

The Mechanic 331

Chapter 331: Black Star: The Beginning (1)

Advanced Mechanic Control-type Knowledge detected: [Advanced Radar Technology]. Learn in exchange for 2 Potential points?

Learning... 15%... 74%...

Knowledge successfully learned! You have learned [Advanced Radar Technology]!

The new knowledge had been imprinted his mind, and his Potential points dropped two points from the previous fifty-five points.

Potential points were used to learn and level up knowledge. Although it did not seem like much—as all fifteen advanced knowledges could be learned in exchange for thirty points—one would keep running out of points the moment they tried to max out those knowledges. Han Xiao had run into this problem in the past, which was why he was extra careful about spending his Potential points this time around. He rarely spent his Potential points unless necessary.

Due to the limit of the Potential points, Mechanic players were forced to branch out in specific paths; it was impossible to be a master of all. Aside from earning a Potential point upon leveling up, players could also earn a Potential point from raising their mastery of an ability to the max. So, players could further their knowledge and thus increase their strength even after they had already reached the maximum level.

Mechanic just so happened to be a class that never ran out of new abilities. Each new blueprint counted as a new skill, and all they needed was experience points.

Han Xiao had a massive advantage when it came to experience, and the amount that he had amassed was far beyond what the players imagined to be possible in the current Version. He had the luxury of branching off in several directions, giving him a huge edge over the players.

You have acquired a new blueprint: Simple Multi-function Detector!

This was the basic blueprint that came with learning the radar knowledge.

Most players would come to find radar technology very helpful. It could be used for making observations at long distances as well as scanning the electromagnetic radiation in the surroundings. Although it could not directly improve their strength, it was still an important blueprint to have. As the players leveled up in the later Versions, combat became much more dimensioned, and without sufficient radar technology, one was as good as blind. However, the majority of the players opted for the

store-bought detection tools, and only the large gaming and merchant guilds would have access to such knowledge.

It's actually not a bad knowledge. It suits my needs quite well. I can sell the detectors to the players after producing them en masse. This kind of supportive equipment could be viewed as absolutely necessary by many players.

He had now obtained three advanced knowledges and was only in need of two more to meet one of his class change requirements. Now, the problem was money. However, Han Xiao's motto was to get rich together with the players, expand their market, and earn the NPC's money with the players.

Han Xiao had the advantage of knowing about the Storylines already. Although this part of the game was kind of a gray area in his memories, he could still remember enough bits and pieces to matter. For example, he knew where to find the long-term mercenary contracts that could get him quite a lot of money.

After he returned to waiting room, he found that most of the players were waiting there patiently. However, after scanning the room, he realized that Li Ge and the Temple of God players were nowhere to be found.

Han Xiao frowned and asked, "Where are the others?"

"They said that they wanted to take a look outside to familiarize with the environment and would be back in a moment," Bun-hit-dog explained.

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes.

*Bullsh*t. Do they think I don't understand how their minds work? They're just excited about entering a new environment and couldn't wait to interact with the new NPCs and trigger missions, thus ignoring my instructions.*

Most players were selfish. This was an indisputable point. It was even more so for the pro players. But really? Could they not even wait there for a few minutes? Clearly, the allure of the shiny new world had gotten to them.

This was also one of the things that Han Xiao worried about. As new opportunities popped up one after another, the players would start getting ideas of their own and would have less reason to always stick with him. They would also be interested in joining a more powerful organization.

To ensure that the players never left him, Han Xiao had long since prepared a plan, and it was about time to implement that plan.

"Follow me. It's time for work."

Han Xiao turned and walked out the doors with the players following right behind him.

The group of people arrived in front of a huge building with a main hall that was similar in size to a town square. People of different species could be seen throughout the building, going about their business. Some sat, some were walking around, and some conversed with each other. However, all of these people were fully clad in battle gear, and pretty much all of them were Supers.

“What is this place?” the players asked as they looked left and right.

“The Mercenary Alliance,” Han Xiao said slowly. “A powerful neutral organization that offers swords for hire. This organization’s business can be seen in all corners of the universe. It was founded by the three big Civilizations in space. They maintain absolute neutrality, and all intelligent lifeforms can register to become one of their mercenaries. The Alliance ranks their mercenaries with different levels, and the difficulty of a mission, the value of reward, operation funds, and other benefits all depend on your level. The Mercenary Alliance is an ancient organization, and like the Intergalactic Bank, they never interfere in matters in space. It also pays great attention to protecting the rights of both the clients and the mercenaries. Mercenaries would never be forced into doing missions. It serves as a fair platform.”

He also knew that the original intention for the founding of the Mercenary Alliance was to give the Supers something to do. Being able to earn money and make a living with their power meant that they would have less time and energy to cause trouble everywhere. The effect that the founding of the Mercenary Alliance brought was evident. Not only did it make good use of the Supers’ abilities, it also contributed to maintaining the security in an area.

But the players did not need to know about that.

The players were stunned, and for a while, it was as if light was coming out of their eyes. They had come to space so that they could take higher-level missions, and they could not wait to head into the building right now. However, everyone stood still as they saw that Han Xiao was not making a move yet.

Multiple fist-sized metal balls could be seen floating around the great hall of the Mercenary Alliance. These balls would fly toward players with a wave from their hands, forming a virtual screen upon contact. This was a kind of an automatic management system that allowed the mercenaries to take on jobs on their own.

Han Xiao retrieved a ball and opened up the virtual interface.

“Please enter your mercenary account username to proceed.” A robotic voice sounded out of the small ball.

Han Xiao directly selected the ‘register’ option, and the screen changed. After entering his identification information, his account could not be connected to his bank account.

Han Xiao entered the information for his own bank account, and with a flash, the screen refreshed and displayed his basic information. There was only a name and a single entry in his resume—Protecting Short Horn Star. This ‘resume’ would automatically record his official accomplishments, and as he had only entered space not too long ago, it was still as blank as a sheet of paper.

These accomplishments were basically the physical record of his renown, but the accomplishments that were made with no witnesses around would likely not be recorded. However, the renown on the player interface was different. Even without someone spreading the news, the renown points would still increase on its own whenever a player did something big.

Han Xiao needed a mercenary nickname. He was called “Black Phantom” on Planet Aquamarine, but he felt like that name wasn’t domineering enough. He decided to use a new name to to also pique the players’ interests.

After a bit of thinking, Han Xiao said slowly, “Then let’s call myself... Black Star.”

Black Phantom was a name for a killer and felt a little bit edgy. He felt that the new name sounded much more ‘righteous’ and fitted his image quite well. The Great Mechanic Han was pleased with himself.

He chose the color black because he felt a connection to this color. He had liked to wear black clothing even in his past life, not because he thought it looked cool, but because he was too lazy to wash his clothes.

After entering a bunch more information, the little ball revealed a small probe and reminded, “If you’re a Super, please release your energy toward this probe. The system will analyze your class for you, and this will determine the difficulty of the missions that will be matched to you.”

Han Xiao held the probe and sent sparks of energy out of his fingertips. He used about eighty percent of his power, and C class was displayed on the screen.

“Data collection complete. Creating file...”

Mercenary Codename: Black Star

Credibility Rating: 10 (Starting Value)

Strength Level: C

Class: Mechanic

Certificates and Badges: None

Faction or Group: None

Summary: Mercenary Recruit

“File creation complete. Data has been entered into the system. Black Star, welcome to the Mercenary Alliance.”

Chapter 332: Black Star: The Beginning (2)

The Colton Star Cluster had quite a few opportunities, and the Mercenary Alliance’s dataset was the easiest way to find the missions. Han Xiao picked some of the missions that he knew.

To be a free mercenary was a very good choice. One could earn a lot of money while networking with major organizations. It was a free path of promotion to the higher status.

But Han Xiao’s plan did not stop there. The next action was the most crucial.

Mercenaries identity interface had an option 'Create a Mercenary Group'. Han Xiao clicked in without hesitation.

"Are you sure that you want to create a mercenary group?"

A mercenary group was a team made out of mercenaries that could accept people's missions. A mercenary group also had rating system, and all their actions would be recorded in the system.

Even a member who finished a mission by themselves would be recorded in the ratings of the mercenary group. At the same time, if a member left a bad record, it would also influence the rating of mercenary group. Han Xiao's record for his mercenary missions was still blank, and the same went for this group.

Sky Ring Army was another large-scale mercenary group that took missions all over the place. They had a wide market with new members joining every day. Their reputation was well known.

If one did not have an extremely bad history, anyone could start a mercenary group. One person could only make one mercenary group. One could not create a new group unless the previous one was disbanded.

"Please enter the name of your mercenary group."

After some thought, Han Xiao directly used his code name and called it 'Black Star Mercenary Group'. He confirmed the name, and the interface suddenly changed from a personal one to a mercenary group interface.

The target members for this group were clearly the players as they were there to provide hard labor. *Ah that's not right, they're warriors.*

Life as a mercenary was extremely dangerous, but players could always revive, so there would not be any loss. This job perfectly suited the players' natural advantage, and with the players, developing a new empire was twice as easy.

Let the players join my mercenary group, then we can start a new base.

Han Xiao's eyes looked deep as he smirked.

Building a base was one core components of his plan. It could tie the players as a beneficiary on his tank, and the players would be more concentrated together while decreasing the chance of players leaving. This was the plan that Han Xiao had finally come up with after pulling his hair out.

At the same time, he could build a closer bond with the players, and their relationship could move from one purely out of benefits to comrades.

Think about it, building a mercenary group by himself with professional players as the initial players of the organization would create a lot of news in the world and attract even more players' attention. He could then use rewards to lure in other skillful players and strengthen his mercenary group. They would think that it was the result of their hard work.

Emphasizing the players' contributions could incentivize the growth of the faction, and players could find meaning in fighting for their own organization and view the faction's achievement as their own. In the end, this sense of belonging and pride could create satisfaction and fulfillment in the players.

One could not underestimate the power of social belonging. This romanticism of social belonging could spread roots of feelings into players hearts, and the power of romanticism could nurture soldiers that would die for their country.

For majority of the players, games were just entertainment. The element of role playing and the option for players to choose a faction could further strength the vision and ideology of the faction. On top of that, this setting would attract even more players to join! Everyone's heart would be filled with passion and loyalty. The emotion of sacrificing one's life for an organization, which was unbelievable in the real world, could now be released in a video game without any repercussions. Han Xiao wanted to lure out this romanticism in players' hearts for the sake of his faction.

Han Xiao just wanted to make his faction into the hope of the players, and he was the perfect leader to win the players' heart. Along with the growth of his faction, Han Xiao could earn more benefits and obtain better items, all while rewarding the players' contributions. The whole process would be a virtuous cycle, and through this, Han Xiao could aggregate the power of the players to assist him to his goals.

Building a mercenary group was the first stage of his plan, and through Bun-hit-dog's show, he could keep refreshing his presence. Once the future version was updated, Han Xiao could simply wave his hand, and all the players would rush to him to join the faction.

Of course, it was just an outline of the plan. The actual execution was complicated, and it would take a lot of time and resources to reach the end stage. However, once the plan succeeded, it would be revolutionary for the players, just like the alliances and the Hordes in World of Warcraft.

This was the blueprint of Han Xiao's new empire!

"You all have the requirement to register as a mercenary. Join my mercenary group, and I will take care of you all," Han Xiao said in a seductive voice.

Frenzied Sword did not hesitate and was the first to register. He only had two rules. First, he could eat well if he followed Han Xiao. Second, Han Xiao was always right.

The other players slowly joined, and Han Xiao smiled as he watched the whole process, as if he was seeing all the seeds buried into the soil, waiting for them to grow.

The display quickly switched to a new interface.

Black Star Mercenary group

Credibility: 10

Scale: 47 members

Class C: 37 members

Missions Completed: 0

Active Region: None

Records: None

Creator: Black Star—Han Xiao

Creation date: Galaxy Calendar 2 October 688

Summary: Trainee mercenary group, small scale, abilities are similar among the members, no obvious strength.

As the mercenary group had just started, they had no information. There were three criteria to rate a mercenary group: scale, strength, and credibility. The first two were requirements to determine which missions the organization could apply. For credibility, it was the 'level' of a mercenary group. The points for credibility could be gained after missions were completed. The credibility was the core representation of the reputation.

Many employers had standards for the credibility of the mercenaries. If the credibility score was too low, then the employer would reject the application of the mercenaries.

Credibility was also equivalent to popularity. Of course, in the formal document, it wouldn't use such an informal word. But in the reputation system, it quantified the reputation system of the mercenary group, and only Han Xiao could see it.

Li Ge and Temple of God were not in the scene and ran around by themselves, so they were the only two groups that did not join the mercenary group. Han Xiao was irritated.

At this time, Han Xiao's interface popped out a hint.

Faction formed: Black Star Mercenary Group

Faction Management Function activated.

The NPC model added a new option named [Faction Management], which was located to the side of [Dungeon Creation].

I knew it! Han Xiao was excited.

After he succeeded in dungeon creation, he had been wondering what other functions the NPC model had. He had expected a faction option to be one of the functions, but he had never activated it. He figured that, since he had belonged to the Dark Net, which Bennett was the boss of, the functions had never been needed before.

He had been pretty confident that only by creating a faction himself would the function be activated.

And he was right.

If the interface did not work, he probably would have given up, but now, with the management interface, it simplified the whole process.

Han Xiao quickly clicked into [Faction Management] and experimented with things, getting more excited as he looked on.

There was only one way describe this function.

You could do anything you want!

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[Faction Management] was the most complicated among all the NPC interfaces. There was a dizzying number of options and information. Through this interface, Han Xiao had access to all the faction-related features a player would have, and he could also give out faction missions, albeit a limited amount.

The level of reward that he could give out was dependent on his own level, faction rank, faction influence, and legendary points.

Faction Reward Limit: 92,000

Faction Leader Level: 70 (+56,000 reward limit)

Officers: None (NPC)

Faction Size: 47 (+20,000 reward limit)

Renown: 2 (+4,000 reward limit)

Faction Leader Legendary Points: 3 (+15% reward limit)

Allies and Enemies: None

92,000 was the limit for a single mission, but the daily total limit was twenty times that amount, far more than the limit for individual members, which was only five times more. Moreover, the other factors such as the faction officers and renown would all add on to that limit. With everything added up, their faction's currently daily total limit was twenty-six times the base amount.

This meant that he could reward the players in his faction with a total of 2.4 million experience every day, but as there were currently fifty or so players, each player could only receive around 50,000 experience. This was not really a lot of experience for the players at their level.

The reward limit mainly controls the speed at which a faction can grow. This is only the base limit, so there's still a lot of room for growth.

He made some calculations, and putting aside his leadership level, his own character level also contributed to the reward limit. Recruiting strong NPC officers to their faction would also greatly increase their reward limit. This convinced him of the need to start interacting with main storyline characters. The faction size was also separated into different stages, with the next cutoff being a hundred members. Renown was basically the same as the reputation system with a small difference. Faction renown was the aggregate of all area reputation points. For example, ten points of renown in the Garton Galaxy and five points in the Gelock Star Cluster would add up to a total of fifteen faction renown.

Legendary Points gave a percentage increase to the reward limit, and this increase was calculated after all the other factors such as leadership points were accounted for. The “Allies and Enemies” was basically the faction’s foreign relations.

Aside from faction missions, the system also allowed him to manage and monitor the player-faction relationship, as well individual players’ level of contribution. Overall, Han Xiao was very pleased with this new interface, and it could help him attract more players.

After Han Xiao established his faction, the other players also received notifications on their interface.

You have joined [Black Star Mercenary Group].

Current relationship: Cold (0/300)

The players were not surprised, as something like a faction notification was everyday business to them.

Han Xiao’s Faction Management system started listing out the names of the member players. His eyes flashed, and he gave out another notification.

You are the Black Star Mercenary Group’s first batch of recruits. You have gained 300 contribution points. Current relationship status: Neutral (300/1000)

“There’s something like this?”

“We got the neutral status directly.”

The players were overjoyed, and they hurriedly studied the faction interface. They wanted to find out what benefits they could get out of earning contribution points.

Once they entered the faction reward page, an assortment of items was displayed in front of them. Most of these items were originally in Han Xiao’s personal NPC shop, and he simply moved them over to the faction page. Moreover, he also threw in some good stuff that was not available from his shop. There were the Ranger 2.5 robots, each costing 1,500 contribution points to exchange; mini mobile turrets, each costing 1,200 points; and the original Python mechanical suit, which cost 6,000 points.

The equipment and items instantly caused a reaction from the players.

“Good stuff!”

“God-tier gear!”

The players were moved. These items had previously been unavailable to purchase no matter how much money they had.

“The mercenary group is newly established, and the credibility rating is still quite low,” Han Xiao said. “Only by raising our credibility rating can we take on higher level missions. We’re all comrades-in-arms now. Let’s work hard together for the future of the mercenary group.”

Immediately after, he made the faction size information visible to all the players in the interface. He wanted to use this as a reminder for them that they could take on jobs with better pay once they raised their rating. Moreover, he wanted the players to feel like they could directly contribute to the faction’s growth with their own actions.

The players were taking a while to process all this information.

Then, Han Xiao turned his attention to finding missions or job notices given by the Sunil tribe for his subclass. He quickly found several available missions; however, their faction’s credibility rating needed to be at least 120.

120 points? Han Xiao thought as he touched his chin. If he did things normally, he would be able to acquire 120 points after taking several outbound combat missions. However, he decided to take those menial labor missions that awarded at least one credibility point per mission. These daily missions were safe and easy, and they could be completed within the hub. Although it would take more missions, was this not what the players were for?”

He immediately used the newly gained interface to issue a faction mission.

Faction Mission [Credibility Standard]

Mission Introduction: Black Star Mercenary Group has decided to take on an outbound assignment. However, the minimum credibility rating must first be met. (Note: This is the prerequisite of the first outbound assignment taken on by the faction.)

Mission requirement: Complete the daily missions and jobs at the Hub Center until the Black Star Mercenary Group has acquired 120 credibility points.

Reward: 45,000 experience and 300 faction contribution points

Remark: The three top contributors to meeting the credibility rating minimum will receive additional benefits.

“There isn’t much experience awarded, but the contribution points rewarded are not bad.”

“Did you not see? This is only the first part. We will be able to take on the combat assignment later on. That’s where we’ll be able to get the experience.”

“This is a team mission, right? It’s asking for everyone to contribute to the 120 points total.”

“Hoho. You even get benefits for being the top three.”

Frenzied Sword, Hao Tian, and the others got excited and could not sit still after seeing the reward. They knew better than anyone that Han Xiao’s ‘benefits’ would definitely not be ordinary.

The mission only required taking on the daily missions in the hub. These missions usually only had to do with cleaning and some other utility-related work. The good thing was that they did not have to go through the trouble of leaving the hub. If the fifty players worked together, they would be able to meet the credibility rating requirement very fast. Han Xiao was not worried at all. Moreover, the players had only been getting benefits ever since they joined the faction. So, they naturally had no reason to refuse the faction invitation.

After receiving Han Xiao’s orders, the players spread out and left to take on the daily missions. With this group of helpers, Han Xiao was able to clear out a lot of time for himself to deal with some other business. After he returned to the resting room, he decided to make some preparations as well as think through his future plans.

A few hours later, Li Ge and the others returned to the resting room. They had been walking around outside for quite a while. Li Ge had left for space because he wanted to trigger all those new missions. With so many new NPCs at the Hub Center, he could not wait to explore around and see what missions he could accept. However, he found out that most people there were travelers, and they all laughed Li Ge and the others away when they tried to offer help. The NPCs asked them why they did not just go to the Mercenary Alliance if they wanted to take on jobs.

Although they could not receive any missions, they were able to get a new piece of information. After heading to the Mercenary Alliance and busying themselves for half the day, they finally registered themselves as mercenaries. Seeing the countless listings of jobs and missions convinced them that they had made the right choice in coming to space.

Furthermore, Li Ge believed that acting by themselves was the right action to take, as they had gained a lead on the other players.

The group of people chatted as they walked to the room’s entrance.

“We have gained an advantage this time. Do you think we should tell others about this mercenary thing?”

Li Ge shook his head. “This is an opportunity that we found. We’re all competing against each other here. There’s no need to tell them straight away.”

“But should we tell them if they were to ask?”

Li Ge thought about this, and he appeared to be troubled. Hiding away information like this after being asked would cause trouble easily. Just as he was trying to decide what to do, the group opened the door to the room. However, they realized that not a single player was in the room.

“Hmm.” A Temple of God player was confused and asked, “Where did the others go?”

“No idea.” Li Ge was glad and secretly let out a deep breath. He no longer had to be afraid of being questioned by the other players.

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They all turned around, but they only saw Han Xiao alone in the room playing with the communicator. He quietly said, “You guys are finally back. You are the only ones left.”

“What do you mean?” Li Ge asked.

“All the other players have already joined my Mercenary Group. How about you?”

Li Ge froze.

Does that mean that everyone else has already become mercenaries? Then what was the point of all our hard work?

And what's a Mercenary Group?

A bad feeling slowly arose in their hearts.

“We’ve already registered as mercenaries,” Li Ge replied honestly.

Han Xiao raised his brows and announced a mission to join the Black Star Mercenary Group. Li Ge had nowhere else to go, so they quickly accepted the mission, went to the Mercenary Lobby, and joined the Mercenary Group.

Right after that, they activated the mission that other players had begun a while ago. Seeing the Faction Introduction and the mission requirement, Li Ge and others could not believe their eyes.

Li Ge was upset. This was supposed to be their treatment, but because they had moved on their own, they were behind in process compared to the other players. Just before they got back, they had been feeling pleased with themselves, but now, Li Ge only felt embarrassed. He had wasted so much time and energy wandering around, and he had not achieved anything other than lagging behind in progress.

After talking with the other players, Li Ge also found out that the other group of players had gotten a reward of 300 Contribution Points.

His mood was extremely poor. He regretted that he did not stay put and instead ran around like a monkey. Why did they think that they knew more about the universe than Han Xiao?

The other players soon heard about Li Ge’s anguish and laughed. At the same time, they had more faith in Han Xiao—Han Xiao was the only beam of light that they should follow. If they followed Han Xiao, they could get the most benefits rather than trying their luck outside.

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With the hard work of the players, the Mercenary Group's Credibility Rating increased little by little.

Han Xiao rented a machinery modification room and tried to make a new battle helmet using the new knowledge that he had gained and the resources that he had brought from Planet Aquamarine. He called it [SIN – Type-A Carbon Life Form Radar (Helmet)]. It had multiple layers of detection and could detect living creatures within several kilometers. It also had a strong radar function and strong life support systems such as air filtration. Han Xiao made a dozen of them and prepared to sell them to the players. The helmet was essential equipment for missions in space.

After a few days, Bun-hit-dog finally released the first episode of his space adventure, and the forums seemed to only discuss the topic.

[Galaxy Exploration Diary: Black Star (1)]

The title of this episode indicated that it was the start of a new series. The editing of the opening of the show changed to the view of Short Horn Star, Juberly Hub, and an alien creature with a weird shape. A few minutes had passed, and viewers flooded the channel in an instant. Bun-hit-dog's Black Phantom show had built a solid, loyal fan base.

This trailer for the new series also garnered a lot of attention. It was the first show about space, and not only the players from Planet Aquamarine, even foreign players from other new planets were excited about the show. The view count rose exponentially, and within a few minutes, it almost broke the record for the highest view count in the past shows.

Bun-hit-dog was showered with attention, and his popularity was boosted once more; he was undoubtedly the top figure in the Galaxy film industry.

"What? There's actually an update!"

"What the hell! There are three million and two hundred people watching right now! Am I seeing this correctly?"

"I'm so excited!"

"Let me see what you've got, you foreign friend!"

Bun-hit-dog's large face then showed up on the screen. He used his disgusting voice and started the show. "Welcome to the Galaxy Exploration Diary. I am Bun-hit-dog. You might be wondering if something is missing. That's right, since I haven't had enough time, there won't be a poem to start off this episode."

Bullet comments instantly covered the screen.

"One can never be too careful."

"This host doesn't have any dignity."

"Screw your family."

For the first episode of the Black Star Series, Bun-hit-dog used a different editing method, which did not follow the previous format where he focused on informative content. He filmed the entire process of Han Xiao leading the players up to the Short Horn Star and then on to Juberly Hub, then he edited the video in the style of a movie. It gave up the informative tone that the previous show focused on. For this new show, there was barely any narration, and with some adjustment to the color of the scene, the audience had a new experience as if they were watching a TV series.

Because there was too much materials to use, Bun-hit-dog could not edit the size down. So, he directly changed the show to a video with a story, and the video was an hour long. After the success of his Black Phantom Series, Bun-hit-dog had become more motivated about trying new styles of film that had more artistic value, rather than limiting himself to informative content with a sarcastic tone. The change was evident, and he achieved great success.

As the video went on, the scene of space unfolded in front of audiences' eyes. In the unfathomable depths of space with all sorts of spaceships zooming around, the show was like a black hole, sucking in all the attention in to this beautiful scene. When Han Xiao appeared on the screen, the bullet comments went on a rampage again.

"Han Xiao finally showed up!"

"Suck everything out of Black Phantom!"

"Hugging Black Phantom is just a 100-meter sprint!"

"Han Xiao is my husbando, don't you dare touch my love!"

"Oh my. Black Phantom is now up in the heavens. There are no more boxes for me to open. I still need to gamble! I need to prove my true lineage!"

"Bro, just go sleep. You can find anything in your dreams."

The text on the bullet comments flew by, and there were quiet some fan girls in there, but it was unclear how many old uncles were in there as well.

Bun-hit-dog also edited in some interactions of the professional players. Of course, he had gotten their approval to use the footage first. These players had gotten to know each other as the days passed, and their relationship had become closer and closer. Their interactions were funny and entertaining, which also attracted a lot of fans to watch the show. Quite a number of fans of the professional players also sent out bullet comments.

Suddenly, the scavengers showed up, and Han Xiao and the players protected the spaceship. The bullet comments flooded the screen again, and all sorts of messages were there.

"Holy cow. In this new simulation of space travel, you can also kill monsters and get experience."

"Black Phantom is still so strong. He still owned the aliens like it was nothing."

"Seeing that Han Xiao is still wrecking everyone, I can now drop my worries."

In the journey to the Juberly Hub, the large space station made the viewers' jaws dropped. The video also came to an end there. In the last scene, Han Xiao led the players to the Mercenary Alliance, and everyone registered as a mercenary. As the camera zoomed in, it looked on the words 'Black Star Mercenary Group' and froze the frame for three seconds! The audience also stared at those words.

Then the screen turned black with three words—To be continued.

Bun-hit-dog had decided to cut the video there because he saw that there would be great potential for the Faction. Other than the leader, all the other members were players. The journey of an NPC leading the players to the world of adventure would definitely lure the interest of the audience.

And he was right. When the video ended, the audience was greatly unsatisfied, wanting to see more of the show, feeling the emptiness of not being able to watch a new episode.

The last three seconds of the show created great interest and curiosity of the name 'Black Star' in the hearts of the audience.

Of course, this episode hinted at the great potential storyline in the future.

"I can't wait for another episode!"

"I won't go anywhere until I see the next episode!"

"Ahhhh. I want to lock Bun-hit-dog in my basement as my slave to pump out more shows."

"Um... I think he would like that."

"Hey, what are you thinking? I'm ashamed of you dirty minded creatures."

The view count of this episode skyrocketed to an unprecedented level. The audience cheered, and the players who had not been chosen by Han Xiao were drowned in jealousy, hating themselves for not being able to last thirty seconds. The influence that this episode brought made the Galaxy Times add another section to their new show.

"A long time ago, we deduced that the storyline character had its own limit, where once they finished their storyline, they would turn into a nobody. However, this incident shows that we were completely wrong. [Black Phantom] Han Xiao... Oh, I mean [Black Star] Han Xiao proved us wrong. His activity was not limited by the level of the civilization. He headed deep into space and became the first man from Planet Aquamarine to explore the universe. This is his new arc!

"We thought that Han Xiao was only a character on Planet Aquamarine. From what we have seen now, everyone guessed wrong. He did not have only one war storyline. He has another more advanced main storyline on space exploration. Compared to other beginner planets, Planet Aquamarine's potential was limited, but after the rise of Han Xiao, he has opened a path to explore new territory and storylines.

"Black Star Han Xiao was not the main character of this planet!"

[Galaxy Times] was brave in recognizing its base mistake, and its honest attitude garnered a positive reaction from the viewers. The segment also boosted the popularity of Han Xiao and promoted his status to a level above the 'main character of a planet' to something even higher. This raised another question from the players.

How far could he go?

Han Xiao also saw the show, and the effect achieved what he wanted. The players looked up to him even more, which meant that Han Xiao was accepted at a deeper level in their hearts.

Thousands of players discussed frantically on the forums, and the heat of the topic did not stop.

However, no one would think that Bun-hit-dog's episode was not only popular for a short period of time. The show stayed relevant for much longer than people had thought. In the future, countless people would go back to this episode, which became known as...

The beginning of Black Star.

Chapter 335: Cheap Bait

The daily missions were the low-level missions. Once a faction's credibility rating had reached a certain level, daily hiring missions could no longer be used to gain credibility points. This ensured that faction's credibility rating reflected their actual capability.

120 points happened to be the first cutoff. This was the minimum to become an 'official' mercenary group, one that would actually attract potential clients.

The pro players had great efficiency. Their faction was able to gain 120 credibility points in two short days. Han Xiao then released the faction mission reward, with King Admiral, Hao Tian, and the Berserkers team captain, Yan Ran, being the top three contributors. The players whom Han Xiao had recruited were not just limited to the four big guilds, and he had also made sure to get people from the top-ranking gaming clubs and teams from the tournament, such as Thunder Storm and the Berserkers. Thunder Storm was alright. They even had the beauty, Rainy Kim, and was thus getting a decent amount of attention. The Berserkers, on the other hand, despite being a top-class battle team, did not have much of a presence. To be honest, Han Xiao would have completely forgotten about them had Yan Ran not made it to the top three this time.

Han Xiao gave those three additional rewards and also re-emphasized to the players that contributing to the faction would net them a lot of benefits. The additional reward was his newly produced [SIN – Type-A Carbon Life Form Radar (Helmet)]. It was something that could only be exchanged with 800 faction points and immediately invited the other players' envy.

Then, Han Xiao announced, "This helmet can greatly enhance your sight and function in many extreme environments..."

He explained the helmet's functions in a way that implied the necessity of this helmet for the future outbound missions.

The three winners quickly put on the helmet to test its features for themselves. The internal screen displayed all kinds of analyzed information of their surroundings such as energy density. They could even adjust the display themselves. The function of this item was clear to see, and it also gave decent protection for the head. It was an item that suited all player classes.

Frenzied Sword was close to Hao Tian, and he was able to borrow the helmet to test it out himself. After putting it on, he could not help but say, "It really is a good item."

After the others saw this, they also took turns putting on the helmet to see for themselves. They were then convinced that they had to earn this item in the future.

With the reward given for being the first batch of recruits along with the previous faction mission reward, all... most of the players had already accumulated 600 contribution points and were only 200 short of the helmet.

Han Xiao had set the price of the helmet to 800 points on purpose to bait the players' frustrated feelings. Being just short of being able to obtain the item would make them want to either do more missions or even give up their own items or even money in exchange for it.

Although it seemed like the players had been able to easily gain 600 contribution points, it was all just a strategy that Han Xiao had long been implementing whenever he dealt with the players. He converted the players' desire for an item into something of a physical value. The items that were available in his shop were cheap and reliable, and in combination with the allure of faction points, it meant that Han Xiao would be the go-to place whenever players wanted to spend their money.

The exchange rate of Enas to Faction contribution points that he had decided on for now was 50:100 for those with a Neutral status—which was 0 – 1,000 contribution points. So, in the players' mind, the helmet's value was 400 Enas. Now that they could buy it at twenty-five percent of the original price after using their contribution points to pay the rest, they felt like they were getting a huge bargain.

Half of the players had earned 1,500 Enas from the Short Horn Star raid and were itching to spend their money on something. The other half did not have a lot as they had only been doing some daily jobs. However, most of them decided to borrow from the other half out of desperation.

"We're all in the same line of work here. It's just a hundred. Are you actually not going to lend me that little money?"

"You're not gonna? Are you looking down on me?"

"Ayyy c'mon, we're all buddies here. We will definitely make more money in the future. You don't have to worry about me not paying you back. Where could I even run off to here? I will owe you a favor if you lend me some money."

After a chaotic scene, the last group of players was able to obtain their own helmets after getting into debt.

Of course, the Temple of God players were the most in debt, making Li Ge feel very bad.

With fifty or so customers, Han Xiao was able to make over 6,000 Enas in one go for all the helmets that he had made, so he was feeling very pleased with himself.

These helmets had been made with materials from Planet Aquamarine and actually cost next to nothing. The profit margin here was practically insane.

...

After their group of people arrived at the lobby of the Mercenary Alliance, Han Xiao got ready to open the interface to accept the jobs offered by the Sunil tribe. However, he realized that the lobby was a little odd today. A crowd of mercenaries was making a ruckus at one corner of the lobby.

Han Xiao was a curious person, so he walked over, only to see a short blue-skinned person get surrounded by the group of people. The person was wearing a fancy loose-fitting dress and had hard nail like hair, pointy ears, and no nose. The two eyes were shaped into a tight slit while the mouth was curved upside down with a naturally upset expression. This person was a Blue-Ni, and his appearance was akin to an emoji.

The impression that the other species had of the Blue-Nis was that they were very selfish, an opportunistic people. This particular Blue-Ni was some financial group's materials investigation member. He was there in person to hire mercenaries in order to save on the tiny processing fee that he would have had to pay if he had gone through the proper hiring channels.

This Blue-Ni was called Martin, and he was in the middle of introducing his job offer. "I am from a Materials Investigation team that is on its way to Planet Garton-791 for a three-day on-site investigation. We're looking to hire bodyguards. Each person will be paid 400 Enas, and you will be responsible of protecting our team members. You will have to clear out the investigation grounds of any beasts as well as perform reconnaissance in any dangerous areas. We're looking for groups with a credibility rating of at least 120..."

The surrounding mercenaries only showed cold faces at that. 400 Enas was not a very attractive reward. Moreover, this deal would be made in private instead of going through the official Mercenary Alliance channel. This meant that no records would be made in the system, and they would not be able to gain credibility points for completed the job. None of the surrounding mercenaries were bothered enough to take on the job.

Han Xiao's eyes flashed, and he checked his star map. *Garton-791 is close to the Sunil's home base. We could earn some cash on the way. Although the reward is only 400 Enas, if each of our fifty people can get it, it's still not too bad.*

It was only a lifeless planet, hence the name with the code. It was basically a planet exclusively for resource excavation.

Han Xiao pushed through the crowd, walked up to the Blue-Ni, and said, "Black Star Mercenary Group. Fifty people. Only group assignments for now."

"Let me check your credibility rating." Martin gave Han Xiao a quick scan with his eyes and was quite happy. He had finally found someone who would take up his offer after shouting there for half the day.

Han Xiao pulled up his mercenary information page and passed it to Martin.

When Martin saw that this mercenary group had reached the credibility rating requirement, he was overjoyed. However, his expression changed immediately when he scrolled further down the page. "You've never accepted any combat assignments?"

Black Star Mercenary Group's resume was filled with the daily jobs that could be completed in the hub. Many were cleaning missions. Normally, mercenaries would not even bother themselves with such jobs.

This resume gave Martin quite a shock. He had never seen such a noob 'mercenary group'.

Chapter 336: A Mechanic's Paradise

Han Xiao raised an eyebrow. "What's wrong here? We meet the Credibility Rating requirement, right?"

"I want warrior bodyguards, and all your records were filled with daily routines in Juberly Hub as if you are the janitor here," Martin said in a condescending tone. "Are you really qualified as a mercenary?"

Han Xiao frowned. "What do you mean?"

"You are not qualified for my job hiring." Martin waved his hand with annoyance. Even though he was very cheap, he did not lower his standards and wanted the best warrior that he could find with the cheapest price. The Blue-Ni's personality was always like this, cheap and greedy. Although the average rating of the strength for the Black Star Mercenary Group was class C, he did not trust their ability after reading through the records. If he spent money on useless mercenaries, the research team would be in great danger.

The mercenaries around all mocked Martin.

"You are offering only 400 Enas, such a choosing beggar."

"Have you never heard that you get what you pay for?"

"Ha, Blue-Ni."

Han Xiao ground his teeth. *Sigh, what are they blabbering about? It feels like they are helping Martin instead of me!*

Martin saw the opportunity and quickly pressured the price. "With this record, I can only offer 200 Enas per person."

"Farewell."

Han Xiao left without looking back. Martin's attitude irritated Han Xiao, and the Great Mechanic Han would never let others pressure him. It was fine if they did not take that job since there were so many other opportunities, so there was no need to beg in front of an annoying man.

He opened the Mercenary interface and found a few hiring requests from Sunils, all about the same event.

The homeland of Sunil had been destroyed. With the help of Godora, the civilization had moved to another planet filled with nature and forests. It had been renamed Planet Sunil.

Planet Sunil had a lot of wild beasts roaming around the planet. Most of the time, the beasts were passive. However, there was a stone that contained evil spirit deep below the ground of Planet Sunil, and it would turn the beasts on rampage once in every few years. Sunil's villages and cities would all be

affected. Every time, during this period, the warriors of Sunil working away from the planet would all return and protect their homeland while gathering more helpers.

The Sunils were a sad race. Originally, it had just been a civilization without interaction with other planets. It had been peaceful, and it had tried to develop into a better society. Unfortunately, they had been attacked by DarkStar. The Sunils had no way to fight back as the fleets from DarkStar repeatedly fired missiles and lasers at the land. The land was filled with screams and fire, which even drowned the desperation that people had.

DarkStar was a mortal enemy of Godora, and it was an active civilization in the Garton Galaxy. DarkStar had found a weakness in Godora's management and attacked the planets under the rule of Godora. Godora had no choice but to exhaust more resources to help the lower civilizations. If Godora ignored the suffering of those civilizations, then they would have lost the public's trust in their ability to control the Garton Galaxy.

As an evil faction, DarkStar had broken the intergalactic treaty [Space Civilization Constitution] long ago by attacking a less developed civilizations. Moreover, Shattered Star Ring was on the far end compared to other star systems. So, after destroying the worlds, DarkStar would always disappear in their region for a long time and avoid the declarations of war from other civilizations. DarkStar was like a shadow that slowly consumed the Garton Galaxy.

When the Godoran fleet arrived, the original planet of Sunil had already perished. The land was covered in lava, and the ground was cracked and destroyed. The ecosystem was lost, and only ten percent of the population survived. The technology of the Sunils was cut off from the past generations, and it had yet to be restored. The refugees had been moved to Planet Sunil with the help of Godora, and in the beginning, Godora had helped building the cities. It was only after living there for a few years that the people found out about the raging beasts.

Moving to another planet would take too much work. The first time that Godora offered help was because of moral reasons, but if the Sunils asked Godora for help again, they would feel that they were owing too much to Godora, so they could not ask them for help with this matter. Therefore, they decided to stay on the planet and fight off the monsters.

It was the period where the beasts became active again. These missions were requesting help to protect the homeland. The difficulty of the mission increased as the list went on, and there was no one who applied for the most dangerous mission. As for the easiest mission, they needed 120 Credibility Rating.

Han Xiao could only select the easiest mission, so he submitted the application. A short moment later, he got the reply and his application was successfully.

Mercenary Mission—[Defend the Forest City]

Mission Introduction: Another wave of the Catastrophe is looming over the Sunils. You have accepted the mission, and your duty is to protect the Forest City.

Mission requirement: Defend the Forest City.

Failing Condition: Fail to protect the Forest City.

Punishment of Failed Mission: -60 Credibility Rating

Reward: 500,000 experience, 1,800 Enas, +34 Credibility Rating, +3 Area Renown

Time Until Activation: 12 days

The Sunils called the period of beast attacks the 'Catastrophe', and the Forest City was the main city of the Sunils.

This was just a normal mission, but it was not all Han Xiao had in mind. The reason that he had accepted the mission was so that he could approach the Sunils with an appropriate identity. He had to activate the storyline mission by himself.

As one of the members, the players also got the mission in the mercenary group. Han Xiao put out the reward of the mission onto the reward for the faction mission. The players felt like they were getting double reward.

It was the first time that Black Star Mercenary Group had selected a battle-type mission, so the players were excited.

Han Xiao waved his arm.

"Let's go."

...

After three days, the group took a spaceship and arrived at Planet Sunil. From the universe, the planet was covered in green with white clouds floating above.

The spaceship shook violently as it descended into the atmosphere, following the directed path and heading toward the forest. Han Xiao then saw an empty plain, and a city was located in the center. That was the new homeland of Sunil—Forest City.

The spaceship threw down the cabin. Han Xiao felt a bit of weightless for a second, and landed safely on the ground.

Whoosh!

The door slid open, and they were in a military base. Han Xiao stepped out of the door, and he quickly noticed teams of Sunil soldiers and armored trucks protecting the base.

[Sunil—Defensive Soldier Armor] was the armor that Sunil soldiers wore. The armor was dark gray, and the armor plate was extremely thick, which could block heavy bullets from machine guns. In matching armor, the soldiers looked like a true unit. The armor suit's weight was almost a ton, and it had equipment that supported the movement. There were also machine guns with large caliber, small rocket launchers on the shoulder, and other melee weapons.

Sunil was a pure technology civilization, and after a technological civilization reached a certain stage, they would always create armor for individual soldiers. Different civilizations had different styles of armor. For the Sunils, the armor was categorized into Private class and Corporal class. It was also separated into defense style, offense style, scouting style, etc.

In fact, Han Xiao knew that Sunil armor had an even more powerful class called 'Commander Class Armor'. However, it had been destroyed back in the attack, and the technology was lost forever.

Other than the armor technology, there were large mechanical weapons, vehicles, and a few light spaceships.

With all the machinery lying around, Han Xiao's eyes were shining, and he was looking forward to this place. A civilization that leaned toward pure technological progress was the best foundation for mechanic class, and this was one of the reasons that he wanted to come to Planet Sunil. The technological level of Sunil could bring great benefits to Han Xiao.

Han Xiao was attracted to the subclass of Sunil, and it was related to machinery. It was a rare subclass could dramatically improve the progress of Han Xiao's main class! For Han Xiao, this was the best choice for him to complete his class.

The players also gawked at the scene around them. Han Xiao had described the tragedy of the Sunils to them, so they had thought that it was a civilization on the brink of destruction. They had been expecting nothing but poor conditions and lagging technology, but the scene of this iron forest proved them wrong.

Dong, dong, dong!

The sound of heavy metal got louder as a soldier with heavy armor approach to the group. His armor was certainly better than that of normal troops. It was also covered in red and white, which symbolized that this was Corporal class armor. The approaching Sunil seemed to be an officer as his face was stone cold, sending the aura of a soldier.

"I am B12 Defense Team Captain Neville. I have already read through your information. Black Star, you will be the 1,432th mercenary to join us. I hereby represent the Sunil people in welcoming you to our world. The Catastrophe has not started yet, so please follow me to the mercenary resting area. Then I will assign you a specific mission."

Chapter 337: Green Knight, the Warrior who Had Returned Home

Neville kept quiet the entire way. Sunil soldiers were not known for their words, and everyone had on a grave expression, as if they did not even have time for idle chatter. They were all focused on their own missions. The metallic smell of the soldiers' armor filled the air, accompanied by an air of silence. The only sound that could be heard was the tanks that passed by occasionally.

Sunils used to be known as a civilization that embraced life; their people loved art and culture. However, everything had changed when the disaster struck. The survivors had been forced to throw away their previous identities and harden themselves. This change was also reflected in the structures they built.

Orderly fortress-like steel buildings lined the side of the road that they travelled on. It was as if they were living on a grid.

With Neville leading them, Han Xiao's group arrived at the resting area, where a large number of mercenaries had gathered, stirring up a ruckus.

Before the Catastrophe waves struck, the mercenaries were all required to get a detailed briefing.

Neville stepped onto a platform and explained in a grave voice, "The forward scouts have discovered increasing signs of the rampaging beasts. You're here as our hired mercenaries, and we hope that you can all work together to help us overcome this obstacle."

After a short speech, Neville got straight to the main point. "This planet's underground contains pockets of Prophecy Stones. Prophecy Stones can corrupt the souls of those around them, and the entire planet's mineral veins have been altered by these stones. This is the reason behind the beasts' berserk and extremely aggressive nature. However, this isn't the main problem of the Catastrophe. The energy contained within the Prophecy Stones will be released once every year in 'waves'. This is the root problem behind the beasts' sudden outburst.

"For unknown reason, this year's wave has arrived half a year earlier. Our specialized observation department predicts that the Catastrophe waves will explode out in full force in around seven to thirteen days. Our enemy is every single beast on this planet. During the waves in the past, we only had to deal with smaller beasts during the initial three to six days. Then, as the battle reached the tenth day or so, the frequency and intensity of the beast raids would increase. The last five days would be the most dangerous period during the wave. By then, most of our vehicles and equipment would be damaged, and most our troops depleted. The beasts we would face then were also the strongest ever, which had been attracted from far away by the dense smell of blood due to the days of bloody battles..."

At this moment, a mercenary interrupted him and said, "You have tanks, airplanes, and even space battleships. Wouldn't killing these beasts be more like a slaughter?"

Neville gave the man a cold glance. "You will understand when the wave comes."

Soon after, Neville turned on the projector and started introducing the different beast types one by one. After a few short glances, Han Xiao was already able to tell that the beasts on Planet Sunil were leagues stronger than the ones on Planet Aquamarine. The Prophecy Stones had already been on this planet for countless years, and the energy that they have accumulated was enough to even affect the beasts' evolution over the years. The beasts on Planet Sunil were abnormally bloodthirsty, and they pushed the rule of 'survival of the fittest' to an extreme.

Maple Moon was curious. "Since the beasts are the enemies, why couldn't they just kill all of the beasts before they get stronger from the Catastrophe?"

"Maybe it's to maintain the ecosystem," said Frenzied Sword hesitantly.

Shaking his head, Bun-hit-dog disagreed. "But this is threatening even the continuity of their people. Why would they care about the ecosystem at this point?"

"Can they even completely exterminate the beasts?"

The players started discussing the topic among themselves. They each had their own opinions toward the Sunils' crisis.

After going through over a hundred types of beasts, Neville sent out this information to each of the mercenaries. The mercenaries were then assigned combat roles depending on the job assignment that they had taken on beforehand.

The Sunils kept a lot of mining and other resource collecting outposts in the wild. However, all of the Sunil people would abandon those locations and return to Forest City during the Catastrophe. They grouped all their forces into a single area to decrease the chance of getting sneak-attacked by the beasts.

With the main city as the final barrier, Forest City had a total of five walls that circled the city. Han Xiao and the others were stationed at the second last wall and were tasked with protecting scout planes and the larger battleships from the ground. They also served as a rapid-response reinforcement group for the frontlines.

Forest City was decked out with defensive infrastructure, and building everything around a main city was only a tactical decision. It was not meant to be a place for a last stand or anything of the sort, as the underground of the city was riddled with escape tunnels. The Sunil people could flee through the tunnels or even be evacuated by the air transports at a sign of danger, and this meant that it was impossible for them to 'lose' the main city. However, there were many powerful beasts in both the sky and under the ground, so this would only be a last resort.

The two most dangerous jobs were the forward reconnaissance units and frontline combat troops. Sunil was a planet that was covered by dense forests, resulting in many blind spots for observation from air, which made reconnaissance on the ground crucial. However, the dangers of venturing outside the city walls during a Catastrophe was obvious. On the other hand, the frontline troops' task was to kill or wound as many beasts as they could before the horde reached the city walls. Their survival rate was close to nil.

That was why those two jobs were never taken on by the mercenaries. All of the frontline combat assignments were taken on by the Sunil warriors.

The individual mercenaries were led away by an officer to reinforce his position. Neville brought along Han Xiao's group of people to walk them through and familiarize them with the defensive layout of the area.

Time quickly passed, and soon, dusk came.

The mercenaries were provided with accommodation in the military base. However, Han Xiao needed to enter the city to complete the subclass requirements. He found Neville by himself and said, "I want to register to enter the city."

"Why would you enter the city?" Neville raised an eyebrow.

"I have some private matters to deal with. I have a friend in town to visit."

"No." Neville straightforwardly declined. To prevent any unwanted accidents, mercenaries are never allowed into the city; you are only allowed to stay in the base outside of combat.

“You cannot use this reason to enter the city. However, your friend can come out to visit you.”

Han Xiao was not sure what to do. The Storyline character whom he wanted to meet did not know him at all. There was no way that he would come out to visit him.

Did he really have to sneak in?

He had the face-disguising tool and his Night Stalker subclass. The chances of sneaking in successfully were quite high... right?

Huuu!

Just then, a gust of wind descended from the sky, and several beams of light landed on the ground. An airship hovered some distance in midair and released down a spiraling set of stairs. One Sunil Super after another walked down from the ship. They were all Sunil mercenaries who had been working hard to earn money away from the planet and had all returned to fulfil their duties to defend their home on the eve of the Catastrophe.

The Sunil soldiers who were on the ground all raised their heads and looked at these returning warriors with reverence and gratitude. They even performed a perfectly coordinated military salute.

Every time the Sunil warriors returned home, they would be welcomed back and treated as homecoming heroes.

Han Xiao focused his eyes and saw a familiar face. He then shouted, “Hey! Lerden!”

‘Green Knight’ Lerden was among the disembarking crowd, and he turned over after hearing his name called. It took him a while, but Lerden remembered that the other person was someone whom he had fought with. With his body supported in midair with blue flames that were shooting out of his feet, he landed in front of Han Xiao and asked skeptically, “Why are you here?”

“Black Star is one of the mercenaries that we recruited.” Neville gave a salute and hurriedly answered for Han Xiao.

“So, you’re a mercenary too.” Lerden suddenly realized that fact.

“Yeah, I only registered recently. I hurried over when I heard that your people were facing a crisis. I never thought that I would be fighting alongside you.” Han Xiao made sure to make good use of this opportunity. “I have friend in town that I would like to visit. Could you do help me?”

“If he’s your friend, then there’s no problem,” Neville added.

Lerden thought that as the two had already fought alongside each other once, even though he did not really know him, he felt like Han Xiao was not a bad person. Also, he was quite powerful. There was no harm in doing him this favor. Lerden then nodded and said, “Sure. I will accompany you into town.”

“Thanks.” Han Xiao smiled. It sure was convenient to have met someone that he was familiar with. One sentence, and the problem was solved. He no longer had to worry about taking the risk to sneak in.

...

It had been a while since they saw each other, and Lerden's bionic body parts had already been repaired. Han Xiao passed the security station with Lerden, along with the other Sunil Supers, who also wanted return to the city after returning to the planet. Han Xiao and Lerden followed behind this group of people.

Huuu!

Sounds of cheers suddenly exploded from both sides of the road. There were posters of the Sunil Supers that still adorned the walls of the city, and the Sunil people rushed out to welcome their heroes home.

Chapter 338: The Ordnance Engineer

The upcoming Catastrophe instilled horror in people's hearts, but the people on the street currently had broad smiles on their faces, as if the Supers had driven off their fear.

"Under regulation, I need escort you into the city," Lerden said.

"It seems like your civilization really worships the Supers," Han Xiao commented.

"It's more like gratitude rather than worship," Lerden replied calmly. "After our race faced sudden changed and migrated to this planet, we still don't have enough power to stand on our own. The efficiency of resource gathering is too slow for us to sustain our consumption, and we needed to purchase a lot of materials from the galaxy. Therefore, our expenses are greater than our production.

"In order for us to survive, Supers that are strong enough will head into the universe and become mercenaries. Most of their rewards are sent home, and it is the main source of economic income. There was no way for this civilization to build enough weapons to fight the Catastrophe."

Han Xiao had a better understanding of the situation. The Sunil was a civilization in crisis. They could only temporarily rely on strong individuals, such as the Supers, to support the entire economy of the race. That was why the people treated the Supers like heroes, and one held great honor if one was a super.

Han Xiao still remembered that Lerden was extremely cheap. In reality, Lerden gave all his income to the race, so he tried to spend as little as possible, all to contribute more to the race.

"It will bring disastrous effects if this civilization keeps on relying on the Supers."

Lerden nodded. "That is indeed true, but we do not have any other choice. In the end, it is all because of the Catastrophe, which is slowing down our recovery. We have to split significant portions of our funds to build weapons and military equipment to defend against the Catastrophe. Our development in infrastructure and industries has been held back because of all the extra expenses that won't help the economy.

"If we don't solve problem of the Catastrophe, we cannot break away from this vicious cycle, and our civilization would always suffer till the end of time.

"We tried a lot of ways to solve the problems, and we even considered killing all the beasts, but that is worst option. Not only is it impossible to deal with, once the food chain is destroyed, the entire planet

will face an inevitable death. Thus, we chose another way—trying to excavate the Prophecy Stones and deal with the cause of Catastrophe once and for all. The project has been going on for years, and we are cleansing the stones bit by bit. One day, the Psychic Current will disappear, and the race will never have to face the tragedy of the Catastrophe again...”

Lerden’s face let out a sense of hope. “There’s always light at the end of the tunnel.”

Han Xiao had a decent impression of the Sunils. They were a resilient race with the Supers carrying more and more responsibility in order for the civilization to live on. They had no complaints.

What a pity... Han Xiao sighed as he remembered the fate of the Sunils in the previous world.

The Supers spread out after they reached the city and went back to their home. The crowd also slowly scattered.

Han Xiao used his distorted memories and finally reached an alleyway after circling around. He stopped in front of a black narrow door, and a wine glass was hung on the sign.

“A bar? The person you want to visit is here?” Lerden frowned.

“Do you have problem with that?”

“... No.”

Lerden remained expressionless. He looked down on people who spent their money for leisure as he thought that it was being wasteful of their money and their life.

After all, he had lost his right to enjoy his life.

They pushed open the door and walked into the bar. The bar was dim, and there were not any customers. The city was in an emergency state, so no one had to guts to get drunk in a bar. Han Xiao walked in front of the counter, and a soft snore came from the back of the counter.

The Great Mechanic Han looked over and saw a man sleeping with his head on the counter. He was well asleep alongside a pile of empty bottles.

Bang!

Han Xiao smacked the counter as hard as he could and shouted, “Customer is here! Wake up!”

The man’s fingers moved at first, and he let out a long breath from his nose. He then finally stood up with the stench of alcohol oozing from his body. His eyes were lifeless, and he looked like he was only half awake. The man then asked, “What do you want?”

“Two signatures.”

“One is enough,” Lerden interjected.

The man yawned. “Pay first.”

Han Xiao took out his communicator and prepared to pay. The man suddenly laughed out loud and said, “My dear, you are not trying to pay with Enas, right? This is a small business, so we only accept local currencies.”

Lerden frowned. He usually spent his time in the galaxy, so the Sunil currency was not worth much for him. He reached for his pocket and wanted to pay for Han Xiao, but at the same time, Han Xiao laughed. "I don't have Sunil currency, can I use another method of payment?"

The man did not look at Han Xiao and reached for another bottle. "Like what?"

"A name."

The man frowned, looking annoyed. He glared at Han Xiao and replied, "I don't have time for a game. Get out if you are not paying."

"Delvis," Han Xiao said in a calm voice, but it was as loud as thunder in the ears of the man.

The man froze as he tried to take a sip from the bottle. The relaxed atmosphere vanished, and he became expressionless, as if he was not drunk at all. The dizziness in his eyes disappeared instantly, and he stared right in Han Xiao's eyes.

He quietly put down the bottle and said, "Wait for a moment, I need to wash my face."

The man walked away from the counter and went to the bathroom.

Only Han Xiao and Lerden were in the bar, and Lerden said, "You don't even know him, so you are not visiting someone you've met before."

"I know his brother, that's why I decided to visit him," Han Xiao explained.

The drunk man was Herlous, and Delvis was his older brother. The subclass that Han Xiao was interested in was called [Ordnance Engineer]. For players, this subclass was extremely rare, and there was a method among the Sunils to change his class. The item for activation was called [Delvis' Journal].

Delvis was a famous ordnance engineer before the Sunil race was attacked. He created a lot of inventions for military equipment, and he wrote all his thoughts in his journal. After DarkStar attacked, Delvis died in the battle, and the journal was handed to Herlous.

Han Xiao wanted to borrow the journal from Herlous to change his class.

After a while, Herlous got back to the counter with his head washed. He was a middle-aged Sunil. His skin was light blue, and there were a few wrinkles on the side of his forehead, far fewer than one might expect of a hundred-and-fifty-year-old. Other than that, he was almost the same as a Super.

Herlous opened up a bottle and brought it to Han Xiao. "I don't know how you found me, but my brother's name is worth a bottle. I brew this myself."

The bottle was covered with white smoke, and the smell of alcohol penetrated their noses. Alcohol made by Sunils was usually made from the leaves of a certain tree, which had a bitter taste. After a sip, Han Xiao felt the spiciness on his tongue.

"I am just a mechanic. I have heard your brother's name, and I want to borrow his journal."

"Is that it?" Herlous raised his eyebrows and tried to get more information.

“That’s it for now.” Han Xiao laughed and glanced at Lerden. “Do you think I have another purpose?”

Herlous heard the obscure response and asked in a cold voice, “Do you think this is threatening?”

“No, no. I am being friendly.” Han Xiao smiled. “But for a nice person like yourself, you won’t reject this small request, right?”

On the side, Lerden did not understand what was happening. Were they still speaking with a real language? Why could he not understand?

Herlous hesitated for a while, but his expression showed that he had given up. He went into the house and came out after a while with the journal in his hand. He slammed it on the desk and said, “Leave when you are done.”

Han Xiao touched the journal, and the interface popped out a hint.

You obtained [Delvis’s Journal].

He had finally obtained it! Han Xiao suppressed his excitement as he opened the diary. He acted like he understood everything, but the journal was written in the Sunil language, which looked like cursive English. However, it did not matter if he don’t know the language. The interface showed a progress bar, and as long as he finished ‘reading’ the book, he could change his class.

Through the normal mission, one needed to be extraordinarily lucky to obtain the journal. The procedure to obtain the journal was complex, since no one knew the identity of Herlous. Most people would not think that a stranger working in a bar was that man. Most of the time, the players would only find out about the journal by becoming friends with Herlous and drinking with him. Only then would Herlous would start talking about his brother when he was drunk.

However, Han Xiao knew the information, so he directly cut to the end without going through the complicated procedure.

Lerden was surprised and asked, “Can you read Sunil?”

Han Xiao closed the book and said, “I can’t”

“Then why are you reading it?” Herlous stared at Han Xiao with his eyes wide open.

“Just think of it as me paying my respects to your brother. Thanks for the drink.”

Han Xiao put down the journal and smiled as he turned away.

“What a weird guy. Don’t disturb me again!” Herlous shouted from behind Han Xiao.

“Maybe I will.” Han Xiao looked back playfully.

After walking out of the bar, Han Xiao opened up the interface and looked at the new hint. He was in a good mood. He had finally gotten the subclass, and the explosive amount of experience points could finally be used!

You obtained the class [Ordnance Engineer].

Chapter 339: The Rush Strat

[Ordnance Engineer] Lv.1

+1 END, +3 INT, +1.5% Machinery Affinity, +2 Free Attribute points, +1 Potential point.

You acquired the skill [War-machinery Mastery].

You acquired the skill [Quick War-machinery Repairs].

There was a chain of effect between Ordnance Engineer and Mechanic class. The skills and attributes perfectly fit with the Mechanic class, and this subclass was equivalent to half of the main class. The levels used for this type of subclass were used at their maximum potential value.

Engineer-type classes focused on intelligence, and they did not provide any combat abilities. However, being an Engineer was more valuable compared to having some additional combat skills. Ordnance meant war machinery such as turrets, armor, shields, and so on. This subclass would provide additional buffs when creating and using war machinery.

Han Xiao pulled out the stack of experience that he had accumulated and spent it all on those two skills.

[War-machinery Mastery] Lv.10: When using war machinery, get an additional 18% attack and defense bonus.

[Quick War-machinery Repairs] Lv.10: When repairing war machinery, the efficiency increases by 24%. During the repairing process, randomly restore 3% – 6% durability. The chances depend on INT. No maximum occurrence.

The effects on these two skills were simple yet brutal, and they were extremely useful for the current Han Xiao. However, the main reason that he wanted to obtain the subclass was the ability unlocked after maxing it out.

He directly used 90 million experience points to max out the subclass.

[Ordnance Engineer] has reached Lv.10 (Max.).

+1 END, +3 INT, +1.5% Machinery Affinity, + 2 Free Attribute points, +1 Potential point.

In total, this class gave him 10 Endurance points, 30 Intelligence points, 15% Machinery Affinity, 20 Free Attribute points, and 10 Potential points. There would also be additional Potential points, including the reward, after maxing out the levels of the skills.

Currently, Han Xiao's intelligence attributes reached 391. If he used all his Free Attribute points, it would surpass the requirement of his class change—400.

Ordnance Engineer was maxed out, and just like the Night Stalker, he also got a new ability.

You acquire the skill [Military Modification].

You acquire the ability [Military Machinery Enlightenment].

[Military Modification] Lv.10: When creating or modifying war machinery, the status of equipment increases by 8% – 14%. (Note: The buff is based on the original status and does not include statuses from other buffs.)

This is the same as having another power boost for the machinery. Han Xiao nodded and looked at the other ability, which he valued the most.

[Military Machinery Enlightenment]: You have been enlightened. When building new war machinery, +30% success rate when building a new production line, +10% Quality of Production Line, -18% resource costs, and +20% speed of production.

Productivity was the essence of this subclass.

A mechanic had multiple stages in their development, and each of them was indicated by certain benchmarks. One of them was fast building while fighting, which was one of the reasons the mechanic became powerful in Version 3.0. As for the assembly line, it was the mark of the later stages. Mass production was a vital step to develop the most explosive, most brutal, and most costly tactic, which was known as the Rush Strat.

For normal mechanics, they would use the best weapons made out of the best materials. For mass production, the equipment created had low quality. Although the difference in quality would increase between normal Mechanics and Mechanics that used mass production, the latter could stack up an uncountable amount of machinery and suppress the enemy with numbers.

Mechanics and Mages were two powerful classes in the later stage. The Rush Strat from the Mechanic and the Summon Rush Strat could turn a one-on-one battle to survival against a zombie horde. These two battle styles ruined the game experience as exceedingly few players could win against them.

However, even though these two strategies were strong, the cost was obscene. The cost of building one single army was detrimental to the players. Moreover, at the later stages of the game, all players had the ability to fight against an army. So, although the Rush Strat could overpower the opponent, there would also be an unneglectable cost in their own army. If they joined the competitive scene, with matches after matches, the combat ability of the army would also decrease, and after ten or twenty matches, the player would use up everything they had.

And if two used the Rust Strat, then everything became simple. With one team-fight between two armies, both sides would lose all their forces in one match.

Therefore, in the previous world, the Rush Strat was seen as a myth. One hardly found these players. So, if anyone was such a player, they would treasure that moment, since the meta could change at any time.

Han Xiao had analyzed the situation. Because the players were in a weaker stage, he could deal with them with ease. However, the players would be deadlier in the later stage, and different sorts of powers would arise. So, Han Xiao did not want to take risk, and the Rush Strat was the obvious choice.

What, the Rush Strat was costly?

In the eyes of the Great Mechanic Han, money was not a problem.

Especially since he had obtained the ability to reduce cost, Han Xiao had no worries about costs and money in the future.

Han Xiao had a long-term plan for his development. Even though he had not learned the knowledge to create assembly lines, he had gotten all the important abilities.

Level 80 would mark another class change, and the class advancement mission required 60 million experience. Han Xiao let out a sigh—it was a piece of cake for him.

In Version 2.0, the maximum level was 90, but that of the current version was level 60. Players in Version 1.0 did not know anything about class advancement missions. Because they could not break the barrier, the players had to experience two class advancement missions at level 60 and level 80. The class advancement at level 60 would make a huge, but not so much for the one at level 80.

The 'piece of cake' was just in the standards of the Great Mechanic Han. The players would have to spend an enormous amount of time to accumulated 60 million experience points. Han Xiao spent 90 million experience to go from level 70 to level 80, while the players had nothing in their pocket, so they could only grind level by level.

On top of that, the class advancement did not give back anything after paying the experience, so the players all wanted to quit.

Han Xiao was in a good mood, and he thought to himself, *I only need two more class advancement knowledges. If I can get enough money from this mission, then I should just head back home, settle down, find a nice wife, and have kids... Yikes. That sure sounds boring. Well, I can change class and get a new main class.*

After leaving the bar, Han Xiao and Lerden wandered in the Forest City.

The sky was filled with stars, and the gentle light from the stars rested on their shoulders. Even though this planet was a dangerous place, it had magnificent views.

The green mountains and forests loomed far away, the rustling sound of leaves echoed as the wind passed by, and the galaxy that was hanging on the night sky glowed. Han Xiao could see why the Sunils might choose this planet for their new environment.

With a shake of his head, Han Xiao recalled a quote. *The most dangerous things often has the most beautiful appearance.*

“Where are you going?” Lerden asked.

“Just walking around.”

“Then let’s get out of here and head to the base.”

“Is there nothing for you to do here?” Han Xiao asked. “Like going back home?”

Lerden shook his head. “I don’t have a family.”

Han Xiao stroke his shin and said, “What mission do you have?”

“Frontline combat.”

“That’s the most dangerous job. You Supers had already given your money earned from your blood, sweat, and tears to the race, and you still have to go on such a dangerous mission. No wonder you are viewed as heroes.”

Lerden’s eyes leaked his confused emotion. He was about to open his mouth, but he stopped himself and shook his head.

Han Xiao saw everything in his eyes. He was glad that he had gotten the information that he wanted.

I didn’t guess it wrong. The storyline for Sunil already exists...

The mercenary job was not the main goal for this trip; Han Xiao had another goal.

Chapter 340: The Catastrophe Has Arrived

Lerden left to join the forward reconnaissance forces on his own, and Han Xiao could only sit and wait inside the military base. However, he had already met his objective for the subclass, so there was no longer any need to enter the city again for now.

As the date of the Catastrophe approached, the effect of the waves became more and more apparent to everyone on the planet. A blurry voice would suddenly speak out from the back of people’s minds. The voice somehow sounded foreign and familiar at the same time. However, whenever one tried hard to understand what the voice was saying, it would immediately disappear like it had never been there in the first place.

When the frequency of the spiritual whispers started to match the wavelength of a living being's brain, it would cause a ripple of emotions through their mind. The mercenaries were no exception and were all getting aggravated due to this phenomenon. The Sunil soldiers, on the other hand, treated this like any other day and carried about their business with their usual determination.

That was the mental disruption that the Prophecy Stones were capable of. More intelligent creatures would have a better chance of suppressing it and not being affected much by it. However, whenever the 'waves' exploded, the intensity of these disruptions would increase, and everyone would be able to experience what the beasts had been going through every day. Living in such conditions all the time meant that a tiny push would be more than enough to nudge one over the line of sanity. In other words, the 'waves' were the spark that would bring about the Catastrophe.

Woo! Woo!

That day, ear-piercing sirens sounded throughout every single corner of the base. Everyone was already familiar with what that sound signified—enemies had attacked!

The atmosphere in the base suddenly grew tense. The Sunil soldiers ran back to their respective positions in uniform steps, and the mercenaries were also able to quickly find their way back into their groups due to the previous days' training.

Different kinds of tanks and armored vehicles were all started up, and a dizzying number of anti-gravity turrets floated into the air.

Hum!

Nine Galactic-class battleships slowly took off into the sky, causing ripples of sand and wind to spread around the area. They were like nine fortresses in the air that guarded the skies above Forest City, each facing a different direction.

Han Xiao suddenly lowered his head as he noticed that a few small rocks were starting to jump around on the ground.

The ground only slightly shook at first, but the intensity grew stronger and stronger until, eventually, the sound of massive footsteps reverberated throughout the base. One could hear the bone-chilling roars and shrieks of different beasts from every single part of the surrounding forests.

Trees were being parted by the beast hordes as if giant snakes were slithering toward them, and they were about to make contact with the border of the plains around the city.

Something was about to charge out. Countless people were so nervous that they could not only gulp in fear, their sweat constantly dripping down their foreheads.

"Roar!"

The beasts' roars were like thunder, and the trees toppled in swaths to reveal beast hordes as far as the eye could see!

The beasts trampled over each other and charged over as if they had gone mad. It was as if a tide of darkness was washing toward them, quickly filling up their vision.

Just this scene alone terrified the hearts of many of those who were present.

“Open fire!” an officer desperately yelled.

Boom!

At the next moment, the countless artillery installations around the defensive circle all opened fire at once, causing ear-shattering explosions all over.

The Catastrophe had arrived!

...

Forest City had a total of five main defensive walls. The first consisted of massive numbers of mines and automated turrets. According to the battle plan, this section would coordinate with the supporting fire from the back to disperse the monster hordes. The second consisted of many fortresses, ditches, traps, and electric walls, all to slow down the movements of the beasts, allowing the anti-gravity turrets, main batteries, as well as the battleships to deal significant damages to the beast hordes.

The third was the iron defense line. Squadron after squadron of armored vehicles and defense teams lined this section. When the beasts entered this part of the defenses, the battle would enter its close-quarter stages, and the defense teams would unleash the fury of their metal weapons on the beasts here. This was also where Neville was stationed.

The last two sections were full of artillery formations. Its purpose was to provide supporting fire for the frontline forces. The rapid-response troops and other reinforcements were also stationed at the second last section. During the calmer periods in the Catastrophe, personnel from the last section would carry out repairs and first-aid work for the troops.

Black Star Mercenary Group was stationed at the second last section. They were assigned to a long-range heavy armored division, with the code name G7. Three Fortress-class main battle tanks served as the core firepower of the formation. These tanks could attach themselves onto the ground and transform into a single gigantic turret. They were also equipped with eighteen mobile heavy artilleries and a decent number of ground troops that moved with the tanks.

As a mechanic, Han Xiao’s job was to control one of those heavy artilleries. He had only one mission—fire the canon! Most people with the mechanic class were assigned to similar roles in the base. With their special affinity and machinery-related abilities, they could increase the damage output of these weapons. Han Xiao was of no exception. With a crisis-level event such as the Catastrophe, it was basically impossible for individuals to influence the battle by themselves, with only a few exceptions.

Boom!

Artillery shells drew arcs over the multiple perimeters and covered the sky before they smashed into the distant beasts, causing red mist to bloom all over the hordes. Flesh and bones of the beasts were blown apart, causing a horrifying scene.

The black tide was momentarily stopped. However, the beasts in the back were not afraid at all and charged over the broken bodies of their brethren, forcing their way through the storm of artillery shells and explosions.

The smell of gunpowder and gore mixed together and wafted into the military formations with a gust of hot wind due to the many explosions.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Han Xiao could feel the tremendous recoil every time that he opened fire with his artillery cannon. He fired shot after shot as he watched the shells draw a blazing arc before landing in the middle of the beasts thousands of meters away, blooming like an orange flower in the middle of the black tide.

He was starting to feel the thrill of freely firing this massive piece of artillery!

Line and line of notifications kept popping on his interface, notifying Han Xiao of all the experience points that he was gaining from the battle. Although using borrowed Sunil weaponry would automatically cause some experience to be reduced, Han Xiao was doing this mainly to calculate how much experience the players would be able to get out of this battle. Moreover, being able to participate in a battle of this scale excited the players to no end. It made them feel like they were part of a historic moment, and they contributed as best as they could.

The black tide was stopped short at the first perimeter. The blanket of covering fire from the back covered every single inch of ground that the beasts were on, and they could hardly advance without leaving behind rivers of their own blood.

A newbie mercenary, who was firing his assigned artillery next to Han Xiao, said casually, "So, the Catastrophe isn't a big deal. The beasts can't even get in."

Han Xiao gave him a glance, but he did not say anything. This greenhorn most likely did not pay attention to when the Sunils briefed them on the beast hordes. This was only the first wave and only consisted of the smaller-sized beasts. The largest ones right now were not even taller than ten meters. Based on the information that they had been given, these beasts were only the appetizers. The nightmare was still to come.

The artillery bombardment lasted four whole hours before slowing. The support troops quickly rushed through the battlefield to resupply the combat troops. Flamethrower units were also sent out to burn away all the blood and gore on the plains to prevent any disease or sickness from spreading. The soldiers were also replaced by a new shift. Each position had a pre-assigned shift cycle. It was impossible for any soldier to last through a high-intensity battle such as this one without rest.

As Han Xiao also walked away from his artillery platform to rest, engines could be heard above his head. A new squadron of scout planes had taken off. The forward reconnaissance and combat troops had long gone into the dense forests. The dangers that they faced were many times higher than the defensive troops around the city, and their operations would be carried out under the constant threat of death. They were all alone like a tiny ship floating on the ocean during a tsunami.

Not long after, the forward reconnaissance sent back information. The next wave of beasts was about to arrive. The new shift of soldiers got ready in their positions in wait for the enemy.

The previous scene replayed itself. However, the black tide was able to inch ever closer to the outer perimeter this time. Just then, the fighter planes took off and blanketed the plains with explosions from

their guided missiles. Fire and explosions once again engulfed the hordes. The Sunil fighters were small and agile. The propellers on the fighters' wings had a similar design to the Amphiptere's flight assistance propellers. Han Xiao was able to tell at a glance that these fighters were extremely suitable for fast-paced air combat.

The enemies were still far away, and although the waves seemed like they reached all the way to the horizon, the surrounding troops did not appear to be frightened. The distance between them and the beasts along with the steel fortresses around them gave them a false sense of security.

The Sunil soldiers, on the other hand, had faces full of worry and doubt.

At this moment, a few dark dots appeared above the horizon. The flying beasts were quickly approaching. There were smaller beasts that were not even a meter long as well as medium size beasts that had a wingspan of several meters among them. They looked ferocious and were not like anything the mercenaries had ever seen. Some of the beasts looked like giant cockroaches.

The information they gave us stated that flying beasts wouldn't appear until three days into the Catastrophe. It seems like they had arrived early.

Just as this thought flashed across Han Xiao's mind, the G7 commander shouted out a new command.

"Switch to flak shells and adjust your aim. Fire at the sky!"

The artillery squadrons followed the order and blew open the sky in the distant, causing bloody bodies to rain down.

The fighter planes flew to a higher elevation to shake off the aerial beasts and launched missiles that drew orange arcs through the air.

The fighter planes were equipped with a simple energy barrier. The first wave of aerial beasts was only capable of using their sharp claws and teeth and were unable to do much other than make screeching noises as they scratched at the barriers. The fighter planes dashed in and out of the beast swarms, looking like medieval knights that charged through infantry units.

This battle was already on the scale of a massive surface battle. Time seemed to pass by quickly amid all the intense fighting.

At first, the mercenaries fought in a laid-back manner. However, after three short days, as the beasts increased in number and size, they could not laugh anymore. The continuous fighting had started to draw out the fatigue from everyone.

Han Xiao did his best to fulfil his own responsibilities and played the role of a gear in a giant war machine.

On the fourth day, enemies that could threaten the safety of the inner perimeters appeared.

The surface of the ground rocked around like waves, as a group of beasts that could dig and maneuver around underground smashed into the reinforced steel wall of the third section and broke out of the ground. This was the first time that the rear troops had ever seen the beasts at such close distance.

The ground-burrowing beasts' appearance signaled the start of the close-quarters combat. The Supers who had been waiting behind the third perimeter could finally make use of their powers.

The wall of steel and machinery at the third perimeter finally unleashed their fury.