

## The Mechanic 601

### Chapter 601: No Reason Not To

*Why did Black Star ask me to stop? And with such a strange tone...*

Brock stopped instantly. He was shocked, and various guesses flashed through his mind.

*Did I show the cloven hoof?*

*That's impossible...* Brock took a deep breath, suppressed his worries, and turned around to face Han Xiao with a surprised expression.

“Your Excellency Black Star, is there a problem?”

Han Xiao sized Brock up then looked at the information on the interface again.

His level was way higher than those freelance mercenaries, so none of their attributes, abilities, or talents were secrets to Han Xiao.

Brock was Grade B borderline. Most of the freelance mercenaries there were Grade Cs with only a few Grade Bs. Brock was an elite among them, and he was the first Grade B tested by Han Xiao.

However, inside the Class List of Brock, there was a [DarkStar Elite Warrior], and there were also DarkStar abilities in his Ability List. Han Xiao had dealt with DarkStar for a few years, so there was no way for him to mistake it.

Plus, Brock was a hybrid Godoran, so the identity of this person was crystal clear.

He was one of the remnants, a secret member of DarkStar!

*Some guts this guy has, coming to join my faction...*

Han Xiao slightly squinted his eyes. Within a short moment, Han Xiao had guessed what Brock was thinking.

*Wants to gain my trust, hide in my faction as a spy? Was this his decision, or was he ordered to?* Han Xiao thought. What he was thinking of was further into the future. Not long ago, the Godorans had told him a piece of bad news—they had lost the DarkStar leader and Ember.

The DarkStar leader was a dangerous person, and Godora had let the master evil escape. Han Xiao kept feeling that they would make a comeback. He was wondering if Brock had been ordered by the DarkStar leader. If he had been ordered, that would mean that the DarkStar leader had secret means to contact his remaining forces!

He might be able to follow the lead brought by Brock and find the DarkStar leader!

With those thoughts, Han Xiao raised his eyebrows and smiled. He said to Brock, “You are quite skilled. I want to give you a special job. Are you interested?”

Brock was finally relieved. Suddenly, he felt like he had been too anxious.

*I've really overthought this. There's absolutely no way that I'm exposed.* Brock was completely relaxed now. Acting as if he was flattered, he said, "What do you need me to do?"

"Er, I want you to become the drill sergeant of the training camp temporarily, helping me train the mercenaries who have yet met the requirements."

"Sure, no problem." Brock nodded, secretly overjoyed.

Although the trainer was not considered an officer, and there was no opportunity to touch the core of the Black Star Army, this was a good start. The fact that he had been given a special position as soon as he joined meant that Black Star had taken notice of him. This way, it would be easier for him to gain Black Star's trust!

"Do your best. Go to the side and wait. After the test ends, I will make the appropriate arrangements."

Han Xiao encouraged him and sent away the excited Brock, then secretly threw an Observer's Mark onto the spy.

The Observer's Mark could locate up to five targets at once, he had the last slot left, and he used it on Brock. Next time, if he wanted to mark a new target, he would have to remove one of the five old targets.

Brock's spy identity was already exposed. However, not only was Han Xiao not going to eliminate Brock, he was boldly going to use him. With Phillip and the Observer's Mark, none of Brock's actions would escape his eyes. As soon as he did anything unusual, Han Xiao would know of it. Of course, Brock had just joined, so he definitely would not do anything bizarre for the sake of his disguise.

Most importantly, a spy would definitely work extra hard to gain his trust without any complaints. This was great manual labor. If he did not drain him properly, he would feel wasteful.

It just so happened that the training camp of Base No.1 had not yet been built, so only a Grade B could be the trainer of a large group of Grade C Supers. Training others was very troublesome, and Han Xiao did not want to waste his free time. Initially, he was going to call Ginette back, but now that Brock was there, it was enough. After all, no matter how much Han Xiao used or overworked him, he would not feel sorry for him.

...

This small incident did not cause any commotion and made many people more excited.

In their eyes, this meant that Black Star cared about talent. As long as they were strong enough, there was a chance for them to get a better position on the spot.

Time passed by, and Han Xiao tested them for another few hours more. More than 5,000 passed and became official mercenaries, and more than 1,000 failed and were sent to the training camp.

During the test, he discovered another three Grade B Supers. Sadly, they did not have any outstanding talents or abilities. They were considered regular Grade B Supers. Nonetheless, they were Grade Bs no matter what, so Han Xiao promoted these three to team leaders on the spot, giving them the authority to gather a certain number of Black Star mercenaries and form a fixed team.

There were two ranking systems implemented in the Black Star Army. One was based on merit, from 1-Star to 5-Star, followed by the honor title of 'Black Star Eighteen Knights'. They were promoted through contribution points, earning better benefits.

Another was based on position, meaning the management structure of an army. Han Xiao had learned from the Sky Ring Army about using both the class ranking system and merit ranking system. The higher one's contribution was or the stronger one was, the higher their position would be, and the more people they would be able to manage in a team.

Grade B Super met the requirement in terms of strength, so they got the position of team leaders.

Currently, the Black Star Army was divided into numerous factions: the Sunil Faction led by Herlous, the Battle Alliance Faction led by Harmon, the Associates Faction including Aroshia and other officers, and the Free Faction made by the players and some mercenaries. The Free Faction had the most people and could be considered the most common group of people.

Only Han Xiao could command everyone. Usually, these factions all did their own thing. This was most obvious for the Sunil and the Battle Alliance Factions; their members were close and very united.

Where there were people, there would be competition. Forming groups and factions was a problem that was definitely going to happen with larger numbers. As the Black Star Mercenary Group's size grew, so did the difficulty in managing it. In order to develop better, they had to imitate other large mercenary groups and design a layered management system, making sure everyone had their own responsibilities. This was also something that Han Xiao had been thinking about recently.

The upper positions were a difficult problem.

Currently, all the officers were basically combat personnel; there was no clear difference in their positions other than Herlous, who could barely be considered his assistant. Many positions were unoccupied, such as Deputy Captain, Area Manager, Business Manager, Logistics, Spaceship Commanders, and many more.

These positions were like screw holes, and elites and officers were the screws. Han Xiao needed to find suitable screws, fit them into the right holes, and tighten them. Only then would the management structure of the Black Star Army become solid.

"The army has hundreds of thousands of members. The base manpower is very high, but we're short of elite manpower. Sigh, I need to recruit more high-level people."

Han Xiao shook his head. Although the size of his base troops was superior compared to many large mercenary groups, high level combat powers were the drawback of his faction at the moment. He was the only Calamity Grade Super in the Black Star Army, and they only had about ten Grade B elites. When compared to the Sky Ring Army who had three Calamity Grades and hundreds of Grade Bs, he was far below.

Han Xiao was not short in people with potential under him. Sylvia, for example, had been Grade A in the previous life, Herlous had the potential to reach Grade A, and Hila and Aurora's Esper Potential even exceeded Grade A, not to mention the players with enormous potential.

However, the potential was not strength. These people had yet to fully grow, and Feidin who had the protagonist aura above his head was not his subordinate, just an employer who tagged along. The players had the version restrictions too. They could not become Grade B yet, at least not in Version 2.0.

*It would be great if I could get a Calamity Grade Super.*

Han Xiao sighed. Expanding his faction meant more accompanying difficulties. There were too many things that needed improvements.

The last candidate stepped forward. Han Xiao tapped him, and that person's attributes appeared on his interface.

With just a single glance, Han Xiao's expression changed.

*Level... 135?*

This person's level was the highest in all the freelance mercenaries!

Just seven levels lower than himself!

Han Xiao felt wide awake. He looked up at this freelance mercenary called Reynold.

*Hmm... Spacehuman, snow-white skin, seems to be a hybrid. Longer than the usual face, high nose bridge, not as handsome as me but gives off a special vibe. Looks like his character is colder and more rational. This guy's eyes are really bright... and he's staring at me too.*

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows and looked at the other attributes of this person.

*Reynold... 1147 INT, Grade B+ Mechanic? Wow, that's rare! This guy is the strongest among these people... Hmm, more than 600 blueprints, he has quite the rich pool of knowledge. Tsk tsk, as for talents... wait a minute, this guy has a Molding Talent?*

Chapter 602: Perfect Mechanical Sense

The Great Mechanic Han had a total of twenty-three talents, Reynold only had six fewer, seventeen talents. This was almost double what the three other Grade B freelance mercenaries had!

For those with high potential, as their level increased, they would regularly receive new talents.

In the current Black Star Army, Herlous was the one with the most talents among the officers—fifteen. He was much stronger than back then when he joined.

When Han Xiao recruited him, he had only had twelve talents.

In terms of the quality of talents, Feidin and Harmon were at the top. They both had Molding Talents.

Feidin's Advanced Luck Glow, of course, was undisputedly overpowered.

Harmon's [War God's Tenacity] and [Desperate Straits] combined with his Basic Luck Glow as a protagonist type character was like a health lock cheat and unlimited buff cheat, which was also very powerful.

The Molding Talent was what differentiated regular people from elites and bosses. Han Xiao was genuinely surprised that Reynold had one too.

[Perfect Mechanical Sense]

Total Machinery Affinity \* 1.4. (Includes basic value, bonuses from passive abilities, and talents. This effect applies to the total value.)

When enhancing machines using Mechanical Force, the quality of the machinery will be temporarily increased by 1 – 2 Grades, up to Pink Grade.

+4 levels to all Mechanic class active abilities. This effect can exceed the level limit.

Remark: In your senses, every machine is a world of ecological balance.

“It’s this talent!”

Han Xiao’s eyes sparkled.

In his previous life, there were players who had listed all the Molding Talents of the characters in Galaxy on the forums. Some of these talents were class exclusive; [Perfect Mechanical Sense] was exclusive to the Mechanic class and was considered one of the best Molding Talents. It influenced three things that were all connected to each other.

Needless to say, the 1.4 times multiplier to total Machinery Affinity was powerful.

Machinery Affinity was the core abilities of the Mechanic class, and it was used to increase the power of machines. For example, if a Mechanic had 500% Machinery Affinity provided by all his talents and abilities, [Perfect Mechanical Sense] would take 500% and multiply it by 1.4, making that 700%!

The rules of this bonus were the same as the Calamity Grade talent [Superhuman], applying to the total value. This meant that the stronger one’s fundamentals were, the higher the bonus was. As their level increased, the effect of this talent would become greater and greater.

The other two effects of [Perfect Mechanical Sense] were also useful. The temporary increase of the Machinery Grade meant an enhancement of the machines’ basic attributes. In simpler terms, trashy gray equipment would have the same effect as green equipment when he used it.

The last effect of adding four levels to all Mechanic class active abilities while ignoring the level limit meant the Lv.10 [Surging Mechanical Force] had the effects of Lv.14.

Those who had this talent could be deemed as ‘one in more than a century’ Mechanic class geniuses.

High level, strong talent, Grade B+... Reynold was the strongest person Han Xiao had ever recruited.

This was a high-quality wild leek!

“You’re a Mechanic?”

“Yes.” Reynold nodded.

“You’re very strong, stronger than all of the officers under my command.”

Han Xiao took it very seriously. He told Phillip to show him Reynold’s mercenary resume. As he looked, he frowned slightly.

“The data shows you’ve worked as a mercenary for seven years, moved through five small mercenary groups. You were active in the Hyde Star System in the earliest days, only coming to the Garton Star System in the last two years. With your strength, it’s more than enough for you to become a high ranking officer in large mercenary groups, why have you been in these small mercenary groups?”

He then stared at Reynold with inquiry in his eyes.

With a serious tone, Reynold said, “Large mercenary groups are too safe. I need more dangerous challenges to increase my alertness.”

Han Xiao squinted. “Then why do you want to join mine? My mercenary group is a large one.”

“I’ve faced enough challenges. What I need now is to break through, to learn more knowledge, to reach a higher level,” Reynold answered with a very straight face.

“What you mean is, you want to step into the Calamity Grade?” Han Xiao raised his eyebrows.

“Yes.” Reynold nodded heavily. “This is also why I’m here.”

Then, he lowered his head slightly and said respectfully, “We are both Mechanics, and you have stepped into the territory of the Calamity Grade. To me, you’re a pioneer on this path, and I’m still exploring, so... I hope to receive your guidance. For that, I’m willing to work for you.”

So that’s his motive for joining... Han Xiao figured it out. It was not the Black Star Army’s privileges that attracted Reynold but my strength.

This guy is Grade B+ and wants to become Grade A. Hence, he came to find me, a Grade A Mechanic, to learn from, wanting to become my student. Well, this motive is nothing but logical; I don’t see a problem.

In the five Super classes, Mechanics and Mages were keenest to learn. Exchanging and communicating knowledge was common for these two classes. Han Xiao understood Reynold’s actions very well. It was just like the players who looked for NPCs to learn abilities from.

This isn’t a bad thing... Han Xiao pondered silently. Reynold had a lot of potential. After recruiting him, the Black Star Army would have one more elite officer.

Sylvia was his only student, so adding Reynold would not be a problem. With his Calamity Grade strength and knowledge level, it was more than enough to teach Reynold.

As for helping Reynold get to Grade A, it depended on personal potential. Since Reynold had [Perfect Mechanical Sense], becoming Calamity Grade was basically a certainty, except Reynold did not know that himself.

Han Xiao made the decision very quickly. He nodded and said, "I can teach you, but you need to sign a longer-term contract."

"Of course." Reynold nodded. He believed that returns only came with hard work; Black Star was already much more casual about it than he had expected.

"Since you're a Mechanic... how about this? You will be responsible for the logistics. You shall manage the workshop factory and the product line in the base, building more production lines and carrying out daily maintenance, repairs, and technical adjustments. This will all be your responsibility; you can gather some people to help you."

Letting Reynold manage the workshop factory was very suitable. With his abilities, the machines that he built would be more than enough to meet the players' needs—it would be just as popular.

Plus, Reynold knew how to build product lines, and he also knew many blueprints. He was the only one that could help Han Xiao in terms of building!

This way, the job of building new product lines could be entrusted to Reynold from now on. Han Xiao did not have to do everything himself anymore. According to the needs of the hundreds of thousands of players, he would be able to save at least one to two months every year for other things!

After all, the production rate of a single person was limited; a logistics department had to be created.

"No problem." Reynold was very content with this position. What he wanted to do now was just train peacefully—he did not want to go out and fight people.

All the candidates were done with the test. Phillip made the new mercenaries sign the contracts before sending the information to the Mercenary Alliance. This way, the new mercenaries were officially members of the Black Star Army.

Other than a number of talented people, Han Xiao let Phillip arrange the positions for the new mercenaries and told Sylvia and some senior mercenaries to show the newbies around to familiarize themselves with their job. After all that, the newbies would take on their positions.

He had recruited thousands of people this time, so including the older mercenaries, Black Star Army had about 8,000 NPC mercenaries. It was many times larger compared to before.

Compared to the number of players, there were still very few NPC mercenaries. It was very difficult for it to explode in size, so the only way was to keep recruiting and building the numbers up.

The biggest surprise this time was Reynold. Even Han Xiao was tempted by the Molding Talent [Perfect Mechanical Sense]. If he could obtain this talent, he would not only be tanky but stronger in all aspects!

Sadly, he had yet to find a way to obtain this Molding Talent. Reynold was not an enemy, and even if he was, it was not certain that he could obtain [Perfect Mechanical Sense].

No matter, Han Xiao had plenty of patience.

...

Two days later, the new mercenaries all started to carry out their jobs.

The training camp of Base No.1 was officially built, too.

The more than a thousand unselected freelance mercenaries became the first batch of students. As the only drill sergeant at the moment, Brock officially took on the job.

On the first day, he was so exhausted that he almost vomited blood.

Training mercenaries was not as simple as just speaking—there had to be physical hands-on combat lessons, which was quite easy to get injured from. To train more than a thousand people alone, the amount of work Brock had to do was almost pitiful; he had completely no time to do anything else. After an entire day, he felt like his bones were about to collapse.

Remembering that he had to continue such a taxing job the next day too, Brock felt his world spinning.

However, after the first day ended as a trainer, Han Xiao deliberately went to encourage him. Brock was instantly motivated and full of energy.

Han Xiao's attitude gave him the wrong idea. Brock thought that his performance had been noticed by Black Star. Him getting this special job right after joining meant that he was important to Black Star.

After all, among all the candidates, he and that Mechanic called Reynold were the only ones that had received special treatment.

Black Star might be testing his abilities.

As long as he completed the mission as a drill sergeant and proved himself, he might be accepted by Black Star and promoted to a high rank officer!

Only after becoming a high rank officer would he be able to monitor the intelligence network of the Black Star Army.

Thinking about that, Brock decided to clench his teeth and hang on, not looking for an assistant and completing the mission alone. Only that way would he be able to prove his abilities to the highest degree, making an impression on Black Star!

“How dedicated...”

Inside his room, Han Xiao monitored Brock's every move in his Chaos Body.

Indeed, people with ulterior motives were the easiest to use.

Deactivating Chaos Body and returning to his human body, Han Xiao straightened his clothing and walked out of his room. He went to the machinery modification room of the base where Reynold and Sylvia were waiting.

It was a lesson day.

Sylvia was used to Han Xiao giving her these privileges, but now there was another person to share her teacher with, she felt very uneasy. She secretly sized Reynold up from time to time, with an unexplained sense of hostility.

Reynold looked straight forward at Han Xiao with an extremely serious face.



From that day forth, he would be learning from Black Star. This was an opportunity that he had earned with a five-year contract. It was very important to him.

Han Xiao stood before the two of them, pondered, and said, “The strength difference between the two of you is too huge. Reynold, I will teach you first. Sylvia, you can observe from the side.”

The power difference between the two was way too high. The knowledge that seemed too deep for Sylvia would just be fundamental for Reynold. Of course, he was not going to teach them at the same time.

As soon as Han Xiao finished speaking, Sylvia opened her eyes wide. How could her teacher teach the newcomer first?

She instantly felt indignant and gave Reynold a fierce glare, only to realize that he was not even looking at her at all, so she could only bloat her cheeks and turn away angrily.

Bringing Reynold and the angry Sylvia aside, Han Xiao cleared his throat and prepared to start the lesson. This time, Reynold took out a pen and notebook with lightning speed from his pocket.

“Er, what are you doing?”

“Recording the lesson content.” With a very serious face, Reynold quickly jotted down this conversation.

After taking a peek at the notebook, Han Xiao’s mouth twitched, and he said, “There’s no need to note casual chitchat...”

“No, any parts missing is disrespectful for you.”

“Then wouldn’t it be better for you to video...”

“No, as a Mechanic, observing all the details is a way of training too.”

Reynold wrote down this conversation without hesitation, even drawing Han Xiao’s expression when speaking. The speed of a Mechanic’s hands was undoubtedly fast, so he was done recording almost as soon as Han Xiao finished speaking.

How stubborn. He’s more like a Mechanic than me...

Han Xiao now had a rough understanding of this new comrade of his. He then started to officially teach the lesson.

It was called a lesson, but it was more like sharing his knowledge. What Reynold really needed was High-End Knowledge. After all, it was very difficult for him to make money. Plus, he did not have as many channels as Han Xiao did. Hence, Han Xiao slowly explained the High-End Knowledge to him.

Reynold was not a player, so he could not learn it instantly and had to slowly absorb.

Reynold listened extremely carefully, and his pen never stopped moving. Sylvia was completely lost. This knowledge was too deep for her—she could not understand it at all.

Clenching her teeth, Sylvia forced herself to focus and memorize the content even though she did not understand it. Reynold's appearance made her feel threatened; she did not want to get left far behind.

After teaching Reynold, Han Xiao then taught Sylvia.

Reynold did not leave however but listened at the side. Even though what Sylvia was learning was way too fundamental for him, he did not show any sign of being impatient and still listened attentively.

Time passed by slowly.

Han Xiao finally stopped his lesson. He looked at the time and announced the end of the lesson before leaving in a hurry to continue building his machines.

Sylvia and Reynold were the only ones left in the room, looking at each other.

"Er, if you have anything you don't understand, I can teach you too."

There were still many days ahead, so Reynold thought that he had to build a good relationship with Black Star's apprentice. He gave a smile that he thought was very friendly and charming.

However, he rarely smiled, so his smile was ferocious no matter how it was looked at.

"Who needs you to teach me?" Sylvia rolled her eyes. "You're new, so you should call me big sis, do you know that?"

Reynold frowned.

Oh no, is he angry? Sylvia suddenly felt a little regretful. Reynold could easily butcher her with one hand. He was even stronger than Herlous.

To make someone this strong lower his head to a barely Grade C Super, he would probably think it was a form of humiliation.

However, Reynold stayed silent for a while then nodded.

"Big sis," said Reynold with a serious tone.

"Ah, are you really calling me that?" Sylvia was shocked. With an awkward face, Sylvia said in an unnatural tone, "I was just kidding."

"No, you're right. I just thought about it. Since I'm new, calling you big sis is what I should do. I was ill-mannered earlier, I apologize. Thank you for reminding me."

There was not a single sense of unhappiness to be found on Reynold's face. His expression was earnest, and his tone was serious as always.

Sylvia's face stiffened. She found it difficult to deal with how serious Reynold was. She giggled and said, "No need. You don't have to be so serious. You can just call me by my name."

"No, I have to call you big sis, or it's too disrespectful," Reynold said solemnly. He even lowered his head to show his respect.

Sylvia felt her scalp tingle and could not take it anymore. She quickly carried her books and ran away.

...

After he finished interviewing the mercenaries, Han Xiao almost spent all the time in the days after that updating his combat mercenaries.

“It’s finally done!”

Ten days later, Han Xiao’s excited voice came from his personal machinery modification room.

Chapter 603: Machinery Innovation!

In the room, a strong metallic stench lingered. There were even heat waves in the air caused by the high temperature of melting steel.

Han Xiao had long become accustomed to such a smell. He hurriedly took out the last machine from the rapid cooling box, transforming it into a compressed orb, before placing it on the desk.

The table in front of him was lined with compressed orbs, all of which were new-generation machines.

This new generation of machinery was crafted with his Grade A Mechanic skills. Be it technical content, attributes, functions, and power, it had completely surpassed the older generation of machinery created when he was at Grade B. Thus, the machines replaced all his old equipment to become his new primary weapons.

His previous generation of equipment was unable to keep up with the battles at the Calamity Grade and was relegated to backup equipment.

This time, Han Xiao’s comprehensive equipment outfitting could be said to be the largest scale he had done so far.

The original combat style had not changed; it was still his continuous stream of soldiers with the Army Style. Han Xiao had only strengthened these current styles.

Buzz!

With a flash of Mechanical Force, a portion of the compressed orbs were activated. Following the clanking sounds of machinery whirring to life, thirty-six new generation Hovering Shield Shuttles floated up, revolving around Han Xiao.

The new generation Hovering Shield Shuttle, codenamed [DT-03 Nano Transformed Floating Guard]. The whole set was labelled ‘Watcher Instrument’.

Compared to the Halo Array of the previous generation, many aspects of the Watcher Instrument showed a definite change. The first was the shape of the Hovering Shield Shuttles, which had turned into a diamond shape. They had more edges and corners, and the color had also changed from white to a deep red. The connecting lines gleamed brilliant gold from the Kyle Alloy used.

In terms of function, the most significant change was the energy. Each floating shuttle was equipped with an ultra-micronized plasma arc reactor. It adopted the process of cold nuclear fission to generate

sufficient energy with extremely low radioactivity, giving them high power outputs. The power output could also be adjusted at will. This equipment set was immensely strong, a dark purple Grade.

With the addition of two more High-End Knowledges, [High Class Energy Control] and [High Energy Weapon Control], Han Xiao had utilized them to create this new generation of machinery. He had even raised the blueprints of his machinery to the highest level, obtaining some potential points to cover his original reserves. It took a total of twenty-one potential points to upgrade both high-end knowledges to level five and four respectively.

Thus, just in terms of looking at his energy portfolio, he had already obtained good technological skills for it.

This time, he focused on strengthening his equipment. Reforming the energy cores was one of the main objectives, and the majority of his machinery had basically been swapped out to now contain controlled nuclear fusion technology.

The blueprints of the nuclear fusion reactors also had different drawings. Of which, the Plasma Arc Reactors were the best grade of blueprints that Han Xiao had obtained. The technology could be summarized as internally energized to form a magnetic field, which would heat the plasma and promote the fusion reaction. Not only was it efficient, it was also clean and controllable.

Above this High-End Knowledge would be Cutting-Edge Knowledge, which was about the study of stronger yet more unstable energy sources, such as antimatter and psionic energies. Generally speaking, only the Star Cluster Civilizations would possess Cutting-Edge Knowledge, so Han Xiao had to be satisfied with High-End Knowledge for now.

In the short term, Han Xiao had no intention of getting any Cutting-Edge Knowledge. Because he specialized in the Virtual Mechanic profession, the Cutting-Edge Knowledge in the Energy and Armed Branches would now cost three times their initial potential points. He only had two extra potential points left.

With a flicker of his Mechanical Force, Han Xiao began to operate the Watcher Instrument, testing out various functions.

The first was the most basic artillery power. He had Phillip open the weapon test module of the machinery modification room, and an alloy wall rose from the ground.

Hum!

The golden lines of the Hovering Shield Shuttle started to glow with a blue light, and the edges and corners at the tip of the shuttle suddenly unfolded, turning into a circular caliber gun. A blue laser beam blasted out, easily penetrating the alloy wall, leaving a smoking hole that could be seen from both sides.

“The penetrative power is indeed strong...” Han Xiao nodded. While the interface had described the weapon’s attack power, he had a habit of testing it himself. He followed up by switching the weapon forms, testing the blasting type, assassination type, the subduing type, and the full blast type.

Because the energy output was controllable, it possessed multiple attack settings.

Han Xiao also tested the Watcher Instrument's shield durability. Unlike the Halo Array, a single floating shuttle of the Watcher Instrument could form a shield, with a high durability attached to it.

The most convenient feature of the Watcher Instrument was its Nano-Transforming ability. They could be combined with each other to become a larger caliber floating cannon or shield, and they could also be turned into a hand-held cannon. The Watcher Instrument could even transform into battle mode, turning into a Berserk Ape mechanical suit. Each of the miniature plasma arc reactors would continuously supply the mechanical suit for a wide range of uses.

"It is indeed worthy of being a Grade A mechanic's weapon."

Without any additional machinery, Han Xiao believed that Herlous could be beaten with just this Watcher Instrument.

Satisfied with the floating shuttle, he activated another pile of compressed orbs.

This time, the machinery that unfolded was the Giant Mechanical Hand. After replacing its energy core, the various functions had been significantly improved.

The Giant Mechanical Hand had always been a multifunctional equipment. It belonged to the Prosthetic category of machinery, where it could be used to slap, and the fingertips and palms could release ion cannons. It could also be turned into a compressed orb to hide in one's hands and feet to begin the series of chain attacks.

The machine could also be turned into an electromagnetic lock, used to suppress a target, or it could be changed into various tools to alter the terrain. It was quite versatile.

Han Xiao had also added new functions to the Giant Mechanical Hands. They could now merge with each other and become a single entity over hundreds of meters tall, akin to the Buddha's Palm of legends.

They could also be combined into an aircraft vehicle. Although the Berserk Ape mechanical suit was capable of interstellar navigation, it was only for a single passenger. The combination of the Giant Mechanical Hands could carry a small squad.

Talking about aircraft vehicles, Han Xiao had also developed an important piece of machinery.

[Short-Range Hyperdrive Engine]!

This blueprint came as a result of combining [Basic Spatial Technology], [Advanced Radar technology], [Interstellar Navigation Technology], and [Advanced Applications for Quantum Entanglement].

Unlike the large hyperdrive engines of the interstellar spaceships, this short-range hyperdrive engine was mainly used by individual soldiers or small aircrafts.

Of course, even though it had short range in the name, that was only compared to the normal hyperdrives in spaceships.

The Short-Range Hyperdrive Engine also had a limit—it needed a long period of time to locate the coordinates. The short-range hyperdrive engine had a charging time of twelve seconds, where the user

could not move or break the connection, or else they would experience coordinate deviation, which could be fatal.

And its minimum cooling time was two minutes.

The BlackLight Stealth's microsecond hyperdrive was made by the Federation of Light, which was currently too complicated for Han Xiao to replicate.

Even though that was the case, his current device was still quite useful, allowing one to shift their troops strategically in a battlefield or to rush to a destination.

Han Xiao had already installed one of them in the Berserk Ape as well as some of the aircrafts. The effect was great, equivalent to a mechanical version of Hexflash [1. Hexflash is the shortened name for Hextech Flashtraption, a rune/skill seen in League of Legends (LoL).].

As for the burden shouldered by the single target while in hyperdrive, it was nonexistent to Han Xiao.

As a void species, his resistance to space was naturally extremely high.

Other than the enhancement to individual equipment, the Mechanical Army had also undergone significant innovations.

The first task was to fully restore the original four legions: Number 001, [Mechanical Beast Guards Army]; 002, [Strike Artillery Regiment]; 003, [G-1 Steel Army Corps]; and the Elite Troops Number 101, [Oathkeepers]. At the same time, Han Xiao had also slightly increased the size of the legions.

Building on these, Han Xiao had added another two legions.

Number 004, [G-2 Heavy Armor Riders]!

This unit consisted of 600 heavy-loaded mechanical soldiers. They resembled huge men riding on high-speed propulsion vehicles. Their way of attacking was charging forward as the vanguard, with a strong impact to cut through the formation of the enemy. These heavily armored riders were mainly melee, equipped with weapons such as high-temperature blades, high-speed drills, and spiral wheel saws. All the weapons could easily set off a bloody storm.

Number 005, [Mini Cube Troops]!

This was a special unit consisting of 1,500 micro-mechanical warfare soldiers. Such a mechanical soldier was dubbed the 'magic cube robot'. It measured only the size of a normal human palm, but even if something was small it could still contain the essentials. They possessed a high level of combat quality, and their size could work to their advantage on some occasions. This was why Han Xiao had created this army.

This unit also possessed an auxiliary function. The drawings of the 'magic cube robot' was derived from the knowledge [Super Nanometer Force], which would allow them to combine with each other to form a larger mechanical soldier. Each individual cube could be understood as parts of a larger mechanical soldier, and these parts could move freely and reshape at any given time.

At present, the scale of his Mechanical Army had reached 20,000. The number was still rising, as new mechanical soldiers were still being produced every day in the workshop.

The extra manufactured mechanical soldiers would either be directly merged into the various legions or used as backups.

In addition, the weapons of all mechanical soldiers had been upgraded, such as adding shock converters to the melee weapons, high pressure blades, and so on.

Plasma cannons, heat ray cannons, and radiation guns had been added to the slew of ranged weapons. The enhancement was also reflected in the turret structure, as Han Xiao had created a new type of turret.

Ammunition and detonation bombs had also undergone a reformation, having new devices such as vacuum oxygen detonation bombs, space warping bombs, thermonuclear mines, miniature nuclear grenades, and the new orbital sniper bombs.

Other than the original combat mods, Han Xiao had created two more battle tactics.

The first was the Restrain and Control Style.

Han Xiao had obtained a blueprint of an electromagnetic superconductor particle, about the size of a grain of rice. He had manufactured a lot of them, and placing them in a pile made them resemble some sort of black sand.

Superconductor particles contained strong magnetism, which could be manipulated through mechanical force.

This set was also known as 'Electromagnetic Adsorption Marsh'. When activated, the superconductor particles would resemble a black wave, carrying with them a strong electromagnetic force. Once they reached the target, the particles would entangle the target, releasing the adsorption force and binding the target.

The longer the controlling time, the wider the coverage of the superconductor particles, and subsequently, more difficult for the target to break free. Through mechanical force, the adsorption and its shape could be varied, which allowed this equipment to actively capture the target.

This was a strong crowd control device that lacked lethality. Han Xiao's inspiration for this came from Ember's fighting style, and Han Xiao's electromagnetic adsorption marsh also controlled particles, which resembled Ember's ability.

His second combat mode could be called the 'Dirt Cheap Style'.

In his previous life, players had named this style as the Tactical Support Style.

A few months ago, when DarkStar attacked Planet Aquamarine, they had used the main cannon to strike at himself from outer space. That was called Tactical Support.

The essence of this mode was to summon missiles to scrub the ground, summon space-based weapons to strike down, summon fleet salvos... it was essentially an upgraded version of the Multi-Turret Firepower Coverage Style.

Also referred to as being gangster!

The Army Style would crush most mechanic styles. Only two schools of thought were the most troublesome opponents of the Army Style.

The first was the Virtual Intrusion Style—that was the Virtual Mechanic profession that Han Xiao specialized in.

The other was this Tactical Support Style.

Han Xiao dropped all his compressed orbs and looked toward the other side of the modification workshop.

Over there sat a giant machine.

It was actually an impact railgun!

Chapter 604: Bad Feelings Most Likely Will Turn True

This impact railgun was called 'Eye of God', a satellite weapon that could move on its own after being detached from the spaceship. It could be plotted at the edge of the atmosphere to orbit around the planet.

Unlike the DarkStar main cannon, the Eye of God was not a particle beam weapon; it used physical ammo. Its shells were exceptionally large and could be used with many different types of ammunition, providing more tactical options. Attacking the surface from outer space, its attacks would gain more kinetic energy from the initial thrust and gravity. With Han Xiao's calculations, its accuracy was very precise.

The cost of this impact railgun was remarkably high, only next to the Berserk Ape mechanical suit, not including the cost of every shot it took.

With so much money spent, the returns were certainly great. The damage of Eye of God was outstanding. It was like a gigantic turret placed in outer space. There were only two restrictions. One was that its attack speed was very slow—the shell had to fly for some time. Another was that it could not be used in space—it could only be used to attack the surface from above. It was rather suitable for missions that involved airdropping down to the ground to deal with issues.

This was now the most destructive weapon that Han Xiao possessed, but there was only one. The Tactical Support Style only had a brief outline. However, Han Xiao had a lot of money, so he could build more if he had the time.

When the Tactical Support Style was complete, tens and hundreds of impact railguns firing together would be able to annihilate an entire planet in a short time, fully proving the fact that money meant strength for the Mechanic class.

Bigger was greater, more was better. When other Supers hit a barrier and were unable to move forward, only the Mechanic class could steadily increase their strength by spending money.



“Only with this equipment have I reached the level of strength I should have.” Han Xiao nodded in his head.

The total cost was close to a million Enas. After updating all his combat machines, his destructive ability had really reached the Calamity level. He could summon nuclear bombs onto planets and destroy the ecology of the surface in a short period.

Watcher Instrument, Mechanical Exterior Prosthetic, Short-Range Hyperdrive Engine, Mechanical Armies 004 and 005, Strong Electromagnetic Swamp, Eye of God... Han Xiao checked all the machines. He then arranged the compressed orbs and wore them. As for the large weapons like the Mechanical Armies and Eye of God, they were placed in the spaceship warehouse.

Other than machines for combat, Han Xiao had also fused an interesting blueprint used for battles between spaceships, which he had built during the time.

The Barbarian Charge Cabin, a landing battle device.

This was a suspended cabin, attached to a spaceship and equipped with shock absorption devices. When the enemy’s shield was destroyed, this charge cabin could be launched to bite onto the enemy spaceship. With its heat slicing equipment, it would then melt the enemy’s armor and send the people inside it into the hostile spaceship. Of course, if things did not go well, the charge cabin could self-destruct.

During galactic wars, charge cabins were regularly used. The people inside had no means of retreating—they were all basically in a do-or-die situation.

Han Xiao felt this was perfectly suitable for the players.

Han Xiao was still studying the Violent Falcon spaceship, but he was short of a part of the knowledge, so his progress reverse engineering it was stuck. In his previous life, high-level Mechanic class players could build spaceships, but it was mostly done by a team. Everyone had different knowledge of the spaceship and assembled different parts.

Han Xiao did not want to divide the labor; he wanted to learn the entire process of building spaceships.

Building a spaceship alone was one of the Special Legendary Point milestones, just like the [Legendary Hunter] milestone that he had yet to complete.

However, he was still short in a part of its knowledge, and he happened to be lacking Potential Points. He was in quite a pinch.

After entering the galaxy, Han Xiao had not harvested as much experience, mainly just money.

He needed time to update his equipment after leveling up, and he had spent quite a lot of experience leveling up and fusing blueprints.

Therefore, his experience was almost dry.

I should find the time to get some experience...

His equipment was all updated, and other than getting more Potential Points, he also needed to continue increasing his strength.

I'm now level 142. Although I just entered Grade A, I can match up to higher level people with my equipment. Plus, my talents mean I can take a beating, so my advantage is huge. If the enemy's ability is common, the chances of me winning will increase significantly...

Han Xiao estimated his combat capability. Usually, most people in Galaxy entered Grade A between level 150 to 160; it all depended on talents, abilities, and attributes. He, however, entered Grade A at level 142. This was not common even among these powerful protagonist-type characters.

At Grade A, each Promotion at every twenty levels or each Class Advancement for the main class could be considered a separation line. Han Xiao was now at the level 140 to 160 grade, so the amount of experience needed to level up was enormous—billions and billions.

In his previous life, when the version that allowed players to level up to this level was released, the missions had all given at least tens of millions of experience. Despite that, the players had still had to spend a tremendous amount of time to level up just once.

Even though he could shear the players, it was still extremely difficult to obtain the amount of experience needed to level up to 160 straight away. Promotion was too far away at the moment, but there was another way to increase his strength—main class Class Advancement.

Han Xiao's [Virtual Mechanic] was now Lv.17. He was three levels away from his Class Advancement, which would need about three billion experience.

This time, Han Xiao did not plan to sell knowledge. Selling knowledge was a one-time sale, so he could only do it so many times. Plus, it was not suitable for him to give everything to the players at once.

He decided to sell blueprints, which was the larger profit chain.

Although the target market for blueprints was limited to Mechanic class players and the profits were not as high as with Promotion Knowledges, the upside of this was that there were way too many blueprints that could be fused, almost infinite. During Version 1.0, Han Xiao had acted as the Mechanic class mentor and made more players become Mechanics. The reason that he had done that was to expand the market for blueprints.

Furthermore, he did not just have to sell the players low level blueprints; he could even sell very high-level blueprints.

The players did not have the required knowledge, so even if they bought the high-level blueprints, they would not be able to use them until much later. Nonetheless, people would still buy them. It was better to have a high-level blueprint that they could not use than not having one at all. Just looking at it would make them look forward to the day they could use it.

He never underestimated the Chinese players' desire to stock up.

Thinking of the players... Han Xiao opened the forums. As usual, it was boisterous.

The players used the tactical equipment that he had sold last time in their new hire missions, and many people sent screenshots to share. Among them, the Worker Bee Armor received the most positive

comments; it made many players find a new way to make money—mining! It was much more peaceful and steadier than fighting and killing.

The second most popular one was surprisingly the Nuclear Flying Backpack. The focus of the comments was not even flying but all about how good it felt to self-destruct...

This made Han Xiao even more confident about the Barbarian Charge Cabin.

He knew it—self-destruction and the players were a perfect match!

Han Xiao browsed through the posts. Other than sharing posts, chatting posts, and other random posts, there were also highly skilled players who posted guides which explained strategies among other things. Suddenly, Han Xiao realized a post was going up the popularity list very quickly.

‘Wayne Cards Newbie Guide—Issue 3’

He clicked in, then realized that the player who had written the post was charmed by Wayne Card and used all the money that he earned to buy Wayne Cards, not equipment...

Noob!

Playing meaningless games every day and not doing missions properly?

In the end, these players have still been contaminated by Wayne Cards...

Han Xiao’s mouth twitched. Could Wayne Cards actually be his biggest competitor?

He briefly scanned through and realized that the Shattered Star Ring card set had been updated, which was the focus of this post. It was being madly discussed by the players. In the updated cards, there was the Black Star Army.

Shattered Star Ring Card Set adjustments:

Mercenary Card [Black Star Mercenary Group] changed to Mercenary Card/Force Card [Black Star Army]. Increased card attributes, added special effects.

Civilization Card [Godora] attributes increased.

Force Card [Floating Dragon Island] attributes increased.

Added Strong Card [‘Black Star’ Han Xiao]

Added History Card [End of DarkStar]

Force Card [DarkStar] moved to Disposed Card Set.

Han Xiao suddenly understood why this post was so popular.

Currently, in the eyes of the players, the Black Star Army represented their faction. Seeing that their faction had appeared in the card set, the players were more than just excited. The comments were

exploding. In their eyes, the updated Wayne Cards showed the result of their hard work for the growth of their faction.

Wayne Cards' update represented the changes of all areas in Galaxy to a certain extent. They had added an exclusive Strong Card for Han Xiao, and it had some decent attributes...

This meant that his actions had spread far, and he was someone very well known.

Han Xiao suddenly realized that Wayne Cards seemed to be a subtle leaderboard or list, showcasing the fame and position of people in the universe.

...

After looking through the forums for a while longer and extracting some potions from Sykes and the rest, Han Xiao closed the door and left the machinery modification room.

While spending close to two months building machines, Han Xiao did not forget his mission to escort Hila and Aurora to Floating Dragon Island.

Since the Black Star Army had grown in size, the players and the regular mercenaries took care of a lot of missions. Currently, there did not seem to be any high difficulty mission that he needed to complete himself. Hence, Han Xiao decided to first fulfill Ames' request.

Hila was usually in the Combat Training Room along with Aurora.

On the way there, Han Xiao met Sylvia, who seemed to be avoiding something nervously. She hastily greeted him and quickly escaped. Han Xiao did not pay any attention to it. He then walked further ahead and noticed Reynold looking around at the intersection, so he went up to him and gave him a few words of encouragement. Seeing that Reynold was about to take out his notebook, Han Xiao quickly shut his mouth and walked away with wide strides.

Upon arriving at the Combat Training Room, Hila was expectedly undergoing combat training, and Aurora had been dragged into it.

Due to past experiences, Hila had a very strong desire for power. After entering the galaxy and seeing so many people that were so strong, she felt an even stronger sense of danger. She would not have slept at all just to train if she could; she put all her time into training.

Of course, the results were visible. The Training Room could simulate real combat and force out the combat potential of Supers. Hila's talent had always been rather good. Combined with hard work, her strength grew quite quickly recently. A few days ago, Han Xiao had sparred with Hila and realized that she was many levels higher than before.

Han Xiao opened the door, and the simulated battle environment disappeared.

Hila stopped. She wiped away the sweat on her forehead, frowned, and said, "What are you doing here? You want to spar?"

She was wearing an extremely tight, black battle suit that looked like a layer of black skin, highlighting her alluring body shape, curvy and thin everywhere it should be.

Han Xiao looked at her and could not help but shake his head. "Can't you change into a more useful battle suit. Do I not have enough armor for you to choose from?"

Hila gave Han Xiao a look of disgust. "Too bulky."

"Bulky? It's called safe. Don't you just not like them because they don't look pretty? What do you know about aesthetics?" Han Xiao rolled his eyes. Tsk, women.

While those two argued, Aurora leaned on her knees and gasped for air, unable to even speak.

She had been forced to join the special training. Unable to keep up with Hila's training intensity, her body was almost collapsing due to exhaustion.

However, Aurora was not completely unwilling. She had experienced times of hardship and knew how important strength was, so she did not slack in her training at all. After all, the simulated battles would not deal any real damage, so if she was just slacking, she would not be so tired.

Han Xiao took out a concentrated nutrition bar and threw it to Aurora. "That's enough. Stop training and pack up. I'm taking you guys to Floating Dragon Island."

Aurora heard that and quickly stopped biting open the packaging of the nutrition bar, surprised. "Are we finally going to meet big sister Ames?"

Hila's eyes became slightly brighter, and her lips curved up a little. After entering the galaxy, only then did she understand how powerful Ames was in the universe. She had been looking forward to training with her.

Di di di...

Han Xiao was just about to say a few words when the communicator suddenly rang. He took it out, and it was surprisingly Ames' communication request.

Speak of the devil.

"Ames?"

"Hmm, Black Star, when are you bringing my students over?" Ames' projection appeared, and a long pair of white, python-like legs entered Han Xiao's sight.

"I was settling some stuff earlier, so it was delayed. I will bring them to Floating Dragon in a few days." Han Xiao nodded.

"Okay." Ames paused and suddenly said, "Best come quicker. When you're here, I want you to go somewhere with me."

"Where?"

"Bloodshed Land," Ames said calmly without any noticeable emotion.

Han Xiao's eyebrows shot up. He had a bad feeling like his casual and relaxing time was about to end. "Can I not go?"

"Humph, no." Ames ended the communication.

Chapter 605: The Tyrant's Invitation, Shattered Star Ring Territories

Speechless, Han Xiao put the communicator away and thought on it.

Why is Ames going to Bloodshed Land? To make trouble?

Malekith had once said that Ames had some issues with Bloodshed Land. The Tyrant had taken one of her officers, and they had battled furiously, ending with Ames' loss. Han Xiao felt that Ames was not going there with good intentions this time.

She insisted on bringing me. Does she want me to assist her and stop the Tyrant's officers?

Han Xiao's lips twitched. He was now Floating Dragon's strongest officer. Back then, Ames did not have anyone whom she could use under her command. Now that she finally had someone who could fight, was she going to make full use of him?

There were plenty of strong people under the Tyrant. The eight Grade A Vanguard Officials were just the tip of the iceberg; Vanguard Officials were not the only position for their high-ranking officers. If Ames only took him along to Bloodshed Land, of course, she would end up being fine, but the same could not be said for him.

I hope we are not going there to fight... Han Xiao had a slight headache.

Hila had watched their conversation from the start till the end. Confused, she asked, "What kind of place is Bloodshed Land?"

"That's a gathering ground for a group of muscular men. It's just a dangerous place," Han Xiao replied unhappily.

As Ames had told him to hurry up, Han Xiao did not delay any longer.

He found Reynold and told him to stay in Base No.1. Then, he found Sylvia and told her to take care of the other issues. This was just standard procedure; the one who was actually managing Base No.1 was Phillip, and Han Xiao could monitor the situation remotely. Hence, there were not that many things to say. The Black Star Army's business could carry on as usual even though he was not in the base.

Settling these issues only took half an hour. Han Xiao gathered Hila and Aurora, who had now changed into new, neat clothes, and the three of them boarded the Blacklight Stealth, which was parked in the hangar.

Woo woo!

The rooftop gate of the hangar opened, and the anti-gravity stabilizer below the Blacklight Stealth activated, emitting a dark blue light.

The spaceship took off vertically, and a purple flame shot out from the thrusters.

In the blink of an eye, the spaceship turned into a stream of light and disappeared into the sky.

...

The Blacklight Stealth exited hyperdrive, slowly caught up with Floating Dragon Island, and docked.

“So, this is Floating Dragon Island...”

Disembarking from the spaceship, Aurora looked left and right curiously. She saw the brutes gathered on the dock immediately, who all looked fearsome. They were clearly not good people.

The brutes turned around and looked at them.

Hila saw this and quickly caught up with Aurora. She stood beside her and looked around at the brutes with alertness in her eyes, like a lioness protecting its child.

“Don’t be so nervous. Although Floating Dragon allows galactic pirates, scavengers, and wanted criminals to stop here, no fighting is allowed... Er, not usually of course. Ahem, anyway, they won’t bite.”

As Han Xiao spoke, he walked over to the two of them, then wrapped his arm around Hila shoulders and looked around. “Hey, what are you people still looking at?”

The brutes then all turned and looked away, continuing with their business. Han Xiao’s ride was too famous; no one wanted to mess with Black Star, on Floating Dragon Island especially.

Hila glanced at Han Xiao then looked at the hand on her shoulder and moved her body uncomfortably.

“My friend, you’ve returned again.”

This time, Wilsander’s voice came from nearby. He had gotten the news long ago and had been waiting to welcome Han Xiao.

What Han Xiao did not expect was that Jenny was there, standing right behind Wilsander.

He greeted Wilsander before looking at Jenny. He chuckled and said, “You’re here, too, huh? Work has been busy, I suppose; you look gaunter than the last time I saw you.”

Without any change to her expression, Jenny snatched a weapon from a guard and started firing at Han Xiao like a maniac.

Bang bang bang!

Han Xiao let the small-caliber laser land on his body without moving. This could not hurt him at all.

At the side, Aurora’s jaw dropped from watching this. Hila clenched her teeth, looking like she was wondering whether to stop it or not. Wilsander was shaking his head and sighing.

Ka ka ka!

When the firearm overheated and could not continue firing anymore, Jenny finally threw it away and coldly said, “Ames is waiting for you in the palace.”

Then, she turned and instantly walked away.

She knew that she could not hurt Han Xiao; she just wanted to vent her frustration.

As the Head Butler, Jenny had been as busy as a bee recently. Being very understanding, Han Xiao did not mind letting Jenny enjoy herself for a moment.

Anyway, this would not affect his actions. He would still expand as he planned to. Jenny's relaxed time was over and never coming back, just like her youth.

Han Xiao patted his clothes, unconcerned. He turned to look at Hila and said, "Let's go. I'll take you to see Ames. Memorize the roads on the way."

Speechless, the two of them looked at each other before nodding.

After bidding farewell to Wilsander, they went all the way to the palace at the center of the floating island.

The dragon bone throne floated in the palace. Ames was sitting on it, resting her head on her hand, and watching the three of them walk into the palace. She sighed and said, "Black Star, you're so slow, only bringing them here after a few months."

Han Xiao did not agree or disagree. Hila and Aurora bowed as a greeting.

Ames controlled her force field, lowering the height of the throne, and landed in front of the three of them. She smiled and said, "Alright, you will be my students from now on. You can call me teacher."

"Teacher," the two of them replied.

Ames was very pleased by that. Her smile became even more gentle. This was what she had once called Aesop. Now that she had her own students, it felt very special.

"Although our Esper abilities are different, I can teach you methods to develop yours using my experience, helping you to make use of your potential," Ames said gently.

Hila nodded solemnly. "Okay, when do we start?"

She was a training maniac, and with such a strong teacher, she could not wait to start training.

However, Ames shook her head and said, "Not now. I want you guys to go somewhere with me."

Han Xiao's eyebrows twitched. "Bloodshed Land?"

"Yes, all three of you are coming with me."

She's bringing Hila and Aurora too? Then it seems like we're not going there to fight... Han Xiao was relieved.

This was good news. He did not want to mess with the force of another Beyond Grade A out of nowhere.

However, to confirm Ames' intention, Han Xiao still asked, "That's Heber's territory. I heard there were problems between you and him. Why are we going?"



Ames' smile became dimmer as she slowly said, "The Tyrant is an ambitious guy. We don't get along. He even once stole someone talented from me, but this time, we are not going there to cause trouble.

"Every once in a while, the Tyrant hosts an enormous party. He sends out invitation letters to the important people of the Shattered Star Ring. Almost everyone shows him respect and attends. There are high ranking government officials of Star Cluster civilizations, representatives of large organizations, and sometimes even emissaries of the three Universal Civilizations. Of course, the Beyond Grade As of Shattered Star Ring are invited, including me... Humph, despite that guy being a pain in the neck, he is a very unpredictable man. Back then, I battled through his headquarters, but the next party, the Tyrant still invited me.

"Anyway, the Tyrant's parties have continued for many years. It has become an unspoken tradition between large organizations. This is a chance to make connections for many important people. The Tyrant has the ability to be the host. At the party, many important people will communicate and discuss various topics. A large amount of information will be leaked out every single party. The discussions between these people during the party decide the future developments of the Shattered Star Ring to quite a large extent."

So that's what this is... Han Xiao realized what was going on.

Simply put, the Tyrant hosted a Shattered Star Ring party, which people attended to make friends, chitchat, gossip, and all that. The difference was, the attendees all held very important positions, which, when all combined, could even decide the future of Shattered Star Ring.

Hosting this kind of gathering and turning it into a tradition for the high-class organizations... the Tyrant was indeed ambitious. His goal was massive.

"So, are you going to attend the Tyrant's party?"

Han Xiao was surprised. Floating Dragon had always stayed neutral. Plus, considering Ames' personality, she did not seem to care about this sort of thing.

"Of course I'm going!" Ames' voice became deeper. "I don't want to look so petty!"

What? What does this have to do with petty? Han Xiao was puzzled.

He then tried to think from Ames' perspective and finally realized what Ames meant.

I hate his guts. How dare he invite me to join his party! To show he's generous? F\*ck, did he invite me because he thinks I won't go? If I don't go, doesn't that show that I'm petty? Go! I must go! I'm generous and awesome, why would I be afraid of going!

To Han Xiao, he thought this guess was about at least ninety percent right. This seemed like the kind of thing Ames would think.

Then why bring me? Oh, because the Tyrant has so many strong people under his command, so Ames doesn't want to lose on that front. That's why she's taking me there!

At least we're not going there to make trouble... Han Xiao was a little puzzled and could only comfort himself this way. "When does the party start?"

“There’s still some time. We will leave tomorrow, heading straight toward Bloodshed Land’s headquarters.”

Bloodshed Land was located in the Seoul Star Cluster. If the Shattered Star Ring could be described in a flat 2D map, the middle would be the most dangerous, unstable cluster, filled with wormholes appearing and disappearing at random, connected to all places in the universe.

On the map, one side would be the edge of the known universe, beyond which was the unknown part of the universe that was unexplored.

The other side would be the tunnels toward other Star Fields that cover astronomical distances of the unpopulated desolate universe. That was how Risda had arrived, traveling through Star Fields for a very long time from another Star Field.

Surrounding the wormhole cluster were ten or so Star Clusters, all divided and controlled by the seven Star Cluster Civilizations of the Shattered Star Ring.

The Taralam Star Cluster was the closest to the wormhole cluster. It was plagued with scavengers. When Han Xiao was doing the Chen Xing missions, he had gone there once.

Between the Colton Star Cluster and Seoul Star Cluster was a desolate area. It could almost be considered their border.

On the other side of the Seoul Star Cluster was the largest Star Cluster, the Setin Star Cluster. Seoul was in the middle of Setin and Colton; it was the second smallest Star Cluster in the Shattered Star Ring.

In terms of government, the Star Cluster Civilization that ruled Seoul was called the Klent Kingdom, and the Star Cluster Civilization that ruled Colton was the Purple Crystal Civilization. These two civilizations coexisted peacefully. They had built many large Stargates in each other’s territory. Godora’s Stargate had been built by the Purple Crystal Civilization.

The Tyrant’s Bloodshed Land was the Klent Kingdom’s VIP. With a Star Cluster Civilization behind them, the Tyrant’s party represented both the influence of a Beyond Grade A and the position of a Star Cluster Civilization. Hence, so many people would attend.

“So, we’re going to the Seoul Star Cluster, right?” Han Xiao sighed. “Take my spaceship then.”

Smiling, Ames said, “That’s exactly what I thought.”

Chapter 606: Bloodshed Land

In the middle of Seoul Star Cluster, the stars shone brightly. A stream of light slashed across the universe, bolting through the darkness. It was the BlackLight Stealth in hyperdrive. On the ship were only Han Xiao, Ames, Hila, and Aurora.

After a few days, the four of them finally arrived at Seoul from Colton, passing through many stargates and Star Systems. When passing through the entry stargate from Colton to Seoul, they were even searched by the stargate station.

Klent Kingdom's management of the Seoul Star Cluster was rather strict. They had set checkpoints around the entry stargates from other Star Clusters.

The entry stargate allowed teleportation across the desolate area between the two Star Clusters, saving a huge chunk of time. All the galactic travelers with a clean background would use the stargate, whereas those who took the path through the desolate region were mostly wanted criminals and secret organizations.

Bloodshed Land's headquarters were in the heavily controlled Star System, the core Star System in the middle of the Seoul Star Cluster.

In the ship's hall, Han Xiao looked at the location marked on the star map and curled his lips.

"Planet Heber. Tsk tsk... he used his own name for the headquarters, such a..." Just as Han Xiao was about to comment, he suddenly realized that he had done the same thing, so he instantly changed his sentence. "Such a wise choice!"

"Are we almost there?" Aurora looked at the star map curiously and realized that she could not understand it.

"The hyperdrive will end in about ten minutes and twenty-seven seconds." Han Xiao looked at the control panel presented by Risda. The spaceship was on autopilot at the moment, and all four of them were at the hall.

Aurora turned and asked, "Teacher, is Planet Heber similar to Floating Dragon Island?"

Ames lay down sideways on the sofa, elegant and casual. She smiled and said, "Different, Planet Heber's costs are higher. It's a modified planet, built by Klent Kingdom with Star Cluster level technology. It's more like a portable fortress. It's Heber's second strongest weapon."

Star Cluster Civilizations' ability far exceeded that of Star System Civilizations; they were on completely different levels. The most obvious difference was mobility—Star Cluster Civilizations could build stargates, so their transport speed was countless times faster than Star System Civilizations'.

Also, Star Cluster Civilizations had the technology to build planet-grade battleships, the most common one being the Planet Mining Mothership. It could 'devour' an entire planet, breaking it down inside and turning it into all kinds of resources.

For example, Planet Heber was a planet-grade space fortress built by Klent Kingdom.

"Second strongest? Then what's the Tyrant's strongest weapon?" Hila asked with a serious expression. She was more interested in the abilities of the strongest people in the Shattered Star Ring.

"His strongest weapon is, of course, his own body." Ames shook her head. "He can use his physical body to penetrate straight through a planet."

"Impossible!" Aurora exclaimed.

Han Xiao had Phillip search for Heber's history. It seemed like there was more than one record of him crashing through a planet. Rather, it looked like it was Heber's usual activity.

“Heber’s body is extremely strong. Mud and stones cannot stop him. The high-density rock layer under deep under the surface is as fragile as paper to him, and lava is his bathing water. Even a planet’s core isn’t hot enough to burn him. Maybe a Fixed Star could hurt him, but not a planet, so crashing through a planet is not a challenge for him.” Ames sighed.

Heber was almost her nemesis, yet even the highest strength force field could not tear Heber apart. Heber could move freely even under the pressure. If she used Floating Dragon to hit him, it would be shattered by Heber instead. The nemesis of force field type Espers was indeed this kind of indestructible enemy. After all, although force field Esper abilities were well rounded, it was more toward controlling—damage was not its strength.

Despite Ames being carefree, she was not ignorant. She knew her own weaknesses.

Hila frowned and kept silent. Heber’s strength currently exceeded her knowledge range, so she did not know what to say.

“Heber penetrating a planet is like a sniper bullet penetrating several planks.” Han Xiao shook his head. A Beyond Grade A Pugilist was terrifyingly powerful.

After chatting for a while, the Blacklight Stealth finally exited hyperdrive state. The light tunnel outside the porthole disappeared, and the universe reappeared.

Right under the spaceship, a small, metallic planet entered their sights. Its color seemed solemn and serious.

Planet Heber!

Han Xiao received a communication request from Planet Heber. If they did not identify themselves and continued loitering around Planet Heber, they would be deemed as an enemy.

Ames had the invitation letter, so after verifying their identity, Planet Heber sent the parking coordinates. Han Xiao told Risda to control the spaceship and land at the given location.

As Planet Heber was a moving fortress like Floating Dragon, it did not have natural sunlight. The top of it was covered with thick, dark artificial clouds to block the radiation from the universe.

The spaceship slowly descended. After passing through the black clouds, Planet Heber’s surface appeared in their eyes.

Planet Heber was mainly made up of cold and dark colors; there was almost nothing dramatic.

Castle-like buildings stood tall, and tons and tons of bases were like mountains. These buildings emitted a dark blue light. It was somewhat futuristic and mysterious. Advanced technology seemed to be a planet-wide theme. Between the many bases, there were gigantic hollow-in-the-middle circular devices up to two kilometers tall. A purple light was rippling at its hollow part like it was operating as something.

Above the bases, battleship fleets patrolled.

This was a planet-level armored fortress!

Hila and Aurora were stunned.

The Blacklight Stealth landed at a dock between the bases. When they got out of the spaceship, a group of people were already waiting there. They were all Bloodshed Land soldiers, led by the Vanguard Official Malekith.

“Your Excellency Dragon Emperor, thank you for accepting the invitation. Welcome to Bloodshed Land.”

Malekith gave a common bow. He had personally delivered Ames’ invitation letter.

Ames did not reply. She looked at the surroundings, snickered, and said, “It’s been a while since I last came. This place is boring as always. Heber really has no taste.”

“Battleships and fortresses are the best decorations,” Malekith replied. When he saw Han Xiao beside Ames, his eyes gleamed, and he said coldly, “Black Star, I said we would soon meet again.”

Han Xiao raised his eyebrows, played dumb, and said, “Who are you? I’ve never seen you before.”

“...”

The others looked over and stared at him.

“Alright, I was kidding.” Han Xiao curled his lips.

Bloodshed Land’s people were really interesting, trying to pick them apart as soon as they met. Malekith deliberately used such an ambiguous tone to hint that he had met Black Star privately before.

Han Xiao did not tell Ames that he had met Malekith before, and Ames had once had someone stolen from her side. Due to the previous incident, she should be very sensitive to this. If she knew that her trusted officer had met with Bloodshed Land privately again, she would probably not be happy with him.

Malekith looks like a savage with a small brain, but he’s actually quite dirty, isn’t he?

Okay, I will remember this.

Chapter 607: Provoke

A sharp green light flashed through Ames’ eyes. She stared at Malekith and deliberately said, “What are you guys trying to do to my people again?”

“Your Excellency Dragon Emperor, don’t be so sensitive. Black Star and I just happened to meet. That’s all,” Malekith replied calmly.

Ames squinted and turned to look at Han Xiao.

Han Xiao had nothing to hide, so he honestly replied, “He found me and wanted me to leave Floating Dragon to join Bloodshed Land. Tsk tsk, he gave me some good terms.”

“And? What did you say?” Ames asked with a faint smile.

“Had I agreed, he wouldn’t have brought this up again.” Han Xiao shrugged.

Ames smirked, turned to Malekith, and said, "Hear that? Give up your tricks and lead the way."

Seeing that the provocation did not work, Malekith did not speak anymore and led the way.

There were still a few days till the party, but many people had already arrived. Bloodshed Land had prepared many rooms for the guests to rest in.

The four of them headed toward the rooms. As they passed through the numerous bases, patrolling soldiers and carriers were everywhere.

Han Xiao had time on the way to observe all sorts of facilities in Bloodshed Land. It was similar to how he remembered. In his previous life, there had also been players that were recruited by Bloodshed Land, so he remembered the map structure of Planet Heber.

If I remember correctly, the Planet Heber's surface is just a small part. There are bigger strongholds underground, Han Xiao recalled.

This time, the voice of a stranger suddenly came from not far behind them.

"Long time no see, Ames."

Han Xiao's first intuition was that the tone of this person sounded very taunting.

They turned around. A team of soldiers crowded around a man appeared behind them, the man was the one that spoke. He wore an exquisite robe and had a more feminine than masculine face, staring at Ames with a mocking expression.

The look in Ames' eyes slightly changed when she saw this person. "Carroll."

Carroll's unrestrained eyes scanned Ames' gorgeous face, snow-white neck, flat abdomen, and her thin, long legs, sizing her up fearlessly. He snickered and said, "I left Floating Dragon so long ago, but you're still as beautiful as before."

Ames' face was cold and indifferent.

Han Xiao noticed Ames' abnormal reaction; it seemed like her relationship with this guy named Carroll was unusual. He turned and glanced at Malekith and saw the rubbernecking expression on this broken horn Demon's face.

I see, Carroll is Ames' ex-subordinate... Han Xiao realized.

If Carroll had resigned normally, Ames would not have said anything. Instead, Carroll had openly deserted and joined Bloodshed Land with a high profile. He had even given away some of Floating Dragon's technological secrets and their map structure. Plus, he was now in a high position. To Ames, this was no doubt a betrayal. She felt hostile toward Bloodshed Land, even more so toward Carroll. Back then, when she battled toward Planet Heber, she had most likely had another goal—to kill Carroll. Only, she had been stopped by the Tyrant.

The truth was just as Han Xiao speculated; Ames and her old subordinate Carroll had become enemies long ago.

"To dare come and look for me, are you tired of living?" Ames said coldly.

Carroll had the Tyrant to rely on, so he was confident and unafraid. With a derisive smile, he said, "This is Bloodshed Land's headquarters. What, do you want to kill the Tyrant's logistics manager here? By the way, I heard you found an insect to replace my position. Hehe, you have quite a heavy taste."

With an expressionless face, Ames started to get intense.

Hila and Aurora noticed that the atmosphere was not right and became alert.

However, Carroll did not hold back at all. It was clear that he had come just to provoke them. He turned to look at Han Xiao and casually said, "Black Star? So, you're Ames' new officer? I can be considered your senior, do you want some advice and tips?"

"Tips?" Han Xiao raised his eyebrows. He was just standing aside and did not speak, but unexpectedly, Carroll spoke to him.

"That's right, I know her very well, and I have a feeling you need my guidance." Carroll shrugged and mocked, "After all, you like being her pet—shouldn't you know what your master likes?"

"Wow, this is the first time I've met someone who's even more of an ass than me." Han Xiao could not hold back his laughter. "Pal, do you sometimes have like punching yourself in the face when you look into a mirror?"

Carroll had thought that Han Xiao would be angered by his provocative words, so he was choked by this completely unexpected reaction. He paused then spoke again with mockery. "Don't get angry, I'm just speaking the truth. You're the same as the old me, just her pet. The difference is, you're just my replacement. Without you, there will be a Red Star or a White Star to replace you."

Han Xiao stroked his chin. Before he could return the taunt, Ames spoke first.

"Black Star is not like you; he's more trustworthy than you."

"Oh, then you'll have to be more careful." Carroll stared at Han Xiao with a sneer. "The more she trusts you, when you want to abandon her, the more determined she'll be to kill you... Hehe, you're probably worse than a pet, just a slave tied to her side."

This guy sure talks a lot of trash... Han Xiao rolled his eyes. A few words were far from enough to anger him.

Then, Carroll looked at Ames again, this time with even more apparent lust. "Did you know this? I once did not even have the courage to raise my head in front of you, but now..."

"I have no interest in what you think." Ames stopped Carroll from speaking. With an ice-cold look in her eyes, she raised her hand and said slowly, "Since you're deliberately taunting, it seems like you're prepared to bear the consequences."

Boom!

As soon as her sentence ended, a powerful force field appeared, and the ground cracked open inch by inch under the extremely heavy pressure. The force field headed straight toward Carroll.

This time, three roars came from around the place. Three shadows moved swiftly in front of Carroll, and thick Pugilist flames rose from their bodies.

The three of them blocked the force field with all their might.

The three of them were all Grade A Bloodshed Land Vanguard Officials, one being Malekith.

In an instant, an impact wave exploded, and the Bloodshed Land soldiers around all turned into rolling stones, falling and rolling away.

The three Vanguard Officials were sent flying, too. They launched a wave of energy midair to stop the momentum, landed on the ground, and stared at Ames with caution.

It had taken all three of them to stop Ames' one simple force field attack.

"As expected." The look in Ames' eyes became darker, and the air started to vibrate.

The attack earlier was just the most casual, simple hit from Ames, and now she was going to get serious.

Ohm!

A much stronger force field brewed, and the ground and buildings around started to crack.

Seeing this, Han Xiao had no choice but to take a few steps forward to stand in front of Ames. With a flash of Mechanical Force, Watcher Instrument hovered behind him in a circle, like a circle of light behind his head.

A dark light appeared in the barrel of the Hovering Shield Shuttle, targeting the enemies. Han Xiao smirked and said, "So, do you guys want to duel or fight me together? I'm fine with anything."

The eyes of the three Vanguard Officials including Malekith all sparkled with anticipation.

Despite saying so, Han Xiao knew that the fight was not going to happen. This was Bloodshed Land's showcase of power; the Tyrant would definitely interfere. After all, they were guests no matter what. Plus, Heber would not allow Ames to destroy his party.

Nonetheless, he still had to express his stand. He could not stand aside and let Ames face the enemies alone.

Just when everything was about to erupt, a new energy force arose from far away, shooting straight up into the sky, as if flooding over the entire Bloodshed Land. Even the star lights in the sky seemed to have lost their color and become dimmer.

Boom!

From a distant place, the voice of a person appeared, deep and loud, like the sound of thunder.

"Ames, fighting in my territory, are you ignoring my existence?"

As soon as he heard this voice, Han Xiao immediately felt the menacing tone.

Subconsciously, this reminded him of what he had felt when he went to the zoo during his previous life and faced the roar of a tiger.



The Tyrant, Heber!

Chapter 608: Probing

Everyone looked toward the source of the sound. The sound came from the middle district of Bloodshed Land and the location of Heber's palace.

Ames's eyes gleamed coldly, and she looked at Hila and Aurora before letting out a soft sigh. Her palm was then lowered and hidden within her sleeves. She was no longer planning on taking action, and the force field that had been brewing disappeared.

The tense atmosphere relaxed in that instant.

She then looked at Carroll and Malekith who had blocked her attack and calmly said, "Don't just stand there, lead the way."

When she decided to accept the invitation of the Tyrant, Ames had already predicted that something like this would happen. Her previous attack had already displayed her attitude. However, since the Tyrant had interfered personally and she was in his territory, she did not want a greater conflict to break out. After all, she did not come here to create trouble.

Malekith nodded and led the way.

Han Xiao then turned around to glance at Carroll.

Carroll did not say another word as he witnessed Ames' departure. He then retracted his smile and shook his head at the other two Vanguard Officials. "I thought that she would continue attacking despite the warning. Although I made sure not to go too far, with my understanding of Ames, this level of provocation should have been enough to enrage her."

Another Vanguard Official then said with a sigh, "The Dragon Emperor has changed. The rumors are true. She indeed wants to expand."

The Black Star Army represented Floating Dragon's expansion. Many organizations had noticed this situation, and Bloodshed Land was no exception.

Carroll's mission was to probe Ames' attitude. The majority of his words were targeted at Black Star and did not directly humiliate Ames. Through Ames' reaction, they would be able to gain plenty of information. If she truly wanted to expand, she would not provoke a greater conflict.

...

At the same time, in Heber's palace, only Heber and a Klent emissary were present. The footage of Ames and her entourage was displayed on the screen.

The Klent Kingdom placed great importance on the Tyrant's gathering and treated this as an important diplomatic mission. The emissary was a high official in the Klent Kingdom and personally attended the gathering to show the close ties between the Tyrant and the Klent Kingdom.

The Klents usually had slim figures, and when standing beside the seven-meter-tall Heber, the emissary seemed extremely tiny.

“Your Excellency Tyrant, you are as powerful as ever. You do not even need to make an appearance and can make the Dragon Emperor back down with a single roar. I still thought that I would be able to witness the majestic appearance of Your Excellency taking action,” the Klent emissary said with a respectful tone.

“Hmm.” Heber shook the gigantic, specially-made wine glass in his hands without saying a thing.

“It’s a pity. If only she had decided to take action.” The Klent emissary shook his head and smiled.

“The gathering this time is a huge event. She will offend many big shots if she creates trouble. Since she wants to expand, she won’t take action,” Heber said calmly.

“Aren’t you afraid of her taking revenge after the gathering?” The Klent emissary chuckled. “She is someone who would do something like that.”

“Isn’t that what you guys would like to see the most?” Heber asked calmly.

“Haha, you are right. That would give you an excuse to suppress Floating Dragon Island.” The Klent emissary laughed. He was the one who wanted to see Ames go all out without any consideration the most. “Even the Purple Crystal Civilization wouldn’t stop you from entering Colton with this reason.”

Heber glanced at him and could not be bothered to reply. While both parties were in an alliance, their motives were different.

The Klent emissary looked at Ames’ figure on the screen and muttered to himself, “Ames... tsk tsk. If I could obtain such a woman who has the halo of a beyond Grade A Super, all other women would pale in comparison to her.”

With his status and authority, he had countless partners, and appearance was no longer what he cared about the most. Status and identity were what made a woman more charming in his eyes. As the only female among the four beyond Grade A Supers in the Shattered Star Ring, Ames was naturally the woman who was the hardest to tame.

A Star System level civilization did not dare provoke a beyond Grade A Super, but to a Star Cluster level civilization, while a beyond Grade A Super was powerful, they would not be that wary of one.

Only a gigantic organization like the Tyrant’s would be of significance to a Star Cluster level civilization.

Thus, the Klent emissary did not mind displaying his desire for Ames. In any case, it was no more than a thought.

“I hate willful women,” Heber said slowly. “Her character needs to be polished more.”

Upon hearing that, the Klent emissary shook his head. Ames was no more than a thought for him, but Heber was the one with the capability to take action.

...

Han Xiao and the others were on their way to the guest room.

After the previous conflict, the mood of the group was a little downcast.

“Black Star don’t think too much,” Ames suddenly said. “Carroll said those words on purpose.”

“I know.” Han Xiao shrugged in response.

“They should’ve been following Heber’s instructions,” Ames explained. “I wonder what his intentions are. Aesop predicted that this gathering would be different and asked me not to act rashly.”

It turned out that Ames had already gotten Aesop to make a prophecy. Perhaps Aesop had also recommended that she come for this gathering.

“Carroll was one of the earliest members of Floating Dragon. However, he betrayed me for the Tyrant, gaining a high status in Bloodshed Land.”

Han Xiao stroked his chin and said, “To allow a traitor to take on an important position, the Tyrant is truly charismatic.”

Do not use an individual you doubt, and do not doubt an individual you use. Heber definitely needed to offer extremely plentiful conditions in order to poach people. When Malekith tried poaching him, Malekith had also offered him the position of Vanguard Official.

“He is the Tyrant, so he is not afraid of betrayals.”

“Why?”

“When Carroll betrayed me, the Tyrant was able to protect him, but if he betrays the Tyrant, no one in the Shattered Star Ring will be able to protect him.” Ames let out a sigh. “Furthermore, I have to admit that the Tyrant is far more charismatic a leader than I am.”

“Are you very wary of him?” Han Xiao said with his brows raised. “I still thought that you weren’t afraid of anything.”

“Of course, I am not afraid of him, but no matter how much I hate him, I cannot change the fact that he is extremely powerful.” Ames shook her head and paused for a moment before continuing. “Thus, try to remain low profile in the Tyrant’s territory. You don’t have to be angry because of Carroll. He said those words intentionally.”

Ames looked at Han Xiao and took the initiative to give an explanation. She was afraid that Han Xiao would take those words to heart.

Han Xiao felt warmth in his heart. He did not mind what Carroll had said but did not think that Ames would care about his feelings.

According to his understanding of Ames, she did not seem like the person who would care about others.

“I feel that you have changed.”

“How have I changed?” Ames smiled.

“You are more patient than before.”

Ames smiled and did not reply. She then turned around to look at Hila and Aurora.

“Aesop said that only a little child would act in such a willful manner. He asked me to change. If not, I will suffer a loss one day.”

Han Xiao rolled his eyes and replied, “That old Aesop is still so shameless. How does he have the right to say such a thing?”

“I think so too.” Ames broke out into a bright smile and chuckled.

...

The guest room provided was located in a building to the side of Heber’s palace. It was a gigantic castle that was made up entirely of guest rooms. There were already some guests who were currently staying in the guest rooms.

There were still a few days before the official start of the gathering, and many organizations would come earlier. The few days before the official start of the ceremony was the best chance to network and expand their social circle. After all, it was a rare opportunity for the big shots of the various organizations to gather together.

Malekith led the way into the castle.

At the moment, the main hall was filled with guests in small groups. The guests were all of different races and came from the different organizations of the Shattered Star Ring.

Upon hearing someone walk in, all the guests turned around to take a look. After recognizing that the incoming guest was Ames, all of them had strange looks on their faces. They wanted to come up to give their greetings but seemed to be wary about something and thus remained on the spot without moving.

All of them had heard the loud roar of the Tyrant. Since Ames and Heber had already clashed, they all felt that it was better for them to suck up to the Tyrant. Thus, no one stepped forward to strike up a conversation with her.

Ames could not be bothered, and their group left the main hall toward the rooms.

Bloodshed Land had prepared the rooms for them. Ames had her own room, Han Xiao had his own room, and Hila and Aurora shared a room.

When they got back to the rooms, Han Xiao was left alone.

He then activated a compressed orb, and it transformed into a detection device. After scanning the room, he confirmed that there were no listening devices.

Han Xiao nodded and took out another machine.

Buzz!

A brilliant beam of light flashed, and a holographic image covered the entire room. Even if there was a magic monitoring device, only the holographic image would be captured, and they would not be able to tell what he was doing.

While there were many big shots living in the castle and there should not be any listening devices, Han Xiao was used to being careful.

“Carroll...”

Han Xiao’s eyes flashed, and he transformed into his Chaos Body. Activating his Void Vision, his sight ignored all physical distance, and he could monitor Carroll’s actions.

The instant Ames had decided to step back, Han Xiao had planted an Observer’s Mark on Carroll and removed the position of the space pirate.

The Observer’s Mark was only there as a precautionary measure. In times of emergency, this Observer’s Mark could come in handy.

Furthermore, Carroll was the Logistics Manager of Bloodshed Land and could come in contact with important equipment and blueprints frequently. Han Xiao felt that there would be a lot to gain from him.

I can make use of the Observer’s Mark to gather intelligence during the gathering, Han Xiao thought to himself.

In his previous life, none of the players had discovered the Tyrant’s gathering because they were not able to reach such a level. This was the first time that he had heard about the gathering.

While there was a conflict along the way, this gathering should be relatively safe.

Ames was probably there to show her presence, but this was an extremely good opportunity to gather intelligence for Han Xiao. Han Xiao decided to make use of it well. With all the participants of the gathering being big shots, they might be able to reveal some important information. With his memory of the various storylines, a small hint would allow him to think of many things.

The Version refresh had always been something of great importance to Han Xiao. After all, the players in his previous life had only received very vague details of the exact timing of the refresh. Han Xiao needed greater details and hoped to gain some insights from this gathering.

## **Chapter 609: New Territory, Empire Envoy**

For a few consecutive days, Han Xiao and the others waited in the castle.

Everything was peaceful. Bloodshed Land’s people did not start another conflict, and the Tyrant’s Eight Ass Kissers... ahem, Eight Vanguard Officials did not appear again.

Other than not being allowed in the restricted areas, the guests could move freely in Bloodshed Land, and the soldiers would lead the tours.

Han Xiao occasionally toured Bloodshed Land.

Even the regular soldiers in Planet Heber’s headquarters were low-grade Supers; there were almost no normal people. The people under the Tyrant were mostly Pugilists, so buff guys could be seen everywhere.

The soldiers wore gray, specially-made heavy armor, which enhanced their body strength and the effect of their Pugilist energy.

Han Xiao noticed that other than the normal soldiers, Bloodshed Land also had some elite soldiers. Their individual physique was stronger, and they wore better armor. Their armor had many exterior prosthetics such as tails, wings, huge claws, and so on. From what the soldier that led the way said, those soldiers were called Thousand Beast Soldiers, one of the elite armies of Bloodshed Land.

Han Xiao was more interested in Bloodshed Land's weapons and carriers; they were all incredibly unique and exclusive to Bloodshed Land. Clearly, the Tyrant had a group of Mechanics designing special equipment.

Bloodshed Land was happy to showcase their power to the guests, but what they showed was only the tip of the iceberg.

Han Xiao could not help but feel a sense of pressure. He was building his own organization, and although they had risen very quickly, there was still a very vast difference between them and large organizations like this, which had been around for so many years and gathered so many resources.

There was still a long way to go for the Black Star Army.

Over the past few days, guests had been arriving and entering the castles continuously.

Although Ames had come to attend the party, she was clearly unconcerned about such things. She had been staying in the room to teach Hila and Aurora, while Han Xiao represented her and socialized.

When he was not touring Bloodshed Land, Han Xiao was chatting with the guests. The guests all represented known organizations in the Shattered Star Ring, so this was a good opportunity to expand his connections and get to know other people.

There were leaders of huge financial groups, representatives of Star Cluster Civilizations, and the most successful people in various industries such as intelligence organizations and ammunition organizations. Han Xiao even saw the Mercenary Alliance's person in charge of Shattered Star Ring, who was very friendly and had a great chat with Han Xiao.

The position, identity, and influence of the guests invited were all at the top of the pyramid in the Shattered Star Ring.

Most of the organizations had heard of Black Star. Although they did not pay much attention to him, he represented Floating Dragon, and the Black Star Army had become quite famous lately.

Han Xiao's current Renown and Legendary Points had reached a certain level, so most of the guests acknowledged that Han Xiao could be part of the circle.

Up until now, Han Xiao had only been active around various Star Systems, which were just the tip of the iceberg of the Shattered Star Ring, so his influence was limited. Now, he had finally stepped into a higher level and met with the people that made up the 'core' of the Shattered Star Ring.

The other guests were divided into several levels. The comparatively lowest level consisted of the large financial groups, and in the middle were the large organizations. Floating Dragon Island was between the low and medium level.

The highest level comprised enormous organizations like Bloodshed Land, as well as the representatives of the seven Star Cluster Civilizations of the Shattered Star Ring. The degree of acknowledgment that they had for Han Xiao decreased as their level increased.

The attitude of the Star Cluster Civilization representatives toward Han Xiao was mostly limited to formalities, except two civilizations who were friendlier—the Purple Crystal Civilization and the Klent Kingdom.

Colton was Purple Crystal's territory. Plus, Dragon Emperor had been hanging around the Colton Star Cluster. To the Purple Crystal Civilization's representative, Han Xiao was considered half an ally to them. The Purple Crystal Civilization's attitude was gentle and friendly.

The Klent Kingdom's high ranked officials were more passionate. They even actively approached Han Xiao to chat, clearly showing their intention of establishing a relationship. Of course, Han Xiao had no reason to refuse.

Nonetheless, he had never had contact with any Klents, so he was quite confused as to why this guy was as passionate as an animal in heat...

After a few days, Han Xiao's communicator obtained the contacts of hundreds of people, who were all the best in their industries. Just these connections had already made this trip worth it.

When he returned to Floating Dragon Island and shares these contacts with Jenny, she would definitely be very touched.

...

Finally, the last day before the party arrived.

That day, to their astonishing surprise, the Tyrant sent someone to Han Xiao and the others, inviting them to attend a private meeting hosted in Heber Palace.

"Heber wants to meet privately? What's his goal?" Han Xiao was curious.

"No idea." Ames shook her head. "We'll know when we get there."

She wanted to know Heber's stance, so she accepted the invitation.

They walked into Heber Palace and arrived at a huge conference room. Three thrones hovered three meters above ground in a triangular shape.

On one of the thrones sat a seven-meter-tall giant, giving off a very strong vibe. As soon as they walked into the room, they subconsciously looked over. Heber's presence was dominating, so he could attract the attention of others immediately.

This was the first time that Han Xiao had met Heber in person, and he was instantly reminded of a crouching lion.

*Huge.* That was Han Xiao's first impression of Heber.

“Sit.” Heber looked over. His eyes were tranquil, and his tone was calm, yet it possessed a natural pressure as if dominance was deeply embedded in his bones. No matter what he did, it would give people that feeling.

Ames snorted. She hovered up and sat on one of the thrones. Han Xiao and the two sisters stood beside the throne.

“What did you call me here for?” Ames asked in a deep voice.

Heber looked at the empty third throne and said, “There’s one more person missing. We’ll talk when everyone’s here.”

Then, Tyrant closed his eyes and rested, leaving Ames aside.

*Assertive...* Han Xiao’s lips twitched uncontrollably.

Ames snorted, already used to it. This was Heber’s way of doing things. Straight forward and forceful, he did not like to have peaceful chats.

After a while, the gate opened again.

A child wearing an oversized Mage robe floated in wobbly, and a few tiny magic dragons swam around his body obediently.

This child’s face was chubby and round, and his ears were sharp. He only looked six or seven years old. A red and white Mage robe hung on his tiny body, like an exquisite and luxurious blanket. Instead of him wearing the Mage robe, it was more like the Mage robe wrapped him up, the tail of which almost touched the floor.

Beneath the child were a few masked men wearing black hooded robes. They were looking down as they walked, seeming mysterious.

“You’re here, too?” Ames’ tone heightened.

“Heard there’s something huge this time, so I’m here to take a look.” The child sat on the empty throne. With an exceptionally tender and childish voice, he nodded at the other two and said, “Ames, Heber, it’s been some time since we last met.”

Han Xiao then realized that this child was another Beyond Grade A in Shattered Star Ring—[Magus] Austin. An unfathomable Mage.

Austin looked very young, but he actually belonged to a long-lived race. He was born with an incomparable Magic Affinity. Like the others, he had many titles: ‘Bender of Rules’, ‘Creator of Forbidden Spells’, ‘Half Spell Body’, ‘Ruler of Arcane’, and others.

Han Xiao looked at the hooded black robe masked Mages below Austin. Every Mage crossed their arms in front of them, their hands hidden in the large sleeves, and stared at the ground like silent sculptures.

*So, these are the Forbidden Sorcerers.* Han Xiao squinted.

[Magus] Austin’s organization was called Hidden Red Robe Abbey, one of the holy lands of Mages in the Shattered Star Ring. They focused on studying and discussing magic, occasionally handling magic-related



investigations for some civilizations. As long as one was a Mage in the Shattered Star Ring, most of them would be willing to join Hidden Red Robe Abbey. That organization had the characteristics of a guild.

Hidden Red Robe Abbey was separated into outer members and inner members. Outer members were all free people that would not have to hold much responsibility, if any. If one wanted to learn deeper magic, they had to pass tests and sign a magic contract to become inner members of Hidden Red Robe Abbey, following orders.

Only the inner members were considered to be under Austin's command. The Forbidden Sorcerers were Hidden Red Robe Abbey's elites. Due to different organizational structures, their military power was not as strong as that of Bloodshed Land, but if the outer members were included, their numbers would probably be much larger than Bloodshed Land.

Other than Ames, Heber had invited another Beyond Grade A. There were four Beyond Grade As in the Shattered Star Ring, and three were gathered there.

Heber then opened his eyes and said, "Everyone's here. Let's get down to business."

"Wait, where's the other guy?" Ames asked. She was talking about the last Beyond Grade A who was not there.

"He said that it's too far, and he's too lazy to come."

"That sounds like him indeed." Austin chuckled.

Heber did not want to waste time chitchatting. He got straight to the point and slowly said, "The purpose of this meeting is to introduce someone to you guys."

The other side of the gate opened, and a person walked in. Everyone looked over with curiosity, wanting to see who this person that Heber wanted to introduce to the other two Beyond Grade As was.

This person was a human species, about 2.5 meters tall. His skin was light red, he had short hair, and his face was unique but mostly suited the aesthetic of Spacehumans. He wore a soft, uncommon robe, it looked very complex and luxurious; the material could not be determined. The patterns on the robe were exquisite, the base of which was crimson red.

Facing three Beyond Grade As, this person remained calm. He stood in between the three thrones and greeted the three of them gently.

"Let me introduce," Heber said slowly, "the Crimson Empire's envoy, Zoel."

The pupils of everyone instantly contracted.

Han Xiao's face remained the same, but there was a storm in his mind.

*The Crimson Empire, one of the three Universal Civilizations!*

*The highest level civilization sent an envoy to attend the Tyrant's party?*

*Has Heber already formed connections with the three Universal Civilizations?*

*Wait a minute...* Han Xiao suddenly realized a problem.

On paper, the Shattered Star Ring belonged to the Federation of Light's territory. However, the Crimson Empire had sent an envoy secretly to the Tyrant's party where all the important people would attend. The meaning of this was extraordinary.

Han Xiao's mind worked fast. Suddenly, he recalled something, and the look in his eyes changed slightly.

He remembered that the background of Version 3.0 [Crimson Tide] was the expansion of the Crimson Empire, affecting various Star Fields.

It turned out that a sign had already appeared.

Han Xiao took a deep breath and calmed his emotions. The Tyrant's party might be an ambush!

Ames frowned slightly and recalled Ames's prophecy before departing.

*This party is indeed not simple...*

The room fell silent.

Zoel looked around slightly and broke the ice. "I'm honored to meet the three Beyond Grade As of the Shattered Star Ring."

"We're honored, too," Austin replied before looking at Heber inquisitively.

Introducing a Crimson Empire envoy, what did this mean?

"What we are going to talk about next is the theme of this party. I'm now telling you guys in advance," Heber said with a deep voice. "Not long ago, the Exterior Universe Explorer Device that the Federation of Light had outside the Shattered Star Ring sent a report back. It crossed an enormous area of desolate universe and was circling around a new Star Cluster area outside the edge. That's an unowned Star Cluster, and it needs to be explored and included in the Shattered Star Ring's map."

The others had different expressions on their faces.

*No wonder the seven Star Cluster Civilizations all sent a representative to attend this party,* Han Xiao realized.

Ever since the Peace Treaty was signed, all three Universal Civilizations had been trying to explore the unexplored universe and expand the known universe.

Every time a new land appeared, new battles erupted.

Since all the Star Clusters of the Shattered Star Ring belonged to the seven Star Cluster Civilizations, the new Star Cluster was a cake that everyone wanted a piece of, if not the whole cake.

"The Federation of Light wants the new Star Cluster to be added to the Shattered Star Ring. We, however, want to deem it as the starting point of a new Star Field," Zoel said.

Although he did not speak of the details, everyone understood what he meant.

The Shattered Star Ring was Federation of Light's territory, but a new Star Field did not belong to anyone. The Crimson Empire's goal was huge—what they wanted was not just a Star Cluster.

In the explored universe, the center Star Fields were bustling, and the Star Fields at the edge were more chaotic and backward. Star Fields at the border like the Shattered Star Ring were where the competition was most intense—only these places had opportunities to continue to explore and expand further.

“Therefore, on behalf of the Crimson Empire, I hope to receive help from you.” Zoel stated his goal.

Heber stayed silent. He had introduced the Crimson Empire envoy to the others, so it was clear that Bloodshed Land had made its decision.

So, the Federation of Light or the Crimson Empire?

Austin and Ames exchanged looks and stayed silent.

Han Xiao's eyes became firm. *They're making a big move!*

### **Chapter 610: Openly Poaching**

The three thrones floated in midair, surrounding the emissary of the Crimson Empire in the middle.

“What can we get if we help you?”

After pondering for a while, Austin was the first to respond.

Everyone present had a certain status, and even the emissary of the Crimson Empire could not expect them to work for nothing.

It was no more than a pipe dream if he wanted the beyond Grade A Supers to help him without offering any conditions.

“A new territory represents new opportunities. Only a piece of white paper is easy to color. If we are able to transform this newly discovered Star Cluster into the beginning of a new Star Field, anyone who wants to explore or expand their territory will have to enter the territory of the new Star Field. At that time, the new Star Field may become a Star Field that has the same weight as the Shattered Star Ring. The benefits hidden within it are frightening,” Zoel explained as he waved his hands to reveal a holographic star map from his communicator that had the new territory marked.

It was outside the boundary of the Shattered Star Ring, and a dark unexplored region of space was marked on it.

After crossing through a long, desolate space belt, a bright region appeared from within the dark region of space. That was the new Star Cluster that the Federation of Light had found.

From smallest to largest, the regions of the galaxy were classified as planet, Star Zone, Star System, Star Cluster, and finally Star Field.

The Crimson Empire wanted to obtain this new Star Cluster not just to expand their territory but because it formed the bridgehead for any future exploration. The Crimson Empire would then be able to

make use of this new territory of theirs as the starting point of their exploration and continue to expand their territory. All the new regions that they discovered after this would belong to the new Star Field, which was part of the Crimson Empire.

The Federation of Light controlled the Shattered Star Ring, and the Crimson Empire wanted to obtain another neighboring Star Field. They were not willing to share this exploration path with the Federation of Light.

As Zoel analyzed the pros and cons of supporting him, Austin and Ames listened silently by the side.

As for Han Xiao, his attention was drawn to the star map that Zoel showed.

No matter how he looked at it, he felt the position of the Star Cluster to be extremely familiar.

After taking a closer look at it, something clicked in his head, and Han Xiao was filled with agitation.

*My goodness, isn't that part of the Flickering World?*

The [Flickering World] was the Main Storyline of a later version, and it was a completely new Star Field. Billions of stars shone brightly to light up the dark universe.

Pioneering the discovery of a Star Field would definitely bring about plenty of benefits.

The players of the entire galaxy would all participate in this Main Storyline mission to pioneer the discovery of a new Star Field. There were also countless races and civilizations that entered the Flickering World. This became an event that caused a huge reshuffle in power among all the organizations and battles to break out everywhere.

The new Star Cluster that Zoel had shown was a part of the Flickering World. It was the tip of the iceberg.

Who would have thought the events of the later versions were already beginning to unfold?

*Only a small corner of the region has been discovered. To explore the new region fully, many years will be required. It is still a long way from the current version...*

In the past, the players had performed missions for the various organizations, but this time, they might have the opportunity to be the ones in control. Just as the emissary had said, a new territory represented new opportunities. Perhaps this was the best chance for him to move up the food chain.

While the Black Star Army was not powerful enough and was still a great distance away from large organizations such as Bloodshed Land, Han Xiao had a huge advantage. He knew how things would develop.

If he wanted to have the rights to be in control, he needed to have a more powerful organization. The stronger he was, the more benefits he could obtain. His present self was far from sufficient. Thankfully, there were a few more versions to go.

Han Xiao could not help but grow anxious as he pondered silently.

The birth of the Flickering World meant one thing. The Crimson Empire succeeded in the end and managed to snatch the new Star Cluster from the Federation of Light and transform it into a new Star Field.

When he was deep in thought, Zoel had finished explaining his conditions. In summary, the Crimson Empire would provide them with aid in secret.

The support of a Universal Civilization was a very tempting condition. While the Federation of Light was in control of the Shattered Star Ring, they rarely interacted with the various organizations of the Shattered Star Ring and appeared to be high above.

Austin frowned and had a serious look on his face. However, when coupled together with his childish appearance, it looked extremely comical and adorable.

"I am not too interested in such a matter and would rather study curses at home. So, I apologize, but I would like to remain neutral. I can only promise you that I will not help the Federation of Light."

After considering for a while, Austin gave his response. He wanted to stay out of this matter and remain neutral.

"I understand." Zoel was not too surprised. They were all beyond Grade As, so he could not force the other party. The outcome of the other party remaining neutral was not too bad. Zoel had only managed to persuade Heber to help him after putting in a great deal of effort. The main purpose of the meeting today was to inform them of their empire's stand and reduce the number of helpers for the Federation of Light.

"What about you, Ames?" Heber asked.

Ames was not interested in such a matter and was about to follow Austin and reject the proposition. However, she paused for a moment and looked at Han Xiao.

"Black Star, what do you think?"

"Hmm?"

Han Xiao was currently deep in thought, and upon being called, he was stunned for a moment.

Seeing everyone's gaze on him, Han Xiao pondered for a moment before nodding. "The Crimson Empire can naturally be trusted with their reputation. The esteemed emissary is correct in saying that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity with great benefits hidden within it. I personally feel that the Crimson Empire has a sixty percent chance of succeeding at the very least."

Zoel's eyes lit up, and he revealed a smile. While wondering when he had successfully converted this fellow, he nodded at Han Xiao and said, "Good eyesight."

Han Xiao also nodded back in response. "Thus, I feel that you shouldn't be in a hurry to reject. This isn't a bad thing."

Upon hearing that, Ames thought for a moment and did not reject Zoel directly but said, "Let me think about this."

The expressions of both Austin and Heber immediately changed.

Both of them had known Ames for years and knew that Ames had actually intended to reject the proposition. However, she had immediately changed her mind after listening to Han Xiao's advice.

Black Star's importance to the Dragon Emperor had far exceeded their expectations.

*Not just a hired thug but an advisor?* Austin stroked his chin and fell into deep thought. *That's right, with Ames' personality, she will need a reliable strategist if she wants to expand, and Black Star seems pretty capable.*

"Black Star, I heard from Malekith that he tried to poach you but was rejected," Heber said.

Han Xiao's eyes gleamed, and he slowly nodded.

"I rarely try a second time, but I would like to ask you again personally."

Heber raised his arm out to Han Xiao and said in a solemn tone, "Black Star, join me."

Boom!

Ames' aura exploded, and an immense pressure was exuded.

Her tone was chilly.

"Trying to poach one of my men before me, do you not respect me at all?"

The frightening pressure assaulted Heber from all directions, but it seemed as though he could not feel it. He ignored Ames and fixed his gaze on Han Xiao. "Do you agree or not?"

Han Xiao's face began contorting.

*Oh my goodness, poaching someone so openly, he is truly tyrannical.*

He had never expected Heber to personally make an invitation at this moment. This fellow truly did not care about what the occasion was and only about how hard his fists are!

"My apologies, but my answer is the same." Han Xiao shook his head helplessly.

Heber nodded and was not angered by the rejection. It was as though he had never brought up this topic at all.

He liked talents but was not willing to force someone who did not want to submit.

The force field was still growing in strength, and Heber turned around to look at Ames. "Aren't you going to stop your force field? Do you want to fight?"

Ames remained expressionless as her aura continued to grow. She almost wanted to completely ignore the advice that Aesop had given her.

Austin could only interfere helplessly lest they ended up fighting. With a snap of his fingers, he cast a calming spell on Ames.

“Alright, alright, this isn’t the first day you’ve known her. Don’t act so rashly.”