

The Mechanic 481

Chapter 481: Thank You

Aesop coughed. "You've won this game, but I don't want to see Ames. Black star, can we discuss it?"

Han Xiao suppressed his murderous intent and said with surprise, "Do you not want to see your apprentice that much?"

"Back then, I only casually adopted a little girl, spent some time with her, and taught her the method to awaken her Super talent. How could I have known that she would go on to become a Beyond Grade A whose name has spread across an entire Star Field?" Aesop shook his head. "If only I'd known, I wouldn't have adopted her. With her strength, if she finds me, there definitely won't be any way for me to escape. Those kind of days without freedom will be the same as imprisonment. It brings me horror just thinking about it."

Han Xiao's mouth twitched. *Casually adopting a little girl who turned out to be one of the strongest people many years later, why does this sound so familiar?*

Furthermore, this old man looks so reluctant. Hey, you can show off, but don't go over the line, damn it!

Holding back the desire to criticize, Han Xiao asked, "So, why did you come back since you don't want to see her?"

Aesop did not possess the demeanor that one would expect from someone who was countless years old. Like a stubborn old man, he said, "The more she wants to find me, the more I want to linger before her eyes."

A horrible personality as always...

Han Xiao was speechless. In his previous life, Aesop had wandered everywhere and was a mystery shopkeeper in the players' eyes. But one day, he was dragged into a conflict between two Star System civilizations. As always, he carried out a 'game'. However, having walked along the shore for so long, it was inevitable that he would get his shoes wet one day. Aesop failed, and it cost him his life. He did not meet Ames again. After a hundred years of searching, Ames only saw Aesop's tombstone in the end.

Ames did everything based on her mood, and she acted out of impulse. She vented her rage and smashed every planet in the territory of these two civilizations, including their mother planets, ending countless lives. The survivors not in the territory at that time filed a complaint to the three Universal Civilizations. Such a violent act severely violated the lawful accords, so Floating Dragon lost its privileges and was besieged by numerous armies.

At that time, a large number of players accepted missions and took part in the siege.

Countless battleships were destroyed in the battle, as was Floating Dragon Island. Although Ames did not die in the battle, she disappeared.

The renowned Beyond Grade A from the Shattered Star Ring was never seen again.

Of course, that all happened in a very late version.

Since Han Xiao had captured Aesop, if he let Ames meet Aesop, it would be something that had not happened in his previous life, so he did not know how it would turn out.

Nonetheless, the tragedies of two civilizations with trillions of civilians being slaughtered, Floating Dragon Island destroyed, and Ames being heavily injured should not happen again.

Never mind, I owe her a favor. I shall give him to Ames. Killing him will only cause unnecessary risks.

Shaking his head, Han Xiao kept his thoughts about killing Aesop to himself.

Aesop could only see into a small part of the future, but what he knew about was the overall trend!

There was no reason for him to be afraid!

Han Xiao placed his arms around Aesop's shoulder and whispered to Aesop's ear, "I refuse."

Aesop's expression stiffened. Why did he whisper then? It gave him false hope...

Han Xiao contacted Ames on his communicator. As soon as the image showed up, Ames saw Aesop, who was standing beside Han Xiao. Her beautiful eyes brightened as a tint of a smile appeared on her face.

"Aesop, my teacher, I've really missed you."

Aesop smiled bitterly. From Ames' tone, he could hear a strong sense of dissatisfaction. Even without using his foresight ability, he could tell that he was in a bad situation.

After hiding for so many years, who knew how much unhappiness Ames had suppressed; falling into her hands would be truly horrible.

Then, Ames turned to look at Han Xiao and said, "Wait for me, I'm almost there!"

The image turned black right after; she was very quick to act.

Aesop was frustrated. He turned to look at Han Xiao. "Won't you reconsider?"

"She has already seen you. Do you think I can possibly let you go?" Han Xiao smiled.

Not much later, Ames' spaceship arrived at the port. Han Xiao took Aesop to the pier, and Ames saw him as soon as she got off her spaceship. She walked over with a fearsome aura!

Han Xiao's hand that grabbed Aesop's shoulder clearly felt the old man's body shiver.

"Dragon Emperor?"

At this moment, the pedestrians near the pier were in an uproar. With faces of horror, they hurried back far away. They had not expected one of the strongest people in the Shattered Star Ring to suddenly appear.

"Don't you have something to say to me?" Ames was expressionless.

Aesop sighed as if he accepted his fate. "Alright, I should have come back to see you long ago and shouldn't have hidden from you. Let's not stand here and let others watch, let's go."

As he was speaking, he walked up the gangway. Before entering the spacecraft, he looked back at Han Xiao, and a smile suddenly appeared on his face.

Ames was about to return to the ship, but she suddenly thought of something and turned around to look at Han Xiao.

She paused. With a serious and solemn tone, she said, "Thank you."

Han Xiao waved his hand. "It's a small matter. I'm just repaying my favor."

"No, I owe you."

Ames' tone was unquestionable. She suddenly hesitated before slowly reaching out. The soft black sleeves slid down her smooth arm, revealing her slender white palm, and she patted Han Xiao on his shoulder.

She was a neat freak and would never willingly touch others, but this time, she made an exception.

Although she looked calm on the surface, she was actually very happy, so she was very grateful to Han Xiao, who had captured Aesop. She knew how cunning Aesop was. She had caught wind of his whereabouts before, but she had ended up disappointed every time. This success surprised her.

After a short pat, Ames quickly pulled back her hand and turned around to go up the ship. Han Xiao, however, did not think it was unusual. At that moment, he thought of something and hastily used the blank Character Summon Card in his interface before Ames closed the door, generating her Character Summon Card.

Boom!

The ship unleashed a deep rumbling sound and left the dock along the track, soon disappearing.

Han Xiao stayed on the dock. He had just informed the others, so they heard the news and quickly gathered, watching the spaceship fly away.

"Black star, since we're done here, where are we going now?" Herlous asked.

"Let's take a break at Noriosse and leave tomorrow." Han Xiao turned to Wilsander and asked, "Do you want to stick around with us?"

"I'm not in a hurry to go back. Plus, it's too boring to stay on Floating Dragon Island. Hehe, it seems like I'll have to disturb you for some time." Wilsander gave his standard cheeky smile.

"As long as you don't spend my money, you can disturb us for as long as you want." Han Xiao shrugged.

This time, they heard a commotion from the direction of the hall. A group of superiors from Noriosse financial group had heard the news of Ames' arrival and hurried here. They did not dare neglect such an important person, but after picking up Aesop, Ames had left immediately. The whole process had only taken a few minutes, so these financial group superiors were too late.

Thus, the executives of the financial group approached Han Xiao and chatted with him enthusiastically with warm smiles on their faces.

The Dragon Emperor had left, but they would never go away with nothing, so they decided to form a relationship with Black Star and see if they could provide any help, showing the attitude of Noriosse.

Originally, when Han Xiao first arrived on Noriosse, those financial group executives had only told their employees to send a greeting. However, now that the Dragon Emperor had appeared, things were different. They felt that they had to personally come to say hello to show their sincerity. The attention that the financial group superiors paid Han Xiao rose many levels.

As they were talking, the sound of several footsteps came from not far away. The people subconsciously looked in that direction.

A group of Godorans in combat suits hurried through the hall, looking to have just arrived. The leader looked brave and extraordinary.

“Godorans? What are they doing here?” Han Xiao’s eyes were also attracted. He curiously looked at the leader of the Godoran, and his expression suddenly changed.

He knew that person.

This was a Grade A Super!

...

On Ames’ ship, Aesop stood before a porthole, silently looking at the distant Noriosse.

“What are you looking at?” Ames asked from behind.

Aesop stopped looking and smiled with satisfaction.

“You have a good officer. He’s trustworthy.”

“You mean Black Star?” Ames nodded. “He is indeed very capable. Didn’t you meet him long ago? You even told him to send me a message.”

Aesop shook his head and laughed.

“I’m old now. I almost forgot about that.”

As he spoke, Aesop lowered his head, opened the communicator, and deleted a letter that had been set to send at a certain time. The receiver was shockingly Ames, whom he always blocked communication requests from.

Aesop shook his head.

“If it wasn’t for you, I wouldn’t have come to the Shattered Star Ring into this trap...”

Aesop knew Ames too well—capricious, arbitrary, not good at plotting. Just as Black Star had asked, if he did not want to be found by Ames, he could have hidden far away, so why did he have to return to Shattered Star Ring?

As for his motivation, of course, it was not to tease Ames. Although he was indeed tired of living, his taste was not that boring. His goal was surprisingly Han Xiao!

Someone had used his name to deceive Ames. What if this person had found Ames' weakness and deliberately used it to get close to her while harboring ulterior motives?

Aesop had been very worried about that.

No matter what kind of power Ames had, in his eyes, she would always be the little girl who needed someone to take care of.

Hence, he had returned to Shattered Star Ring, exposing his whereabouts and leading Ames' officers to track him down. If Han Xiao did not catch him, then this man was only so capable. If Han Xiao did catch him, Aesop would start the second round of his test. He had made the follow-up preparation long ago; he deliberately showed his prophecy ability while at the same time angering Han Xiao. If Black Star was really the Dragon Emperor's enemy, he would not allow such a dangerous enemy to live.

If Aesop died, that timed messages that he had set long ago would have reminded Ames of his death, and the culprit would have been the one who lied to her.

Aesop placed his own life, that of an old man, on the line and made a bet. If he died, Ames would not easily believe in others again, which he felt would be very worthwhile. After living for so long, the habit of looking for death had integrated into his blood—it would only make him feel thrilled and excited.

Although he looked like he did not care on the surface, he actually cared a lot about Ames. Aesop had no children, so Ames was like an adopted daughter to him.

Of course, Han Xiao did not know that his casual words to convince Ames back then on Floating Dragon Island would cause such a butterfly effect, leading the two of them who had never met each other in his previous life to meet for the first time, indirectly changing the fate of hundreds of trillions of people.

Black Star... Aesop thought, Very promising guy. If he lives for a thousand years like me, he will be a hundred times more horrifying than I am.

With his help, Ames will at least have an easier time...

Chapter 482: Trap

After helping Ames catch Aesop and completing the mission, Han Xiao had been in a good mood. However, when Han Xiao saw a bunch of Godora warriors rushing over, his mood plummeted.

He recognized the Godoran's battlesuits, and these warriors were not low-grade Observers. Instead, they were special forces that specialized in battle, and their leader was a Super who had been extremely famous in his previous life. In Version 2.0, this person had been the key figure in dealing with the mutation disaster on Planet Aquamarine. The majority of the battle quests that the players accepted from the Godoran camp had also been issued by him. He was like a commander level character and an important NPC to the players. Thus, Han Xiao was extremely familiar with him.

Nagakin, an officer of the War Bureau, Grade A Pugilist. He would only take action during important missions, and for him to appear on Noriosse, it meant that something important was about to unfold on Noriosse. A thought suddenly popped into his head, and Han Xiao immediately thought about the mixed blood Godoran that he had met a few days ago, Alvin.

The two should probably be related... Han Xiao thought to himself.

There was another strange sight that puzzled him. The Nagakin in front of him was majestic and full of valor. His strides were wide, and every step of his was taken with stability. In Han Xiao's memories, when the players of Planet Aquamarine first met Nagakin, he had been half crippled. Half of his face had been reduced to a skeleton, and not only was he disfigured, his left arm and both legs had turned into prosthetics. He had also needed numerous life support systems to be injected into his body in order for him to be alive.

It was less than a year away from Version 2.0.

As such, Nagakin must have been crippled during this period, but the exact time was not certain.

Han Xiao's eyes flashed, and he immediately sprang into action. He broke away from the upper echelons of Noriosse and stood in front of Nagakin.

"Who are you? Don't block the way." The Godoran warriors stopped, and Nagakin looked at Han Xiao with a frown.

Han Xiao introduced himself simply.

"Black Star? Oh, I've heard your name. You and some other mercenaries successfully destroyed a DarkStar mothership. Good job."

Nagakin nodded and did not take it to heart. A figure of his caliber would only be concerned about more important matters. He only knew about Han Xiao's name because his subordinate had mentioned it in passing. At that very moment, he was pushed for time, so he asked impatiently, "Why are you stopping us?"

"I only wanted to say hi. At the same time, I wanted to ask if you guys needed help." This was a common phrase that players used to start a conversation with NPCs. Han Xiao was also trying to see if he was able to receive a mission and understand the Godorans' reason for appearing there. He was lacking intel and did not know that DarkStar and Godora were having a confrontation on Noriosse. He only felt that something was strange.

Those warriors were the reinforcements sent by Godora, and their mission was to rescue Alvin. Over the past few days, two of Alvin's doppelgangers had been captured, and the situation did not allow a single second's delay. From Alvin's doppelganger, they had found out that the strongest individual in the squad chasing after Alvin was a grade B Super called Forsyth. As such, Godora had sent out Nagakin, who was the nearest to the location, and felt that it was sufficient to take care of the enemy.

Nagakin felt that he did not need any help and that he was sufficient to take care of the enemy. As such, he casually replied, "We do not need your help. I'm pushed for time and will take my leave now."

After finishing his sentence, Nagakin moved past Han Xiao and led his men away.

Studying the backs of those Godorans, Han Xiao stroked his chin and muttered to himself, “Tsk, I wasn’t able to activate a mission. For a Calamity Grade Super to take action personally, it’s probably a risky mission.”

Since Nagakin did not welcome outsiders, Han Xiao would forget about the matter. He would not lower himself and continue sticking to them uninvited.

He then opened the interface. After obtaining the Ames Character Summon Card, he had not checked its effects yet.

[Character Summon Card—Ames]

Force Field—Gaze of the Dragon: Compress the medium within a certain area (effective for all states of matter) and target a single character. The targeted character will fall into a [Trapped] status. For every 100 points of STR the target has, 1s of control time will be reduced.

Basic control time: 18s

Usages: 0/1

Han Xiao felt that the strong control effect was still acceptable. Ames had many different skills, and at her level, almost seventy percent of her skills were useful. While he did not obtain an attack skill, a control skill was more flexible and had its own advantages.

He then left the port and returned to land. After renting a temporary stronghold, he was prepared to spend rest a few days there. At the same time, he would purchase some resources. Noriosse was home to many shops, and he intended to strengthen his war machinery. Two High-End Knowledges and his many Advanced Knowledges gave him the option to obtain better blueprints, and it was sufficient for him to have an all-round upgrade. He still had more than twenty million experience points, and as long as he spent it sparingly, it would be sufficient for him to obtain enough blueprints.

Just when everyone was resting, a storm exploded.

...

Nagakin took dozens of Godoran warriors in aircrafts and arrived at a skyscraper at the periphery of Noriosse’s City 4. Tall buildings filled the district, and the magnetic floating bus station that connected the cities was not too far away.

According to Alvin’s reports, the temporary base of DarkStar’s forces was on the eightieth story of the skyscraper, and it was located right at the center of the building.

Alvin’s main body had always been in contact with the reinforcements from Godora, and he used his doppelganger to observe the members of DarkStar to provide Nagakin with information. His request was for Nagakin to get rid of all the DarkStar forces chasing him before his main body would appear. He was extremely cautious.

“The enemy’s forces are inside. We will first destroy their base before dealing with those DarkStar members operating on the outside to prevent us from alerting the enemy. Currently, the enemy’s base is unaware of our arrival, and we have an advantage in terms of intel. Attack with me!”

The aircrafts ascended slowly and approached their target building. Nagakin’s gaze was solemn as he clenched his fists. A golden flame began to flow down his arm as though it was liquid.

His fist smashed onto the outer wall of the building.

Boom!

The next instant, a white shockwave was sent out in all directions!

All the glass in this building was shattered!

The might of his fist shot through the entire eightieth floor, and a large hole could be seen on both sides of the building. The entire building began to let out unsteady creaks, and the middle of the building bent slightly like a wooden pole that was almost smashed in half!

Not to mention a building, it was a piece of cake for a Calamity Grade Pugilist to destroy even a battleship. As long as he had enough time, he could even turn into an excavator and change the landscape of the entire planet.

After destroying the building with a single punch, Nagakin charged in with his subordinates and attacked the enemy base. Upon entry, he immediately spotted Forsyth and the others, who were in a daze.

Nagakin made a few hand signals and the Godoran warriors surrounded Forsyth’s troops. He then said in a deep voice, “I am Nagakin from Godora’s War Bureau. All of you are surrounded. Drop your weapons and surrender now. I will send all of you to Rainbow Prison.”

The building was shaking unsteadily, and Forsyth finally managed to steady himself. Revealing a malevolent smile, he chuckled as though his prey had fallen into his trap. “It seems like we’ve caught a big fish. Nagakin, look around you. Who do you think is surrounded?”

Two powerful auras exploded and trapped Nagakin’s troops in the middle.

Nagakin hurriedly turned around only to see Anur and Ember glaring at him.

The intense killing intent seemed to have frozen the space around him.

“Why are there two Calamity Grade Supers? There is an error in our intelligence!” Nagakin’s face changed drastically.

Alvin’s intel had stated that the strongest person pursuing him was a Grade B Super. For Godora to send out a Grade A Super, it could be considered a foolproof plan. With Nagakin taking action, even if a Grade A Super was hiding amid the enemy’s ranks, he would still be able to fight the other party equally. However, Godora could never have expected that DarkStar would actually send out two Calamity Grade Supers to kill a single traitor. This was akin to killing a chicken with an ox’s blade. This was the trap that DarkStar had set.

Anur and Ember did not appear in front of Alvin's doppelganger, and Forsyth had acted as the leader. As such, Alvin had believed that there were no Calamity Grade Supers in the team. DarkStar had already predicted that Godora would send reinforcements and intentionally tricked Alvin into thinking that there were no Grade A Supers. They had predicted that there would be a single Grade A Super in the reinforcements at most, and this Grade A Super would become Anur and Ember's prey!

DarkStar did not only want to chase their traitor down. They had even laid a trap to make Godora lose one of their top fighters!

This was the reason for Anur and Ember to take action together. Godora had fallen for DarkStar's trap.

The Godoran warriors present felt a chill run down their spines, and their backs were drenched with cold sweat. The immense pressure from facing two powerful enemies had almost caused their hearts to stop beating. They were extremely anxious and did not even know which side they should focus on defending.

Nagakin's face was solemn, and he knew that it would be difficult for him to escape alive. Taking in a deep breath...

"We will die today..."

Hu!

The Pugilist's flames covered his entire body, and the aura exploding out of his body matched Anur and Ember's auras. He then got into his fighting stance, and a resolute gaze could be seen in his eyes. Gritting his teeth, he let out a deep roar.

"Before we die, let's fight!"

Chapter 483: Seeking Aid and Recruitment

In the hall of their temporary base, everyone was currently busy with their own things. All of a sudden, the image on the television screen flashed, and the news was suddenly broadcast.

"Noriosse emergency report. Ten minutes ago, a building in the periphery of City 4 was attacked, and three streets were completely destroyed. The bus station is completely crippled, and the number of casualties is being calculated. According to initial analysis, the cause of the destruction is a fight between Supers. More details will be released after further investigation. The Public Security Office is already investigating the matter. Now showing the scene of the location..."

This news drew everyone's attention. Sylvia immediately went to knock on the machinery modification room and called Han Xiao out to watch the television.

The news displayed scenes of the location. A few dozen tall buildings had collapsed and been reduced to rubble. Just ten minutes earlier, that had still been an extremely prosperous location, but the entire place had been destroyed with thick, black smoke billowing. The aircrafts of the Public Security Office were flying around, trying to save as many casualties as possible. The entire place was filled with noise as corpse after corpse was bagged up before being thrown aside.

“That explains the tremors. I thought that it was an earthquake,” the oldest Volga brother said.

Wilsander was using a brush to clean his wings, and he asked with a shrug, “Are they fighting a war?”

“For them to create such extensive destruction in such a short time, it is probably a battle between Calamity Grade Supers,” Han Xiao said with a deep tone.

He immediately thought about Nagakin. Considering when he had met Nagakin, he felt that it was extremely possible.

However, this had nothing to do with him. He had not activated any missions from Nagakin, and since there were no benefits, Han Xiao did not care about the matter.

Beep beep!

Right at that moment, his communicator rang; an unknown number was calling him. Han Xiao accepted the call.

The next moment, Nagakin’s figure appeared on the screen. He was breathing heavily, and his entire body was covered in blood and wounds. He was obviously in an extremely pathetic state.

“Black Star... please help me,” Nagakin said with grit teeth.

...

Just a while ago, Nagakin had met the ambush of DarkStar, and after an intense battle, three streets had been destroyed with all his elite warriors dead. That foreign Calamity Grade Super had reduced all of them to ash in a single instant. They could not even let out a single cry for help.

Those were his subordinate who had accompanied him into battle for many years, and they had all been wiped out easily. Nagakin was furious but had no choice but to force himself to remain calm and face the two experts in front of him.

While he was the only one left, Nagakin did not entertain the thought of retreating. As long as he could exchange his life for one of his opponents’ lives, it would not be a complete loss.

There was also a divide between Calamity Grade Supers. Nagakin’s strength was not superior to Anur or Ember, and he was at a clear disadvantage. Both of his opponents were Espers who were extremely difficult to deal with. In just a short exchange, he was already injured all over.

The intense battle between them had quickly drawn the attention of the Public Security Office, and they arrived swiftly. Anur had originally intended to continue chasing, but after considering for a moment, he had decided to make a strategic retreat as he did not want to end up being chased by those from the Public Security Office. The result of the ambush was not up to his expectations. He had originally wanted to kill Godora’s Grade A Super quickly, but Nagakin was a Pugilist with a powerful physique and had only been severely injured.

If not for Nagakin having a powerful physique, he would probably have died.

Dragging his severely injured body away from the battlefield, Nagakin did not immediately tend to his wounds. Instead, he contacted the headquarters and reported the entire event while bearing the pain.

Godora's War Bureau was shocked and ordered Nagakin to wait for his orders with the priority being the preservation of his life.

He requested aid from the headquarters, but travelling required time, so it would be impossible for them to send anyone in time. Giving up and retreating had never been part of his vocabulary. Even if he was alone, he would stop DarkStar from accomplishing their objective.

Just when he was considering killing his way back, Nagakin suddenly thought of Black Star, who he had met at the port.

Perhaps only mercenaries could help him.

Noriosse was located far away, and there were few mercenary groups operating in that region. Currently, the Black Star Mercenary Group was probably the only mercenary group around, and he could only seek their help.

He had rejected Han Xiao's help just a while back but had no choice but to seek help now. This was far too embarrassing, and Nagakin had never imagined that such a scenario would occur. However, he could only grit his teeth and contact Han Xiao. For his mission, casting aside his pride was not a problem at all.

"Nagakin?" Han Xiao had a weird look on his face. His guess was right. Nagakin was related to the news shown on the television, and he had already been severely injured by an unknown enemy. The help that Nagakin was requesting was obviously related to this matter. With none of his subordinates in sight, they had probably all been wiped out, and thus, Nagakin had no choice but to seek help from mercenaries.

With just a short pause, Han Xiao came up with a rough idea of what had happened. He then recalled Nagakin's crippled appearance, but after glancing at Nagakin's body once, while Nagakin was covered in blood all over, his limbs were all still intact.

"I have a mission to fetch a character who betrayed DarkStar from Noriosse. His name is Alvin, and DarkStar sent forces to chase after him. The other party has two Grade A Supers, and I fell into their ambush..."

Nagakin described the situation honestly.

While he knew that revealing the truth about two Grade A Supers might cause Han Xiao to act warily and not help him, Nagakin would never hide the strength of his enemies and deceive mercenaries. He was an extremely straightforward person, and even if he knew that the mercenaries might reject him, he would still tell the truth.

Han Xiao was immediately enlightened. When he met Alvin before, he had already been somewhat suspicious but had no intel. This matter was really related to DarkStar.

"Who are the two Grade A Supers of DarkStar?"

"I am not sure." Nagakin shook his head.

"What are their abilities?"

“One of them is able to reduce the human body to ash and can control a large amount of dust to form various weapons. If I did not raise my defenses with my energy, he would have been able to slowly peel away my flesh...”

A cold glow flashed through Han Xiao’s eyes, and he said, “Carbon element control, Ember!”

He had originally thought that this fellow had died in the explosion of the battleship, but never had he expected that Ember had actually escaped. Furthermore, he had even entered the Calamity Grade. When he fought Ember back on Floating Dragon Island, Ember had already been B+ Grade and far stronger than him. If not for his talent restricting the trump card of Ember, it would have been impossible for him to fight Ember to a draw.

Ember was capable of instantly wiping out any carbon-based life form, and his ability was extremely difficult to deal with. It was like a divine AOE skill. Only Aroshia and himself were immune to Ember. Wilsander was a mixed blood demon, and his body constitution was unknown. If he was not carbon based, perhaps he would be able to escape the outcome of being instantly wiped out.

However, after Ember reached Grade A, his Esper abilities might have new ways to be used. Even his ordinary attacks would be much more powerful than before.

“What are the abilities of the other one?” Han Xiao asked.

“He is a shapeshifting Esper. He can change into a strange flying creature roughly four to five meters tall. It seems as though he has the ability to control the flow of air. He is extremely fast, and it is difficult to follow him with the naked eye. When he is flying, wind pressure is generated around him. Not only is it able to form a protective shield, it is able to provide a certain degree of invisibility. It seems as though he is using a trick to bend the light rays. The faster he flies, the stronger the wind pressure generated, and everywhere he passes is destroyed by the wind pressure. He is just like a wind pressure cannon.”

“Shapeshifting... wind pressure...” Han Xiao’s mouth contorted. “Could he be the Wind Demon Anur?”

DarkStar had a limited number of Grade A Supers, and according to the abilities that they had displayed, Han Xiao was able to guess their identities. Anur was an old member and a powerhouse of DarkStar who was extremely difficult to deal with. After his transformation, not only would his speed increase, if he flew a few times around the planet, the accumulated wind pressure would form a cyclone gigantic enough to flatten the entire planet’s surface.

The two of them were extremely difficult to deal with. Before Version 2.0, Han Xiao did not really want to provoke DarkStar. However, this was a good opportunity for him to get closer to a Grade A Super from Godora and a channel for him to get in contact with the upper echelons of Godora. With Nagakin around, it would be much easier for him to gain trust when he handed over the mutation source in the future, and it would be more convenient for him to discuss benefits.

Nagakin bit his lips as he waited for Han Xiao’s response. He silently prayed that Han Xiao would not reject him—Han Xiao seemed like his last chance.

After a long while, Han Xiao shook his head. “It is too dangerous to fight two Grade A Supers...”

Nagakin's expression froze. While he had expected the outcome, he was still a little disappointed.

"However, your mission isn't to kill the both of them, right?" Han Xiao asked. "As long as Alvin is able to leave Noriosse alive, your mission will be completed. The problem now is that your Godoran reinforcements require time to arrive. Thus, we only need to stall for time and help Alvin escape from DarkStar. If this is the case, I can try helping you."

Nagakin's eyes lit up—he was overjoyed.

At that moment, a new mission was shown on Han Xiao's interface.

Nagakin's Request

Mission Introduction: You have agreed to help Nagakin. His mission is to save a DarkStar traitor.

Mission Requirements: 1. Aid Alvin in hiding until Godora's troops arrive. 2. Kill all of the pursuing DarkStar forces. (Completing one of the two requirements would complete the mission)

Failure Conditions: 1. Alvin's death. 2. Nagakin's death.

Rewards: 5,800,000 Experience, 240,000 Enas, +850 Relationship with Godora Faction, +30 Alvin Favorability, +30 Nagakin Favorability

There are two mission requirements. It seems like it will be easier to stall for time, Han Xiao thought to himself. While it was more straightforward to defeat the enemy, the other party had two Calamity Grade Supers.

Han Xiao had three Main Storyline missions, and one of them was [Godora's Ally]. The mission requirements were plenty, and Anur and Ember were all included on the hit list. While the reward for killing them was high, Han Xiao only thought about it and did not think that that it was possible for him to accomplish it.

Just when Nagakin was about to ask how they should work together, Han Xiao interrupted him.

"Just the few of us will be far too little manpower. Let me find more manpower for you."

He then turned around to Herlous. "Go through the Mercenary Alliance and issue a recruitment notice near Noriosse. The target will be all the mercenaries in the vicinity. As long as they can rush over in time, we want them all. As many as possible."

"What should we write for the person issuing the mission?" Herlous asked. "Nagakin or Godora?"

"No, their names aren't the best option." Han Xiao shook his head. "Use my name."

Chapter 484: Chaotic Entry

The mercenaries in the Shattered Star Ring were extremely active. Even in the region of Noriosse, there were many active mercenaries, but the majority of them were second or third grade mercenaries. Han Xiao issued a recruitment notice through the Mercenary Alliance, and this recruitment notice quickly spread through the Noriosse mercenary groups.

Majority of the mercenaries had the same two reactions—surprised and curious.

In the past year, Han Xiao had completed plenty of missions, and because of the backing of Floating Dragon, he had built up a large network consisting mainly of large mercenary groups including the likes of top-notch armies such as Blades, Purple Gold, and Sky Ring.

While Black Star's position in the mercenary world of Shattered Star Ring was not considered top notch, he was considered a first-rate small mercenary group. Many mercenaries wanted to build a relationship with Black Star and tap into his connections to gain better missions. After all, the rich employers usually wanted to hire the best mercenaries, and the Mercenary Alliance would only issue these missions to the lower grade mercenaries if the large armies did not accept them. The people at the top ate meat while those below drank the soup. This was pretty much the situation everywhere.

As such, the moment that Han Xiao posted a recruitment notice, countless respondents applied, and he activated at least half of the mercenaries in the Noriosse region.

...

The gathering location was extremely crowded, and everyone was packed like sardines. The colorful mercenaries squeezed together and chatted with each other as they waited for the appearance of their employer.

Clap clap...

At the very front of the group, a clapping sound could be heard, and everyone turned to take a look. Seeing the legendary Black Star before them, the noisy crowd slowly became silent.

Their gazes were all fixed on Han Xiao as they sized him up from head to toe. They were all interested in Han Xiao's connections but did not think too highly of his personal strength. The majority of the mercenaries were wild and untamed characters. The way they saw it, Black Star was not any much more powerful than them. He was only lucky enough to gain the recognition of Ames.

Han Xiao was unmoved, and he said emotionlessly, "Everyone, I am the one who issued the recruitment notice, and I believe that all of you should recognize me. I shall not introduce myself, and since we are all mercenaries, I shall skip the pleasantries. I received a difficult mission with bountiful rewards, and I require more manpower. I hired all of you to find partners to complete the mission together. You can treat me as a middleman, and the details of the mission shall be explained by the employer."

Nagakin made his entrance and described the situation honestly.

Very quickly, the mercenaries below broke out in a large commotion.

Many of them were thoroughly frightened by the two Calamity Grade Supers and backed out immediately. At the same time, they stared at Han Xiao in disbelief as though they were looking at a dead man.

You actually accepted a mission that requires you to face two Grade A enemies? Have you seen how powerful Calamity Grade Supers are?

Don't drag me down if you want to die!

The war between DarkStar and Godora was known to everyone in the Shattered Star Ring, but the majority of the mercenaries kept their distance from the battle and were not willing to get involved.

“Our mission isn’t to fight the enemy, but there will be some risks,” Han Xiao said in a deep voice. “If any of you aren’t willing to accept the mission, you may leave now. For those who stay behind, after this mission is over, I will sign a cooperation contract with all of you to enjoy my resources.”

As everyone heard that, many of them fell into a dilemma. If they could cooperate with Black Star, they would have the chance to get better employers. It was like starting a company. Them running around to find odd jobs definitely could not be compared to working together with a large organization and easily enjoying jobs.

Many mercenaries did not dare take the risk and took their leave. The crowd began to thin, and Han Xiao did not stop them.

Only a hundred odd people were left behind. They were the mercenaries who were willing to take the risk.

Phillip read out their information, and Han Xiao viewed it once.

“Three mercenary groups, seventeen lone mercenaries. There are four Grade B Supers and the rest are Grade Cs. This is better than my expectations.” Han Xiao nodded. Because of the limited time, he did not dare wait too long, and it was not too bad for him to hire this bunch of mercenaries.

Han Xiao got the mercenaries to rest and reorganize themselves as Nagakin walked over.

“What are you planning to do?” Nagakin asked. The day before, he had just met Han Xiao, and meeting him again that day, he felt a little embarrassed. As a Calamity Grade Super, he actually had to rely on a bunch of mercenaries. This was truly an embarrassing mark on his record.

However, he quickly shook away such useless emotions and focused on the mission at hand. While he did not understand Black Star much, it did not stop him from treating Han Xiao as an ally.

“We aren’t the most anxious ones now; DarkStar are,” Han Xiao mused. “With Anur and Ember’s ambush failing, they know that Godora will definitely send out fresh reinforcements. Thus, they will try to capture Alvin as quickly as possible, so we have to try and interrupt their search.

“Alvin’s main body has remained in hiding, and he didn’t dare to reveal himself. Thus, it wasn’t possible to take him away from Noriosse. Furthermore, there may be many DarkStar battleships hiding in Noriosse’s vicinity to block all routes out.”

Based on the present circumstances, they had to first contact Alvin before they could formulate a plan. Nagakin took out his encoded communicator.

“Nagakin? Weren’t you defeated?” Alvin’s voice sounded from the communicator, but there was no image displayed. In order to prevent anyone from finding his location, Alvin did not turn on his image display.

“Your intel was wrong, and DarkStar sent out two Calamity Grade Supers. I survived and found some helpers. We will help you escape from DarkStar’s pursuit, and new reinforcements are on the way. As long as we can stall for enough time, DarkStar will have no choice but to retreat. You will be safer if you accept our protection. Where are you hiding?”

“I do not need your protection; my main body is extremely safe. You have already lost once, and if it wasn’t for my cautiousness, I would have been caught. I would rather believe in myself. I have three doppelgangers in DarkStar’s hands, and they aren’t able to return to my main body. I have to suffer the pain from their torture every day, and only a single doppelganger of mine is able to move about freely. If you really want to help me, protect my doppelganger. He is still being followed by the enemy...”

Alvin hung up, and Nagakin frowned, feeling pretty helpless. If he could not protect the main body, whether or not the main body was found would be up to the heavens’ will.

Han Xiao smiled and said, “DarkStar obtained three doppelgangers, and the doppelgangers will die if they are too far away from the main body. As long as split the main body up in three different directions, it will be easy for them to pinpoint the region that the main body is in. With some simple calculations, they will then be able to determine the center of the region. Thus, Alvin will not foolishly stay in one place.”

“There is one more thing,” Nagakin said with concern. “For us to recruit mercenaries openly, DarkStar will probably receive news about it, and they won’t sit still without doing anything.”

“Hmm, I have a guess as to what they will do. It seems like we will have to take some risks.”

Han Xiao stroked his chin and decided to mess up this storm midway. Apart from the plentiful reward, this was also a good way for him to contact the upper echelons of Godora. He was pretty tanky, and he would be able to exchange a few blows with Grade A Supers. Retreating with his life definitely would not be a problem, and he did not have to be as cautious as before. With the advantage of understanding his enemy, there was no need for him to be anxious. If his opponent was Ember, he felt that he would be able to last a long time.

...

Because of the destruction caused by the battle between the Grade A Supers, DarkStar decided to change to a new secret base to discuss their next move. Anur felt that it was a waste that they had not been able to kill Nagakin, and he knew that Nagakin would have called for more reinforcements. Thus, they needed to seize every second.

At that moment, the troops on the outside was spying on Alvin’s final doppelganger. Without daring to delay any further, Anur sent out all of his men, preparing to capture the final doppelganger.

However, before they could, the DarkStar troops received new intel. Nagakin had found some helpers—the Black Star Mercenary Group.

“Nagakin still isn’t giving up, and he thinks that he can face the two of us alone?” Anur’s expression was dark, and he revealed a sneer. “Since he isn’t willing to hide obediently, we will use the opportunity to kill him.”

He had originally thought that Nagakin would not dare reveal himself again after being ambushed by the two of them. Now that he had a chance to kill Nagakin, Anur was naturally overjoyed.

In truth, in Han Xiao’s previous life, when Nagakin was ambushed, he did not suffer any severe injuries as well. However, he refused to give up on the mission, and even without any reinforcements, he had faced the two DarkStar Supers alone, eventually being crippled. At the same time, the Calamity Grade Super who participated in this battle was not Ember. In Han Xiao’s previous life, Ember had not been forced to enter seclusion, so he had entered the Calamity Grade far later.

A large reason was because Han Xiao had caused the butterfly effect... or perhaps it was because Han Xiao served as a great motivator for Ember.

“So what if he’s found a bunch of mercenaries? What can they do? They are no more than a bunch of weaklings.” Anur was completely unconcerned. Only an elite army like Blades or Sky Ring was worth his attention.

Ember’s gaze turned cold.

“Black Star again... I have given him a chance already.”

Ember no longer placed Han Xiao in his sights, but since Black Star wanted to interfere with his mission, he had to wipe out all obstructions.

With the threat of Floating Dragon, Ember had not decided if he wanted to get rid of Black Star. However, he had to wipe out all of his companions at the very least and let Black Star know the price of provoking DarkStar.

While Black Star had some talent to be immune toward his abilities, Black Star’s companions were not immune. Ember could still remember that he had managed to rip off the arm of one of Han Xiao’s subordinates previously.

If you want to interfere in matters that you shouldn’t, you will also place your life at risk.

Anur looked at the intel. “None of these mercenaries can be kept. I don’t want any accidents to happen.”

“You can take people to catch the doppelganger; I alone will be sufficient to get rid of the mercenaries.” Ember stood up. “With my abilities, I will crush them all in less than a minute. I will meet up with you after taking care of this matter.”

Chapter 485: The Gangster Mechanic

Ta, ta, ta!

Alvin escaped hurriedly. He was the final doppelganger left on the surface, and DarkStar's pursuing forces followed behind him like parasites. The one chasing after him was a Grade B Super called Sherman, the vice-captain of Forsyth's squad.

He had already noticed that DarkStar was getting ready to take action and had informed Nagakin and the others to request reinforcements. However, reinforcements still had not arrived, so Alvin was getting anxious.

Bang!

A thick light cannon pierced through the walls and smashed into Alvin's body. A magical shield appeared with ripples on it and blocked the damage before exploding in the next instant. Alvin was sent flying by the shockwave and rolled a couple of meters out.

Not too far away from him, a short dwarf-like man walked over wearing a pair of targeting goggles. He was dressed in a gray mechanical suit and held onto a gigantic cannon almost the size of his body. The design of the cannon was complicated with an extremely thick barrel. Apart from the main cannon, there were a couple of subsidiary cannons, and it was obvious that this was a multipurpose firearm.

This person was Sherman. It is said that he had the bloodline of the dwarfs and was a Cannon Master.

"I only have three protective talismans left, and I wouldn't be able to escape far. If the reinforcements do not arrive, I will be finished for sure. Those from DarkStar definitely won't show any mercy to me..." Alvin's face turned solemn; he knew that things were bad.

Sherman remained expressionless, and he pointed his cannon at Alvin, who was trying to crawl back up. "Don't move. Unless you find your legs too long."

Before he could even finish his sentence, the sound of something descending from above could be heard. Looking up, he saw someone weaving through the gaps of the buildings nimbly, dressed in a mechanical suit that looked like the armor of a knight. The white cape on his shoulders fluttered in the wind, and he approached Sherman at high speed. With a Battleship Slicing Blade that was a couple of meters long, it could only be Herlous.

Without saying a single word, Sherman raised his cannon and fired.

Boom boom boom!

Wave after wave of large light balls assaulted him. Herlous' eyes were extremely sharp, and he cleaved apart the ball of lights before they could even reach him.

Weaving through the balls of exploding cannon fire, Herlous cleaved his blade down at Sherman's head right before he reached the ground. However, Sherman had already foreseen this attack and avoided it.

Boom!

This attack landed on the ground, and a long ditch was created with silvery flames spewing out like lava. The cracks on the ground then extended out a few dozen meters.

"Reinforcements?" Sherman was sent flying by the shockwave of the attack and was half kneeling on the ground. Licking his lips, he could taste the slight metallic taste of blood, and his killing intent burst out.

At that moment, all of the hired mercenaries also appeared and surrounded Alvin to protect him. Alvin could finally heave a sigh of relief.

Reinforcements are finally here.

Over a hundred mercenaries glared at him fiercely, but Sherman was not anxious in the slightest. He pointed his finger at Herlous, who caused him to suffer a small loss, and pointed his finger at his head like a gun before 'firing'. He obviously meant that he had his eyes on Herlous.

The next moment, the members of DarkStar arrived as well. They did not lose in numbers at all and had even more elites. Anur walked out from the crowd and said with a deep voice, "Godoran, don't hide in a corner. You cannot escape from my senses."

Hearing that, Nagakin walked out, and the two powerhouses glared at each other in a faceoff. Nagakin's expression was solemn as he asked, "Where's the other one?"

Anur did not reply, and his gaze swept past the mercenaries. Counting the number of mercenaries present, he began to frown. Almost all of the hired mercenaries were there, and the enemy's camp should be empty. He knew that Ember would definitely return empty handed. However, that did not matter; Ember would not need much time to return, and they would be able to form a pincer attack to cut off all paths of retreat.

Since they were enemies, neither party spoke about their plans. Glaring at each other without a word, the situation was extremely tense.

With a single command, the killing began.

The battle had erupted!

Siii...

Anur's body swelled up, and he turned into a strange looking creature in the blink of an eye. His body was four to five meters tall with an inverted triangle as the head. His body was that of a streamlined beast with thick skin and small little holes all over. Those holes were the key to controlling the wind pressure. A long tail trailed behind the body, and his limbs turned into powerful claws. Eight strange, dog-ear-like bones could be seen on his back with its appearance looking a little like a pair of wings. However, it was a special organ like a tube for it to shoot out air. It extended out from Anur's ribs and allowed the high-pressure gas to cycle between the inside of his body and the atmosphere on the outside. It also ensured a balance of pressure on the inside and outside of the body to protect the body under high speed.

This was what Anur looked like after its transformation. His nickname was Wind Demon, and he had the special ability to control the flow of air.

Bang!

Anur's eight tubes spat out high-pressure gas, and he sped up rapidly. In the blink of an eye, he covered the distance of a few hundred meters and clashed together with Nagakin.

With him as the center, to his left and right were formless wind pressure cannons. The usually gentle air had been transformed into a powerful shockwave and decimated everything in its way.

Boom!

Wherever the wind pressure cannon passed by, the ground would crack, and the windows on the buildings to the side would be shattered. Everyone present felt that it was becoming difficult to breathe as though they were in the middle of a storm.

Nagakin broke through the wind barrier, and his fist smashed squarely onto Anur's body. His golden flames clashed straight on with the formless wind pressure, and both of them were sent flying in two different directions. Wherever they landed, a gray cloud of dust would be kicked up, and a circular crater would form.

By the time he raised his head again, Anur's figure had already disappeared, and only the violent winds were left behind. Nagakin had witnessed this ability before. The little holes on Anur's body would control the air surrounding him to coat his entire body like a shield. He would then use some unknown method to absorb the light rays and make sure that his body was no longer reflecting any light. As such, Anur's body could no longer be seen.

The two Calamity Grade Supers had to restrain each other. If not, the others fighting by the side would be in danger. Just a single Anur forced Nagakin to use all of his strength. If there was another Calamity Grade Super, he would be dead for sure.

Black Star said that the enemy will probably split up their forces. One of the Calamity Grade Supers will probably charge into our base alone. Black Star chose to stay behind to restrain the enemy. Only if we can hold down that Calamity Grade Super will we have a chance to save Alvin.

However, he is only a Grade B Super, and the Calamity Grade is too dangerous to him. Can he really do it?

Nagakin was worried.

...

At the same time, Ember walked into the mercenaries' base and was already prepared to unleash a massacre. However, the place was covered in darkness, and there was not a single person inside.

"Everyone abandoned the base and took action with the Godoran? It seems like this was a wasted trip. I'd better regroup with Anur."

Ember was expressionless. Just when he was about to turn around and leave, the lights lit up in the base.

"Don't go. I have been waiting for a long time."

Ember's eyes narrowed.

I know this voice.

He looked up and looked at the camera in the corner.

"Black Star?"

“Ember—this is the nickname that DarkStar gave you, but you do not have a real name. When you were very little, you were accepted by DarkStar. They were interested in your talent, and they treated you like a weapon, forcing you through endless strict training. You are not a Godoran, but you were brainwashed with a hatred that does not belong to you. DarkStar groomed your loyalty, but you are no more than a useful tool in their eyes. Your beliefs are completely meaningless because those aren’t your true thoughts.”

Han Xiao narrated slowly. Because of the information from his previous life, he understood Ember’s life story. While he had killed many and was extremely hateful, he was also extremely pitiful.

If he had not been groomed by DarkStar from a young age but led a normal life, he would not have been the infamous Ember. He might have had his own name and would not have given his all only to be treated like a weapon and tool.

Ember clenched his fists tightly before releasing them slowly. He did not have any intention to argue with Han Xiao. “All of the other mercenaries have left? Why are you the only one left behind?”

“To wait for you of course.”

Ka-cha.

A metal door opened, and Han Xiao walked out with his gaze clashing with Ember.

Sparks flew.

DarkStar had sent out two Calamity Grade Supers, and Han Xiao had guessed that they would try to fully utilize their advantage by sending one of them out alone. On a strategic level, this will allow them to be more agile. Thankfully, he had guessed correctly, and there was indeed a Calamity Grade Super who worked alone with his strength.

During the recruitment, Han Xiao knew that he would not be able to hide the recruitment from DarkStar. If the enemy wanted to barge into their camp alone, the most likely person to come would be Ember because his ability was the most suited for a group battle. All carbon element beings that were weaker than him would essentially be killed instantly. As such, Han Xiao got the majority of the mercenaries to aid Nagakin in saving Alvin. They would only be committing suicide if they stayed behind.

Only he would be able to restrain Ember. The longer he could restrain Ember, the higher the chances of Nagakin rescuing Alvin.

If he wanted to fight a battle of attrition, Han Xiao was extremely confident.

“Wait for me?” Ember’s expression was odd. “You want to hold me back alone?”

“Not really alone.” Han Xiao shrugged his shoulders. By his side, a light flashed, and Aroshia drifted beside him. Apart from her, there were another few useless mercenaries in another monitoring room with their attention focused on the screen.

Han Xiao had left them behind on purpose, and their mission was to ignite the explosives that were laid all around the building to hold Ember down. At that moment, their palms were completely soaked in sweat and their breathing heavy. The look of nervousness could be seen all over their faces.

It was understandable for them to be nervous. After all, the figure in the surveillance image was a Calamity Grade Super. If they had been standing in Han Xiao's position, they probably would not even have been able to speak fluently. They could not help but feel nervous for Han Xiao.

The moment the enemy takes action, Black Star will be in danger.

If Black Star dies, we won't be able to benefit from his connections.

Ember raised his finger and found out that there was no reaction from Aroshia when he used his Esper abilities. He then shook his head and said, "It turns out your trump card is this energy lifeform. Do you think that you can stop me like that?"

Han Xiao twiddled a compressed orb and said with a smile, "We never decided the victor in our previous battle. Could it be that you are afraid?"

As Ember heard that, he could not help but chuckle. He had already entered the next grade and was no longer the same as before. He did not understand where Han Xiao's confidence came from. Could it be that Han Xiao thought that he was the same as before?

"Overestimating yourself." Ember's tone became cold. "Even though the rest aren't here, it isn't too bad to get rid of you. I will be able to fulfil a small wish of mine from the past. It won't be too late for me to provide reinforcements after getting rid of you."

A rustling sound could be heard as though there were numerous grains of sand rubbing against each other. However, this rustling sound quickly turned into the sound of rushing waves. Around Ember, countless carbon atoms had already formed a mysterious black cloud that was rapidly expanding.

The range of Ember's Esper abilities was greater than before, and he could control it much more easily than before. Countless carbon atoms were stuck to the surface of his clothes and skin, and it was just like a weapon that he could bring around with him. He was not afraid of fighting in a place without any carbon.

"This is the strength of a Grade A Super..." The sound of the mercenaries gulping with nervousness could be heard. They felt a wave of pressure emanating from the screen, and their legs turned to jelly.

But the next moment, they saw Han Xiao's body shaking and bolts of electricity being shot out in all directions. It accurately connected to the ceiling, ground, and the compressed orbs in every corner. With him as the center, he seemed to have formed a web of electricity!

Ka ka ka!

The next instant, hundreds of machines were activated. The scene was truly breathtaking!

Those compressed orbs had been set up by him before the battle!

The entire base was a trap that he had laid!

Chapter 486: Fierce Battle

Ka ka ka!

The sound of the machinery unfolding covered the sound of Ember's carbon particles rubbing against each other.

Following the walls and corners, hundreds of artillery pieces slammed onto their pedestals. The three-piece large caliber cannons gave out a sense of ferocity. The majority of the gunpowder artillery had been replaced with electromagnetic kinetic artillery, and there were ten additional laser light ray artillery pieces, providing higher penetrative force. [High Class Energy Control] had allowed Han Xiao to obtain the energy weapon technology.

Dong! Dong!

The artillery let out an angry howl as the large caliber cannons started to operate. The metallic hum of the turrets was reflected in the roar of the machinery.

Thirty to forty Black Panther mechanical beasts pounced out, their shoulder cannons spitting fire non-stop. On the ceiling, the mechanical spiders gleamed coldly as they scuttled around. Other than the Black Panther mechanical beast, Han Xiao was also able to manufacture smaller machines, such as the mechanical insect series. Other than spiders, he could also produce centipedes, scorpions, and wasps.

He only needed the blueprint of the mechanical spider for reference, and he could come out with the blueprints for other insect series by himself.

Phillip launched a unified attack, commanding all the machines to fire toward the ash.

The black carbon particles that were originally saturating the air contracted inward to form a sphere, with Ember wrapped inside it. The outer layer was made up of diamonds, and as the bullet rain cluster bombed it, the diamonds shattered, disintegrating into particles and reforming to fill the gaps. The capability of the shield seemed to be almost endless.

Seeing this, Han Xiao's face twitched. *This is the Carbon Shield? It's practically cheating!*

At this time, Ember's indifferent voice could be heard inside the ball of diamonds. "Even if you planned a trap in advance, even if you are immune to my Carbon Deconstruction, in the face of my current strength, you only have one outcome... Defeat!"

Boom!

The next moment, the diamond sphere transformed into a black-colored wave, slapping down with a force that could destroy mountains. Dozens of the mechanical beasts were caught within, and they turned into a pile of scrap metal in the blink of an eye. Not only did the metal bear signs of being crushed, it also had grooves and marks, traces of violent tearing.

What a strange force this is. It can instantly cripple the armor of my mechanical beasts!

As this thought rang through Han Xiao's head, he did not pause to observe further but slammed his palms together, releasing a compressed orb from each side of his hands. The orbs expanded to form thirty-two golden-white Hovering Shield Shuttles, which lined up in a circular manner around himself. They each spat out a thin ray of light, with every four beams combining into one, causing eight points of light to appear before Han Xiao's body.

The connection between each light point caused a reaction to occur immediately. A glowing line strung the eight light points together, forming a circle. Within the light circle, a mirror-like golden protective light shield appeared, as though painted by an artist!

The black wave welled up, slamming on the golden shield. The scene resembled one where waves from the sea dashed against the reefs, only to be split apart to move on either side instead. Under Ember's control, the split waves recombined behind Han Xiao, rushing from his back this time.

However, at that moment, the formation of the Hovering Shield Shuttles changed yet again. The eight light points were arranged in a 3D manner, forming shields surrounding Han Xiao's figure. It formed a trapezoidal shape, causing the black wave to be unable to attack from any angle. While the trapezoid flickered every time that the waves hit it, it ultimately remained motionless.

"Hovering Shield Shuttle Formation, Halo Array!"

[High Class Energy Control] was one of the core knowledge of the Mechanic class. During this period of time, Han Xiao had built quite a few interesting toys, and this [Halo Array] could be considered a stronger version of the Sonic Sphere, integrating offense and defense into one.

Han Xiao squinted as he scrutinized the waves and finally understood the reason for its weird strength difference.

The black tide only existed as a wave on the surface. If one looked closer, they could see that some carbon particles inside had been transformed into diamond fragments, and supported by high speed spinning inside the waves, they turned into something resembled a circular saw. The cutting force was abnormally strong as a result.

This swathe of black contained at least a few hundred of such 'diamond wheel saws'. Just like the undercurrent in a river, it would be difficult to notice without careful observation. It was no wonder the mechanical beasts had turned into scrap metal in an instant.

The significance of this was that if the wave was set to engulf a whole building, it would be able to turn it into rubble in a matter of seconds. This destructive power far exceeds that of its appearance on the surface, like a Golden Ant Colony that could strip an elephant down to its bare bones in a matter of seconds.

While he was confident in his tanky body, Han Xiao had no desire to let his tender skin be exposed to such a horrifying force.

They indeed live up to their names as Calamity Grades, to be able to have such control over conflicting operations of subtlety and aggressiveness. Ember was unable to achieve that in the past, but now he has more control over his abilities. I have to be more careful, Han Xiao reminded himself.

Even as the thoughts spun in his head, the Void Dragon Mechanical suit covered his body. He strode with large steps toward Ember in assault mode. There was no way of him breaking past Ember's defense from mid range; he had to get within close range to be able to have a chance.

Aroshia turned into a stream of light, penetrating into the diamond sphere that enclosed Ember. The carbon particles within could only cause her energy body to swell up but were unable to perform an effective attack, since she was highly immune to physical damage after transforming into energy.

Hum!

The rays coming from an energy explosion shone out from within the diamond sphere.

Ember had eaten a close-range energy bomb from Aroshia. Unable to retreat, he could only choose to deactivate his diamond sphere, turning it into a flat shield to ensure his visibility. He felt extremely uneasy in the presence of Aroshia, whose energy form made her immune to physical damage.

Numerous bullets sparked on the surface of Ember's diamond shield, ricocheting off with metallic noises. Ember glanced over the scene once before waving his hand. The carbon particles surrounding him wildly spread out, no longer clustering together. They turned into a black colored sandstorm, drilling into the various machines and destroying their internal circuits.

Buzz!

Sparks flew out as a large number of machines became crippled.

Ember coldly laughed. "The battle has ended."

As long as he managed to destroy all the machinery, the Mechanic class would become akin to a tiger whose teeth and claws had been pulled out.

While Black Star could mitigate his abilities, he could do the same to Black Star!

However, upon casting his eyes forward, Ember found out that Han Xiao seemed to have no intention to stop, as though he was indifferent toward what had happened.

With quick footwork, Han Xiao rushed up to Ember as a complicated machine unfolded in the palm of his hand. This melee weapon was very thick and almost two meters in length. It resembled a giant knife with a hand guard, but the shape was more futuristic, akin to a rifle with a barrel. This was a weapon in that category, named [High Frequency Strike Cannon], a multipurpose, close-range weapon.

This new equipment replaced his original electromagnetic scythe, which could not keep up with his strength.

The blade of the weapon was a protective shell covering the inner structure. The blade inside consisted of a high-frequency oscillation, which was hard to trace, carrying a strong cutting force. Along the side of the blade were two rows of holes, and each time the blade came into contact with the target, those holes would spew out gunpowder to ignite and cause an explosion.

The gunpowder could also cause internal heating, resulting in an electromagnetic overclocking of the equipment, allowing it to enter a second stage of Super power output, something akin to a Great Release ¹.

Surrounded by sparks and carrying lightning within, it was violent.

Boom boom boom!

One strike after another rained down, and the explosions continued unabated as Ember repeatedly used his diamond shield to resist. His brow was slightly furrowed. His forte did not lie in melee battles, so he attempted to retract the particles to surround his body, trying to sabotage Han Xiao's armor. However, the Sonic Spheres that followed Han Xiao disrupted the particles, foiling his scheme.

Sound waves were constantly released toward Han Xiao, forming an invisible shield around him. The moment that the carbon particles neared him, they would be forcefully repelled, bouncing off instead of adhering to the surface of his mechanical suit.

The three of them seemed to have rolled into a ball from the fighting. Ember's expression no longer showed ease, as Han Xiao was giving him more trouble than expected. It seemed like he was not the only one who had improved. He had originally thought that he would be able to eliminate Black Star quickly, but to think that he was tangled up with him now!

In Ember's original vision, only Nagakin would pose some trouble. Now, he found out that Black Star was also not easy to deal with. However, Ember thought that this was a good chance!

To be able to discover this point sooner was a blessing, compared to being caught off guard.

Because the enemy soldiers had split in two, Black Star had taken the risk to hold Ember up. However, he did not have many helpers with him. Thus, this could be considered the best chance to get rid of a strong enemy.

As he thought up to this point, the look in Ember's eyes changed.

He had initially wanted to resolve this quickly and meet up with Anur once more, but now, he would not mind putting in some more time to remove any possible hindrances.

At this time, a carefree laugh suddenly rang out from Han Xiao.

"Ah-ha, that's a good look you have there. I feel more killing intent. It seems like you're finally willing to waste more time with me."

"I certainly do not think it a waste of time," Ember coldly replied. "The majority of your machinery has gone to waste, and I can destroy your mechanical suit sooner or later. By that time, what other methods will you show me?"

"What other methods, you say?" Han Xiao chuckled twice before his tone suddenly turned ferocious. "Then, I'll let you experience it firsthand!"

Hum!

His Mechanical Force gushed out, and as though a shockwave of electricity, it swept across all the machinery present.

The next instant, the crippled machines were reactivated with [Waste Modification], and all of the weapons came back to life, awaiting orders!

The War Mechanic Class was one that was borne from war itself!

The mechanical roar resounded once again!

Ember was caught unprepared and was blasted flying. His face was blackened with soot, and he quickly blocked the follow-up attacks using his Esper abilities. While it was not a huge problem...

... he had indeed been injured!

Ember suddenly looked up, the anger blazing within his pupils.

The pain that he was suffering awakened his body's memory of Han Xiao.

The shame and humiliation that he suffered, which he had gradually forgotten, came rushing back like a tsunami!

Chapter 487: I Do Not Believe Heroes Cannot Fall to Their Deaths!

The enthusiasm from the duo's battle radiated outward, causing the mercenaries that were hidden in the surveillance room to stare with their mouths hanging agape.

Black Star could actually fight equally against a Calamity Grade Super?

The first thought that came into everyone's minds was that the opponent might not be so strong after all. While they had never seen the full capabilities of a Calamity Grade Super, they had heard many rumors about their frightening powers and how Grade B Supers were effortlessly destroyed in front of them.

However, looking at the battle between Han Xiao and Ember, maybe the rumors about the Calamity Grade Super's combat capability were simply overexaggerated.

This gave the mercenaries some form of confidence.

"I want to go down and help." A bearded mercenary suddenly stood up, withdrawing his gun from its holster.

Everyone else had a strange look on their face. While the enemy was not as strong as expected, it was definitely safer to be seated where they were. *Why do you have to seek danger?*

The bearded mercenary glanced at everyone, secretly disdainful. He thought that this was a godsent opportunity!

Since there was little danger, going down to help meant showcasing his good side to Black Star. If he left a deep enough impression, he might be invited to join the Black Star Mercenary Group!

This person thus hurriedly left the surveillance room. Nobody else dared to lecture him, turning their attention back to the surveillance cameras.

When the bearded mercenary reached the battlefield, the atmosphere made him feel a little nervous, causing him to start regretting his decision. He took a deep breath before telling himself that riches were obtained through encountering dangers.

Following which, he barged through the door loudly, firing continuously at Ember's back as he shouted, "Black Star, I'm here to reinforce you! Quickly...."

Pa!

In the blink of an eye, before the bearded mercenary could even finish speaking, his body 'collapsed'. Dust leaked out from within his clothes.

"He—he's dead just like that?"

The mercenaries in the surveillance room were all stunned silly, fear coloring their faces.

Weak my ass!

This guy can literally kill people through fright!

The Calamity Grades are too terrifying; we're better off hiding here and slacking!

The guts that had just begun growing within those mercenaries were nipped at the bud, and whatever courage they still had left was thrown out the window.

The group of mercenaries now understood that Black Star, who was able to compete with those of the Calamity Grade, was not just so-so as described by the other mercenaries. Most likely, even those Grade B mercenaries who secretly scoffed in disdain at Black Star could not beat him even if they fought together against Black Star.

Indeed, a person with reputation would definitely have some form of ability to back it up!

...

On the battlefield, Han Xiao felt that this matter was a little strange. Why did this bearded mercenary not bother to quietly hide? Could it be that he had been possessed by Aesop and purposely went there to seek death?

At this point, Ember repeated his tactic, attempting to paralyze the machines again. He did not believe that Han Xiao could repeatedly rejuvenate his machines.

His hypothesis was correct; Han Xiao indeed could not use his [Waste Modification] skill infinitely. Other than the limited number of uses, the energy consumed each time was not a small amount.

However, Han Xiao was clear of another point. Those carbon particles that Ember employed based on his control were similar to the relationship between him and his machines. Without them, Ember's ability would also weaken.

As such, Han Xiao had long made preparations.

With a snap of his fingers, a trap machine that had not yet been activated suddenly shone.

Within the black wave, countless spherical shaped lights appeared, trapping huge clumps of carbon particles within them. In an instant, the black wave was reduced by a great margin.

Those traps were nothing unique, just ordinary shield generators. In an orthodox sense, their purpose was not even made to trap items within. However, in Han Xiao's eyes, any machine could be a trap. To have those shields locking in a huge number of carbon particles was as good as trapping them within, causing them to become prisoners within the shields.

Even though Ember could still control the carbon particles, he needed energy and time to break through the shields. All that would create distractions for him.

This move of his effectively shaved off a portion of Ember's battle strength!

As for this location, it was comprised of an alloy that did not contain carbon within. Han Xiao's machines were also not made out the carbon steel materials, and thus, other than the mercenary who blindly sacrificed himself, there was nobody else whom Ember could extract carbon from. While the range of his ability was great, he still required time to extract the carbon from his sphere of influence and bring it over, unless he decided to extract the carbon particles from his very own body.

The remaining carbon particles suddenly started spinning, forming the shape of a tornado as it tried to cut through the ceiling. Ember had discovered that this battlefield was extremely disadvantageous to him. He wished to change the battlefield, and going out into the open would allow his combat capability to increase a few folds.

Ember did not realize that his attitude toward Han Xiao had imperceptibly changed—from the disdain and contempt early on to now, where he had even begun to consider the effect of the battlefield. He could clearly feel a sense of pressure from Han Xiao, from a Grade B Super, a pressure that this was an opponent who could threaten his life!

At that moment, Han Xiao strangely did not retreat but rather rushed toward the dangerous cutting tornado as he shouted, "Explode!"

Boom!

The mercenaries in the surveillance room hurriedly detonated the explosives, causing the base to collapse. Numerous building materials fell down and buried the area.

Han Xiao greatly respected any Calamity Grade Super, so he had prepared and buried a huge payload below them. Detonation was an art, and due to his positioning of the explosives, the entire floor of the building collapsed. The duo entered a state of weightlessness as they rapidly fell.

Rumble!

Bits of debris and rubble ricocheted around them, and their vision and breaths were obscured and stifled by the thick clouds of dust. The momentum caused by the explosion was so large that it was as though an entire mountain had shifted.

Ember hurriedly formed a diamond panel under his feet, stabilizing himself. He intended to fly out of this collapsing building while using his carbon particles to shield himself.

Hu!

From afar came the sound of loud whistling. Having fought with Han Xiao for so long, he recognized the sound coming from the High Frequency Strike Cannon. He understood that Han Xiao was pursuing him like a rabid dog. Ember did not wish to carry out a fight in such a complicated environment, but he had no choice but to retaliate.

Suddenly, a lump of black shadows appeared in front of him, obscuring his limited vision.

Ember jumped in shock. He was totally blind, and no matter what he tried, he was unable to escape from the cage of shadows. Furthermore, this thing could not even be touched, so he had no idea what contraption this was. The sound of howling winds was getting closer, but mixed within the various sounds of the collapsing building, it was difficult to pinpoint the exact position.

With no other alternatives, Ember could only deploy his diamond sphere defense once again.

Clank!

A tough object pierced into the sphere, and Ember immediately utilized micro-manipulation to reveal a small hole to appear at the moment of contact, trapping the hard object. Based on the size, it was obviously Han Xiao's Strike Cannon.

While he could not see, Ember immediately dispelled his diamond sphere, changing it into a long spear, and pierced in the direction of the Strike Cannon. He predicted that his reaction speed would still be able to catch Han Xiao.

However, his strike only hit thin air.

"Not good!"

Ember instantly reacted, but it was already too late. A large hand from the mechanical suit firmly latched onto the back of his head, and without any warning, a Void Jet Spray was discharged directly.

At the same time, Han Xiao utilized the skill [Armor Piercing Consecutive Attacks] from the Germinal Organization's Leader's Character Summon Card. In the next five seconds, all his attacks would have a certain chance to break the armor of his enemy, reducing his defense by twenty-four percent.

Boom!

Ember felt as though he was struck by lightning. His brain shook, and stars flew in his vision, causing his Esper ability to dissipate for that instant.

But this instant was enough to cause the diamond panel that he had below him to disintegrate. The duo once again fell down the collapsed building!

Swoosh!

Dust blew in their faces, and they could only hear the sounds of collapse and the whistling of wind.

Before this, Han Xiao had borrowed the messy and complicated environment to create a diversion attack. He had first used [Void Vision] to inhibit Ember's line of sight, followed by throwing his weapon

and using [Void Travel] to appear behind Ember soundlessly, creating the scenario where he attacked Ember from behind.

This opportunity was rare; thus, Han Xiao would not let go. He ignored the cost of energy, releasing burst after burst of Void Jet Spray. This was the additional ability granted by the Void Dragon Mechanical suit. While it had no cooldown, the energy consumed would rise by thirty percent if used again within ten seconds.

“Forty-two percent of Energy remaining, hum... Twenty-six percent of Energy remaining... Energy level critical, hum...”

The energy of the mechanical suit was spent at a torrential rate, with the voice of Phillip constantly sending out warnings.

Ember was hurriedly attempting to gather energy within his body. No matter the class, Energy had a universal function, which was to raise resistance for a short period of time.

Suffering a series of heavy blows, Ember had no choice but to focus his attention on defending himself. As such, the control of his ability dropped by almost seventy to eighty percent.

Han Xiao had managed to see Ember’s attributes through the interface. This guy also had a Boss template, with his defense and health at insane values. Furthermore, because he was a Grade A Super, his conversion of Endurance was too high, so much so that his health was comparable to Han Xiao’s. Thus, Han Xiao could not afford to be stingy. All kinds of explosive abilities such as [Gene Liberation] and [Overload] were activated, and Han Xiao even chose to activate the Character Summon Card of Hila, [Whisper of the Dead]. Causing mental damage could also help to shave off a target’s attention.

This series of buffs was activated extremely quickly. They had only fallen around half the distance, with both of them still weightless.

Ember’s head was still being clamped, and the pain and humiliation caused him to sink into fury.

While he could not see what was happening behind him, he could feel the power fluctuations given off by Han Xiao weakening. This indicated that his energy in his mechanical suit was low, which meant that his burst of attacks was about to end.

While he had taken a hit, he had at least achieved his objective. The moment that they came into contact with the outside world, that would be his stage!

The last Void Jet Spray completely drained the energy in the mechanical suit. Ember could clearly sense this point, and he endured the splitting pain in his head, hoarsely saying, “You have no more energy left... Just wait for me to drag you out from your turtle shell. I’ll turn you into mincemeat!”

When Han Xiao heard this, he gritted his teeth and lowly shouted, “Aroshia!”

Aroshia was not affected by gravity at all, merely following beside both of them, her body easily phasing through the rubble. When she heard her name, she turned into a beam of light and accelerated, sticking to Han Xiao’s back. She opened her arms and embraced him from the back.

Hum!

Her energy body was like melting ice, flowing into the core of the mechanical suit.

In an instant, the Void Dragon Mechanical suit's energy capacity shot through the roof!

"Energy levels at 327%, hum... Circuit is overloaded. Please expend the excess energy as soon as possible, hum..."

To Han Xiao, Aroshia's energy was the biggest reserve battery for him!

Han Xiao's tightened his hand, holding Ember's head as though he was clamping it with tongs.

"Energy? I'm not lacking in that! Are you ready for a severe concussion?"

Boom!

Feeling the new surge in energy levels, Ember's eyes opened wide, shock and anger filling his face. He felt that something was amiss, as though the entire matter had proceeded out of his control.

This sort of feeling... made him subconsciously remember the time when he first fought Han Xiao! He gritted his teeth.

Every time... it's the same every single time!

*This b*stard has all sorts of schemes!*

The continuous series of explosions drowned whatever thoughts he had. The duo slammed into the ground, the impact jolting both to their bones. They lay prone, unable to muster the strength to stand due to the pain in their bodies.

At this point, a huge shadow rapidly expanded where they were situated.

The next second, the collapsed building slammed down on them.

Boom!

Dust billowed!

The earth shook!

Chapter 488: Retreat

The commotion of the collapsing building startled the pedestrians and they gathered together at a distance, pointing at the rubble as they discussed about the chaos with shock.

In the skies, a large number of aircrafts stopped in midair and looked down at the rubble below.

While the destruction of this battle was not as bad as the battle between the three Grade A Supers, because of something similar happening a while back, the citizens of Noriosse paid close attention to the battle.

"How is Black Star? Who won?" A couple of mercenaries who ignited the explosives had long escaped from the base and were currently in midair within an aircraft.

Swoosh!

A mechanical arm pushed off a large boulder, and a figure could be seen climbing out of the rubble with difficulty. With his hands on his knees, Han Xiao panted heavily.

“Ouch... a few of my ribs were fractured.” Han Xiao felt a dull ache in his chest. An entire building had crashed down on him, and even with the powerful defense of his Void Dragon armor, its durability had fallen from the original sixty-seven percent to about thirty percent. Black crack marks could be seen all over the armor, and sparks could be seen coming out from some of the cracks. Thankfully, the equipment’s passive [Indestructible Toughness] was activated, and the resistance of the armor was increased many times over.

A portion of the damage penetrated through the mechanical suit’s defenses. Han Xiao looked at the interface in front of him, and it showed that he had lost more than 4,000 HP together with light fractures and slight dizziness effects.

The majority of the damage had come from the falling debris. Thousands of tons of debris had smashed down onto his body, and when he was falling, his entire attention had been placed on attacking. He had let Phillip take over the control of the machines so that he would not need to divert his attention. When he landed, both he and Ember had landed in two different regions. Phillip had immediately turned the Halo Array into a shield to block the majority of the falling debris. Without that, the damage that he had suffered would definitely have been much worse.

Because of the collapsed building, the majority of his machines were buried under the rubble. However, he still had over seventy compressed orbs on him and still had the ability to fight. Aroshia separated from the mechanical suit, and her glow was obviously dimmer than before. Han Xiao had used up plenty of energy.

The dust cloud spread, and his visibility was limited. Han Xiao looked around him to find Ember.

Killing a Calamity Grade Super was not that easy, but this series of attacks would definitely be enough to make Ember suffer. Ember did not have the powerful physique of a pugilist or any Esper abilities to strengthen his body. If he did not use his Esper abilities to put up a defense, his durability would not be very high.

Sha sha sha!

At that moment, a familiar grinding sound could be heard, and Han Xiao’s expression changed. He immediately jumped back, and three thick black spears shot down where he had been standing just a moment ago. Those black spears had easily penetrated through the rubble and created a pit over ten meters long.

The dust cloud was blown away by the strong wind, and Han Xiao could see a thick, black wave that was double the size of before. It spanned over two to three hundred meters and was still expanding. Now that he was not in a building, Ember was able to gain access to a never-ending supply of carbon.

All of a sudden, the black current condensed into a large, lifelike python, which was two to three meters thick and a hundred meters long. The body of the python stood erect with its snake head looking at Han

Xiao, sticking out its tongue. It looked as though it was truly alive. On top of the snake's head, Ember's figure could be seen.

He should have been full of elegance and majesty, but he was currently looking a little pitiful. His clothes were torn all over the place and blood was seeping down from his forehead with half of his face dyed red. The skin at the back of his head all the way down to his neck was torn apart. Being shot by the Void Jet Spray twenty to thirty times had obviously left a scar. Ember's face contorted in pain as he glared at Han Xiao furiously.

Every single attack that Han Xiao shot out was aimed at his head, and Ember had to focus all of his attention to control his Esper abilities. Thus, he was forced to endure a head splitting headache, which affected his ability to control his Esper powers. He was not able to perform any meticulous control and could only expand the range of his carbon wave.

In the sky, a couple of mercenaries gasped in disbelief. "That Calamity Grade Super is severely injured!"

They had personally witnessed Ember's strength, and there was even one of them who had personally experienced it. However, Black Star was actually not on the losing end and had severely injured this Grade A Super who was considered a powerful figure in the galaxy.

He was truly formidable!

The gazes of those in the surroundings were very quickly drawn to Ember. In truth, it was difficult for them not to notice such a large black snake.

This looks bad. Han Xiao knew that things were no longer in his favor. For him to achieve such a battle result, it was because of his meticulous set up of the battlefield ahead of the event. While he had severely wounded Ember and affected his battle prowess, Ember was still far from death. Since they were on the outside, Ember would be able to make full use of his abilities, and it would be difficult for him to injure Ember any further. There would not be a chance like before.

A thought flashed through Han Xiao's head. *His attention is fully on me. As long as I can hold him back, when Nagakin succeeds on the other side...*

He would not lose his cool just because he had the upper hand. He was very clear that he would be the one suffering if the battle continued.

He did not continue battle, and the thrusters of his Void Dragon mechanical suit began spewing fire. Han Xiao shot into the sky and began to flee.

"Don't think of escaping!" Ember roared furiously, and the python under him shot into the sky to chase after Han Xiao.

Escape? This is a strategic retreat!

Numerous black spears shot over, and Han Xiao avoided them nimbly in midair. Turning around to take a look, Han Xiao heaved a sigh of relief. Thankfully, Ember gave chase. That fellow was indeed infuriated.

Avoiding a head on confrontation and letting Ember chase him would allow him to buy the largest amount of time. Han Xiao did not feel that it was necessary to fight him head on.

With one person escaping and the other chasing, both of them weaved through the buildings. Humungous black python charged forward recklessly, and its size was constantly increasing. All the aircrafts along the way hurriedly avoided the python, and those that were not able to get out of the way in time were quickly reduced to shreds. Even the buildings that the python merely brushed past had large chunks taken out of them.

The commotion was shocking!

Compared to the black snake, Han Xiao's figure was like a little bug.

Woo...

The ringing alarms could be heard from afar, and the Public Security Squad rushed over at high speed. The destruction that Ember had caused had affected the peace of the city, and the Public Security Squad would not ignore it.

"Di di di... You have an incoming call request..."

A notification sounded in his helmet, and Han Xiao accepted the call request. Nagakin's face then appeared in front of him.

"Alvin's doppelganger has been brought to safety. Anur destroyed two streets, but thankfully, a passing Calamity Grade tourist was dragged into the fight and decided to help out. However, Anur's speed was too fast, and we could only force him back..."

A passing Calamity Grade Super?

This piece of news was truly out of his expectations. Han Xiao had thought that he would have to stall for a while longer, and his face could not help but cramp up. At the same time, he lamented about how Noriosse was truly full of hidden dragons and crouching tigers.

He could not help but think about the first time that he met Alvin. This fellow's luck was probably even better than Herlous', and he had truly gotten lucky this time.

"Black Star, hang in there. We will come back and reinforce you immediately!"

Nagakin's voice was filled with anxiety. The way he saw it, it was far too dangerous for Han Xiao to be delaying Ember alone. He had been afraid that Han Xiao would already have beaten before he called.

Turning off the communicator, Han Xiao's eyes glowed. With Nagakin fulfilling his part of the plan, there was no need for him to entertain Ember any further. He then turned around and turned on the speaker in his helmet.

"Do you really think that you can get rid of me? Have you forgotten about my other ability?"

As Ember heard that, his face turned color.

He suddenly remembered that when he was on Floating Dragon Island, Han Xiao had once displayed the ability to recover fully in an instant.

This meant that this battle would not end any time soon!

“The Public Security Squad is rushing over, and the Grade A Super hired by Noriosse will not allow you to act so unbridled. My comrades have already forced Anur back and will be here to reinforce me soon. If you still want to continue playing with me, I shall accompany you,” Han Xiao said in a tone filled with delight.

Ember had a look of hesitation on his face and was extremely reluctant. He was stuck in a dilemma where he could not advance or retreat.

Continuing the battle would only be a waste of time. Not only would he be unable to get rid of Black Star, he would end up being surrounded. However, he was reluctant to retreat like that! After being beaten up by the enemy, he had not settled the score with the enemy and still had to retreat! This was too much!

The sound of the sirens grew nearer, and Ember realized that Han Xiao had already reduced his speed, looking as though he had no fear. Ember’s expression was ice cold with a sharp pain coming from his wounds and the dizziness reminding him of the condition of his body.

The pride and arrogance that he had after entering the Calamity Grade had vanished during the battle.

Black Star’s name was even more deeply imprinted in his heart. Together with the pain, this impression had seeped into his bones.

“It is my mistake. I underestimated you too much. Next time, regardless of your strength and the machines around you, regardless of whether you are in your prime or severely injured, I will not be careless.”

He then calmed his anger with a complicated look in his eyes.

After one last glare at Han Xiao, Ember resolutely turned around. The black snake crumbled into a dark cloud and escaped with him like a black mountain demon.

“I’m finally safe.”

Han Xiao stopped moving and heaved a sigh of relief. While he seemed to be extremely relaxed on the surface, he was feeling a great deal of stress in his heart. If he did not fight Ember in a place that was to his advantage, he would definitely be on the losing end. If all of his machines were destroyed, even Aurora’s Character Summon Card would be completely useless. At the very most, he would only be able to make use of it six times, and he had already been forced by Ember to use it once.

He did not wait for Nagakin to return and surround Ember but warned him to escape. If Ember truly wanted to escape, it would be difficult for them to stop him. On the contrary, all of the other mercenaries would have to face the risk of being annihilated.

Looking at the incoming Public Security Squad, Han Xiao did not wish to be interrogated, so he hid from them.

At the same time, Nagakin arrived with the mercenaries. The moment that they saw the destroyed building, those hired mercenaries were completely dumbfounded.

Along the way, all of them had been extremely pessimistic about Han Xiao's chances of survival. For Black Star to delay a Grade A Super alone, they all felt that he would definitely be trampled upon and were extremely worried.

However, they witnessed the rubble created from an intense battle, and everyone, including Nagakin, was dumbfounded.

Just what had happened?

Where did Black Star go?

Chapter 489: Anur

As the mercenaries who had stayed behind saw the returning Nagakin and the others, they hurriedly landed, and both parties met up. The hundred or so mercenaries who had gone out to rescue Alvin then heard those few mercenaries excitedly describing what had happened.

Apart from Herlous and those from the Black Star Mercenary Group, looks of disbelief could be seen on the others. Black Star was actually able to fight a Calamity Grade Super evenly and had even severely injured his opponent. This was completely different from what they had expected!

Everyone was shocked into silence.

Even Herlous was in a slight daze. "Is he so powerful?"

Nagakin was immediately overjoyed. He had not felt confident, and never had he imagined that Black Star would be such a reliable ally.

At that moment, Nagakin received a message. Han Xiao asked them to dig out all the machines buried under the rubble before meeting up with them at another place. He also reminded them not to attract too much attention.

Nagakin turned around and realized that more and more people were gathering over to watch the show. The Public Security Squad and construction team were also rushing over. Too many regions of Noriosse had been damaged by battles recently, and the Noriosse Financial Group was probably extremely frustrated. Nagakin did not wish to be tied down by them and hurriedly instructed everybody to quickly dig up all the machines before they escaped.

After waiting for a while, Han Xiao arrived.

The hired mercenaries looked at Han Xiao with more respect in their eyes and made way to let him in.

Walking over to the middle of the crowd, Han Xiao slapped Herlous on the shoulders and said with a smile, "Ember was injured by me, and he is definitely suffering a headache right now."

Herlous was stunned for a while, and he stroked his mechanical arm. Every time that he thought about Ember, the nerve connection to his mechanical arm would begin to ache dully. Hearing that, Herlous broke out in a wide smile and felt his anger vented.

"Good brother, fantastic!"

After chatting casually for a while, Han Xiao collected all the recovered machines back into their compressed orbs. After counting all of his machinery carefully, Han Xiao concluded that he lost about thirty machines, and many of his machines had dropped in quality. Apart from injuring Ember, he did not receive any material gains. The biggest gain would be completing their mission objective and saving Alvin's final doppelganger.

"We meet again, friends." Alvin greeted everyone. His complexion was pale, and his lips white. It was obvious that he was not very healthy.

"Seeing a mixed blood Godoran again, nothing good will happen for sure." Han Xiao shook his head. "Where is the Grade A Super who helped?"

"He left."

"Leaving without leaving his name behind, he is probably a Superhero."

Han Xiao did not find the matter strange. The more powerful someone was, the greater their responsibilities. At the very least, there were some who still adhered to such principles. Superheroes were a common occurrence, and there were many powerhouses who did not mind playing the role of a hero occasionally.

After saving their target, Han Xiao and the others began discussing their next move.

"If DarkStar want to have any progress, they only have two choices. First, search for Alvin's main body, which will be like finding a needle in a haystack. Second, snatch his final doppelganger from us. Thus, we have the initiative, and DarkStar is on the passive side. They will be anxious. Nagakin, how much longer will it take for your reinforcements to arrive?"

"The War Bureau sent the fleet nearest to us, but even if they make use of the stargate, they will take twelve days at least."

"DarkStar won't ignore the incoming reinforcements and will definitely send their fleet to hide near Noriosse. I have a few ideas, but we should first find a new base before discussing them in detail."

...

On the other side of the city, the injured DarkStar troops found a concealed location to rest and recuperate. While the battle had been short, it had also been extremely intense. The number of Grade B Supers on both sides added up to about fifteen, and with the mercenaries being well trained, the battle had been intense.

Herlous' Battleship Slicing Blade and Sherman's cannon had clashed with each other ferociously. Wilsander had also joined the battle and found the most powerful enemy, Forsyth. Sylvia's strength was far too weak, so she had not entered the battle. Since Feidin was only a customer, he was not willing to be dragged into the battle.

Anur's expression was extremely ugly, and his mood was very bad. The battle had initially been in their favor, but another Grade A Super had jumped in from nowhere and resulted in all of his efforts going down the drain. How was he to know that a Grade A Super would suddenly pass by that region? He had already tried his best to reduce the collateral damage.

For the majority of Calamity Grade Supers, as long as they went all out, they would definitely have the ability to change the very geography of a planet. For their strength to grow to such a level, they could be considered a walking weapon capable of wiping out a civilization. However, they had to restrain themselves when fighting someone of the same level. The more restrained they were, the more concentrated their attacks would be, and the more easily they would be able to break through the enemy's defenses. If they only tried to spread out the range of their destructive abilities, it would not threaten an opponent of their level.

Furthermore, Anur did not wish to create too much damage on this planet and provoke the Noriosse Financial Group.

If Ember had rushed over in time, they might have had a chance in a two-on-two battle. However, who knew what Ember was doing? He had not arrived even after a long time. It was truly difficult for Anur to understand. With the majority of the enemies in battle with him, there should not have been too many men left behind in the base. Just what had taken Ember so long?

With Anur being surrounded, he had been able to escape injury only because of his speed. Finally, seeing Alvin escape and being unable to wait for Ember's arrival, he could only retreat.

One could only imagine how frustrated Anur was at Ember.

Not too long later, Ember returned to the base. The blood had clotted and formed scabs. The injuries all over his neck were extremely frightening, and everyone was shocked.

Seeing that, Anur began to frown. "How did you get injured? What did you meet? Could it be that Nagakin found yet another Calamity Grade Super?"

Ember waved his hands and said with his teeth clenched, "It was Black Star. He stayed behind to deal with me."

Anur's eyes widened in disbelief. "You mean to say that you were delayed by a Grade B Super and were beaten by the other party to this state?"

Ember nodded.

Anur took a few seconds to regain his cool. "Since you dragged the battle on for so long, you must have gotten rid of him, right?"

"The situation was urgent, and I retreated."

Anur immediately let out a curse.

He had placed a great amount of hope in Ember, but at that moment, he could not help but wonder if he groomed the wrong person.

Ember could feel the change in Anur's gaze and knew that his respected teacher was extremely disappointed in him. His face contorted, and he wanted to explain himself. However, he felt that he would only embarrass himself even further and thus chose to remain silent.

Anur had decided that he must lock Ember up for another year after their return. He did not wish to see the face of this fellow and said to Forsyth, "The situation isn't in our favor. Do you have any suggestions?"

Forsyth thought for a moment before saying, "We have three choices. We can either use the three doppelgangers in our hands to find Alvin's main body, snatch the doppelganger from them and kill Nagakin while we're at it, or... do nothing at all."

Chapter 490: Sharp Contradiction

"What do you mean?"

"We are hidden in the dark, and Alvin's main body won't dare appear," Forsyth explained. "Thus, the other party is definitely waiting for the Godoran reinforcements. Our fleet is already awaiting their orders near Noriosse, and we can apply for more motherships to be sent out. When the reinforcements of the other party arrive and attempt to collect Alvin from Noriosse, our troops can launch an ambush and destroy the enemy's fleet. Not only will we be able to get rid of a traitor, we will also be able to get rid of a Godoran fleet."

"You are right," Anur said. "The port is a place that they have to pass, and it is easy to track their whereabouts. This can be a layer of insurance, but we cannot ease up. Continue to search for Alvin's main body and give the other party pressure."

...

Han Xiao and the others found another base. After settling down, he looked for Nagakin and Alvin to discuss their plans. However, before their discussion, a question surfaced in his mind. Why did Alvin choose to betray DarkStar? There was no information on this character from his previous life.

"Betray? I do not feel that this is a betrayal." Alvin shook his head. "I have golden colored skin and am a Godoran. This is abandoning the darkness and entering the light. I joined DarkStar once, but it does not mean that I have to be a member of DarkStar forever."

"There are many mixed blood Godorans who are treated with prejudice and scorn. Thus, when the members of DarkStar appeared before me, I left without any hesitation. DarkStar's hiring process is extremely strict, and it would be almost impossible for any Godoran spies to sneak in. I am naturally not a spy either."

Han Xiao's brows then furrowed, and he asked, "So, why have you chosen to side Godora now?"

"Because I noticed that Godora's problem with DarkStar isn't so simple. DarkStar has always brainwashed their members with hatred and described Godora as an extremely evil entity, as though they wished to wipe out all mixed blood Godorans. Reinforcing hatred is the same as reinforcing loyalty to them. The members of DarkStar have begun to hate Godora more and more over the years, but news of the true situation in Godora has always been restricted."

Alvin raised his head up and sighed. "Godora's attitude toward the mixed blood Godorans isn't so extreme, and the government is very open. They only treat DarkStar as their enemy, and to ordinary mixed bloods, the government has always been extremely fair to protect their rights."

Han Xiao nodded and said in a teasing tone, "I am waiting for you to say 'but'."

Alvin laughed bitterly as he heard that. "Alright. But... the government's stance and policies aren't sufficient to change the views of the Godorans. The purebloods' disdain toward the mixed bloods is deeply rooted in tradition. While the government is able to give us the assurance of material objects, discrimination is one's free will. The government isn't able to control the thoughts of its people. The Godoran government wants to accept the mixed bloods, but the enemies of this policy are their own citizens and the millions of years of tradition.

"DarkStar's presence incited greater contradiction between the people and made the purebloods discriminate against us even more. Even though terrorists like DarkStar have nothing got to do with ordinary mixed bloods, that isn't enough to change the views of the majority. After all, not everyone is able to act rationally.

"Compared to the dangerous DarkStar, the mixed bloods living in Godora are targets for them to vent their frustration. While DarkStar claims that they are fighting for the lives of the mixed bloods, their unscrupulous means haven't given the mixed bloods a better life but have turned it into a greater torture. As such, even more mixed bloods have been forced toward DarkStar's side.

"This is a knot that is extremely difficult to untie. You cannot expect the purebloods to suddenly end their discrimination in a single night, and you cannot expect the mixed bloods to not have any thought of retaliation when being discriminated against. This is the fact that DarkStar is exploiting. If not for DarkStar, would the mixed bloods suffer from so much discrimination?"

Han Xiao tapped on the table with his finger and looked at Nagakin. "What do you think?"

Nagakin let out a sigh. "He is right. I do not discriminate against the mixed bloods, but I do not represent everyone. The policies of the upper echelons have always been to treat the mixed bloods with kindness and give them a fair chance to seize opportunities. However, because of DarkStar, those on top are also afraid that the mixed bloods may betray them. Thus, it is impossible for any mixed bloods to climb to a high position. You can treat it as a solidification of social class."

"While policies may be good, a good plan may not be feasible, especially when it involves the benefits and survival of an entire race." A thoughtful expression lingered on Alvin's face. "Thus, I am willing to defect to Godora. Perhaps the lives of mixed bloods will only become better with DarkStar being eliminated."

"Your ambitions are extremely noble," Han Xiao said with respect.

"Thank you." Alvin smiled. His tone then changed. "However, even if you praise me, I will not hand over any intel before I am completely safe."

"Don't say that to me; it isn't my concern," Han Xiao said with a smile. "You should say that to the Godorans. My mission is only to protect you."

He then retracted his smile and said in a serious tone, "We are unable to predict DarkStar's plans, and we currently have a few options. First, hide ourselves and observe any changes while waiting for our reinforcements. This will be the most passive plan. Second, take the initiative to attack DarkStar. Distract them so that they won't have the energy to find your main body.

"The third option requires the agreement of you, Alvin. We can hide your main body far away from this place, and it would be best if it was on the other side of the planet. This way, your doppelgangers will all disappear. While you will suffer some injuries, DarkStar will lose all clues. I know a Teleportation Mage who lives on Noriosse, and he can help us. If not, he will definitely be beaten up by me again.

"Fourth, find a chance to leave Noriosse secretly with your main body. However, this plan is extremely risky. There is a ninety percent chance that DarkStar's fleet is currently hiding outside the atmosphere, and leaving rashly would only cause us to fall into their net."

Nagakin and Alvin looked at each other with hesitation.

Han Xiao then said with a deep voice, "If the two of you don't have any other suggestions, which plan will you pick?"

With Nagakin's personality, he leaned toward taking the initiative to attack.

However, Alvin did not want to take the risk and preferred to wait and watch.

Bang!

Before they could come to a decision, Aroshia's body suddenly swayed, and she crashed onto the table with a loud bang.

The few of them turned over to take a look. She was currently holding onto her head with her eyes in disarray and brows furrowed as though she was in great pain.

"What's wrong"? Han Xiao got up immediately and held onto Aroshia's shoulders.

Aroshia rubbed her temples. "It is like... there is a voice calling out to me in my head. It seems to be getting closer to me. I can feel its position..."

Han Xiao's brows were raised, unsure of what was going on.

...

At the same time, a black spaceship finally came out from dark space and was floating among the stars.

It had arrived from a distant star field. It had jumped through numerous stargates, almost been caught in a black hole, witnessed the explosion of a new planet, driven past an asteroid belt, escaped the chaotic tides of space, met a radiation storm, and also traveled through the most silent part of space without a single organism or planet. After a whole series of dangers, it had finally stopped.

The shiny mirror-like exterior of the spaceship reflected a planet that looked like an iron fortress.