

The Mechanic 871

Chapter 871 Business Snatching Mid-Version

The little secret between the Arcane Church and Federation of Light was not made known to Han Xiao.

After leaving the star system of the Star Pupil Holy Race, Han Xiao's fleet did not stop, returning to the headquarters of the Black Star Army.

In the previous gathering that the Tyrant hosted, Han Xiao had signed a few agreements with a large number of civilizations in the Shattered Star Ring and had also publicly sold access to the Evolution Cube in exchange for cooperation with the major civilizations.

This year was the first year of cooperation, and because Han Xiao would remain in the Shattered Star Ring for this period, he prepared to handle the slots purchased by the various civilizations this year and complete them.

In the past years, the civilizations had conducted numerous internal selections, confirming the list of elites who would undergo evolution, and had been waiting for this day. Upon receiving the notice, the teams were dispatched, and many elites from each civilization gathered at the Black Star Army headquarters.

Using the Evolution Cube as a bridge to reach better relationships with multiple star cluster and star system level civilizations was a key step in the expansion plan for the Black Star Army.

In Han Xiao's blueprint, maintaining this sort of cooperation network for a long period would form a large network using the Black Star Army as a transit point. By that time, the power and influence of the Black Star Army would truly cover the entire star field, so Han Xiao paid a lot of attention to the cooperation in the first year.

Furthermore, there was an additional benefit. The people picked by the civilizations would all be elites, and there would definitely be well-known characters or protagonists within.

Letting them take the initiative to gather was better than him looking for all of them himself.

This is probably the alternate reality version of keeping the talents in the world for my own usage... Han Xiao mused to himself.

...

Spaceships of different styles landed at the Black Star Army headquarters, and elites of all races poured out as the hatches opened. They were led to the accommodation area under the guidance of the reception robots, causing the dock to be extremely lively.

These elites were all leaders back in their respective civilizations, and the majority were either Calamity Grades, military officers, potential Calamity Grades, or scientific researchers. All of them sized up the other elites as they disembarked, their expressions wary.

"This is the Black Star Army talked of in legends."

Pamela opened her three large, watery eyes as she curiously took in her surroundings. She hailed from a star system level plant-based civilization, with her race called the Flower Sprite Tribe. Her body was covered with a layer of green leaf-like epidermal tissue, and she exuded a strange fragrance. It was said that every individual had a unique fragrance, just like how humans were differentiated by fingerprints. Body fragrance, appearance, and physique were the aesthetic standards for this race.

According to their aesthetics, Pamela would be a rare beauty, and at the same time, she was an elite researcher who was chosen to undergo evolution.

As Pamela and her party observed the dock, a small hovering robot flew in front of them, speaking in Phillip's voice.

"Welcome, everyone, to the Black Star Army, hum... Our Commander is still en route. I'll be responsible for escorting you and arranging your accommodation. In the meantime, if you have any needs, please contact me directly, hum..."

The leader of the Flower Sprite Tribe was a Calamity Grade, and he calmly nodded. "Understood."

"Please follow me."

The reception robot flew through the huge crowd, leading the way.

The group followed close behind, looking around on the way and discussing in a low voice.

"People of all civilizations have come. I even saw a few Star Cluster level Civilizations."

"All of them are elites of their races. This is a grand event. Let's go pay a visit to some others. After all, it's a rare chance to socialize."

Hearing the discussions coming from behind, the reception robot turned around and addressed them. "During this waiting period, I'll take you to visit the headquarters, hold banquets, and provide a platform for everyone to communicate with each other, so please don't worry about not having a chance."

"This looks a little like the Tyrant's Party... but the people here are not representatives of a few civilizations but rather a large number of elites..." The eyes of the Calamity Grade leading the team moved around, and they seemed to understand something.

Pamela hesitated before asking, "So, so... will we have a chance to converse with His Excellency Black Star?"

"There will be a banquet for everyone to celebrate after the evolution process is completed. If you're willing to stay, then you'll be able to converse with our Army Commander," the robot replied.

"That's... that's great." Pamela's skin color turned green, which was the same as humans blushing. She looked expectant.

"Yo, shy because you're about to see your idol?" One of her colleagues teased.

Pamela did not reply, her face so green that it was turning indigo.

Every Beyond Grade A would have a few fans in the universe, even those infamous thugs such as EsGod.

The deeds of Black Star were widely circulated in the universe. As a native of a planetary civilization, he had established the Black Star Army from scratch and rewritten the fate of his homeland by himself. Such a legendary existence had attracted a large number of admirers within the Shattered Star Ring, and Pamela was one of those who were impressed with his deeds.

“I don’t know what sort of spouse Black Star likes...” Pamela appeared a bit dazed.

“Hello, are you being serious? Do you not know about reproductive isolation?” Her colleague was surprised.

“I’m a biological genetic engineer. Do I need your reminder?” Pamela snapped back in resignation.

The Calamity Grade leader frowned and turned back to say, “Don’t forget our purpose here, and don’t provoke His Excellency.”

“Can’t I have expectations?” Pamela grumpily replied.

She did not know, however, that the reception robot was recording every word they spoke and passing it on to Sylvia.

In her office, Sylvia received the report, and after sweeping over it, she coldly snorted.

“Number 237...”

After which, she put a mark on the file before throwing it into a folder labelled ‘Banquet Seating Arrangement (Corner List)’.

...

Way before the date that Han Xiao set, all the civilizations that were supposed to undergo evolution had arrived. Except for Klent, the other Shattered Star Ring civilizations were there. Not only were civilizations belonging to the Shattered Star Ring there—even a new batch of elites from the Crimson Dynasty had arrived.

While waiting, these organizations did not just idle but took this rare chance to network and exchange contacts. The atmosphere quickly became friendly.

All the elites present could see that Han Xiao was taking advantage of the situation to gather all the influential people in Shattered Star Ring and start his own banquet. In other words, he was trying to snatch the Tyrant Heber’s businesses, using the Evolution Cube as a cover to form his own ‘party’, in order to expand his influence!

Although everyone understood this, no one had any issues with it. They were also willing to communicate with other races for their needs.

As for Black Star and the Tyrant’s competition, no one dared breathe a word. Both sides were not good to provoke, and it was better to just go with the flow.

A few days passed, and Han Xiao finally arrived back at the headquarters. After resting for a few hours, he informed everyone to gather to proceed with the ceremony.

Following batch after batch of people, the clean and gleaming main hall quickly became packed. Reynold received the news and took the mechanics of the logistics department to widen the hall on the spot so that it would not be overcrowded.

The space fluctuated slightly, and Han Xiao stepped out of the void dimension, suspending himself above everyone's head. The Evolution Cube slowly rotated around him.

Everyone looked up at the floating Han Xiao, and there was a small commotion as everyone broke out in whispers.

"Black Star is here."

"This is the first time I've seen a Beyond Grade A from up close. The energy contained within his body is just terrifying. I started sweating when I felt it."

"The thing beside him is probably the Evolution Cube. Not too long ago, I heard that Psyker relinquished his control over this Universal Treasure... Such a small thing was actually the source of so much trouble, and even a few Beyond Grade As from the Arcane Church were captured."

"Black Star does have the ability to keep this Universal Treasure. A year ago, I thought that his Evolution Cube would be snatched away quickly, but it turns out that I was wrong."

The elites of the various races all had awe in their eyes. No matter how proud they were normally, in front of Han Xiao, they did not have the ability to be confident.

Before Han Xiao rose up, other than the Purple Crystal Civilization, the other Star Cluster civilizations had tried to suppress Han Xiao, but at the Tyrant's Party, all of them could not help but lower their heads to seek cooperation.

Just because Han Xiao had recently reached Beyond Grade A, everyone had entertained a brief thought of suppressing him.

However, the recent matters had proven Black Star's ability, consolidating his position in the universe. This dispelled the last bit of hostility the star cluster civilizations had. They completely gave up on their fantasy. Now that Black Star had completely taken off, playing small tricks were useless.

Looking at the gazes below of respect and admiration, Han Xiao secretly nodded to himself.

The recent storm had brought him benefits in that he was able to successfully launch this program to create a consortium of interests. This had saved him a lot of time.

On his way back, Han Xiao had briefly scanned through the name list of the elites as well. Not out of his expectations, there were a few well-known personalities of various civilizations from his previous life.

However, this was not the time to come into contact. After completing their evolution, Han Xiao then intended to befriend these 'old acquaintances' during the specially organized banquet.

Most likely, these people all had some kind of storyline. While he might not need them, the players needed them...

In short, these elites were walking bags of fertilizer.

Various thoughts flashed by as Han Xiao surveyed the scene. He smiled before speaking in an interested voice.

“Before we begin, there’s something I need to do... Heber, there’s no need to hide. I know you’re in there.”

The moment this sentence was spoken, everybody jumped. They stared left and right but did not discover him.

The Tyrant’s here too?

Everyone fidgeted, but no one stepped forward. Seeing this, Han Xiao’s brows furrowed. “Stop lying to yourself. I’ve already discovered you. Since you won’t come out, do you want me to drag you out? You will only lose face.”

The commotion got louder, but still, no one stepped up.

Han Xiao looked over everyone with narrowed eyes before suddenly bursting into laughter. “Hehe, it seems like Heber really didn’t sneak in. Then we can begin.”

Hearing this, everyone’s expression stiffened.

“He was actually joking...” Countless people’s mouths twitched.

Is it really good to ridicule the Tyrant like this, even guarding against him coming over? That guy is after all a Beyond Grade A! He wouldn’t do something so low class... right?

Perhaps Black Star and Tyrant have a good relationship now, so they can ridicule each other...

Everyone could only think this way.

Han Xiao then activated the Evolution Cube, and with a thought, the black evolutionary energy spewed out, enveloping the entire room. The elites present all turned into black cocoons.

“It’s done.” Han Xiao clapped his hands and instructed Phillip, “Monitor their evolutions. Remember to invite them to stay for the banquet later.”

“Roger, hum...”

Han Xiao did not wish to wait there for nothing. He stored the Evolution Cube and left the hall full of black cocoons, returning to his room.

He was going to change his clothes. He awaited the banquet that was to come next.

On the way, Han Xiao casually read through the forums.

Now that the matters of the Arcane Church had drawn to a close, the long-term gains from this event would gradually manifest over time, such as Urranrell’s appreciation of him and his importance to the dynasty.

The situation was already settled. What happened next would be between the Crimson Dynasty and Arcane Church, which was not his concern.

In the short term, no trouble would come looking for him, so Han Xiao had the capacity to focus on the players.

From the perspective of the players, Version 3.0 had been going for about a year and a half, which was the mid-version phase.

In this year and a half, the players had experienced the secret war, the Crimson Tide, the rise of Black Star, the Flickering World, and the Battle of Planet Lighthouse, which were all major events. More and more players at the level cap of 120 had appeared, and more and more players would continue to reach this goal as time passed.

During the mid-version phase, the new Pro League would be released. There was still some time before the opening, so players had time to upgrade, learn new skills, and change equipment. However, on the forums, the league officials had already begun the preparations, advertising widely and attracting the players' attention.

From his memory, Version 3.0 was particularly spectacular.

Players would possess the strength of Grade Bs in this version, and the Mechanic profession would also slowly start to rise. A large number of newcomers would emerge, including Maple Moon, as professional players, causing a new injection into the pro scene.

The ratio of Mechanics in the Shattered Star Ring was the highest among all the other star fields, and the Black Star Army also sold the highest number of machines as well as blueprints. With the bonuses offered throughout the version, Han Xiao believed that the Shattered Star Ring's Mechanics would bring great glory in the Pro League this time.

To him, the best benefit would be that it would attract more people to take the Mechanic profession or allow the older players to create Mechanic smurfs.

If that was the case, he would generate more income as the 'mentor' of the Mechanic profession.

"What a pity. With three versions out, the good days are almost over." Han Xiao shook his head with some emotion.

Based on his experience from his previous life, Version 3.0 was a watershed. It symbolized that players had formally entered the mid-stage of the universe, and it was where their influence truly began to manifest and expand.

The nicknames 'Cancer of the Universe' as well as 'The Fourth Calamity' were tagged toward the players after Version 3.0!

It was also the source of Han Xiao's psychological shadow.

For now, the players were in a period of imminent transformation. After this version, the players' strength would exceed a certain point, and the more things they could do, the more they would be inclined to cause chaos. This was inevitable!

Version 3.0 was the last stage where players could be easily controlled.

Thus, Han Xiao placed his bets on the Flickering World. He might be able to use it to gain some advantage during the faction wars in the next version.

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Just as Han Xiao was about to proceed with the banquet, on the other side of the star cluster, Heber also received some news.

As a competitor, he was always paying attention to the moves of the Black Star Army.

Heber thus discovered Han Xiao's sinister intentions.

"Relying on the Evolution Cube, Black Star is building a platform for the elites to converse. He's trying to take away the influence of the Tyrant's Party and gain even greater influence in the Shattered Star Ring..."

As he read the intelligence, Heber grew visibly annoyed.

The Tyrant's Party was the byproduct of his many years of effort. Now that Han Xiao had come out to compete with him, he was furious yet unable to stop it.

Furthermore, upon realizing that Han Xiao had mocked him in front of all the various civilization elites, Heber's mind finally blew.

Dammit, why!

Are we even on good terms?

To ridicule me like that in public, smearing my brave warrior image, this is pure evil!

You're taking advantage of me!

One of these days, I'm going to make sure you can't even defend yourself!

Chapter 872 Banquet and Reques

The duration of everyone's evolution process differed. As the cocoons slowly broke one after another, people groggily woke up, sensing the changes within themselves.

The Evolution Cube raised one's life level, and the normal people were unlike players in that they could not get used to their new changes immediately. Their way to improvement was through long hours of extended practice, where many streams flowed to form a river. It was usually only when they broke through to a new realm that such a drastic change occurred.

Thus, most of the people present were satisfied with the effect of the Evolution Cube, especially the Calamity Grade Supers. The stronger their body, the better the effect of using the Evolution Cube.

"What a novel experience." Pamela curiously observed the changes in her body. As a biological genetic engineer, she could feel the process more acutely, and her professionalism surfaced. "This is a pure evolution at the genetic level, not environmentally induced mutation but rather optimization. One's original racial characteristics amplify the advantages of the genes, and their strengths are strengthened. If there are no sequelae, it is practically perfect.

“The source of this power is unknown. It’s like a divine blessing... The cells seemed to have received some sort of radiation. Is the essence of evolutionary energy a special kind of radiation?”

While she was muttering, the reception robot came up to her and said, “Congratulations. In order to celebrate your evolution, the Black Star Army will be holding a banquet tomorrow. The Army Commander and the officers will attend, and you’re welcome to participate, hum...”

Every race that had completed their evolution would receive an invite from the reception robots. The Flower Sprite Tribe leader suppressed his excitement and nodded. “We will be there.”

“The invite has been sent. On it is the time and place. I’ll remind you again closer to the time. Also, please remember to dress formally.”

“Understood.” Everyone else nodded in agreement.

The purpose of their trip was completed, and everyone in the room was in a good mood. Practically all the elites accepted the invitation, opting to stay and attend the banquet.

It was to be held the next day, so everyone proceeded back to their accommodation.

After resting for a day, the elites took off their battle suits and armor, donning the formal attire of their respective civilizations, and proceeded to the banquet venue.

In the commander’s room, Han Xiao also donned a suit, looking at himself in the mirror.

The man in the mirror was tall and well-built, wearing a compressed orb necklace and a thick black cloak with white borders on his shoulders. The emblem of the Black Star Army was embroidered on his back, lined with the dark-red fur of a rare beast. The neckline of the cloak had three silver magnetic clasps that could be joined to wrap around the body. It matched with the black top and pants provided.

Han Xiao could not help but comment, “I would like to know who designed this suit. Is the person treating me like a crow?”

“I designed it based on your usual attire, hum...”

“It seems like I will need to modify the data collection algorithm,” Han Xiao muttered to himself.

After washing his face, Han Xiao opened his door to find all his officers outside in their formal attire waiting for him.

Sweeping his eyes over them, he looked at everyone’s designs.

Han Xiao interestedly sized up everyone. “All of you look pretty good.”

“It’s been a while since I wore my robes. It’s a little awkward.” Feidin adjusted his neckline, looking a little helpless.

Because Han Xiao normally did not host such events, few of them had seen each other in formal attire.

Hila frowned. “You know I have no interest in these activities. If I have time to attend a banquet, I’d rather be training.”

“Just training itself wouldn’t help. You need to rest and relax at times.” Han Xiao waved his hands. “Recently, because of the problem with the Arcane Church, my nerves have been stretched out, and now that this problem has finally been solved, I can relax for today. Don’t think about training anymore.”

“I don’t like conversing with strangers.” Hila shook her head.

“Uh... these people are all the elites of their civilizations. They’re probably formidable characters, and if you get to know them, you could organize a spar.”

“That sounds good.” Hila’s eyes flickered.

Han Xiao chatted with his entourage while he walked, all the way until they arrived at the banquet. There were already a lot of people within, and it was boisterous.

The banquet hall was a special hall designed for this purpose, and its decorations were opulent. Tables were filled with full, and innumerable delicacies were delivered like flowing water. The foods were complex and catered toward the tastes of different races.

The elites of all races were present, and various styles and designs of clothing were on full display, dazzling the eyes. It fully demonstrated the diversity of the interstellar society.

Han Xiao led his people to the front, where he attracted all gazes.

“Ahem, on behalf of the Black Star Army, welcome to the evening banquet...”

Clearing his throat, Han Xiao smiled as he spoke. As the host, he had to give some pleasantries before the banquet could formally begin.

After giving a brief speech, the atmosphere at the banquet grew much warmer. Many people took the initiative to approach Han Xiao and chat with him enthusiastically.

The majority of people had stayed behind in order to converse with Han Xiao. It was not every day that one had the means to come into contact with a Beyond Grade A.

Very quickly, a crowd was surrounding Han Xiao. With a smile on his face, and seemingly not bored of the small talk, he continued to access everyone present.

In just this short period, he had seen many of the ‘acquaintances’ he knew in his past life. All of these people were famed personalities that the players from Shattered Star Ring had met in various regions while adventuring.

Some of them were very cheerful and sociable, while some wore hooded cloaks as though they were trying to hide themselves. One of them was even mumbling to himself, as though he was neurotic.

While, in front of Han Xiao, these characters’ fame was not worth mentioning, in front of the players, they were all big-shot characters.

As for all the elites that came to talk, Han Xiao collected all their contact details. This gave them a pleasant surprise because they did not expect a Beyond Grade A to be so easy to approach.

Collecting their contact information was akin to collecting their potential storyline missions for Han Xiao. In addition, these elites all had considerable power in the respective civilizations, which could be regarded as networking.

While conversing, Han Xiao heard someone calling him from behind in a shy tone.

“Your... Your Excellency Black Star, I’m Pamela from the Flower Sprite Tribe, a biological genetic engineer.”

Han Xiao turned back and smiled. “Is there anything you need?”

“I... I’m one of your admirers. I would like to know you. Could you accept my communicator number?” Pamela looked excited. She had watched him from the side for a while and realized that Han Xiao did not reject such requests. Thus, she had gathered up her courage to talk to him and exchange contact information.

Feeling her impure gaze on him, Han Xiao laughed dumbly.

Am I being picked up now?

What a rare occasion.

“Ok. Send it to me.” Han Xiao did not reject her. A biological genetic engineer was worth him befriending.

Although it was impossible for these elites to jump ship, he could still recruit them if he ran into some special situations in the future or request their aid.

“Thank you!” After exchanging contact details, Pamela behaved as though she had just obtained his autograph, her face full of joy as she hugged her communicator close to her chest.

Not far away, Sylvia saw this entire scene and lightly snorted. “Humph, airhead.”

As the banquet progressed, the guests became more absorbed in the atmosphere and relaxed more.

Batch after batch of guests exchanged their contact information with Han Xiao before being content enough to retreat. Han Xiao finally managed to get a breather and sighed in relief as he grabbed one of the alcoholic beverages from a floating tray. He drained half the cocktail, which held a blue gradient, to moisten his throat.

The cooling yet spicy alcohol flowed into his throat, and there was an aftertaste of sweetness. Han Xiao felt rejuvenated and smiled.

Walking to a corner, he slowly drank whilst surveying the scene.

After working for so many years, the Black Star Army had finally reached its current scale, which gave Han Xiao mixed feelings.

“What are you reminiscing about?” Hila carried a deep red cocktail as she walked over.

“How did you know?” Han Xiao raised a brow.

"I've known you for so long. How could I not understand? Seeing your eyes, I know that you're recalling something," Hila blandly replied.

"Speaking of, I just recalled something. Twenty years ago, back on Planet Aquamarine, when I just... cough, just lost my memories, you were the first friend I met, and the earliest."

"That's right. In the blink of an eye, it's been so many years." Hila followed Han Xiao's gaze and looked around the entire venue. "Those years, I struggled in despair and never thought that I would step into the universe one day and have such a future. Now, looking back, it seems like those days on Planet Aquamarine belonged to a past life."

"Thinking back, I endured for a good half a year in the Germinal Organization base. It was lucky that you left the base once in a while, or else I would never have escaped."

"It's good that you know this." The corners of Hila's mouth curled up.

Han Xiao laughed as he reminisced, but suddenly, his laughter stopped, and he shook his head. "There are so many things that happened after. You felt that you owed me, so you always chose to fight for me. However, your ability is not only at this level, and you have the potential to reach Beyond Grade A. One day, you will obtain this power, and at that time, will you still fight shoulder to shoulder with me?"

Hila hesitated for a while before shaking her head. "I don't know."

"An honest answer. Promises are the most unreliable thing. Who can predict the future properly?" Han Xiao shrugged and raised his glass. "At least, you're still by my side now. To our friendship, cheers."

"You sound so old fashioned."

"Please, we're already in our forties... although if we look from the perspective of our life spans, we're just little brats."

"You're the little brat."

Hila's expression was disdainful, but a smile still hung on her lips as she raised her glass to clink Han Xiao's.

"Cheers."

They both took a sip of their drinks.

Han Xiao wiped his mouth. He was about to say something else, but a guest suddenly walked over, as though he wished to talk, yet there was a hesitant look.

Seeing someone approached, they both stopped talking, and Han Xiao took the initiative to ask, "Is there something?"

"Your Excellency Black Star, I'm Ceselin from the Gulal Civilization. I have a matter that I would like to discuss privately."

Gulal Civilization? Han Xiao quickly searched on his quantum network.

This was a Star Cluster Civilization that seemed to have been embroiled in civil strife for a long time. Their internal issues were serious and had evolved to the point of military division.

This Ceselin was a Calamity Grade elite belonging to the current ruling party of the civilization. Not only was he one of the strongest guardians but also an army commander with high power.

“What do you want to talk in private for?” Han Xiao raised his brow. “Can’t we talk here?”

Ceselin shook his head. “It’s not suitable in a public venue.”

“You must at least tell me your intentions.”

Ceselin paused for a moment before solemnly saying, “This is a request. Please believe me. I come with sincerity.”

Han Xiao stroked his chin, smelling the possibility of a mission.

To have a mission bring itself to me, it’s quite worthwhile to listen to it...

As he thought of this, Han Xiao passed his glass to Hila before turning to walk toward a side entrance. There were private conference rooms located along the corridor there.

“Follow me.”

Chapter 873 S Grade War Hire

Both of them left through the side entrance, walking along the hallway to a conference room. Phillip locked the door as they entered. The soundproofing system here was good, completely isolating the noises from the banquet.

They sat down facing each other, and Han Xiao snapped his fingers. The simulated mechanical waiter stepped forward to pour two glasses of amber mead for them, adding a few cubes of ice before placing the glasses on the table in front of them.

“We can speak now.” Han Xiao swirled his glass, and the fragrance of the liquor wafted out from the mouth of the glass.

Now that he was a great character within the Shattered Star Ring, no longer did he need to actively search for missions. People would naturally come knocking to request his aid.

This phenomenon was not only limited to himself. Players could also achieve this if they managed to carve out a name for themselves within a certain star system. NPCs would then also seek help from them from time to time.

“It’s like this. My request is about the future of the Gulal Civilization...” Ceselin sat on the edge.

I guessed it. If it wasn’t something of that magnitude, who would come and disturb a Beyond Grade A? Han Xiao’s expression, however, remained unchanged, and he lifted his hand, gesturing for him to continue.

“Before this, please allow me to briefly explain the current situation of my civilization.” Ceselin solemnly spoke. “The Gulal Civilization has always been in a state of military division, and the three main parties

have formed their own military regions and are opposed to each other. They are the Ancient Emperor Party, the Pioneer Party, and the Descendant Party. The current ruling party representing the Gulal Civilization government is the Ancient Emperor Party, and my teammates and I are members of this party.”

As one of the edges of the explored universe, the Shattered Star Ring had a complicated situation due to the lack of control. Some civilizations were stable and peaceful, whilst some faced external and internal problems. The situation of internal military division such as the Gulal Civilization would be considered quite serious.

“Okay, I understand. So, what is your request?” Han Xiao asked.

“I beg the Black Star Army to lend the war efforts and end the split of the Gulal Civilization, letting us find peace.”

“I understand. You wish to apply for war employment and have my people assist the current ruling party to suppress the other two, right?” Han Xiao raised a brow.

However, Ceselin shook his head and gave an unexpected answer.

“No, I hope for Black Star Army to assist the Pioneer Party in overthrowing the Ancient Emperor Party and suppressing the Descendant Party.”

This was getting more interesting. Han Xiao sized Ceselin up. “You’re someone of the Ancient Emperor Party, yet you are helping the Pioneer Party to speak. Are you a spy?”

Ceselin shook his head. “That’s not the case. I was born on a colonial planet of the Ancient Emperor Party and even joined their army. I’ve never joined another party.”

“Then, why? For benefits? Did the Pioneer Party give you any advantages?”

“That’s not true either. My position in the Ancient Emperor Party is high, and I’m even a War Hero. The Pioneer Party would not try to pull hardcore members like me over, and whatever they can give me, the Ancient Emperor Party can do so as well.”

“Then why?”

“Ideals,” Ceselin gravely replied. “I’m more inclined toward the ideology and beliefs of the Pioneer Party. The Ancient Emperor Party is decaying, and only the Pioneer Party will be able to lead the civilization to greater hope.”

“I get it.” Han Xiao narrowed his eyes. “You’re a traitor. The Ancient Emperor Party has given you both authority and standing, even allowing you to obtain the power of the Evolution Cube, yet you decide to stab them in the back and overthrow them?”

“From their viewpoint, I’m indeed a traitor, but from the viewpoint of the Pioneer Party, I’m someone who has thrown away the darkness and embraced the light. One’s perception is based on their viewpoint, so I’m only looking at this objectively and not caring about one’s judgement,” Ceselin replied in a low voice. “Back when I was young, I was also passionate and wanted to serve the nation. However, my thoughts were not mature, and like many others, I was just keen to maintain the orthodox Ancient Emperor Party. Since I was born on the colonial planet, my position was largely determined from birth...

but after so many years, I've become skeptical of their ideals and behavior, and my beliefs have become more and more shaken."

Han Xiao looked at him silently. Before Phillip presented him with the complete information on Gulal Civilization, he would not just take anyone's words at face value.

This time, Ceselin's tone became more animated, and it even hid some anger.

"Due to its position, the Ancient Emperor Party wanted a totalitarian rule and has done many bloody things under wraps to our people. I've participated in many of them and have seen the darkness of politics, the bloodshed of domination, and the confinement of thought. My house is filled with medals awarded by the party, and I used to like to look at the past glories. However, when I stare at them now, my nose fills with the sickening smell of blood."

Han Xiao stroked his chin. "So, you decided to betray the party that groomed you?"

"To be specific, it was only after I began to doubt myself that I finally freed myself from the shackles." Ceselin took a sip of his drink and sighed. "I've always been bound by my identity, and when I woke up, I realized that the three parties were only the standpoints of internal division of our civilization. The so-called opposition is meaningless, and what we should be concerned with is the future of our entire civilization. Whoever can bring prosperity should be supported. I chose to follow the idea of freedom and the judgement of my heart, so I chose the Pioneer Party, which the majority of citizens support. They will be able to bring Gulal Civilization further."

"So, in this way, you believe yourself to be noble?" Han Xiao raised his brow.

"I never thought of myself that way." Ceselin shook his head.

"... Regarding your choice, I cannot give any comment because I'm an outsider," Han Xiao slowly said. "I just want to know. You mentioned that you have never joined the other parties. So, on what basis can the Pioneer Party talk to me about cooperation?"

"I'm not representing the Pioneer Party. I'm just making a request to you personally."

Han Xiao laughed at this. "What makes you think you can persuade me to intervene in a civil strife that I do not care about? You haven't even reached a consensus with the Pioneer Party, and let's not talk about whether the other party wishes for me to intervene. Just how are you even going to afford the war employment wages? Why should I kick aside the Ancient Emperor Party that I'm working with now to help you? What can you bring me?"

"I know that it's very abrupt to bring this up as an individual, but I have no choice," Ceselin replied. "The Ancient Emperor Party has assigned me the mission of applying to you for war employment. They are ready to use force to eradicate the other two parties and take back all the divided land."

"So, it's like that." Han Xiao understood it.

The Ancient Emperor Party wanted to resolve the strife once and for all, but they did not wish to be controlled by an advanced civilization. Thus, instead of asking for help from the Star Cluster civilizations, they planned to hire foreign aid in the form of interstellar mercenaries. In the Shattered Star Ring, the

most representative of the mercenaries were the Mercenary League, Bloodshed Land, and Black Star Army.

Since the Black Star Army was also the head of the Mercenary League and an ally of the dynasty together with Bloodshed Land, as long as the Black Star Army was hired, the mercenaries of Shattered Star Ring would not be employed by people wishing to oppose the Black Star Army. After all, with the current might of the army, no one wished to send themselves to die, and mercenaries that are cooperating with each other would not send their people to opposing sides.

In the mercenary world within the Shattered Star Ring, the Black Star Army had already reached the highest level of influence and reputation.

As the ruling party, the Ancient Emperor Party had already attached themselves to the Black Star Army. As long as aid was received, the Pioneer Party that Ceselin looked upon fondly would be destroyed, so he could only brave this risk and boldly make this request of Han Xiao.

Man, of all the people you chose to be the emissary, you chose an emissary that is a backstabber... Han Xiao's mouth twitched. Could this be the legendary plot of 'I didn't choose this, but now I wish to be on the good side?'

Han Xiao shook his head. "Let's be practical. Which party is in power has no impact on me. Since the Ancient Emperor Party is cooperating with the Black Star Army, they will definitely offer a good price. And since you came here in a rush to find me, that means nothing is set in stone on your side... Forget it. I don't wish to say any more unpleasant words. Let's consider this conversation over."

Han Xiao put down his glass and stood up, walking toward the door with a dissatisfied mood.

While the words from Ceselin were nice to hear, it was true that he could not bring out any substantial remuneration. Han Xiao did not care about the struggle of a party in an unfamiliar civilization. The Black Star Army had retained its mercenary business after the transformation and did not change into a charity overnight.

Violation of professional standards was a behavior without any professional ethics. Without practical benefits, he wished to use only his mouth to influence a Beyond Grade A?

If he had such a fantasy, he should just die in that fantasy!

"Please wait." Ceselin immediately stood up. "Just as you mentioned, whichever party it is has no influence toward you. The Pioneer Party can also maintain a cooperative relationship with you. I hope that you will help the Pioneer Party. The Gulal Civilization can also become stronger, which will be more rewarding for you. The Ancient Emperor Party has decayed, and the Pioneer Party is the only righteous one now."

"What does your righteousness have to do with me?" Han Xiao did not bother turning back. Waving this so-called banner of justice was useless in front of others.

His kindness only existed to people he knew. Toward strangers, this was greatly limited. His coldness was created with the times, and with all the matters experienced, he would not easily allow people to sway him.

“Please help the Gulal Civilization!”

Dong!

A weird sound was heard, and when Han Xiao turned back, he saw Ceselin prostrating on the ground. A Calamity Grade actually begged him for help.

However, glancing at him, Han Xiao remained indifferent and prepared to push open the door.

At this moment, a mission notification appeared on his interface.

You have triggered an S-ranked Mission (Gulal Civilization: The Flames of Pioneer!).

Mission Introduction: The Gulal Civilization is a galactic civilization that has been plagued with internal strife. The civilization has not progressed for many years and has even deteriorated. In order to break this deadlock, Ceselin, who is an upper echelon of the Ancient Emperor Party, has decided to support the Pioneer Party and has made a request to you.

Mission Requirements: Overthrow the rule of the Ancient Emperor Party, eradicate the Descendant Party, and support the Pioneer Party to become the new rulers of the Gulal Civilization

Failure Condition: The destruction of the Pioneer Party

Reward: After completion of the task, the reward will be determined by the Mission Rating.

S-ranked mission? Han Xiao’s footsteps paused. A coup d’état of a galactic civilization was as good as engaging in total war. It was indeed deserving of its S-rank difficulty, as players would find it difficult to control the direction of an internal war.

Of course, it was different for him. The influence of the Black Star Army was huge, so he was naturally qualified to intervene in this war. This mission was not difficult for him.

But while thinking about it, Han Xiao did not stop there and walked out of the room, leaving Ceselin in the room looking lost.

The S-ranked mission was indeed attractive, but it was unreasonable to aid the Pioneer Party just because of the mission. It was unreasonable to assume that the Ancient Emperor Party would not have a mission, as Han Xiao immediately saw with his experience that this would be a series of missions.

Han Xiao was prepared to speak with all the upper echelons of the Gulal Civilization and activate the missions of each party before deciding.

He was never the kind that had an obsessive compulsion to complete every mission that he saw.

An S-ranked mission’s war employment was no trivial matter. While the Black Star Army had a certain level of strength, it did not mean that they could just ignore the resources of a galactic civilization.

Han Xiao was clear that although their status was high, it was mainly because of him. After all, the development time of the army was limited, and its military force, while able to participate in a star system level war, was still far from being able to control a star cluster level war.

Han Xiao did not really require the mission reward and did not care for the remuneration of a star system civilization. Toward this, his main concern was the players.

Such a war employment task naturally was not his to interfere—a Beyond Grade A joining a star system level war was being too much of a bully and was also incongruent to his name and reputation. Furthermore, he planned to quietly stay at the headquarters and construct more machinery while biding his time for the experience penalty to pass. Thus, this mission would definitely be given to the players.

Players were the most suited for such missions since they would reduce the casualties of his mercenaries.

Since the battle in Planet Lighthouse had just ended, there would not be any big events for a period of time. The players could only do side missions, and while the Flickering World had its benefits, it was too boring for the players. Thus, he planned to create an event for the players to fill up their spare time, catering to the players in the army.

In addition, this would give the players more rewards before the Pro League, as the rewards from an S-ranked mission would be richer than the norm.

By helping the players grow faster, it would attract more people to his faction. Han Xiao had always done it this way.

At this moment, Phillip started bubbling in the quantum network.

“Master, hum... I’ve found the information on the Ancient Emperor Party you requested.”

Han Xiao’s consciousness entered the quantum network to read the intelligence.

In this regard, Ceselin did not lie. The Ancient Emperor Party was indeed unpopular, and its government was rotten. The people were suppressed by them and did not dare speak.

The Descendant Party was also not any better; in fact, they were worse. However, the Pioneer Party was not as good as Ceselin made out. Still, compared to the other two, it was the most acceptable.

After reading, Han Xiao nodded to himself.

Now that he had seen the truth, with actual information, he had an idea in his heart.

Chapter 874 Isolation

Han Xiao did not contact the Gulal Civilization immediately. The banquet was still ongoing, and it would be rude to ignore the guests.

Returning to the banquet, Han Xiao collected more communication numbers. The relaxing time passed in a flash, and the banquet quickly approached the end. The guests all bade their farewells and left the venue.

Han Xiao saw Ceselin among the throng of people leaving, his footsteps hurried but nothing strange from his expression. His display toward Han Xiao this time had brought nothing but ruin.

However, Han Xiao did not intend to snitch someone to such a small star system civilization. He was a Beyond Grade A and had no obligation to report to such people.

As the guests left, the mechanical waiters appeared to clear up the messy venue.

This was the first year of holding the evolutionary banquet, and both the scale and influence were limited. It would need a few more years before its reputation would sound in the Shattered Star Ring and become a practice.

After leaving the venue, Han Xiao did not idle but met up with the elites of the Crimson Dynasty separately. These people were more important, so they received special treatment. They did not talk about business but rather just chatted idly to improve their relationship.

All these people in the Crimson Dynasty had varying levels of influence, and making more contacts would allow him to help expand his network in the dynasty, as well as his speaking rights.

Because of the battle at Planet Lighthouse, Han Xiao's fame and status in the Crimson Dynasty had increased, and he found that the elites' attitude was now even more awed than the previous batch; they no longer treated him as a normal Beyond Grade A ally.

Everyone had a great chat, and only after Han Xiao sent them off did he return to his room and get Phillip to contact the upper echelons of the Gulal Civilization.

He did not disclose Ceselin's backstabbing but indicated that Ceselin had offered him war employment and completed his mission, leading him to call to discuss this matter.

The Ancient Emperor Party did not suspect anything and offered a price for his war employment efforts, including remuneration, military supplies, machinery materials, and long-term mining rights for their resource rich planets.

Normal mercenary groups would only obtain remuneration, military factory borrowing rights, procurement channels, and other rewards, but due to the nature of the Black Star Army being vastly different, they were able to obtain resources such as mining rights.

Unsurprisingly, the Gulal Civilization civil strife turned out to be a mission series. After he contacted the Ancient Emperor Party, a similar S-ranked mission appeared, the only difference being the name of the mission titled 'Protect the Orthodoxy'. The mission objective was to aid the Ancient Emperor Party in suppressing the other two parties and reclaim their territories.

Without giving the Ancient Emperor Party confirmation, Han Xiao cut the call, stroking his chin as he contemplated.

"Both are S-ranked missions, so the reward should be the same... Oh, there should be some minute differences. Because the Ancient Emperor Party is the strongest, suppressing the other two will be the easier option. If I help a weaker party ascend, the reward should also be higher."

After thinking about it, Han Xiao had Phillip search for the leader of the Pioneer Party's number. Ceselin was just an unexpected factor, and Han Xiao was prepared to just leapfrog ranks and talk straight to the leader.

With the military division within the Gulal Civilization, the Pioneer Party had a clear territory, so it was easy to find the required number.

The call was quickly connected.

"Hello, may I know who you..." The leader's secretary appeared on the screen, but in mid speech, the person exclaimed upon seeing Han Xiao's face. "Black Star?"

With Han Xiao's current fame, only bumpkins would not recognize him. As someone who was an official of a star system civilization, they would not fail to recognize this face.

"Connect me to your leader." Han Xiao calmly spoke.

"Oh oh, I'll divert the call now, you... no, sir, please hold on," the secretary stammered. While they were not the ruling party, the leader of the Pioneer Party was not someone that any Tom, Dick, and Harry could meet as and when they liked. However, Black Star was obviously an exception.

Not long later, the leader came online. He found it difficult to hide the surprise in his eyes. He was waiting for an important call, but he suddenly received news that Black Star was on the line, which gave him quite the shock.

How come Black Star, who had never had any dealings with them, suddenly called and asked to speak with him?

"Your Excellency Black Star, may I ask... what business do you have with me?"

"I've heard about the situation in your Gulal Civilization, and not too long ago, the Ancient Emperor Party requested me for a war employment, wishing to borrow my strength to annihilate the other two parties. Are you aware of this?"

"Is this true?" The leader's expression changed. While he did not know this, he had been waiting for a report from his spy, who had reported some movements from the side of the Ancient Emperor Party. He had guessed that they would seek aid, but this report was now directly confirmed by Black Star.

The Pioneer Party leader also knew the importance of such a matter and immediately panicked. He quickly recovered though. If Black Star had accepted the employment, then there would have been no need to inform them. Black Star must have a reason for calling them.

In a flash, the leader understood Black Star's thinking. "Your Excellency Black Star, no matter what price the Ancient Emperor Party offers, we'll double it and will not go back on our word."

Since the other party had already made his intentions clear, there was no need for pleasantries. The Pioneer Party immediately gave his offer. In fact, he also wished to receive the aid from the Black Star Army, but it was nigh impossible since the Ancient Emperor Party had long forged a connection with the Black Star Army through their business dealings.

What a good fellow, he actually treated me like a warmonger... Han Xiao's brows twitched, but from the perspective of the Pioneer Party, this was natural since he did not know about Ceselin.

After thinking about it, Han Xiao did not choose to reveal the existence of Ceselin. After all, he had provided him with this mission. Before he took the initiative to jump over, his merits and fame would be hidden.

After pondering for a while, he nodded to the nervous expression of the Pioneer Party leader.

"Good, then it's settled. When the time comes, I'll look for someone to allow you to sign the employment contract."

He ended the call.

Staring at the darkened screen, the leader of the Pioneer Party slumped in his chair, looking out of sorts, as though he had just woken up from a dream.

Without any warning, he suddenly obtained the help of the Black Star Army, such a behemoth?

"Could it be that Black Star is really trying to be a warmonger? He doesn't have to do this." A seed of suspicion bloomed in the leader's mind.

But Black Star clearly had no dealings with his Pioneer Party, so why did he choose them?

"There must be some underlying factor..."

The expression of the Pioneer Party leader flickered.

It was just that Black Star did not reveal anything, and it was not a good time for him to ask. However, the Pioneer Party leader did not wish to be kept in the dark. He decided to slowly dig out the reason. There had to be someone involved that had made Black Star seek employment from him.

On the other side, Han Xiao put his communicator away. His part had come to an end; he only needed to send someone to get the contract finalized before sending out the mission to his faction. The rest would be completed by the players and his members, which did not require his concern.

He had chosen to help the Pioneer Party, not because it had any relation with Ceselin, but because it was indeed the best among the three. Only when he could protect his own interests would he think about sowing good karma. This had always been his work ethic.

On the other hand, the Pioneer Party looked more righteous. Many players loved such a scenario, so it would satisfy their emotional and ethical needs.

Thus, after considering all these factors, he had chosen to give up on the Ancient Emperor Party and Descendant Party, and help the 'righteous' Pioneer Party. This would be conducive to enhancing the players' sense of identification with the army.

...

A few days later, the elites left the Black Star Army headquarters.

The Gulal Civilization's spaceship also left the port, heading into the universe. Ceselin looked back at the Black Star Army headquarters disappearing, his crestfallen expression hard to hide.

Two days prior, the Ancient Emperor Party's leader had contacted him, praising him for his effort and explaining that Black Star had contacted them. They were expecting the Black Star Army's aid soon.

"I didn't manage to convince Black Star... The Pioneer Party..." Ceselin was depressed, and he did not think that he alone could reverse the current plight of the Pioneer Party.

At this moment, his teammate suddenly held out the communicator and exclaimed, "Guys, come look! The Pioneer Party just announced that they've employed the Black Star Army and are formally launching an offensive!"

"What?"

Everyone was stunned and took out their communicators as well, Ceselin included. The more he read, the more emotional he got.

This... this... what happened? Did my words... really have an impact?

Ceselin was so moved that he found it difficult to restrain himself. His actions had really ushered in a turning point, causing Black Star to make a different choice. If he did not take the risk this time, Black Star would most likely have agreed after the Ancient Emperor Party made their request.

No matter what conditions the Pioneer Party had offered Black Star or how he thought, there was still the fact that he had played a part in this.

Just like the split in train tracks, he was the one who pulled the wrench and steered fate away from its original track.

Ceselin turned back to look in the direction of the Black Star Army, and while he knew that Black Star did not need his gratitude, he still revealed a thankful expression.

He was not aware if Black Star had revealed his identity or chosen to bury this issue. He only thought that he was doing the right thing and did not think to claim credit from the Pioneer Party.

...

Within the machinery factory, Han Xiao released the faction mission that he had on hand before opening the forums to have a look.

The players were already used to such war employments, and since it was such a large-scale collective action each time, they had always welcomed such big events.

While this time was a star system level war, helping a party to destroy its competitors, being able to have their own teammates, and not facing against the entire star system civilization made the difficulty more manageable for the players. The players in the army were excitedly signing up and calling for more support through the forums.

After a few glances, he confirmed that the players' reactions would not have problems and closed the forums. The matters afterward would be settled by the players, so he did not need to worry.

This war employment would likely last until the late to end stages of the version, which gave the players a lot of stuff to do.

This way, I'll have more time to construct my mechanical army.

Han Xiao let out a deep breath.

He had to tide past the experience penalty period, as well as face off against EsGod, sealing his mouth for good. This was the important matter. Because of that, Han Xiao decided to isolate himself in the factory and no longer paid attention to the matters outside.

EsGod was already strong enough. Since he had even obtained an evolution, his combat ability would be off the charts.

Thinking of this, Han Xiao could not help but feel pressure.

To kill this fellow, he had to put in a lot of effort.

Chapter 875 Unable to crack The

Half a month later, within the President's Office of the Federation of Light, Bader alone. In front of him was a projection of a normal galaxy human, of moderate height and wearing a large white robe. He had lots of wrinkles on his face. Despite his apparent age, however, he looked spry. His eyes especially were glowing like two luminous stellar bodies. His beard stretched down to his chest, and his hair was also kept very long, tied up with silvery magnetic bands.

This projection was the true appearance of the Mechanic Empire's Manison. His expression was calm, and he was conversing with Bader.

"My troops have sent the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter to the designated scientific research station and completed the handover." Manison's voice was old but full of 'magnetism'.

"Many thanks." Bader was smiling and nodded. "The promised reward will be sent to your Mechanical Race."

As long-term allies, Manison's strength and his achievements had granted him a high position in the Federation of Light. Bader was full of respect toward Manison and had always been serious in ensuring that both parties had a good relationship.

After all, Manison had already assisted several Presidents of the Federation of Light before Bader. Of course, there were also reasons for that; compared to the Arcane Church and the Crimson Dynasty, their rate of change for leaders was much higher.

Manison nodded and changed the topic. "There's another matter."

"Please speak."

"When you decide to come into contact with Black Star, remember to call me."

Bader lurched.

What's this curveball? Why do you think that we'll contact Black Star?

After this incident, Bader did not dare look down on Han Xiao. However, he was also not prepared to send emissaries over to contact Black Star. The latter was allied to the Crimson Dynasty, and unless there was a special reason, a Beyond Grade A would not jump ship. Thus, Bader had no intention of contacting him.

After thinking about it, Bader just thought that Manison was interested in Black Star and agreed. Being Beyond Grade A Mechanics, they would naturally have topics to discuss. It was nothing strange.

“If there’s nothing else, I’m hanging up.” Manison nodded and cut the connection.

Seeing this, Bader waited for another ten seconds or so before contacting the Beyond Grade A Virtual Mechanic under their employment.

“Any abnormalities in the data quantum network?”

“No.”

Hearing this, Bader relaxed. While he trusted Manison, he still had to take precautions. After all, Manison was not directly under the Federation of Light but rather an ally from the Ancient Ones. He might be the strongest mechanic alive in this era, so every time he connected remotely, Bader would have Virtual Mechanics monitor the network so that Manison would not open some backdoor.

At the same time, in the distant Primeval Star River, Manison opened his eyes as his consciousness retreated from the quantum network. He smiled.

“The material sealing the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter has reached the level of a Space Wonder. The Federation of Light... is going to have a headache.”

When Manison took up the task, he knew that he would come into contact with the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, so he had taken along some research equipment to study the material while en route.

However, this Spacetime Amber isolated all forms of energy, and even detecting its parameters was impossible to achieve. It appeared as ‘non-existent’ on a lot of his research equipment, and only when utilizing his space research equipment did he then discover that the spatial and temporal coordinates of the Spacetime Amber were weirdly distorted, fixed at a constant value.

He had tried to break apart the amber by disturbing the spacetime coordinates, but the Spacetime Amber also isolated any influence toward its surrounding spacetime coordinates.

Manison had not managed to discover the material structure of this amber. It appeared to be a physical object, yet when observed under a microscope, it appeared as a universe of its own, an area without any movement.

Since there was no particle movement, and time seemed to not exist, which was the theory behind freezing.

Manison thought of the past, during the time of the exploration era where the three Universal Civilizations had changed the physical constraints of the universe near their mother stars, forming a closed and safe area. The Spacetime Amber seemed to be of a similar principle, only stranger. It was as though this material was a condensed secondary space independent of the universe.

Due to his knowledge, he concluded that this was a material on the level of a space wonder.

After his research, he had ruled out the possibility that the Spacetime Amber was a technological advancement. He did not think that Han Xiao would have such an ability at the moment, so he became interested in the treasure that could create such a material.

Other than Black Star, it was unlikely that anyone could break this.

Thus, Manison was sure that the Federation of Light would try to contact Black Star, and it would also not be long from now.

“At that time, I can take the opportunity to know him. Oh, he seems to have bullied my people some time ago.”

Manison narrowed his eyes, and it was unknown what he was thinking.

...

Not too long ago, Manison had sent the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter to one of the Federation of Light’s research bases, and it was currently being fixed in a huge machinery cabin. Outside was a pile of research instruments, and many researchers were fully concentrated on the task.

This was an all-in-one material analyzer, which was able to analyze the various parameters of the object without destroying it. This was a standard product used by researchers from advanced civilizations, and the Federation of Light’s would naturally be even more advanced. So long as it was an object, its components could be easily analyzed.

The research head stood by the side, his eyes never leaving the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter.

Bader had set down an order that they had to crack the seal for the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter. The research team head knew the seriousness of this job and thus had personally gone to supervise it.

Being in charge of a research base, the head would not be any ordinary person. He was one of the bigwigs in the Federation of Light’s top research institute and had made many various major scientific research contributions. He had even been awarded the Medal of Honor by the President.

“Reporting! The equipment has been calibrated, and the substance analyzer is ready. Permission to begin?”

“Let’s begin.” The head nodded.

The researcher pressed a button, and the substance analyzer started to operate, letting out a droning noise. Everyone watched the screen carefully, where the data was changing rapidly.

After a few moments, the artificial intelligence came to a startling conclusion.

“Data error. Substance is unable to be analyzed. The target has energy insulating properties, and the detection rays cannot penetrate it.”

The substance analyzer was rendered useless? The head was a little surprised, but such incidents were not unseen. This meant that what they had on hand was a problematic object.

The research facility would naturally not only have one type of analyzer. The head ordered the amber to be run through all the tests, and the number of analyzers that could pick up the Spacetime Amber was pitifully low, which left them still clueless about it.

Since Manison was able to discover the anomaly within the spacetime coordinates, they naturally could deduce the same. Both sides came to the same conclusion—there was no method to crack it.

If even a normal analysis did not work, why talk about cracking it?

The research head got more and more mystified, and his head began to hurt. All conventional methods were ineffective, and he did not know where to start.

Just what sort of toy was this?

As a researcher, he was full of curiosity and had a mentality of challenging the unknown. However, interest was one thing; his mission was another.

Thinking about Bader's request, the head groaned.

He had a premonition... the president's hopes would soon be dashed.

This object had completely exceeded all their imaginations.

Chapter 876 Great Mechanic Han in Seclusion, Do Not Disturb

"Can't be broken?"

In the president's office, Bader received a detailed report from the research department, and a look of disbelief could be seen on his face.

He had never doubted the technological skills of the Federation of Light and felt that breaking the seal of the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter would be a piece of cake. He could not have imagined the research department giving him such a 'surprise'.

"Space Wonder grade material that seems to have the ability to solidify space..." Bader read the report again in detail.

He suddenly thought about something, and he immediately entered the intranet of the federation to pull out a secret document. This file was 'Grade 16', and it belonged to the secret category in the Federation of Light. In the Federation of Light, there were a total of twenty different grades.

Grades 1 to 5 contained information that could be revealed to the public such as annual reports. Grades 6 to 10 were restricted documents that most government officials could view. Grades 11 to 15 were confidential documents where a log of who viewed them would be recorded with some details being removed if the viewer did not have enough security clearance. Grades 16 to 19 were secret documents that only the upper echelons could view. Finally, Grade 20 contained top secret documents that would almost never be revealed to the public.

"Confirming your identity... Welcome, President. You have Grade 19.5 authority and have the right to view the entire document."

Bader then began to read the document.

Spacetime Freezer!

This Primordial One had worked for the Federation of Light during the exploration era, and the Federation of Light had kept a file on him, which included a lot of detailed information about him and a breakdown of his Esper Ability. After Bader read the report of the Spacetime Amber, he immediately thought about this Primordial One as their abilities were similar.

The leader of a Universal Civilization had received special training and would be extremely familiar with their own civilization's history, confidential documents, and technological skills. Thus, Bader was able to easily remember the existence of the Spacetime Freezer.

"[Spacetime Freezer] Frogo has the ability to freeze spacetime, and his ability can be ranked as a [Super High Risk Esper Ability]. He can freeze time and space at a set location or target and create a huge influence for Beyond Grade As. The effects of his ability far exceed a Mage's spacetime spells, and there was once an incident of an entire planet being frozen [See Appendix B-004]. There were many records of him freezing the enemy battleship fleet, resulting in the enemy being unable to fight back, and he turned the tides of a few hundred battles [See Appendix B-027]...

"According to our investigations, Frogo needs to exhaust his energy to maintain the spacetime freeze on a region [See Appendix A-001 for the exact breakdown of numbers]. If the supply of energy is broken, the spacetime seal will disappear. The usage of the Esper Ability can be adjusted, and Frogo can freeze the space around him for defense. It can provide defense against most energy and physical attacks, but it is unable to block mental or soul attacks. After further testing, although his Esper Ability can seal a soul, it cannot prevent a soul from moving, and this proves that Frogo's Esper Ability isn't perfect.

"Frogo sacrificed himself in the battle of Planet Millennium [See Appendix B-1940], and his body disappeared."

Bader frowned and thought to himself, Their abilities are extremely similar indeed. Could there be a link between the two? However, even Frogo himself didn't have the ability to manifest the frozen spacetime into a physical object. Just what is going on?

He naturally did not know that the Spacetime Amber had been floating around in the universe for many years and had absorbed the radiation from the universe to mutate into a different object. Mutation happened because of the change in gene structure of an individual. Frogo's Esper Ability was not perfect, and although it was able to freeze spacetime, he could not defend against mental attacks. However, the mutated Spacetime Amber did not have this weakness, and even a mental attack would not be able to pierce the amber that it created.

After thinking for a while, Bader decided to send a copy of this information to the research head and hope that it would be helpful.

Breaking the seal of the Spacetime Amber was far more difficult than he had imagined. Bader had chosen to snatch the Arcane Church's trump card, but they were not able to use it despite snatching it for themselves. It was no more than an ornament for them.

Thinking back, it seemed as though the Arcane Church would not have been able to break the seal even if they retrieved it.

This should have been a problem for the Arcane Church to have a headache over, but it is now our turn to suffer. I thought that we would offend the Arcane Church greatly, but we only snatched something that the other party wouldn't even be able to use...

Just what was the point of us snatching this item ?

It seems as though we've suffered a loss!

Bader was truly in a terrible mood.

No wonder, Manison thought that I would send someone to meet Black Star. He also noticed that this item is extremely weird. It seems like I must find an opportunity to contact Black Star.

Bader shook his head. He was not willing to treat the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter as just an ornament.

At the same time, he could also allow the descendants of the Spacetime Freezer to be the emissary. As members from the same race, they might be able to detect some clues and find out if the Universal Treasure in Black Star's hands was related to their ancestor.

...

The Arcane Church was also feeling frustrated.

After a series of negotiations, the Crimson Dynasty had already agreed to allow the Arcane Church ransom back one of their Beyond Grade A. After paying a huge price, the Arcane Church finally got back Dylan. They actually wanted Sagman, but the dynasty did not agree. The first one to be returned would be the weakest one for sure.

However, Dylan's Spacetime Amber seal was not released, and the dynasty wanted to get the Arcane Church to deal with it on their own. The main reason for doing so was so they could verify if the Spacetime Amber seal was truly as troublesome as Han Xiao made it out to be.

Naturally, the Crimson Dynasty still did not know that the Federation of Light had stolen the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter, and Urranrell wanted to use Dylan as an indicator to see whether the seal on the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter was broken.

The dynasty made use of an excuse that Black Star was currently in seclusion and did not wish to be disturbed. Helpless, the Arcane Church could only get their own research personnel to attempt to break the seal.

The result was naturally the same as the Federation of Light, and they were unable to do a thing to the Spacetime Amber.

The Arcane Church was also extremely frustrated but also a little thankful.

They were frustrated that the dynasty had scammed them once more, and they would have to pay the price to invite the dynasty to unseal Dylan. However, they were thankful because the Federation of Light would probably be helpless toward the Ten Thousand Deity Scepter as well.

Although their own Universal Treasure had been stolen by the Federation of Light, the other party was only able to look at it through the seal but unable to use it.

If not for the grudge between them, the Arcane Church might have praised Black Star.

The Federation of Light and Arcane Church began paying close attention to the other party's research as a result. They wanted to see if the other party had any progress while also trying to spy on each other to 'copy the answer'.

With the Arcane Church taking a step back, the conflict between both parties was no longer as heated, and their soldiers were also recalled from the borders. The galactic organizations paying attention to this event heaved a sigh of relief.

The explored universe gradually calmed down.

The Federation of Light and Arcane Church temporarily took a step back, and the Super Star Cluster Civilizations that wanted to exploit the opportunity also became low profile. No one wanted to provoke the Crimson Dynasty at such a moment and wanted to wait until the storm passed.

...

The Black Star Army arrived at the Star System where the Gulal Civilization was located.

The outpost planet of the Pioneer Party was already within their sights, and the Black Star Army landed according to the instructions of the base. The warriors of the Black Star Army disembarked from the thousand-meter-long battleships and gathered at the port.

Apart from the army's warriors, there were a few million players participating in this mission. A War Employment Mission was a huge event, and it was much more interesting than exploring the Flickering World. Thus, most players accepted the mission and joined the civil war in this Star System Civilization with the identity of mercenaries.

Half a month ago, the Pioneer Party announced that they were working together with the Black Star Army, and news of the Black Star Army's interference stirred up a huge storm in the Gulal Civilization. The Ancient Emperor Party and Descendant Party were immediately thrown into internal chaos with a small portion of their upper echelons escaping or defecting to the Pioneer Party. The remaining members of the party decided to seize the initiative, and both parties joined hands to attack the Pioneer Party's territory.

There was no need for the three parties to make any preparations before the war as all three parties had always maintained war readiness. The three parties had split up the Gulal Civilization's land into three regions and lined up troops to guard their own territories. The commander only needed to give the order for war to begin.

Thus, the entrance of the Black Star Army also signaled the beginning of the war between the three parties.

The officers of the Pioneer Party first had a discussion with the commander of the Black Star Army's fleet, and the players were given a new list of missions to choose from.

The Pioneer Party provided a military star map with the nine Star Zones of the other two parties being marked out.

The majority of the Black Star Army manpower was sent back to the Flickering World, and the remaining manpower was left to guard their bases. Thus, not many mercenaries were sent to complete the mission, and they did not have an overwhelming advantage in strength. As such, it would be difficult to complete this mission in a short period. With their objectives of exterminating the enemy army and capturing the enemy's planets, the Black Star Army needed to push the battle line forward slowly to capture the enemy territories.

The colonial planets, resource rich planets, and military bases were the missions that the players could choose. As such, there were many opportunities for ground battles. This was a civil war after all, and they would not choose to bomb the enemy's planet to capture it. As such, the players were immediately put to good use. The greatest place to utilize a few million Grade B players was a ground battle!

After looking through the mission introduction, the players all grew excited. They had experienced many different events already and instantly knew that this mission would be the most exciting one. Fighting together with a battleship was extremely troublesome, and the players preferred fighting monsters on the ground instead. Furthermore, they were the main characters of this employment mission, and they only needed to enjoy the battle to their heart's content.

The size and levels of the enemy had been indicated, and the players could make their decision carefully. The levels of the enemies were also extremely clear. The enemy could be roughly broken down into a few different groups: cannon fodder soldiers, Grade C high grade monsters, Grade B elite monsters, Grade B mini-bosses, and a few Calamity Grade bosses that had their own names.

All the players were extremely satisfied with the mission. This was the main reason they joined the mission—to fight as they wished!

They finally did not have to just watch from the side!

Chapter 877 The Mysterious Individual Watching the Players

For one month later, the Pioneer Party defended against the attacks of the Ancient Emperor Party and Descendant Party while counterattacking with the Black Star Army. The three parties tried to break through the holes of the enemy's defenses, which resulted in a jagged territorial line on the star map.

At this moment, a colonial planet that was near the border of the Ancient Emperor Party was being invaded. The Pioneer Party and Black Star Army fleet were engaged in an intense battle with the defense fleet of the planet. At the same time, the cities on the planet were being attacked from the sky with their protective shields being bombarded and drop pods being launched at the holes created.

A hemispherical light screen covered the capital city of this colonial planet and endured the never-ending attacks from the sky. Multicolored explosions could be seen on the surface of the light screen, and the protective shield began to flicker unsteadily.

Upon considering the many reasons for a civil war, the local army closed off all the underground sanctuaries and prohibited their civilians from entering. The many inhabitants of the city could only tremble in their own homes, and the ground troops of the city gathered together and looked up at the sky.

Ka-cha!

The protective shield of the city finally could not endure the waves of attacks and began to crack before everyone's eyes.

The next moment, densely packed black dots could be seen appearing from the sky, descending from above like meteors.

The anti-air cannons of the city immediately opened fire toward the drop pods, and balls of explosions could be seen in the air.

A portion of the drop pods were destroyed in the sky, but many managed to land in the city.

The army of players emerged from the drop pods and sprang into action.

Every one of them had a detection device on them to scan and indicate all hostile targets who had a weapon. The descending army was already extremely used to such missions and began clearing up the enemies in the city.

Battles erupted in every corner of the city, and the players began exchanging fire with the ground troops. Although they had a disadvantage in terms of numbers, the players were almost all Grade B Supers, and a large majority of the enemies were ordinary soldiers.

Grade B Supers were mid-ranked combatants in the galaxy with all of them having the combat strength of an entire army. Destroying a building was a piece of cake, and the players were not ordinary Grade B Supers. They were not afraid of coming under fire and could fight without any worry.

The ground troops were extremely shocked to realize that these galactic mercenaries could charge forward while enduring heavy fire without any fear of death. They were able to easily cut through their formations and massacre their troops.

From the map, the black dots that represented the player army rapidly weaved through the city, and the red dots that represented the enemies disappeared quickly.

At the center of the city, the government building had already been attacked by seven parties of players.

In some room of the government building, an Ancient Emperor Party Grade B Super knelt on the ground with his eyes wide open in shock. The individual in front of him pulled out a blade from his throat, and blood splattered everywhere.

Life was drained from his body, and he collapsed into a pool of his own blood.

"This fellow's level is pretty high. I've only got thirty-seven percent of my health left." Frenzied Sword shook off the blood on his blade.

The silver black armor that he was wearing now was Mechanical Pugilist equipment with various hidden mechanical weapons hidden all around.

The entire room was littered with corpses, and the members of Rivervale and his teammates were beside him. They had just worked together to get rid of everyone in the room and were now repairing the durability of their equipment while searching for their spoils of war.

Outside the door, the sound of intense fire could be heard. This Grade B officer that they had killed seemed to be pretty important, and a large number of enemy troops were drawn to their location. Maple Moon was keeping guard outside the door, and she used her mechanic traps and electromagnetic artillery tower to return fire. The defenses of a Grade B Mechanic were not something that ordinary soldiers would be able to overcome. They were all suppressed in a corner of the corridor, and their few attempts to charge forward ended with a ground full of corpses.

Maple Moon usually enjoyed playing with Rivervale, and Frenzied Sword was also willing to bring along a reliable Mechanic. The two of them had a pretty good relationship.

When the Mechanics came into contact with compression technology in Version 3.0, they became the most popular choice to form a party with. Mechanics no longer had to slowly build their machines, and their preparation speed increased greatly. Regardless of whether it was to fight a dungeon or complete a mission, every party would generally have a Mechanic. Of course, every Mechanic had a different set of equipment and was able to deal with different circumstances.

Evil Sword injected himself with a serum to recover his health and casually said, "I wonder how many Grade B enemies there are in this city."

"We should have taken care of most of them." Frenzied Sword looked at the battle map. "The soldiers in the city have been mostly wiped out. Hao Tian and the others have already killed four Grade Bs downstairs."

"How lucky. We only managed to kill two along the way," Evil Sword said with envy.

Grade B Supers were elites that could provide them with plenty of experience. Furthermore, every Grade B elite had a name and would give them additional rewards for the mission. Apart from experience, they were able to collect an additional bounty from the Pioneer Party, and all the players were extremely passionate about killing Grade B enemies.

To a first-rate party, perhaps it would be impossible to solo a Grade B elite, but a party of five was able to easily win against an ordinary Grade B Super. Even if a mini-boss Grade B enemy was difficult to deal with, it was still within the capabilities of the players.

A Star System Civilization would only have ten or twenty Calamity Grade Supers, and they would only appear in key battles. Thus, the millions of Grade B players were basically invincible in the other colonial planets.

Not too long later, the army in this city was completely wiped out, and the players returned to the spaceship before being sent to a new battlefield.

...

"Another three colonial planets were taken down by the Black Star Army's immortals."

The upper echelons of the Ancient Emperor Party looked at the star map, and worry could be seen on their frail faces.

"The immortals of the Black Star Army are far too scary, and it is impossible to restrain them," one of the officers said. "Up until now, a total of twenty-one colonial planets have been seized by them."

If the enemy only had a fleet of battleships, they would not feel such a headache. The Ancient Emperor Party was completely helpless against the immortals.

The total number of immortals was probably more than all the Grade Bs in their civilization, and these immortals could not even be killed.

The upper echelons of the Ancient Emperor Party could only watch as the players capable of reviving captured their colonial planets one after another.

The immortals of the Black Star Army had always been famous in the Shattered Star Ring, and it was their chance to experience it personally this time. Everyone present could not help but feel despair.

Such an enemy was truly far too frightening. Anyone capable of having such a trump card would definitely have a place in the universe!

With the participation of the Black Star Army, the Ancient Emperor Party could no longer see much hope. It would be impossible for them to win if they continued fighting, and the Pioneer Party would probably emerge victorious in another year or so.

However, it was equally impossible for them to surrender. No one would be willing to give up a Star System Civilization. They had already held on for a year, and holding on further might give them a chance to turn the tables around. As they fought back, the upper echelons of the Ancient Emperor Party had been trying to find reinforcements and plan their retreat.

“That b*stard Ceselin actually defected to the Pioneer Party and even took all his subordinates away. I never imagined that he would be a traitor!” The Ancient Emperor Party leader gritted his teeth. “He must have done something to get the Black Star Army to help the Pioneer Party. If not, there isn’t an explanation for their sudden intervention!”

Upon mentioning Ceselin, a look of hatred could be seen on everyone’s face. If not for his betrayal, they would not have been reduced to such a pathetic state!

“This traitorous b*stard! We have never treated him badly before. We have given him both authority and wealth. Just what is he dissatisfied about, and what right does he have to betray us!”

The Ancient Emperor Party leader slammed the table and said with heartache, “He actually told me that our ideals were different. What a joke! Look at what he did. Just for his so-called ideals, he actually sacrificed so many of his fellow brothers. Does he really think that his actions are extremely noble? We have been ruling the civilization extremely well, and this civilization will lose their rightful rulers just because of him! Dammit!”

Upon hearing that, the upper echelons by the side listened with helpless expressions.

Others might have had the rights to say such words, but they knew that they did not. All of them were extremely clear about what their Ancient Emperor Party had done over the past few years.

The way they saw it, their leader must have been angered silly and was just venting his anger.

Right at this moment, the Ancient Emperor Party suddenly stopped cursing, and his entire body froze in place. He then suddenly regained his cool and stood up slowly, with his tone being completely transformed into a different persona.

“It seems like everyone is extremely frustrated. Maybe I can be of some help.”

All the upper echelons were stunned for a moment, and they stood up abruptly.

Was their leader’s mind being controlled?

The leader of a Star System Civilization would usually be protected by a Calamity Grade spell and psychic energy. This was to prevent him from being controlled by another. At the very least, it would be impossible for a Calamity Grade Super to control the leader of a Star System Civilization without any traces in front of a crowd.

Just who did this?

Could it be a Beyond Grade A?

“Who are you?” a military officer said with caution and sent a message to get all the Calamity Grades to rush over.

“You don’t need to worry. I did not come with ill intentions. I do not have any intention to tell you my identity,” the Ancient Emperor Party leader said emotionlessly. “All of you only need to know that I will provide you with resources and manpower to fight the Black Star Army.”

The upper echelons were still doubtful as they looked at each other. However, regardless of whether this was true or false, they decided to play along. At the same time, they were also worried that their comrades might have been controlled. After all, this mysterious individual indeed had the ability to do so.

“What do you want?”

“Don’t worry. I do not want anything.”

“Then, why are you helping us?”

“I am not bothered about your Gulal Civilization, but I am interested in the immortals of the Black Star Army. Furthermore, the longer all of you can survive, the more I can observe them,” the ‘Ancient Emperor Party leader’ said. “My suggestion will only provide all of you with benefits. Do you accept?”

Everyone looked at each other before nodding hesitantly.

“Very good, I will get my people to contact all of you soon. Right, I can give you a suggestion. All of you can try employing the immortals of the Black Star Army.”

Everyone was stunned.

“The Black Star Army is our enemy. You are asking us to seek aid from our enemies? Just what is the meaning of this?”

“Ordinary logic doesn’t seem to be applicable to the immortals. How will you know without trying?” the ‘Ancient Emperor Party leader’ said with a teasing voice.

The Ancient Emperor Party leader then suddenly trembled, and his eyes fell into a daze. He then suddenly snapped out of his daze.

“Has the person controlling me left?”

Everyone heaved a sigh of relief and immediately went forward to support their leader.

“Do you still remember what you said when you were controlled?”

“I remember everything. My body was controlled, but my senses were still present.”

Right at this moment, the Calamity Grade Supers arrived, and after hearing what had happened, they began to check the leader’s condition.

“How is it?” the Ancient Emperor Party leader asked.

“The enchantments used to guard your mind were destroyed in an instant. These enchantments are capable of defending against a Calamity Grade Psychic for ten minutes. The one who controlled you is definitely a Beyond Grade A.”

The expression of the Ancient Emperor Party leader changed slightly. A Beyond Grade A had a huge significance to a Star System Civilization.

There were only five Beyond Grade As in the Shattered Star Ring, and only Psyker and Austin had the ability to infiltrate the mind.

Though, it might not be these two but a Beyond Grade A from another Star Field.

Thinking about the words of the mysterious individual, everyone could not help but have a strange look on their face.

To think that they would gain support through such a strange method. This was something that they had never imagined, but at least they now had some hope.

Although they did not know who the other party was, since he was also a Beyond Grade A, he should not be afraid of the Black Star Army.

“Right, he even asked us to seek aid from our enemy. Isn’t this a joke? Does he think that the Black Star Army will turn around to help us?”

Everyone was the most puzzled by this suggestion. It was obviously a meaningless action, and they truly did not understand the point of doing so.

The Ancient Emperor Party leader nodded. “Since we do not have any way of retreating, why not we give it a try?”

Chapter 878 Suspicion

The governing planet of the Pioneer Party was located in Star Zone 3, and the upper echelons within the party were observing the situation of the battle.

In the conference room, the upper echelons of the party were gathered, and the atmosphere was completely different from the meeting in the Ancient Emperor Party. Everyone had a bright smile on their face, with the Pioneer Party’s leader glowing with radiance.

Their army had the upper hand, and it was impossible for them not to be happy.

“The Ancient Emperor Party and Descendant Party are being forced back, and the citizens are also crying out for us to overthrow the rulers. The situation is to our advantage at the moment,” the staff sergeant in charge of analyzing the battle situation said.

The Pioneer Party leader had a bright smile on his face but said, “We need to be even more careful during such a moment and prevent the enemy from fighting back in desperation.”

Although the situation was looking good, he knew that it was impossible for the Ancient Emperor Party to surrender. The result of losing would be extermination.

Just as everyone was discovering the situation, the internal comms rang, and it was an emergency message from the intelligence personnel.

The appearance of the intelligence personnel appeared, and he had a strange look on his face.

“Your Excellency, the Ancient Emperor Party made an announcement.”

“Send it over immediately.” The Pioneer Party leader raised his brows.

Very quickly, the announcement of the Ancient Emperor Party appeared on the screen, and everyone present began reading it.

In this first half of the announcement, the Ancient Emperor Party claimed that they were the rightful rulers of the Gulal Civilization and criticized the Pioneer Party for using armed forces to seize authority. They then claimed that the Pioneer Party were traitors and called for the citizens to reject the Pioneer Party. They also began hiring help from the galaxy.

The details of the public announcement were extremely ordinary. They were trying to preserve their status as rightful rulers and suppress their opponents. They had made use of such a tactic for many years already, and the upper echelons of the Pioneer Party were extremely used to it. After they won, history would be written by them, and it would be useless to call them traitors now.

The way they saw it, it was completely useless for the Ancient Emperor Party to seek aid from the galaxy. This was only a civil war, which did not go against the Peace Treaty. With the Black Star Army on their side, no one in the Shattered Star Ring would go against the Black Star Army just for a Star System Civilization.

The mercenary groups that had some size would not help them, and the other civilizations would only watch by the side. Even the Bloodshed Land would not go against their titular ally for such a small matter. Thus, it was impossible for the Ancient Emperor Party to find any aid. This was the powerful effect of seeking aid from the Black Star Army. They were able to prevent the enemy from finding any support.

The Pioneer Party’s leader then read until the end and was stunned.

“Wait a moment... the Ancient Emperor Party is trying to seek aid from the Black Star Army?”

The Pioneer Party’s leader rubbed his eyes and thought that he had misread something.

To think that the Ancient Emperor Party actually wanted to employ the Black Star Army and attempted to convince the Black Star Army to help them.

The upper echelons of the Pioneer Party all looked at each other with confused looks on their faces.

Just what was the meaning of seeking aid from their enemy?

Even if the Black Star Army was external aid, they had already signed an employment contract. Why would they publicly break the contract? Would this not be destroying their own reputation?

Furthermore, the Black Star Army was a Beyond Grade A organization, and since they had already decided to help the Pioneer Party, why would they suddenly go back on their word?

Even if you want to try and rope the Black Star Army over to your side, you should do it privately, right? With the current status of Black Star, would he openly go back on his word? Do you think he will go back on his word because of money? That's impossible!

But if the objective of this is to drive a wedge between us, isn't it far too coarse a method?

"It seems like the Ancient Emperor Party has truly gone crazy," the Pioneer Party leader said with his mouth cramping up. "This should be the funniest joke that I have ever heard."

"Hahaha..."

Everyone could not help but burst into laughter.

...

Not too long later, the announcement of the Ancient Emperor Party was spread all throughout the Gulal Civilization.

It was not just the Pioneer Party who were puzzled. Even the Descendant Party were completely bewildered.

Are my teammates fools?

The members of the Ancient Emperor Party felt extremely embarrassed. They were currently fighting with the enemy, but their higher ups actually tried to seek help from the enemy. Just what was this stupidity?

There were many who interpreted this as the upper echelons being pessimistic about the outcome of the battle, and morale took a large hit.

On the Black Star Army's side, the members of the army could not help but laugh.

We are currently fighting a war. Can you please be more serious and not tease us like that?

Just when everyone was laughing at the actions of the Ancient Emperor Party, the players received a different message.

The plea of the Ancient Emperor Party had actually become a mission on their interface. A Grade S mission for them to help the Ancient Emperor Party.

All the players gasped in shock upon discovering that.

"So, it turns out that this is a faction series mission. It should be a Grade S mission that can be triggered regardless of which party we aid."

“However, the army has chosen to support the Pioneer Party, so we have no choice but to choose them as well.”

“Hmm, if we support a faction up into power, we will be able to successfully change the entire fate of a civilization. I think we found a way to strike it rich.”

“What if we persuade the NPCs to start another party and support the party. Would it be even more fun?”

This mission attracted the attention of many players, and they began to show off their creativity as they discussed the matter.

However, the influence of this new mission stopped there. Not a single player would choose to accept it.

The players were not fools, and accepting this mission would mean that they had to oppose the army. It would probably be no different from leaving the faction. They had fought in the army for three versions already and accumulated plenty of faction Contribution Points. Furthermore, the potential for growth in the Black Star Army was also extremely high. A mere Star System Civilization was not worth them betraying the faction.

Furthermore, the chances of the Ancient Emperor Party winning were far too low. Thus, it would be much better for them to keep to the Pioneer Party mission, especially since both were Grade S missions anyway.

After a month into the employment mission, the players had an understanding of the three parties. The Ancient Emperor Party was not anything good, and there was no meaning to help them.

With Summer Night Flower as an example, the number of players in the Shattered Star Ring willing to take risks had decreased. Thus, the players were only interested in the opportunity presented to them by the Ancient Emperor Party but uninterested in actually completing the mission.

...

In the Black Star Army headquarters, a large assembly line ran through Han Xiao’s workshop without stopping to produce various types of mechanical soldiers and equipment. Bolts of Mechanical Force could be seen running through the assembly lines to increase the quality and efficiency of the production.

In another region, all the freshly manufactured mechanical soldiers and equipment were sent over with many mechanical arms modifying the equipment.

Han Xiao would naturally modify all his mechanical soldiers as much as possible, and all the modified equipment would have their grades increased. Even the cannon fodder mechanical soldiers had been raised to the orange grade.

At Han Xiao’s level, an ordinary mechanical soldier was no more than cannon fodder, but these mechanical soldiers were all elite equipment that could not even be purchased with money.

Han Xiao stood in front of a machine and personally assembled a new mechanical host while humming a tune merrily.

The sound of metal ringing could be heard all around him, and Han Xiao had already gotten used to the environment in the workshop. Creating machines was a form of enjoyment to him. As his own strength increased, Great Mechanic Han also grew to enjoy the process of crafting new equipment.

Phillip's mini projection could be seen in front of Han Xiao, and he said to Han Xiao with a babyish voice, "Master, hum... I saw an interesting piece of news. Shall I read it out to you?"

"Alright." Han Xiao wasn't distracted and remained focused on hammering the alloy before him.

"It's news from the Gulal Civilization. The Ancient Emperor Party actually made a public announcement and hoped that we will go back on our word and help them instead. Master, hum... what do you think they are thinking about?"

"To think that they will make such an announcement. Do they think I am like EsGod, without any morals?" Han Xiao laughed.

"Eh?" Phillip was stunned, and his eyes widened. "Isn't that the case?"

"... You have also learned how to joke, huh?" Han Xiao immediately changed the topic and said, "Although it is difficult to understand why the Ancient Emperor Party would do so, I guess it is still understandable. If not for Ceselin, I would have never come into contact with the Pioneer Party. They... eh?"

Right at this moment, Han Xiao suddenly froze in place and thought about the Ancient Emperor Party missions. He then opened the forums to take a look.

The players were indeed discussing this matter on the forums, and many of the players took a screenshot of the Ancient Emperor Party Grade S mission. His guess was not wrong, and the Ancient Emperor Party's plea for help allowed the players to trigger a mission.

Han Xiao stroked his chin and fell into thought.

Although it only seemed like a desperate move by the Ancient Emperor Party, Han Xiao could not help but think that the matter was extremely odd.

"This is an illogical plea for aid. It feels as though..." Han Xiao's eyes narrowed. "This plea for help is targeted at the players."

It was not that he was being suspicious, but there were far too many coincidences. Although the actions of the Ancient Emperor Party seemed like a joke to everyone, it was not a joke to the players but a way for them to trigger a mission.

Was this by luck or an intentional action?

Han Xiao hesitated for a moment. He had too few clues and was not certain about his own guess. However, he would always plan for the worst-case scenario to be safe.

There was a reason for this. In his previous life, there was a similar phase. As the players began to grow and move around in the universe, many galactic organizations began to pay attention to the players and analyzed their characteristics, specialties, and habits.

Even during the current version, there were many organizations that paid close attention to the players.

He had operated in the Shattered Star Ring for many years, and no one would dare steal his trump card force with his status. However, the situation of the players in the other Star Fields was different, and it was not strange for the players to attract the attention of the organizations.

He was not the only one who wanted to recruit the players.

Han Xiao was not too worried about this. The players had already invested three versions of their time and effort into the army, and they would not be so easily stolen by another. Furthermore, ordinary NPCs would only treat the players as a special force. Other NPCs did not have an interface and would not be able to obtain a massive amount of experience from the players.

However, it would also be extremely frustrating if someone really wanted to steal his vegetables.

I originally planned to ignore the Gulal Civilization mission, but it seems like I must pay close attention to it now. Someone has set their eyes on the players of the army.

A cold glint flashed past Han Xiao's eyes.

...

A mysterious fleet then entered the border of the Gulal Civilization. This was the Ancient Emperor Party territory, and the Ancient Emperor Party fleet was already present.

In the main flagship, the Ancient Emperor Party leader looked at the star map and heaved a sigh of relief. "They're finally here."

That mysterious Beyond Grade A had promised to provide them with reinforcements, and this fleet was the first batch of reinforcements. The Ancient Emperor Party leader wanted to guess the identity of the Beyond Grade A through the fleet but could not help but be surprised upon seeing the insignia of the reinforcements.

This was a local armed organization in the Shattered Star Ring that was managed by four Calamity Grade Supers. One of them was even a Beyond Grade A seed. As a result, the fame and size of the organization was not too small, but many people believed that they did not have any backers.

However, it seemed like this low-profile organization actually had an unknown Beyond Grade A behind them.

Just who was this mysterious Beyond Grade A. Could it be that he had more than one organization under him in the Shattered Star Ring?

The Ancient Emperor Party leader suppressed the doubts in his heart and contacted the other party.

With the aid of this armed organization, their situation will be much better.

The flagships of both parties met each other, and the Ancient Emperor Party leader's projection met the four Calamity Grade leaders.

"I am the leader of the Gulal Civilization. I thank..."

“We will help you suppress the traitors. There isn’t any need to thank us as we are only fulfilling our orders.” That Beyond Grade A seed interrupted the words of the Ancient Emperor Party leader.

The Ancient Emperor Party leader thought for a while before probing, “I wonder, who is the one giving the orders?”

Right at this moment, a member by the side suddenly trembled, and he was possessed by the mysterious Beyond Grade A. “Don’t try to find out who I am, otherwise our agreement will come to an end.”

The Ancient Emperor Party leader was shocked and immediately nodded in agreement.

“We have followed your suggestion, but the Black Star Army has shown no reaction.”

“Is that so?” The mysterious individual was not surprised. “Failure cannot be avoided, and the habits that I have grasped won’t always work. That’s why I need to observe and experiment more.”

The mysterious individual fell into deep thought. “However, it seems like Black Star doesn’t only have good luck but has also grasped some of their habits like me.”

Chapter 879 End of the Penalty

With the Ancient Emperor Party receiving fresh reinforcements, the advancement of the Pioneer Party was restricted.

An armed organization being led by a Beyond Grade A seed entering the battle to help the Ancient Emperor Party? All the organizations watching the civil war were naturally shocked.

There were still those who dared fight the Black Star Army in the Shattered Star Ring? Although the Black Star Army was not the sole tyrant of the Shattered Star Ring, such an action still baffled many. After all, this was fighting the Black Star Army head on.

The Black Star Army had plenty of experts in its ranks. Where did the four Calamity Grade Supers get their courage to intervene in the Black Star Army’s employment mission? Even if one of them was a Beyond Grade A seed, it still was not enough.

Han Xiao, who received news from Phillip, had his thoughts verified at that moment.

Furthermore, Han Xiao knew who the mastermind was upon seeing the armed organization.

“It turns out to be them...” Han Xiao came to a realization.

The Beyond Grade A seed of this organization was called Luthor, and he was a famous Super who was active in the Shattered Star Ring. In truth, Luthor was actually an elite member of a financial group that spanned across various Star Fields called [Limitless].

Peaceful times brought about plenty of business opportunities and many large financial groups. Limitless was a unique financial group because its leader was a Beyond Grade A Super.

Not every Beyond Grade A wanted to form an armed organization, and different Beyond Grade As had various interests and strengths. The Limitless leader was a Beyond Grade A who enjoyed making money by the name of Sorokin. He had a special position in the universe.

After Sorokin took over as leader of the financial group, he developed the Limitless Financial Group to its current scale.

This super financial group was an elite business organization that was involved in many sectors, including management, military, technological, trade, intelligence, service, and manufacturing. It had many different brands under its name, and its operations spanned across many different Star Fields. It was a conglomerate that was extremely famous and even had business dealings with the three Universal Civilizations.

The Limitless Financial Group belonged to the neutral faction and was already a listed company in the universe. Their assets were frightening, and their logo was a Mobius strip.

The armed branch of the Limitless Financial Group was not to be underestimated. With a frightening amount of wealth, the Limitless Financial Group developed many subsidiary organizations in the various Star Fields, which were akin to the military might of the financial group. Luthor's organization was such an existence.

Furthermore, Sorokin was not the only Beyond Grade A combatant in the Limitless Financial Group. Sorokin had roped in a few other Beyond Grade A allies through their stocks with a few Ancient Ones being included.

With money to open the path for them, the Limitless Financial Group's network was unfathomable.

In comparison, although the Black Star Army was also a Beyond Grade A organization, its history was far too short, and the scale was incomparable to the other party.

Luthor had only exposed his own identity in the later versions, and no one knew that Luthor belonged to the Limitless Financial Group at this moment. However, Han Xiao was different; he understood Luthor's background. As such, he immediately knew the mastermind interfering in the Gulal Civilization's affairs.

This was his unique advantage. Many 'secrets' were not secrets before his eyes.

The Limitless Financial Group seems to be extremely interested in the players, but this isn't too strange, Han Xiao thought to himself.

In his previous life, the Limitless Financial Group was a faction that players could join with their headquarters being in the Sea of Star Spirits. Many players in the Sea of Star Spirits joined the financial group during the middle phase of the game.

Even now, there was a large group of players in the Sea of Star Spirits being recruited by the Limitless Financial Group, and the Limitless Financial Group was pretty popular on the forums.

Han Xiao could guess the other party's intentions, and they probably wanted to spy on his vegetable garden.

Hmm, they should have noticed that the immortal troop is extremely similar to the players that they have recruited and sent someone to probe the players. Perhaps the Limitless Financial Group will discover some of the player's habits. For example, they only have to issue a request to the players, and even if it isn't logical, some of the players will still carry out the request. Thus, they got the Ancient Emperor Party to issue a plea for help toward the army to test the reaction of the players.

Han Xiao's guess was not too far from the truth.

If I'm remembering it right, the Limitless Financial Group was also very active in the Flickering World...

Han Xiao's eyes sparkled.

The various Star Fields had their own organizations, and they would all enter the Flickering World in Version 4.0 to become competitors. The Limitless Financial Group was one such organization.

It seems like I cannot avoid coming into contact with them in the future.

Han Xiao pondered for a moment before calling for his Black Star Guards.

Very quickly, Hila brought the members of the Black Star Guards into the workshop.

"I have a mission for all of you."

With a wave of his hands, a holographic screen appeared with Luthor's information being displayed.

"This armed organization entered the Gulal Civilization civil war and provided reinforcements to the Ancient Emperor Party. I want all of you to reinforce the front lines and get rid of the four of them. Right, the one called Luthor is a Beyond Grade A seed. Hila and Hadavy, be careful."

"Alright." Hila nodded.

"I know Luthor." Hadavy crossed his arms. "I approached him for a spar a long time ago. He is an extremely powerful Pugilist. Strange, I remember him as someone who kept an extremely low profile. Why would he suddenly go against the army?"

"Who knows?"

Han Xiao was not prepared to tell anyone else that he was aware of the other party's background.

The Limitless Financial Group probably thought that they were still operating from the shadows, and Han Xiao planned to keep things as such.

"Alright then." Hadavy did not say anything else. Although he knew Luthor, he would not go easy on Luthor since he was going against the army.

The Black Star Guards then left the room. Han Xiao opened the doors to the secondary dimension and summoned his Apostle Weapons.

"Lord."

Psionic Prime knelt so that his head was at the same level as Han Xiao.

"Take a batch of mechanical soldiers to the Gulal Civilization," Han Xiao said. "If Hila and the others do not succeed, find a chance to get rid of Luthor's group of four. Phillip will send you information about the enemy."

He could not do anything to the Limitless Financial Group as both parties were not enemies. However, exterminating Luthor's group was not an issue since it was in line with the Black Star Army's stance.

Since they had accepted an employment mission to go against the Black Star Army, the other party would definitely kill members of the army.

Since the Limitless Financial Group was eyeing on his immortal troop and wanted to probe them, Han Xiao would use this opportunity to pull out the claws sent by the Limitless Financial Group. He would still be able to warn the other party even if he pretended that he was not aware of their objective. This would prevent the Limitless Financial Group from becoming bolder and sending more people to probe him.

...

Boom!

A spaceship crashed onto the surface of an uninhabited planet, leaving a huge crater behind.

When the spaceship stopped rolling, Luthor crawled out from the wreckage.

Hila and the other Black Star Guards descended from the sky with light injuries.

Luthor's injuries were far more severe, and he held onto his bleeding chest. His beating heart could be seen through his ribs, and his wounds were slowly healing.

"Black Star truly thinks highly of me. He sent out his entire Black Star Guards. Cough cough, it will be an honor even if I end up dying today." Luthor's face was pale, but despair could not be seen on his face. Instead, he looked extremely carefree as though he had seen through life and death.

Both parties had met on the battlefield, and the Black Star Guards had already taken out his three comrades. He was the only one left, and his time had come.

Hadavy shook his head and said, "I don't understand why you had to accept the employment mission of the Ancient Emperor Party. If it was to earn money, why did you have to go against the Black Star Army? You killed the members of the army, and His Excellency Black Star was always going to send experts after you. You definitely knew this fact."

"I do not have a habit of giving explanations to others." Luthor took a deep breath and prepared to fight to the death.

Hadavy hesitated for a moment and tried to persuade him. "Surrender. His Excellency Black Star is very easy going and treasures talents. You are a Beyond Grade A seed, and His Excellency won't make things difficult for you if you are willing to join the army."

"Ha! I am not interested in that. Either kill me or be killed by me. I am not prepared for a third choice."

"Is there really such a need?" Hadavy frowned. "There isn't any hatred between us, and it wasn't easy for you to become a Beyond Grade A seed. Why do you have to rush to your death?"

Bang!

Luthor replied with a fist to Hadavy's face.

The many Black Star Guards took action together and filled the entire planet with craters.

Even if Luthor was a Beyond Grade A seed, he could not endure such a ferocious attack. His mind, which was riddled with holes by Hila's attack, finally collapsed, and his soulless body fell to the ground.

Luthor became nutrition for Hila's Esper Ability.

Hadavy let out a sigh by the side. It was a pity that such a good man had been killed just like that.

The Black Star Guards then cleaned up the battlefield before leaving the planet. Not too long after they left the planet, Psionic Prime appeared outside the atmosphere with his mechanical troops.

"The Black Star Guards have killed the target, so we don't need to take action."

Psionic Prime had been watching the battle from the side.

...

"Luthor is dead?"

In the conference room, the upper echelons of the Ancient Emperor Party were stunned.

Although they knew that the reinforcements would not be a match for the Black Star Army, Luthor was a Beyond Grade A seed. They had never imagined that he would be killed so easily.

At this moment, one member of the upper echelons trembled, and his body was possessed.

In truth, this mysterious individual was the leader of the Limitless Financial Group, Sorokin. Despite being extremely busy, he had the ability to do a hundred things at once.

"It seems like our cooperation has to come to an end," Sorokin said slowly.

The Ancient Emperor Party leader was shocked. "You..."

"The reaction of the Black Star Army is far more intense than I expected. My original plan was only to probe and observe them, but the loss is out of my expectations. If we continue to work together, the cost required will be too great; this investment isn't worth it," Sorokin said calmly.

A Beyond Grade A seed was extremely rare, and Luthor's death truly made Sorokin feel a sense of heartache.

Sorokin did not know that Black Star already knew his identity. According to his plans, the Black Star Army was always going to react in some way, but he had never expected Black Star to send out the entire Black Star Guards.

As such, Sorokin's plan had failed. Although he was powerful, he could not possibly find Black Star personally for such a small matter, and he was not willing to sacrifice even more subsidiary organizations for a small experiment. Han Xiao's reaction had forced him to give up on the thought of probing the immortal troops.

His plan to test the immortal troops could only be delayed.

However, he was not someone who liked suffering a loss. Even though Black Star was not aware that Luthor was his subordinate, he was not planning to let the matter rest so easily.

Of course, Sorokin would not take revenge with force. The Arcane Church had already tried to do so and suffered a huge loss. He did not think that he would be able to match the Arcane Church in terms of high-level combatants.

However, history had proven that Black Star was an ambitious character, and Sorokin believed that Black Star would eventually have to face his Limitless Financial Group. This day might not be too long later as he was currently attempting to gain entry to the Flickering World.

Without waiting for a reply, Sorokin left the body.

The Ancient Emperor Party leader's face turned ashen.

...

A few months went by in a flash, and Han Xiao remained in the headquarters the entire time while observing the changes in the Gulal Civilization.

After the death of Luthor, the Limitless Financial Group retreated without any signs of fighting back.

The Limitless Financial Group wanted to hide their identity so that they would not be spotted by him. The Limitless Financial Group was a business organization and not an armed organization after all. As long as Han Xiao could make the other party pay a sufficient price, the other party would definitely give up.

Without any future reinforcements, the Ancient Emperor Party was dragged back into hell, and the civil war was controlled by the Black Star Army again.

Upon seeing that the Limitless Financial Group had given up on their attempt to probe the players, Han Xiao also stopped paying attention to the battle. As the players grew stronger, it would be inevitable for others to set their eyes on them.

The experience provided by the players was something that he needed to grow quickly, and this was a non-negotiable for him. If he did not take a hard stance, the other party would climb over his head.

After dealing with this little problem, Han Xiao turned his attention to something more important.

After a few months of seclusion, the sixteen-month experience penalty had finally ended!

Chapter 880 Thanks, Arcane Church

Han Xiao made a trip to the combat practice room and shut the door.

Taking in a deep breath, Han Xiao opened the interface.

The '40% Experience Penalty' status only had a few minutes left, and Han Xiao could not help but become excited as he watched the timer go down.

It hasn't been easy. Sixteen months...

Sixteen months ago, he had finally stepped into the realm of a Beyond Grade A Super.

In just a year and a half, he had fought Psyker to protect the Evolution Cube before having a duel with Heber. Following which, he had headed to the Crimson Dynasty's mother planet, where he was

provoked by the allies of the dynasty again. Along the way, he fought EsGod once and met with his biggest crisis not too long ago.

He had only been a Beyond Grade A for a year and a half but had met with plenty of dangers. Han Xiao could not help but feel a sense of lingering fear as he looked back.

Thankfully, my quick-witted brain and handsome appearance resolved these dangers. Han Xiao praised himself shamelessly.

Dangers also brought him opportunities, and his status had now been cemented in place. Furthermore, his experience penalty was over.

Everything was getting better!

Han Xiao rubbed his palms with a look of joy on his face.

“I am now at level 260. I increased my level hastily to deal with the Arcane Church, which resulted in me spending forty percent more experience. With the experience that I accumulated over this period...” Han Xiao looked at his stash of experience, and his eyes sparkled. “I should be able to reach level 280.”

At his current level, the experience required for every level was a sky-high figure.

Without the experience penalty and ignoring all Class Advancement missions, the experience required for him to level up once should be enough for a player to go from level 1 to 160. Furthermore, the amount of experience that he needed would only increase as his level went up.

If he did not have the players to harvest experience and only relied on missions for experience, he would probably take donkey’s years to reach level 280.

The only reason he was able to accumulate enough experience to reach level 280 was because of the Political Asset. The combined effects of the Political Assets was like a double experience card.

It was truly frightening!

After lamenting for a while, the experience penalty status reached the last second and disappeared from his interface.

“The side effect of the Evolution Cube is finally gone.”

Han Xiao rubbed the muscles on his body and felt the activity within the cells of his body. The way this side effect showed itself was the slow adaptation to the evolution of his genes. The more powerful an individual, the more energy contained within their cells and the longer the process needed for the conversion. At this moment, the slight tinge of discomfort within his cells had finally disappeared, and their evolution was complete.

The effect of the Evolution Cube is truly amazing, Han Xiao thought to himself. He had been in a rush to use the Evolution Cube so that he could reach Beyond Grade A quickly. The side effects of using the Evolution Cube did not come at the right time. Han Xiao naturally did not plan to only use the Evolution Cube once but would choose a better time to make use of it next time. The best time for him to use the Evolution Cube would be after he spent all his accumulated experience during the version update period.

However, that was still a long way away.

Han Xiao focused on his attribute interface and began to level up.

[Lord Mechanic] leveled up to Lv.2.

+360 Energy, +5 STR, +5DEX, +12 END, +15 INT.

You have received 12 Free Attribute Points and 1 Potential Point.

...

[Lord Mechanic] leveled up to Lv.20.

+360 Energy, +5 STR, +5DEX, +12 END, +15 INT.

You have received 12 Free Attribute Points and 1 Potential Point.

A warm surge of energy flowed through his body, and his energy level was upgraded.

As his experience stash went down, his level shot up and stopped at level twenty.

Every twenty levels, there was a Promotion Mission, and a notification popped up on his interface.

You have reached Lv.280. You have triggered the Promotion Mission [A Legend Takes Flight].

[A Legend Takes Flight]: Obtain 1 Universe Grade Legendary Point. Only the strong will write his own legends.

The moment this Promotion Mission popped up, it was already in a 'completable' state.

Upon looking at the mission, Han Xiao was overjoyed.

The Universe Grade Legendary Point was the highest grade, and his actions needed to shake the entire universe. A player had to complete a mission of extremely high difficulty or do something extremely ridiculous to obtain the Legendary Point. This Promotion Mission was already at the level of the later versions during the World Tree Civilization arc.

Even with Han Xiao's current status, it was not easy for him to obtain a Universe Grade Legendary Point.

However, Han Xiao did have a Universe Grade Legendary Point right now: Enemy of the Arcane!

Han Xiao's mouth contorted. Was it truly a blessing in disguise?

After roaming through the universe for so many years, he only had a single Universe Grade Legendary Point. It could be seen just how rare it was.

He did not have any Mission Completion Cards on hand, and he originally thought that he would be stuck at the Lv.280 Promotion Mission. Who would have thought that he would be lucky this time?

Han Xiao then burst into laughter.

Hehe, I really need to thank the Arcane Church for giving me a Legendary Point.

Right, I also need to thank Feidin...

Upon thinking about Feidin, Han Xiao's hands grew a little itchy.

This was a surprise that dropped from the sky, and Han Xiao chose to complete the mission without hesitation.

You have completed the Mission Requirements.

Lv.280 Promotion Mission completed.

+55 END, 1 END = 410 Health = 420 Stamina

Your Energy Rank has exceeded 52,000 Ona.

You have received the talent [Strengthened Elemental Resistance]!

You have received the talent [Optimized Energy Usage]!

You have received the talent [High Grade Life Vitality]!

You have acquired the skill [Mighty Prestige]!

The effects of all your Virtual Technology skills have been increased by 40%.

Han Xiao's eyes glowed with a blue bolt of lightning, and he spat out a cloud of bluish gas.

Since there was no race evolution this time, there was not much pain throughout the whole process.

He looked down to see if there were any changes to his body. From the outside, there were not many changes. He had grown slightly taller, and his muscles looked more toned.

He then felt his head itch slightly and grabbed a bunch of hair off from his head while scratching it.

"I'm shedding hair?"

Han Xiao was shocked and immediately summoned his mirror to take a look, but after getting a clear look, he heaved a sigh of relief.

His Promotion stimulated his metabolism and improved the cell structure of his entire body. As such, his original hair fell out, and new hair grew out. However, the hair that had dropped was still stuck in his head, which explained why he felt the itch.

"Thankfully, my thick black hair is still around."

Han Xiao heaved a sigh of relief. For a moment, he thought that he had walked the evil path of exchanging his hair for power. The balder he got, the more powerful he would become.

The upper limit of the Lord Mechanic class was level 40, and he would complete his Class Advancement when he reached level 200. The next race evolution was also at level 300, and level 280 was just an ordinary Promotion in the middle.

However, 52,000 Ona seemed to be a stable boundary. Not all Beyond Grade As were able to reach 52,000 Ona, and the few talents that he had obtained felt like the basic abilities of a new realm.

After learning [Endless Material Science] and [Virtual Creator], his Energy Rank rapidly approached 52,000 Ona, and he finally broke through the boundary after increasing his level.

Han Xiao then looked at his new abilities and verified his guess.

Although he did not experience a race evolution, every Promotion was also an increase to his realm. Going past 52,000 Ona meant entering a new realm, and every life form that reached this realm would receive the same talents.

[Strengthened Elemental Resistance] boosted his attributes like [Perfect Mechanical Sense], and its multiplier was 1.25.

[Optimized Energy Usage] reduced the energy and stamina consumption of all his skills to 27%.

[High Grade Life Vitality] increased the upper limit of his health and recovery rate. His health increased by 17%, and his recovery rate increased by 120%.

These three talents strengthened his basic ability to take damage, which was something that all classes required.

The only skill, [Mighty Prestige], was a halo type ability that could be turned on and off. A life form at a higher realm was capable of emanating pressure, and this had turned into a skill.

The suppression would cover a certain region, and the individuals within the region would be affected by it, inflicting a negative status to reduce their attributes. However, it was only useful to life forms with intelligence, and certain life forms that were immune to mental skills were immune toward it, such as Mechanical Lives. It was useless against individuals of the same level.

After thinking for a while, Han Xiao concluded that the skill was completely useless apart from bullying noobs. But if he wanted to bully noobs, a Mechanic like him would not need a halo like this. He could just have a team fight.

The three talents that he had obtained were still much better.

Although this was only an ordinary Promotion, the increase to his strength was still pretty good.

His base Endurance boost was one Endurance point to 410 Health. The increase from his other abilities included an additional 60 from [Advanced Strengthened Life], 140 from [Eternal Body], 50 from Grade S boost, 10% health from [Extraordinary Physique], 17% health from [High Grade Life Vitality], and 100 health from [Well Trained].

For his Mechanical Force, he also had various different talents and skills to convert Intelligence to Machinery Affinity.

He then threw all his Free Attribute Points into Intelligence and looked at his attributes with satisfaction.

Level: 280

Main Class: Mechanic

Race: Black Star Race

Attributes: 3,347 STR, 4,080 DEX, 6,129 END, 9,029 INT, 2,950 MYS, 1,163 CHA, 1 LUK

Free Attribute Points: 0

Potential Point: 21

Health: 5,137,427

Stamina: 4,417,950

Energy: 89,320 [Lv.17]

Lv.17 Energy bonus stats: +1,206 STR, +1,488 DEX, +1,890 END, +2,345 INT, +1,123 MYS, +311,520
Stamina Limit, +1,632% Machinery Affinity

Energy Rank: 53,750

Grade: S+ (Beyond A)

Grade S Bonuses: +50 END, +25 All Resistances. +25% Highest Attribute, +15% Other Attributes, +750
Free Attribute Points, +50 Potential Points

The future of a Beyond Grade A is like a cloud of mist. Everyone is searching for their path and will meet many bottlenecks during their evolution process. Congratulations for going past the first bottleneck.

The remark is so solemn this time.

Han Xiao rubbed his muscles and tried to get used to the changes.

Now that he was at Grade S+, he was still considered Beyond Grade A despite the growth in his strength. His strength did not achieve such a huge change like when he went from the Calamity Grade to Beyond Grade A. Because there was no clear distinction between the combat strength of the Beyond Grade As and the grades within the Beyond Grade A realm being slowly figured out, the realm was segmented into mini realms.

Just like how everyone thought that the Calamity Grade was the upper limit of strength during the early days of the exploration era, the people now felt that Beyond Grade A was the limit of an individual's strength. EsGod wanted to break through the current limits just like the Primordial Ones did and raise his strength to a whole new realm.

After his promotion, the amount of experience required to level up increased yet again. Han Xiao knew that it would be impossible for him to save up enough experience to reach level 300 quickly. After all, he used the faction store to earn the players' experience, and even if he could earn experience quickly, he needed the time to accumulate it. Currently, the players had already learned plenty of knowledge, and the experience that they provided had begun to stagnate.

Han Xiao was not prepared to continue waiting. He had already been in seclusion for a few months, and it was better for him to get rid of EsGod as quickly as possible.

He had crafted many pieces of equipment that were made specially to deal with EsGod, and as long as the dynasty was willing to help him, he would have some confidence to kill EsGod.

"I haven't contacted the dynasty at all during this period. I wonder how matters are still unsettled between them and the Arcane Church. If they have come to an agreement already, they should have the capacity to deal with EsGod."

Han Xiao then took out his communicator and was about to ask about the dynasty's situation.

Right at this moment, Phillip suddenly appeared.

"Master, hum... Someone sent me an encrypted message just now."

"Sending an encrypted message to me? Decrypt it and see who sent it."

"I can't decrypt it alone; that's why I came to you."

Han Xiao's eyes narrowed. Phillip was a capable assistant, and since Phillip was unable to decrypt the information, it meant that the other party was not a simple individual. They had to be at the Star Cluster level at the very least.

"What is said in the encrypted message?"

"They said that they are the descendants of Spacetime Freezer and want to talk to you face to face."

Han Xiao was stunned, and his expression changed slightly.

When he was searching for information regarding the Spacetime Amber, he remembered the current state of the Spacetime Freezer race.

So... the Federation of Light is looking for me?

Since they have chosen to send the Spacetime Freezer race over, are they trying to hint to me that they are aware of the Spacetime Amber's origins?

Han Xiao then pondered for a moment before instructing, "Reply to them. I agree to meet them."