were all completely stunned, inhumans came to help continuously, they were all called by Han Xiao, it was like a dream.

Terrifyingly influential!

The work efficiency of one inhuman could match up to many workers since they don't sleep, these more than 20,000 inhumans could almost match up the manpower of 70,000 to 80,000 workers, and even more inhumans were coming.

Completing the basic layout of the sanctuary in one month didn't seem impossible anymore!

When the entire construction team realized this, they all became extremely motivated and gave all of their effort in the construction.

If Sanctuary Three could be completed even before Sanctuary One, it would be a huge contribution that would shock the entire organization!

In only three days, the camp had a complete makeover, rough houses were built, all the people of Dark Net had a roof above their head.

Huang Yu loitered outside Han Xiao's house for quite a long time, then finally made a decision and knocked on the door.

"Squeak."

The door opened, Han Xiao appeared in sight wearing a Mechanic working suit, the protective goggles were still on his face.

“Yes?” Han Xiao said coldly.

Huang Yu suddenly felt very unconfident when he heard that, he smiled awkwardly and said, “your excellency, I...”

Before he could finish, Han Xiao turned around and walked back into the house, “talk inside,” he said.

Huang Yu entered hastily, seeing Han Xiao pointed with his fingers, he found a place and sat down with his butt only occupying a small fraction at the front of the seat, with a fawning expression, he said, “your excellency, I wish to help you take care of some matters, I’m your assistant after all...”

As players became more and more, Huang Yu shockingly realized the one month plan really had a chance to succeed, and once it does, Sanctuary Three would be the first completed sample, this contribution would be extremely huge, and even as an assistant, he could be written in the Dark Net’s book of merit.

Huang Yu couldn’t sit still anymore, he would regret his entire life if he let this credit slip pass, he felt that he’s already offended Han Xiao because of his perfunctory attitude earlier since Han Xiao didn’t assign any mission for him, if Han Xiao rants even a few words to Bennett about him, this credit would have completely nothing to do him any more. He was originally happy that he had nothing to do, but now he was in total panic and couldn’t wait to join the construction, which was why he came to Han Xiao’s doors and fawned over Han Xiao, wanting to make up for his disrespect back then.

Han Xiao left Huang Yu and didn’t bother about him, seeing that Huang Yu was very nervous and fidgety, he finally said in a slow tone, “didn’t you not want to do anything, I understand my and gave you a holiday, are you not satisfied with it?”

“your—your excellency, I’m your assistant, I could contribute something as well.” Huang Yu wiped his sweat and said sincerely.

Han Xiao folded his arms and looked at Huang Yu meaningfully, but didn’t say anything. Seeing this, Huang Yu’s heart kept sinking, he felt that this credit would probably have nothing to do with him anymore.

Unexpectedly, Han Xiao turned around, took a stack of documents and threw it to him then said, “these are the construction progress of the sanctuary, go through and arrange them, report to me if there’s anything.”

Huang Yu held the documents and immediately felt more energetic, he stood up hastily and said, “I will ensure these are well taken care of.”

“Go,” Han Xiao waved his hands and went back to work.

Huang Yu walked out of the house filled with excitement, he breathed a sigh of relief, Black Phantom definitely knew the potential of Sanctuary Three, but he didn’t hold any grudges and gave him a chance to join in and share the credit, for this he was very thankful to Black Phantom.

Compared to his perfunctory attitude earlier, Huang Yu felt ashamed, Han Xiao was now fully respected by him.

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Han Xiao thought of it clearly, there was no need to have a bad relationship with his assistant, what was between them was hardly even a disagreement, seeing that Huang Yu had put down his pride, Han Xiao didn't want to ruin his future on purpose, and he did indeed need an assistant to take care of the construction matters of the sanctuary, these were complicated and cumbersome, which he wasn't fond of.

Now he truly had nothing to do and could do his own stuff all day long.

Only three days had passed since the construction started, its progress was already like a horse out of its leash, completely unstoppable. The energy of the players had far exceeded The Great Technician Han's expectations, they were working even harder than migrant workers that they could all be considered as labor role models.

In Han Xiao's previous life, the early stages of the game had already ended when the players came in touch with the sanctuary main storyline and Dark Net approached and hired players, back then many sanctuaries were being built at the same time, the players had choices so their numbers were dispersed.

And for now, the players also noticed Han Xiao was in Sanctuary Three, which means there have to be other sanctuaries that need to be constructed, but the information regarding Sanctuary One and Sanctuary Two was way too vague, as there were very few information sources. On the contrary, Sanctuary Three had the well known familiar face "Black Phantom", it was an easy choice.

The majority of people followed with the trends, as the players in Sanctuary Three became more and more, other players were attracted too, the number of people grew like a snowball. The future of the "players' main city" plan Han Xiao had was looking really great.

Sanctuary Three was filled with all sorts of yelling, the players created fairs and areas one after another, some were for selling items, some for friendly PKs, the lively look did indeed feel like a "main city".

Even the players belonging to the Six Nations had left the expedition gathering call and came to build the city.

The expedition mission had a level requirement and had yet to start, some players chose the more relaxed sanctuary missions.

Han Xiao had a sense of achievement that felt like people came from everywhere to respond to his summon!

"Seems like my image building plan is going very successfully." Han Xiao was satisfied with the players' response, at the same time paying attention to the response of the forums and Dark Net.

Sanctuary Three didn't only make an impact within the players, it was also a shocking view in the eyes of the organizations of Planet Aquamarine.

The problem of inhuman has always been focused highly on, the Six Nations were very confused when they investigated the situation after noticing a large number of inhuman gathering in the Southern Continent.

Why is Black Phantom so influential amongst inhumans? Why can he command the inhumans? What is the relationship between them?

The organizations raised their alert, the danger level of Black Phantom increased another level.

Dark Net was the first to receive this intelligence, even Bennett was stunned, thinking back of when Han Xiao said he wanted to exceed the progress of Sanctuary One in a month, he realized it was actually not a joke.

Seeing its current progress speed, that could really be done.

Bennett was not shocked but surprised, as long as sanctuary could be built successfully, it didn't matter which one was first, it would all be a contribution. He only entrusted those who he had trust in, so he didn't ask Han Xiao anything about how he got help from the inhumans.

The directors of Dark Net, on the other hand, felt chills up their spines, having a colleague like this, they didn't know whether it was fortune or disaster.

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Sanctuary Three, West, Clock Tower Area.

The signature building of this area is an enormous clock tower covered in vines, it had now become a base for the players, nearby was a large square, a dried river with a broken bridge that separated the East and the South, and a little bit further was an area filled with factory buildings, this area was originally a mix of residential area and factories.

A factory outline had already been built around the clock tower, inside was large amounts of construction materials and electricity generators, the terrain here was unobstructed which was suitable for a power station that would provide energy for the sanctuary.

There were hundreds of players in this area cleaning the ruins and evicting the beasts.

A team with five players was walking in the drainage pipes of the river, it was pitch black, the only light was from the flashlight.

"It's quite smelly here," a player held his nose and said.

"They said the electricity network will be planted here, so they needed people to scout the area to see if there's any danger," another guy said.

"No wonder no one wants to do this mission, it's too dirty..." this guy seemed like he had mysophobia, he was walking very carefully.

Even after decades, this drainage pipe was still damp, the floor was very sticky, almost like rotten mud.

The team of players took a few more steps forward, suddenly an inhale that sounded like a wind tunnel appeared from deep within the dark.

Huuu——

"Something's wrong!"

The player was shocked, just as they were about to move, they realized they were unable to, a notification showed on their interfaces.

[You are affected by the intimidation aura of a high-level beast and entered "Fear" state!]

"What is this?" The expression on their faces changed.

"Boom!"

The ground shook vigorously, a black shadow that filled the entire tunnel dashed towards them in an extremely high speed.

With a loud "bang", the team of players flew away like they were hit by a train, they bashed against the wall and died instantly. They were not the first batch of players, but they were level 15 and yet they died with just one hit, which means the damage was at least 200 to 300!

There was more than one shadow, a string of shadows of the same size followed behind, not making any stop and dashed out of the tunnel straight away and were exposed under the sun. Like furious tanks, they bolted up the ground and headed towards the most conspicuous building, the clock tower.

The players resting in the clock tower were met with a sudden situation, they all stood up and tried to stop the shadows but anyone who did it ended up flying away and dying.

Unstoppable!

A large number of shadows scraped through the players and destroyed the unfinished power generator, it exploded with a loud "boom" and fire broke out. These shadows didn't stop and plunged into the clock tower.

The ground shook!

A large amount of dust burst out of the clock tower, with a loud squeak sounding like the last scream of a dying person who had lost all hopes, it collapsed.

The movements here shocked the entire city!

Loud and fearsome roar also came out of the mouth of these black shadows, quaking the entire sky!

Chapter 224: Shadow Stalker Viper

An hour later, the fire in the clock tower area was finally extinguished. There were burn marks everywhere, the unfinished power generator had been completely destroyed, and the collapsed clock tower had created an area of ruins. This place had become a mess, adding to the burden of cleaning missions.

The area nearby was fenced off. Huang Yu took charge of the scene that was in a complete mess. Fortunately, the players did their best to clear the ruins, so the situation was slightly under control.

Thousands of players gathered afar and looked at the broken scene. These black shadows had stomped on the brick floor and left a string of cracks with their footprints. The footprints had three claws that were long and thin. The name of the creature was unknown.

At the time, those black shadows had disappeared and returned to the river tunnel, which was clearly their nest, and no one dared to mess with these unknown monsters.

“What kind of beasts could create this level of damage?”

“The monsters that we met these few days were LV 20 something at most. I thought there are no strong monsters, so this is where they’re hiding in.”

“I heard from the experienced people that the results of their scan were all question marks, and the danger level was ‘Extremely Lethal’.”

“Wow, that should mean it’s at least LV 40.”

“Let’s wait and see. Maybe there will be missions for us in a while.”

Huang Yu finished arranging the jobs, and he activated the communication device. “Your excellency, the situation is temporarily under control.”

“How’s the damage?” Han Xiao asked calmly.

“Not good. The power station that we were building has been completely destroyed, together with the construction materials and engineering machines inside.”

Han Xiao had expected this to happen. Since the sanctuary was a main storyline, there would very likely be twists and turns, and it really did come without any warning. He had not expected the Graymetal Ruins to have powerful monsters in it. The loss of construction materials and engineering machines was not the most important problem, but the construction period would be largely slowed down if there was no solution to these beasts.

“What is the species of these beasts?”

“It’s still under investigation, but they are hiding in the drainage pipes that we have no knowledge about, so it is very dangerous.”

“Wait for me to go over.”

Ten minutes later, Han Xiao arrived at the scene. The people came to him and reported the situation. Han Xiao listened for a while and waved his hands to tell them to quiet down, then walked to the footprints and observed them in detail.

“Able to crack open the brick floor with their feet, which means the leg power of these beasts is very high, and they are monstrously heavy. Likes to live in damp and dark places, lives in a herd, aggressive...” Han Xiao took out his laptop. He searched through the Planet Aquamarine beast database and found many matching species.

After some thought, Han Xiao lifted up his coat, and about seven spider detectors slid down his legs and landed on the floor. They slowly crawled into the tunnel and started surveying its internal structure. The laptop was showing the night vision and infrared vision of the detectors.

While waiting, Han Xiao asked casually, "Are there any other powerful beasts nearby?"

"No," Huang Yu replied immediately, "this is the only place. The clearing tasks at the other areas have all been completed."

The shocking incident that had taken place here did not slow down the other construction projects. The construction of the walls, residences, garages, power stations, internal life support facilities, greenhouse farms, and so on were all progressing well. Han Xiao was the only one that could do this because he had tens of thousands of players to help him, unlike Sanctuary Two, where they were still exploring the city, progressing at a much lower speed than him.

The image of the tunnels was relayed by the spider detectors. The walls were covered in a strange mucus in the deep area of the river tunnel. It was sticky and looked disgusting, and it was dripping continuously.

One spider was covered in the dripping mucus. Its machine legs twitched, and it shut down completely, like being covered in amber.

As the spiders went deeper, an even more shocking scene came into sight. The beasts had dug countless split paths at the end of the river tunnel. Under Han Xiao's control, the spiders entered the different paths, and as more images got sent back from the spiders, the people became more and more shocked.

Under the surface of Graymetal Ruins, there was an enormous sized underground nest! It covered more than half the West Area!

These beasts had been living in this abandoned city for many years!

"Holy..." Han Xiao felt a slight chill up his spine.

The hidden beasts' outline was shown under the infrared vision. Han Xiao hastily opened the database, and this time, he was finally able to narrow down the target.

"Scientific name, Nygaro Shadow Viper Beast, also known as Shadow Stalker Viper. It is oviparous, born with six feet and three claws, and covered in chitin exoskeleton. Adults can grow up to four meters long. Usual forms of attack are through its claws, tail, and teeth, and it is able to secrete a type of corrosive slime from its mouth and anus, which is used to dig its nest. It likes dark, warm, and damp places, usually underground near volcanoes..."

Other than not having a bug that jumped onto people's faces, this thing looked really alike to aliens ¹!

After studying the database entry, he realized that the vital signs of these Shadow Stalker Vipers were at around LV 40, which meant that every one of them was a mini BOSS to the players at the moment.

There were roughly more than a thousand Shadow Stalker Vipers in the nest, so this was a huge hidden danger to the sanctuary. If it is not resolved, accidents like today would continue to happen and slow down the construction of the West City Area.

Han Xiao suddenly noticed something abnormal.

Despite the fact that Shadow Stalker Vipers like hot environments, they are still attracted to the underground of the flatland, which should be cool and damp. That is really weird. Could it be that... there is abandoned reactors or high energy waste underground?

He contemplated and decided it was best to have the players detect the radiation strength inside.

If Han Xiao had guessed correctly, there should be a wild BOSS level Beast King in a herd of Shadow Stalker Vipers, and he was the only one that could deal with that thing.

The complicated nest was the Shadow Stalker Vipers' territory. Han Xiao didn't want to deal with an entire herd himself as he would suffer tremendous damage even with his mechanical guards.

The players would be able to kill a normal Shadow Stalker Vipers by overwhelming them with numbers, and since so many players were present, he might as well make full use of them.

Come to think of it, the corpses and eggs of Shadow Stalker Vipers are both used in manufacturing drugs. Han Xiao's eyes twinkled, and a plan formed in his mind.

Huang Yu was actively giving suggestions on the side and said, "I think we could use a large number of explosives in the empty spaces underground to create a landfall and destroy the Shadow Stalker Vipers' nest. Although the ground of the West City Area will also sink because of that, it shouldn't be a problem because this is an abandoned city, and it can also be used for modifications..."

"Good idea." Han Xiao's eyes twinkled. He always liked to maximize the benefits to the best of his ability. All the Shadow Stalker Vipers would go to waste if he simply blew everything up, but Huang Yu reminded him that Shadow Stalker Viper would turn extremely aggressive if they were disturbed and by doing so would lure them out of their nest. Han Xiao could then plant traps in advance so that he could deal a large amount of damage once they were lured out.

Han Xiao was someone who was action-oriented. He immediately gathered all the patrolling Generation 2.5 Rangers around the river tunnel before ordering the people of Dark Net to move the mini batteries over and lay out a battle frontier that aimed at the river tunnel.

"Throw in a flashbang." Han Xiao gave a mission to Frenzied Sword. Frenzied Sword dashed in immediately without saying a word.

Seconds and minutes passed by. Everyone waited, completely focused. It was quiet. Players watching from further away occasionally chatted among themselves while staring at the scene.

Fearsome growls broke the peace, and with a short scream of pain, the ground started quivering. The sound from the tunnel got closer and closer; something was coming out.

Boooooom!

A huge number of Shadow Stalker Vipers galloped out of the tunnel, they were covered in black carapace and had hideous bone spurs. There were three pairs of tiny, bloody red eyes hidden between their exoskeleton that was filled with fury and wrath. At least a hundred Shadow Stalker Vipers showed

up. They noticed the group of humans gathered far away instantly and stampeded over with a loud growl.

Tu tu tu tu!

The next second, they were faced by a thunderstorm of bullets and cannons that overturned these Shadow Stalker Viper and stopped them from charging any further. The steel core bullets penetrated and tore open their chitin carapace. Thick and sticky bodily fluids splashed all across the place as growls turned into wails. They struggled to stand up but were beaten by the hail of bullets pressing them again the floor and shattering them into pieces.

The flashing gunfire reflected onto Han Xiao's face. He lit up a cigarette and watched as more than a hundred Shadow Stalker Vipers broke into pieces.

Not long after, the magazine was cleared, and bullet shells covered the ground.

The smell of smoke pervaded the air, and the scene turned silent. The corpses of Shadow Stalker Vipers were all over the ground, shattered into pieces.

The faces of many players who were watching turned pale. They were disgusted by this image of monster parts scattered all over the floor.

"Collect the corpses and keep them in the frozen storage," Han Xiao ordered.

Everyone cleaned the battlefield quickly. Han Xiao gave the flashbang mission to Hao Tian this time, but the Shadow Stalker Vipers did not fall for it again. They killed Hao Tian and stayed in the nest, refusing to come out no matter what.

The mechanical guards became temporarily useless because of that as this tactic worked best in open areas—they would one by one be torn into metal waste if they entered the narrow nest. But tricking the enemy once was good enough.

The players had been watching for quite long, so it was time to give them something to do.

"I need some people to clean this nest, within three days," Han Xiao yelled. He then set the mission quickly and gave it out.

"Prize-Pool Mission: Clean the Nest!"

Many days had passed since Han Xiao had last issued a prize-pool mission, and he realized that prize-pool missions were the easiest way to draw out the players' enthusiasm, and as he expected, the rubbernecking players immediately dashed toward him to accept the mission.

The prize-pool accumulated more than 1,000,000 EXP very quickly, and it was still growing. The mission requirements were to hunt down Shadow Stalker Vipers and bring back their eggs—these two tasks would give them contribution points, and the ten teams with the highest contribution points would be rewarded.

The players were all excited and ready. They swarmed into the nest to kill Shadow Stalker Vipers, making up for their difference in strength with numbers.

Han Xiao turned and said to his four spare tires, “Take this device and detect the radiation strength of the nest. At the same time, be wary of any strong Shadow Stalker Vipers—that will be the Beast King. Notify me immediately if so. Also, if there are any other discoveries, let me know as well.”

The four people nodded and entered the nest together.

Looking at the passionate players, Han Xiao pondered.

Shadow Stalker Vipers are too strong for the players at the moment, but in order to reach higher positions in the prize-pool mission, they will definitely have more demand for better weapons. There will definitely be someone who is interested in my group of mechanical guards after seeing them.

Han Xiao had more than enough spare parts to build and sell weapons to earn him another fortune.

This again showcased his innovative business philosophy. *If customers don't have a demand, just create one!*

Chapter 225: Radiation Crystals

Han Xiao would never make a losing deal. The price that he asked for was very high, and most players would not be able to afford his equipment. He soon thought of launching rental services for his weapons to gain a profit through low margins but high sales.

However, Han Xiao rejected this idea immediately after.

If the players damage the weapon, I will make a loss, and there might even be some players that don't return my equipment. Before ensuring that the weapon can be retrieved in perfect condition, rental service is not a good idea, Han Xiao thought.

The concentrated sound of gunfire came from the nest under the West City Area, together with explosions. The ground trembled lightly, shaking up the sand and dust on it.

While the players hunted the Shadow Stalker Vipers, the people of Dark Net were not doing nothing. They drew out the map of the underground nest from the images of the detectors and divided the nest into areas on the ground.

“Your Excellency, the habits of the Shadow Stalker Vipers are alike to ants. Their nest is very labyrinthine and complicated; it can be roughly divided into two areas—the core area and the activity area. The activity area makes up to 95% of the entire nest, and we are still looking for the core area,” Huang Yu reported.

Han Xiao nodded. If his guess was correct, the Shadow Stalker Viper Beast King should be in the core area.

The Beast King should be between the level of 50 to 60 and have a BOSS panel. This difference in strength could not be filled no matter how outnumbered it was by the players at the moment. Han Xiao would have to do it himself, which he planned to do as soon as they found the core area.

The nest was the Shadow Stalker Vipers' territory. On the first day, the players split up and marched in at a very slow pace. Most of the players were completely thrashed. After all, it was the first time that these new players had faced a monster with such a high level. Thus, their weak spirit and mind were beaten.

Han Xiao did not focus on the West City Area all the time. This was just a part of the sanctuary construction, and as a responsibility of the overseer, he patrolled the other areas' construction progress and went back to building machinery.

The class advancement requirement was five purple quality equipment. He could already stably build Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades, Iron Fist—Mounted Heavy Mechanical Arm, and Mini Maneuvering Equipment with dark blue quality. One time of over performance was all he needed to achieve purple quality for these pieces of equipment.

The failed products—those that did not reach purple quality—filled almost half of the entire room.

Only Han Xiao, who had so many assets, could afford such expenses.

...

Some players finally came to visit during the evening.

Jade Green Sky brought a group of guild members to visit. They expressed their intention of wanting to buy equipment.

A large number of players resided in the sanctuary at the moment. Players could be seen all over the place requesting to team up and do missions. Many Mechanics opened up stalls for repairing, building, and enhancing services, and even Maple Moon would sometime open a stall to pass the time. The sanctuary did have the feeling of a main city indeed.

These Mechanics were able to gain the blueprints of various low-tier machinery through Knowledge Fusion, each having its own uniqueness, and firearms were the most common type.

The Mechanics who opened stalls demanded very low prices, so many not-so-rich players were very willing to buy from them. However, Han Xiao did not bother to do such things as it was a waste of time for him. The market that he was aiming for was high-end as his product quality was far beyond that of the players, and he had a lot of blueprints that they did not have.

He was irreplaceable—he had no competition.

“You want to buy equipment?” Han Xiao put down the parts in his hands.

Jade Green Sky nodded hastily.

Sky Territory had accepted the prize-pool mission, and they had a chance to go for a higher position, but other large guilds had arrived at the sanctuary a few days ago, and they were all strong competitors. Thus, Jade Green Sky wanted to buy Black Phantom's equipment to stay ahead.

Jade Green Sky had bought a Light Mechanical Arm when the public launch had only just begun, and it was his main weapon even now, so he was very confident in Han Xiao's products.

The Great Mechanic Han had an outrageous amount of 230,000,000 experience in his interface at the moment, so he could afford to spend some of that experience and gamble out some new blueprints, which made his inventory full of various types of equipment. To match the ever-increasing level of players, he had put in some new machinery.

After some consideration, he also added Iron Fist—Mounted Heavy Mechanical Arm and Mini Maneuvering Equipment into to his store. He had a lot of blue-quality products for these two types of machinery, which he had no use for, so this was a chance for him to get rid of them and gain some profit at the same time.

However, he did not sell Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades. This was almost god-tier equipment for the players in the early stage, so Han Xiao did not want to sell it to players easily.

The people of Sky Territory took a deep breath when they opened up the store. The huge variation of products had their hearts beating faster, and everyone's eyes twinkled brightly.

"God, even the lowest quality is green. There is even some blue quality equipment. I have never even seen blue equipment before!"

"All of them are so tempting!"

Jade Green Sky stared at the Heavy Mechanical Arm with excitement. This thing was stronger than the Light Mechanical Arm; it could largely increase his strength.

He looked at the price—120,000!

"So expensive!" Jade Green Sky's face twitched. Although the guild was rich, 120,000 was still a significant amount; it was the price of dozens of firearms and many boxes of gunpowder.

After some hesitation, Jade Green Sky decided to buy it. He believed that it had more worth than anything else he could buy with that money!

Large guilds were rich. They purchased many pieces of equipment that totaled to 300,000 dollars, and they were given to Core Group One for the prize-pool mission.

Han Xiao earned a fortune and offloaded some machinery that was useless to him at the same time—a very profitable deal.

He had set security measures within the machinery that he sold. The Mechanic players at the moment would only be able to pass through these measures only in their dreams, so it was impossible for the blueprint to be leaked. Therefore, Han Xiao was very confident when he sold them.

Having sole possession of the technology meant a monopoly—it was the most profitable business as there would not be another place where these products could be bought.

Du du!

Frenzied Sword and the other three returned right after Jade Green Sky left, bringing along new discoveries.

“We have detected a very high radiation strength, almost reaching the maximum on the measuring device,” Maple Moon said and passed the device back to Han Xiao.

Han Xiao was a little shocked. With such high radiation, creatures that lived near it would very likely go through mutations. Whether the mutation enhanced one’s strength or the other way around depended on the species and habits of the creature. Stronger creatures that had a higher resistance would more likely have enhancing mutations.

Which means there might be elite mutated variants in this Shadow Stalker Viper herd, Han Xiao thought.

“We have also discovered the source of the mutation—it’s these things,” Frenzied Sword said as he took out a bag of blue crystals and laid them out on the table. The crystals were filled with mist and cracks—they looked very turbid. The blue crystals reflected a mist-like aura from the light. They looked magnificent and almost magical.

Unknown Crystal: A crystal formed by unknown reasons. It is highly radioactive.

The measurement on the device increased noticeably as it was moved closer to the crystal.

Han Xiao wore a pair of gloves. He held up a finger-sized crystal and looked at it carefully. “Where did you find this?”

“On the walls deep inside the nest.” Hao Tian gave a very simple answer.

Frenzied Sword added, “These crystals were embedded in the wall. We wouldn’t have found it either if the slime on it wasn’t scraped off during the battle. Furthermore, these crystals became more concentrated as we went deeper into the nest as did the monsters. We were unable to go even deeper, so we came back early.”

Han Xiao could feel the warmth from the crystal itself even with gloves, which solved one of his questions. These crystals provided the heat energy that made the Shadow Stalker Vipers build their nest here.

Han Xiao waved at Frenzied Sword.

Without a hint of hesitation, Frenzied Sword walked toward Han Xiao, who suddenly did something shocking. He grabbed Frenzied Sword’s mouth and stuffed the crystal into it. Then he blocked his mouth, not letting him spit it out.

“Swallow it.”

“Wuuuuuu—” Frenzied Sword’s face was filled with shock. He struggled all he could, but Han Xiao’s hands did not budge even an inch. Then, the crystal went down his throat. The three people watching from the side were stunned.

“Any reactions?” Han Xiao stared at him.

Frenzied Sword let out a sigh like he accepted his fate. He touched his chest and looked at his interface.

You have swallowed a type of high radiation strength crystal (Unpurified).

Race Detected: Human

Endurance is less than 50.

No related ability gained.

You have entered the 'Radiation Damage' state!

Radiation Damage: -33% Maximum Health, -33% Maximum Stamina, -50% across all attributes

Duration: 2 hours

Related medication can be used to recover in advance.

Frenzied Sword described the status. Undying players were the best choice to test drugs. Han Xiao gave a large amount of experience to Frenzied Sword as a reward and said while nodding, "Well done."

Frenzied Sword felt much better when he saw the experience. He looked at the rest of the crystals on the table and pondered, *Will there be more experience if I eat all of them? It actually tastes like sweets.*

Han Xiao knew what Frenzied Sword was thinking from the expression on his face. He awkwardly collected all of the crystals, denying Frenzied Sword's thoughts.

From the experiment, the rough uses of the crystals could be seen—purifying this type of radiation crystals would create crystal-formed energy, which was a form of clean energy.

Han Xiao had a thought. There were a lot of such crystals in the nest. He could use [Basic Extraction] to purify them and turn them into energy storage, and these energy crystals could even be used on all kinds of machinery if he made an energy transformation device. It was a valuable discovery.

Crystal energy was most commonly used in magic civilizations, it would also appear sometimes in technological civilizations. In a more fashionable way, such clean energy crystals could also be called 'Non-Elemental Crystal' or 'Magic Crystal'. Mages would use magic techniques to harvest energy from these crystals to become their own energy or to power magic, so there were many uses for it.

The concentration level of the crystals should lead to the core of the nest, Han Xiao thought and called Huang Yu over immediately.

After describing this discovery, Huang Yu instantly marked an area on the nest map that they had drawn.

"There's a ninety percent chance that this is the core area." Huang Yu pointed at the map confidently.

"Very good." Han Xiao nodded.

Time to act!

...

At midnight, players continued to fight in the nest as they did not need to sleep.

The prize-pool mission motivated the players. Although there was no direct mission, they still received quite a lot of experience from killing the Shadow Stalker Vipers, which were a much higher level than them.

Sky Territory was at the top of the rank!

“Quickly, T3 (third tank) pull the monster. T1 (main tank) and T2 (secondary tank), come back here now!”

“Pugilists attack at close range quickly!”

“Come on Espers, last longer! Go to the side to recover if you’re out of energy!”

“Mechanics don’t go too close, stand further away to deal damage!”

“Those carrying eggs leave quickly, don’t get hit by the fallout!”

The people of Sky Territory were surrounding a Shadow Stalker Viper and took it like a BOSS. Jade Green Sky was commanding and yelling, and they were having a very exciting time. The cooperation of Core Team One was very in sync.

The slime in the nest would lower the players’ speed, but although the nest favored the Shadow Stalker Vipers, it still was a fish in a net when facing the core team of Sky Territory, which was extremely experienced in fighting BOSSES. The Shadow Stalker Viper could not break out of the net no matter how it tried, and its health was decreasing at a steady rate.

“Killing Line ¹ ! Everyone, deal damage now!”

All kinds of attacks downed on Shadow Stalker Viper. Its carapace started cracking, and slime splashed all over.

Jade Green Sky charged forward. He wore a Heavy Mechanical Arm much thicker than his hands on his right arm and activated the active ability of the Heavy Mechanical Arm.

The motors made a loud noise. Heated steam shot out of its ventilation pipes, and the iron fist hit straight at Shadow Stalker Viper’s head. At the same time, Jade Green Sky shouted out loud with passion!

“Haaa! Iron Fist Burst!”

Chapter 226: Demolition?

The iron fist punched the chitin carapace. The skull of the Shadow Stalker Viper shattered, and its health reached zero. It screamed in agony and fell to the ground, dead. The air in its lungs came out of its mouth and nose, and its swollen body slowly deflated.

Jade Green Sky took a deep breath and looked at the damage ranking—he was unexpectedly first once again. The damage of the Heavy Mechanical Arm would not be exceeded easily by the players at the moment.

The Heavy Mechanical Arm also had very high armor stats—it can even be used to withstand damage from the monster. Several times, they had been in danger of being wiped out, and it was Jade Green Sky who had saved the situation. While the other players got wiped out once in a while, they had not died once. Thus, their contribution points increased steadily, and they reached rank one.

Buying this weapon was more than worth it!

Black Phantom's products were expensive, but they were worth every penny. It was really a great deal—Jade Green Sky was very contented.

Vice Team Captain jokingly complained, "How old are you already Captain? Are you not ashamed when you yell out the name of the ability?"

"I like to do that. None of your business. Plus, why bother to play Pugilist if you're not going to yell out your ability names?" Jade Green Sky replied.

The carcass and eggs of Shadow Stalker Vipers were both contribution points. The team members started to clean up the battlefield.

Wuuu—

Suddenly, the sound of a piercing wind echoed from further down in the tunnel. Something was approaching at very high speed!

A shadow passed by them in an instant and created a strong gust of wind that almost made everyone in Sky Territory lose their balance. It was so fast that they could not even capture it with their eyes—no one could see what had passed them.

"What was that?"

"It disappeared in a flash!"

Jade Green Sky looked in the direction where the shadow disappeared and said with surprise, "That's probably toward the deeper part of the nest!"

Everyone exchanged looks of surprise.

"Let's follow and take a look."

The speed reducing slime was everywhere in the nest. They chased for a while, but that shadow was long gone. The players of Sky Territory felt a little beaten.

"Stop chasing, we can't catch up."

"Wait... what's that?" Someone noticed something abnormal.

The flashlight shone over, and a pungent smell entered their nose as they saw the carcasses of Shadow Stalker Vipers all over the tunnel and extending all the way into the darkness. It was a shocking view.

The carapace that players tried so hard to penetrate looked as fragile as eggshells. The carcasses were still fresh, which meant the shadow had gotten rid of all the beasts obstructing his way within the short period of their chase. The LV 40 beast herd did not stop him for even a second.

Everyone instinctively thought of Han Xiao.

“It was Black Phantom that just passed by, right?”

“The monsters we took so long to beat were killed by him within seconds. He’s definitely at max level.”

When the players scanned Han Xiao, the information they got was always all question marks except the danger level being [Extremely Lethal]. People had tried guessing his level, and now that they had something to compare with, they had a more accurate deduction. Black Phantom was definitely one of the strongest in Planet Aquamarine.

Jade Green Sky suddenly became happy. “He opened up a path for us. We can follow along.”

...

Han Xiao, who was covered in his black combat mechanical suit, dashed through the nest following the route from the tactical screen.

Slosh...

Two Shadow Stalker Viper pounced out of the darkness, where the human eyes could not reach. However, the mechanical suit radar had detected the vital signs and heat energy long ago. Without dodging, Han Xiao activated Enhanced Mode, and the biological muscles under the armor swelled up. Power surged from his fists and smashed straight at the Shadow Stalker Vipers!

Devastating strength difference!

Shattered carapaces, splashing slime, and screams of pain.

Claws hit on the mechanical suit and only left a string of sparks. Han Xiao passed the two beasts without pause and sent out several punches within an instant, killing these two beasts immediately. With the LV 55 attributes, Viper’s advanced performance, and the difference in level, Han Xiao could kill those Shadow Stalker Vipers within a second easily.

He did not stop.

Wiping off the slime on the wall, the radiation crystals were becoming more concentrated.

“The core area should not be far away—monsters are appearing at a higher rate,” Han Xiao muttered as he casually killed a Shadow Stalker Viper. He looked at the map on the screen and confirmed that he was on the right route.

The screen showed that the temperature on the outside was increasing. The crystals contained heat, so the higher the temperature, the more likely it was that the Shadow Stalker Viper Beast King would be living nearby.

The high temperature from the crystals had turned the infrared and night vision images completely red. Han Xiao changed it back to normal vision, and it darkened immediately. However, a few seconds later,

it was bright again. This was because of the [Night Stalker] class talent [Bat Habit], which provided vision in darkness and bonuses when fighting in the dark.

Passing through a cave, the space suddenly became much larger. A thick, pungent smell filled the place, and slime on the ground was thick and dense. This was an underground cave that looked like a honeycomb. The walls were embedded with large, dark-blue radiation crystals, surrounded by more than a dozen entrances of a tunnel that lead to many places. This was the center of the nest.

Dense red eyes blinked in the dark. Dozens of Shadow Stalker Vipers lay low on the floor and bared their teeth, demonstrating their authority over the unwanted guest. There were also a few more frightful looking elites in the herd.

The Shadow Stalker Viper Beast King was the most conspicuous one surrounded by the herd; it was three times larger than the others. It looked down on Han Xiao with condescension as the slime in its mouth dripped down onto the ground, corroding the floor and emitting a pungent odor.

It's so big. It has to be the Beast King, Han Xiao thought.

The Shadow Stalker Vipers pounced toward Han Xiao fearlessly. The Electromagnetic Hover-boots allowed Han Xiao to ignore the slimy terrain and move freely. He dodged the attack and took out the Ghost sniper rifle from his back, using it as an assault rifle. Blue flashes appeared on the muzzle as 'Needle' magnetic bullets were being shot out rapidly.

He changed targets continuously—doing so was to keep triggering [Lethal Shot], which did not trigger on the same target within five minutes. This talent was more useful during group combat, and the right way to use it is to keep changing targets and maximizing the damage output.

Flesh exploded one after another—the Needle bullets penetrated the carapaces easily and slaughtered the herd at a very fast rate. An elite monster snuck behind Han Xiao and pounced toward Han Xiao, thinking that he would not notice. However, Han Xiao turned around and slammed his leg on the skull of this Shadow Stalker Viper like he had eyes behind his back. Its skull was flattened.

The herd charged toward Han Xiao one after another in waves, but Han Xiao was like a reef—he did not budge at all. The herd became less and less dense as they fell one by one around Han Xiao.

“Roar!” The Shadow Stalker Viper Beast King growled. The soundwaves echoed in the nest, summoning their own kind.

The players in other areas realized that the Shadow Stalker Vipers that were fighting them stopped simultaneously and dashed toward the center of the nest without looking back.

The tunnel rustled, and the ground shook. A large number of beasts were approaching. The longer the battle lasted, the more difficult it would be. Han Xiao's eyes focused. He activated [Overload], [Flaming Will], and [Lethal Critical Hits] at the same time and fired at the Beast King lingering at the edge of the battlefield.

Buzz!

The firing sound of the Ghost sniper rifle was a buzz made by its electrical circuits.

A flash of dark blue appeared and disappeared the next second, penetrating the carapace of the Beast King and exploding its empty cavities.

This shot also triggered the True Damage from [Lethal Shot]!

– 2853!

An astonishing damage number appeared. The health bar of the Beast King dropped a huge portion instantly, and it growled and rolled on the floor in agony. Han Xiao saw the attributes of the Beast King from the interface.

LV 53 BOSS, very high Dexterity and Endurance... but only 9,000 Health? Han Xiao was surprised. His shot just now had taken almost a third of its health—this health amount didn't match up to its BOSS status.

Is it one of those Dexterity-type Beast Kings that are more focused on attacking? But it doesn't look like it with such a huge size.

The Beast King rolled over, but unexpectedly, it did not pounce over immediately. Instead, it ran to a corner of the cave and took many large bites into something stiff. Han Xiao looked over through the gaps in the herd and was shocked when he saw it clearly—the Beast King was eating barrels of high energy waste marked with radiation symbols.

Beasts consuming wastes in long term would very likely induce mutation, or they would gain a special ability—he realized that the Beast King's health was recovering at a remarkable speed, gaining back 1,000 HP within seconds. Clearly, consuming waste materials quickly recovered its health.

Then it occurred to Han Xiao that this Beast King was the type that stalled people to their death. This environment had put him at a very bad disadvantage. He took a deep breath and adjusted himself to his peak performance, before jumping up high into the air and flying over the herd in an arc, slamming on the back of the Beast King with a huge amount of energy. Upon impact, they both rolled over.

Before standing up, Han Xiao bent his fingers, and blades shot out. He stabbed them into the Beast King's carapace, and at the same time, he activated the Thermo-Electrical Incisor Gloves and burnt through the carapace.

Suddenly, the wind whistled. His back was hit by the Beast King's tail, and he almost flew out. He could feel the enormous power even through the mechanical suit, and the durability dropped a little.

Han Xiao was fully focused. The light from the Bonfire Reaction Furnace behind his back brightened, and with force from both his hands and legs, he pushed the Beast King to knock the wall.

The ground shook!

Pebbles fell down like rain!

The man and the beast collapsed the wall and fell onto the tunnel on the other side. The Beast King growled, wanting to recover health in its nest, but Han Xiao grabbed onto it tightly and pulled it outward. Energy flew into the Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades on the back of his hand. The blades hovered in the air, slashing open the carapace of the Beast King rapidly, showing its dark purple flesh.

It was like two beasts of the same size were clashing—they destroyed walls continuously, and the entire nest started to shake as if it was going to collapse.

The players were shocked and soon started to escape.

“Run, we are going to be buried alive!”

“What is this, demolition?”

Jade Green Sky also followed the crowd and ran for a while. Then he suddenly realized something. “Wait a minute, since we can revive, this is the best chance to kill already wounded monsters and gain contribution points!”

Just as he finished the sentence, the wall on his side exploded. Han Xiao pushed the Beast King in his direction. Jade Green Sky was in their way, and he was immediately squished.

The vice-captain of Team One held his head and yelled in shock, “Ah, you died so tragically captain!”

Chapter 227: Profit from the Nest

The slashing slime could not corrode the mechanical suit. Shadow Stalker Viper’s carapace cracked all over its body, covered in blood and slime. Pressed on the floor by Han Xiao, its health decreased steadily.

The herd charged toward them one after another like they had lost their minds. Han Xiao used the Beast King’s body as protection and dodged most of the attacks with his agility. The vision on the tactical display screen was jumping all over the place. Normal people would have a headache by looking at it for just a few seconds, but Han Xiao was completely used to it and was not affected at all.

Every punch, every kick, was sent out with incredible power that the surrounding terrain looked like it had been destroyed by a tornado.

With his basic combat skills all being at max level and the performance enhancement from Viper, Han Xiao’s close-range combat ability was way above average, the Beast King’s health very soon arrived at the killing line, as it was unable to eat waste materials and regenerate. Han Xiao’s energy flew into Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades and formed a high speed spinning pointy cone around his arm like a drill, piercing right into the Beast King’s head.

Ignoring the wail, Han Xiao grabbed onto the wound to not get dropped by the struggling Beast King, he then turned on the Sunworm and sprayed at the bloody brain of the Beast King. A smell of burnt meat spread in the air, the Beast King’s body suddenly became stiff, like a fish out of water, giving his last struggle before death.

You have killed Shadow Stalker Viper Beast King (LV 53). You have received 132,000 Experience.

As soon as the Beast King died, the surrounding Shadow Stalker Vipers growled in agony and pounced toward Han Xiao dauntlessly, wanting to shatter this enemy that was harder than iron, submerging Han Xiao instantly.

But the next moment, a strong repel force pushed all of the Shadow Stalker Viper away at a speed even quicker than when they attacked. They hit against the wall of the nest as the Field Repulsive Machine on Viper's arms made a buzzing sound.

Boom!

This repulsion force caused a chain reaction, and the nest started crumbling down piece by piece. The ground was shaking so rapidly that it was like an earthquake.

Han Xiao did not want to be buried alive, so he concentrated all the power in his legs and jumped up. The floor cracked open from the strength of his jump, and he flew up in the air. He then turned on the Mini Maneuvering Equipment to give him further boost in speed. With the combined forces of the jump and the Mini Maneuvering Equipment, he rocketed up and burst through the mud above his head.

The next second, the ground exploded, and a black figure bolted out of the ground. The vision became obstructed, and the night sky came into sight.

The West City Area collapsed. Cracks opened from the sunk ground, and dust splashed out from within. Some players got buried and died; some players escaped and watched the scene, stunned.

"The entire city collapsed because of the fight. Such strong destruction power!"

"Isn't that Black Phantom? Did he do it?"

"He's got to be a max level BOSS with such strength!"

"All the Shadow Stalker Vipers are buried alive. Does that mean our mission is completed? There's no notification though."

The players were shocked and confused. They looked at Han Xiao at the side who was wearing the mechanical suit with fire in their eyes. They had seen the video of the mechanical suit in action on the forums, and now they had finally witnessed that themselves. It was even more impressive than in the videos.

Jade Green Sky trotted over after he revived and was shocked by the completely different scene than before. He hastily asked about the situation, then contemplated and said, "The mission is not completed yet. There are chances to make use of the situation."

At the same time, signs of life appeared within the ruins, Shadow Stalker Vipers that were still alive crawled out with struggle. Only a small half of the nest had collapsed, but all the tunnels were blocked, so all the beasts had nowhere to escape.

Seeing this, the players dashed over in a hurry to get the last hit.

Han Xiao was only responsible for dealing with the Beast King—the other small monsters were to be dealt with by the players. The sound of cracking came out of his neck as he twisted it to relieve his tight nerves.

Huang Yu brought some people over and waited on the side.

“When the Inhumans are done the cleaning, you guys go dig through the ruins. Bring the radiation crystals and the carcasses into the warehouses, especially the Beast King’s—that’s rare material. Although I broke quite many parts of it, it should still be of some use,” Han Xiao said casually.

Huang Yu took a look at the sunk ground, gulped, and nodded hastily.

Half an hour had yet to even pass since Black Phantom came, and he had already settled the problem. Even though the West City Area had almost been destroyed, this astonishing efficiency left Huang Yu in complete awe.

After returning to his room, Han Xiao took off Viper and repaired its damage.

...

At around midnight, Huang Yu finally came with the information that the cleaning of the ruins was completed.

“We have stored 846 Shadow Stalker Viper carcasses. 27 of them are mutated, and one is the Beast King. More than 300 undamaged eggs have all been stored in the frozen warehouse. Also, we have collected about two tons of radiation crystals—the 300 pounds that were collected near the center of the nest seem to have a higher concentration.

“By the way, Coney Fury has discovered the source of the crystals. These Shadow Stalker Vipers have been consuming high energy waste as their food source. The slime secreted in their bodies has gone through special reactions, which caused them to harden and thus become crystals.”

Han Xiao was stunned for a second. “So... these radiation crystals are actually Shadow Stalker Vipers’ feces?”

“You could say that.”

Han Xiao scratched his head and thought of Frenzied Sword.

Never mind. The truth is too cruel for me to tell him. I don’t think he can take it.

...

As the nest was finally cleaned finish, the players felt relieved, they looked at their interface with anticipation.

[Clean the Nest] has been completed.

Current Prize-Pool Experience: 1,340,000

Damage ranking:

First: Jade Green Sky (Team)

Second: Red Carp (Team)

Third: No Sleep During the Day (Team)

...

The players on the leaderboard were delighted. Although it was unfortunate for those who did not make it, they did not lose anyway as the experience from killing the Shadow Stalker Viper was more than enough to cover the experience spent to take part.

“We’re first!” Jade Green Sky and the people of the Sky Territory Core Team One were filled with joy. The players beside them looked over with envy, focusing their eyes on Jade Green Sky’s Heavy Mechanical Arm.

“Sky Territory really is steady.”

“What equipment is their guild leader wearing? Looks really powerful.”

“I have a friend in their team. He said that equipment is a god-tier weapon for Pugilists. It can both tank and deal damage, but it is very expensive, and only Black Phantom sells it.”

Seeing the effect of the Heavy Mechanical Arm, many players started to desire it. Desire would create demand, and demand meant potential customers.

The ruins needed reconstruction. The head of West City Area gave out more missions, and the players rested for a while before starting to help once again.

...

The next day, Han Xiao woke up to the construction noise surrounding him in all directions, and he rubbed his temples helplessly. It was indeed much quicker to have the players help to build the city, but there was one tiny flaw of that, the players didn’t sleep or rest and worked throughout the day—this non-stop noise pollution almost made him mentally fatigued.

The secret base, however, had very good noise reduction measures, and it was in a rural area where no one had done any construction. Han Xiao had gone there secretly a few times and brought some supplies over for storage. He had also enhanced the security measures.

On the surface, Han Xiao did not work in the base.

Han Xiao came to the boisterous workshop then walked to his VIP room, which he had entered many times. Inside were many neatly arranged boxes emitting a magnificent, beautiful, but strange aura.

However, knowing that these are the feces of monsters, Han Xiao could not appreciate their beauty no matter how magnificent they were. He made sure his gloves were on tightly.

Radiation Crystal—can be turned into energy block after purification, non-elemental pure energy. Although it says these are of high concentration, these should be of the low tier in the standard of the

universe. The conversion rate is roughly 100:1, so two tons of it should probably be able to produce 45 pounds of energy blocks. These can be used as emergency energy storage; it is a surprising but welcome income.

There were many types of energy—magnetic, electrical, nuclear, light, planet, antimatter, dark, psionic, and many more. If these were psionic energy blocks, they would be as valuable as the entire Planet Aquamarine. However, only very advanced civilizations could acquire, convert, and make use of psionic energy; low-class civilizations would not be able to use it even if they were able to acquire psionic blocks. Those civilizations that had discovered psionic energy too early had all destroyed themselves. To research and experiment on psionic energy without the required technology was suicide—thus, their entire planet was vaporized.

There were also 300 pounds of dark-blue crystals with higher concentration. Han Xiao guessed that it was the feces of the Beast King. The Beast King owned the most amount of high energy waste, so it produced crystals with the highest concentration compared to the others. It could barely be considered middle-tier concentration. The purification rate would be much higher, and they should be able to produce 10 pounds of energy blocks with higher Ona.

*300 pounds... this guy really can take sh*ts.* Han Xiao shook his head.

Han Xiao's [Basic Extraction] was at max level. The knowledge from the energy brunch could be infused into the Energy Block Extraction Device, which was a rather precise device. Han Xiao contemplated for a while and remembered the knowledge combination. He had plenty of experience points, so he successfully gambled out the blueprint after a few infusions and started to build the device.

It was completed after two hours.

Basic Energy Block Extraction Device: Extracts energy blocks out of minerals or crystals containing radiation or energy. Ordinary conversion rate, a rather slow conversion speed.

This thing was very steampunk. The input port was in a funnel shape and could automatically take in original materials. Energy Block Extraction Devices were most common in crystal civilizations where magic and technology were both present, and energy blocks were the main energy resource. The headquarter of Japan, Planet Lonnie, was one of such civilizations. It was a unique kind of civilization, but anything was possible in the wide universe.

Han Xiao arranged the crystals nicely and activated the auto drop. The extraction process was fully automated.

It should take about half a day to extract everything. I shall just wait. Han Xiao patted his hands. All that was left were the carcasses and eggs in the frozen warehouses. These could be used to make drugs, but he was not a Pharmacist.

Louis Research Institution was in the Western Continent—it was too far, and the transportation cost would be too high. Also, the time it would consume during transportation would cause the materials to lose their freshness.

Han Xiao pondered for a while and decided to hire a Pharmacist.

Suddenly, he had a flash of insight, and a name buried deep in his memories appeared in his mind.

Chapter 228: The Exchange

A secret meeting was being held in the headquarters of Division 13, and many important members of the Hesla military intelligence department were present—Gu Hui had welcomed them himself.

The expedition was drawing near, so the Six Nations contacted each other frequently to discuss and adjust some final details.

In the meeting room, both parties were calmly discussing the expedition.

Buzz!

The entire place turned silent upon the sound of phone vibration. Everyone looked over with dissatisfaction in their eyes.

This is a very serious occasion. Who's so disrespectful?

Seeing that the sound came from the deputy director-general of the Division 13, Gu Hui, their expressions became complicated. The expressions on Hesla people's faces looked like they were saying— *Is this your leader? So unprofessional.*

Gu Hui frowned. He had many phones, and most of them were turned off during meetings except for the one for emergency matters. Only very important calls would go to this phone.

However, once he took out the phone and saw the number, his pupils constricted. "Pause the meeting. I have to take this call."

Without paying attention to the reactions of the others, Gu Hui left with his phone hurriedly after he finished the sentence.

The people of Hesla were shocked. Whose call could make the deputy director-general of the Division 13 leave an important meeting in front of everyone?

Who was so important? Was it the superiors at the highest ranking? Then why did they not call the internal line?

Coming to the quiet and isolated room next door, Gu Hui picked up the phone and said in a serious tone, "How come you're calling?"

"Surprised?" Han Xiao's mocking voice came out of the phone.

Han Xiao used the number and identity of 'Zero' to call Gu Hui. Since the intelligence he provided last time, he had become a very important focus target of Stardragon.

Ever since the battle in Dark Crow Valley, Han Xiao had disappeared without a trace. Even Stardragon's intelligence organizations could not find him. In the face of such a valuable communication opportunity, Gu Hui could not give it up no matter what, even if it meant he had to leave the important meeting.

“What do you want this time?” Through precious contact with Han Xiao, Gu Hui had a rough idea of his personality. Han Xiao was goal-orientated and would not call for nothing. Thus, he went straight to the point.

“I want a person.”

“Who?”

“She’s called... wait, let me go through the wanted list. Her code is Emerald Grass; she’s a pharmacist.”

Gu Hui was stunned for a moment. He told his secretary to check on this person, and very soon, the results came back.

Emerald Grass—her superhuman ability was controlling plants, and she was a top-notch Pharmacist. Once, she had spread an infectious lethal disease with a drug that was not experimented on and caused a large number of deaths, which led to her wanted status. She had been captured a few years ago and was currently tightly imprisoned on Bell of Death Island.

Bell of Death Island was a prison of the Six Nations for the highly-dangerous criminals. It was an isolated island in the sea with mysterious coordinates and tight security.

“What do you want her for?” Gu Hui questioned.

“Something.” Han Xiao gave a vague answer.

Gu Hui contemplated and said, “Even I can’t bail people out of Bell of Death Island casually. It’s against the rules.”

This was a roundabout rejection.

Han Xiao laughed. He suddenly changed the subject and said, “I heard the expedition is going to start very soon. Tsk tsk, Six Nations coming together for a battle, attacking the land of Andrea from more than a dozen directions, with planes, aircraft carriers, and all sorts. Tell me, will the Germinal Organization accept their fate without resistance?”

Gu Hui’s hand tightened on the phone.

“What intelligence do you have?”

“Plenty. Base locations, military power, missile layout, and the Germinal Organization’s various Inhuman plans,” Han Xiao said in a very tempting tone.

Gu Hui was angry, but he had to fall for the trap. “Emerald Grass is yours.”

“Done.” Han Xiao agreed without hesitation. He had already planned on giving every piece of intelligence he had on the Germinal Organization before the war to give more advantages to the Six Nations anyway, and now, he could even use that to exchange for a very important person.

In version 2.0 of his previous life, Emerald Grass had been a very important character in Planet Aquamarine. As a top-notch Pharmacist, she researched on the mutation virus, created drugs that suppressed the virus effectively, and made a very strong impact.

In his previous life, Bell of Death Island had been a mysterious place. No player could find its coordinates, but they did have some information on it in version 2.0—the mutation virus had spread to Bell of Death Island, causing a very dangerous change, but the criminals imprisoned by the Six Nations in the Bell of Death Island resolved the disaster. They had fought their way out of the island and escaped. Emerald Grass had also escaped during this.

As the saying goes, there are always crouching tigers and hidden dragons.

The prisoners poured into the outside world and became new characters of version 2.0 like dragons flying over a river, causing a storm in the world on top of the disaster.

“The intelligence will be sent to you. I will decide the location to retrieve Emerald Grass,” Han Xiao said then hung up the call.

Gu Hui’s expression changed several times—only Han Xiao dared to hang up on him casually, and he could not do anything about it.

A prisoner in exchange for key intelligence, this deal was a definite win.

Furthermore, Gu Hui realized another benefit.

“He has been lost for so long. This meetup is a chance to follow up on his whereabouts!”

Han Xiao still had a position in the field agent files. Whether he went where, did what, or if he joined any organizations during his disappearance, this was all unknown to Stardragon despite their interest. It was just the right chance to investigate.

...

In the workshop in Sanctuary Three, Han Xiao waited thirty seconds after hanging up the call, only then did he send the first set of intelligence to Division 13 and held onto the rest temporarily. He knew full well that he should not give out all the intelligence at once.

If I can get Emerald Grass this time, not only can she help to research on drugs, I can even make Sanctuary Three be the first place that suppresses the mutation virus in version 2.0. The Sanctuary has my name in it. The safer it is, the more influential I become.

However, Stardragon will know they exchanged Emerald Grass with me. They won’t give up this investigation chance, and if they find out that Emerald Grass works here, they might guess I’m Black Phantom, and my identity will be exposed.

While evaluating the risks and benefits, Han Xiao suddenly realized something. He had kept his identity hidden at the start because he had been too weak, but now, with Dark Net backing him up and his strength being at the top of the planet, there was no need to hide from the enemy anymore. At the same time, the Germinal Organization was facing its destruction and could not even take care of themselves. Hiding his identity did not matter anymore.

He suddenly felt delighted.

Without him noticing it, his arch enemy was not gigantic in his eyes anymore. He had grown to be able to face the strongest organization on the planet.

From another perspective, exposing his identity could combine the influence of Zero and Black Phantom and cause a chemical reaction, and he was eighty percent sure that he would get legendary points. The players' impression of him would also increase to another level.

With the things he had done, the players might even mistake him to be the main character of Planet Aquamarine instead of Bennett.

I should take things steadily instead. I will think about my identity after the war starts.

Although Han Xiao saw some benefits, he still decided to act on what would happen.

The Energy Block Extraction Device was still operating, so Han Xiao locked the door and left, surveying the construction progress of the various areas with his hands behind his back.

As he passed by the wall construction area, he suddenly heard a commotion. He stopped in place then walked over.

The engineering team surrounded a large crane helplessly. Seeing that Han Xiao approached, they greeted with respect.

"What's happening?" Han Xiao asked.

"The crane malfunctioned and cannot be turned on. We can't find the cause," someone said helplessly.

Han Xiao heard this and thought, *Wasn't fixing vehicles what I started with?*

He rolled up his sleeves and said with excitement, "Bring the tools over."

The engineering team only remembered now that their boss was a Mechanic. They hastily brought the parts and the tools over. Han Xiao climbed up the crane to check for the malfunction, and he found it not long after. He took out the tools and started fixing. His hands moved around so incredibly fast that they even created shadows behind them.

The players on the side doing construction work were shocked upon seeing this.

This hand speed matched the power of being single for at least fifty years!

"Turns out single people have an advantage in the Mechanic class," a player yelled. "I'm the man who will become the Mechanic King ¹!"

"Sad but true."

As he repaired, the Great Mechanic Han was in the zone, so he also gave it some enhancements.

He tightened the last screw.

Done!

Han Xiao clapped his hands and told the engineering team to turn it on. The enhanced crane was like it was on steroids and moved so quick that the engineering could not even catch up to its speed. They dodged hastily and jumped around.

At this time, the players welding rebars on the wall suddenly looked at the wilderness and shouted, "There are some people here!"

Han Xiao quickly climbed the scaffolding of the wall to a higher place and looked out.

A group of people wearing ragged clothes appeared in the wilderness, walking slowly toward the sanctuary.

The wanderers had arrived.

Chapter 229: The First Time Is Always Hardest

A few days ago, the guards that Han Xiao had sent out came into contact with the wanderers in the colonies tens of miles away. They explained the purpose of the sanctuary and invited the wanderers to take residence or work.

Using foods and smiles, some wanderers that did not have a pleasant life agreed to move.

From far away, the hundreds of wanderers could already see the tall wall that was still being built with the words 'Black Phantom Sanctuary Three' written on it with red paint. They found the situation unbelievable.

"Didn't they say that they just arrived in Graymetal Ruins a few days ago? This doesn't look like the construction has just started..." a middle-aged man said hesitantly. The others were wondering the same thing.

They had originally thought that the sanctuary was just being built, and the conditions would be harsh. In their imaginations, it would not even be as good looking as the tiny lousy houses in their colony. They were all ready to face a hard time, but reality gave them a huge surprise.

"Did they spend all the time building the wall?" Some people were still in doubt.

As they entered the sanctuary following the main road, this doubt was cleared in no time. There was too much for them to take in.

Looking at the tall wall, neat buildings, and paved roads, every one of them could not believe that this was the construction progress of just ten days.

It took days for them to even build a lousy wooden house!

The guards lead the dizzy wanderers to their residence, which was neither a camp nor wooden houses but brand-new bunkers. There were many rooms, and electricity and water were available. There were ingredients in the kitchen, and they could cook themselves.

They were completely overwhelmed by this huge pleasant surprise.

How is this even called a sanctuary? Might as well call it a resort home!

...

“Your Excellency, we have brought back 427 wanderers. There are fifteen colonies tens of miles away with a total of about 3,500 people. Other teams are still in the middle of their discussion, and there’s currently about 300 that rejected us clearly.”

Only a bit more than 400. That’s not much.

The purpose of the sanctuary was to protect humans, with the biggest goal of taking in wanderers. It would be a joke if there was nobody staying in it after its construction was completed.

There were few wanderers in the Karst, and wanderers from further away might not be willing to travel such a distance. In order to have people move over and take residence, Han Xiao felt like it required Bennett’s macro-control, which was able to bulk migrate the wanderers who were willing to stay in a sanctuary from other areas. However, that should be the arrangement after the plan matured; now was only the early stages of the construction.

Han Xiao waved his hands and dismissed Liu Zhao. He then walked back to the workshop and contemplated the situation. One of the requirements of his [Sanctuary Three] main storyline mission was to reach 40,000 residents, excluding players. This was one of the requirements that had the richest reward, and it had very clear benefits to raising the mission’s overall grading.

Walking on the streets and seeing the lively scene of the players, Han Xiao knew that in order to achieve the ‘Player Main City’ plan, there had to be NPCs staying—important characters would be best. These were all mission resources, and only then would the players be attracted to gather there.

The number of residents was a requirement of the sanctuary as well, which interlocked with his plan.

This is a long-term task, Han Xiao thought.

There were players that came to talk with him once in a while, wanting to buy equipment. Han Xiao did not refuse and got rid of the useless equipment in his storage while earning some money at the same time.

...

Back at the workshop, the Extraction Device was still operating, and Han Xiao was in a very good mood. Not wanting to waste the opportunity, he took out the parts and started building Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades. He was trying to go for the purple quality, and this time, he felt more proficient than all the times before.

It might succeed this time!

The noise of the Extraction Device echoed in the workshop, but Han Xiao was not affected by any external factors, immersed in building. When the Extraction Device stopped, he also finished at the same time.

You have Built Compounded Magnetic Chain Split Blades (Purple).

Class Advancement Requirement: Build 5 Purple Equipment above LV 60.

Progress: 1 / 5

Han Xiao exhaled, feeling much more relieved.

The first time was always the hardest, much the same as forgiveness. After the first time, there would always be the second and third, and sooner or later, one would become used to it.

I should be able to advance my class in this month, Han Xiao estimated.

Without looking at the interface, Han Xiao was already very familiar with the attributes of purple equipment. Starting from blue, quality would gradually make a bigger difference in the attributes of an equipment. The basic attributes of a purple equipment would be 20% to 30% higher than a blue equipment. The damage of the purple compounded magnetic chain split blades was a lot higher than the blue ones, and the attribute difference would be even greater if it had even better quality.

After replacing the purple equipment with the blue one that he had equipped, Han Xiao went to take a look at the result of the Extraction Device.

Two tons of crystals became a small pile of rhombus-shaped, light-blue crystals, each crystal being about half a palm in size. The original ore had been filled with cracks and messy lines, but the product after extraction was clear and transparent. Light passed through the crystal unobstructed and refracted within, like there was a mini sun in the crystal.

Low-Class Energy Crystal: Contains non-elemental pure energy that can be converted and extracted.

Energy crystals were most commonly used in magic civilizations and crystal civilizations. It was also the source of food for some creatures.

Han Xiao nodded. He had yet to think of another way to make use of the energy crystal other than to use it as an energy source. The Mage class had more ways to use the energy crystal.

I shall store it for now. There are Shadow Stalker Viper's eggs in the warehouses that can be cultivated. Manually feeding them waste materials should create another way to make energy blocks, Han Xiao thought. Cultivating beast eggs required a professional, and Emerald Grass was just right for the task.

...

Stars filled the sky.

On the Stardragon border, a black heavy helicopter landed slowly, its rotors blowing the weeds in all directions.

A few Stardragon special force soldiers lugged a person by their arms down from the chopper with serious expressions on their faces. This person was wearing a metal eye patch and a bandage. She had dry, messy hair that had not been taken care of for a very long time, and her lips were pale and cracked. The bottom half of the face showed it was a female.

“Sir, she’s here.” The special unit soldier saluted the officer who was waiting on the side.

“Confirm her body status, make sure she doesn’t wake up,” Feng Jun said. He was in charge of this exchange. This woman was Emerald Grass, a serial criminal whom they had bailed out of Bell of Death Island overnight.

“Don’t worry,” the doctor said, “I injected a large dose of tranquilizer into her. She’s in a deep sleep now.”

“Confirm it again.”

Feng Jun looked down at his watch. The agreed time of exchange was nearing, so he was nervous. Not only did he have to complete the assigned mission of exchange, but he also had to gain some information of Han Xiao’s current status.

He wondered who would be coming for the exchange and whether that person would give him some face. Although Feng Jun knew Han Xiao, it was because he knew Han Xiao’s personality that he was not very confident.

Seconds and minutes passed. They waited silently. The sound of the wind blowing lightly across the grass and the buzz from insects were the only sounds they could hear. The atmosphere became more tense together with the emotions of the people.

Whoosh—

It was the sound of rotors cutting through the air. Feng Jun regained focus and looked up.

A helicopter approached from the night sky. The indicator lights flashed in the code pattern, and Feng Jun immediately told someone to reply. After exchanging the signals, Feng Jun gave a quick scan but did not find any organization’s symbol on the chopper.

However, although it was unknown, Feng Jun could see that Han Xiao had joined another organization. He felt heavy-hearted.

“Where’s the person?” A man in mask hopped down from the chopper.

Feng Jun waved his hands, and the team behind him brought Emerald Grass forward. The masked man opened a laptop and confirmed it was the right person before carrying Emerald Grass onto the chopper. The helicopter took off immediately after. The entire process took little more than a minute. Feng Jun did not have a chance to communicate—he could only watch the helicopter fly away helplessly.

Feng Jun took out his phone and called Gu Hui to report the process.

“He did join another organization after all, and it’s because this organization hid him that we were not able to find him,” Gu Hui pondered. “What organization could it be?”

...

On the helicopter, the masked man unlocked Emerald Grass’s metal eye patch and bandage.

Suddenly, the supposedly asleep Emerald Grass opened her eyes and stared at the masked man. Neither said a word—they just stared at each other for half a minute. Emerald Grass looked down. She slit open the flesh on her arm, picked out a bloody wiretap device, and casually crushed it to pieces.

She had not been asleep at all. As a Pharmacist, how could she not have trained her drug resistance? Thus, tranquilizers were completely useless on her, but she had concealed that throughout all her years of imprisonment.

“What did they exchange me for?” Emerald Grass asked calmly. It did not feel like she was in danger at all; it was like talking to an old friend even though she did not know the masked man at all.

“Some intelligence.” The masked man looked at Emerald Grass with interest.

“Cheap.” Emerald Grass frowned in dissatisfaction. “Are you interested in my ability to make drugs?”

“Whatever do you mean?” the masked man asked playfully.

“You wouldn’t be interested in any of my other abilities other than this,” Emerald Grass said coldly.

“You’re too strong after all.”

A few days ago, when the Bell of Death Island guards injected tranquilizer into her and brought her onto the chopper, Emerald Grass already knew that she had become a bargaining chip, and she finally saw an opportunity to escape.

While she maintained the disguise of being asleep, she had heard the conversation between the escort team and knew a meeting would be carried out. Emerald Grass had planned to use her own abilities to escape after the meeting, regain her freedom, and never be controlled again.

Emerald Grass’s ability was controlling plants within a certain range; therefore, her instincts were very sharp. The feeling the masked man gave off was like a beast hidden under the skin of a man, ready to consume its prey anytime. He felt even more dangerous than when the Stardragon special unit soldiers pointed their guns at her head during the escort. Emerald Grass immediately knew that there was no chance to escape, so she gave up the idea of resisting.

“I was going to escape, but it looks like that would be suicide,” Emerald Grass said honestly.

Han Xiao pulled off his mask and smiled. “You’re very wise.”

Han Xiao had disguised himself for this meet-up and taken a chopper over himself. He knew full well that Emerald Grass was not ordinary, and sending anyone else would have been a risk. Thus, it was best for him to go himself.

As expected, Emerald Grass had hidden something. If he did not go, she would most likely have escaped. Emerald Grass had a very calm temperament; she was not surprised at all when something unexpected

happened. She was very obviously suitable for scientific research as she would never be afraid of accidents happening during experiments.

“What do you need me to do?” Emerald Grass asked.

“I will tell you when we are there.” Han Xiao casually took out a device and scanned to see if there was any other wiretap on Emerald Grass’s body, at the same time contemplating about how to have Emerald Grass work and stay in the sanctuary willingly. Although he had Emerald Grass under his control temporarily, he did not think that Emerald Grass would give up on escaping in the future if there was to be a chance, and he could not monitor her at all times.

Chapter 230: Pharmacist Emerald Grass

The helicopter carried the two toward Sanctuary Three.

During the journey, Emerald Grass was very quiet, like she had accepted her fate. The imprisonment on Bell of Death Island had made her familiar with the feeling of not having freedom; it was just going from one cell to another for her, and at least her treatment would be better here with this man called Black Phantom than when she was on Bell of Death Island.

Black Phantom, never heard of such person, Emerald Grass thought. She had been imprisoned for many years and had very limited knowledge of the changes happening in the world outside. She looked through the events that had happened in the recent years in her laptop and realized that the name Black Phantom had first appeared half a year ago.

Unbelievable.

In only half a year, this name had risen to fame like a shooting star. His strength was more terrifying than the highly dangerous serial criminals on Bell of Death Island, and those were all renowned serial criminals.

There was one piece of information that gave Emerald Grass a huge shock; the Germinal Organization that had been extremely strong before she was imprisoned had been forced onto the path of destruction!

And the reason for that was just an ordinary traitor!

When she saw this piece of intelligence, Emerald Grass could barely believe her own eyes, and she only digested this information after a very long silence.

Her emotions were mixed, and it all turned into a sigh in the end.

The world was changing constantly. After a few years of imprisonment, the outside world had become completely different.

Also, what the hell was this ‘Inhuman’ described in the intelligence?

Sanctuary Three was coming into sight, so Emerald Grass put down the laptop and looked out the window. Surprise flashed on her face. "So that construction area is the place we're going to. Black Phantom Sanctuary Three... What is a sanctuary?"

Han Xiao gave a faint smile and said, "You still have much more to catch up on."

"I know." Emerald Grass nodded. She flicked her messy hair and said softly, "It's safe here, right?"

Han Xiao did not reply. He pointed at his eyes then at Sanctuary Three, implying that she should look for herself. Emerald Grass searched the keyword 'sanctuary' on the internet for intelligence, and after some time, she got a rough idea. "Turns out it's the Dark Net's plan. I didn't expect this hidden huge organization to surface and even received funding from the Six Nations. The purpose is very pure, isn't it? Indeed, there is no place safer."

Looking down from the plane, the Graymetal Ruins had experienced a complete makeover. A new area was marked out from the ruins, players and engineering teams dashed across like ants, and various types of engineering machines made buzzing sounds. The abandoned buildings, bridges, roads, and such had all been demolished in order to construct new buildings. The atmosphere was completely fresh. A small half of the tall concrete wall had already been completed, and countless players climbed up and down for construction.

The helicopter lowered itself onto the parking spot.

Having received notice long ago, Huang Yu came up to Han Xiao, talking rapidly about the things that had happened when Han Xiao was not around. Most of it was cumbersome matters, but Huang Yu had taken care of all of them very neatly. He was indeed suitable as an assistant and secretary.

Emerald Grass looked left and right, then stopped at Han Xiao, and said with surprise, "Didn't think you're actually the leader of this sanctuary. No wonder you need me."

Han Xiao did not agree or deny it; he gave Huang Yu a few words of encouragement and took Emerald Grass to the frozen warehouse.

After looking at a large amount of Shadow Stalker Viper materials, Han Xiao described the task then stared at Emerald Grass, waiting for her reply.

Emerald Grass pondered for two minutes before nodding.

"Shadow Stalker Vipers' brains, kidneys, gall bladders, mitral valves, and tailbones are all drug materials suitable for creating steroids and hormone drugs. Their eggs have a substance that aids in bone growth and metabolism and can be extracted to create very effective healing potions.

"Since you have so many monster eggs, I can try to cultivate a Shadow Stalker Viper herd. You also mentioned that feeding them high energy waste can create radiation crystals. This is a renewable resource..."

Emerald Grass turned very professional when she talked about what she was good at, and she talked with more confidence, almost in a despising tone since she was so confident in her knowledge and skills of her field.

"What and what?" Han Xiao did not hear clearly and was very confused.

Emerald Grass rolled her eyes—her expression was like telling Han Xiao to leave these kinds of professional matters to the professionals, and Han Xiao should not interfere since he had no knowledge of the field.

Compared to the cold feeling that Emerald Grass gave off earlier, her expression was now livelier, like she had noticed that the situation she was in was not bad after all, which made her feel relieved and stop putting on a disguise that rejected everyone with her coldness.

“That substance you mentioned sounds very valuable. I’ll leave you to it.” Han Xiao nodded with his hands behind his back, looking like he totally knew what Emerald Grass was talking about. Emerald Grass laughed before hurriedly suppressing her laughter.

“Huang Yu, come!” Han Xiao yelled. Huang Yu, who was waiting to the side, ran over immediately. Han Xiao pointed at Emerald Grass and said, “This is a Pharmacist I’ve hired. Arrange a room for her.”

Huang Yu nodded. He brought Emerald Grass to an exquisite residence, then followed Han Xiao’s orders, and gave her some information about the sanctuary.

The room was new and rather large, or at least much larger than the cell she used to be in.

Emerald Grass lay on the bed and let out a moan of comfort.

After years of sleeping in that iron-framed bed, she finally could sleep on this soft mattress—it was like sleeping on a pile of cotton, and her entire body was sinking.

Huang Yu stood at the door awkwardly. Emerald Grass totally ignored him while doing this, and he did not know whether he should stay or leave. He knocked the door frame and coughed. “Rest well. I shall leave now.”

Emerald Grass took out the documents and started browsing after Huang Yu left, her eyes twinkling.

“Tens of thousands of undead Inhumans are gathered in the sanctuary. I will not have to worry about the number of test subjects. There will be no infections, and there will not be another plague. How perfect. The sanctuary is also free and safe. Maybe staying here for a while won’t be so bad. After all, I need time to digest the changes in the outside world.”

...

Han Xiao leaned on the chair in the office and stared at the laptop on the table. It was the image of real-time surveillance of Emerald Grass’s room.

Emerald Grass had history and was not trustworthy, so Han Xiao had back up plans. He had placed a few hidden cameras in the walls of the room and monitored everything Emerald Grass did, including what Emerald Grass was doing then.

Han Xiao squinted and thought, *Her actions were very different before. She was calm and cold when she boarded the plane, but she showed her side of being a woman just now. It might be to create an illusion of her feeling safe to clear my doubts.*

He was doubtful for a reason. The Emerald Grass in his memories was a liberal who did not bow to any organization. She did things her own unique way and was unpredictable. Han Xiao was cautious because he knew how important Emerald Grass would be in version 2.0.

There were also other benefits to Emerald Grass joining in. The players could do missions for her in exchange for her guidance and advance their class into Pharmacist. With her joining in, it was another step forward for Han Xiao's plan of making a 'Players Main City'.

To create a main city for the players, NPCs with all kinds of functions were a necessity.

"Your Excellency, I have already arranged her..."

At this time, Huang Yu walked in to report the situation. He took a few steps forward and saw the image on the laptop screen. He stopped the sentence, and the look in his eyes became weird.

Seems like I discovered something extraordinary!

Is... is this what they call a peeper?

Could this be the boss' unknown hobby?

Will I be killed?

Huang Yu took a quick step backward and looked down at the floor, acting like he had not seen anything at all.

Han Xiao clearly knew that Huang Yu had misunderstood him; he shook his head but did not bother to explain.

Let it be a misunderstanding then, the Great Mechanic Han has never cared about what others think.

"Don't tell anyone," Han Xiao said.

Huang Yu thought that Han Xiao did not want anyone to know about his weird hobby, so he nodded rapidly.

...

Emerald Grass was always very efficient. She started work almost immediately.

The players did not know that he had a deal with Stardragon secretly, and the efficiency of the information flow between players and NPCs was very low. However, Han Xiao required Emerald Grass to wear a mask and hide her identity just in case. It was not the best time to show their identity, and Han Xiao wanted to be steady for as long as possible.

Due to the difference in information, the players were at a disadvantage when it came to their sensitivity toward pieces of intelligence. Without missions or a storyline introduction, they would have no idea what type of information the organizations needed, and they would also not know how the organizations operated. Most players were busy doing missions, making money, and getting equipment.

Also, with their player mentality, they would not chat too much with the NPCs, which meant that there was an even smaller chance of their conversation mentioning other NPCs.

Since it was for safety reasons, Emerald Grass did not have any problems with it.

Emerald Grass created many kinds of drugs with a very high quantity. Han Xiao took the healing agents and steroids with the best quality and allowed Emerald Grass to sell the rest of the drugs with lower quality to the players, which showed the 'multiple functionalities' of the sanctuary to the players.

There was always a high demand for drugs on the market. They were usually expensive to limit the players from using drugs excessively to win battles.

Despite that, players still had a very high demand for these drugs. The appearance of Emerald Grass made a lot of players content.

The message spread very quickly—all the players knew that there was a new NPC in the sanctuary who sold drugs, so a lot of players came and bought from Emerald Grass.

Emerald Grass was very curious about the Inhumans. She realized that the players were the best test subjects, and they were all very easy to talk to. As long as she asked them for help, they would almost always agree. She also did not have to worry about the consequences of failure—they were indeed perfect test subjects. Emerald Grass was like a fish in water; she enjoyed staying there even more.

Sanctuary Three was a good place.

Han Xiao still had the drugs that he had robbed from Louis Research Institution, but he did not plan on selling them any time soon. They were all of extremely high quality, and they would have much better effects when the level of the players became higher. Then he could sell them for a good price.

Thinking about Louis Research Institution, Han Xiao realized a small problem—the institution should know that Black Phantom was the one that robbed them by now, but they had not done anything about it.

"Looks like they are afraid because of my name. They don't dare take revenge, so they decided to hold their indignation in," Han Xiao sneered.

Organizations that knew their place were the best—a lot of small troubles would be avoided, and he did not have to destroy them.