STAR RANK HUNTER

BOOK 01

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Star Rank Hunter

(星级猎人)

by

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Synopsis

The universe. This infinite field of stars is the dream of every Hunter.

For the Hunters who run amidst the stars, the only limit they truly have is the universe.

Is there a limit to the universe? And where would this limit lay?

When the Shadow Hunter; a young man named Cillin obtains a strange chip by accident, he begins his journey into this endless field of stars.

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Chapter 1: Shadow Hunter

Ding –

The gentle voice of a woman resounded as the door of a small shop slid open.

“Welcome.”

At the same time, a beautiful face appeared on both sides of the door. She had big wavy blonde curls, bright red lips, a sparkling smile and assertive sweetness.

But the person who pushed open the door did not look twice at her beautiful face. In fact he frowned and yelled at the direction of the counter, “Cillin, get that old man Devon to change out a new face already; it’s been so many years!”

The young man behind the counter busying himself with a bottle of wine shrugged, “No can do. The boss loves it.”

“Give it up, it’ll be easier to make him quit gambling than change out the display.” Some of the patrons in the bar stirred and answered loudly with a laugh.

As the dream lover of the entire male population on the planet thirty years ago, the face on the door had definitely sunk many hearts in the past. Time is the most cruel killer of them all and beauty is one fragile gift. However, before this killer could act out

this beautiful singer and televised sweetheart had passed away first due to a failed gene transformation. During the first ten years there were still many people who still kept this beautiful singer's holographic images and electronic posters in their room, but in the end, it had been thirty years. The tide rises, and the tide ebbs. Everything is as transient as the fleeting cloud. A new beauty would submerge the old star into oblivion, and there weren't many people who were willing to look back at a long dead illusion.

But of course, the owner of this bar was in fact a faithful man. Even though it had been thirty years, he still kept the beautiful singer's image on the welcome screen. Thirty years and beyond, and it never changed. It was also one of the topics the patrons who frequented here often talked about.

The newcomer curled his lips as if he disapproved of the owner's practice. He did not bother to comment on it further and walked to an empty spot on a table and sat down. There were familiar faces everywhere, and he quickly inserted himself into a conversation. He did not make an order.

Cillin, that is the young man who stood by the counter took down a bottle named, 'The Smile Under The Sun' from the wine cabinet and put it down on the visitor's table. He opened the cap, then left to serve drinks to the other patrons.

Without wasting anymore words, while he was still chatting with his companions around him, the newcomer had already grabbed the wine bottle in his hands and took a swig.

"Hah, in the end this is still the most enjoyable drink. It has

enough spice in it and packs a punch!”

Cillin gave him a smile and returned to the counter. He then logged the account into the tablet.

This was a very normal bar, and the city it was in was also very normal. They were almost all citizens at the bottom level, and to borrow the words of the people from the center city they would be known as the ‘lower class’, or in uglier terms, ‘the rabble’.

The rabble have their own happiness. They loved to sit in a bar where a human served them instead of a high-grade robot; drink cheap but strong alcohol; sit down with familiar drinking buddies and talk about everything in a day while complaining about their cruel bosses along the way; and gossip about someone else’s gossip. It was a simple but happy life.

The ‘high class’ people from downtown area did not understand the happiness of the poor. It was like a smartly dressed successful person walking on the path of gold and authority, and when they passed by a wreckage on occasion looking down on an excited stray cat leaping at a fly. They would think to themselves: Just how bored are these people to be doing such a thing; no wonder they were known as a lowly lifeform.

What is lowly, and what is noble?

The seven forms of genetic ranks; A, B, C, D, E, F, G were the lines to differentiate them all. Those with lowly genetics would be considered lowly people, and those with advanced genetics would

be considered noble people. That was all.

Including Cillin, everyone in the bar had F rank genotypes, and on this planet they could be categorized as the lowly poor. Those with E rank genotypes would be given the chance to work at the downtown area, and only those who were D rank and above would be able to gain a foothold at the downtown area.

As for those with G rank genotypes. These were the saddest kind of people of them all. Because their natural genetics were inferior and defective, the sicknesses that came along with them could not be saved through simple treatments. Some examples would be severe deformity, progeria and other congenital diseases. Cillin's young ex-girlfriend Hena was a G rank genotype. The cute girl never managed to walk past the best time of youth due to a factor of progeria, another congenital disease and poverty.

The descendants of those with high genetic quality and high quality genotype would not be lacking. In fact, they would only get better. On the other hand low genetic quality and low quality genotype was the complete opposite, and social polarization was also turning more and more serious. Therefore there were a lot more people of low quality genotype who tried to undergo genetic transformation. However, those who succeeded were far and few, and even disregarding the huge amount of capital expenses, the chances of a successful genetic transformation was incredibly low in the first place. The higher one tried to improve their genotype, the harder it became, and this was exactly the source of pride of those with higher genotypes. The heartbreaker from thirty years also had turned into history exactly because she failed the genetic transformation.

Man is fated not to be equal the moment he was born. It is just that familiarity breeds indifference.

“Ah, Cillin, old Devon hasn’t shown up for many days already, has he? He still hasn’t come back from his blind date?” Someone yelled.

“Yeah, his chances should be pretty big this time,” Cillin replied with a smile.

“Ceh -” No one looked convinced as they began chattering about old Devon’s history of blind dates.

Cillin simply listened with a smile and did not offer an opinion. He did not tell them that actually, old Devon had struck jackpot and became rich overnight. Thus he went on to realize his dreams.

Old Devon’s dream – to find a E rank genotype, neither too young nor too old lady and take out the sperm he had saved inside the sperm bank. The best case scenario would be to give birth of an E rank baby, open a small shop at the city area and lead a stable life. As long as he had money, it would not be a problem to find a woman of E rank genotype, even if old Devon was a rank lower; an F rank genotype.

The annual water, land and sky competition was something the entire planet paid close attention about, and it was also the most anticipated event for gamblers. This was because that the prize was large enough that, even if the bets weren’t completely accurate, as long as one achieved a particular standard it would still turn a poor

into the rich overnight. It was exactly because Old Devon had struck jackpot that he was able to depart from his status of poverty.

Of course, the reason old Devon managed to win the prize was mostly thanks to Cillin. Every time Old Devon makes a bet he would first ask for Cillin's opinion; and only then he would dare to wager.

Old Devon might be a miser, but he did treat Cillin very well, otherwise Cillin would not have helped him in the first place. Moreover, this time Old Devon had sent Cillin the dividends of his prize on the same day.

The night gradually deepened, and the patrons slowly left.

Cillin took a bath and changed his clothes; sprayed a special kind of chemical to eliminate the smells before locking up the shop's door. He glanced towards the black sky, and there were blinking tiny dots that were like finely crushed starlight.

The weather forecast said that starting from oooo hour there would be an hour of continuous rain, and now it was still forty minutes away from oooo hour.

Forty minutes... it is enough.

Thirty minutes later, behind the cover of some jutted eaves and shacks Cillin arrived at an industrial zone. Dexterously and

skillfully dodging the outside scans, he took out a magnetic card that he had prepared in advance and silently sneaked into a staff quarter beside the warehouse. After all this wasn't the central city region, and the security system in this small place was neither advanced nor complicated.

The person lying on the bed seemed to notice something, but before they (no mention of gender) could act they lost consciousness and seemed to have sunk into deep sleep once more. But at a certain area behind the person's ears and neck hidden beneath the hair, three thin black needles were stuck soundlessly behind it.

Cillin's hands gently swept the needles back into his possession, and after making sure that he had left no other traces behind, left the same way he slipped in the first place; behind the cover of eaves and shacks.

There was the 'Sky Eye' in the sky, and firearms would be detected by the local detection network. The only way to resolve a case silently and without anyone noticing was to do it the primitive way, because there were no energy fluctuations to be detected.

As a Hunter, Cillin could be said to have walked a difficult path. Due to his age and genotype, he could not become an honest Hunter. More accurately speaking Cillin was a Shadow Hunter, and a so-called Shadow Hunter was the generic term of people who worked together with a Hunter but remained in the dark due to the sensitivity of their identities and so on.

Since he was 14 years old until now, Cillin had been working as a Shadow Hunter for almost three years. His choice to become a Hunter was initially due to Hena's sickness, and after Hena passed away Cillin continued to persevere at this job because he needed a large amount of money to leave this planet safely.

Five minutes after Cillin left, another shadow slipped into the room and carried away the person Cillin had taken out, in order to exchange them for bounty and split the loot later.

They had worked together for almost three years, but the Hunter never knew the true identity of the 'Shadow'. Of course, the Hunter didn't mind it as long as they could capture their prey smoothly and exchange them for bounty. The rest did not matter. Cillin also believed that the Hunter he had chosen would never bother to spend a tremendous amount of effort tracking down his 'Shadow's' identity, because long before he picked his choice of partner Cillin had already did a lot of homework analyzing a variety of potential scenarios from all angles.

For the Hunters who weren't really qualified to do their jobs, without a 'Shadow' they could never have completed their assignment and earn the bounty, and would instead lose their lives. And so to a certain degree, these Hunters and Shadows shared a symbiotic relationship. As for the top level Hunters, they did not need a Shadow at all. Of course, barring a Hunter corp, those people were a special kind of existence of their own.

Also, the Hunter would not have realized that the shadow who worked with him, a D rank genotype, would only be at F rank. No one would have believed it even if he told the truth.

It was midnight, oooo hour, and rainfall resounded. Cillin sat inside a deserted building as he watched the droplets grew larger and larger. The rain would wash away any smell or subtle traces Cillin left behind, which was also one of the reasons why he had picked this time to act.

How did a natural rain look like; Cillin didn't know. He had only seen one on television, and there was no natural rain on this planet at all. There were only the precisely controlled weathers by a weather station. The precise intensity of the sun, and the simulated thunderstorm; they were all artificial.

A breeze blew over through the open cracks of the wall, and Cillin sniffed the smell of cement and slag. In addition, it was also mixed with an unexpectedly familiar smell...

Cillin's eyebrows jumped as he carefully identified that particular smell in the wind. After confirming his suspicions he wore a strange expression. He didn't think that there would still be people using that at this age and time.

Chapter 2: Guinea Pig

Cillin’s nose was very sensitive. He could differentiate and analyze mixed smells, and that was exactly why he found it surprising.

The person who used these few reagents; were they bored out of their wits, conducting a hobby research or for a different reason entirely?

These smell did not come from the rain outside. From the other smells mixed within the wind direction and air flow he could determine that this particular smell came from inside the building. But who would use such an ancient reagent inside such an abandoned building?

Tracing the smell, Cillin found a pipe about the width of a thumb amidst a pile of rubbish. Cillin didn’t walk too far along the pipeline before he found out that the rest of it was hidden inside the wall.

It was hidden pretty well alright.

Turning on his thumb-sized, closed-ranged projector flashlight, a light blue light was shone onto the wall, illuminating the pipeline buried behind the wall clearly. After some investigation, Cillin grew more and more curious.

Interesting.

In addition to this pipeline, Cillin had found several more, and they were all very well concealed.

Cillin grew more and more cautious. Although the best course of action wuould be to leave right away, for some reason Cillin had a strange feeling that urged his desire to discover the truth.

Following the pipeline downwards, he walked through many crooked paths; some of them even requiring Cillin to climb through some ancient vents. Arriving at the first floor of the building, Cillin opened a hidden cover and walked down the narrow staircase beneath it and headed deeper inside.

The surroundings were very quiet, but it wasn't exactly a complete silence. After a moment of careful sensing, Cillin felt that there shouldn't be anyone in his vicinity and proceeded to take out his flashlight and continued deeper inside.

As the number of pipelines grew more and more numerous, Cillin understood that he was getting closer and closer to his target. He took a deep breath and turned off his flashlight. Although he hadn't sensed anyone in front of him, his instincts told him that the path before him would not a smooth one. Although the energy flux of a flashlight was at most ten meters, to be safe Cillin still turned it off decisively.

It was dark everywhere. Cillin relied on the minuscule airflow to decide his direction and avoid obstacles. About half an hour later the space around him gradually grew larger, and a number of

electronic lights the size of a nail were also starting to appear. With the lights he could see that this place had existed for quite a while, and there were also a layer of dust on top of those electronic light panels. Although it wasn't really thick, no one had come through here for at least a month.

Watching the light spots on the walls, Cillin grew more and more uneasy.

Something is wrong, something is really wrong! This place looks just like a... trap! A trap!

An intense sense of crisis assaulted him, and without another thought Cillin turned around and ran immediately. His Hunter's instincts were telling him that he could not the danger that might appear in the next moment.

But the thick special steel plates that cut off his retreat path was even faster.

With the turn of a palm a metallic dagger appeared in Cillin's hand. He could cut open the steel plate with a laser dagger, but one it would waste a huge amount of time, and two the laser's dagger powerful energy flux would expose his position constantly.

With his back against the steel plate, Cillin quietly watched towards the front. He knew that there must be someone there.

Ta, ta, ta...

The footsteps closed leisurely towards him without the slightest intent of concealment at all. In fact, they carried within them a fearless attitude.

Ka.

A beam of light turned on, and the passageway instantly lit up.

Cillin narrowed his eyes and swiftly recovered from the discomfort induced by the sudden exposure to strong light in a weak lighting environment. But the person standing opposite to him did not seem to be in a hurry as he waited for Cillin to recover.

He was an old man who looked like an F rank genotype human approaching his first hundred, which was to say it felt like he would die at any moment. The old man's skin was brownish-yellow. He had a shriveled body, and his exposed arm showed clear signs of muscle atrophy. Cillin could not see the old man's eyes clearly because he was wearing a goggles. But it was this shriveled old man who had made every hair on Cillin's body shudder.

The old man walked slowly towards Cillin; as leisurely as taking a walk in the park.

He who strikes first gains the advantage!

Cillin flew into action in a flash without leaving even an afterimage behind. From this one might notice his incredible

speed, so much that it was comparable even to a D genotype human.

Qiang!

The shrill voice of metal rang.

Beside the old man's carotid artery, a twig-like hand had caught tightly of the tip of his dagger as easily as he would pinch a tree branch.

The energy flux of either a plasma dagger or a laser dagger were simply too huge, and with Cillin's current constitution the chances that he would expose himself was also bigger, which was why Cillin was a lot more willing to use a cold weapon and commit murder without a trace. But even with his special alloy dagger his attack was blocked – not, pinched – all too easily by this deathly old man!

Three years of life and death experience as a Hunter left Cillin with no time to think. This was not an enemy that he could face. Run!

But before Cillin could make a move, his body was suddenly tied up firmly by what seemed like wires of liquid metal. When Cillin searched for the thing's origin, he was shocked to discover that they came from the five fingers of the old man's other hand. More accurately speaking, it was the extension of the old man's finger!

Is he a human? A machine? A mutant? Or an unknown type?

It was an icy cold touch. Cillin could smell the breath of death. Every one of his pores were exuding coldness.

Kacha!

The alloy dagger that had taken god-knows-how-many wanted men's lives was crushed. Strangling his throat with skinny fingers the old man lifted Cillin off the ground like a chick.

All four of his limbs were bound, and even the blood vessels on his neck was almost blocked from the sheer pressure.

"Hehe, you came at just the right time." Listening to his tone, it appeared that the old man was very happy, even a little impatient for what comes next.

If the one being crushed was a normal person, they would've rolled their eyes a long time ago. But Cillin still had the willpower and energy to think of a way out of his predicament.

The old man stared at Cillin and looked even more pleased.

Door after door opened, and door after door closed. Cillin's shock grew bigger and bigger. To think that such a place was hidden beneath this poor town!

This secret chamber could not have existed for less than thirty or fifty years old, and it was far more complex than Cillin had first imagined. Both its defense and its concealment were done exceptionally well, or it would not have remained hidden for so many years without anyone realizing it. Or perhaps the ones who did discover this place were all dead.

Cillin looked sidelong at an open room, and there were numerous men put in liquid tanks like preserved specimens inside it. The twisted looks on their faces chilled Cillin to the bones. He could see that these people had suffered unbearable torment prior to their deaths.

Perhaps Cillin would become one of them in the next moment.

The old man did not intend to kill Cillin immediately. His control over the strength of his hands was extremely well. Not only did he give Cillin no chance to escape, he also made sure that he would not impair his body functions as well.

As for why the old man had said that Cillin came at just the right time, this was because Cillin had walked right into his doorsteps just as the guinea pig before him expired and was placed inside a liquid tank.

Cillin was carried into a room filled with all sizes of tools and instruments. The table at a corner of the room were filled with all sorts of jars and bottles. He had already identified some of the gases exhausted from the pipeline, and they were reagents used to purify DNA.

At this age and time, almost no one but the old pedants would know such a primitive method to purify DNA. Cillin had done similar experiments before, but it was simply out of curiosity and he did not research it in-depth.

With current technology, a palm-sized apparatus was all that's needed to perform DNA purification. It was swift, precise and could even perform functional analysis on genomes. But no matter the kind of purifying and analyzing apparatus, they all needed to be registered and verified under a real name. Every apparatus had a registration number, binding chip and data connection.

Since the old man had chosen to perform a manual purification – and from the looks of it he was purifying by the bulk – it meant that he was engaged in the kind of illegal research that would make him a wanted man. But no matter how Cillin wracked his brain he could not find any most wanted information relating to the man before him. The planet's most wanted list was open to everyone regardless of their risk level. There were only two pieces of information on top of the arrest warrant: one was their photo, and the other their bounty.

Because this laboratory was underground, and it was even covered with a rare layer of isotope barrier, hence it was not discovered by the 'Sky Eye'. The data of these instruments should also be disconnected from the outside world, and so it escaped some other ways of investigation.

What exactly is this old man planning to do?

Placing Cillin on top of a floating white table, the old man pressed a button on an instrument. Cillin's wrists and four limbs were cuffed by the manacles that appeared on the table. Many thin wires appeared on the table, slipped through his clothing and entered his body. In an instant Cillin was turned into a guinea pig studded with countless tubes. On one side he was filled with thin red tubes, and the other thin blue tubes. The numbers on a nearby display jumped continuously.

Since Cillin was already bound by on top of the table – not even his fingers were spared – the old man then retracted his hand and returned his fingers to its original twig-like form. After injecting a sticky and ice cold liquid into Cillin's body, he tapped swiftly the buttons on the instrument to combine and analyze the data from the other tens of instruments.

Pain. Terrible pain that seeped right into the bones. His fingers were shaking, every blood in his body was flowing erratically, every second was challenging the limits of his nerves and his mind was nearly destroyed instantly. But after a short blank period, with difficulty Cillin was finally able to refocus his thoughts little by little. Otherwise, it wouldn't take long before Cillin himself would become a member of those specimens.

Those sticky liquid-like substance were actually many tiny special biochips. Some of its characteristics were very similar to vectors, and it could be integrated into the chromosome of a human body and undergo synchronous replication and division.

The red tubes's main function was induction. It provided sustenance at the same time it induced the subject's metabolism to

accelerate cell division. On the other hand the blue tubes controlled apoptosis. It killed off the cells that could not keep up.

The old man watched the elevated spike on the screen and let out a few chuckles. He then turned a knob in his hand ten degrees clockwise, and for every ten degrees the rate of induction would rise to a new level, and the chip's activation rate would also increase.

The cerebrum's hippocampus region, the DMRs in the chromosome, the frequency of intercellular communication and more were presented in data form on the repeatedly flashing display. They all made the old man incredibly excited.

Cillin's nerves were assaulted once again by an even bigger wave of pain, and then arduously gathered his mind together again.

"Not bad. Not bat at all. To think that a mere F rank genotype can come this far!" The old man began talking to himself as he watched the knob that had been turned over a hundred and eighty degrees, but his words betrayed his clear excitement.

The figure a hundred and eighty degrees meant that fifty percent of the chips had been activated, and yet this man was somehow still alive. The numbers flashing on the screen even cause a tremor in the old man's speaking voice. In the past, the guinea pigs that were able to endure beyond a hundred and eighty degrees did not even reach half the total number, and it meant that the physical endurance of this mere F rank genotype human was comparable to that of a D rank's.

But how long could he last? Every time he lasted another ten degrees there would be an extra set of data that excited the old man beyond belief, but he didn't care at all about Cillin's survival.

Cillin continued to look for a chance to escape amidst the assaulting waves of pain.

Chapter 3: Change

“Betwixt life and death, the terrible pain will destroy a person’s will to survive. When you are faced with such a crossroad, you may wish to induce a deep trance of self hypnosis and numb the nerves that transmit pain; to focus your mind; to think within the shortest possible time…”

Those were the words Genya had said to Cillin, but Cillin had never truly used it before, because he was never as completely helpless as he was right now.

Hypnosis.

Self-hypnosis.

His entire body was convulsing. After drawing in a difficult breath, Cillin then closed his eyes.

…

Watching the spike that had elevated yet another level on the screen, the old man’s hand gave a shiver as he took off his goggles and pressed his face closer to the screen. His sunken eyes were completely glued to the screen as if he was trying to distinguish whether this was real.

The knob had already turned two hundred and seventy degrees. Seventy five percent of the chip had been activated.

He wasn't looking at Cillin on top of the experiment bench. The old man was laughing a somewhat distorted laugh. Since the life indicator lines were still beating rather strongly, it meant that he could raise it some more!

Two hundred and eighty degrees...

Two hundred and ninety degrees...

Three hundred degrees...

The instruments were beginning to screech out a warning. The crimson red warning sign and ear-piercing siren did not deter the old man in the least.

Right now, his eyes were completely filled with madness.

There were nearly a thousand test subjects in the past, and none of them had managed to hold on until three hundred degrees. But today...

"Heh... hehehe... I, the one they call Horay... shall appear within 'Glory' and 'Code'!"

Cillin did not have any energy to pay attention to the old man's words right now, or he would have thought that the old man was a complete madman! How dare he dreamed of appearing inside

‘Glory’ and ‘Code’ with only these resources!?

‘Glory’ and ‘Code’ were the two most famous electronic magazines in the interstellar network. They were hailed as the ‘historical records’ of GAL (Galactic Alliance). With these two electronic magazines at the forefront, every other electronic publications in GAL were relegated into the background. They were also the only publications to have scored over ninety contribution points out of the hundred point electronic publication system set by GAL. That was to say, the achievements of personages or inventions research findings published in these two electronic magazines scored at the very least ninety contribution points.

Any one of the personages, deeds, research and more that appeared in ‘Glory’ and ‘Code’ was enough to shake the entire GAL. ‘Glory’ featured mostly generals and politicians, whereas ‘Code’ featured academics and technicians.

It didn’t matter whether the records inside the two gigantic magazines were man or deeds; they were all built on top of countless manpower, resources, wealth and time. The Planet Brown Earth Cillin was in had news that reached at best twenty or so contribution points, and they could only be recorded in magazines with small influences. In truth, any news that exceeded ten contribution points would be broadcasted continuously for tens of days by the planet’s TV station, much less one that was above ninety contribution points.

Therefore, any normal person would have thought that the old man’s words were but a delusion.

The old man turned the knob once more.

Three hundred and ten degrees…

Three hundred and twenty degrees…

Di – di – di –

The alarm grew more and more urgent, and the fluctuation of Cillin's life line was starting to grow erratic. A few instruments were beginning to smoke and shudder with many bangs. A few buttons had also exploded, and it was looking to grow worse and worse. Even the tubes trapping Cillin were beginning to shake as if unable to handle the load.

Peng!

A finger lock trapping one of Cillin's fingers ricocheted off from high load.

Peng!

That was another one.

The old man no longer had time to care for Cillin as all of his attention was absorbed by the data on the screen. His fingers clutched the knob, and he could not wait to see the final numbers.

Buttons were flying off the instruments everywhere.

There’s no time. Cillin knew where his limits lay.

His two released fingers had caught hold of a button from a button that ricocheted off some unknown instrument. It was the response of a single trace of sanity left after he had hypnotized himself under intense pain. It was also Cillin’s last chance.

It was only a trace of sanity, and yet its calculation was surprisingly accurate – unprecedentedly accurate; just like the control and error analysis conducted by a sophisticated instrument. In less than a second Cillin fired out the button in his hands.

Pu –

The flying button rebounded three times across the floor, the wall and the baffle plate of an instrument before it shot through the old man’s left eye into the central nervous system of the brain, cutting off his neural network circuit and killing him instantly. It was the same instant the madman’s fingers on the knob were ready to make the final adjustments, and the numbers on the knob were already pointing towards three hundred and fifty degrees, so it would not be an exaggeration to say that it was literally in the nick of time. If the knob really was turned to three hundred and sixty degrees, then Cillin would not have lived as well.

Thank god that the old man was an actual human being, and

thank god the old man hadn't made crazy modifications to his entire body. The old man who was dead in an instant laid beside the instrument.

The moment the old man died, all of the tubes that bounded Cillin were retracted. A warning popped up on top of the instrument, and an electronically synthesized voice resounded, "The host is dead. Begin program deletion."

Cillin could not afford to attend to his still somewhat paralyzed body as he turned around and fell down from the bench. He could not stand up. He could only lift his head and watch the images and data flashing instantaneously across those screens.

Every information that was about to be deleted would flash once across the screen. It was unimaginable that the old man would set up such a strange deletion pattern.

There was no telling if a rank B, or even an rank A genotype human would be able to capture all those images and data, and even if they did they might not necessarily be able to memorize it, and this assumption was limited to just a single screen. But Cillin was able to memorize all the information from the tens of screens into his head. In the past this would've been absolutely impossible. Although he had a pretty good memory before this, there was no way his capture speed could have kept up, let alone memorizing tens of screens at once!

His body was adjusting quickly. Cillin's eyes appeared to be out of focus, but he was in fact etching all the information on the screen into his brain. The thing the old man had injected him with was

like a unknown bomb – if he could not deCryptography these information then he might not even know how he died.

Five minutes later the programs had been deleted completely, and all information relating to the experiment – including the information of the old man Horay Hanson – were memorized inside Cillin's head as long as they had flashed across the screen.

"Program deletion complete. Self-destruction program to be executed in five minutes. Countdown to desertification in..."

Fuck!

Cillin cursed. He moved a little his body that had recovered some senses, lifted himself up with difficulty and staggered towards the exit.

Every door beneath the underground laboratory was open. Those other rooms were used for storage such as the 'specimens', food, equipment, medicine and so on. The true core of the lab was this room that Cillin had stayed in, so he had neither the thought nor the time to check out the items in other rooms. Rely on his memories, retraced his way back through the path he was brought in.

All the doors were opened, and he was not obstructed along the entire way. It was if everything had been premeditated. It was exactly five minutes.

The desertification program had activated when Cillin reached the vents at the edge of the laboratory. A quicksand-like depression appeared at the center of the lab, and it extended outwards and turned the floor, the lab instruments and the dead old man all into quick sand. The area of desertification began to spread. When Cillin climbed out of the vent and returned to the building from before, the desertification had just reached the vents.

Cillin had no time to rest. He knew that the old man' so-called 'self-destruction program' would definitely not be just desertification. In order to make sure that his researching findings were not compromised, he had even bound his own life to every program in the place. If he could be this ruthless, then he would definitely ensure a more thorough destruction.

Thankfully the sun wasn't up yet, and there were no people on the streets. Under the cover of darkness, Cillin moved while sticking close to paths beneath the shacks and eaves. If he was discovered by the 'Sky Eye' then it would be all for naught.

Sure enough, not too long after Cillin had left, the huge sound of an explosion woke up every men from their sleep. There was a mushroom cloud billowed into the sky. Dazzling flames. A deep and wide chasm on the ground. The buildings that were affected by the blast wave and collapsed were left with broken walls and a state of ruination. The kids who were woken up were crying and screaming; the adults were cursing non-stop.

Before any curious personnel could approach the blast site, a white light descended from the sky to cover the entire blast zone in a prison of white light and isolate it from the outside world. The

‘Sky Eye’ had made its response; it wouldn’t be long before the patrols of the police force would come over and check out the situation.

But they were none of Cillin’s concerns. When he slipped back to his small ten square meters wide room at the poverty area, his nerves finally and gradually lost their high tension as he fell into a deep slumber.

Chapter 4: Genya's Secret

An information recorded inside Cillin's head flashed across his dreams, and a change was also happening inside his body.

It was two days later when he reopened his eyes. Cillin did not go to old Devon's shop, but instead went to Genya's, his master's home.

Cillin was picked up by Genya from the woods at the west side of the town. At the time, due to the high energy radiation of an abnormal solar flare causing its neighboring planets' food crops to fail and the price of sustenance medicine to skyrocket, it was a terrible disaster for the poor. Many people were starved to death, and the kids whom they could not afford to feed were sold to the rich people in the bustling city. Cillin was the kind who wasn't sold off in time. On that day, a scrimmage had happened in the west woods due to a food shortage problem, and when Genya got there the only one still alive was Cillin placed inside a tree hole still wrapped within his swaddling clothes.

Genya was only an F rank genotype, and yet he lived and fought better than a D rank. Genya had taught him Cillin a set of exercises that, as compared to the ones he saw on TV, was improved upon on the many aspects of human Kinesiology. These exercises were later used by Cillin for hunting. Genya once said that this set of exercises were originally adapted from actual martial arts techniques. He had removed the killing aspect of it and added some moderation, but Cillin himself was slowly able to recover the removed parts through actual practice.

Genya passed away when Cillin was twelve years old. No one knew how old Genya was; Cillin only knew that his master was not an ordinary person. The rest was a mystery.

Every month Cillin would come over and tidy up Genya's home. The arrangements inside the house weren't shabby. It gave off a feeling of simplicity and peacefulness and it was just as humble and unremarkable as Genya himself. he was obviously not short of money, and yet he was willing to live his life quietly in this poverty area.

There was a huge tree over twenty meters tall at the backyard. Its canopy was big enough cover more than half the backyard. Genya once said that there might be only one such tree in the entire galaxy.

Cillin walked until he was beside the tree, and took out the crystal-like pendant hanging around his neck.

"Master, Hena and I are here to see you."

There was only Genya and Hena in his world. Well, he supposed that old Devon barely made the count too. But Genya and Hena were already gone, and old Devon too was starting a new life of his own.

He sat down with his back against the tree. Fine beams of light shone down from above, and yet he couldn't feel much temperature from them.

“It’s just me again.”

Cillin lifted his arm and in accordance to the information he had understood inside his brain, controlled the chip’s activation. He looked at his arms. On the outside it looked exactly the same as before, and yet he could now easily penetrate a ten centimeters thick steel plate with them, just like that crazy old man who had easily crushed his alloy dagger. He hadn’t digested much of the information stored inside his head; only the basics such as the control over his body muscles just now, or the activation and halting of his genes…

It was worth mentioning that thanks to the integration brought forth by the injected chips, Cillin’s genotype had reached the level of B rank right now. Before Genya had shut his eyes forever he once said to Cillin that, if one day Cillin managed to upgrade his genotype to rank C, then he could open that box inside his room. If he couldn’t, then he should never open it.

Getting up, Cillin walked inside the room Genya once stayed and opened the cupboard. There was a box that looked like it was wood made lying quietly inside it. There was an invisible layer of protective film surrounding the small box, and it was used to evaluate the rank of a person’s genotype. Cillin once ricocheted off it when he was just an F rank.

He placed his hand on the invisible film once more, and a thin halo slowly spread until it disappeared completely. Cillin picked up the box. The activation key was Cillin’s own genetic information; the double password inside genome and Mitochondrial DNA.

Pa –

The box opened.

Genya's hologram appeared. Although it was only the size of a palm, it was incredibly clear.

"Cillin, since you're able to open this box, it means that not only your genotype has reached C rank, you are also no older than fifty years old."

Cillin's eyebrows jumped. He didn't know Genya had even set up an age limit.

"Cillin, if you plan to explore the universe, then continue; otherwise, you should close this box and never open it again. This is my order as your master!"

Cillin did not move.

After a while, the hologram flashed once before clearing up again.

"Since you've chosen to explore the universe, then please do your master a favor. Carry the ring inside the box with you, and if one day there is a reaction from the ring, then send me back home..."

It would be a lie if Cillin said that he wasn't shocked listening to

Genya's voice. The ring was actually a subspace ring, and it was impossible for Cillin's current planet have developed such a technology. Only the super-rich at the central downtown area could afford it, and it was practically the luxury of luxuries. But Genya definitely possessed one, and Cillin could sense that it was even more elaborate and complex than the subspace ring and necklace and so on owned by the rich!

The more Genya said, the more Cillin felt that Genya's identity was extraordinary.

"The tree in the backyard is called a Fuji Tree. My family's emblem is a Fuji leaf; the Elder Tree Fuji – the Gen Family. Ever since I've arrived at this area, I've never heard of it once..."

When Genya was but a child, he had flown his family's spaceship and accidentally entered the 'Demon's Zone'. A wormhole had appeared out of nowhere and consumed his spacecraft, and soon he arrived at this unfamiliar universe. His spacecraft was destroyed, and after travelling from one place to another he finally arrived at Planet Brown Earth X-C362; as in this planet.

Although there were a lot of details Genya had neglected to mention, Cillin was able to guess some of it.

"Before there is a resonance from the ring, you must never easily mention either the Gen Family or the Elder Tree Fuji..."

Once finished, the hologram disappeared and left behind a wood-like ring.

The ring looked a bit big, so he wore it on his left thumb. The second he put it on, the wood-like ring suddenly turned into a curly, leap-shaped green pattern and became stuck tightly to his skin. It didn't look like a ring anymore and was practically a tattoo; a tattoo which he could neither pull nor rub off his no matter how hard he tried.

Fudge, if I knew this earlier I would never have worn this on my thumb! Who would tattoo a curly leaf on their thumb?!

According to Genya's instructions, Cillin was to dig out the coffin buried under the backyard's Fuji tree. They had not electro-cremated his body that year; instead they had followed in accordance to Genya's will and placed him inside a coffin made of the wood from the Fuji tree. Then they buried him beside it. Of course, Cillin and Hena were the only ones who knew about this.

He didn't move the coffin around much. Cillin pointed the leaf pattern at the tip of his thumb at the coffin, and after a green flash the coffin was sucked into the ring. Cillin could feel the location of the coffin inside the ring, and Cillin also knew that there was still a large enough space in the ring; enough for him to stock up for a long travel.

After he tidied everything nicely in the backyard, Cillin kissed the pendant around his neck lightly, then looked at the leaf pattern at his thumb and smiled,

"The three of us shall go on an adventure!"

Chapter 5: The Chip's Ability

The sheriff himself had come over to supervise the situation because of the explosion, and every day the people living around the explosion area would be questioned. The people were worried, and there were plenty of shops in town that did not open for business, which was why no one would notice even if Cillin did not go to the bar. Moreover, the place Cillin lived in was the poorest region in the area, so the sheriffs simply made a few superficial inquiries before leaving the place. Cillin was not among the questioned.

He went back to the streets in town again, but Cillin did not plan to reopen the shop and continue the business. Instead he contacted old Devon. After all, he should communicate with the boss about the matter of his shop.

Old Devon was currently hot in love, and his face glowed with a ruddy color. Just he had dreamed old Devon found a suitably aged E rank genotype woman for himself and was currently planning for life after marriage. When he heard that Cillin was ready to venture out to the world, he had thought that Cillin was simply trying his luck in the downtown area. As his elder Old Devon had lent Cillin some advice, but he did not say anything more than that. Young people have all the energy in the world, and it is good to have something to strive for. After all, Cillin was only seventeen years old.

Old Devon himself did not plan to come back, and he gifted the little shop to Cillin. The geography of the bar was bad in the first place, and even if he managed to sell it it wouldn't sell for much money. Old Devon also did not know anyone in the city region and

he could not help Cillin in terms of contacts, so he planned to give Cillin some money instead. But Cillin turned down his offer.

After turning down old Devon, Cillin told him to take care of himself before ending the conversation. His savings were far more than old Devon could ever have imagined. Cillin did not plan to sell the bar immediately, and instead rented it to a person who lived in the poverty area as well. He was fine as long as they did not neglect to deposit their rent to his card every year.

He went back to his poor little room and packed up his stuff. On the same night Cillin went back to Genya's place again, and unlike last time's open visit he made sure to keep this trip well hidden due to a very critical matter. Plus, Genya's place had excellent security, and the effects of its defensive shield's internal and external signal were very good. It added another layer of security.

Inside the room, Cillin first relaxed his body before he began to channel the changes inside his body. Since the chips that were integrated into Cillin genes had seeped into his every cell through replication of the host body and blood transportation, Cillin's current aim was to make the chips to undergo selective expression. Of course, since the chips did not reach a hundred percent during its initial activation, any selective expression it underwent would be limited.

The order was sent down from his brain, and the information from the central nervous system was relayed to every chip inside the cell. The chips began to express selectively, and even the genome's expression were disrupted and underwent a transformation. The most obvious one was Cillin's appearances.

His facial bones began to change. His hair, eyes and skin color were changing, and even his skeletal frame had undergone a transformation. This was neither short term coloring nor plastic surgery; it was a transformation that happened in his very DNA. It could not be detected even by an advanced instrument because it was a control and change at the very source of his being. This was Cillin's real trump card.

According to the data and information left behind by Horay, the host body could theoretically cause the original DNA of his cells to undergo recombination, fragmentation, deletion or mutation through control of the chip.

For example, if someone tried to examine Cillin's DNA information, then Cillin could control the cells of his body fluid, his hair or other parts of his body to undergo a change prior to its departure from the body, thus resulting in the other's party failure to examine Cillin's true DNA information.

But because the chips had not been completely activated, every time he underwent a massive transformation there needed to be a period of stabilization and easing before he could control and change from the source again.

Once the sounds of bones cracking stopped, and Cillin sensed that the rest of the transformation was complete, he was left somewhat speechless staring at the person inside the mirror.

The black haired, black-eyed, dark skinned and healthy sunshine

boy from before was transformed into someone with light gray-hair, dark blue eyes, pale white skin and an even thinner frame. No matter how you looked at it he looked like one of those rich kids from the cities. His face wasn't exactly extraordinarily handsome, but it was definitely shapely. Overall he didn't look as imposing as he was before.

Cillin frowned. He wasn't too impressed with his new look, but because the chip wasn't activated perfectly he had no way of dealing with some of the superficial changes. Never mind; let's just leave it like this and use it for the moment.

Genya once said that there were two only two kinds of people who could change the world. One of them is God, and the other one a madman. Cillin thought that the old man Horay belonged to the second category. As for whether or not it could really reach the level of 'Glory' and 'Honor' that remained to be seen, but he had to admit that Horay was a devil of a genius. To think that he could create something this insane with just this level of equipment and mostly manual operations.

Cillin had spent a large amount of money to purchase a blank identification card from the black market. Both its serial number and magnetic print were verifiable by the officials. Cillin first entered his name and photo and other forged information into the ID card. Then he swiped it across the card slot of an instrument. The screen immediately displayed Cillin's current personal identity information. As long as the officials did not dig deep, this ID card would not draw suspicion from the inspectors.

Other than the ID card, Cillin had also purchased a galaxy wide

debit card form the black market, and after a series of complicated but careful operations, Cillin deposited the rest of his money into the card.

In order to obtain these two cards, Cillin had spent over a few million Star currency. He had barely a tenth of his savings left. Moreover, without a proper channel it was impossible to acquire these items through money alone. It was one of the benefits Cillin enjoyed having worked for three years as a Hunter.

The next day, the greatly changed Cillin dressed lightly and boarded the flight between X-C362 to X-C100. He did not encounter any problems with his ID card or the spaceport's security inspection.

Cillin touched the curly leaf pattern on his left thumb as he sat on the spaceliner's seat. The security check had failed to scan it at all. If this was just an average subspace object then there was no way it would have gone this smoothly; not the mention the guns and other dangerous articles stored inside it.

He pressed a button on his seat, and a screen appeared in front of him. It showed the scenery outside of the spaceship.

Cillin might have lived in that poor little town, but as a Shadow Hunter he had traveled to many places around the planet. But from this point of view it was yet another kind of feeling that people usually referred to as mixed emotions.

The towering skyscrapers; the bustling cities. Slowly they turned

smaller and blurrier until the entire planet itself was presented before him. For the first time Xililn saw the true nature of the ‘Sky Eye’ – an array of satellites. They monitored everything on the ground and would take measures at first notice, just like how it had dropped down a protective light shield to control the area of destruction that night.

Cillin took out the pendant hanging below his neck so it could have a good look at this planet.

“Hena, master, we’re departing. I wonder when we’ll be able to come back.”

Chapter 6: That Weird 'Uncle'

Planet X-C100 was the equivalent to a transport hub in Sector X. The turnover between the Sectors divided by the Star Alliance mostly happened on planet X-C100. Every day, there were tens of thousands of space crafts and space ships landing and taking off within the area, and Cillin's destination lay between Sector D to M; the Sectors categorized as the ten rapidly developing 'free trade' Sectors. Sector X was at best a backward Sector.

On the other hand, Sectors A to C were not easy places to gain a firm foothold in. Sector A was populated by political organizations, and the Galactic Alliance's coalition government could be found in this area; Sector B was famed for its many academies and financial tradings; as for Sector C, most of the land fell under military reservations, and GAL's most famous military academy – GAL Military Academy could be found right here. Sectors ABC were known by the people of GAL as 'The Shining Three Sectors', and they weren't a place anyone could go. The waters ran deep, and there was no telling when one might get eliminated for some inexplicable reasons.

Sitting inside a restaurant near the space port, Cillin propped his chin and looked at the scenery outside. As compared to Brown Earth's bustling chaos, the terminal planet X-C100 looked to be systematic and in perfect order everywhere; be it as big as a freighter or as small as the flying cars driving swiftly across the roads. The transportation hub of Sector X certainly lived up to its name.

Cillin bought a tabloid. The flashing animations and eye-catching names could always inject some freshness into people's everyday

lives. The ticket to Sector K had already been purchased, and all Cillin needed to do was wait. In the meanwhile Cillin sipped his cup of tea.

Be it his sitting, drinking or reading posture, the impression Cillin gave was that of a very cultured person. It was something he cultivated following Genya since a young age, and he did not look like someone from the poor area at all. But of course, this was just a disguise to match his current appearance. He could just as easily give the impression of a ruffian if he wanted to.

“Hey sweetie, got a free table for me?”

A young man with brown shoulder-length curls wearing a pair of sunglasses and somewhat fancy clothing walked into the lounge holding a big black briefcase. The top two buttons of his shirts were unbuttoned, revealing well defined muscles a testament to his explosive masculinity. He teased the waitress serving him; staring unabashedly at her well-formed breasts.

He was right next to a robot waiter, and yet he just had to ask for the waitress on the other side of the counter. But such flirtations were pretty common, and the waitress herself was obviously not surprised by the situation as she continued to answer him with a smile, “I’m really sorry, but we don’t have a free table at the moment. However there are empty seats, so would you like to wait or join another table…”

“Aw, man! So there aren’t any tables left! How unfortunate!”

The young man looked around the lounge through his sunglasses before finally stopping at Cillin's table.

"That table will do. Guess I'll just squeeze with our little buddy over there."

"Okay. This way please."

The waitress' smile was a bit stiff. It was a standard six man table and there was only a person sitting there; two including him. Why would he ever need to squeeze?

Although there were several tables in the lounge that were seated with only one or two people, Dias had picked this particular table on purpose. The kid had given him a very strange feeling – one that he just could not describe – and for some reason he even looked vaguely familiar; although he couldn't for the life of him recall where at the moment.

Placing his briefcase at a side casually, Dias sits down on the opposite side of Cillin. He had no plans to take off his sunglasses even though he was inside the lounge. He tentatively categorized this under 'playing it cool'.

Receiving the menu from the waitress, his fingers slid repeatedly across its surface as he flicked and selected through various menu screens.

"Hmm, let's have these orders for now."

“Alright, please wait for a moment.”

After he finished ordering, Dias looked towards the reading Cillin and said, “Hey, little buddy. Waiting for your flight?”

Cillin lifted his head, smiled gracefully, and with an ‘I am very cultured’ look answered, “Yes, uncle.”

Un... Uncle? Did this sonuvabitch just call a handsome, charming, brilliant and attractive person like me ‘Uncle’?! If Cilin was one of his men he would’ve given him a taste of the sole of his foot already, but, hmm. Interesting.

From the moment Dias walked into the lounge, Cillin had kept an eye on him. He might know nothing about this young man, but Cillin had a feeling that this man was very powerful; more powerful than anyone he had met before. Even though the other party had called him, a seventeen years old, ‘little buddy’, Cillin did not react angrily and countered with an ‘Uncle’ instead.

Dias gave a short laugh and picked up his served drink. He drank it in one go, “Same here. I’ve already bought the ticket to Sector K. And you?”

“Me too.”

“Why, it looks like the two of us are tied by fate.”

The waitress serving the pastries rolled her eyes on the inside when she heard him. Tied by fate my ass; eighty percent of the people hanging around here are waiting for the flight to Sector K. If he is the only “person” in the room tied to you by fate, then does that mean everyone else are un-evolved apes?

“Much thanks, sweetie!” while speaking Dias had even brushed lightly across the back of the waitress’ soft white hand in a most flirtatious manner.

“You’re welcome.” She smiled and ignored him completely.

Dias didn’t really mind it. Turning his head around, he began chatting nonchalantly with Cillin and made some small comments about the news on today’s morning paper. The majority of them were scornful and criticizing. Most of the time Cillin played the role of a quiet listener, and it was only when Dias asked something that he would nod once or give a short answer or two. Meanwhile Dias shuffled closer and closer towards Cillin, and although Cillin appeared relaxed, he was tensed on the inside; muscles ready to react at the slightest trouble.

“Alas, I have forgotten to introduce myself.” Dias shoved himself in front of Cillin with a suspicious look while saying with utterly undisguised pride, “I am Dias.”

Once finished, Dias leaned backwards against the soft chair, folded his arms and smirked. If someone translated his expression it would be: Revere me! Worship me! Your god is right here!

There were invisible light boards surrounding every table, so the people on the other side of the light board would not be able to hear their conversations. Moreover, while Dias was speaking he casually covered up with his arm so that the people outside would not be able to read his lips. Naturally it was impossible to determine what he said through his lips.

Cillin blinked. For a moment he couldn't figure out what the dude was so smug about. "Oh. I am Cillin."

"..."

Cillin's reactions actually caused Dias to choke a little.

That can't be right. If he's from one of those families then there's no way he hasn't heard about me.

Dias gave Cillin a strange look, but then he replied immediately with keen interest, "You're so funny!"

Cillin: "..."

And where exactly did this 'funny' come from?

"Ahem, anyway. I guess we know each other now. Pleased to make your acquaintance, Cillin." Dias stretched his hand.

Cillin stared blankly at Dias outstretched hand for a second

before smiling and returned, “It’s a pleasure to meet you too, Mister Dias.”

The handshake lasted only for a brief moment, but on the inside Cillin was well and truly shocked. Once contact was made with the other party, his chip would feedback information to him, and through this information Cillin had found out that this Dias was actually an A rank genotype!

Cillin did come into contact with several people around earlier, but they were at best B rank. To think that this person before him was actually an A rank; Cillin had not expected to meet a character this level so soon.

Is he a Hunter?

Generally speaking, a handshake was not a common ritual. But Hunters loved hugs and handshakes a lot because there would be a form of contest during the process. Competition of strength was an effective way most Hunters employed when interacting with each other, and not everyone would have the courage and insight to accept these rituals. Those who overestimated themselves might bring severe injuries and even death upon themselves.

But all Dias saw from Cillin was momentary surprise before he proceeded to receive the etiquette. He reflected inside his heart, this guy isn’t too bad. Although Dias himself had not pulled any cheap tricks during the handshake, he thought Cillin was a pretty interesting boy to return his grip so calmly and fearlessly. Should he say that he had a screw loose in his head? Or was he a different book from his cover?

Probably the latter, Dias thought to himself. But judging from Cillin's reactions it appeared that he really didn't know him. Just where did this little guy come from? Cillin had told him frankly that he was called 'Cillin'; as for his surname, Cillin made no mention of it at all so it wouldn't be right for Dias to ask about it either. How very curious.

It was at this moment the flight announcement had sounded, and more than eighty percent of the people inside the lounge got up and headed towards the station. Dias stuck to Cillin like glue as they entered the station together. There were a few thousand people aboard this flight. Cillin picked neither the first class nor the third class cabin, and instead chose a seat at the medium class cabin. To his surprise Dias had also picked a medium class cabin, and he even deliberately exchanged seats with another person and sat beside Cillin. Even when he was inside the cabin, Dias did not look like he had any intentions to take off his sunglasses.

Cillin had a feeling that this flight would not be as smooth.

Chapter 7: Robbery

The three seats were connected, and Dias sat at the right side of Cillin. To Cillin's left was another youngster around Cillin's age.

The youngster shuffled in his seat repeatedly looking a little nervous, and when he saw Cillin frowning slightly, he tugged at the corner of his lips and said, "Bro don't worry, the flight path of the spaceliners from Planet X-C100 is the product of precise calculations. It is different from the spaceliners from other planets; its safety factor is at least tens of times higher. The chance of running into a magnetic anomaly is less than 0.01%, and the chance of encountering a space robber is even less. Moreover flights from X-C100 are protected under special laws..."

While listening to the youngster's mostly self-comforting naggings, Cillin noticed that the corner of Dias' lips were upturned ever so slightly. He couldn't help but feel that the son of a bitch was smiling in a way that was up to no good.

Once the ship had entered warp flight, some of the conversations began to quiet down since the passengers needed to divert more energy to suppress the discomfort of traveling under such conditions. Meanwhile, Cillin lay down his seat, pulled up the blankets, closed his eyes and began to sleep.

Dias just felt funny watching Cillin's reactions. This little guy was sleeping quite soundly; he must be quite used to this. Both his physical and psychological qualities were pretty good.

What he didn’t know was that this was in fact the first time Cillin had slept during a warp flight. But although he was sleeping, every hair on Cillin’s body was absorbing the surroundings around him; and especially killing intent. He would wake up if he detected even the slightest bit of it.

However, Cillin didn’t manage to sleep too long before an abrupt shaking woke him.

“Magnetic interference and force field has affected the helm’s control, and the pulse power isn’t functioning normally as well. With these changes the control systems aren’t going to last much longer. This ship will exit warp flight.” Dias calmly assessed the situation before him, “It’s probably due to deliberate interference on the outside. If my guess is correct, then we’ve run into space robbers.”

When the boy beside Cillin heard the words ‘magnetic interference and force fields’ he was already so frightened that he turned deathly pale, and the latter words ‘space robbers’ from Dias was without a doubt an unbearably heavy blow for the boy. Therefore the poor kid had fainted straight away.

Dias’ voice wasn’t loud and only the three of them could hear his words, but the other passengers had also formed their own respective assumptions. The common point here was fear.

After yet another round of violent shaking and the sound of buzzing electricity, a low and arrogant voice resounded throughout the entire ship.

“Much apologies, my cute passengers. For now this ship has fallen under our control. If you do not wish to die then please stay obediently in your seats, since the guns in our hands can’t interact nicely like human beings after all. Oh, one more thing, I dislike noisiness, so if anyone screams aloud then you may meet your fellow debris in space.”

Space robbers!

For a time, the cabin was filled with anxious breathing and sobbing.

Cillin analyzed the situation in his mind. Since these robbers dared to rob a Planet X-C100 spaceliner, that meant that they must have planned meticulously for this. That they were able to avoid the security patrols, take down the entire security system on the ship without meeting much resistances or huge commotions such as explosions meant that there was a ninety percent chance they had planted a mole on this ship a long time ago. Moreover, due to the protection of certain laws, anyone who carelessly kill the passenger of a terminal planet spaceliner will be hunted ruthlessly by the military. Judging from the robber’s tone, at this stage of the situation, these robbers did not plan to kill the people on this ship, and even the guards were probably only immobilized for the moment. However, nothing was certain, and robbers were robbers after all. Who knows if they might find someone unpleasant to the eye and shoot them?

Watching Dias sitting cross-legged leisurely at his side, Cillin thought that this incident had everything to do with this guy for

sure. Sigh, looks like I'm caught in a crossfire. However Cillin was more curious than anything else actually. Just what was this A rank fellow planning to do?

Not long after, about ten or so robbers wearing hideous-looking masks walked in with guns in their hands, and they headed straight in front of Dias. Tens of guns were pointed at Dias.

"Get up and come with us!"

Dias himself was pretty cooperative. He opened his arms and spread out his fingers to show that he had no intention of resisting.

"Oh, right," Just when he had taken two steps Dias suddenly turned towards Cillin and said, "Hey bro, look after my food will you? I haven't finished that box of space burrito yet."

Cillin's eyebrows twitched. Fuck! Do I know you that well? Like hell it's my problem that you haven't finished your burrito, and who would so bored as to grab your more than half-eaten burrito with teeth marks still on them under this circumstance? You're obviously dragging me down with you!

As he thought, the leader of the robber group pointed his gun at Cillin, "Bring him together!"

Cillin did not have the slightest doubt in his mind that the pair of eyes hidden behind Dias' sunglasses were filled with fox-like smiles.

The rest of the people inside the cabin dared not even take a deep breath; afraid that the robbers might notice them.

With tens of guns pointed against them, Cillin and Dias were brought to the main control room. As it turned out, the captain and the helmsmen were left unconscious in a corner. As Cillin expected these robbers had not killed them, although there was no telling what would happen afterwards.

“Boss, we’ve brought him over.”

The person sitting at the captain’s seat spun the chair over. He wore the same mask as the rest of the robbers and was toying with his gun. He did not look at Cillin and stared straight at Dias, “Where is it?”

They had already gone through all the luggage deposited in the baggage compartment. They did not find what they were looking for.

Dias did not act like a fool, “It’s on me.”

The hand toying with the gun stopped as he said solemnly, “Take it out.”

Almost twenty guns were pointed at Dias. If he made even the slightest unnatural movement, they would fire straight away.

Dias shrugged his shoulders, “I can tell you and give you the stuff you’re looking for. But you have better keep your guns in check. If I’m dead, then you won’t be getting it either.”

While speaking, Dias shook his hands once as a silver colored ring slid from his arm to the wrist. He touched somewhere along the thin ring, and it turned into a three centimeters wide bracelet.

A subspace product! Its quality was even far better from norm; this single ring was far more valuable than the entire ship itself!

These robbers all knew their stuff. Even through the mask, Cillin knew that their eyes were brimming with greed.

Dias took out a big black briefcase. Cillin had seen this briefcase before at the restaurant, but he seriously did not expect that this case that Dias was carrying around leisurely would be the robber’s target. Cillin did not doubt the value of the item inside in the least, but wasn’t this Dias fellow being a little way too conspicuous?!

He did it on purpose; this dude totally did it on purpose!

Every muscle in Cillin was tensed in readiness. This Dias fellow was as sly as a fox; there was no way he was going to give in this easily.

After taking out the case Dias flung it straight at the person sitting on the captain’s seat. Just as the person was about to catch it, all the lights inside the control room abruptly turned off.

Fuck! I knew he's going to do it!

Just before the lights turned off Cillin noticed a flash from a spot on Dias' bracelet at the same time a strange noise was released. Most people would not notice these noise, but the chips inside Cillin reacted towards it, which was why the Cillin's first and immediate response was to get out of the way.

As expected, gunshots rang out amidst the darkness as sparks flew everywhere.

Dias had attacked!

Cillin did not need to wear night vision glasses at all. His eyes automatically adjusted as columnar epithelial cells grew in his retina, and his pupils were enlarged as wide as 90% of the eyeball's surface. The light from a single firing laser gun was enough for Cillin to see everything inside the control room with perfect clarity; not to mention that so many guns had fired at the same time. For Cillin it was like someone had setup a searchlight inside the room.

Dias certainly lived up to his rank A genotype. Crisp movements, precise aim, and striking his target with every hit he threw. He didn't even need a weapon to take down most of the robbers in a single breath's time. He did not kill the robbers and instead simply immobilized them.

Cillin did not believe that Dias was a merciful person. From a

Hunter's point of view, a robber was worth more alive than dead.

One of the robbers took out a spare light source, but even with light, they still found it difficult to catch Dias' figure. He was simply too quick; giving them no time to aim at all. Plus these robbers probably never thought that the entire control room would suddenly black out. They didn't bring either infrared goggles or scanning electron goggles.

The entire battle lasted not more than ten seconds. It would not be an exaggeration to say that these robbers had experienced a disastrous rout. The difference between their strength was all too obvious.

The last robber was smart enough to put a fainted worker in front of him; ready to use them as a hostage. But before he could even speak a cracking sound rang out from his throat, and he became the only dead man of the bunch in this control room.

"I hate it when people threaten me." Dias's tone was perfectly calm. It was as if he was simply repeating a commonly known fact.

Once the fight was concluded, all of the light source had restarted again as light returned to the control room. Cillin's eyes had also returned back to normal.

Dias did not even look at Cillin standing beside him as he fiddled with a few instruments.

A large screen unfolded before them as several crisscrossing lines of coordinates began to move rapidly before locking onto a couple of rapidly moving light sports. They were robbers who were supposedly standing watch at the other sections inside the ship before running away after realizing that the situation was amiss.

Once he locked onto the targets Dias did not hesitate in the slightest to engage the photon torpedo equipped on this ship. The corner of Cillin's lips kept twitching. Wasn't there a few factors of password to enter before the ship's photon torpedo could be engaged? He had cut through them this quickly?

Bright explosions lit up like many flames consecutively, and soon the fighters of the fleeing robbers were blown to smithereens.

"Yeah!" Dias hummed a tune and danced on his feet. Once he put away the briefcase that had dropped on the ground he arrived in front of Cillin and said, "The security team will be arriving in a minute. Oh, Cillin, it's not in my place to say this, but you should have acted a little more panicky when you see the robbers and be terrified by the sight of the muzzles of their guns. You shouldn't look so calm it's as if you have face paralysis, because the passengers' every move and expression would be recorded by the ship's security cameras. The way you act is so obviously suspicious the security team will bring you back and interrogate you brutally." Dias purposely emphasized the word 'brutally'.

Cillin gave Dias a sidelong glance, "So? Haven't you sat beside me on purpose to involve me in this matter?"

Dias let out a cunning laugh and did not deny it.

“You know, the airline company and security team will provide compensation to passengers if they are met with a robbery. If you’re willing to mutilate yourself, they’ll pay even more.”

Cillin’s reaction was noncommittal.

Chapter 8: Vanguard

Dias took out a book of some sort, dark gold in color, and wrote something while grinning, then cheerfully tore the foremost page and stuck it at the most obvious spot near the entrance. The thin sheet that was originally just the size of a palm expanded until it was as big as the black briefcase. The shining numbers and a dagger-shaped emblem was especially glaring.

This thing that looks like a notice is a… bill?

When Cillin saw the emblem his pupil shrank and his heart jumped suddenly.

The Vanguard! The emblem of one of the top four Galactic Alliance Hunter regiments, Vanguard!

The top four Hunter regiments were different from the other Hunters that worked alone or in small groups. They had bigger goals; goals that were so big they were breathtaking. From the discovery of a new habitable planet, to the pioneering of a Sector, and a large number of mineral transactions and so on. They were all not without their presence. Their targets might be a certain family, an organization, a city, and even a planet or an unknown region in the galaxy. And they have the power to do it… It wasn't something any average Hunter could undertake.

What was worth mentioning was that the information about the top four Hunter regiments took up to eighty percent space in the electronic magazine 'Hero', which was preceded only to 'Glory'

and ‘Code’ in GAL with a contribution of eighty points and above. Hence one could imagine the influence the top four Hunter regiments held; they were an existence that authorities couldn’t help but be wary of.

The security squad bustled over in a hurry, but when the security squad leader walked into the control room and saw that shining ‘notice’ his already partially dark face immediately turned as black as coal. One could practically scrape a layer off his face. He looked up again and saw a certain someone crossing his legs, sitting inside the captain’s seat biting a fruit crispy loud.

“Report, captain. There are a total of twenty four robbers onboard; twenty three fainted and one dead. Some of the passengers suffered minor injuries. No deaths. We are in the process of consoling them…”

As he listened to his subordinate’s report the security squad leader’s expression turned darker and darker. He wanted to strangle those robbers to death himself.

Robbery? Why the fuck did they even bother when they didn’t even figure out who their opponent was? This is a veteran rank A genotype Hunter we’re talking about; do they have pig brains in their heads?! As if that wasn’t bad enough, they were completely toyed by their opponent like they were three years old. A robber is at least twice as expensive alive than dead; just how much money the security squad would have to report!? And most importantly the one who caught these robbers are exactly the kind of people we’re trying but failing horribly to avoid! Speaking of which, why had this bastard come to a poor place like Sector X? Logically

speaking Sector X has no pioneering significance at all.

The more he thought, the more pissed off the security squad leader grew. As veins popped on top of his forehead he lifted his feet and kicked his subordinates at the side right out of the door. The assistant squad leader who had followed him looked a little dissatisfied; even if he wanted to teach his men a lesson he shouldn't do it in front of outsiders. Wouldn't it be just exposing their own shame? But when he looked up and saw that glaring 'notice' his own expression flushed green instantly. With a livid look he turned around and kicked the men behind him as well.

It looked like their security squad was going to get yelled at when they got back and wrote their reports. For example, "Does everyone in the security squad eat shit for a living?!" "Have your brains aged? You can't stop even robbers like these?" "What the fuck are those cash vampires doing at this place?!"

The moment he thought about it the security squad leader's facial muscles began to convulse uncontrollably, "Lieutenant Commander of the Vanguard Sixth B Squadron – Dias. I have heard about you."

Because Cillin hadn't come into contact with much information at the 'Vanguard's' level, he only knew about the top four Hunter regiments, but not so much about their respective squadrons.

No wonder Dias' expression was so strange when he revealed his name and was met with Cillin's calmness.

But Cillin really was quite surprised. Wasn't Dias a little too

young to be the Lieutenant Commander of a Vanguard Squadron? He didn't look more than ten years older than Cillin.

Dias continued to sit openly on the captain's seat despite seeing the security squad leader walking towards him. Dias did not appear surprised to hear the other party call out his title and background as he smiled, "Oh, I've been found out."

The few security squad members looked a little green in the face. Among those who worked in a security squad; who wouldn't know about the dagger shape emblem on that 'notice'? They had a certain level of understanding for every squadron, and they all did their homework about the Sixth B Squadron's activities at a few surrounding Sectors as of late. The few key members of the Sixth B Squadron were even blacklisted and practically guarded against the like of thieves. But in the end it was inevitable.

"In accordance to the relevant contracts and laws, you will have to pay me a certain amount of remuneration. I have already pasted the bill over there and I hope you can fulfill it as soon as possible."

"Of... course..." The security squad leader practically squeezed the words out of his teeth. His heart was bleeding; the higher ups were guaranteed to deduct their salaries. After all the one who took down the robbers was the 'cash vampire' Hunter and not them.

It was at this moment the receivers and displays in the control room began to lose control.

“We have a transmission!” A crew member shouted.

As soon as he said it, a powerfully rhythmic music broke out.

Six stressed cannon-like sounds resounded continuously in a specific rhythm, among which interlayered with music like a chain of beads. All the data and images displayed in every electronic screen inside the ship were also beating to the same rhythm. The crowd that was at first still quarreling inside the ship quieted down instantly, and a bewitching power that seemed to synchronize even one heart’s beat spread out along with the music. With powerful courage, the music slowly turned as distant as time immemorial; like a dagger piercing through every space.

Audio interference and signal assimilation!

It was the first time Cillin had experienced such a thing. In the past he had only learned about these things from televisions and magazines, but it was still a lot more shocking to experience it firsthand.

A Hunter regiment’s intro music of signals and mission music was a kind of symbol just like the Hunter regiment’s emblem. Each squadron under a Hunter regiment would have a slightly different music, such as the six stressed sounds from before meaning that they were the men from the Vanguard Sixth B Squadron.

A starship instantly appeared on the screen, and there was a massive dagger cursor on top of the starship. Beside the dagger was the number ‘6’.

The Vanguard Sixth B Squadron!

“Oh, my pickup has arrived. I was going to finish this ride, but alas.”

Dias’ tone was regretful, but his expression was smug. It was so smug that the security squad could barely restrain themselves from serving him with their guns.

An openly smiling face suddenly appeared at the control room’s display.

“Sir. Are you going to warp in or are you going to come in yourself?”

The only word to describe the security squad’s feelings right now was pissed as they glared fiercely at the person responsible for controls in the ship control room. The man looked innocently; the other party’s remote hacking and control of the spaceliner’s displays were so quick that there was absolutely nothing he could.

“Don’t be stupid, of course we’re warping in. Oh right, set it to two people; I’m bringing a little guy over.”

Cillin had a bad feeling about this.

Dias turned to look at Cillin after he yelled at the monitor.

“Hey, Cillin. Come take a look at your bro’s ship.”

A white light enveloped the two person before they vanished from the control room in the blink of an eye.

The security squad leader’s expression was clouded as he said towards the person at the control station, “Retrieve their information on that spaceliner now!”

“About that… Every information and footage etc regarding those two has been deleted.” The operator stuttered.

“Useless good-for-nothing!” The security squad leader smashed apart the chair beside him with a single punch.

The group of men bowed their heads. They cursed inwardly: Those people are from the Vanguard, man, how can it be easy to deal with them?

Meanwhile on the other side.

After Cillin was transported to Vanguard Sixth B Squadron starship, he said towards Dias, “I still have some baggage left on the spaceliner.”

Dias himself was indifferent, “Anything that’s placed inside the cargo hold isn’t important and dispensable for you.”

While speaking, an odd-pitched cry closed in from afar.

“Lieutenant, you’re finally back!” The figure rushed over like the wind, and just when Cillin thought the two men was going to put on a ‘subordinate welcomes his superior’s glorious return’ show, the dude uttered his next sentence rudely, “The stuff?”

Dias seemed used to this kind of situation and tossed over the five cases straight away. Among them was the big case that Cillin had seen before. The case was made with a special material that insulates radiation and energy, so whatever was contained inside should be an energy type.

Once holding the fix cases firmly, he then cheerfully turned around and got ready to leave.

“Hey, what’s the hurry Cary? Didn’t you see that I’ve brought a guest?” Dias said while pulling at the leaving Cary’s ear, but there was no blame to be found in his tone.

Cary bared his teeth, indicating Dias to show mercy to his ear.

Cillin knew that Cary was ignoring him on purpose. They would not respect you until you had proven yourself worthy.

Carrying five boxes with one hand, Cary freed his other arm, dug his ears before extending it over. He wore a business smile on his face without a trace of the sincerity he had shown when facing

Dias earlier.

“Hello.”

A handshaking ritual.

Chapter 9: Vanguard Sixth B Squadron

Cary would not be as courteous as Dias. Meanwhile, Dias cheerfully stood at a side to watch the show.

Cillin smiled and extended a hand, “Hello.”

Neither of them introduced themselves. Then, the cold war began.

He used thirty percent power, forty percent power… all the way until eighty percent power. Cary had the nagging suspicion that the hand he’s holding was made of special alloy. It was really damn hard. Not only did he not make his opponent suffer, his own hands were painful from the hold. What hit him even harder was the fact that his opponent did not use any strength at all; he had allowed him to exert as much force as he wanted to.

Cillin himself was caught by surprise on the inside. Another A rank genotype! Since when are A rank genotypes as common as cabbages?! The top four Hunter regiments truly are the top four!

Cary was caught in a dilemma.

Dammit, I won’t believe this! Cary dumped the five boxes on one hand aside and put both hands to work.

This shameless bastard!

Inside the starship's main control room, a group of people criticized Cary repeatedly as they watched the scene on the display. Cary's shamelessness had long since rooted itself inside everyone's hearts.

From the moment Cillin was warped into the starship there were already people conducting the relevant analyses on him. The result of the calculation was that there was a ninety percent chance that this young man brought over by Dias was a B rank genotype.

Not only was he bullying the weak; oppressing a lower rank gene with his higher rank gene, he even used both hands instead of one!

Dias could only cough embarrassedly at Cary's shameless actions, but at the same time he was also incredibly shocked by Cillin's abilities. Not every man could force out Cary's shamelessness.

"You are too passionate." Cillin smiled and extended his other hand.

Two hands versus two hands.

Cary's face twisted a little.

"Look – Ow ow ow I give! I give!"

Cary pulled away. He stared at his swollen hands and felt like weeping.

“Lieutenant, just who is this boy? This is insane!”

That Cary would change the way he addressed Cillin to ‘boy’ meant that he had already acknowledged his abilities.

“Got taught a lesson, didn’t you? Let’s see you flaunt about some more!” Dias kicked Cary to aside before pointing at the five boxes on the ground, “Get to work already.”

“Yessir!” Cary picked up the boxes, swaggered a few steps before turning around again and asked Cillin, “I’m called Cary; A rank combat personnel of the Sixth Squad. Who are you, boy?”

“I am Cillin, a freelancer.”

Cary’s mouth took on an ‘O’ shape as he winked towards Dias: Lieutenant, dude’s a freelancer man, what are you waiting for!?

“Move! Or do you need me to help you?” Dias scolded with a smile.

“I’m going, I’m going! Hehe!” Cary instantly ran out of sight.

The number one reason Dias had brought Cillin over was to figure out the kid’s background. He thought he looked familiar but couldn’t remember who he was. Number two – also the most important point – was to absorb Cillin into the team if he hadn’t

joined into any forces yet. The Sixth Squadron was just lacking manpower right now. Dias trusted Cillin's character, and he trusted his own insight even more.

In order to get Cillin used to the situation even faster, Dias began to explain the whole matter from the beginning to the end.

The Sixth Squad had a business meeting at a neutral zone between Sector X and Sector R. Since Dias was bored of doing nothing and heard that there was an underground deal about a rare energy ore on a certain planet at Sector X, he went over and stole it while those men were busy betraying each other. At the same time, he had let out some false news on another planet saying that he had acquired a huge precious stone that was worth a few billion credits to attract the robbers' attention. That was how the series of events unfolded, and Dias was even able to screw some money out of X-C100's government and spaceliner company because he 'helped' taking down the robbers.

Although Dias had explained it in a very casual manner, Cillin knew that many of these details were actually quite difficult to manage. It also proved that Dias' true strength and ability to plan and control. He really was worthy of his title as the Lieutenant Commander of the Sixth B Squadron.

Dias introduced Cillin to the ship as he led him along the passageway.

"That is the warehouse; the place used to store supplies, and a right turn at the front is... Hey, Dough, why are you sleeping around here?" Dias called out towards a particular section on the

wall of the passageway.

At first glance it would've been easy to miss it, but if someone was alert enough or had very acute senses, then they would realize that there was actually a life form right there. It's just that it seemed to have merged with its surroundings into one, and it was impossible to see it judging just from the color of its body.

Dias walked over and pulled that thing down. It was about thirty centimeters long, and when it separated from the passage wall its color immediately faded and turned invisible. However its two little eyes were rather obvious; milling about in circles; and when it saw Dias it made a slurping sound; seemingly greeting the guy.

An iguana?

Cillin stared curiously at the little fellow in Dias' hands.

"Stop pretending. What kind of bad things did you do to make Eudy throw you out again?" Dias flicked Dough, the iguana's head.

Dough curled his tail and waved it about looking pitiful.

Dias tsked once before kneading the small iguana into a ball just like an actual dough and Pak! flung it against the other side of the wall. It stuck on it and quickly changed its body color to match its surroundings, and on the surface it appeared to have become one with its environment.

“That fellow’s called Dough. He’s a variant Eudy picked up on a mission five years ago. Little bastard quite often causes trouble.” Dias did not elaborate on the personnel named Eudy.

Dias brought Cillin to the main control room and introduced him to a few more personnel.

While allowing Cillin to interact with the others, Dias called Beaver over, “Beaver, come with me for a moment.”

“Yes, Lieutenant.”

Cillin had seen the personnel Beaver before; he was the one who had appeared on the spaceliner display. What surprised Cillin was that everyone on this starship was fairly young. Many of them were around Dias’ age or younger, although none of them were as young as Cillin.

Taking heed from Cary’s lesson, the people on this starship treated Cillin fairly well. Although they weren’t really cordial, at least they were neither distant nor indifferent towards him.

After Dias had called over Beaver, they arrived at Beaver’s workplace. He turned the silver ring on his hand and popped out a connector before connecting it to an instrument.

“Give this footage a runthrough.”

The footage running on the screen was the one captured by Dias

while he was fighting the robbers inside the spaceliner's control room. There was infrared processing so the darkness at the time was nothing. However the footage grew a little confusing as it followed Dias' movements fighting the robbers.

Beaver did not say anything. His ten fingers danced across the instrument as he manipulated the programs, and after the screen's footage was cut, put through three-dimensional arrangement, bit rate adjustments and other workings, it soon became a clear and smooth footage that didn't dazzle the eyes.

"Analyze that Cillin kid." right now Dias had lost his usual casualness and flippant attitude. In fact he even looked somewhat serious.

Beaver adjusted the images on the screen to display Cillin's every move in slow motion. The more he watched the more shocked Beaver was, "Lieutenant, are you sure this guy's a human and not some other races that look like a human?"

On the screen, Cillin had easily dodged away from where the guns were pointed at as if he had predicted the robbers' every next move. And he had done it while every light source inside the control room was cut.

"I can confirm that he did not wear any kind of auxiliary lens and that he is definitely human." Dias said solemnly while staring at the display.

Beaver's eyebrows were close to forming knots already, "There's

one more thing, Lieutenant. When the two of you warped over I conducted a genetic rank analysis on Cillin. Normally speaking, if he was just a B rank genotype, the reliability of the calculated results of the MFA (Multiple Factor Analysis) should be above 95%. But this time the result was only at 90%. Why is there a 5% of uncertainty?"

After a pause, Beaver probed Dias' thoughts, "Should we, acquire the kid's DNA? Body fluids, hair or even fingerprints should work."

"There's no need. We should give due respect to our future comrade."

"Alright. But that kid is seriously incredible."

"But of course; your Lieutenant Commander has incredible insight you know. Right, one more thing, do you think Cillin looks very familiar, Beaver?" Dias was caught in the dilemma again.

Beaver gave it a thought, but he really couldn't figure out where he had seen him before, "The galaxy is huge and there are countless people who looked similar to each other. You want me to enter the computer database and get a match?"

"Never mind, put it on hold." He would need the B Squadron Commander's passcode to enter the archives. Too troublesome.

Dias let out a sigh and gave up.

“Oh right, lieutenant, the Commander has urged us to join them as quickly as possible. It seems that the deal isn’t going too well.”

“Got it. Get ready to depart then.” Dias waved his hands and walked out of the door.

Chapter 10: Unhappy Cary

Cillin did not give an immediate reply towards Dias' invitation to join his squad. Dias was not in a hurry either; both parties needed an understanding process in between as this would be beneficial for their rapport in the future.

Everyday, Cary would pester Cillin about the benefits of joining the squad. Cary wasn't one to be stingy with passion towards a capable person, and he was also a combat maniac. He would often drag Cillin to the training room to spar.

Since it was a spar, naturally both sides did not use what they would normally employ to kill people, but even then, Cary was still very happy with the fights. Cillin's boxing style was something that he had never seen before. Not only was it flexible, it also carried with it a strange atmosphere. Be it forceful or gentle; peaceful or deadly, it could change instantly to Cillin's whim.

Although Cillin was a B rank genotype, Cary would not purposely go easy on him either. This was because Cillin had the power to go up against an A rank genotype human. At the same time, Cillin had learned quite a bit himself while training with Cary. Being exposed to different fighting styles was greatly beneficial for self improvement, and while they were training, Cary had told him a lot of combat experience and provided examples. After all, Cary had far more experience than Cillin as a Hunter.

For a squadron that often traveled between sectors, their combat personnel must know how to dogfight. Even if they weren't good at it, they had to learn at the very least the basic controls.

The cost of a good fighter was too high, so Dias would not allow Cary to drive one out for fun. And since he wasn't allowed to drive one Cary dragged Cillin to the fighter battle platform on the computer instead. Although it wasn't as enjoyable as the real thing, the simulation was still good enough that they could go at each other nicely for a few rounds.

At first, Cillin was unfamiliar with the vehicle. Although he had experience with hoverboards and triphibian flying cars on Planet Brown Earth, he had never really come into contact with a fighter before. Cary had won the first few rounds, but in less than five rounds, Cary began to lose, and every defeat was faster and more miserable than the last. Every time, Cary would request to change to a different type of mech before they began competing again, and the cycle of victory to utter defeat would renew once more.

Later on, Cary would still lose miserably even after they had changed to a new fighter.

"That guy isn't human!"

After yet another defeat, Cary logged out of the online battle platform and complained while scratching his messy hair.

"Do you need me to comfort you?" A voice rang out. He sounded like he had just woken up.

Cillin looked over. A thin and tall young man about Cary's age wearing a sleepwear with a strawberry picture on it and snow

white plush slippers were looking at them curiously.

Was he a childish spirit? It was hard to imagine that there would be someone dressed up like this on this ship.

When Cary heard the voice, he wore a constipated look and kept silent. But anyone could see that he was feeling blue from the twitching of his facial muscles, because there would definitely be nothing good coming out of the voice owner's mouth.

Did the fucker finish catching up on his sleep already? The fuck is he hanging around here for if he has nothing to do!

"Eh, you're awake, Eudy?" Beaver said towards Eudy standing at the entryway when he walked in from the outside, then turned around and looked at Cillin while laughing rather smugly at Cary, "Cillin, you won again? You're improving really quickly I see. The Lieutenant is looking for you; he wants you to go the control room for a moment."

Cillin nodded towards Eudy and greeted him once before leaving along with Beaver; leaving Eudy and Cary behind to glare at each other.

"So he's the Cillin the Lieutenant was talking about." Eudy looked right at Cary, "Judging from his reflexes and body coordination, and the level of control he has towards fighters; and combining that with some of the information I heard earlier, I have come to the conclusion..."

Cary covered his ears, “I’m not listening I’m not listening!”

“That he went easy on you in the match just now.”

“…”

Cary had the impulse to strangle this bastard Eudy to death.

You call this comfort?! Is this comfort?!

Eudy scratched his head, yawned and walked out of the door. Before he left, he didn’t forget to leave behind a line that pissed off Cary so much he almost spewed blood, “You’re so shit.”

“Euuuuuuuuuuudyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyyy I’M GOING TO KILL YOU!”

Sounds of fighting rang out from the battle room. Dough stopped its footsteps towards the battle room, turned around and escaped. There were two dangerous people inside and when they fought, it was easy to be involved as an unwilling victim.

Cillin’s sleep time had been increasing lately, and other than the times where he was pulled away by Cary to the battle platform for a few rounds of battle, the rest of his time were spent on eating and sleeping only.

At first, Dias and the others had thought that it was natural to

rest since a lot of mental work exhausted one's energy. Eudy was one such example who would sleep for a period of time after making a large amount of calculations.

But that explanation was quickly rejected because Cillin was just too good at sleeping. Even when he didn't fight Cary, he would still sleep like his life depended on it and there were signs that his sleeping time was growing longer and longer. The amount of time he used his brain and the amount of time he slept was completely out of proportion. Dias had let the doctor on the ship to examine Cillin before, and the results was that Cillin was extremely healthy and that he could not explain why Cillin slept so much. Cillin himself had expressed that it had something to do with his own constitution.

Dias was so worried about Cillin's sleeping 'phenomenon' that he had saggy bags under his eyes. Originally, he was planning to recommend Cillin to join the squad after he had reconvened with the other members of the Sixth B Squadron, but some of the other lieutenant commanders had held an opinion against Dias in the first place. If it wasn't for the fact that the Sixth Squad's Commander, Shawton, was Dias' elder brother, his own position as a lieutenant commander would be at risk. Adding Cillin's lethargic situation into the mix; it might not be easy to convince them to accept Cillin into the main force.

The competition between the ten Vanguard B Squadrons were growing more and more intense, and the A Squadrons were already implementing a series of measures in order to surpass the other three Hunter regiments. Shawton did not explain any specifics to him, but Dias knew that the Sixth B Squadron was in urgent need for expansion and achievements. The current

difficulty they faced was a shortage of talent, which was also why Dias was so eager for Cillin to stay.

"You are a Hunter, aren't you Cillin?" Although it was a question, Dias had said this with a tone of certainty.

Cillin knew that Dias must have investigated him background already, but as long as the matter of the strange chip and Genya remained hidden, Cillin was fine with it. Moreover, Cillin believed that they would at most discover Cillin's false identity and memory card, and anything before that would be largely conjectures. No one could have imagined that Cillin could alter his appearance from the roots of his DNA.

"Yes, but I was just a Shadow Hunter passing my days in a small planet." The stray Hunters muddling about every day was nothing compared to a Hunter regiment, but Cillin saw no reason to feel inferior or run away from his past.

Dias let out a sigh, "I don't care what you did in the past. As long as your character is fine and your strength is commendable, then I will welcome you with open arms. You've been on the ship for quite a few days, and you are familiar with how we operate already. As compared to the other three Hunter regiments, we Vanguards act far more freely, which was also why our captain had named our starships as 'Free Fleets'."

Seeing that Cillin was silent, Dias continued, "The universe is huge, and this endless space is every Hunter's dream."

But this dream needs a bedrock, or it will be impossible to sustain. A stray Hunter could never come into contact with this boundless domain, and only by joining a Hunter regiment can one go further and higher than ever before. A single person's strength is limited after all.

Cillin understood all of the things that Dias had left out from his speech, plus joining a Hunter regiment was beneficial in seeking out the Gen Family Genya had mentioned as well. After the get-along period, Cillin was rather satisfied with the atmosphere of the Sixth Squad. He really looked forward to explore the field of stars that appeared within reach, yet ever mysterious.

"What do I need to do?" Cillin looked towards Dias.

That sentence was a clear expression of Cillin's decision, and it dissolved much of the depression that had inflicted Dias for the past time. As long as Cillin had made up his mind to join the team, then Dias would do his absolute best to face those annoying Lieutenant Commanders.

"It'll be fine as long as you've given your word. There's no need to worry too much; I am here. Who else is the Lieutenant Commander but me?" Dias had put Cillin's 'sleep disorder' at the back of his head and focused on thinking up countermeasures after they met up with the rest of the Sixth Squad.

Chapter 11: What's Going On?

Seeing that Dias and Cillin had finished their discussion, Eudy pressed the bell and came in, "Lieutenant, I'd like to borrow Cillin for a little."

Dias waved his hands, "Off you go. Get along with your squad mate."

After the two of them went out, they weren't seen again until it was time to meet up with the main force.

"Where's Cillin?" Dias asked.

"I haven't seen him. He's probably at Eudy's place." Cary sounded a little unsure. There were a few times where he mustered his morale to battle Cillin again in the battle room, but he heard that he had been called away by that bastard Eudy to research some formulae. Cary was tactful enough to not disturb them.

"When I sent them their food yesterday, I heard them discussing whether a certain formula should sum the squares or use square roots. When I sent them their food today, they were discussing weighted multidimensional matrix. In short, they haven't been sleeping for the past days. It's likely that that formulae Eudy is researching is going to bear fruit soon." Beaver opened his arms helplessly, "It's rare that Eudy gets to meet his own 'kind'."

The group of people quieted. Two weirdos. Of course, such talents were exactly what the Sixth Squad was lacking. If the

formulae Eudy was researching succeeded, then it would be a breakthrough for the future programs written by the Sixth Squad. The automatic ‘sentries’ aim, target lock’s efficiency, and hit rate would be massively increased.

But what Dias was worried about was: If it was this mentally exhausting, then wouldn’t that mean… that the two of them would be sleeping for the next period of time?

Different from the starship Cillin was on board right now, the Sixth Squad’s main starship was far bigger, and there were tens of other starships the same size as this one surrounding the main starship.

After docking on the main starship, Dias went to meet his elder brother, the Sixth B Squadron Commander Shawton.

Surprisingly, Dias did not wear that showy sunglasses of his, and in fact he appeared to be a lot steadier than usual. Once receiving the notice that the meeting had begun, Dias walked into the conference room.

Dias sat down on the lieutenant commander seat that belonged to him before staring soulfully at the famous cool beauty Asiya who was also sitting on her own lieutenant commander seat beside him. However, the other party continued to turn a blind eye to Dias’ passionate gaze, and the other four lieutenant commanders had gotten used to his antics already.

Previously, with Dias as the exception, Shawton and the other

Lieutenant Commanders had met with the great galactic family Douance's Aiflon to talk business, but the results were not as good as they had imagined and the situation remained at a stalemate without change to this day. It wasn't an easy task to gain more profit from Aiflon, and the goods submitted by the Hunter regiment Navigator, also one of the four Hunter regiments were no worse than the Sixth Squad. The Sixth Squad had spent much manpower and resources to acquire the batch of energy ores in order to gain a greater profit. If they could not sell it for a good price then the Sixth Squad would not be content as well.

The previous two business meetings were unsuccessful, and judging from Aiflon's attitude, it would appear that he was planning to trade with the Navigators instead. For a few days in a row, Shawton and the lieutenant commanders were all pretty depressed, and it was easily noticeable from their negative atmosphere. The final negotiation would happen today, and Aiflon's intentions were clear by the fact that he had chosen to negotiate by video conference and not face-to-face. If they failed this time, then the Sixth Squad would have to find another buyer, and this was the kind of goods that no ordinary person could buy. Even if they could, the buyer's final price would not be high with Aiflon as a precedent.

"Dias," Shawton handed over a tablet from the front seat, "You weren't around during the last two negotiation. This is the minutes from the last two dealings. Take a look."

"Okay." Dias straightened himself as he accepted the tablet. While he was reading his eyebrows began to wrinkle. Dias knew very well that the Sixth Squad had nearly lost a Lieutenant Commander in order to acquire that batch of goods, and a lot of

aircrafts and detection equipment were scrapped. They did request a slightly higher price for this batch of goods, but even then, the price Aiflon was pushing for was a little too low, wasn't it!

The further back he looked the more irritated Dias became, and he grabbed the cup of water before him and downed it fiercely into his mouth. Suddenly, an image flashed across the tablet...

"PUUU – "

Dias spat his mouthful of water at the person on his opposite. The table were also filled with water stains.

Asiya rejoiced at the fact that she wasn't sitting on the opposite side of Dias. The person on the opposite side already darkened expression looked like it was about to thunderstorm after being spat on until he was wet all over by Dias.

Since everyone's thoughts were placed fully on the matter of the negotiation, no one expected Dias to put up such an act so suddenly. They were also close to each other, so the lieutenant commander on the opposite side couldn't react in time and was struck dead on.

Under Shawton and the other lieutenant commanders' condemning gaze, Dias hurriedly explained himself.

"Cough cough... Ahem, excuse me. I got too excited and couldn't hold back." Dias turned back to that image on the tablet, pointed at

the person appearing on it and asked, “Is this really Aiflon Douance?”

The last time Dias saw Aiflon was ten years ago, and at the time he was just a normal member of the Sixth Squad and Shawton the lieutenant commander. Now Dias could only sigh: No wonder…

Seeing Shawton’s unhappy gaze, Dias hurriedly took out the other portable tablet he carried with him and handed it over, “Take a look at this fellow.”

Holding the two tablets, Shawton himself had looked somewhat stunned, “Alike, they are too alike!”

The lieutenant commanders had also closed in to look, and after they saw it their faces looked odd as well.

“They’re alike, yeah?” Dias wiped the water stain beside his mouth and said, “From the first time I saw that kid I already thought he looked familiar; I just couldn’t recall it. This person is the new member I want to recommend, Cillin. If I haven’t seen the ‘No Children’ displayed under Aiflon’s information, I would have really believed that the two of them are father and son.”

Now, Shawton did not press about Dias’ behavior just now any longer. His finger tapped rhythmically on the table surface thinking about something. Looking at the time, there were only ten minutes left before the video conference would start.

“Dias, please call Cillin over. Remember, try not to let anyone on board see his face as much as possible.”

“Got it.”

Dias did not ask any further questions as he swiftly left the conference room, and in no time grabbed a half lidded, sleeping looking Cillin over.

Cillin cleared away his sleepiness when he saw the people in the conference room. He could sense that these were no ordinary people.

“Sit down. There’s no need to be overly formal.” Shawton pointed at a chair beside and smiled good-naturedly.

Cillin looked suspiciously at the seven people before taking his seat. I’m not really being formal, but your stares are seriously giving me the creeps...

“Cillin is it? Dias has told me about you and we have deliberated over the matter. Welcome to the Vanguard Sixth B Squadron. Your ID card will be sent to you shortly.”

Dias kept his head low and drank more water. Since when did you guys deliberate about it?!

The other lieutenant commanders did not dispute Shawton’s words either. Although they held an opinion against Dias, Cillin’s

situation was special. The few lieutenant commanders had come to a rare and unanimous acknowledgement of Cillin's identity as a new member; a member of the main force even.

Cillin stared suspiciously at Dias lowering his head. Didn't he say that it would be quite difficult to acquire the identity of a main member? Didn't he say that the lieutenant commanders would make things difficult? What's with this situation then?

Chapter 12: Fearless

Shawton did not waste his words. He passed over the tablet with Aiflon's photo to him.

Cillin was stunned the moment he saw it.

If he didn't know very well that his current appearance was due to the alteration of gene expression, Cillin himself would have suspected that person on the screen was his own father!

What a coincidence!

After briefly explaining to Cillin about Aiflon and the current trading situation, Shawton pointed at a chair at the corner of the room, "Cillin, just sit there when the negotiations start."

"Okay." Cillin had guessed a few things by now. That they had allowed him to join the Sixth Squad and be part of the main force so easily meant that he his usefulness was rather huge. At the very least, his face was very important to the Sixth Squad.

A while later, the video conference began.

On the screen, the thirty seven years old Aiflon might wore a kind smile on his face, but his every movement suggested an inviolable spirit. Originally, he had planned to end this negotiation swiftly by rejecting the Sixth Squad's business deal and choosing Navigator's, but the moment he saw Cillin sitting at the corner, he

did not say the words he had prepared beforehand.

Aiflon and Shawton were both smart men. They only needed a glance to guess roughly each other's thoughts. In that single instant, many thoughts had passed through Aiflon's mind.

After a short pause Aiflon chuckled, "Do allow me to consider the matter of our deal again. However, I believe that we have some matters to talk about, am I right, Commander Shawton?"

"Of course. It is my pleasure."

He waved his hand for the others to go out, and Shawton was left alone in conference room.

Cillin laid on a chair at the lounge after being pulled out of the conference room by Dias and shut his eyes, calming the surprise in his heart. He had guessed the few possible scenarios that might happen soon, and Cillin looked forward to them no matter which kind it might be. This was his first mission after going out of Planet Brown Earth.

Shawton was feeling really, really good right now. The reason he was able to become the Sixth B Squadron's Commander was not due to his powers alone. Shawton viewed problems with deeper insight, and the reason he allowed Aiflon to see Cillin was to confirm that assumption inside his heart.

Two hours later, Shawton called Cillin over for a private

discussion.

“Pose as his son?!” Cillin stared at the mission plan Shawton had sorted out.

“Yes. Although Aiflon had not given his reason, but I believe that this move will play a very important role in Aiflon’s contest for the position of the successor of the Douance Family. What do you think? Tell me your thoughts.”

Cillin swiftly browsed through Aiflon’s information in his mind before saying, “Although the outside world claims that Aiflon has no children, I believe that’s not true. It’s just that he would not reveal them before he acquired the position of successor to ensure their safety. It’s too dangerous otherwise. His motive is for me to cover for his true offspring and attract firepower from certain people. Only then he can dish out more energy to contest for the position of successorship. But of course, this is just my guess.”

“Very good. You did well to figure out all these just by reading these partial materials alone. However, this is but a part of the mission Aiflon had put forward. The other part can only be decided after he has seen you personally. So my question for you now is: Cillin, do you want to accept this mission?”

“Why shouldn’t I?”

“There is a degree of risk to this mission. Members of the Free Fleet have their own decision-making power. We are not the military, and you do not need to obey a superior’s unconditionally.

You can refuse.”

“Why would I refuse?” Cillin looked at the sum on the plan and felt very satisfied. Normally speaking, a mission’s risk was proportional to the amount of income.

Shawton looked Cillin up and down, “You don’t seem like the miserly type.”

“This is the nature of a Hunter, isn’t it?” A Hunter was not an adventurer. A Hunter was the kind of person who would walk the line between life and death for money and self-gain.

“That’s right, that’s what a Hunter is.” Shawton chuckled, “You will come with me to see Aiflon two days later. As for the price tag, we can definitely ask more than this. Use these two days to make your preparations.”

There were some things that Shawton did not say, but Cillin knew that – ignoring the mission’s risks – if Cillin had accepted the mission, then the business deal Sixth Squad and Aiflon were negotiating would most likely succeed. Moreover, through this matter, Cillin could even gain the acknowledgement of the other Lieutenant Commanders of the Sixth Squad. This was very beneficial for his advancement in the Sixth Squad in the future.

The contest between the top four Hunter regiments was growing more and more intense, and although there were no large scale head-on collisions, there were definitely undercover forces at work, which was why the main squad had already begun to take

precautions. The achievements of every B squadron had tremendous impact to the people of those squads. If through Aiflon, they were able to influence a communication between the Sixth Squad and the Douance Family, then it would no doubt promote the Sixth Squad's development greatly.

The importance of a great galactic family towards a Hunter regiment could not be ignored. The reason these families could stand out from the ash heap of history was mainly due to various channels and networks. Meanwhile, the relationship between the military and a Hunter regiment was very delicate. Although they weren't exactly standing on the opposite side of each other, they did not share a harmonious relationship. If possible, the military would not allow a Hunter regiment to exist, but reality was much more complex. Therefore, even if they could not pressure them openly, very often the military would secretly work to obstruct a Hunter regiment's mission; to obstruct their development.

There weren't many people in the galaxy who would dare provoke the main squadrons of the top four Hunter regiments, but the B squadrons were a different story. The military, various Sector-level political institutions and the small scale Hunter regiments. As long as they got the chance they would put a paw on the B squadrons, because the B squadrons' very existence was to rob them of their money and fame. Of course, if there was a great galactic family pulling the strings from within, then the B squadron's development would become much easier.

So of course the Sixth Squad wasn't willing to give up after obtaining the opportunity to meet Aiflon. Moreover this was a situation where they were competing with another Hunter regiment's B squadron, so naturally they would strive for it even

harder. Furthermore, if Aiflon really did become the successor under Cillin's assistance, then the Sixth Squad would gain unlimited benefits in the future. They were all well aware of this, so it could be said that the few heavyweights of the Sixth Squad who knew about this had high expectations for Cillin.

As for the preparation, Shawton had asked of Cillin, what he meant was for Cillin digest all the information necessary for this mission during these two days of free time.

Cillin absolutely could not compare to those veteran Hunters in terms of experience. Moreover, due to his origin, Cillin's understanding of the latest information was also very one-sided. This was a huge flaw for a Hunter who travels the galaxy. For this reason Shawton had purposely chosen some information for Cillin to look through.

After arranging a single room for Cillin, Shawton summoned the six Lieutenant Commanders and started yet another meeting; dealing with the matter regarding keeping Cillin's work confidential. However, when Shawton ended the meeting and brought food for Cillin, he discovered that this person who was supposed to be making the best use of his time was fast asleep with a tilted head. In fact, he appeared to be sleeping very soundly, even.

The tablet registered with the information were thrown at a side. The monitors of the surrounding computers were all blinking rapidly; whatever it was displaying could not be seen clearly.

At the side, Dias opened his mouth, but in the end he swallowed

the words that were about to jump out of his mouth. Carefully peeking at Shawton's changing complexion, he shouted inside his heart: Cillin, you idiot, where is your fighting spirit! How can you be sleeping at such a critical moment?!

Taking a deep breath, Shawton put down the food tray on his hands, turned around and walked out of the door. Dias followed behind Shawton with a bitter look.

For the next two days, Cillin had slept to the point that he did not even touch his food, and during this period of time, everyone in the Sixth Squad had noticed an atmosphere that could freeze someone to death. From the Commander Shawton to the six Lieutenant Commanders; every one of them with a kind of aura that said, 'DANGER! STAY AWAY'.

If it wasn't for Shawton, some of the Lieutenant Commanders would have probably knocked him awake and forced him to read those info. A Hunter who did not know to master his information was not a good Hunter.

"Tell me, how can that kid possibly sleep so easily?" Shawton lay down on his chair and tapped rhythmically on the table surface with his fingers.

Sitting on the opposite side, Dias scratched the curly hair on his head, "Cough, how should I say this. Although the kid's behavior really makes you feel like whooping him a good one, but..." Dias searched for the right words, "I can't help but feel that the kid's being fearless."

Chapter 13: What Kind Of A Monster Is This Kid?

Shawton lifted an eyebrow at Dias, “Fearless?”

On what basis?

He was a B rank genotype Hunter born in the 13 backwater Sectors who was leaving his planet for the first time of his life. He was so young too. On what basis was he so confident? Where did his assurance come from?

However, Shawton believed in Dias. His leadership wasn’t remarkable when compared to the other Lieutenant Commanders, but when it came to an eye for good men, no one could outdo Dias in the entire Sixth B Squadron.

Even the few Lieutenant Commanders who disliked Dias had to admit that he had an outstanding intuition despite his usually unruly appearance. Important talents such as Beaver, Cary, Eudy and so on were all dug out by Dias. From the mundane who were nearly drowned amidst a sea of humanity, to the extraordinaire who were slowly revealing their splendor today, everyone of these men handpicked by Dias were living proof of his intuition.

If it wasn’t for the large scale betrayal incident in a few Hunter regiments a few years back, Dias would not have been forced to investigate Cillin’s identity so deeply.

“He isn’t your average kid. He won’t try to pass off the responsibility.”

“I hope it is as you say.” Shawton sighed. He was under great pressure himself. After all, this was a very important matter for the Sixth Squad.

The other five Lieutenant Commanders had already expressed their dissatisfaction. If the time comes Cillin could not perform well, then he would probably drag Dias through the mud as well. Afterall, Dias did guarantee for Cillin about the matter of making him a main force member and accepting the mission. Otherwise, the Lieutenant Commanders would not have agreed so easily just because Cillin had looked like Aiflon.

On the day of the appointment, Cillin woke up on time like an alarm clock. Shawton didn’t have time to question him too much either, so after he obtaining a ‘I feel okay’ reply from Cillin, he then brought a few men and departed to a planet at Sector R designated by Aiflon with a few men.

Although Sector R was also part of the 13 backwater Sectors, its development was still better compared to Sector X’s. After the spaceship had landed at the port, Shawton had brought only Cillin with him. The others would await orders on the ship.

There were many businessmen who loved to use the 13 backwater Sectors as a raw material processing ground for their product, because it was possible to obtain lots of cheap labor here. While walking down the streets, Cillin once again saw the familiar scenes he had often seen on Planet Brown Earth.

Many different species went back and forth. At a counter inside a shop, a two-headed Dallean was eagerly introducing the shop's products to the customers. They could communicate with two customers at once, and they were both cute and cheap.

It is commonly known that the species that had an '-an' at the end of their names were human-like primates that had evolved significantly. Of course, some of these species were no weaker than humankind, but because their numbers were small they weren't seen too often.

Shawton led Cillin into a hotel that was more than a hundred stories tall. After informing the the attendant about the floor of their appointment, the attendant respectfully led the two of them upstairs. No ordinary people could reserve the rooms a hundred floors and above. Moreover, Aiflon had booked five floors at once, so from his wealth alone, one could see that his background was extraordinary.

Aiflon's men had led the duo to the middle floor of the five floors. Both the floors above and below were stationed with Aiflon's subordinates. From this, one could see Aiflon's cautiousness regarding this matter.

Cillin had come here wearing a mask and makeup to disguise himself, and after Aiflon's and Shawton's signal, he took off the mask on his face.

Aiflon had observed him closely, then examined him with some

equipment. Finally he nodded in satisfaction.

"You can trust us, Mr. Aiflon. We will not lie to a client for profit. The Vanguard's reputation is well known." Shawton said while leaning on his chair.

Aiflon's response was noncommittal, "But his genes are only at B rank."

"As far as I know, there are quite a few B rank descendants in the Douance Family." Shawton knew that there were many B ranks; even among the ones requested for by the military among the descendants of some great families. It's just that they could be slowly improved and evolved into A ranks afterwards. However, not everyone could handle the manpower, material and financial resources required for this process.

Aiflon frowned, "A B rank is too risky. I dislike unnecessary troubles."

Shawton looked at Cillin and asked for his opinion with his eyes.

Cillin did not get angry. With a smile he politely asked, "Mr. Aiflon. May I ask if the two bodyguards behind you are of A rank genotypes?"

"Correct."

Cillin's figure moved just as Aiflon finished his words. Even the

afterimage he left behind was blurry.

BANG!

One of the bodyguards behind Aiflon was knocked off his feet. He was smashed right into the special reinforced wall and had sunk inward into a curvature with it. Meanwhile, the other bodyguard had held a gun in his hand and pressed a muzzle to Cillin's head.

He was definitely an A rank alright. One had to admit that the bodyguard had acted really quickly. If it wasn't for the fact that Cillin was still useful in this business deal, then he would definitely have opened fire without hesitation.

However, sweat began to drop from the forehead of this gun wielding bodyguard. His shrunken pupils reflected his current emotions right now.

Those people who were ready to charge in after hearing the commotion were all waved out by Aiflon's butler. The old butler, whose expression would not have changed even if a mountain had collapsed before him, was feeling the shock of his life right now.

While Aiflon was exclaiming that Vanguard was truly full of hidden aces, in truth the Sixth Squad's Commander Shawton's heart was beating as wildly as a drum. God knows how much effort Shawton had spent to maintain that calm pretense of his.

Holy shit. What kind of a monster is this kid?!

The round might have seemed like a draw for both sides, but it was in fact otherwise. Aiflon, the old butler and Shawton could see that.

For this bodyguard who was pointing a gun at Cillin, If he could've fired his gun at that moment, he would've done it and would not have checked if anything had happened to his gun, which was exactly why he had spared his own life. The people who could become Aiflon's bodyguard must have their own abilities. It was only until after that moment had passed did he realize that there was something wrong with his gun.

There was a black needle stuck between the high-pressure pump and ignition slot. If he had opened fire, then the laser beam would likely have backfired at the bodyguard himself, due to the needle causing a 'back feed' reaction from inside the laser gun!

There were very few high-powered, ignition type guns that were as small as this one. It might have looked like a gun that fired metallic bullets, but it was without a doubt a laser gun. But it was also because of this factor that Cillin had been given the opportunity he had.

Shawton rubbed his chin. The guns Aiflon had equipped his bodyguards were new models. It would have been an impossible feat if Cillin didn't have some level of understanding about them, and if his own physique and reflexes hadn't reached a certain level.

Two days ago, the tablet Shawton had handed over to Cillin only

briefly mentioned about this gun model. When he recalled the flashing monitors inside the room, Shawton had the impulse to press his forehead.

Dias, just where have you found such a freak?

It was true that Cillin had conducted a deeper research through the computer after seeing the gun model that day. It took him only two minutes to collect all the information about the gun, and the 'sleep' that happened afterwards was to 'digest' all these information. The reason Cillin's sleep time was longer as of late was because that, when he entered that special state, his focus and comprehension would reach a peak value. He would be able to digest all the information he had collected in the shortest time. It's just that this state looked no different from sleeping to any outsiders.

Cillin did not pay heed to the bodyguard. He walked back to Shawton's side and looked at Aiflon; seemingly asking his opinion about his performance.

The smile on Aiflon's face grew wider, "Very good."

When the gun wielding bodyguard had withdrawn his gun and stood behind Aiflon once more, the other bodyguard who had been slammed into the wall had 'pulled' himself out from it. He stretched his body for a little as it let out many cracking sounds; returning the displaced bones inside his body back to normal. He was an A rank human after all. Although that blow from before was pretty powerful, it did not do too much damage to him. However, the person's gaze on Cillin was odd. It was as if he was

looking at a monster.

"Mr. Aiflon, do you still remember that proposal I made you?" Shawton straightened his face. This Sixth Squad Commander would seize any opportunity that presented itself with his life in order to gain a larger profit for his squad mates.

"Of course." Aiflon motioned for the butler standing at a side to hand over the documents.

"Seven Lights University?" Cillin was somewhat shocked when he read the document.

Seven Lights University; or its full title Seven Lights University of the Galactic Alliance, was ranked among the best of universities. It was located at Sector B, and not just anyone could attend there.

Chapter 14: Pleasure To Work With You

"Aren't you happy, Cillin?" Seeing Cillin's uncertain gaze, Shawton explained to him, "Mr. Aiflon is only asking you to pose as his son and not his bodyguard. There's no way you can come in contact with his family's business either, so in order to make full use of your time, I have suggested to Mr. Aiflon to have you undertake a higher education. He chose Seven Lights University."

Generally, the galaxy's education could be divided into three broad categories: primary education, secondary education and higher education. Most Hunters in the top four Hunter regiments had received higher education. As long as they meet the age requirement, the regiments would fund and raise them. The top four Hunter regiments were never stingy with their talents, which was also why they were better than the other Hunter regiments.

However, most of these Hunters had received their higher education at the ten Sectors between D to M. There weren't many at all like Cillin who could receive his higher education at the Shining Three Sectors.

This was also an investment Shawton had made for the Sixth Squad, and even better, the Sixth Squad didn't have to pay a cent for it. It was practically the perfect opportunity, and Shawton was sure that even if all Cillin did was to pose as Aiflon's son, Aiflon would definitely choose a high rank university in order to defend the Douance family's reputation.

Cillin was not a fool. He had not even received a proper primary education while he was at Planet Brown Earth in Sector X – Genya

was the one who tutored him privately all this time. So why would he let such a chance slip by?

"Of course I'm willing, since I got the chance."

Aiflon nodded his head, "Everyone knows how Seven Lights is. Moreover, the reason I chose Seven Lights isn't just because of the Douance Family's reputation, but also because it is located at Sector B. The families' hands do not extend too deeply there, so those who plan to act against you will have more to worry about. This is good for both me and you."

It was true that Aiflon would not need to spend more manpower to handle certain probable sudden 'accidents' that might happen if it was Seven Light University.

Aiflon received a few more tidied documents from the butler and passed them over, "If there are no further questions, then please sign here. As we have agreed upon, the down payment will be a hundred thousand. Going by galactic time, a sum of fifty thousand will be transferred to Cillin's account every ten days. When the mission is complete, an additional ten million will be transferred."

"Galactic credits?" Shawton asked further.

"Galactic credits!" Aiflon seemed very dissatisfied with Shawton's suspicions. Did he really think that the great Douance Family would pay with sector credits?

The exchange rate of galactic credits to sector credits was 100 at the thirteen backwater Sectors, and 10 for the trade Sectors D to M. The bounties Cillin once earned from his 'hunt' were all in sector credits, and the few million credits he spent to buy a blank ID and debit card were just sector credits from the thirteen backwater Sectors. His three years of bounties were only equivalent of this mission's ten days of income.

Hearing the dissatisfaction in Aiflon's voice, Shawton returned a smile and cracked a rare joke, "Cillin is a really excellent, you know? Once you missed him, you'll be hardpressed to find another Hunter as good as he is. Plus he can act as a bodyguard once he's finished as a son, though, of course ,that will be a different charge."

Cillin rolled his eyes straight away. It was only now that he could see that Shawton and Dias were truly blood related brothers; the way they joked was practically of the same mould.

"Pleasure to work with you."

"Pleasure to work with you."

Both sides handled the matter crisply. They were all smart men; there was no need for additional explanation.

After the deal was complete, all three signed what was necessary for the agreement. They signed a tripartite agreement specifically for Cillin's mission, and no one would know about the contents of this agreement except for the three of them.

Aiflon would not stay for long at the thirteen backwater Sectors, so he gave Cillin an address and have him depart there two days later. Someone would pick him up afterwards.

Shawton left the hotel in a relaxed mood and had Cillin return to the squad first. It wasn't too convenient to walk around with a mask on his face after all.

Since everything was done and his depressed feelings for the past few days were completely swept clean, after asking the Sixth Squad to hand over the cargo to Aiflon's men, this Sixth Squad Commander looked at his debit card and went on a rare shopping spree, looking to increase the Sixth Squad's quality of life.

After returning to the squadron, Shawton had even purposely pinched Cillin's arm a little.

This... is real flesh alright. It's just that whenever Shawton recalled the scene where Cillin slammed that Rank A bodyguard right into the wall, he couldn't help but shudder. How was that a Rank B human? He was more like a human armored vehicle!

On the other side, Aiflon sat quietly in his seat with eyes lowered and fingers crossed on top his knees, looking to be sunk in deep thought after Cillin and Shawton had left the hotel.

A while later, Aiflon looked up, "Sopho, send 'Carnage Elf' back for improvement and upgrades; If the problem can't be solved, then just discard it. It's almost time, so urge that matter at Seven Light. Also, start arranging the matter about Cillin."

“Okay.”

Aiflon’s words were very simple, but as an old butler, Sopho knew very well Aiflon’s intentions.

‘Carnage Elf’ was the gun Aiflon’s bodyguard was using and a new type of firearm developed by the Douance Family. Since the gun was small for stealth purposes, there were many designs that had been simplified. But it was the cause of the scene where Cillin had pierced through the gun’s ‘Achilles heel’. If they could not fix this problem, then Aiflon would rather give up than take a risk on this firearm.

The second matter was about Seven Light. Seven Light University’s enrollment period had passed a long time ago, but the school hadn’t opened yet, so there was a need to supplement and manage the related procedures. This really wasn’t hard to manage with Douance Family’s influence.

The last one was of course regarding his ‘son’ Cillin. In a few days, the world would know about Aiflon’s abandoned ‘son’, and so certain operations should be started as well.

After returning to the squadron, Cillin went to look for Beaver. As part of the technical staff, Beaver was qualified to use some of the Sixth Squad’s instruments.

“You want to reinforce this ash crystal?” Beaver looked at the pendant Cillin had taken out and said, “Sure I can, but you should

know that the energy spent to reinforce an ash crystal will cost quite a bit."

"How much?" Cillin asked.

Beaver thought for a moment to calculate the cost of materials, "Thirty thousand at least, and in galactic credits."

"No problem." With the hundred thousand galactic credits from Aiflon, it would be sufficient.

Beaver stared at him. It had just been a few days; when did this kid get so rich? But Beaver did not ask him any questions; Dias had told him not to ask Cillin more questions than necessary for now, "Come with me."

An ash crystal was the ashes of a person that were electro-cremated, compressed in high pressure and underwent a series of processing into a block shape crystal. The process cost close to ten thousand galactic credits; the majority of Cillin's bounties back in those years were spent on this process.

An hour later, Beaver finished reinforcing the ash crystal and returned it to Cillin. After the reinforcement, the ash crystal seemed to have shrunk a little, but it was also more solid and transparent. When facing towards a light source, the faint image of a person could be seen inside.

"Ex-girlfriend?" Beaver asked. The image of the person depicted

inside the ash crystal did not share any similarity to Cillin's appearance. This meant that they weren't relatives.

"Yeah." Cillin wore the ash crystal back onto his neck.

Beaver gave Cillin a slap on the shoulder. He had seen a lot of similar situations, "The road ahead is still long."

Perhaps one day in the near future, Cillin would meet a great girl and diminish the sadness of the past.

Other than Beaver, Shawton and a few other Lieutenant Commanders, no one else had seen Cillin during the two days he had returned to the ship at all. The Sixth Squad had done a pretty good confidentiality job. Shawton had told him everything he should know. The rest of the opportunities fell on Cillin alone to grasp.

Two days later, with a mask on his face, Cillin headed towards the destination mentioned by Aiflon and received his new identity.

Chapter 15: Planet Seven Lights

At a certain planet in Sector D.

Cillin had arrived at this planet according to Aiflon's information. After walking down down the spaceliner, Cillin then pulled at his big coat and straightened his collars.

No wonder Aiflon had picked this planet for Cillin to come. It was currently winter on this planet, and Cillin did not need to put on any disguises at all. He would cover more than half his face by straightening his collar alone, not to mention that the wind was strong and the pedestrians came and went in a hurry. Even if there was someone who recognized Aiflon's facial features, they would not examine at an ordinarily-clothed passerby closely, so it did save him quite a bit of effort. There were plenty of planets that Aiflon's influence had touched upon, and there was a reason for him to choose this place.

After exiting the port, when Cillin walked to a street corner, he saw a seemingly ordinary black flying car waiting quietly at the area.

After taking a look at the car plate, Cillin then walked over to it.

At the same time, the two men inside the car had seen Cillin as well. They got off the car and gave him a polite bow, "Young master."

Cillin recognized one of them to be the bodyguard that he had

slammed into the wall. He didn't recognize the other person. Cillin's eyebrows lifted after he heard the greeting 'young master'. He might have accepted the mission, but he had never been given such treatment in his entire life. It felt really awkward for a time.

Regardless of his own thoughts, Cillin's expression did not change in the slightest whatsoever. He nodded, lifted a leg and stepped inside after the other party had opened the backseat door.

This is good stuff. It's also a triphibian flying car! After surveying the interior of the car one time, Cillin recalled a certain phrase – low-key luxury. This car probably cost more than a few million galactic credits.

After all was said and done, the car lifted into the air steadily and glided into the hover highway. This car was utterly missable amidst many other flying cars as it merged into the masses.

The ten free trade Sectors were far superior as compared to the thirteen backwater Sectors. This could be seen from the surrounding flying cars alone. Put any one of them at Planet Brown Earth and it would definitely cause quite a big commotion even at the most flourished areas. But over here, they were simply one among many.

The skyscrapers grew scarce. There weren't many high-rise buildings towards the direction the car was heading at. Further up ahead were villas that took up many wide lands, and after passing through these villas, the flying car finally stopped at a manor-like place.

The old butler Sopho had been waiting there already.

Sopho let out a kind smile after he saw Cillin, “Young master Cillin, please follow me.”

He sure got into character real quick alright, Cillin criticized on the inside.

“I’m in your care.”

Sopho led Cillin into big house surrounded by flower beds. Although it wasn’t tall – only three stories – it had taken up a lot of space and was bigger and a lot more luxurious than the villas he had passed by.

On the surface, the servants didn’t look all that reactive, but in truth they were unbelievably curious on the inside. It was rumored a few days ago that the master had found his long lost bastard. At the time, a few had thought that it was impossible, but today they’d really seen him with their own eyes. That’s right, anyone who had seen Cillin would believe that Aiflon and him were father and son. This was what they called a coincidence. Moreover, Cillin believed that by the morrow, the news about Aiflon receiving his bastard would spread out and even printed with pictures and videos on certain electronic magazines.

But the spread of the rumors and its trend wasn’t for Cillin to worry about. That was Aiflon’s problem and a part of his strategy to contest for the family’s successor position.

After putting on a ‘loving father, faithful son’ show together with Aiflon at the dining table, Aiflon called Cillin to his study.

“The related procedures at Seven Lights have been completed. You will bring your new identity card and admission notice to Seven Lights University. All you need to do is to carry yourself as the ‘illegitimate child’, the rest you do not need to worry. In addition, you should know that even the forces of those people who are obstructing me cannot penetrate that place too deeply. But the one thing you must not forget is that the waters in Sector B are very deep. Be careful when you act. You are now holding the ‘Douance’ surname with you, so you should avoid anything that damages the Douance’s family reputation. However…”

Aiflon took out his tablet from the drawer and pulled up a few photos. He passed them to Cillin, “You may see these people as your targets.”

Cillin accepted the tablet on Aiflon’s hands and swiftly looked through the information on it. Some of the people listed on this tablet could be taken out directly, and some of them were to be captured alive if possible. There were freelance Hunters, highly trained killers, Aiflon’s competitors and the people from their respective forces. Everyone had a corresponding bounty.

“You do not need to seek out these people deliberately. As long as you are still in Seven Lights University, they will naturally come and look for you unless I have acquired the family’s successor position. Remember this information. Once you have reached Seven Lights University, I will have someone send you the latest

informations from time to time. I'll leave it to you to decide how to deal with them when the time comes. Of course, it depends on your abilities whether or not you will be able to hunt down these prey."

His prey would come to him, and his employer would even refresh his information automatically for him. What was there against such a fantastic opportunity?

Cillin quickly flipped through all the information on the tablet once and returned it to Aiflon. Aiflon was distracted for a moment. He finished reading already?

Aiflon said nothing else after obtaining a firm reply from Cillin. What needed to be paid attention and what needed to be done had long been stated in the agreement.

Aiflon gave Cillin a new debit card; a debit card registered with the identity 'Cillin Douance'. There was already a hundred and fifty thousand galactic credits inside it; a one-time payment transferred into his card for the next thirty days.

The next day, Aiflon had deliberately ordered a family starship under his control to escort Cillin to Sector B.

Seven Lights University wasn't on a certain place on a certain planet at Sector B. It is a planet.

The entire planet was a university on itself. That was why Seven

Lights University was also called Planet Seven Lights.

There were seven space stations surrounding Planet Seven Lights, and every starship that came must be parked first at one of them. Those who were to be admitted would use the admission notice in their care to enter an exclusive transport. No other starships or spaceships were allowed to come close to Planet Seven Lights, and no unrelated personnel were allowed entry to Seven Lights University. Everyone had to obey the rules set down by Planet Seven Lights no matter which great family you came from.

The starships that came here usually abided to the rules. Those who did not would automatically listed as a dangerous target and be opened fire at by the 'Sentinel' defense system on the space stations. Who cares which family you came from; lasers first talk later.

And don't say that Planet Seven Lights was too arrogant; they really do have what it takes to be arrogant. Otherwise, why would Aiflon say that the waters of Planet Seven Lights were very deep?

The starship escorting Cillin stopped at a space station, and after docking, five bodyguards then escorted Cillin into the space station. Cillin saw someone being stopped in their tracks at a bridge not far away; the reason being that they had too many escorts – there was an eye-catching sign at the bridge that stated that there would be 'no more than five escorts' at a time.

There were a lot of people that were escorted by bodyguards like Cillin at the inspection hall. Fifteen to twenty five, all wearing very similar expressions – excitement and anxiety. They were obviously

of extraordinary status; grab anyone of them and they would be someone from a certain sector from a certain famous family. But over here, it would seem that their previously extraordinary statuses had been normalized.

After passing through the identity verification and scanning his admission notice, the five bodyguards returned as Cillin sat in the transport headed towards Planet Seven Lights.

Chapter 16: The Twin Stars Of Seven Lights

The transporter departs every two hours. When Cillin walked in there, not even a third of the cabin was filled. When checking the time, there was yet an hour until the next departure.

There were a few girls at the front talking to each other quietly. From time to time, they would look towards the people inside the cabin.

Aiflon had handpicked Cillin's outfit for him. Put together with his own incredibly deceptive face, anyone would know that he was the young master of some great family at first glance. Therefore, the girl's discussion became louder when Cillin had come in, and their stares on him were so obvious that it was hard to ignore. But it only lasted a few minutes before they switched their attention onto another newcomer.

Naturally, more than half of the people in this transport had powerful backgrounds. Cillin recalled the story which Beaver and the gang had flaunted back at the ship. They talked about the class of a certain Sector's military academy where twenty nine out of thirty people were all a 'general's offspring'; that was to say their fathers were all Sector level generals. The one person in the class who wasn't a 'general's offspring' had a colonel father, so they were scorned greatly by the twenty nine other people in class at the beginning. But two days later, hah, these people were all as silent as the dead. You wanna know why? That's because said 'colonel' was actually a Galactic Alliance colonel! Their ranking system was different from a Sector's. Ten generals may not necessarily match up to a single galactic colonel.

Dias had even ridiculed him saying that Cillin was lucky he wasn't sent to a military academy at Sector C, or anyone he meets would be the offspring of a galactic military personnel.

Cillin smiled silently then. He picked up the 'Seven Lights Handbook' that the inspection personnel had passed him when he came in and swiftly flipped through the booklet. There were many things that he had learned prior to this and he had an exceptional reading ability and memory, so it took him less than two minutes to read through the whole thing. Cillin lamented as he touched the leaf pattern on his thumb. Not even the famous Seven Lights could detect this ring. Just what kind of an existence is the Gen Family?

He pressed a button on the seat handle, and an optical display popped out in front of him. Cillin looked forward to his next life as he watched the colorful planet backdropped with a deep colored space on the screen.

"Hey, bro, can I sit here?"

A young man grinning a bright smile pointed at the seat beside Cillin and asked. Judging from the way he dressed, his family seemed to be faring quite well.

"Of course." Cillin smiled back. He could see that he was the overly familiar type.

"I am Allen Chev." The young man introduced himself in a friendly manner.

“Cillin.”

The young man named Allen gave a brief chuckle and stretched his neck to look at the girls in front of him.

“Yep, it looks like the quality of our term’s babes are pretty good, although it seems like the pretty babes in Seven Lights are plentiful in the first place, hee hee. How nice.” Allen scratched his head and turned back around after seeing that the girls had ignored him completely. All the entertainment related stuff inside the passenger cabin had been put inside the luggage compartment, and it was boring to just wait and do nothing, so Allen automatically looked for a topic to chat up to Cillin. As a Hunter, Cillin had a certain level of involvement in all kinds of things, so he was able to converse a little in every topic Allen had brought up.

After retelling his epic tale of merry times and once leisurely life in great delight, Allen frowned again, “Ugh, I heard that Seven Lights is not an easy place to screw around. I hadn’t wanted to come to Sector B to receive my higher education; the competition’s way too fierce after all. But after I started clubbing and skipped the night, my dad flipped out, dropped some cash and dumped me into this place to fend for myself. Aaah, my colorful life! ~ When will you come back to me once more?”

It was true that those whose admission results weren’t ideal had to pay a huge sum of money to enter Seven Lights. That being said, Cillin also knew that Seven Lights would not admit a student if their result was too bad, regardless of the sum of money involved. That Allen could enter Seven Lights meant that his result wasn’t

too bad.

Before Cillin could make a comment on Allen's words, he heard a low hmph coming from behind.

While Cillin and Allen were chatting about random stuff, the traffic into the cabin had not stopped. At a glance, about four fifths of the passenger cabin had been filled, and the young man sitting behind Cillin and Allen also arrived around this time.

Allen did not react in anger towards the disdainful humph. In fact, he even clung to the back of his chair and looked at the person who had let out the humph curiously.

The person ignored Cillin and Allen's gazes and simply stared at the display before him. His attire was different from the people around him; although he wasn't dressed poorly, it definitely looked more simple and plain as compared to the others.

But of course, one must not look down on this person simply because of his attire. How many of these people who could sit here and had the qualifications for Seven Lights were actually ordinary?

"Eh?!" Allen's eyes turned starry, "Kang Man! I can't believe I'm actually sitting on the same transport as the genius Kang Man!"

Only then Kang Man, who had scoffed after hearing the words 'dropped some cash' and 'leisurely life' finally turned away from his monitor to look at Allen, "You know me?"

It might be phrased as a question, but there was no surprise behind his words. Cillin could see the arrogance in his eyes and the air of obstinance around him.

“Of course! The genius Kang Man; our term’s specially recruited student. At just the age of fourteen, you have published research findings that are over fifty contribution points; it’s all published in some academic electronic magazines, isn’t it? I have zero understanding about that electronic cryptography thingy you’ve researched though.” Allen grew more and more excited as he spoke without the slightest embarrassment for having ‘zero understanding’ about said subject, “I couldn’t count the number of times my dad had pulled my ears and said that the only two youngest fifteen years old geniuses in our term are also known as the Twin Stars of Seven Lights. One of them is you, Kang Man, and the other would be Pride Zweig…”

Suddenly Allen stopped talking as he opened his mouth wide and stared at the cabin entrance.

“Pride Zweig…”

After staring blankly for a moment Allen grabbed Cillin’s sleeves and began pulling excitedly, “Cillin, it’s Pride Zweig, it’s really Pride Zweig! Oh my god I’m actually sitting on the same transport as this term’s Twin Stars of Seven Lights! What do I do; I feel like squealing!”

What the hell does your squealing have to do with me! Cillin

stared at the thread that was about to come loose from his sleeves and itched to smack him in the head. He's not a pretty girl so what the fuck is with your reaction?! Plus you didn't react nearly as much when you see Kang Man just now.

Pride Zweig was exactly that person Cillin had seen at the bridge who was stopped in his tracks because he had too many escorts.

Pride Zweig's face was one that could cause every woman around him to overflow with maternal feelings. His expression was impatient when he first walked into the cabin, and after he frowned and swept his gaze once around the cabin his eyes were attracted by a certain someone's waving arms.

It wasn't a choice. It was difficult even to ignore it. Allen was the only one in the entire cabin gleefully waving his arms, shaking back and forth in his seat in excitement with one finger pointed at the empty seat beside Kang Man and his mouth contorted into many exaggerated shapes, "Sit here! Sit here!"

If it wasn't for the fact that no one was allowed to make loud noises and roam freely inside the cabin, Cillin believed that the dude would have hollered at the top of his lungs, ran to Pride Zweig's side and dragged him over.

For a time, everyone's gazes inside the cabin was focused onto Allen. It was as if everyone had just realized that there was a monkey hiding inside the crowd...

Cillin lowered his head and read his Seven Lights Handbook

‘seriously’, while Kang Man never took his eyes off the display as if he didn’t know Allen.

And man did that baby face of Pride’s turned from red to green and from green to red. He felt as if he had turned into a monkey himself. Pride thundered from the bottom of his heart: WHO THE FUCK IS THAT GUY!

It was at this moment a staff member had walked in from outside, and after seeing Pride still standing at the entrance he urged, “Find a seat quickly. The ship is about to fly.” Glancing about, he pointed at the waving Allen, “How about over there? That seat looks nice.”

Pride gritted his teeth and walked to the seat beside Kang Man with a black face. Bloody hell, the hell is going on today!

Chapter 17: Arrival

Pride was feeling very depressed today; to say nothing of the bunch of naggers back at home who wouldn't stop breathing down his collar over and over again. He was just attending school, but they actually sent five starships to escort him and, even after he boarded the station, there was a huge crowd of men that had surrounded him as protection, causing him to be blocked at the bridge. The moment Pride recalled the gazes of those people on the space station, "Tsk, what a baby, look at the number of nannies he brought with 'em'" he couldn't help but gnash his teeth in anger.

He finally escaped those people outside, but he ran right into one such case again the moment he entered the cabin. Nothing was going well today. Pride angrily walked over and sat down. Without even glancing at Kang Man beside him, he glared at Allen once before he opened the display, adjusted the angle and checked if those escort ships his family sent over had left the station yet.

Pride's alienating-don't-come-near-me attitude was obvious to everyone's eyes, and yet it just so happened someone was able to ignore it completely.

"Pride Zweig, it is a great pleasure to meet you. I am called Allen Chev, and I am also enrolled in Seven Lights this term. Ya can say we're classmates now." Allen extended a hand in greeting with a very happy smile.

Pride did not even lift his eyes as he answered in a very furious tone, "Like I give a damn which shallot you are!"

(T/N: Or for better understanding, piece of shit)

But Allen did not have the slightest self-conscious that he was called a ‘shallot’; his thick skin and ability to filter words automatically amazed Cillin.

He had heard long ago from Dias that there were a lot of weirdos in institutions of higher learning. Today he had certainly learned his lesson.

“I always watch your fighter battle videos. You’re so amazing; I can’t believe you can pull off such amazing maneuvers…”

Praise poured out of Allen’s mouth continuously. Although Pride did not lift his head, Cillin realized that the corner of the brat’s lips widened a bit. He then immediately strived to maintain his serious outlook from before, but his ears were lifted completely straight. In Cillin’s opinion, if Pride had a tail, it would definitely be pointed towards the sky. Why else would he have allowed Allen to rattle off the whole time like a machine gun without appearing to have any intentions of stopping him.

A difficult child, he is. This was the conclusion Cillin had come to about Pride.

Kang Man humphed softly again before staring at the display before him. There was no telling if it was directed at Allen or Pride. Pride was drowning in Allen’s praise anyway so he probably didn’t notice it.

Besides that, there were also a few people sitting around them

that had been paying attention to this area for a while. When they heard Allen's words, they too joined into the conversation. Pride lifted his chin at the surrounding people's praises, "I've learned them a long time ago."

If someone said that Kang Man's pride was hidden inside him, then Pride's was as obvious as his name.

Still, Pride did have the qualification to be proud of himself. Excluding status, background and other similar factors, if someone said that the Twin Star of Seven Light's Kang Man was leaned towards research, then Pride would fall under the combat type. His fighter piloting skills were top-notch among his peers, not to mention that his shooting, mech piloting skills and other aspects were also outstanding.

Allen was very sad that it wasn't allowed to carry photographic equipment inside the cabin. Otherwise he would definitely take a picture with the two Twin Stars of Seven Lights. It would definitely give his dad a pleasant surprise.

Although Allen had also brought up the other person of the Twin Stars of Seven Lights – Kang Man, it was obvious that people around them weren't too interested in this genius with an ordinary background. Part of the reason they had come to Seven Lights was because it provided a platform, and hence some of these children of big families and forces could network with more people here in order to pave their paths towards the future. It was obvious that these young people born to speak with a golden spoon did not categorize Kang Man as part of their social circle. Kang Man might be one of the Twin Star of Seven Lights this term, but his speciality

was leaned towards academics. Naturally the group of youngsters had even less common topics to share with Kang Man. Of course, Allen was an exception.

Kang Man did not express too much emotions towards the other's cold shoulders. He seemed to be used to them.

"Can you tell me about that electronic cryptography that Allen had mentioned earlier? Electronic cryptography has magnetic trimming, correct? How do you ensure that the geomagnetic field and other factors would not cause a distortion. According to the formula..." Cillin did hold some interest in the electronic cipher Kang Man had researched. When he was discussing with Eudy, the subject had been brought up before, although they did not delve deep into it. But now Cillin's curiosity was actually piqued.

Kang Man looked at Cillin with surprise. Someone who could cite those formulas correctly must have a certain degree of understanding in this subject, which was why Kang Man did not ignore Cillin. He turned off the display, pressed another button on the armrest, took out an electronic board and began slowly explaining things for Cillin.

The duo had talked from the most basic acoustic cryptography, to optical cryptography, and finally magnetic cryptography. Cillin had even written down a few simplified formulas that came up when he was discussing with Eudy. This caused Kang Man to view Cillin in a new light, and when the matter of academic research was brought up, Kang Man had grown even more excited. Kang Man's attitude towards a genuinely knowledgeable person was completely different from norm.

Pride's attention was also shifted by Cillin and Kang Man's discussion. Although his eyes were still staring at the display before him, his focus was actually somewhere else entirely. He might not know the things that Kang Man was talking about, but he could understand some parts of it.

Allen, who was originally deep in conversation with the surrounding, saw that Cillin and Kang Man were 'whispering' with each other and glanced at their direction. When he saw that Kang Man's board was written full with formulas, his gaze at Cillin became filled with admiration. To Allen, formulas or whatever was no different than the bible of gibberish.

After the transport had landed on Seven Lights, according to the newcomer's guidelines written in the 'Seven Lights Handbook', they must acquire the all purpose card on Planet Seven Lights. This was because the exclusive card was needed to purchase items, catch a ride and so on. Once you got out of this port, outer worlds debit cards would become completely useless.

After he had made a Seven Lights card with his identity card and admission notice, Cillin then transferred the credits on the card Aiflon gave him to the Seven Lights card. Since he was a new student, Cillin's Seven Lights card was crimson in color. When classes officially started, then he would be able to apply to upgrade his Seven Lights card if his academic credits reached a certain target. The Seven Lights card's ranks could be divided into seven ranks: Crimson, Orange, Yellow, Green, Cyan, Blue and Purple. Different ranks had different authority on Planet Seven Lights, and the students would have to depend on themselves to rank up their cards.

Seven Lights was a relatively independent place, and they weren't the only one. There were a few academies in Sector B and military academies in Sector C that had similar systems.

Kang Man was going to visit an old professor, and he had wanted to bring Cillin along at first – the old prof was pretty friendly to those who were engaged in academic studies. But Cillin had turned him down. He had his own plans, and he wasn't a pure academic researcher either.

After also turning down Allen's invitation to complete their registration together, Cillin carried his rather light travel bag from the luggage compartment on his back and left the port. The moment he got out, he saw two high class flying cars stopped at the entrance waiting for someone. With a lifted chin, Pride walked over, threw the small bag in his hands at one of the escorts and entered the flying car.

He didn't think the boy's background was deep enough that he could enjoy special privileges openly even on Seven Lights. No wonder those people had fawned all over Pride back inside the cabin. Although Pride's identity was not revealed outright, they most likely had an idea who he was when Allen revealed some of his accomplishments.

Cillin turned his head and put the trivial matter away. He arrived at a shop selling communication equipment around the port and purchased a bracelet type communicator. Seven Lights had their own exclusive communication network and signal reception equipment, so the communication equipment that was brought

over from outside the planet could not be used here. He could only buy a new one.

Cillin did not plan to register immediately; the registration session would continue for another six or seven days anyway. Complying to a Hunter's habit, Cillin would first visit a few important locations on Planet Seven Lights personally. After purchasing a world map, Cillin then hopped onto a maglev train that travels around the planet.

Chapter 18: 'So Poor All That Is Left Is Money' Family

Seven Lights University. As a university that was famous throughout the galaxy, be it their geographical and urban planning, or their resource and equipment allocations, they were incomparable to the schools at the ten trade Sectors.

Here, there was a tightly guarded research and technology zone, a wide open area training zone, a sleepless city that provided relaxation and entertainment, and a trade zone of many categorizations... they had everything in this place. It was just like a perfected system.

The school zone was the closest to the port, and there was a large residential zone right next to it. There were clumps of high-rising buildings and clumps of villas as well. According to the 'Seven Lights Handbook', the students' living quarters were assigned by the university and not chosen freely by the students. Of course, there were many luxury houses and office buildings for rent, and whether someone could rent those buildings depended entirely on their own abilities. Money was just a small matter; what was really important was the limit of authority of one's Seven Lights card. If you haven't ranked up the Seven Lights card to a certain level, then don't even bother thinking about those buildings.

The school district was located at the center of the planet and was surrounded by the entertainment zone, training zone, trade zone and so on. Cillin did not go to the school zone; he would register himself there directly after circling the entire planet. Therefore, going by the signs on the map, the global train's first

big stop would be the trade zone.

Maybe because it wasn't the rush hour that there weren't many people scattered along the train. Some of them had their eyes closed as they slept in their seats. Judging from the badges at their chest area, they were all third or fourth grade students.

In Seven Lights, there were seven grades divided according to one's education level. The first to fourth grades were mandatory grades, and a student could only apply for graduation after they had gone through all four grades. Of course, those who had good enough results and the intent could pursue for further study, and in Seven Lights those who pursue for further study would enjoy a very lucrative treatment. The reason there was no fifth to seventh grade students abroad the train was because that they all had their own private cars, which was a lot more convenient than taking a train or renting a cab.

When he was speaking with Kang Man on the transport, he had already learned that Kang Man's choice of education was four plus three, which was an integrated mode for further studies. This mode was only open to specially recruited students, and the treatment they enjoyed were different from other people. Cillin and everyone else's Seven Lights card was the most basic rank : 'Crimson', but Kang Man's was a rank higher: 'Orange'. it was also easier for him to rank up his card compared to other people.

Listening to the train's stop announcement, Cillin got off the train while carrying his bag on his back. The moment he got out, Cillin was immediately assaulted with the sensation that he was standing somewhere else. He might have read the trade zone's

description on the ‘Seven Lights Handbook’, but it was still a lot more impactful to see it in real person.

This place was like a giant business empire.

The trade zone before him seemed to be formed from countless flourishing and complex commercial streets intersecting with each other. The bustling flying cars; the noisy crowd... was this really just a university? Why did it not look too different from the bustling commercial streets on that planet in Sector D when he went to look for Aiflon?

There were many blinking road signs and billboards guiding those who had arrived here. A giant display suspended in mid air would also run ads from time to time, such as: A person wearing a fifth grade badge holding a device in his hands and introducing its functions... Such advertising screens could be seen everywhere while encompassing all kinds of things from the most basic daily necessities to roller skates and flying cars. There were endless varieties, and with images gorgeous enough to capture one’s attention completely.

Cillin randomly took a glance at the shops on his two sides and knew immediately that none of them were selling your ordinary goods. It would have been embarrassing otherwise in such a high-end commercial street anyway. Although Cillin still had some savings in his card right now, there really wasn’t much that he could buy in this place. Luckily for him, he didn’t need some of those items right now anyway.

After arriving at a department store and buying his daily

necessities, Cillin then wandered towards a flea market. As its namesake, there were no formal shops in this area, but the people who opened a stall on this street were all second to fourth grade students. The items on display were all part of the prizes they had obtained while undergoing a fieldwork outside the planet or during a certain class' exam.

Some of these items were small and delicate playthings that were worth nothing but pure decorations inside one's living quarters. They might be varied, but the only worth of these trinkets were their novelty. Still, there were a lot of good stuff on sale; among them there were even precious metals or energy blocks. If these were consigned to a large shop, then a partial fee would be collected, which was why many people handled the selling themselves.

"Hey, look at this, this is a big seashell that we fished when we went to Planet Sea Blue last month. When the wind blows, you can even hear the sound of sea waves, and would you look at this color..."

"Oh my, you sure have a good eye brother. This is a type of alloy ore that we dug during a fieldwork. The tutor who led our team mentioned that the ratio of the few significant metal elements that made up this alloy ore was near perfect. It plays an important role in building and repairing a weapon, as well as the modification of an armored mech's parts..."

"..."

Looking around, there were all kinds of people selling their

products in all sorts of ways. For some people, it might be their first time doing this so they couldn't let go of themselves, but there were obviously some seasoned old birds mixed inside as well.. The energy behind their shouts and slippery smooth words were practically no different from veteran traders.

The dexterous girls would do some simple processing to the materials in their hands, and the resulting appearances were not bad at all. At the very least, the number of people crouching in front a pretty girl's stall were three times more than anyone else's. There was no denying the pretty girl effect.

While Cillin was checking out a stall, a man suddenly appeared at the stall beside his. He looked to be about the same age as Cillin. His hair was a little messy and he was wearing a singlet and fat flowery pants. The soles of his feet were tucked with a pair of rattan knitted slippers, and his hands were shaking a fan made from tree leaves. Cillin had seen that fan at a stall that specialized in selling products made of tree leaves before.

This man crouched down in front of the stall and shook the fan with one hand while playing with the little items on the stall with the other. He seemed to be checking the items' raw materials or their integrity.

However, Cillin realized that the expression of the stallholder behind him had changed multiple times when he saw this person. He opened his mouth, but in the end he did not say anything.

Cillin had a feeling that this stallholder had the impulse to roll up his stall and run away immediately. It piqued Cillin's curiosity,

and so he stood at the side and watched quietly.

The stallholder beside him did not look any different, however. He enthusiastically explained to this man about the raw materials and origins of his items.

Then... a most tragic haggling process began. Cillin witnessed the poor stallholder's eyes shifting from a most jubilant '?' shape to a griefing U shape. He couldn't even get angry as he said, "Forget it, junior. You look like a new student. Just take this as a gift from a fellow senior."

"No, don't! it's not like I know you or anything so why the fudge would I want to accept your gift? Plus, if you don't accept some money at least you're gonna give me a guilty conscience, you know?"

Conscience... do you even have such a thing?

The price was chopped from 500 credits all the way to 50 credits. The stallholder's own tears were almost chopped out of his eyes. The dude even refused when he tried to gift him the item so that he would go away and get out of his sight.

The man lifted a hand, dug into his pocket and fished out a whole stack of galactic credits in €1000 bill (E/N: We decided to use a symbol for the currency of Galactic credits for clarifications even if there is none in the raws). We decided on the € cause it looks like a C and a G, so it could represent Galactic credits). He frowned. He then dug into another pocket and fished out his Seven Lights card

and a few VIP cards from a few luxury stores from the central district of the trade zone instead. He spent a long time fishing through his pockets before finally, he worked out a galactic credit with a €50 bill from a certain corner.

"There, a fifty. Don't say I took advantage of you." The man smiled most harmlessly.

And boy did the stallholder look like he had chronic constipation. Cillin could feel his misery just by looking at him.

That stack of galactic credits in €1000 bills couldn't possibly be less than twenty thousand credits, could it? Also, those cards could not be made without spending a few million credits. But he went so far as to crouch down like a person from a small household and haggled all the way until 50 credits while wearing a 'I'm a good guy you see' face. If he was that stallholder, Cillin thought that he would've let loose his legs and give that bastard one hell of a time.

Watching the man's departing back, the poor stallholder lifted a trembling finger and pointed at that damnable bastard's back. He couldn't even fart a single word for a long time.

Cillin listened to the stallholder of the stall he was visiting patting the back of the person who was still pointing with a trembling finger and consoled, "Let it go. That guy has a bad taste. You aren't the only one who suffered."

"Who... is that bastard?"

“Dude, I’ve only learned about it yesterday from a lecturer. When I discovered the truth, I had the impulse to run myself into a wall.”

“Tell me the truth!”

“He’s called Lung Andrea.”

“… This surname is so familiar…” The poor stallholder frowned harder before his eyes abruptly turned wide open, “Andrea… he… he’s from that so-called ‘So Poor All That is Left is Money’ family?!!!”

“Yep.”

“…”

Something crashed on the ground.

Cillin smiled and left while shaking his head.

The Andrea Family’s fame in the galaxy was even bigger than the Douance’s. In truth, the Douance family’s wealth wasn’t too far behind, but the reason the Andrea Family was so famous was due to an incident, where the master of the Andrea Family had complained about being poor at a certain old galactic general’s birthday party, and that old general had joked and said, “Yeah, you’re poor, you’re so poor all that is left is money.”

And so, the ‘So Poor All That is Left is Money’ family’s name became spread throughout the galaxy.

Chapter 19: Something's Strange About That Guy

The items sold in these small stalls were not bad, but they were not really that practical either. As a matter of fact, those who were looking to buy highly practical items would not have come here in the first place. Those who came here were purely after the novelty, and if the seniors could sell them some new toys that they had never seen before then there were still many people who were willing to buy them at a high price.

Continuing forward, a plant stall caught Cillin's attention. Thanks to Genya's education, Cillin would always acquire some greeneries at the places he stayed in.

The amount of flowers on this stall veered on the high side. Some were especially grown by floral enthusiasts, and some were seeds and branches collected when they went out of the planet for training and fieldwork. Cillin had seen in books all of the plants on display before, but the seeds were a different matter.

After a brief observation, Cillin took a fancy to a green vine sealed inside an ecological film and nutrient solution. The name on the label was 'Bigfoot Parthenocissus Tricuspidata'. In comparison to a normal Parthenocissus, BPT had stronger climbing ability. Moreover, its radiation and drought resistance were more than ten times a normal Parthenocissus.

(T/N: From here on it will be short-formed to BPT)

Cillin took a look at the price tag; 8000 galactic credits. Pretty

expensive.

The stallholder was a third grade student. Seeing Cillin's frown, he explained, "Junior, the price may be high, but it is definitely a real bargain. This BPT is unlike the species that you've seen before. We found this vine by accident when we were receiving a training course outside of the planet; we didn't manage to get too many because we were pressed for time. It's rare not only in Planet Seven Lights, but in the entire galaxy."

The stallholder said mysteriously and passed Cillin an infrared optometer. He then placed the vine right in front of himself.

When Cillin saw the picture on the optometer, he was surprised. The image around the vine was incredibly blurry; it was almost impossible to see the stallholder's face behind the vine!

"Get it now?" The stallholder looked very pleased, "This thing is definitely a bargain. If you can grow this vine and make it cover the walls around your living quarters, it will be difficult for the people outside to peep into your home. Its masking effect against night vision telescope or the like is super awesome!"

Before Cillin could express his opinion, a voice interrupted into the conversation.

"Hey, I saw this at the Institute of Botany in Seven Lights' Research Zone yesterday. I heard that it can only live for ten days at most after leaving its main body. Counting back, shouldn't it be the eighth day already?"

Lung Andrea!

Seeing that it was this guy, Cillin did not say anything further. He simply looked at the stallholder with pity in his eyes.

“Ahem, that’s not entirely true. If it’s sealed inside and eco film and a nutrient solution it can still be preserved for ten days or more.” The stallholder was a little embarrassed about being pointed out by Lung. He didn’t expect to meet someone who actually knew the Institute of Botany; how fucking unfortunate.

Long did not even lift up his head as he stared at the vine he picked up, “I heard that the fifty plus research samples at the institute had all died. There are still tens of samples that they weren’t willing to use and were preserved through this method. A few lecturers had gone out to look for the mother plant; they may be able to acquire a huge number of samples in a few days…”

Five minutes later.

With a look of tearless grief, the stallholder accepted 80 galactic credits from Cillin. His eyes on Lung was one that could not wait to flee as far away as possible.

Truly a member of the family ‘so poor all that’s left is money’, Cillin thought to himself.

“So? Do I get a reward for slashing such a hefty price for ya?”

While waving his tree leaf fan Lung looked cheerfully at Cillin.

Cillin did not waste his breath either, “Tell me your request.”

The people of Andrea Family were definitely not some goody-goody fellows. They would not do useless work, and they would not make bad bargains. That was why Cillin had asked Lung to propose to him directly. As long as it was within an acceptable range, then anything was possible.

“Good; an honest man. As for the reward... if you can grow this vine, then you will sell the plantation technique to me before anyone else.”

“And you are sure that I can grow it? Even the researchers of the institute had failed; on what basis do you think that I can do it? Besides, it is as the stallholder says; you buy this purely as a souvenir or for fun’s sake.”

“My reason? Well... let’s just say it’s the intuition of an Andrea.” Lung said very cockily.

“Alright.” Cillin replied with a smile, waved and left the market street.

Cillin wanted to buy a hoverboard so it would be easier to move around in the future; the school zone was quite large after all. A hoverboard was much cheaper than a flying car. It looked like a skateboard, but a manual rudder could be installed to it. It could

even be used to train one's body – if you want to save energy, then you would have to push the ground yourself.

Before he went to buy a hoverboard, Cillin passed by a bookstore. The shop-front was huge, and had a quaint feel to it. It was pretty old.

The bookstore was having an event – their seventh centenary.

There was nothing Cillin could do with the member exclusive incentives, but he could participate in the open quiz. The sources of the questions were publicly known; they all originated from those few books. Those who got everything would be rewarded ten thousand galactic credits, be free to choose any ten books from the bookstore without charge, and awarded a VIP membership card. There was rewards for those who scored between fifty percent to ninety percent correct as well. It was not as if the people who couldn't score even fifty percent were entirely neglected too; at the very least they could get the store's discount coupon.

He didn't have to pay for it anyway, so why not participate in the event? Plus Cillin had read those books before. They were all very basic.

There were many participants. After swiping his Seven Lights card for verification, the store clerk then arranged Cillin an answering panel.

Almost all of the questions were objective, but about twenty percent of the questions were very minute. For example, from

which book and which volume and which chapter did a specific sentence come from; on which year did that specific war happened; there was even a question that asked about a certain medicine's molecular formula...

Thankfully, Cillin's memory was extraordinary. In no time at all, he had answered all one hundred questions, and after he submitted it the system began evaluating immediately.

"100 marks! Congratulations on getting the first prize of the quiz!"

In accordance to the instructions provided on the panel, after Cillin had submitted the results and answering panel to the relevant person in charge, someone led him to the prize area. At the same time, a line that stated, 'Congratulations to Cillin Douance for acquiring first prize in the quiz.' appeared on the winner and award received list on the store's big display.

When the people saw this they couldn't help but exclaim, "Someone scored full marks even with such unusual questions? What a boss."

"Douance? A member of the Douance family?"

"This is the second full marks prize of the day, isn't it?"

"Speaking of which, who was the first person who scored full marks again?"

“Seems to be a ‘Ci’ or something…”

Cillin didn’t know how the people outside were talking about him; he was busy receiving his prize. When ten thousand galactic credits were swiped onto his Seven Lights card, Cillin then went up to the display area to pick his books. Some limited edition books could not be easily found.

The premium display area weren’t open to the public today, but those who acquired a certain prize were an exception. When he arrived at the display area, Cillin noticed that there was one other person who had come to receive the full marks prize and choose his books.

He looked about the same age as Cillin, with a bit of a cultured scholarly air to him. He stood in front of a bookshelf and flipped his book quietly.

“Jincheng, look, there’s actually someone other than you who had scored full marks.” The person who brought Cillin over to choose his books smiled and greeted the person.

“Oh?” The person’s attention was shifted away from the book on his hands to Cillin. He wore a refined and cultured smile, “That’s hard to come by.” He did not look like he wanted to go over.

Cillin returned a courtesy politely before he began reading a book on the bookshelf.

Soon after.

“Hey, Jincheng, don’t you think something’s strange about that guy?” The person who brought Cillin over went beside Jing Cheng and whispered.

Ci Jincheng shifted his gaze away from the book once more and looked towards Cillin not too far away. The more he watched the deeper his frown became.

Too quickly, he was flipping through the pages way too quickly! The next page had followed almost the instant his gaze fell on the current page.

This was not an e-book. They could not ignore the speed at which he flipped through the pages.

“Jincheng, tell me, do you think he really read them? Or is he just putting on a show? He had flipped through the pages like this over a few books already.”

“Who is he?”

“The information displayed on the card during the transfer was ‘Cillin Douance’. He is a new student of this term just like you. Self-sufficient; not specially recruited.”

“The Douance Family?” Ci Jincheng was sure that he remembered everyone with even a little reputation in the Douance Family. But he had never heard of a Cillin.

Chapter 20: I Am A Gentleman

Cillin was immersed inside the book while he copied all of the information into his brain. He didn't care about the gazes of the other two people at the display area at all. As long as there was no danger, Cillin would not exit that state.

After flipping through the books that he thought were useful on the bookshelves, Cillin chose ten of them and turned around. He immediately saw the two people looking at him with strange looks. After smiling towards the duo and nodding his head, he then said to the store clerk, "These ten books, please."

"Oh... right. Right, please wait for a moment." Finally the store clerk came around, and he scanned and demagnetized the ten books Cillin had chosen before stamping a 'Book Store Centenary Quiz First Prize' stamp. Then he returned the books to Cillin, "Please receive your VIP member card at the main service desk."

"Alright, thank you."

After Cillin had left, the store clerk was still struck with some amazement, "Jincheng, did he really read everything?"

"He should have remembered all of the books he read."

"Is he even human! I've heard a long time ago about people with eidetic memory, but it's scary to even hear about someone who can scan things like a machine." While he was speaking, the store clerk had even shuddered a little in response.

“It appears that there are a lot of hidden dragons this term.” Ci Jincheng closed the book and put it back on the bookshelf, “I’m leaving too. I’ll come back after registration if I have the time. That batch of new books will arrive two days later; I will have someone contact you then.”

“Kay, I’ll let the manager hear about this. I’ve submitted the graduation application; it shouldn’t be long before there is a reply. When that happens, I’ll be relying on you to arrange things.”

Ci Jincheng gestured him to relax before leaving the display area as well.

The ten books Cillin had chosen were all hard covers, and it wasn’t a good idea to carelessly put them into his subspace at this place. He could not risk exposing his ring’s secrets, but it was also too strenuous to carry them at his back. Therefore, Cillin had arranged for the books to be put in a trust. He would contact a store employee later to send them over after he had finished registering and tidying up his living quarters. Since he was the quiz’ first prize winner, the store did not charge him extra for the deposit.

Cillin was stopped just as he walked out of the book store.

“Cillin Douance, please wait for a moment!” Ci Jincheng walked swiftly towards him while holding a book in his hands.

“What’s the matter?”

“I just want to remind you that the winners would be announced in the store’s big display. It doesn’t display a picture, but someone will still pay attention to it. It is very common for high grade students to bully a newcomer, and if you do not have conclusive proof the police will not be of too much help.”

Cillin let out a smile upon hearing this, “Thank you for the reminder. May I know who you are?”

“I’m called Ci Jincheng. I’m also a new student this term. But I do know some understanding about Seven Lights University. If you have need of anything then you can always try me.”

After giving it some thought, Cillin said, “Are you familiar with the Trade Zone? Do you know which store sells a more affordable hoverboard?” Since Ci Jincheng had expressed his good will, there was no reason for Cillin to reject it. This was a new and complicated environment after all; the more friends he had, the better.

“I know of a hoverboard store that is pretty affordable; it is admission season now so it should have a lot of special offers. The production quality of their hoverboards is pretty good as well. I bought one at that place before.”

The store Ci Jincheng had led Cillin to had discounted hoverboards on display at the store’s entrance. Cillin took a look at the real thing and found that they were pretty good and, as promised, pretty affordable. They even came with two

complementary open air tea house coupons at the top floor of a commercial building.

In order to express his thanks to Ci Jincheng, Cillin used the two complementary tea house coupons right away.

There were many different-sized round or square tables on top of the commercial building. There was even a huge parasol at the top. Groups of people would often take a lift straight to the top floor to enjoy some tea and snacks after they had finished shopping at the mall.

It wasn't peak hour at the moment, so there were a few empty tables. Cillin and Ci Jincheng sat there and drank tea while they took the time to chat a little about Seven Lights. But they didn't sit for long before eight people came up and surrounded them.

"Yo, so this is where you guys are hanging out, eh? What kind of friends are you to not invite us to have tea with y'all?" One of them greeted them warmly as if they were close brothers.

Cillin and Ci Jincheng exchanged glances. Here comes trouble.

The eight men surrounded the tiny table, and the person who greeted them pulled a chair and sat beside the duo after he walked closer. He grabbed a snack and put it into his mouth while saying leisurely, "They say the two of you just got some money. What good, studious kids you are to be able to answer all those crazy questions correctly."

That's what he said, but there were obvious sarcasm brimming in

his eyes. To these people, those who could answer that kind of questions were all bookworms, and bookworms were very easy bully targets. They had always looked down upon these sickly scholars.

Cillin had changed out of his clothes after he left the port, and Ci Jincheng's attire was not showy as well. They were both dressed in modest clothings so their identities did not look profound. It was no wonder that these people had picked them up so quickly; they were sure that neither Cillin nor Jincheng had the background to back themselves.

However...

The person's hand holding the snack froze in mid-air and even began to shake – a gun barrel was propped right at his head.

Other than Cillin, these people did not even notice Ci Jincheng's actions. They just felt that out of nowhere a gun had appeared just like that, and it was only when the gun was pressed against the head did they realize that their target had taken out a gun since god-knows-when.

Gun control was very strict in Seven Lights. Most people did not have the qualification to equip firearms, so they had not expected that one of these two very easy looking targets to actually have a gun. Moreover, this scholarly-looking guy was most definitely powerful!

All eight people was frozen in place. It was obvious that this was

the first time they had run into such a target. They did not dare to escape, and they were even scared of speaking aloud. Even their breathings had turned cautious. Their numbers meant nothing against a gun. The air felt like an icy hand grabbing them by their throats as a cold chill instantly spread throughout their entire body.

Cillin was surprised for a second during that instant Ci Jincheng had taken out his gun, but besides that no discernable emotions could be seen from his appearance. He continued to drink tea and enjoy his snacks; it'll be a waste not to finish the food he paid.

Ci Jincheng held a tea cup with his other hand and drank his tea leisurely, "I am a gentleman. I dislike solving problems through violence."

Like hell you're a gentleman!

All eight people shouted inside their hearts. WTF, if this doesn't count as solving problem through violence then what is? A high-energy laser cannon?!

"W... we..." The guy with a gun to his head stuttered for so long he nearly bit his own tongue.

"Out." Ci Jincheng did not plan to listen to an explanation at all. A so-called explanation in this situation would be pure bullshit. His fingers moved, and the gun vanished. Ci Jincheng withdrew his hands and continued to drink his tea. From the beginning to the end, he did not look at the person even once.

They knew that it wasn't that the gun had disappeared into thin air. It was just that the other party's movements was too quick, and they could not capture it at all.

Even a fool would have realized that Ci Jincheng was not to be trifled with the moment he took out a gun. Anyone who continued to stay here would be an idiot!

Without even looking at the escaping buffoons, Ci Jincheng continued to wear his scholarly smile, "The best way to solve problems in Seven Lights is absolute domination."

Cillin lifted his cup and toasted, "Great idea."

After they finished their drinks, the duo exchanged numbers and Cillin rode his new hoverboard and headed towards the global train station. There was special slow lanes in the air specifically for slower flight transportations like hoverboards and the like. As for the faster vehicles like flying cars, they had their own lanes.

Cillin bought some instant snacks and put them inside his bag, so he wouldn't need to look for a store when he got hungry. It was a special kind of feeling to ride a hoverboard in mid-air while looking at the skyscrapers on his two sides and the pedestrians below. Cillin did not use the hand controlled rudder because it would deplete more energy. Energy ores and batteries weren't cheap, plus Cillin was confident that he could control the hoverboard without relying on the hand controlled rudder.

When he reached the station, the next train was still twenty minutes away. Therefore Cillin put away his hoverboard, bought a newspaper and waited while sitting on a platform not too far away.

The advantage of a hoverboard was that it wouldn't take up too much space after it was retracted. The more than a meter long hoverboard was less than twenty centimeters after it was retracted. Since he kept food inside his bag, Cillin had set the hoverboard at a side.

"Hey, the child over there!"

No one answered.

"Hey, the child reading a newspaper over there!"

Still no one answered.

"Hey, the child over there reading a 'Seven Lights Weekly' with a hoverboard on his left and a bag on his right!"

Chapter 21: You Have The Right To Be Specially Recruited

Cillin raised his head. He was reading a ‘Seven Lights Weekly’ with a hoverboard on his left and a bag on his right, but the ‘child’ part was kinda...

Following the voice, Cillin saw an old man with grey hair shouting at him from a seat not too far away. He was holding a bunch of parts in his hands.

Seeing that Cillin had looked over, the old man pointed at the edge of Cillin’s seat and said, “Child, give me a hand and pass that over.”

When the old man spoke, he was panting a little. It was probably due to exhaustion.

Cillin picked up the parts that had rolled to the edge of his seat, stood up and handed them over.

“Thank you, my child.”

“Sir, I’m almost eighteen years old already.”

“Oh, you’re almost eighteen eh, child? Your old man here is a hundred and thirty years old.”

Cillin: “…”

Oh well. A child it is.

After the old man accepted the parts, he began assembling the parts in his hands; joining every socket with its corresponding connection. The assembly of many connections was very technical, and those who were unfamiliar with the task would take up to tens of minutes just to link a single connection. But this old man had linked them nearly within a second, and from the looks of it, he was very skillful in this job. Every one of his fingers had fully played their roles: supporting, balancing, pressing…

The old man might have been a little breathless earlier, but his hands were very steady. The parts in his hands were like many fragments of arts being assembled little by little into a striking work of art.

The old man was assembling his work very seriously, and Cillin was watching very seriously as well. Through observing the old man’s action, he could learn many assembling techniques. Cillin had never seen someone able to make full use of their fingers to this extent. Even the gaps between his fingers had played their roles. Parts danced on his fingers before they were assembled onto the main body in the next moment.

Other than skillful fingers, Cillin also noticed that the old man was incredibly experienced in differentiating parts. He only needed to look once at the connection and sweep a glance over the pile of parts on top of his knees, and he would be able to choose without fault the one that was needed.

While the old man was in the process of assembling, a three-dimensional image had appeared inside Cillin's head as well. When a part was assembled, the next part to be assembled into the connection was already formed inside his head. Afterwards, Cillin's gaze and the old man's finger would fall onto on the correct part almost at the exact same time.

Ten minutes later, a small fifteen centimeters tall robot was complete. Cillin had watched the assembly process from beginning to the end, and he knew very well how complicated was the assembly of circuit connections, chips, parts and so on in a robot. Even some of the engineers he had met back in Planet Brown Earth would not be able to assemble this robot to completion without taking more than half a day, and whether the results would pass a quality check was also unknown. But the product the old man had completed in only ten minutes would most definitely be graded as outstanding if tested with a machine!

"Eh?" It was only until he finished the assembly that the old man realized that the child who had helped him picked up the parts was actually watching from the side. His eyes flashed with sudden interest, "You interested, child?"

Cillin glanced at the small robot dancing smoothly in his hands and answered, "Nope." Finished, he was ready to turn around and return to his original seat.

"Come on, child, don't be so hasty to leave. Do talk with this old man and keep him company; it's so boring, sitting here alone waiting for the train."

But I see that you're having a good time, Cillin criticized on the inside.

"Let me get my bag and hoverboard first."

"Just leave them there; no one's going to take it. Come quickly." Afraid that Cillin would run away, the old man moved away and patted at the empty seat beside him; motioning for Cillin to sit.

Having no choice, Cillin glanced once at his backpack and hoverboard before sitting down.

"Child, you've seen how I assembled the parts?"

Cillin nodded.

"Did you see everything clearly?"

"There are some parts that I don't understand."

"Which?"

Cillin pointed out his doubts. He might have memorized the old man's assembling movements completely, but there were a few places which principles he did not understand.

The old man was quite surprised by the questions Cillin had asked. They weren't questions that could be asked without a certain level of understanding towards the assembly of this robot model. He is a learned man. However, the old man did not show this on his face and focused on resolving Cillin's doubts one by one. His explanations were simple and direct; he did not act like those ostentatious lecturers who used many difficult terminologies to flaunt their knowledge.

"The electric circuit is a robot's nervous system. It takes a lot of effort to install this nervous system accurately and without fault. This old man's advantage lies in his experience. Practice makes perfect."

After connecting the electric circuits, the old man then pointed at a few parts of the robot, "These things may look simple, but no effort was skimped in the process of manufacturing them. Let's have an example. You younglings love to play with guns, and some who are well off would often order barrels or firearms and so on. But you would not pay attention to this manufacturing process. We will not talk about design; that is an exhausting work. After designing, you will have to choose the materials, ream the barrel, cut the rifling grooves... all of these processes requires precision."

The old man grew more and more engrossed as he spoke. He had even cited a few hot selling gun models at the moment as examples and picked them apart. Among them were the DKC series multi-functional titanium gun that was rather loved by youngsters and the 'Carnage Elf' Cillin had seen before.

"But I heard recently that that bunch of idiots in the Douance

Family had come up with a ‘Carnage Elf II’. I haven’t seen the specifics, but I hope it won’t have a fatal flaw like ‘Carnage Elf I’…”

The old man was shooting spittle everywhere with a completely flushed face. Although Cillin did not say anything, seeing the silent agreement in Cillin’s eyes, the old man’s criticisms had only grown more and more heated.

Still, Cillin sweatdropped on the inside. That bunch of idiots in the Douance Family… right now he’s wearing the Douance’s family name under his belt.

Di—— Di—— Di——

The bell rang. The train had already arrived. The people waiting for the train by the station stood up, and the people inside the waiting room too poured out in succession.

“Sir, let me help you up the train first.”

Cillin lifted the two bags filled with parts and was ready to help him carry them up the train before getting off again for his own bag and hoverboard. The weight of these two bags of parts were nothing for Cillin, but the old man was old, and it would be strenuous work for someone his age. Plus Cillin was rather impressed by the old man’s research spirit. No matter how tired he was, the moment matters related to his own research were brought up, he could ignore his fatigue completely.

“Hah, you’re a pretty good child. What’s your name? Who is the chief mentor of the mechanical engineering course? I’ll talk to your chief mentor later and have him give you more credits.” The old man asked while walking towards the train entrance.

Although in principle, a student’s GPA was strictly given according to their average results, in truth there were many elements involved in the final GPA given. If someone at the top had given a recommendation or notice, then the class mentor would grade a little higher. Every course had many mentors, but the number of chief mentors would not exceed five. Since the old man had started right off the bat with a chief mentor, it appeared that his status in Seven Lights was rather high. But didn’t a person of that level normally have their own private vehicles?

“I would really have to thank you, but I am a new student just starting this term. I haven’t even registered yet, so I wouldn’t know who my mentor is.”

“You are specially recruited?”

“No, my family spent some money and threw me in to continue my education.”

The old man really was surprised. After a pause he said, “You have the right to be specially recruited!”

The old man’s words were very firm. Even the usual prefixes such as ‘I feel’ or ‘I think’ was missing as he said it directly and vigorously. That ‘my word is law’ vigor of his was probably related

to the old man's identity; he was accustomed to such a way of speaking.

The old man appeared very dissatisfied with the fact that a student like Cillin wasn't recruited and humphed once, "Your name!"

Cillin smiled and put the two bags of parts beside the old man's seat, "I am called..."

Vroom—— vroom——

The sound of speeding flying cars resounded.

There were two convertible flying cars; one crimson and another bright yellow. When they streaked past the train station, the owner of the red car reached out and took Cillin's bag.

It really was quite the crime in broad daylight, but the people at the train station seemed to be used to this and did not have much of a reaction.

Obviously, the old man had seen it as well. His eyes were open wide and round. He even told Cillin earlier that no one would take it.

"You go first." Cillin said before he jumped swiftly off the train, grabbed his remaining hoverboard, activated and unfolded it, and chased after the criminal.

“Oh dear. If there isn’t anything important in the bag then just let them have it. Isn’t it pointless to chase a flying car with a hoverboard?” Someone commented.

“Yeah, it’s not like such crimes are uncommon. Those people on the flying cars must be awfully bored. It’s not like they’re short of cash or anything; they did it purely for the heck of it and pissing off someone else. Even if they were caught later by the police, the worst that’ll happen is that they get a fine, pay some money and settle everything behind closed doors. That’s why these people aren’t afraid...”

Listening to the discussions of the people next to him, the old man stayed quiet for two seconds before pressing his communicator and searched for a number on the popped up screen. He dialed after confirming the number.

Chapter 22: Are You Sure That's A Hoverboard And Not A Plane?

At Seven Light University training base, inside the chief's office of the training division office building, a middle-aged man and a seventeen or eighteen years old well built young man were talking to each other.

"It's been two days. How is your experience in Seven Lights, Knight?" the middle-aged man asked the young man sitting opposite him. He wore the smile of an elder caring for his junior, and even though he was simply sitting, his every movement spoke of his qualities as a soldier.

Traces of impatience appeared on the face of the young man called Knight. But he was facing a senior after all, so his tone wasn't overly rude, "One word: Boring!"

"Seven Lights isn't a military academy after all. There's no way they would let students come in much contact with firearms and mechs. Even when they do, there isn't much firepower involved, nor any large scale mock battles. Still, Seven Lights' online training platform is pretty good." the middle-aged man expressed his helplessness about certain matters.

"But ultimately that isn't the real thing. There's a difference between facing down a real gun and a simulated one. Plus, the people here have terrible constitutions!" Knight's face was filled with disdain. He had fought a few rounds with some high grade students for the past two days, and although some of them were barely passable, that was all there was to it. None of them were

truly worth his attention. If he wanted to improve his fighting abilities, he could only seek out the people from the training division . Some of the people in the police and training division were transferred over from the galactic army. Unlike the ones in an academy, the killing intent of a soldier in combat greatly excited Knight.

"This isn't a military school after all..." The man was helpless as well. He couldn't remember how many times he had repeated this for the past two days already, "How about apologizing to your dad and taking the opportunity to have him arrange for you to go a Sector C military academy? You haven't registered here anyway."

"Impossible! I'd rather be bored until graduation than apologize to him! Not to mention I wasn't wrong in the first place! Those bastards should be beaten! They deserved to have their asses kicked!" The moment the matter was brought up, an air of hostility immediately rose from Knight's body. Wasn't it just a small case of beating up a bunch of noisy, pretentious spoiled brats? The next time he sees them, he'd beat them just the same.

The middle-aged man smiled wryly. This father and son duo sure were similar to each other. The moment that stubborn temper of theirs acted up, it was difficult to change their minds. As he was about to say something, his communicator suddenly rang, and he motioned for Knight to give him a moment. Looking down, it was a number he didn't recognize, and it wasn't even a video communication, just a voice call. Wondering who it was, O'Neill picked up his communicator and spoke with the vigor of the chief of the training division, "This is Huo Neil."

“Ah, Little Nail…”

The moment he heard the voice, Huo Neil abruptly sprung up from his seat, pressed his feet reflexively into a standard military pose and answered with a powerful voice, “YES SIR!”

The shockwave nearly caused Knight to tumble from his seat. Open-mouthed, he gaped at the man, whose elderly demeanor had completely vanished, standing rigidly at attention while listening intently to the person lecturing him from the other end of the communicator.

“Yessir… yessir, don’t worry sir, I will notify the police division to act immediately… yessir, I know, don’t worry sir… yessir, take care of yourself, sir!”

Once the comm call had ended, Huo Neil’s body finally relaxed a little. His expression was bitter; far bitter than the one he wore when he spoke with Knight earlier. Why did Sir Mo change his number again? Speaking of which, Sir Mo has been changing his number more and more frequently as of late. It’s probably because the number of visitors had increased with the deluge of new students…

‘Uncle Huo, what happened?”

“We’ll talk later!” Without waiting to explain too much to Knight, Huo Neil turned and called the police division. It didn’t take long for the comm link to be established.

“Huh? Why are you looking for me at this time, Nails? You got bored and wanted to get some practice in?” The other party joked.

Huo Neil ignored his teasing and said seriously, “Gerrard, I’ve just received a report about a robbery at the trade zone’s global train station. Two flying cars robbed the backpack of a student waiting for the train…”

On the other side, Gerrard couldn’t help but press a hand to his forehead. Normally they couldn’t care less about such a thing. It was just a minor issue between students and almost nothing major ever came of it. The mess’d be over in the blink of an eye. Plus, a stolen backpack was hardly anything important, not to mention those rich kids speeding on flying cars didn’t lack money at all. Still, someone who could mobilize the police division through Huo Neil obviously had some weight of their own. What annoyed Gerrard was that it would be terribly irritating if it turned out that the police were getting dragged into a quarrel between the offspring of any of the big families.

“Nails, just give me the word. Who made the report?”

“Our old boss General Mo’s father; Seven Light’s vice headmaster Sir Mo…”

Before Huo Neil could finish, Gerrard immediately replied in full righteousness, “How dare they committed something as atrocious as a flying car robbery under broad daylight? This is downright heinous!”

Huo Neil: “…”

Gerrard turned towards the window and roared at his subordinates practicing outside, “Alright grunts, round up! We’re mobilizing! Anyone who’s slow will be stripped, dumped outside, and forced to run naked around the whole city!” Finished, he then turned back towards the communicator, “Nails, tell Sir Mo not to worry. We’ll mobilize and take care of those itchy little bastards immediately!”

After he turned the communicator off, Huo Neil pressed a control button on his hand and entered a few coordinates. A screen rolled down, and a few pictures appeared. They were satellite images of the two flying cars and Cillin riding a hoverboard captured from the top, sides and front. Knight had also crept closer to watch curiously.

There was a no man’s land between the trade zone and the Sleepless City of the entertainment zone. A green wave was set off by the three red, yellow and blue vehicles as they raced across the boundless forest landscape.

“Fuck, what the hell is in the bag? That brat actually chased us this far on that shit hoverboard of his!” The guy in the bright yellow flying car complained.

“It’s all food other than a newspaper, a tablet and some clothes. The materials of these clothes look a little rich, but other than that, there’s nothing valuable.” The other guy in the crimson car flipped through Cillin’s bag and answered.

“Holy shit, he chased us this far just for these? It’s another one of those hotheads; god knows how many high efficiency batteries he’s used!”

These people had assumed that the reason Cillin was able to chase them this far was because he used high efficiency batteries.

“Yeah right? Tsk, a mere shit hoverboard wants to catch up to a flying car? Not even a hundred high efficiency batteries will be enough! That kid totally has a brain fart!”

“Forget him. Let’s speed it up. That kid probably isn’t going to last much longer, plus that shit hoverboard of his has a poor tolerance for high efficiency batteries. He better not explode mid-chase!”

“Haha, that’ll be fun. Let’s wait and watch that kid’s hoverboard explode into smithereens then! Woohoo~~”

The two youngsters whooped insolently as they sped up further.

Cillin’s eyes narrowed into slits. He increased the strength beneath his feet and adjusted his body into an angle that would minimize drag. An invisible cone shaped aura had surrounded Cillin, helping him break through the air. He wore no goggles, but this speed could not affect Cillin’s vision in the slightest.

The sound of his foot pushing the hoverboard forwards broke

through the air again and again. It was as if Cillin had merged with the hoverboard right now. Like a blue homing bullet he flew with speed and flexibility.

Cillin was calculating the other party's car speed, the push force he needed to use, the number of pushes and the hoverboard's tolerance. This hoverboard could not have caught up to those two flying cars at the front with just its energy and maximum speed. That was why Cillin had decreased the energy's thrusting power and used his own strength to push forwards instead.

Inside the training division's office, Huo Neil and Knight stared at the screen intently.

"This kid is pretty unusual, eh?" Huo Neil asked.

"He didn't use the manual rudder and controlled his movements completely through his own will. From the way he deftly dodged the obstacles,you can see that his mental control is very high. Moreover, in order to conserve energy, all of the energy originally reserved for the manual rudder has been used to maintain the hoverboard's flight. If he had started chasing from the train station at the trade zone, and was able to chase this far without being thrown off by the flying car, it means that his stamina is pretty good. From the shockwave he generated when pushing the hoverboard, you can see that this guy is very strong." At this point Knight's eyes were brimming with strong fighting will, "Who is he?" Such a person couldn't possibly be unknown.

Huo Neil entered a series of passwords and coordinates on another screen. Through identifying and locking on to the position

of the Seven Lights card, he could confirm the identity of the cardholder.

"Cillin Douance? He's from the Douance Family?"

On the other side, a dedicated passenger car was flying from the trade zone to the entertainment zone in mid-air. A few students were idle, and so looked at the endless greenery outside the window.

Suddenly, one of the students' eyes grew wider and wider, "Holy fuck, is that a hoverboard that guy is riding?!"

The people beside looked outside the window, and the scene of the hoverboard chasing relentlessly after the two flying cars fell into their eyes. In fact, they quickly overtook the passenger car.

"Are you sure that's a hoverboard and not a plane?"

"Well duh, is there a plane that's shaped like a hoverboard?"

"Actually... I think they're advertising the hoverboard, aren't they?" Again someone expressed their opinion.

Someone looked around and said, "But I don't see any shooting crew around?"

"If it really is a hoverboard then I'm going to buy one just like

that. I just don't know what the brand is."

"Don't worry, I took a picture just now!"

Regardless of the discussions of the people on the passenger car, all Cillin wanted right now was to smack the two robbers and fish for compensation. It was likely that his hoverboard would be unusable after this flight.

The two flying cars at the front continued to accelerate, and Cillin too increased his pushing force and frequency. The sounds of his foot detonating the air with loud bangs could be heard clearly even by the passengers inside the passenger car.

Before long, the three red, yellow and blue figures had vanished before the passengers' eyes.

Not good. The hoverboard is about to reach its limits. Cillin swiftly calculated in his mind the angle of his next step and its success rate.

Suddenly, the duo chatting inside their cars heard an explosion from their backs.

"Hah, it exploded! That kid's hoverboard had exploded!"

The guy in the crimson car was overjoyed as he started to turn his head around and enjoy the miserable sight of the kid behind him. But after he heard a sudden bang, his eyes blurred, and the

flying car slammed uncontrollably towards the ground.

The next moment yet another bang occurred, and the other bright yellow flying car too was kicked into the air while performing many high difficulty rolls.

Huo Neil and Knight, staring at the screen inside the training division office, was dumbfounded.

Chapter 23: Hoverboy

The two people inside the flying cars might be confused as to what just happened, but Huo Neil and Knight saw it crystal clear in front of the screen inside the training division's office.

The instant the hoverboard exploded, Cillin had leveraged the force of the explosion, zoomed over to the crimson flying car and slapped its rear with his palm. At the same time, he used the energy of the slap to swiftly kick towards the bright yellow car next to it.

In the blink of an eye, one flying car was slapped down to the ground, and the other was kicked into the air.

The reason Huo Neil and Knight were shocked wasn't because of Cillin slapping or kicking the two cars away. They were shocked by his ability to grasp the perfect timing.

The act of borrowing the hoverboard's momentum after it exploded was a risky thing. If he was a moment too early, he would not have been able to able to leverage its pushing force; and if he was a moment too late, he would have been hurt by the explosion's shockwave. At the same time, Cillin was able to accurately home onto the crimson flying car's body after he flew out, before leveraging the force of his own actions again and kicked the bright yellow flying car away.

Knight pointed at Cillin on the screen who was landing safely on the ground, "How is it possible that such a person is unknown?"

Huo Neil did not answer Knight's question and exclaimed instead, "He definitely deserves Sir Mo's protection alright! Still, since when did the Douance have such a person in their family?"

It was obvious that Cillin was a veteran who had fought countless battles. There was no way he could be one of those fresh greenhorns. Moreover, Huo Neil could see that the kid had acted pretty decisively, without a bit of hesitation to be seen in his movements.

Inside the vast green woods, after two crashing sounds, Cillin slowly walked beside the crimson flying car. The body of the car was already warped, and some of its internal components were scattered to the surroundings or even further away. The energy system of the flying car had not exploded, since it was built with increased safety in mind. The driver did not suffer too much injuries thanks to the air bag, even though he was still inside the car. However, he was obviously still shaken. His eyes were dull, his body was shivering continuously, and his teeth were chattering.

Cillin looked at the man once before grabbing his backpack from inside the car. He counted the items inside, and felt his mouth twitch. .

He pulled away the air bag with one hand, then grabbed the man's face and shook him a little. It was only then the man's focus slowly shifted onto Cillin. His already pale face turned even whiter from fright as he stuttered, "Don't... don't kill me... You can take the bag. I'll pay you... all the money you want..." This time he was truly afraid. He had never encountered such a thing. When his car

was slapped down from the sky, he had felt as if his entire body was wrought with despair.

"You make it sound like I'm the one who robbed you." Cillin took out his tablet and wrote something on it. Then he passed it over to the man to have a look, "You will have to compensate me – as you should – since your criminal acts have caused me severe losses. Look, the details are all written in there. A hoverboard is 2000 galactic credits; the expended batteries are 500 galactic credits. You ate three of my snacks, and every one of them costs 5 galactic credits so it's 15 galactic credits in total. However, I bought these from the trade zone and there is no way I am going back to buy them again, so let's round them up to 30. There is also 10000 galactic credits worth of emotional trauma compensation. But of course, the most important thing is that this matter has wasted my time. As you know, time is more precious than gold, so I guess I'll just have to suffer the loss and fine you another 10000 galactic credits..." After summing everything up Cillin concluded, "They all add up to a total of fifty thousand galactic credits. Is that a problem?"

The man lost his will to think long ago. He could only shake and nod his head.

"Alright, that's it then. Press your fingerprint here." Cillin put the tablet into his hands.

The man shakingly pressed his fingerprint on the tablet.

"Where's your card?"

The man shuddered again and took out his Seven Lights card.

“Wow, an orange rank. Which grade are you?”

“Se... second...”

It was at this moment that a police siren rang. the eyes of the man inside the car, who was full of fear, suddenly lit up as if they had found their savior.

The police had sent a whole team of police cruisers. In the past, it would’ve been incredible if even a single police car was sent out to deal with such a case, but today, it could be said that they had mobilized with the utmost seriousness.

Gerrard had led the team personally. Along the way, there were only three swiftly moving targets on the surveillance monitor in his car, and he could differentiate which one was a flying car and which one a hoverboard. This was because both hoverboards and flying cars had GPS tracking system installed in them. However, Gerrard would not know what exactly was going on from this information alone, so when he saw the hoverboard’s signal vanish from the monitor, he felt as if he had fallen into an ice pool. Crap, how the hell is he going to explain this to Sir Mo?

Although both flying cars had crashed, their car bodies were still intact, so the GPS signals had not disappeared as well. That was why Gerrard had urged his men to move faster after he saw both cars coming to a sudden and bizarre stop. But when they saw the

real scene, everyone in the police team was a little dumbfounded.

Both flying cars had crashed? What happened?

Right now, the only person Gerrard was concerned about was Cillin. Huo Neil had already sent Cillin's information to Gerrard, so Gerrard had rushed right at Cillin the moment he arrived at the scene and saw him.

"Cillin Douance, is it? I am the captain of the police force Gerrard." Gerrard said with a friendly smile. When he saw that Cillin was okay, the weight on his chest was lifted.

Cillin was leaning against the car, and when he saw Gerrard walking over, he was sure that he did not recognize this person. But before he could answer, they abruptly heard the person still inside the car screaming, "Help!" He cried out while did his best to extract himself from the car before running right at Gerrard who had a police emblem on his uniform.

Gerrard had dumped the guy running at him on his men at the back. He had no time to bother with him right now.

"We received a report that there was a flying car robbery incident in the train station at the trade zone, so we need to get a handle of the situation right now..."

"Good day, captain Gerrard. I am very thankful that the police could come over to uphold justice, but we have already come to an

agreement and settled behind closed doors."

That would be the best outcome alright! Gerrard shouted in his heart. There was no way he was getting involved in the contest between the younger generation of the great families. But when he thought of Sir Mo, Gerrard still gave the person who robbed the bag and deducted a demerit in credits.

"Captain Gerrard, do you have a card reader with you? I would like to borrow it for a moment and make a transfer."

"A transfer? Uh, yeah I have one in my car."

Gerrard led Cillin over to his car, and when he saw Cillin swiped the card, transferred the funds and very calmly returned the card back to its original owner, he couldn't help but think that they might have really acted unnecessarily by coming over.

With Gerrard's experience, naturally he was able to guess what had happened after seeing the scene. He couldn't help but think much more highly of Cillin. If he had come because of Sir Mo's face, then he had acknowledged Cillin's abilities now.

The other person in the bright yellow car was also brought over. His condition was pretty much the same as the guy in the crimson car. He was shivering so much that the police almost had to carry him all the way.

After the major matters had been taken care of, Gerrard had his

men dealt with the remaining matters on site and drove Cillin and a few more team members away. However, Cillin had gotten off the car after he had arrived at the edge of entertainment zone's Sleepless City. He still needed to survey the state of affairs in Sleepless City.

Once Cillin had gotten off, a police team member beside Gerrard exclaimed, "Captain, that kid's actually a King Kong, isn't he?"

To chase a flying car with a hoverboard? It was a seriously unimaginable feat. Moreover, he had relied on a hoverboard that uses a common battery alone to wreck the two flying cars. Not everyone could do this; not even Gerrard would dare say that he could do the same without a chance of failure.

At the same time, a video was uploaded into Seven Lights' internet, and the name 'Hoverboy' began to circulate within Seven Lights.

Chapter 24: The Sickest Accommodation In Town (1 Of 2)

There were many people who heard of ‘Hoverboy’, but very few actually knew that ‘Hoverboy’ was Cillin, the reason being that Cillin’s figure was blurry and his face was unclear in the video. When Cillin had chased after the flying cars, the air around him had extruded and twisted abnormally. Therefore, the sharpness of the video captured by the person on the passenger car was poor, and later on it was also impossible to revert the twisted parts of the scene. Because of this, the person who recorded the video had even bought a more professional filming equipment; so that he wouldn’t regret it again if he ran into a similar situation in the future.

Cillin had seen that video by chance. Luckily, he had changed into a new set of clothes when he arrived at Sleepless City, since the one before was worn due to air friction. Otherwise, even if the Hoverboy’s true face was unknown, his clothes would still make him pretty recognizable.

After he had arrived at Sleepless City, Cillin was deeply impressed by the money making abilities of this entertainment system. Many of those who came to Seven Lights – especially those with a strong background – had spent more than eighty percent of their expenses in this place. In comparison, the tuition fee or whatever was practically nothing.

Playgrounds, bars, arcades, hotels, casinos... the madness of entertainment knows neither day nor night. There were disputes happening at almost every moment in Sleepless City, but the police would normally not involve themselves too much. There were

clear rules in Seven Lights, and the people were allowed to go crazy amongst themselves as long as the matters were within acceptable bounds. However, if they were to exceed that limit, then Seven Lights' punishments would be very severe. There were plenty of people who had been expelled because they caused too much trouble.

In addition, this place also had its relevant laws and regulations. The moment they were infracted upon, the police and training division would mobilize to execute these laws. And who were the police and training division? They were men sent over by the galactic military who had gone through many battlefields of life and death. Resistance was futile.

Cillin had stayed in Sleepless City for two days before he continued to the next stop. Within the next three days, Cillin had visited the rest of the zones such as the training zone, the research zone and so on. However, these zones were more restrictive and Cillin did not have the permission to enter them right now. But still, even though Cillin could only observe these zones from the perimeter, he still had a profound experience as to how unique these zones were.

On the last day of registration, Cillin took the train and returned to the school zone. He still had a lot of time to register going by his original plan. The reason Cillin had wandered the zones before registering was because he could only wander inside the school zone after registration and was not permitted to leave freely. Once the registration was done, a student's profile would be fully activated. They would become an official Seven Lights students, and Seven Lights was more strict towards their new students. This was the education method most academies had adopted in Sector

B.

Cillin arrived at the registration center following the map's guidance. The last 48 hours before the registration ends were also the busiest, but there would definitely be no one during the final hour of the registration.

He could already see from afar that there weren't any students at the registration center except two employees sitting at the spot while shaking their arms. It looked like their workload today was pretty huge, and it tired them out.

"They came this early to Seven Lights University, and yet they had all ran to Sleepless City to have fun before rushing back to register on the last day. It tires the hell out of me!" One of the employees complained.

"What can we do? It's the same every year. Those pampered kids would rot from boredom inside the school zone if they registered a few days earlier." The other guy lying down on his chair answered.

"One more hour left; there should not be anyone else. I'm going to take a nap and leave once its time."

"I'm afraid not. There's another kid at the front."

Both men looked somewhat sick when they saw Cillin gradually coming closer. They could not even hide the impatience on their faces.

After reading Cillin's card, one of the man pointed at the small device beside his hands, "Swipe your Seven Lights card here."

Once the Seven Lights card was swiped, Cillin's information appeared on the screen.

Hmm? The Douance? That's a great family.

After seeing Cillin's information, both employees' attitudes improved a lot. They forced out a smile and gave Cillin a tablet, "Please fill in this form.There is also the choice of accommodations and more at the back..." the employee paused for a second, "It looks like there are no single accommodations and... huh? There are no double accommodations as well. I'm very sorry, but think the only choice left for you is a quad accommodations. Still, a quad accommodation has its own benefits. Its space is huge and the space distribution in Seven Lights has always been 1+1+1+1 smaller than 2+2, and 2+2 smaller than 4. Moreover, the quad accommodations were all in the style of villas..."

As the person had explained, a quad accommodation did have the biggest living space out of all the choices; bigger than even four single accommodations put together into one. However, Cillin also knew that this so-called extra space was just an additional courtyard. Most people couldn't care less about it, but Cillin was an exception in this case.

The most expensive living quarter among Seven Lights' dormitories was a single villa, and the best value proposition was

actually a studio apartment. But these two choices were also obviously the most popular, so those who came later would not be able to choose them. Moreover, a quad accommodation had always been thought to be the kind of living quarter that was filled with strife and troubles. After all, it was easy to gain mutual dislike for each other with four people squeezed inside a single apartment. There were plenty of cases in Seven Lights where the conflicts between housemates had caused entire villas to be destroyed.

Other than the interior space, the reason they were called twin or quad accommodations were because everyone would have their own set of training room, rest room, bathroom, study and so on. A single accommodation would only have one set of each, whereas a quad accommodation would have four sets of everything other than the courtyard, the living room and the kitchen.

“I’ll have the quad villa then.” Although the ideal choice for Cillin was a studio apartment, but if he couldn’t get one then no harm done. Regardless, these living conditions were far better than the place he used to live in.

While Cillin was filling in the form, another person had walked in from the registration center’s entrance. It was someone familiar.

“Eh? So you’re registering at this time as well, Cillin.” Ci Jincheng shut the book in his hands and came over with a smile.

Ci Jincheng’s Seven Lights card was orange in color, and it meant that he was specially recruited. The smiles on the two employees’ faces immediately grew wide as they enthusiastically introduced Ci

Jincheng to the registration process.

The reason they were this enthusiastic wasn't only because that Ci Jincheng was a specially recruited student. The most important factor was the information displayed on Ci Jincheng's card. The surname Ci wasn't common in this galaxy, and when put together with Ci Jincheng's qualification to be specially recruited, the two employees immediately thought of that particular family – the leading authority of academic studies, the Ci Family!

Within the academia, there wasn't anyone who hadn't heard about the Ci Family. The frequency of Ci family members appearing on the two top magazines 'Glory' and 'Code' would amaze most people, and their influence on galactic military and politics could not be underestimated as well. It was no wonder that these two men were this enthusiastic.

According to normal registration procedures, every accommodation should be filled up completely before they could arrange for the next one. But both Cillin and Ci Jincheng had solid backgrounds, and they knew each other. So the employees didn't mind doing them a favor and opened a new quad villa; the previous villa was already three man full anyway, so it was only a matter of time before they opened a new one.

While the duo was filling in their information, a sudden engine rumble came from afar. There was the sound of a flying car, and a hoverboard.

Screeeech! a luxurious, red gemstone-like flying car swung its tail and drifted into a stylish stop. When the ceiling of the car opened,

a familiar face appeared.

Lung Andrea!

The hoverboard had also paused in front of the entrance at the same time the flying car had come to a stop. A sturdy young man had jumped down from the hoverboard, withdrew the transport and walked in. The two men had entered almost at the same time.

Ci Jincheng’s eyelids twitched when he saw the duo. These people...

Chapter 25: The Sickest Accommodation In Town (2 Of 2)

When they saw the duo walking in, the smiles on the employees' faces grew wider. However, their mentality were different from when they faced Ci Jincheng. Right now, the duo were trying their best to smile as honestly and warmly as possible, but in truth they were beginning to sweat all over their backs.

With their insight, naturally they noticed that the flying car that looked like it was inlaid with a layer of red gemstones was not something any ordinary rich family could buy. And then there was that hoverboard. To begin with, it was a military grade hoverboard! A military grade hoverboard was incomparable to the average flying car, and there was only one place in the entire Seven Lights University that had this kind of hoverboard: the training division. They both knew very well what kind of people resided in the training division. If this boy could get a military grade hoverboard from the training division, then it was obvious that he had quite the military background. Those with military background weren't easy to deal with.

"Yo, student BPT! We meet again! This is fate!" Lung let out a bright smile. He hadn't really expected to meet Cillin at this time.

While Lung might be driving a deluxe flying car, he was still wearing the same clothes Cillin had seen him in at the trade zone. It was a really incongruous sight.

"What a coincidence." Cillin answered with a smile. Cillin did not feel disgust towards this person; in fact he thought that he was

pretty interesting. A prominent background could not conceal this man's abilities. There might be a lot of people who missed this, but Cillin was sure that Lung's true strength was not weak at all.

As for the other young man who had arrived riding a hoverboard, he wore with him an air of arrogance concealed within a layer of fortitude, and when he saw Cillin, a terrific fighting will flashed across his eyes like a star. Even as mere bystanders, the two employees felt a sense of fear towards him.

This young man was none other than the one who had watched with Huo Neil the whole process of Cillin slapping down the flying cars at the training division, Knight.

When he saw Knight's eyes, Cillin felt confused. And who the heck is this guy? It seems that he recognizes me. However, Cillin showed no intentions of cowering whatsoever as he faced the intimidating fighting will in Knight's eyes.

Both Knight and Lung's Seven Lights cards were Crimson just like Cillin's. After both cards had been swiped across the device, the duo's information were displayed on the screen.

Lung Andrea. Knight Feigler!

The two employees matched each other's eyes and felt a violent beat in their hearts. After so many years in Seven Lights, they were of course familiar with some of the more sensitive surnames of the galaxy. While everyone knows about the Andrea 'So Poor Money is All That's Left' Family, the real crux of the matter today was the

sudden appearance of the ‘Feigler’ surname!

Feigler was a well known military family. There were already quite a few generals who bore the surname Feigler, and there was even one who was among the eight grand admirals of the Galactic Alliance Military.

The two employees watched nearly every step of the way when they dealt with the duo standing before them; terrified that they might offend the two little devils. There might be plenty of rich kids in Seven Lights, but those with such terrific backgrounds were few and far between. In comparison, Cillin’s own background with the Douance family was a lot more low-key.

Originally, the two employees had planned to report the matter to the higher-ups and apply for a few single villas, but to their surprise, Lung and Knight had chosen right away to stay in the same villa as Cillin and Ci Jincheng. There were very few people with such profound backgrounds who would choose the least popular quad accommodation. With that kind of background and history, they only needed to insist to acquire their single villas.

After finishing up all the procedures, Lung waved a hand and said, “Come, my housemates. We’ll ride there in my car! Our beautiful life of four has begun~~ 4 seater mode!”

At first, there was only one seat. As Lung’s voice settled, that lavish flying car of his began to transform swiftly. Its body was slightly stretched, and three seats appeared one after another.

Cillin did away the pleasantries and jumped straight into the car. It would be a waste to turn down a free ride. Seeing Cillin's actions, Ci Jincheng paused for a second before jumping into the vehicle as well. Knight scooped up his retracted hoverboard and entered Lung's car.

"Oh? I see that you're fine with my car now, brother? I thought it was a little too poor for your taste when I made you the offer earlier." Lung joked when he saw Knight jumping into the car.

Earlier today, while Lung was driving over from the trade zone and about to reach the school zone, he had run into Knight riding on a hoverboard and flying over from the training zone.

"Cut the nonsense, you didn't even bring out a seat at that time. It was clear that you were just offering for the heck of it." Knight's mouth twitched.

Lung smiled and did not answer. As Knight had said, he really was just offering for the heck of it. Even if Knight wanted to take a lift, he would have ignored him. But since they were all staying in the same accommodation now, as the old man would have put it, they were now 'one of his', and it was only natural to treat his people better.

After watching the flying car zooming away with a whoosh until it vanished completely out of sight, the two employees finally dropped and lay crookedly on their seats.

"Holy shit, there were so many people who registered today, but I

did not expect such a highlight to show up at the final hour."

"Yeah, and who would have thought that four heavyweights would show up all at once. Especially Knight. Hey, tell me, with such a profound military background, why in the world had he come to Seven Lights and not the military academy at Sector C? This doesn't seem like the style of the Feigler Family."

"This is nothing man, those rich kids are all weird. Perhaps they felt like having a change of air. Just look at the Andrea Family and tell me which one of them aren't 'unique'?"

"That's true."

"Accommodation number 13 sector 6, This may be the term's, no wait, this may be the sickest accommodation even in the entire Seven Lights University..."

The quartet's accommodation was at number 13 of sector 6. Sector 6 referred to a private villa area, and number 13 was the house number. The number showing on the screen of the recording system was exactly 0613.

After the number 0613 was entered, a clear navigation route had appeared, and before long, the quartet had arrived at their assigned accommodation. The first floor of the accommodation was at least 500 square meters wide, and there were three floors in total. The first floor had the largest area, whereas the second and third floor were about the same size. Excluding the courtyard, the three floors added up to a total of at least 1200 square meters wide.

The wide courtyard was paved with grass, and above the fences was a detection light curtain that reached straight into the sky. Those who didn't belong in this accommodation would not be allowed to enter, and forced entry would trigger the alarm and retaliation. The object of detection would be the Seven Lights card.

While they were processing the documents at the registration center, the quartet's information had already been entered into the accommodation management system. Upon sensing their Seven Lights card, an opening appeared in the light screen at the courtyard, and the flying car flew straight into the courtyard.

At first glance of his accommodation Lung sighed, "Man this place is fucking small."

Cillin: "..."

Although Ci Jincheng and Knight did not say anything, their expressions were obviously aligned with Lung's thoughts.

Cillin sighed inside his heart. Fine, we're poor people. We're not gonna compete with them.

The key to the accommodation was the Seven Lights card. As for the locks on their respective rooms, that would have to be arranged differently. Every bedroom had its own setup system used to configure the locks of their respective bedroom, study, training room and so on.

The four training rooms, living room and the kitchen were all here. To Cillin's surprise, other than the first floor, the second and third floor could be configured to one's own likings. The space was just like toy blocks that could be moved around and combined, which was why there were no longer any clear boundaries left between the second and third floor after a series of adjustments. There was only the top and bottom floor.

After tidying their respective bedrooms, studies and so on, Lung yelled out and said, "Let's go and grab some food first; man I'm so hungry I could die. I don't have the energy to tidy up the rest of the stuff."

Bullshit, did you even do anything? Then what are those two domestic robots for? The only thing you did was some spatial adjustments!

That being said it was almost time to eat. Oh well, he could finish up the rest of the stuff after meal.

"Are we ordering a takeout or eating at the dining hall?"

"Of course we have to visit the dining hall on our first day, plus we get to look at the hot chicks of Seven Lights. And I'm telling you, they're pretty good." Lung wore a perverted smile on his face.

There are 7 sectors in the accommodation zone. Sector 1 and 2 contained single villas, sector 3 and 4 contained double villas, sector 5 and 6 contained quad villas and finally sector 7 contained single apartments. These seven sectors joined together to form a

circular ring, and the center area that they're surrounding would be the dining hall, convenience store, hospital, cafe and so on.

The dining hall was built in the shape of a heptagon. Every one of its corner was pointed towards an accommodation zone.

When the four of them arrived at the dining hall, they first swiped their cards and reserved their seats. It would be fine to leave them as long as they returned within thirty minutes. If the person who swiped their card did not return after thirty minutes, then the seat would automatically cancel the reservation and revert to a free state.

Once they reserved their seats, the group split up to pick their own food. Everyone's taste differed from each other after all. However, while Cillin was choosing his own meal, a shout suddenly came from behind him.

"Cillin!"

Chapter 26: First Meal In The Dining Hall (1 Of 2)

As expected, the owner of the voice was the guy he met on the transport, Allen. Allen was originally coming down from the side passage to receive someone else, and did not expect to see Cillin choosing his food.

“What a coincidence, Allen.” Cillin raised the tray in his hand and greeted Allen.

Seeing the empty tray Cillin’s holding, Allen said hurriedly, “Cillin, it looks like you haven’t make your pick and that’s perfect. Come, come with me upstairs, I’ll treat you. I was going to call you a long time ago but I don’t have your number. It’s lucky that I ran into you here.” while speaking, Allen dragged Cillin by the elbow and began pulling him upstairs, as if he was afraid that Cillin would turn him down.

Ever since he saw Cillin and Kang Man discussing on the transport, and those complex equations on the writing board, Allen had admired this peer of his greatly. Allen always treated those people with genuine ability and skill warmly. ‘To bully the old but not the young’, for the future belongs to the young, and you never know what they may achieve in the future. That was the belief his father had taught him.

“Easy, I came with my housemates. I can’t just leave them without saying a word, can I?” Cillin put down his tray and said.

“Ah? Housemates? What kind of accommodation are you staying in, Cillin?” Allen had always thought that Cillin would pick a single villa with his background, but apparently he was wrong.

“I’ve only registered today, so the quad villa is the only choice left.”

“Oh, I understand. I registered three days earlier myself to grab a single villa, but it was still too late, so I could only pick a double villa.” Allen made a regretful look, “The reason I’m treating today is to get acquainted with my housemate and a few other people around our accommodation. I’ve also met a few more people after coming here as well. Oh right, hehe, I managed to invite Pride as well. Kang Man seems a bit busy, so he can’t join us.”

Allen had spent a painstaking amount of effort to invite Pride along; he couldn’t even remember how many praises he had to say in order to convince him. At the same time, Allen felt another twinge of regret. He was going to invite this term’s Twin Star of Seven Lights for a group photo, but he didn’t think that Kang Man would turn down his invitation with a lack of time as his excuse.

“Cillin, why don’t you contact your three housemates to come along? I’ll treat everyone. The more the livelier, so let’s all go together! Plus us new students of this term should get together and communicate a little. By the way, we also have a few pretty babes coming over today, so you better don’t miss out, hehe.”

The quartet had exchanged numbers back at Lung’s flying car before, so Cillin immediately flipped out their numbers and called all three of them at once. He explained to them about Allen’s treat,

and – other than Lung, who had accepted the invitation without much hesitation – both Ci Jincheng and Knight agreed with some reluctance.

Ci Jincheng and Knight had only accepted mainly to give Cillin face. Otherwise, with Ci Jincheng's temperament, he would have never liked that kind of messy atmosphere, whereas Knight just couldn't be arsed to communicate with those brainless showoffs. They would be lucky if he didn't greet them with a fist.

While Cillin was talking with the trio on phone, Allen ran to the main entrance and looked around for a bit, seemingly waiting for someone. Not long after, he then led three beautiful girls over. He said something to the girls that caused them to giggle like a schoolgirl with shining bright eyes. It added a kind of charm that caused a few surrounding students holding their trays to stare fixedly at them. They didn't even realize that the food on their trays were stolen by someone else.

"My three beautiful ladies, allow me to make an introduction. This is my friend, Cillin. Cillin, they are..."

"Allen, didn't you say that everyone has been waiting for a long time?" Before Allen could begin, one of the girls immediately interrupted.

"Yeah, yeah. Come on, take us up already Allen." Another girl flicked her hair and gave Allen a sidelong glance.

It was true that Cillin had good looks and qualities, but it wasn't

like people like him were rare in Seven Lights. This was why they weren't really too interested in Cillin. Plus, wouldn't the heavyweights be reserving a room for lunch upstairs?

Seeing Allen's hesitation, Cillin smiled and said, "It's not a problem, Allen. You bring them up first."

"Then... okay, you wait here until your housemates joins you. The place is at second floor's 'Freedom Hall'. I'll come and receive you later after I send them upstairs."

When they heard that Cillin had housemates, and more than one no less, the three girls lost all interest in Cillin right away. Those who lived in quad accommodations weren't deserving of their attention.

Cillin didn't care at all about the girls' thoughts. If it wasn't for Knight's words today, they might not have gone out of their way to choose their own meals personally and would have had a robot send it to them after ordering. He felt like laughing the moment he thought of Ci Jincheng and Lung's expressions when they listened to Knight's words.

Knight had shared some past experiences along the way to the dining hall. He used to make orders and have robots serve him his meals back at middle school, but by coincidence he saw a few pranksters spilling dandruffs into a fitted tray. However, the robots would only scan for dish names and whether there were life forms or poison etc in the dishes when they carried over...

Since then, Knight had ordered and carried his food in person, and it was obvious that Ci Jincheng and Lung usually relied on the robots to bring them their dishes. At the time both Ci JIncheng and Lung had immediately felt a surge of nausea. When they arrived at the dining hall and saw with their own eyes that there were plenty of people who carried their own dishes, the duo grew even more determined on the inside. It definitely looked like many people had had a similar experience. Therefore they pondered to carry their own dishes personally as much as possible, or else especially acquire a waiter robot and set up a few more scanning programs in it. Scans for dandruffs was a must.

Allen wasn't gone for long before Ci Jincheng and the rest showed up. It appeared that their experience of lifting their own dishes weren't all that eventful.

"Cillin, where's your friend?" Lung looked around but saw no one.

"He led three pretty girls upstairs." Cillin pointed up.

"Oh~~ pretty girls, huh! That being said, how is your relationship with that friend of yours, Cillin?"

Cillin briefly explained what happened on the transport.

"Then you guys aren't all that familiar with each other after all. But why is that kid acting so warmly? Allen Chev, you say? Chev... Oh, I remember now, it's the family that founded 'Tomorrow's Star' and 'Prospect'. They're okay; both these electronic magazines

have over sixty contribution points." Lung was obviously knew more about this, but judging from his tone, the Chev family was just 'okay' in his eyes.

Both Ci Jincheng and Knight also knew about 'Tomorrow's Star'. This was because they had both appeared before on that magazine.

"So, all three of you have appeared on that electronic magazine?" Cillin said.

Money and background alone could not win someone a spot in an electronic magazine with over sixty contribution points. What's truly important was genuine ability and skill. Kang Man, who had an ordinary background, was such an example. He had relied completely on his own abilities, skills and talents to acquire the same 'Twin Stars' title as Pride.

When he heard Cillin's words, Knight snorted and said, "You can appear on those magazines as well if you want to. Don't think that you can avoid other people's attentions just by hiding yourself. You and I are going to practice tomorrow."

"That is true. You're the Hoverboy who can chase after two flying cars and not be dumped in the dust with just a common hoverboard. We have high expectations for you!" Lung winked.

It was clear from Ci Jincheng's calm expression that he knew that Cillin was the 'Hoverboy' as well.

“You all know about this.” Cillin scratched his head.

“Hmph, that’s not all I know. Not anyone can fuck over two flying cars with a shit hoverboard, so you and I have better get in some practice before school officially starts. It’s not easy to find a good opponent in Seven Lights, you know.” the moment the matter was brought up Knight grew eager again as the fighting will in his eyes rose instantly.

“Alright, we’ll find a place and get some practice tomorrow.” Of course Cillin wasn’t going to turn down a chance to practice.

“Huh? Could there be a continuation to the story of Hoverboy? Tell us quickly, Knight!” Lung immediately closed in.

While they ascended the floor, Knight summarized the whole incident with one simple and clear sentence. Then, Lung’s eyes brightened as he put on a surprised look.

“Cillin, why don’t you come and endorse our hoverboards! We’ll pay you generously!”

The Andrea Family did have a factory that produces hoverboards, and their brand was rather famous as well. Even their prices started at ten thousand.

Cillin smiled and did not answer. After giving out the name ‘Freedom Hall’, a small hoverbot then led the quartet towards the place.

They barely walked a few steps before they saw Allen coming from around the corner.

“Ah, Cillin, I was just ready to go down and receive you...” Allen’s voice abruptly cut short as his eyes widened and his jaws dropped to the floor. The reason for that was the trio beside Cillin.

Chapter 27: First Meal In The Dining Hall (2 Of 2)

There were many people who had heard of Lung Andrea, Ci Jincheng and Knight Feigler, but not many people actually knew them in person. Since Allen's family had founded two GAL electronic magazines, he had memorized deeply the many faces of famous people in his head. That was why Allen had instantly recognized the trio beside Cillin the moment he saw them. For a time, he wasn't sure how to react.

He had not received any news beforehand that these trio were coming to Seven Lights University. For the longest time, Allen had thought that the brightest stars of this term would be the Twin Stars of Seven Lights Pride and Kang Man, today he was truly overawed. When the trio had looked at him all in unison, Allen suddenly felt nervous. He, who had been a social butterfly for the longest time, was actually feeling nervous at this very moment!

Back in those days, his father had pointed at these three people on the 'Tomorrow's Star' magazine and told him in private that they would definitely become the top dogs in business, military and academia in the future. Allen did not understand why his father would view them so highly; he had not given such high praises even when the Twin Stars of Seven Lights had shown up. But even so, Allen trusted fully in his father's insight.

Thankfully, Allen had a lot of experience and managed to adjust his mentality swiftly.

"Cillin... are these three your... housemates? It's definitely an

honor, hahaha…" Allen howled in his heart: Oh my god, these three VIPs are Cillin's housemates!

"You guys know each other? I'll skip the introductions then."

"Of course, of course. It is my great honor to have you all."

While leading the way, Allen pondered about a change of plans and to add some more high-end dishes later. He must satisfy these guests.

However, reality did not go the way Allen wanted. Just as they approached the entrance of 'Freedom Hall', they heard a group of people chatting inside.

"Just who is it that Allen kid is receiving?" A somewhat arrogant and impatient voice asked.

"Oh, I know that guy. I know him from the transport." Cillin had heard this voice before on the transport.

It was then followed by a sound of laughter full of disdain, "He's nothing but a fellow who stays in a quad accommodation and eats at a public restaurant."

Another roaring laughter ensued. There were no holds barred.

Allen's eyes dimmed, and he nearly face-planted onto the

ground. Holy shit, if I knew this would happen I would never have invited them! Also, why the hell did they not close the door! If they want to talk behind someone's back at least do it behind closed doors – what am I saying, they shouldn't do it even behind closed doors!

It was obvious that all four of them had heard their words clearly.

Before Cillin could say anything, Lung began to cry out, "Why, it looks like someone doesn't welcome us! I guess everyone here is a big name, eh?" Lung would not care for Allen's face. He's the type to say whatever he wants to.

Allen did not even have the time to cry as his thoughts raced for a way to appease these guests. One of the youngsters among the laughing crowd abruptly stood up as if his ass was on fire before stuttering out with a red face, "Young... young master Lung..."

By chance, this person had seen Lung when his old man had gone to a business meeting. He was nothing in front of Lung; even his own father had to watch his own words and manners in front of him.

There were no idiots in this place. The moment they saw their companion's reaction, they immediately stifled themselves and withdrew their previous jests.

Lung didn't look at the guy who stood up at all. Since the sofas were already full, he went and pull a chair on his own and sat

down. Cillin and the others had also sat beside him. And so a bizarre scene was formed. On the other side tens of people sat on soft, luxurious sofas; on this side the quartet simply sat on chairs. The quartet might appear to be sitting casually, but their aura was so powerful that the group of people sitting at the sofa felt as if they could not even raise their heads in front of the quartet. It was so uncomfortable they felt as if they were sitting on nails.

The person who broke this bizarre scene was Pride. The bodyguard who walked in first went blank when he saw Cillin's group, and he was especially surprised to find Knight among them. However, he also felt a lot more assured. At first, he thought that this place would be very mixed and unhealthy for the young master's growth, but if he was here, then they would not need to worry.

"Snotty brat is here as well ?" Knight scoffed.

The arrogant, chin-lifting Pride who couldn't even be bothered to look people in the eye immediately reacted like a cat who had its tail stepped on the second he heard Knight's voice, "Knight, why are you here?!"

"If a snotty brat like you can come over, then why can't I?"

"Hmph!" Pride turned his head, dragged a chair and sat down next to him. He might not be able to stand Knight, but those people on the sofas weren't worth even a single glance.

Even an idiot would know that these people sitting on chairs

were not to be trifled with by now. Otherwise, why would Pride stare them in the eye? Everyone on the sofa said not a word as they pondered their own thoughts. Even the girls' gaze on Cillin had turned different.

Cillin nibbled at some melon seeds and watched the show from the sides. How interesting. I should tell Dias and the others about today when it's time.

Pride looked curiously at Ci Jincheng and Lung once he sat down. He had seen Cillin before on the transport, so he automatically overlooked him.

"This is my housemates; Cillin, Ci Jincheng and Lung." Knight gave a simple introduction before turning to Cillin and the others, "This snotty brat here is called Pride." He had only introduced his name and nothing else.

Pride's only response to Knight's 'snotty brat' nickname for him was a humph, but if he was someone else then Pride would definitely have turned on him. What could he do; he was defeated again by Knight during their last challenge, so he had no choice but to endure the nickname.

Pride gritted his teeth. Sooner or later he was going to get back at Knight, and when that happens, he was going to pummel the bastard so hard not even a pig would recognize him!

"I can't believe that you're living in a quad accommodation." Pride said scornfully.

Knight shrugged, “It can’t be helped. I’m a poor man. I can only afford to eat at the dining hall’s public restaurant and live in a quad accommodation that no one wants. It’s by coincidence we ran into Cillin’s friend that he so kindly brought us up here. But it appears that we’re not wanted though.”

Allen broke out in cold sweat profusely. Objection! He swore to god that he never thought and would never dare to think such a thing! At this point, even Allen did not know what to say anymore. These people have very eccentric tempers and Allen could not figure out what they’re thinking right now. He could only look at Cillin for help.

When he received Allen’s S.O.S, Cillin put down the melon seeds and said, “I’m hungry. Why don’t you send up the dishes, Allen.”

“Alright, we’ll send up a few dishes first. Please order anything you want.” Allen hurriedly passed them the menus as if he was freed.

In the end, around the huge, rectangular table there were a group of five sitting on chairs and cheerfully eating away at their meal, whereas the other a group of people sitting on sofas were trembling and sweating and moving very carefully.

In short, the atmosphere of this lunch was bizarre.

Knight was the speedy type. He finished three bowls of rice before Pride could even finish one. However, Cillin and the others

weren't slow as well. After they finished, the quartet bid their goodbyes and left first. Although Pride had eaten a little slowly, seeing that Knight and the others had all left he had no mood to eat while facing the remaining people as well. So he pushed his bowl aside and left.

Cillin and the group did not care what the group of people might have said after they left. After they returned to their accommodation and finished tidying up the stuff, they went to bed and had a good sleep.

The next early morning, Cillin was forcefully woken up by Knight saying that they sould spar at an ad hoc training room in the school zone after choosing their courses. According to the rules, students had two days to choose their courses after registration. Every accommodation had a platform, and they were used for course registration as well. The quartet then finished choosing their courses in succession during breakfast time.

Breakfast was prepared by Lung's domestic robots, and the results weren't bad. All four of them had programmed the robot and placed their breakfast ingredients in the kitchen. This way they would be able to eat breakfast right away every morning.

After finishing their breakfast, the quartet then sat Lung's flying car to the training room at the school zone. The training room in the accommodation was too small and fit for some simple exercises only after all. The only place they could let themselves go and fight was the training room at the school zone. It had a wider space and all kinds of training modes.

There weren't many people who were using the training room today. Cillin used Ci Jincheng's orange card to pick a medium-sized training room, since their red cards could only book a small-sized training room. Technically speaking, a small-sized training room would be sufficient for single combat, but Knight still felt that it was a little too small, so they chose the medium-sized one.

They were the only four people inside the medium training room. Ci Jincheng and Lung watched from the quarantine zone at the sides, while Cillin and Knight did some warm ups to digest their breakfast. Their coats were also left at the quarantine zone so they wouldn't be damaged by the match.

"You ready?" Knight asked.

"Ready. Let's go."

Chapter 28: The Star Who Walks Out Of The Darkness

While Knight was speaking, his knees were slightly bent and he shifted his weight to his toes. His fists were placed in front of his body, reading to initiate combat at any time.

Cillin raised a foot and took a step sideways. His arms were wide open and placed seemingly casually on both sides. His posture appeared to be full of holes.

When Cillin said ‘let’s go’, the emotions in his eyes slowly subsided until not a speck of it could be seen. It was a sharp contrast to Knight’s intense fighting will.

His instructor once told him that it was possible to determine an opponent’s next action from their eyes, but all Knight could see from Cillin’s was tranquility; a tranquility so deep that it was like the abyss. Knight had seen the same tranquility in many people’s eyes before, but they were either extremely experienced instructors or prominent characters like his father. He had never seen such eyes from a peer!

This Cillin gave Knight a very strange feeling. The Cillin now was like a hunter waiting quietly for its prey to fall into his trap.

Prey? Knight laughed at his own thoughts. We will see who is the hunter or the hunted after this fight!

Bang——

Whoever strikes first gains the advantage. Knight's figure instantly vanished from his spot, and the air where he stood resounded with a bang due to the air compressing and colliding instantaneously with each other.

Knight rushed forwards and tightened his fists the instant he arrived in front of Cillin. His speed was even several times faster than when he first started, and his strength was instantly adjusted to its best condition. Just when Knight felt like he was about to hit Cillin, he suddenly realized that his elbow had dropped slightly as if sucked in by a whirlpool, causing him to deviate a little from his aim. At the same time, Cillin's other palm had pierced through the gap and attacked right at Knight's neck.

Knight blocked the attack with a raised hand, and rather than retreating, he took another step forwards and punched Cillin's face yet again. This time his punching speed was again much faster than before; Cillin could even hear the friction sound of Knight's fist crackling against the air.

Cillin dodged past it, shifted and withdrew, adjusted his footing and twisted his body forwards at the same time.

Was he going to charge into Knight head-on?

No, he wasn't!

That bizarre, whirlpool-like force had appeared once more and ‘sucked’ Knight’s fist away from its original trajectory. This time Knight had seen it clearly. The origin of the strange force was the cyclone formed from the movement of Cillin’s palm unto his entire arm.

To subdue hardness with softness?

Knight recalled the examples of ‘subduing hardness with softness’ his father and instructors had told him in the past while he was still in training. Since almost everyone in the Feigler family were strength types, Knight had learned a lot of countermeasures so that he would not be caught off guard in the future. However, one of his favorite countermeasures was to add strength upon strength; that is absolute strength.

He might be having thoughts in his mind, but his hands were definitely not slow. A knife hand went straight for Cillin’s throat, but he did not withdraw it completely when it was parried away in the next moment. Instead, he swiftly overturned his palm and struck downwards at Cillin’s chest.

He never stopped once, and his speed only accelerated faster and faster.

The eyes, the back of the ears, the neck, the throat, the ribs, the stomach, the shin, the tailbone... Every time he attacked he had aimed well at his target, but every time his strikes would be ‘sucked’ off target by that cyclone energy and hit the walls, the floor or the ceiling instead...

Meanwhile, Cillin had not actually put on much of an offensive. Most of the time, he was simply defending. Every time he fought against a different person, he would always check out their skills and combat style. While he neutralized the enemy's attacks, he would also correct his weaknesses and learn new techniques from the fight.

Cillin had never seen Knight's fighting technique before. Although he could still deal with it at the moment, Cillin knew that Knight was improving little by little as well. At first, Cillin was still able to deviate Knight's fists to a certain corner, but gradually his attacks grew stronger and faster with each passing moment. The cyclone had been gradually losing control to the point where he could only throw the attacks aside. This meant that Knight was slowly grasping the limits of this cyclone.

Countless banging noise rang inside the training room, and depressions were beginning to appear on the walls, floor and even the ceiling. One could see just how powerful these punches were to be able to punch holes in the special walls and ceiling of the training room.

Ci Jincheng and Lung sighed on the inside as they felt the tremors coming from the training room.

"This is a little fierce, isn't it? Jincheng, is Cillin's genotype really just rank B?"

Ci Jincheng nodded.

Cillin's admission data did show him as a B rank genotype, but on the other hand Knight was a full fledged A rank. Would an A rank really need to use this much firepower against a B rank right from the beginning? Plus, Cillin was still able to resist against Knight's attacks up to this point. More accurately speaking, Cillin was leveraging off borrowed power and causing all of Knight's attack to miss.

As he watched the continuously shaking training room, Lung exclaimed, "The guys from the management are probably starting to notice."

It would be a real surprise if they didn't notice such a huge commotion, though they did turn off all of the training room's cameras when they came in earlier. Still, there's no way the management wouldn't have a backup plan, would they?

Ci Jincheng didn't say anything. He took out a finger-sized device and pressed it once. Many probes and pinhole cameras appeared on the floor, walls and ceiling of the training room. There were also a few monitoring equipment joined together with the walls that appeared completely ordinary at a glance. At the same time, anyone of the monitors that were connected to this training room would only display static. Even the records would be deleted as well.

"Check the card owner of that training room." One of the employees of the management said.

“Got it. Looks like he didn’t delete this card record. The card owner is called… Ci Jincheng!”

“His surname is Ci?” The person thought for a while, “Never mind. Ignore that training room. Let them do whatever they want as long as they didn’t destroy it.”

Since the commotion Cillin and Knight had caused was too huge, even those who were training had come out of their training rooms and looked about curiously. Just who was so amazing to cause such a noise? Even those in the nearby training rooms could sense the tremors clearly.

A group of people followed the noise and arrived in front of the training room. The room’s door was shut, and locked down in ‘Onlooker declined’ mode no less. Since the crowd couldn’t get in, they could only gather in front of the door and discuss what’s happening inside. People came one after another to join the discussion circle.

Both Cillin and Knight were not in the mood to think about the reactions outside.

The longer they fought, the faster they became. If there were afterimages that were visible just now, now even those had completely vanished. Instead, fleeting bolts of electricity began to appear clearly.

“The Feigler Family’s Thunderstorm Fist.” Ci JIncheng said while watching the flashes of electricity.

“I have long heard its name. But I’ve never seen it with my own eyes.” Lung had only seen videos of it from electronic magazines, but they were only blurry images at best. Most magazines did not dare to analyse too deeply into things related to the military.

At this time, Cillin who was defending against Knight’s attacks could sense clearly the beginning of a restless air around him. The particles were beginning to split and release energy, and these changes were all caused by Knight.

It was as dense as rainstorm and as devastating as a thunderbolt. Every one of Knight’s punches would spur flashes of electricity around it, and crackling sounds persisted in one’s ears.

These were no fancy effects, but real electricity. Cillin could already feel his skin numbing from the contact with these miniscule particles. He had a feeling that he was inside an electric field, and the electric field was still strengthening as more and more fission particles appeared. Every time he moved the numbness would worsen.

Cillin could even sniff the kind of scorched stench of burned clothes. If this continues, he definitely wouldn’t be able to last much longer. The bulging green veins on Knight’s arms and the gradually declining acceleration of his punching speed indicated that his strength was about to reach its peak.

Bang——

Cillin received the blow and backed away a few steps.

However, when Knight encroached onto Cillin, he realized that Cillin had shaken both his arms and dispersed his cyclone. Instead it was replaced with a completely different aura from before. It was an unfathomable, immeasurable, and even stifling pressure.

Then, the restless particles around Cillin began to subside.

Now this is the real you, isn't it... While thinking, Knight's leg pushed against the floor once more and heightened his momentum of his charge to the peak. The crackling electricity seemed ready to tear apart even space itself...

Cillin neither dodged nor used the same deviation tactic as before when he faced down Knight's attack. Instead, he chose to meet him head on. He stood there, raised a fist and moved forwards.

BANG! BANG!

The two sounds had resounded nearly at the exact same time. The impact of their fists clashing against each other caused both Cillin and Knight to fly towards the walls on both sides.

The students discussing heatedly outside the training room turned dead silent. It was because they saw a human shaped protrusion jutting out from the wall.

These students had trained inside the training room long enough

to know exactly how tough the walls' strike resistance were. It they tried to leave a footprint on the wall, they could probably kick until their leg bones were fractured and not even leave a curve on the wall. But then, how could they explain the scene before them?!

Ci Jincheng and Lung's eyelids twitched continuously. Luckily the duo had not been blown towards the quarantine zone, or the entire quarantine floor would be smashed apart.

Knight was very strong. This was something both Ci Jincheng and Lung had known a long time ago. As their contemporary, they would often hear high praises about him from their seniors even though they did not belong in the same field.

But what about Cillin? Since when did the Douance Family give birth to such a monster? How could someone who could fight Knight to a standstill possibly be obscure?

He was like a bright star hidden in the darkness all this time, watching the world quietly, while displaying a terrific brilliance at a place where no one would know.

But no matter what, this star would soon appear before everyone's eyes. Since he had walked out of the dark, then his brilliance could no longer be hidden.

Chapter 29: The Young Master Lung With A Missing Screw In His Head

Both Cillin and Knight were embedded inside the walls at the opposite sides of the training room.

Cillin jumped down from the wall and landed on his feet. He moved his arms and rolled his shoulders, and every time he moved clear cracking sounds could be heard from his bones. On the opposite side, Knight's condition was about the same.

"Haha, that's so fun! This is the first time I had such a pleasant fight ever since I came to Seven Lights!" Knight's laughter was incredibly happy.

Watching the duo from the quarantine zone, both Ci Jincheng and Lung felt a constant tic on their faces. Those two were actually King Kongs, right?

They literally smashed a human-shaped hole in the wall, and yet after they climbed to their feet and dusted themselves a little, both of them appeared to be perfectly fine!

Cillin looked at his clothes. There were a few spots that were obviously charred. Luckily, he had brought a change of clothes to be on the safe side. There was no separate dressing rooms inside the training room, but they were all guys anyway so what was there to be embarrassed about? Just strip and get on with it.

While Cillin and Knight were changing their clothes, Lung took out a mini camera and began snapping photos.

“Hehe, I’ll set up an online auction and sell your changing photos later~~”

“Lung, you planning to decorate the walls as well?” Knight lifted his chin and pointed at the two human-shaped depressions on the walls.

“Ah, worst comes to worst I’ll split you half the credits of the sale. We’re housemates, right? Speaking of which, Cillin, are you really a B rank genotype? There are many A ranks who are not as good as you.”

That sure was quite the swift change of subject, but admittedly Knight’s attention was drawn towards this topic.

“That is true. I felt like I ran into a tank during that last hit.” Knight swung his arms while saying. Surely Cillin had not used much strength when he slapped down the two flying cars, or else the resultant damage would have been far different.

Cillin smiled, “It’s because of my physique.”

“A physique like yours should enter the army. I guarantee that you will rise swiftly just like that second oldest brother of Pride’s Ji Feihang. Back when he was still a recruit, he took down an entire class on his own. My father called that an A+ physique, and the

cause of this phenomenon may be heterosis.”

Heterosis...

It was definitely obvious just by listening to Pride and his second oldest brother’s name alone. Their parents weren’t from the same race, so one of the sons were named after his father, and the other his mother.

“But still,” Knight said again, “I also know of some people whose parents weren’t from the same race, but their genotypes were only at rank B, which is leagues apart from their parents’ rank A... But of course, I’m not sure about your situation, Cillin. I’m not familiar with the Douance Family’s state of affairs.” Knight was feeling good at the moment and so had a lot to talk about.

Lung narrowed his eyes into slits while rubbing his chin, “Does that mean that if I find a woman whose race is outside the galaxy, then the chances that our children will have A+ rank genotype will be higher?”

Ci Jincheng appeared thoughtful, “There has been people who researched this, and they believed that the further apart the parents’ geographies are, the higher it is their chances to give birth to offsprings with better genes.”

“Alright!” Lung clapped his hands together, “Then I will find a woman outside the galaxy as my wife in the future!”

“You’ve decided to exercise self-restraint?” Cillin wore a disbelieving look on his face.

“That’s two different things! My wife has to be from outside the galaxy, but I could hardly ask as much from my lovers.”

“Ceh~~” All three of them scoffed in disdain.

Cillin would not tell anyone the truth behind his physique; the chips integrated inside his body were his greatest secret.

Outside the training room, when a group of students were discussing whether the people inside were instructors or high grade students, the door of the training room opened. The discussion stopped instantly.

Cillin and his friends walked out one by one. They merely swept a glance at the crowd of students gathered outside his training room before walking straight towards the exit.

“Who are those four? They didn’t wear badges, so I can’t tell which grade they are.”

“It’s them!” a high grade student had identified Lung. Lung’s name was spread really quickly among the high grade students, because the person they had interacted the most while they were setting up stalls at the trading zone was this young master from the Andrea Family.

“You mean they’re all this term’s first grade new students?”

“Isn’t this a little too fierce!” some of them gulped as they watched the human-shaped protrusion on the wall. Not even grade five, six and seven students specialized in military would have such destructive power, would they?

Not far away, a few grade three students leaning on a handrail withdrew their gaze from Cillin’s group.

“Knight Feigler? I didn’t think that guy would come to Seven Lights. Didn’t he despise all universities that aren’t military?” A youngster wearing a earring said with a tone filled with thick, dripping sarcasm.

“Oh? You know them, Stolt? Which one’s Knight?” His companion asked curiously.

The young man named Stolt did not answer, seemingly unwilling to delve deeper into the subject.

“Sister Fu Luo, who do you think is fighting inside just now?”

The speaker was a younger girl with blinking big eyes and a voice tinged with playfulness. When she smiled, there were two very cute dimples on her cheeks.

“What do you think?” The girl named Fu Rong simply lifted a faint smile, while appearing graceful and pure.

“Hmm…” While holding her chin, the younger girl pointed at Knight on the screen, “This guy is definitely one of them. His air of battle hasn’t subsided yet.” she then pointed at Ci Jincheng, “This guy is definitely out of the question. As for the remaining two…” her big eyes roamed between Lung and Cillin before she pointed at Cillin, “The chances that this guy is the other fighter is higher.”

“I believe so too.”

“But if even the training room walls were smashed this badly, then why do the two of them look perfectly unhurt?”

Fu Luo looked at the ruby-like flying car vanishing into the distance with complicated eyes. She felt that the coming days in Seven Lights would be no longer calm.

After returning to the accommodation, Cillin took a good bath, ate the fast food prepared by the robot and swiftly went to bed. He needed to enter that state today to analyze in depth today’s battle.

While asleep, the scene where he sparred with Knight began to replay clearly in his mind. Knight’s every movement, the contraction of every muscle, the miniscule changes in the air, the splitting of particles, the generation of electricity… everything began to replay in high definition slow-mo.

This time, Cillin’s sleep did not last too long, however. At the very least, he woke up on the next morning. After checking the time display on top of the bed, he scratched his head and went

down ready to wash himself. There was already the smell of breakfast coming from below.

The second he went down, he saw Lung crossing his legs and exclaiming at the ‘Teacher Information Display’ on the accommodation education platform.

“Look, this teacher has such beautiful eyes; they look just like shit!”

Cillin: “…”

Is that praise or slander?

Ci Jincheng was applying egg yolk jam to his bread in front of the dining table, when he heard Lung’s words and felt his hands coming to a stop. He frowned at the egg yolk jam and suddenly lost his appetite.

Cillin did not care too much for it; he urgently needed to replenish the energy from exhausting his brainpower. After instructing the robot to make five sets of the same breakfast, he grabbed the hotdog on the table and took a bite, “Where’s Knight?”

Lung pointed upwards, “He’s fixing some kind of wireless jammer on the roof. Right, Cillin, we can use the internet now. JIncheng had installed something that would keep the people from the management division from investigating our real information.

In other words, even if we swear at the headmaster on the Seven Lights Net, we won't need to worry about being discovered and have our marks deducted."

"It's not just Seven Lights Net. It will work on Sector B's University Alliance Network as well." Ci Jincheng said firmly.

"That's awesome! I had a flash of inspiration last night and I came up with a love letter. I'm going to send this to every pretty girl in Sector B's universities!" Lung excitedly took out his tablet.

Cillin and Ci Jincheng moved closer to read exactly what kind of heart touching soulful confession it was.

The tablet wrote:

"You are like an inferno. The moment you appeared, every molecule of my blood cooks my soul until it boils for you alone. That bone deep, scorching passion is what drives me to turn over the entire galaxy to find a carnation for you; unable to pause my footsteps for anyone else, only for you…"

Cillin and Ci Jincheng sweatdropped all over themselves. Ignoring that terrifying phrase about his blood cooking his soul, what in the universe was with that carnation?

The two of them pointed at the text 'Carnation' harmonized with pink and rendered in crimson tone before looking at Lung.

“Hmm? Isn’t carnation the symbol of passionate love?” Lung widened his eyes with an innocent look on his face.

“Then what does red rose symbolize?” Cillin asked again.

Lung said with a ‘even kids know this’ expression, “Of course I know. It’s a curse!”

Cillin, Ci Jincheng: “…”

Like hell it’s a curse!

Knight, who just finished installing the wireless jammer and was about to get down ready and flaunt around for a bit, nearly fell off the stairs.

What the fuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuck!

Young master Lung, even if you’re writing a love letter you can’t just misuse the flower language like this!

The trio finally gained a profound recognition on exactly which screw was missing from this young master’s head.

Chapter 30: Life's Code

On the day of the freshmen inauguration ceremony, Cillin's group sat at the last few rows of the auditorium.

Cillin was leaning against his chair and sleeping, Knight was playing with a tank model in his hands, Ci Jincheng was reading and Lung was looking left and right for pretty girls. In summary, no one among the group gave two shits about the freshmen representative or the Seven Lights upper management's speeches happening at the center stage. In fact, there should be plenty of students who were just like them.

However, Cillin suddenly heard a familiar voice while he was in sleep mode. He awoke and opened his eyes to look at the stage.

It was a familiar face.

The person giving the speech right now was one of Seven Lights vice headmasters; Chief of Science and Research Division Mo Heng. He was also the old man Cillin had met at the train station in the trade zone.

While Cillin was looking over, the speaking Mo Heng suddenly looked at Cillin's direction as if he had detected his glance. After a momentary daze, a rather meaningful smile then appeared on Mo Heng's face.

The vice headmaster An Ting sitting beside Mo Heng suddenly gave a violent shiver while he was pondering what to have for

lunch later, and the moment he looked up, he immediately saw Mo Heng's eerie smile. To the innocent and ignorant, his smile would still appear kindly, but anyone who understood Mo Heng would know that the old devil was up to some wicked plot again!

Cillin suddenly felt a chill. What is this vice headmaster planning?

When the inauguration ceremony finally ended, the quartet immediately left like the wind. It was boring as hell to sit through the whole thing.

After the inauguration ceremony, it was time to officially start class.

There were many established curriculum in Seven Lights University. Under academic majors, there were literature, business, theoretical studies, engineering, military and so on. You could pick whatever you want as long as it's within your grade, but if a student picked a course and failed the final exam, then all the university had to offer was a sorry: instead of gaining credit, their corresponding credits would be deducted instead.

Therefore, a student would generally pick a major that they were familiar with. As long as they accumulated enough credits, they would be able to move on to the next grade. If they failed to meet the minimum requirement, they would have to repeat a year, and if they failed to move up a grade in three years then they would be forced to drop out. On the other hand, if they could accumulate enough credits, then they could apply to move up a grade in advance.

The military major was the most male students most looked forward to, but it was also the hardest to acquire credits. That was why those who wanted to major in military must know their own abilities, or it would be too late when they screw themselves.

But of course, it was impossible that the university would kill a student's passion. Every major had established their own respective elective courses, so those students who were interested in a particular major but weren't too sure if they could guarantee those credits could choose to study these elective courses. The credits of these elective courses were only one tenth of the originals, but the good thing was that they were easy to get, and the lecturers were lenient. So the students were rather fond of these elective courses.

Ci Jincheng had chosen some of the courses under the literature major, and since he was a specially recruited student, he was judged by a different standard. Lung's main choices fell under the business major, but he also picked up an elective under the literature major because there were more pretty girls over there. To quote his own words, 'I am there to clean my eyes'. Needless to say, Knight had chosen the military major. He was uninterested in anything else.

As for Cillin, he chose a few courses in every major, and they were not elective courses either. Basically, he picked everything he could as long as the times didn't clash and was within school hours. It could be said that his schedule everyday was relatively full. Of course, weekends didn't count. The weekend was the time for respite.

Since they had different courses, their chances to meet during the day became a lot less. Cillin had bought yet another hoverboard. He couldn't always depend on Lung's flying car after all, and their class times were not exactly the same either. A specially recruited student like Ci Jincheng often stayed overnight at the Science and Research Division, whereas Knight also often stayed overnight at the Training Division. It was convenient after all. Meanwhile, Lung would drive everyday to the trade zone after class and 'flirt' with the high grade students, causing everyone at the trade zone be it male, female, old or young to wish for flying legs to escape whenever they saw Lung.

Therefore, as a result, Cillin was the one and only permanent resident of the accommodation. But this wasn't a bad thing; it would make it more convenient for Cillin to deal with a certain matter.

If he delayed dealing with that BPT wrapped in eco-film any longer, the poor thing's gonna drop dead.

It was the first weekend after classes had started. Cillin was the only one in the accommodation.

Cillin took out a clean tray from the room, tore open the eco-film and placed the vine on it. The surrounding nutrient solution seemed to be of no help to it whatsoever. The green color of its leaves appeared dim, and incredibly weak.

Cillin placed a finger on the leaf and closed his eyes, sensing the

information transmitted from it.

The placement of each cell, the different compositions inside a cell, the decoding of genetic information…

The relevant data and information flashed across his mind. The biochip integrated within Cillin's chromosomes was like a precise instrument analyzing the object he touched. Cillin had a very peculiar feeling. Unlike the other dead, lifeless objects, this… beating vibrance caused Cillin to feel like engaging in communication.

Cillin seemed to have discover this vine's life's code. By unlocking this code, he would be able to understand the survival conditions of this plant. More accurately speaking, it was what this plant needed the most right now.

Cillin could sense clearly what this vine was desiring for. At the same time, he could sense its weakness and insecurity as well.

Thoughts?

That's right. This is their thoughts.

Cillin remembered Genya's words clearly. Back in those years, Genya had sat under the Fuji tree and told Cillin, "Very few people would truly care for the life of a plant, but in truth, a plant is more eager to communicate – the resonance of life can win their affection much easier than an inflexible machine."

Of course, Genya's words were actually based on the Fuji tree. The Fuji tree could be counted as among the finest within the plant kingdom, or it could not have possibly been crowned as 'Elder Tree Fuji'. Genya had even said that the finer they were, the clearer their minds were. They were like a specie in between an animal and a plant; the shape of a plant, the mind of an animal.

So it would seem that this mutated BPT was actually an evolved breed. Cillin could accurately make contact with its clear thought.

Cillin expressed his goodwill as he transmitted his thoughts through the transcoding of the chips inside his body to the leaf.

This vine was just like a child who had been separated from its parent. After it came into contact with Cillin's goodwill, a long lost sense of security returned as it transmitted its own thoughts.

Cillin lifted the tray, looked at the vine inside it, and said quietly in his heart: Don't worry, I'm here. I'm right beside you.

Before he went out Cillin pressed a button setup by Ci Jincheng. Once activated, the people outside would only see a preset scene and not the changes that were actually happening inside the courtyard.

On the ground right beneath his bedroom window, Cillin dug open the surface to reveal the soil underneath. He put down the vine and sprinkled a common nutrient solution on it. The vine began to change at a visible rate.

The color of the leaves began to turn full of vitality. The vines began to grow, extend, and climbed ‘step’ by ‘step’ upwards, and at the same time, its two sides too began to grow offshoots when it had reached a certain level of height. It grew more and more.

Cillin sat on the lawn and watched it grow; spreading its way step by step towards its surroundings.

In reality these vines did not have high environmental needs, and were pretty easy to grow. It wasn’t that the child couldn’t absorb the nutrient solutions earlier, but because its wariness was too strong after being separated from its parent. If their wariness could not be appeased, then they would rather wither and return to dust than accept the relief that had been presented right in front of them.

The Institute of Botany’s instruments at the research zone could analyze in detail the plant’s genetic code and respective traits. However, it could not communicate with it. This was the difference between life and machine.

The miracles of life lay in its inability to be interpreted by words, and yet could be felt clearly as a real, living existence.

It was evening. Cillin watched the plants that had covered more than half of the surface of the accommodation and smiled. When those three come back they would be surprised, wouldn’t they?

Chapter 31: The Humiliation of Twenty Rounds

In less than two days after Cillin had planted the BPT, Lung returned on his flying car and nearly drove straight into the accommodation while he was entering the courtyard. After parking his car in haste, he ran circles around the accommodation and looked all over the plant, clicking his tongue in amazement.

“Cillin, you have to sell me the cultivation method for this plant!” Lung said with bright eyes.

Cillin shook his head, “The growing conditions of this plant is nothing special. Moreover, I’ve only used a single common nutrient solution worth 100 galactic credits.”

“Bullshit, even if you used only a bottle of common nutrient solution, there must be some special way or something. Otherwise, why the heck would those people at the research division come up with nothing despite such a long time?” Lung said while fiddling with the leaves of the vines that had climbed up the accommodation’s walls. This plant sure grows pretty well alright.

Cillin shrugged as a sign of his own helplessness and said, “Perhaps they need to be soothed.”

Lung wore a look of suspicion, but then he smiled and replied, “You may actually be right.”

There were certain things that need not be said. They were all smart people; they all kept secrets that were best left unspoken. However, Lung really did pay heed to Cillin's words. Cillin was not one to waste his words on random things. He might deceive someone else but not him, because Cillin had promised to sell him the cultivation technique before anyone else long ago.

Seeing Lung fiddling with the leaves and examining them, Cillin continued, "A child forcefully separated from its parents was threatened to eat by a stranger at knife point. Even if they did acquiesce and eat, how can they possibly grow well? Much less those that are rigorous by nature."

Lung took it to heart, "You have a point."

What happened afterwards was also clear proof of Cillin's words.

The plant was going to be exposed to the public sooner or later, so when Cillin had withdrawn the preset light screen altogether, the news of this mutated BPT was quickly known by the people of the Science and Research Division.

The people of the Institute of Botany had doubtfully cut and propagated the BPT back at the research division, and after less than two days of intensive care, the specimens were all dead. The instrument had shown that the specimen at Cillin's accommodation was identical to the one at the institute, and the result of the soil analysis was inconclusive either. It was as Cillin had said; there was only the composition of that 100 galactic credits common nutrient solution.

Coincidentally, the person who went to acquire a sample at the planet where the vine's parents were grown had returned with a small but complete version of the BPT. After much care, the small specimen finally managed to survive, but its growth was obviously completely incomparable to Cillin's.

But this was a problem the people of the Institute of Botany should worry about. Cillin had not the time to deal with them; he had plenty of other courses that required his attention elsewhere.

Cillin's military class could be said to be at its initial phase and was carried out within the school zone only. Every class had emphasized on exercising one's fitness; if their fitness wasn't up to par, then they would be nothing more but a punching bag at the training zone. Only after their fitness had been improved would a student be allowed to continue to the next step of the course at the training division.

In a rare occasion, Knight had shown up after skipping three classes. He even wore a 'I so don't want to be here' scowl while standing. The instructor ignored him right away; everyone here knew about the man's identity and abilities anyway. He can do whatever he wants to do.

"Today's training will be weight running, laps with 100 kg weights. The cutoff is 10 laps. Those who can run 15 laps are exempt from weight running and can proceed directly to the next training. If you can run 20 laps, then you can head to the training division. There's no need for you to continue wasting time here."

The instructor had said this in a very easy tone, but there were plenty of students who were gulping already after after hearing his words. The field was 1 km long per lap, and ten laps would be the equivalent of 10 km. Would they not be as exhausted as a panting dog if they ran the whole length while carrying 100 kg of weight?

Both Cillin arms' and legs' were tied with 25 kg of weights. After some thought, he added yet another 50 kg on his back, or it seriously would not contribute much improvement his physical fitness.

Knight grinned immediately after seeing this, "Cillin, you're a true man!" while saying, he also added 50 kg on his own back. Originally he had planned to get to the training division sooner, but it wasn't a bad idea either to add a bit of challenge to the exercise.

Not far away, the instructor and assistant instructors had also turned interested after seeing Cillin's actions. Although Cillin's performance was pretty good during the past three classes, he always stopped when he had fulfilled his quota. They wondered if running with Knight today would force out this kid's abilities.

Everyone knew that they should maintain their own pace, but in reality, when so many people started running at once – competitiveness triggered and heads turned hot – some people began to lose control and ran faster than they originally planned to. It was a chain reaction; the moment the people at the back saw that they were about to be left behind, they too began to speed up.

Not far away, the instructors sat there leisurely while chatting.

One of them pointed at the running students and said, “Most of these fellows are B rank genotypes, but are incomparable even against a C rank army. They’re purely wasting their genetic resources.”

“That’s why I say they needed to get fucked up. Even if we don’t judge them by military academy standards, we can’t shame our reputation either. After all, people like us who are sent to non-military universities have our names singled out at the GAL headquarters. If these bastards got out and got their asses kicked by the other universities, just imagine how embarrassing it’ll be when we return to the army.”

“That’s why I asked big boss Huo to force that Knight brat over; it’s all to teach these usually arrogant bastards a lesson during this class.”

“Hehe, jokes aside, this Knight kid really is pretty good.”

“Of course, just look at his father, would he have taught a terrible son?”

While the instructors were chatting leisurely, the running Cillin and Knight on the other side were also chatting. They ran near the front of the center of the group. Since Knight was bored, he roped Cillin into chatting with him while running, and it caused everyone around them to stare at them like they’re exotic animals. Are they actually chatting during a weighted run?!

The duo paid no heed to things like breathing rhythm or

whatever at all. It felt no different from walking and chatting!

Fuck, you'll regret this when two laps are up! Some people thought on the inside.

Cillin knew that Knight was very impatient with the class, but still he underestimated the true depths of his annoyance. It was a waste of time for Knight to attend this kind of class.

"Then why have you come today?"

"I don't have a choice, Attendance can only be taken by swiping the card, and the number of attendance is calculated into the final result. Uncle Huo... Um, that is the chief of training division said that he could help me, but I still gotta show my face once in awhile. Oh right, how are the vines at our accommodation doing? I heard that the people at the Institute of Botany are so frustrated they're about to lose all their hair."

When Cillin had sent both Ci Jincheng and Knight pictures of the vines, they were no less surprised.

"Not bad. Yesterday those people from the research division had come over to collect some soil again."

"Tsk, absolutely disdainful. Those idiots have heads made out of rocks..."

And so the duo moved on from the topic of vines to the training

division's high grade training, and then to a military academy's training. From the sound of it, the training here really couldn't compare to a military academy's training at all. No wonder Knight had looked down upon the people who were complaining about fatigue around them so much.

While the duo was chatting, they did not pay attention to the other students' running speed, so before they knew it, the duo was beginning to lead at the front of the group. As the students breathing heavily behind them watched the duo chatting easily about nothing, they doubted from the bottom of their hearts if the duo's weights were made of bubbles.

"That Cillin kid is pretty good, yeah?" The instructor pointed at their direction.

"It's the seventh lap already and he looked just like he hadn't run at all. He's bearing the same 150 kg weight as Knight you know, and his genotype is only rank B."

"He's a good seed."

Cillin and Knight only knew about running and chatting and did not care about the people behind them at all. Knight didn't even bother remembering the number of laps he ran; in the past he stopped only when he had reached his limits.

Slowly, they had left the group behind by more than a lap. The weaker ones were more than 3 laps behind.

“We ran 10 laps already, right?” Cillin asked.

“Eh, who cares. Let’s talk some more. Where were we just now?”

“Sure, let’s chat a little more. Once we finished 20 laps we’ll go straight at the training division and register.”

“Haha, you’re a true brother!” Knight slapped Cillin’s shoulder and felt very satisfied with Cillin’s words. Then they continued to talk about the stories at the training division. When Knight talked about the ridicules Pride caused there, he grew even more excited. He was always happy to see Pride make a fool of himself.

And so, the entire large field was filled with Knight’s laughter alone.

“Oh my god, you have no idea how he looked at the time; I was about to laugh myself to death! Haha!”

The students who were gritting their teeth and hanging on felt their vision turn black and couldn’t wait to blackout. This fucker was trying to drive them to death, wasn’t he!? How was he still chatting and laughing after all that!? How were they going to look themselves in the mirror if he could laugh so powerfully even after so many laps?

Some of the students felt the duo running past them not long ago, before passing by them again after a short while, and again, and again…

When Cillin and Knight had finished their 20 laps, some of the students were still running their 10. The instructor had roared earlier that they either finish the 10 laps even if they had to crawl, or have their credits deducted.

Comparisons are odious.

This was the current thoughts of those students. A few people had personally inspected Cillin and Knight's weights after they finished running, and not only were they the real deal, the weights had even exceeded their own. Those people who thought they were good felt so resentful they could spew blood.

After the 20 laps were done, and Knight pulled Cillin before the instructor to perform a standard salute, he said in a pleased manner, "See, my brother ain't bad, eh? We're brothers of the same accommodation! Now then, instructor, a promise is a promise, so we won't be coming over next time. We'll be training directly at the training division."

After 20 laps were done, Knight and Cillin were only breathing a little heavier. However, their spirit were strong as ever, and they looked like they wouldn't take long to recover.

The instructor did not mind Knight's tone. This wasn't the real army, and considering this kid's terrible temper, that he saluted them and called them by their title were all the face they could want. The instructor waved his hands and smiled, "Go on, go on. Keep up the hard work after you reached there!"

Once the duo had gone far away, the assistant instructor at his side said, “I heard a long time ago from the police team about this Cillin kid. He may appear ordinary, but he definitely has some serious tricks up his sleeves. His stamina is easily a match for Knight’s.”

Chapter 32: Caught By The Vice Headmaster For Skipping Class

Naturally, Cillin was happy that he could go straight to the training division to train, but it had also brought him a problem – a schedule clash. This was because the training division's class time was not entirely similar to the military class time. In addition, even if he were to take a direct shuttle from the school zone to the training zone, it would still take him more than half an hour of flight time.

Cillin did not have special privilege like Knight, so he had no choice but to selectively skip a few classes. He should be able to pass the final exam as long as he didn't skip too many classes. If it wasn't for the fact that attendance was tied to credits, there were many classes that Cillin didn't need to attend. He only needed to look at the materials once to learn them, so even if he went, he would just be sleeping in class. It was only when he encountered more advanced or interesting materials would he pluck himself up and listen for a moment. There weren't many advanced materials for first grades after all; if he could accumulate enough credits sooner, he would be able to apply for high grade courses then.

At the training division's shooting range.

The students were doing target practice; 100 shots at high speed moving targets.

The result of the practice were as followed: Knight had the highest hit rate at one hundred percent. The next was Pride, also scoring a hundred percent but used two more seconds than Knight.

The third was Cillin, with a ninety nine percent hitting rate.

At first Cillin's results had surprised everyone, but they got used to it later on. A few target practices passed, and Cillin constantly sat at third place by missing one or two shots.

"What a black horse. He may not compare to Knight and Pride, but he's not far away from some of the high grade students already." The person calculating the scores said.

"It is a little regretful. That Cillin kid had missed yet another shot. If he didn't miss that, he might have been able to compete with Pride for second place." Another person also said.

Huo Neil frowned and did not say anything. He always came over and observed the two little ancestors Knight and Pride when they had their classes to prevent landing into a situation where it would be awkward for him to explain it to certain people in the army. But after every shooting class, Huo Neil kept feeling that something was off with that Cillin kid, even though he couldn't quite get his fingers on it.

After the target practice had ended, Cillin withdrew his gun and turned around, getting ready to leave. Coincidentally, Pride was also heading towards the exit, and after he saw Cillin, he lifted his chin and said, "Yo, Forever Third."

"No one is competing with you to see who can lift their chins higher. Now get lost, you snotty brat who can choke himself while eating fish." Knight said derisively while walking over from

behind Pride.

It was obvious that Knight's words had struck Pride in a sore spot. That one incident where he choked on a fish had turned him into a laughing stock.

After glaring indignantly at the duo, Pride humphed once before lifting his chin and left.

Knight twitched his mouth at Pride's back and said, "No need to bother with that snotty brat, c'mon, let's go get a drink. The food at the training division ain't bad; do you know that back in military school, they barred us from drinking and starved us so bad..."

In truth, Cillin didn't mind placing at third place at all. He could absolutely hit all the targets in half of Knight's time, but by doing so, he would without a doubt bring a whole lot of suspicion and trouble upon himself. Cillin did not plan to stand out too much; as long as he could enjoy the benefits of being part of the top three, it would be fine. The rest should play out just right.

There were many types of courses in the training zone. Other than shooting, there was also military theory, military geography, cooperative tactics, driving techniques of battleships, airplanes, tanks and so on. Cillin had learned quite a bit during middle school himself, but those days didn't last long.

Today, Cillin had skipped his class at the school zone and took the passenger car that goes directly from the school zone to the

training zone. The transport didn't fly for long before it came to a sudden stop. Apparently a conflict between two students had caused a small problem in the passenger car's energy system.

Cillin checked the time. The passenger car's energy system should take about half an hour to repair, but he was still in time for class. Let's take a nap.

Vaguely, Cillin heard a conversation from not far away.

"Today is my lucky day! Thank you elder Mo, thank you for your efforts elder Mo!"

Cillin even felt someone looking at his direction, so he opened his eyes and turned around to look. It was at this moment, he knew he fucked up.

"It really is you, kid. How dare you play truant!"

It was none other than Mo Heng.

"Good day... Headmaster Mo!" Cillin stretched the corners of his mouth. No matter how he looked at it, Mo Heng's smile was giving him the creeps.

Mo Heng no longer bothered with the driver or the people around him, squinting his eyes while walking over with steady steps. He said unhurriedly, "You should be attending an engineering course now, shouldn't you? The machine

manufacturing class?”

Okay, you’ve actually paid attention me for a long time now, haven’t you sir? How am I going to refute you if you can even tell what classes I’m attending?

He looked at Cillin’s backpack, “Going to the training division?”

“Yeah…”

“Rejected. Follow me, I have something to talk with you.” After taking two steps and turning around, seeing that Cillin hadn’t moved his white eyebrows lifted upwards, “Faster! What are you dawdling about for; you’re wasting the other passengers’ time!”

Cillin forced himself to follow Mo Heng and got out of the passenger car.

“Headmaster Mo…” He still had shooting class at at the training division today. It was to be included in the usual results.

Mo Heng lifted a hand and stopped him. He dialed his communicator right in front of Cillin, which was connected almost instantly by the other party as Huo Neil’s hologram appeared above the device.

“Little Nail, I’m taking Cillin.”

“Yessir! He’s all yours sir!” It was a very powerful, very clean, very decisive answer without even a speck of hesitation in it.

Cillin: “…”

After cutting off the communicator, Mo Heng sat in his private car and beckoned proudly with his finger, “Be a good boy, will you? Come and take a trip with this old man.”

Mo Heng had taken this path only because he had some unexpected business today, but he didn’t expect to run into a passenger car with a malfunctioning energy system, so he lent a hand and shrank the repair time from half an hour to just five minutes. It was also thanks to this coincidence that Mo Heng caught Cillin playing truant.

Cillin sat in Mo Heng’s private car and arrived at the research division’s mechanical engineering lab. With Mo Heng leading the way, Cillin met almost no resistance when he walked inside.

Mo Heng threw a set of overalls at him, “Change into these and follow me.”

Cillin didn’t know what Mo Heng is planning, but he still did as he said. He followed Mo Heng into a workshop. The interior of the room was scattered with parts.

“You have half an hour to assemble a complete machinery. If the machinery does not pass QA then it will also count as a fail, and if

you fail, then you'll be staying here for the day and score zero marks for that machine manufacturing class of yours as well!" once said and done, Mo Heng closed the door and locked it.

(T/N: Quality Assurance)

Facing towards the tightly shut steel door, Cillin scratched his head, let out a sigh and looked around the workshop.

Cillin needed only a glance to be able to differentiate which parts could be joined with one another, but if he was to assemble them into a complete machinery, he would always be missing a few parts.

Cillin did not begin his work right away. Instead he swiftly categorized the parts and memorized the positions of each part after they would be assembled into a machine. As he continued to categorize the parts, the many mechanical blueprints in Cillin's head gradually became whole.

Mo Heng had given him thirty minutes, but because there were too many parts in this workshop, he took twenty minutes just to sort out the parts alone.

Ten minutes left... it should be enough time, I think.

Out of the seven heaps of parts, there were only two that could be assembled into a full machinery. Cillin chose the slightly easier heap and began assembling.

While sitting at his office and looking at the display, Mo Heng let out a pleasant smile.

Mo Heng had tested other students in the research division with the parts in that workshop as well. But they either could not assemble a full machinery, or discover only a full assembly. But Cillin was able to find both assemblies in such a short time. The time limit given to other test students was ten hours, and there were no lack of specially recruited students among them either! That was why Mo Heng had told Cillin that he had the right to be specially recruited.

Chapter 33: Quick, Bow To Your Master!

Cillin recalled the memory of Mo Heng assembling the parts back at the train station in his head: The force of every finger, the angle and accuracy of every connection...

After glancing once at his chosen heap of parts, Cillin almost never looked away from the parts in his own hands. But somehow, Cillin was always able to grab the correct parts needed for the next step of the assembly instantly.

At first, Cillin's speed was a little slow. But once he got used to that kind of finger control and calculation of the accuracy of his assembly on the fly, his hands began to move quicker.

While he watched Cillin assembling in his office, Mo Heng grew so excited that his entire body began to shake. He stood up from his chair while still shaking and zooming in on the screen, staring at the art-like assembly.

The further he went, the faster Cillin's assembling speed grew. Not only did his accuracy not fall, it even trended to increase even further. Mo Heng stared closely at the screen and said to the computer, "Analyze overall accuracy."

"Scanning... overall accuracy at 97% of theoretical value."

"Scanning... overall accuracy at 98% of theoretical value."

“Scanning… overall accuracy at 99% of theoretical value.”

“Scanning… overall accuracy at 99.2% of theoretical value.”

“Scanning… overall accuracy at 99.3% of theoretical value.”

“Scanning… overall accuracy at 99.5% of theoretical value.”

…

In the end, the overall accuracy had reached 99.5% of the theoretical value, and every step he took afterwards reached 99.95%. Be it assembling one part or multiple parts at once, his accuracy was always 99.95%!

The overall accuracy was calculated by putting through the many parameters acquired after scanning into a number of technical formulae. The higher the overall accuracy, the closer the assembler was to that legendary point.

Inside the workshop, Cillin had assembled the heap of parts into specific units and components. Then he put these units and components through one final assembly. Mo Heng didn’t even need to test for the assembly’s circuits or correctness to know that it would definitely work; that it was definitely at excellent grade!

At the ninth minute, Cillin completed his work and pressed a button on the assembled machine.

Other than the stabilizing bottom, a large majority of the upper part of the half-an-arm tall machine began to open up like flower petals. It was like the blooming of a skeletal flower accompanied by a crystalline music, causing someone to feel as if they had stumbled slowly out of the darkness after a long, long wait to welcome that very first ray of light.

Cillin finally understood why so many engineers were obsessed with these things. He watched the machine that he had assembled with his own hands and felt a childish joy in his heart. It was incredibly touching.

Cillin sat there cross-legged on the floor, and while listening to the flowing music, fell into a trance while watching the machine; watching them expanding and collapsing, blooming and closing... just like rebirth.

It wasn't until Mo Heng opened the door of the workshop that Cillin finally came to.

Mo Heng walked before Cillin and sat down on where he stood, "Cillin, do you know about the Golden Point?"

Cillin shook his head. The first year courses did not venture deeply into many content, and the relevant books that Cillin read previously did not mention this either.

"Most books would not mention this, because it is something that exists only within our circle. The correct parts, the correction

position, the literal perfect assembly accuracy within the shortest time. The ‘point’ that satisfies all those requirements is called the Golden Point.”

While speaking, Mo Heng took out the computer’s calculation results while Cillin was assembling.

Cillin frowned at the 99.95% at the end. There was actually no increase at all during the last stages of the assembly.

Mo Heng pointed at those 99.95% at the end and said, “When this number reaches 100%, then you would have achieved the Golden Point. Cillin, you’re not bad at all. I can see that you haven’t done this much, but you are already much better than some of the teachers in Seven Lights to be able to reach 99.95%.”

“Have you reached the Golden Point, elder?” Cillin looked at Mo Heng.

At this, Mo Heng’s voice turned forlorn.

“No. No one even in the entire Galactic Alliance has reached it. We have always been getting closer to the ‘Golden Point’, but no one was actually able to reach it. Some said that the Golden Point is just a theoretical limit that is impossible to achieve, but I have always believed that the Golden point is achievable!”

Cillin kept his head down and watched the machine still blooming and closing before him, listening quietly to Mo Heng’s

story. Many of these knowledge could not be learned from books.

After talking about some matters relating to the Golden Point, Mo Heng continued to sigh, “I am old. My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak. Even if I know what I should be paying attention to when assembling, even if I know where I can improve further, but my hand speed and control still cannot reach the form I had imagined in my mind.”

Slapping his his hands on his knees, he sighed as if he wanted to vent every bit of regret inside his heart. Then he glanced at Cillin still keeping his head down and – this brat isn’t reacting at all!

Let’s give it another shot!

Mo Heng sighed again with even more sadness of a hero at his twilight, “I will reach a higher point in my life no longer, and my biggest regrets is none other than the fact that I have no successor. My son has chosen the army, and there wasn’t any students that I was particularly satisfied with back when I was still a teacher in my younger years, unlike those old bastards in the Alliance who had the good luck to run into a good disciple. Ah, this is fate! How nice would it be, if I had met someone of your talents earlier.”

While sighing, Mo Heng’s eyes glanced towards Cillin’s direction. The latter continued to bow his head and said not a word. His expression was hidden from sight either. Mo Heng swore in his heart.

You little shit, I already made it as clear as it can be; can’t you

show me any signs at all? Logically speaking, shouldn't this be the part where you excitedly recommend yourself?! How stupid do you have to bit grab hold of such a precious opportunity! So stupid! Blockhead!

Sir Mo seemed to have forgotten that he was praising a certain blockhead just now.

Seeing that Cillin refused to give any reaction, Mo Heng got angry.

"Would it kill you to react a bit?!"

Cillin was tempted to laugh. With Mo Heng's 'quick, bow to your master!' look and that intense gaze he threw over from time to time, it would be hard not to know what Mo Heng was thinking. However, as a Hunter, his days in Seven Lights were limited. He would leave as soon as his mission was complete. What would happen when Cillin Douance disappears from the people's eyes?

"You know, there are so many specially recruited students…"

"Don't talk to me about those specially recruited students! They can't achieve what I want, and they are put under the names of other mentors. Their direct mentor isn't me either."

Cillin pressed his forehead under Mo Heng's terrific gaze and said, "I'm lacking in many expertise, and since I've picked up so many classes, I should obtain those credits as well. I don't have too

much time…”

Before Cillin could finish Mo Heng waved his hand grandiosely, “Those courses are mostly form without substance; to attend them will just be a complete waste of time! I’ll give you your credits directly; I’ll be interested to know which chief mentor dares to question me!”

Cillin sweatdropped in his heart. Oh vice headmaster Mo, you must not speak of this outside, or every teacher and student in Seven Lights will be holding a grudge.

“So? Are you going to become my disciple or not?!”

Seeing Mo Heng’s eyebrows slowing trending towards a vertical line, Cillin considered for a moment before finally saying, “How about this. I’ll work as a trainee under you, and if you’re satisfied with my performance, then we’ll talk about this again. Is that okay?”

“Forget becoming a trainee or whatever; it sounds ugly. You’ll work as a research assistant.”

“Alright, I’ll become a research assistant as you say.”

Cillin didn’t know that for individuals like Mo Heng, a research assistant was the equivalent of a disciple. And so without Cillin’s knowledge, Mo Heng had labeled Cillin as his research assistant a.k.a disciple right away.

Now that Mo Heng was happy, he pinched Cillin's cheeks and said, "What else are you dissatisfied about with the Chief of Research Division teaching you personally?! You're totally taking this for granted, aren't you kid?!"

"Yes yes, I'm taking it for granted, I'm taking it for granted." Cillin did not struggle and allowed Mo Heng to pinch both sides of his cheeks and shake them. Sigh, why does this old man like to pinch someone's cheeks so much. It's almost swollen already.

What Cillin didn't know was that Mo Heng's son, the GAL army general, had carried 'baby fat' on his face before he entered higher military university at fifteen years old.

Chapter 34: We Have A Mission

Mo Heng had tweaked the research institute's access system on that same day. Cillin was the only person who could enter the research institute while wielding a Crimson card; a place where not even many specially recruited students had the authority to enter. Luckily, most of the institute's members were cooped up inside the research division, or the news of Cillin given special favor by the assistant headmaster would be known by many people.

Many of the first year courses Cillin had chosen were given approval by Mo Heng to skip entirely. Since the vice headmaster himself had given his word, none of the chief mentors dared to say anything either. Mo Heng had even specially granted Cillin a personal workshop, so Ciilin's commute now basically consisted between the research division's workshop, the training division and the accommodation only.

Since he didn't need to attend many of the courses and rarely showed up, for most of the Seven Lights students, Cillin had basically no presence whatsoever.

For the past few days, Mo Heng had told Cillin a lot of mechanical knowledge and benefiting him greatly. His overall accuracy had risen to 99.96%.

Please do not look down on this 0.01% increase, for the number of people who achieved 99.97% like Mo Heng, in the entire galaxy could be counted on two hands and they were all famous authority figures like Mo Heng in GAL. Meanwhile there were hundreds of

known people who could achieve 99.96%, and up to thousands to tens of thousands people who could achieve 99.95% overall accuracy. The higher the number, the harder it was to improve. Beyond 99.95%, not many people could improve by another 0.01% even after an entire lifetime of effort.

Only those who achieved 99.90% overall accuracy could be considered high-end talents. Those who were unable to reach this standard basically had no say in this circle whatsoever. The mechanical mentors in Seven Lights were all 99.90% and above, and the chief mentors could achieve 99.96%.

Therefore, Mo Heng was no less proud at Cillin's improvement. He was proud at his own wise decision to save Cillin's time from those 'garbage' mentors, and even prouder that he finally had an excellent disciple.

If those mentors knew that they were 'garbage' in the vice headmaster Mo Heng's mind, they might spew blood from sheer anger.

There was a time when Cillin went to look for Mo Heng, and the latter was talking with an unknown person on the communicator. That cockiness of his was just missing a wagging tail. Since Mo Heng was very proud of his disciple, he therefore expressed it directly by pinching Cillin's cheeks more and more frequently. Cillin felt keenly that his cheeks was beginning to 'put on some weight'.

Today, Cillin was assembling some parts Mo Heng had given him in the workshop. Mo Heng had gone out on an errand, and an

errand meant that he had left Planet Seven Lights itself, although his destination was a question mark. But before Mo Heng had left, he wore a radiant look as if he was expecting something while he was assigning Cillin a task. His gaze on Cillin also grew more and more kindly, causing Cillin to feel a chill up his spine. After knowing Mo Heng for some time, Cillin also knew that whenever his Chief revealed such a smile, he must have a rotten idea in mind!

in actuality, Mo Heng was going to visit an old friend and show off while he was there.

Cillin's hand speed was incredibly quick. There was a computer at the side capturing the entire process while calculating his overall accuracy at the same time. Every time he finished assembling a machine, Cillin was required to write an assembly report about his findings and thoughts. This was something Mo Heng had especially emphasized and also something everyone in the research division must perform. A member of the research division must be flexible and have their own opinions and beliefs. These were Mo Heng's words as the Chief of the Research Division.

Cillin believed that he could still increase his speed further while preserving his accuracy. Time is life. These were simple words that even a child was overly familiar with. But the Hunters who walked among the galaxies were very conscious of this fact. Be it accidental or intentional, if he was ten thousandth of a second too slow to repair certain malfunctioning parts of a warship, then the chance that everyone dies from that implicit threat would grow continuously.

It’s not to say that Cillin was oh-so-noble or anything, but only a capable person would be accepted quickly by a Hunter regiment and walk further into the universe. For the Vanguard and for himself, only by having this mindset would he be able to carve a better living.

After finishing the assembly of the machine, Cillin took a look at the data on the logger, picked up a report and began summarizing his thoughts and findings on it. It was at this moment that the doorbell rang, and judging from its rhythm Cillin could already guess who it was.

A head poked inside after the door was opened. Seeing that Cillin was writing a report and not assembling, her intelligent eyes immediately curved into crescent slits.

“Luckily, you’re not assembling a machine. I was worried that I would disturb your work.”

A young girl wearing an innocent and charming smile walked in. It was the girl who commented on Cillin and the others with Fu Luo back at the teaching building.

“You came at the right time. I just finished assembling.” Cillin said.

The young girl was also one of the research division’s specially recruited student belonging to the design institute. Her name was Ling Long, 16 years old and also a first grade student. She seemed to have some background as well, although not many people knew

what kind of background she had. They only knew that many of the chief mentors in the research division had treated her quite well.

Cillin had ran into Ling Long by coincidence when he came over to the research division, and she had pulled him asking about the details of the battle between Knight and him. Since then, Ling Long would visit Cillin whenever she was free, saying that the rest of the people in the research division were boring, and that she found Cillin rather agreeable.

When the conversation had happened, they were at the research division's dining hall, not to mention that she did not lower her voice as well. So the people around them heard her and showered Cillin with odd and ambiguous looks. She was the research division's famous little elfin beauty, and he was Chief Mo Heng's favorite pupil. They were the literal image of an ideal couple.

Cillin simply smiled at their ambiguous gazes. He knew that Ling Long was a person of hidden depth despite her innocent appearance. She was most definitely not as innocent as she looked. Moreover, on the first day Cillin and Ling Long had eaten their meal together at the dining hall, Mo Heng had told him to keep some distance between him and Ling Lung if possible. Cillin could also see that Mo Heng's attitude towards Ling Long was friendly but distant. As for the reason, Mo Heng wasn't willing to tell him, so Cillin wouldn't ask either.

Ling Long touched the machine Cillin just finished assembling, and while looking over it, curiously said, "Cillin, someone is gonna treat us at our institute today. A BIG treat. His son was born

recently and he was going to celebrate it with a feast. Everyone in the institute is allowed to bring their own friends. So, are you going or not?"

"Are you asking me to sponge off him?" Cillin answered with a smile while still jotting on his report.

Ling Lung stared at Cillin and blinked, "It's not like it's our first time; last time the communications institute had a treat, we sponged off them as well, didn't we? C'mon, let's go." While saying she even bumped Cillin a little with her elbow.

Just as Cillin was about to answer, his communicator suddenly rang.

"Sorry, excuse me for a moment."

Cillin walked into a rest bay next to the workshop. No one would be able to hear him from the outside.

The one who called him was Knight. Usually, Knight would not call Cillin on his work time, but after seeing the ITE pictographic signal on the display, Cillin immediately shied away from Ling Long and connected at the rest bay. The signal meant 'Urgent'.

"What is it?" Cillin asked.

"Cillin, we've got a job to do!!" Knight appeared very excited on the display. After holding back for such a long time, he could

finally unleash himself.

"Tell me." Cillin knew that the mission must not be simple for Knight to react so intensely.

Knight straightened his face and asked, "Do you know about Seven Lights' asteroid experimental stations?"

"I do."

There were a few asteroids not far away from Planet Seven Lights, and Seven Lights' experimental stations were built on top of them. There was a station on each asteroid, so one might see exactly how grand Seven Lights was.

The reason for their locations was because certain experiments were too dangerous to conduct on Seven Lights, such as wide range communication interference, high risk bio-virus experiments, wide range radioactive weapons research and so on. That was why the extraterrestrial experimental stations were built. Ci JIncheng was performing research on one such communications station on an asteroid right now.

"Something happened at the bio-virus station. Uncle Huo did not explain the exact details; these are Seven Lights' confidential secrets. This time, those people from the army allocated at the police and security division have joined the operation team as well. At first, Uncle Huo wasn't ready to allow a student to participate, but there were some students who applied multiple times to join in the operation, so now it was changed to allow only the top

performing students to join. Everyone else is out of the question."

There were only four grades in the military, and there was no fifth, sixth or seventh grade. If a student performed excellently within these four years, then they would be recommended into the military. Normally speaking, such people were few and far between.

"In total, there were two second grade students, and three each for third and fourth grade. Originally none of us first grades were allowed to join – I couldn't change Uncle Huo's mind even though I blocked his room entrance for a whole day – but after I contacted my grandpa, he finally added my name into the operation team. But that Pride brat, hehe, he's not allowed to join in; his family wouldn't allow him to. Still, I figured that he definitely won't give up this easily. He should be persuading his second oldest brother Feihang Zweig or thinking of a way to contact his grandpa right now. They are the only ones who might agree to this." Knight said gloatingly.

As the Chief of Training Division, Huo Neil knew both Knight and Pride's identities very well. If the mission wasn't dangerous to a certain level, he would not have acted so firmly.

"So, what do you think Cillin? Are you interested to join in?" Knight asked.

"Yeah, sure, I look forward to it." Cillin smiled and answered. His hands were getting a little itchy from underuse.

“Alright, I’ll talk to Uncle Huo directly. Come over now, we have to prep before the operation starts.”

After he hung up, Cillin came out and smiled apologetically at Ling Long, “Something came up. I can’t go sponge off the table with you.”

Ling Long’s delicate nose twitched while she drew lines across the floor, “Fine, I’ll go eat two portions on my own! Buh-bye!”

After Ling Long left, Cillin swiftly finished his almost completed report and began tidying up the mess inside the workshop. Five minutes later, he picked up his backpack and left on his hoverboard.

in a room inside the research division, Ling Long watched Cillin’s back hurriedly leaving on a hoverboard in a monitor and frowned. She flipped open the communicator in her hands and called a number. The person on the other side had connected swiftly.

Ling Long’s eyebrows tightened deeper and deeper as she listened to the report from the other side.

Chapter 35: Preliminary Test

When Cillin arrived at the training division, Knight had already talked to Huo Neil about Cillin's participation. However, Huo Neil only allowed Cillin to enter the preliminary list. He wasn't the only one; all ten Seven Light students must participate in the preliminary test, and if they failed they would be barred from this operation. They were just students and not soldiers after all; it was necessary that their overall qualities reached a certain standard. A real battlefield was nothing like a usual examination.

The ten students – no, wait, it should be eleven, because Pride had run over and passed his communicator to Huo Neil with an excited look on his face when the test was about to begin.

At the time, Huo Neil already had a bad feeling about this, and when he received Pride's communicator and walked into his office to listen, he soon came out with a constipated look on his face. Huo Neil felt that his future was bleak as he watched the chin-lifting Pride and Knight denouncing each other.

And so, Pride joined in the test as well.

The first subject on the test was shooting. The guns handed out to each person were different from the ones normally used during training. The bullets were slightly bigger, and their firing speed was slightly slower. Moreover, not only were their targets not slow, they were also very aggressive as well. Everyone had put on a protective suit. These protective suits all had sensors on them, and they were set at a maximum 10 points. If anyone's points fell below 5 after the test, they would be eliminated.

Therefore, this preliminary test challenged a student's shooting ability, responsiveness, adaptability and more. Moreover, the students had also realized that this operation was different from norm and guessed vaguely the reason behind it. As long as they held fear inside their hearts, their reactions would become less calm and crisp. Their shooting abilities would be noticeably affected. The soldiers would be able to see their results on the screen outside the test field displaying the number of hits, accuracy and deducted points within the given time limit.

This was a group operation. No soldier would acknowledge you if your capabilities weren't above a certain standard. They would not feel safe fighting together with you, much less trusting you their backs.

All ten people were scattered at ten different locations within the test field, and every test field had a total target score of one thousand. Their first priority was to eliminate all targets within the time limit.

On the test field, Cillin walked to the entrance after he had finished adjusting his equipment. The lighting of the test field was dim, and the simulated environment was a dark and humid atmosphere. He could clearly sense something moving about restlessly within the darkness.

Whoosh——

A medium dog-sized black shadow charged towards him. Cillin

raised his gun, bang, and took it down in one shot as the black shadow shattered and disappeared. Then there were two black shadows, four black shadows, eight...

After he got used to the bullet's speed and recoil, it could be counted as smooth sailing despite the increasing number of targets. The longer the test continued, the more black shadows there were, and the stronger their offensive power became as well. There were a few times Cillin was barely able to slip through the attacks. He would've been hit if it wasn't thanks to his swift reactions. He would open fire and attack his targets while he was dodging a number of sudden attacks at the same time. As long as he kept his targets from closing on the him en masse, he would have the space to avoid them, and as long as there was such a space, Cillin would be able to perform the quickest and most convenient response.

Strangely enough, Cillin was astoundingly calm. He felt neither fear nor worry. It was like he was eating a bowl of noodle; watching them disappear into his mouth as he ate them with a pair of chopsticks little by little. That was all.

At the same time, the crowd was observing the ten participants' performances from the display outside the test field. There were two students who were affected by the interior environment and atmosphere, feeling a hint of fear the moment they entered inside. Adding to that a change of firearms and the miscalculation of the bullet's speed, it didn't take long before they started to get hit, and five minutes later, both the sensors on their protective suits had fallen below 5 points and looking to drop further. Huo Neil had them pulled out immediately from the test field. There was no longer any need for them to continue.

The two people who were disqualified when the preliminary test had barely started took off their helmets while appearing defeated and very dispirited. An instructor counseled them at the side.

As the test continued, three more people were eliminated. There were only five people left inside the test field now.

Knight was still the first person to eliminate all targets within the specified time limit. He appeared calm after he walked out of the test field. He had performed exercises like these since he was young, and Pride was probably in the same situation as well, which was why Knight was only looking at Cillin's display after he came out. Before long, Pride had come out as well. He appeared somewhat dissatisfied upon seeing Knight's figure, but still he lifted his chin high and humphed once.

Cillin was the third to walk out of the test field. He had gathered all the necessary data, and at the same time, he also predicted that Knight and Pride should've completed their respective tests and were waiting outside, so there was no longer any need to drag this any longer. He walked out after swiftly executing the remaining dozens of targets.

Other than the trio, there were also two students who hung on until they exceeded the time limit. However, the points on their protective suit did not fall below the cut-off line, so they were considered to have passed as well.

Knight, Pride and Cillin's grades were excellent, whereas the

other two students were passable.

After the preliminary test was over, the next was an antibody allergy reaction test. The five students who had passed through the preliminary test were injected with a small amount of antiserum. If their body could adapt to the serum and not trigger an allergic reaction, then they would pass and be able to join the other comrades ready and waiting on the transports.

So it would seem that the targets we are to eliminate this time not only have incredible offensive power, but also poison. Cillin thought while analyzing the antibodies injected into his body. After the antiserum was injected, Cillin then deduced its antigen from the antibody, and after combining the test field's environmental conditions and relevant data on their targets, Cillin dare said that their targets this time were rodents.

And what kind of rodents had powerful reproductive capabilities, loves to live in dark environments and were widely used in biological tests?

Mice!!

If they were really as big as the targets at the test field, then Cillin really hadn't seen seen such a big mouse in his life yet.

The good news was that none of them were allergic after the antibody allergy reaction test was over.

It was an emergency situation, and there was no time to provide the five students with any additional orders at all. All the equipment was readied just as the five students completed their tests, and they were sent directly up the transports by a very reluctant Huo Neil. The relevant information would be explained on the warship.

The transports transported the soldiers and students onto the warship parked at the spaceport.

When he saw the warship, Knight let out a whistle, “A military warship armed with heavy weaponry and high-end ‘Sentinel’ defense system. It looks like this incident is pretty serious after all. Still, the garrison wasn’t alerted, so it can’t be that bad.”

After entering the warship, every man and woman on the warship, be it the operation members or the warship’s pilots, were injected with a lot more antibodies than during the allergy test. After the injection was over, every member was even given two antiserums to be used in case the injected antiserum did not work.

Chapter 36: Approach

While the warship flew, Huo Neil began debriefing them on the current mission. The huge screen began displaying the three dimensional map of a planet that showed the layout of the station.

“Half a year ago, when the bio station was disposing the assumed dead mice during a failed experiment, they found out that one of them had gone missing. There was a hole in the sealed container, and the many attempts to search for it were met with no results whatsoever. Twenty days ago, an abnormal situation had occurred at the waste treatment plant on the other side of the planet. Three workers had gone missing, and there were bloody torn overalls found on the scene and several instruments with claw marks on them. Since then, similar incidents kept happening at the treatment plant. Ten days ago, the base sent out a small patrol unit to investigate, and half a day, later the entire unit’s biosignals had disappeared one after another. Communication had come to no avail.”

Huo Neil switched to the next image. The image showed a black mouse that was half a meter long even after discounting its tail, “After that, a large number of patrol units were dispatched, and just three days ago they had discovered the cause. It was these black mice that had caused the current grim situation.”

Through Huo Neil’s presentation, the group was made to understand that these black mice had incredible vitality. In the station, the confirmation of death of the subjects used in experiments were very strict. There’s a time requirement that stated that a subject must show no signs of life for twenty four hours straight before they could be confirmed dead. Moreover,

they were also sealed under ultra low temperatures while being transported to the treatment plant. Normally speaking, even a live mouse would be frozen to death under -80°C, not to mention that it had to pass through yet another test for signs of life so that there would no room for error. But that lab mouse managed to bite through the sealed container and escaped, so one could see just how tough this mutated mouse was.

At the time, the escaped black mouse had undergone a strengthening agent experiment. Later on, it mutated after being subjected to UV sterilization and ultra low temperature during its transport and, after it escaped the station, it endured the effects of magnetic fields and radiation outside and mutated again to become what it was right now.

“After a great sacrifice, the station’s patrol units finally brought back a live, juvenile black mouse. The antiserum you’ve injected is supplied by the station’s personnel. However, these black mice mutates very quickly, so there’s no telling how useful the antiserums will still be when the time comes. So I’ll be warning all of you here beforehand – don’t think you’re immune just because you’ve been injected the antiserum!” Huo Neil said seriously.

After the debriefing was complete, Huo Neil split up the five thousand strong operatives into ten big battalions. The five students were plugged into five of them. Pride and Knight’s respective battalion commander were Gerrard and Huo Neil. The two of them would be led personally by the head of the training division and police division; they couldn’t entrust them to anyone else without feeling worried.

Cillin was assigned in the seventh battalion.

After readying their equipment, they were to gather as a battalion an hour later.

The five students had put their equipment together, and while they were tidying up they talked about some impressions along the way.

Hard, one of the two people who passed the preliminary test had a forthright attitude, and he quickly chatted up to Knight in no time.

“Say, how do you guys think it became a large scale mouse infestation even though it was only one lab mouse that escaped?”

Huo Neil had asked this question before, but there was still no answer yet. Therefore everyone was just making guesses at the moment.

“It went out and found a doe, I guess?” The last person of the five man group, Sird said. Sird might not be as bold and direct as Hard was, but he wasn’t too far behind. He was Hard’s childhood friend, and his father held a post in the GAL army at one of the ten business Sectors.

“Bullshit, there’s no life outside the station, not to mention the strong magnetic fields and radiations. Even if there is, they would have been cleaned up already when the station was built.” Knight

said while wearing his combat suit.

“I guess our targets are pretty tough then.” Sird sighed.

“Hmph, if you’re afraid to die then don’t go!” Pride said scornfully.

Sird took no notice to his words. After being in the training division for such a long time, everyone knew the young master’s temper.

“Cillin, what are your thoughts?” Knight asked.

Cillin arranged the tools in his waist pack for a little. Many asteroids have erratic magnetic fields, so it was impossible to use subspace containers. In the end, he had to rely on himself to carry them.

“My thoughts? I don’t have any, really. I do have some advices though.”

“Oh? Do tell.” Knight asked curiously.

“We should think less about how many mutated black mice we’re going to kill, and more on how to retreat safely when the need arises.”

Cillin barely finished his words before Pride scoffed disdainfully,

“Coward.”

“Fine, I’m a coward. I have no intentions of turning into those black little mutated things’ shit just like those workers at the waste treatment plant; leaving behind only a few shreds of stained cloth, having even their bones dragged off to feed its offsprings…”

“Cease your scaremongering!” Pride yelled out.

They had to admit that Cillin’s words did cause a chill among them.

“Hehe, actually, all we need to do is to take them out. That’s what our weapons for, right?” Sird lifted the gun in his hands.

“No, it’s just that I have a feeling that the situation may be far more serious than we thought. The black mice’s group attack may be even tighter than what we faced during the preliminary test, plus they’re intelligent and would not act like preprogrammed targets. They have sharp teeth that could bite through a lab’s sealed container, and sharp claws as well. Moreover, their saliva carries toxin and their skin carry animal virus.” Cillin said firmly.

Cillin wasn’t exaggerating his words. He had in fact come to this conclusion after a conducting series of analysis. Cillin had even accounted for the asteroid’s radiation and many other factors to his comprehensive analysis of the black mice’s frequency of mutation. Still, judging from the operatives sent out on this operation, as long as the drugs at the tip of the bullet remained effective, and eliminated the mutated black mice thoroughly, they

should be able to handle this.

The reason that the firearms were different, and the bullets were larger and heavier; with slower bullet's speed than the practice guns was because they were custom made in a hurry and contained drugs inside. When the bullet was fired into a mutated black mouse's body, they would explode. The drugs would spread out and swiftly and thoroughly kill the target. At the same time, the drugs would also scatter onto the surrounding mutated black mice and affect them, causing them to slow down as well.

Although Pride still maintained a disdainful look on his face, in truth he had memorized all of Cillin's suggestions. Who wouldn't appreciate their own life, and he had no plans of turning into those black little mutated things' shit alright.

The warship docked onto the space station once it had arrived outside the asteroid. Huo Neil and Gerrard took a few men and went in first to get a better grasp of the situation. The rest of them were on standby.

Before long, Huo Neil and Gerrard had returned with serious looks on their faces. They began explaining the latest news they'd acquired just now to the group.

An hour ago, the black mice had attacked the station from underground. the center section of the station had the strongest base, and it would take them some time to break through this layer of defense. However, there was not much time left for them to act. Many of the station's flight and communication equipment had been chewed off, and there were now hundreds of researchers

trapped at the center area of the station. Among them, there were tens of people who were severely injured. The toxin had invaded their bodies, and the few antiserums they had injected were completely ineffective. New antiserums were being synthesized in the central lab as they speak, but as to exactly how many more unknown toxins waited for them at the back, they dared not imagine. As for the fringe area of the station, it had already fallen.

"Battalion 1 to 8 will take care of the 'sweeping', starting from around the station's central area. Battalion 9 will be responsible for the protection of the engineers and perform emergency repairs on the station's defense systems. Battalion 10 will assist the trapped researchers in evacuating and act as medical backup..." Huo Neil gave out the orders swiftly. He only assigned the tasks to each battalion, and as to how they're going to go about them, he believed that his men would not disappoint him.

In truth, Huo Neil wanted nothing more than to arrange Knight and Pride in the last two battalions, but he also knew that if he did, these two 'ancestors' would probably disobey him anyway.

The seventh battalion Cillin was assigned in had been split up by the battalion commander into five smaller companies. Each company consisted of a hundred men, and they were broken down again into ten squads. They would push forward as a single squad unit.

Eight out of ten squads had moved out first. The eight armed transport aircraft descended around the station's central area from eight different directions.

Chapter 37: Sweeping The Station

The aircraft slowly descended after approaching the station's central area. Rather than scared, the black mice grew excited by the aircraft's approach and reacted as if they had seen food.

Since there were many locations inside the station that could not be scanned by the scanner, there was no telling exactly how many black mice were down there. However, dense black dots could be seen everywhere looking down from the aircraft.

In just half a year, the mutated mice had reproduced to astonishing numbers. Its tremendous reproduction speed was obviously incomparable to normal mice.

"The station's isolation barrier has been activated, we may begin the operation. Over."

"Roger that, over." The seventh battalion commander Shute switched the communication channel, "All squads, standby! Begin countdown to infrasound weapon in 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 – Fire!"

The soundwaves that could not be heard by human ears were discharged from the aircraft, and the originally very excited and lively mutated black mice suddenly began to grow anxious. The agile ones had already begun to escape far away, and those who were slow became slower and slower.

This was the infrasound weapon provided by the research station

that was specifically developed based on the natural frequency of the black mice's internal organs. While it was effective, it wasn't working as well as they had imagined. Still, at least it was effective.

After the infrasound attack had ended, the number of black mice around the station's central area had decreased quite a bit. Those that remained were somewhat slow and groggy.

Seizing the opening, many cables were lowered from the low flying aircraft as the operatives wearing combat suits glided down along the cables and descended on the surface. The squads of ten men swiftly formed into formations and began dealing with the targets while pushing forwards.

The spinning, high-speed bullets cut through the air before sinking into a mutated black mouse's body and exploding, blasting its internal organs into smithereens. A huge hole appeared on the half-meter long mutated black mouse's body before it fell to the ground and died without even twitching once. Its black skin and red blood began to dehydrate after the drugs inside the bullets began to take hold, and in less than a minute, the entire mutated black mouse had transformed into a pile of powder.

The reason Cillin was assigned in the squad led by the seventh battalion commander Shute himself was probably to watch out for Cillin, the student. However, a warrior was not a nanny. Shute did not expect Cillin to perform well or anything, but at the very least he must be able to protect his own life.

Within the 10-man formation, Cillin was placed in a fairly safe, backup point. But before long, everyone realized that this ten plus

years old student was most definitely a pro.

Cillin's firing speed was impressive. While the others were still firing their second shot, he had already fired his third. Moreover, all three shots were fired in succession without missing a single target. But the most important thing to notice was that the mutated black mice he killed were all large and swift. All these factors combined were enough to draw glances from the side.

When a squad member was reloading, Cillin almost singlehandedly took over their point's suppressive and support fire. They didn't even notice when Cillin had reloaded, and only heard a series of uninterrupted gunshots. With such firing speed, setting physical endurance aside, there wasn't even aim time, was there?

Cillin was accepted quickly by this squad after displaying capabilities no weaker than a soldier's as a student. The rest of the men were also beginning to set down their worries and focused on their own attacks as well. With their comrades and this very capable kid watching their backs, there was nothing they needed to worry about.

Inside the space station outside the asteroid, a man wearing a uniform of a lieutenant general rank stood at the command center and watched the ongoing 'sweep' at the station happening on the displays.

He was Marshal Feigler's man, and he even received a call from a certain GAL politician before he left. It could be said that he bore a 'heavy weight' on his shoulders. Both Knight and Pride's squad

had two specially assigned agents to guarantee the two young masters' safety. You could say that this was a special privilege; he wouldn't say anything even if he might harbor certain opinions of his own. Still, there was something to be gained from this trip. The three students Huo Neil mentioned had performed pretty well; especially that kid named Cillin. He was comparable even to those celebrities at Sector C's military academies. At the very least, the lieutenant general hadn't noticed much emotional changes in Cillin so far. He was sufficiently cooperative, calm, decisive and accurate!

While staring at the screen, the lieutenant general pondered the possibility of absorbing Cillin into his subordinate's troops once the operation was over. His talents were utterly wasted at Seven Lights.

The operation was met with some obstacles after they pushed forward and entered into the station. The cables were bitten, the power generator was missing, the energy system was malfunctioning and the batteries were unusable. Any place without a window was completely pitch black, plus a lot of the areas inside the station's laboratories were infrared and X ray scan insulant. In order to make sure that every laboratory had been 'swept' clean, the operatives would throw a flashbang, rodenticide grenade and so on to force the black mice inside out to the open. Then they would pop everything that came out.

As the sweeping continued, the black mice seemed to have sensed the threat from this side of the station and escaped into the open. That was exactly what they had hoped would happen.

If they could force these mutated black mice out of the station and into the empty grounds outside, only then the weaponized aircrafts could perform a large-scale clean up with their directed-energy weapons. Unless it was absolutely necessary, no one was willing to destroy a station that took so much hard work to build with a directed-energy weapon.

At times, several holes could be found inside the station. These were the marks of mutated black mice attacking the station from underground. They had sent many bots to scan down the mice holes, and at the same time, they poured drugs into them to force out the mutated black mice hiding underground. Once this battle was done, the underground constructions of bio stations would likely be improved further.

After a while, the black mice in the base had decreased tremendously. Grey powders were scattered wherever the operation squad went. They were all mutated black mice that were shot and transmuted into powder.

Cillin’s senses were very powerful. Even without looking, he could sense the three mutated black mice hiding behind the lab bench. The second they showed their heads, bullets immediately flew over to blast off their heads.

Maybe the other operatives would experience some difficulties operating in a dark environment, but Cillin wouldn’t. There were a few times when Cillin had opened fire before his squad members could react, exploding the black mice just as the gunshots resounded.

After finished inspecting the area for any signs of abnormal biosignals, Shu Te smiled and said, “Mission complete.”

“Captain, this is the edge of the station already, right?” A squad member asked. Although Shute was the battalion’s commander, the squad members still called him captain out of habit.

“Yeah, we should be done soon. The directed-energy weapons outside have begun cleaning up, and the rest of them should be easier to deal with.” Shute’s tone was slightly relaxed as he took a glance at Cillin fixing an electric circuit on an instrument and said, “Cillin’s pretty good.”

“Oh yes. Even we feel a little ashamed ourselves.” A squad member laughed.

Cillin did not say anything and focused on the task at hand.

Something just didn’t feel right. According to his predictions, this shouldn’t be all the black mice were capable of.

Chapter 38: They Want Vengeance

Shute did not say anything towards Cillin's silence. In fact, Cillin had not said much at all since the start of the operation. He simply felt that the kid was too silent; a young man should be act more cheerful and lively.

"Cillin, you can put those things aside for now. Once we took care of all the black mice and the repairs began, there would be specialised personnel who would take care of these things. We should head to the other side of the waste treatment plant now; that is where their lair is." Shute looked at the time and said.

"Give me a moment... alright, done!" Cillin opened the instrument and entered a series of commands.

"What's that?" One of the squad members asked. The written labels on the instrument had been worn away by the black mice. They couldn't read what it said.

"This should be the instrument that analyzes the genes or something, I think." Another squad member answered.

"Yes, this is a more high-end analyzer in GAL right now." Cillin took out a small needle from his waist pocket and dripped its contents onto a recess on the instrument. Then he pushed the recess into a socket and resumed typing a series of formulas on the instrument.

"See, I told you you should read more books. If you run into some

instruments in the future then at least you'll know something about it. Otherwise, you'll be called an illiterate, you know."

"Ceh, I'm a soldier; all a soldier needs to know is to fight. Why would I need education for?"

A few squad members laughed while chatting.

However, Shute did not follow suit. Cillin's reaction had given him a bad premonition. He had heard from Huo Neil a long time ago that Cillin was a very talented person and did research at Seven Lights research division. Now it would appear that this kid really was skilled and knowledgeable. It didn't even take him five minutes to repair this instrument, and his technique was well-practised. However, the thing Cillin just dripped on the instrument should be the black mice's blood, wasn't it? When did he get that?

"How is it?" Shute crept closer and asked. He didn't understand any of the advanced stuff displayed on the screen.

Certainly, being uneducated was a terrifying thing. Still, as his subordinate had said, all a soldier needed to know was how to fight . The stuff they could store in their brains were limited, and if there were too many, than their CPU wouldn't be able catch up.

Cillin did not answer Shute's question directly. Instead he said, "Captain, lend me a hand and help me gather some black mice blood samples from the lab. As fresh as possible." Some of the places had blood residues left behind by the black mice fooling

around with themselves or injured by the lab's defense mechanisms. As long as the blood residue hadn't come into contact with the drugs, then it wouldn't change too much.

"Sure." Shute received a small bag of empty vials from Cillin. Every one of these vials had a piece of sterilised cotton swab in them. He didn't think that the kid would bring even this along while they were tidying their equipment on the warship.

Before long, nine men had brought twenty eight blood samples to Cillin.

After scouring the lab for a few solutions and putting them through a series of treatment, Cillin put all twenty eight samples inside and analysed them all at once. After looking at the series of data displayed on the screen, he sighed, "Give me a moment; I'll go for another round of sampling. Let's hope that I can find it."

"Hey, what is that kid doing exactly?" A squad member complained.

"I have a bad feeling about this." Another person muttered.

Cillin looked at a hole and took a couple of photos. Then he jumped right into it.

"Hey, you!" The squad member who came after him could feel his hair standing on its end. This was a mouse hole; they couldn't even stretch their limbs inside, much less raise a gun. If a black

mouse suddenly scurried out from the bottom, then the only thing that awaited them was death. Although the bio scanner had not detected anything, there were just too many interferences in this kind of research station. It was very common for the device to malfunction.

It was pitch black inside the hole, so the people above could not see what Cillin was doing either. Cillin pulled off his gloves and pressed his hands directly on the wall. The black mice's virus had no effect on him. While touching the walls, Cillin's brain was already beginning to analyse in high speed the information he acquired from his fingers. The data he acquired through DNA analysis from the miniscule hair, dander, saliva and other residues on the wall was almost the same as the one he acquired on the instrument.

His fingers traveled along the walls before coming to a sudden stop when they had reached a certain spot. Cillin put on his gloves again and took out the cotton swab from a vial. He swiped that area with the cotton swab and scraped a layer with his cutter at the same time.

Shute and the others finally let loose a sigh of relief when they saw Cillin climbing out of the hole. Seriously, this kid...

After scanning and analysing the sample he had acquired from the hole, then comparing it with the twenty plus samples earlier, a new set of data was displayed on the screen.

"As I thought." Cillin pointed at the data displayed on the screen and said to the group, "This is the comparison of the sample that

I’ve acquired in the hole just now, and the twenty plus samples that you’ve collected. According to the data deduced from the analysis of their genetic materials – well, I’ll skip straight to the point – in short, we’ve been played.”

Shute frowned, “Can you explain?”

“”I’ll use this one as an example.” Cillin pointed at a particular dataset, “The black mice we’ve hunted have red and white muscle strength that are at least five times weaker than the black mouse that drilled that hole. That is to say, this black mouse is far stronger than any of the black mice we’ve encountered so far, be it in speed or endurance. This is not even the full analysis yet.”

“You mean that the black mouse that drilled those holes is a stronger variant?” Shute asked.

“That’s right. The black mice that we killed couldn’t even claw through the reinforced coating underneath this station! I’ve checked those holes before, and the claw marks inside were pretty smooth and clean. These stronger variants could even claw through steel plates. However, the black mice we encountered might not be able to claw through the reinforced coating even if we gave them a month’s time. Do you remember how long has it been since these holes were drilled into the station?”

The squad members turned silent.

That’s right, how long did it take for the station to succumb? A few hours at best!

“Where are those stronger black mice then? Inside the waste treatment plants?”

“No. If my guess is correct, then their true ‘elites’ are right underneath the station’s central area!”

Shute was shocked, “That’s not possible! Aren’t they…”

Shute was about to say that, weren’t the black mice incapable of drilling through the central area’s underground reinforced barrier? But he then immediately realized that they might have been wrong from the very beginning. It wasn’t that they couldn’t drill through the barrier. If the black mice were truly this strong, then no matter how tough the barrier beneath the central area was, it could not have possibly endured this long.

“What exactly are they trying to do then?” A squad member couldn’t help but ask.

“Revenge. They want revenge.” Cillin looked at the direction of the central area. The station’s most core researchers were all there.

The black mice they killed were just the vanguard. The true elites had not showed their faces yet this whole time. Cillin even suspected that the research station’s successful capture of the black mouse was the black mice’s leader intention in the first place. This was because that mouse wasn’t an elite; it was completely incomparable to the mouse that drilled that hole.

They once made their lair at the bottom of the waste treatment plants because both food and water could be found in that place. But now, that place was nothing more than a cover; a cover to waste the operation team's bullets and time.

A diversion. They had played the tactic very well. In this world, the intelligent species were far beyond the humankind's imaginations.

"If you predicted this a long time ago, then why didn't you say anything?" A squad member said angrily.

"Would you have believed me without evidence?" With Cillin's status as a mere student, no one would have believed him, be it the military or the station's researchers. In that case, he might as well acquire for some evidence first and talk later. Cillin did not think of himself as a kind person. He would not do things that would obviously not be reciprocated. Whether those people lived or died was none of his damn business.

If Mo Heng could hear Cillin's inner thoughts right now, he would probably be mad enough to give him a good beating.

Chapter 39: Big Black Mouse

After listening to Cillin's words, Shute dialed his communicator and conversed a few lines before passing it to Cillin, "Here, tell big boss Neil the situation yourself."

Cillin accepted the communicator and began explaining what needs to be known about the current situation. He also transmitted the series of data analysed by the instrument; they were convincing enough as evidence.

"Keep those blood samples and everything else you've collected in safety. I'll send some men over to collect them. I will also order the other squads to collect more samples as well." Huo Neil also realized the severity of the situation after listening to Cillin's report. He told Cillin some of the things he needed to pay attention to.

"Alright, got it, we'll keep an eye on…"

Suddenly, Cillin came to a pause while still on the phone before turning around swiftly, lifting his gun and firing twice in succession. There was no hesitation or lag time at all in his aim; all of his movements were completed in one go.

Bang! Bang!

On the other side, Shute was still discussing something with his squad members. When Cillin raised his gun, Shute had already noticed the danger, but before he could react in time, Cillin's

bullets had already streaked towards him. The two bullets streaked past the hair at the fringe of his ears; he could even feel the heat of the projectile and the lingering smell of burnt hair caused by the speeding bullets in the air.

It was a black mouse about two meters long even after excluding its tail. When the first bullet had struck it, it only caused a small-scale explosion and the drugs did not swiftly penetrate into every part of its body. Therefore, it would still have been capable of clawing Shute's back in half had the second bullet not followed closely behind.

The black mouse that was shot twice convulsed violently on the floor; its claw as sharp as knives drawing deep claw marks on the floor. It was very obvious that its drug resistance was far more powerful than the black mice they encountered before.

Before the blood traces on the floor were completely atomised, Cillin swiftly took out a needle, sucked in some of it and put it inside a small vial containing neutralizing agents and anticoagulants. Under the group's alarmed gazes, he even dug up some flesh from the big mouse and submerged it into a bag filled with neutralizing agents.

His squad mates felt a chill behind their backs, and they weren't sure if it was caused by the black mouse or Cillin himself. Could this kid refrain from doing something that scares the shit out of them?! The black mouse was still twitching, and hadn't even drawn its final breath yet, but the kid had already run forward to take its blood and dig out its meat. What if the black mouse had retaliated with a swipe before its death?

The black mouse's eyes, so red that they appeared to be bloodshot slowly faded into black before it finally expired and atomised into powder. However, those cold, sharp claws were perfectly intact.

"Thank you." Shute recovered himself and said. He was on his guard even though he was talking with his squad members earlier. However, no one had detected the big black mouse's approach, and he himself had noticed the danger only after Cillin had raised his gun. Although Shute had his back against the black mouse, he could sense that its speed was several times faster than the black mice they had encountered earlier, and it was completely silent. When you realized it, it would already be too late.

Since the communication channel with Huo Neil was never closed, Huo Neil had seen what just happened through the communicator's video capture function. No more proof was required to prove Cillin's point; Huo Neil had seen it with his own eyes, the powerful black mouse Cillin was talking about. If all the black mice underneath the station were like this, then the consequences would be truly unimaginable.

Had it not been for Cillin's warning, the elite black mice in hiding would've seized the opportunity to slaughter all of the researchers at the station center and the two battalions sent out to rescue them while they were exterminating its 'lair' at the waste treatment plants.

Cillin picked up the perfectly unharmed black mouse's claw and scratched the surface of the lab bench at the side with the claw. A

gap was easily cut open on the surface of the hardened sheet.

“Holy crap, this thing is deadly!” A squad member cried out in surprise. This result had completely exceeded their initial predictions.

“This black mouse had probably come over to patrol and check if our operation squad has left. After all, going by the time, the rest of the squads should have left the station and readied themselves to head towards the waste treatment plants by now. However, we are still here.” Cillin voiced his assumption. Plus, the fact that the black mouse could arrive here safely meant that he wasn’t afraid of the rodenticide sprayed down in the underground tunnels at all.

“I’ve ordered six battalions to return and left two of them plus the weaponized aircraft at the waste treatment plants. If they couldn’t handle it later, then we’ll just wipe out that whole place with a directed-energy cannon and leave it.” Huo Neil no longer could not be bothered with the situation at the waste treatment plants right now. He felt restless every time he thought about Cillin’s words.

On the other side, the tenth battalion that was carrying out rescue work and was preparing to open the station center’s defensive barrier was put into an emergency stop by Huo Neil. At the same time, the engineers rushing the repairs of power supplies and other important facilities were protected and hurried back up the aircraft since the station was too dangerous.

The samples and data Cillin had submitted were processed immediately. Thereafter, Huo Neil had given every battalion

commander new orders while sending in the bots to expand the sizes of the underground tunnels. Otherwise, their soldiers wouldn't even be able to move after they got down there and be nothing better than food.

However, the strange thing was that the deeper they went, the bigger the mouse holes became. There was no need for the bots to expand the tunnels at all. After the machines had reached a certain level of depth, they were destroyed by the black mice underneath. But before they were destroyed, the scanning device installed on the machine indicated that there were a large amount of abnormal life forms underneath the station, hence proving Cillin's assumptions.

But now another question had surfaced. Why were the mouse holes underneath so big? Did this mean that there was an even bigger black mouse lurking somewhere? No conclusion could be drawn yet about this question.

Perhaps it was because they had noticed something, but the black mice hiding deep beneath the station had begun to act earlier than expected.

Part of the eight battalions went underground, and the rest stayed behind and guarded at every corner of the station.

Since Huo Neil had informed them beforehand, every operative fired at least twice at every black mouse that crawled out of the holes. Other than the ones that were already there, the group of big black mice had drilled even more holes that strayed away from the operation squads' firepower when they charged towards the

surface. They were like a bunch of crazy avengers who only knew to charge madly towards the central area without a care at all for their own lives. There was no doubt that the operatives' accuracy had fallen because these black mice were quick and their senses were acute. Moreover, the operation team had to switch locations from time to time as well, because there was no telling if a huge group of black mice would suddenly appear from underneath them if they stayed at one spot. There were already a few people who were dragged by the suddenly emerging black mice into the holes. They did not even have the time to let out a death scream.

The squad Cillin was in had entered the underground. The tunnels were very dark, but their headgears were equipped with night vision devices. There was less interference underground than inside the station after all. The teamwork among the squad members had been excellent so far, and no casualties had occurred just yet. Firepower was also more concentrated inside the tunnels.

As they moved deeper, the tunnels grew larger to the point where three members could walk side by side along the way. At a fork in the road, the group saw a pool of blood. It did not belong to a black mouse but a human. At the same time, there was also a weak cry of help coming from that direction.

Chapter 40: Hidden Danger

There weren't many messy marks around the blood, indicating that no struggle had taken place here. However, it also meant that the men who were attacked did not put up much resistance at all.

Shute made a hand signal – alert, cover – before moving over to perform a rescue.

Cillin crouched down at a place beside the wall and took out a small box, scraping a layer of soil from the wall. His squad members simply watched the surroundings vigilantly and did not disturb Cillin's actions. They assumed that he was acquiring samples since he had done the same thing earlier.

In truth, they didn't know that Cillin's true objective wasn't to acquire a sample, but to use his actions as cover to pull his fingers from his gloves and touch the walls and ground, analysing miniscule traces within. Not even the most high tech instrument could compare to the chips inside him in terms of convenience. The instant contact was initiated, the feedback from his fingers had told him exactly which kind of black mice had attacked the operatives at this place.

This is different! This is different from the hole-digging, big black mouse that we ran into earlier! This mouse is even stronger!

Exactly how much stronger it was, Cillin could not be sure. However, he had a feeling that these people had probably run into the leader of the black mice; the very first mutated black mouse

that had escaped from the station at the beginning.

When Shute found the squad member who was crying for help, he was already on his last gasps and entered into deep coma. Under the flashlight, everyone could see clearly that one of his legs were bitten off and that there was blood everywhere. The medic in the squad came over to staunch the bleeding, but before the bandaging could be completed, he had already passed away.

“I’m going to kill those animals!” A squad member with bloodshot eyes punched the wall beside him hard in terrible grief.

Everyone else’s expression was more or less the same.

Shute sucked in a deep breath and said, “It’s demonstrating its strength. It could’ve killed everyone here without a sound, but it had purposely left behind one who’s severely injured.’

“He lost too much blood, and the rat toxin has invaded its internal organs.” The medic lifted two empty needles to the air, “Both antiserums were injected, but they have no effect at all. This rat’s toxin is unbelievably potent.”

“Captain, there’s no signal on our communicators!” A squad member suddenly cried out. He had wanted to contact the reserve group and notify them of the current situation at the same time, but he didn’t expect to find no signal at all.

Cillin pondered in his mind. Their, no, he should say its

intelligence was far beyond anything they had expected. If every squad had done their jobs – installed and disguised the signal receivers properly – and there was still no signal, then either the receivers had broken down themselves, or the black mice's leader had taken apart all of them. The former was unlikely, and the latter was all too possible.

It sounded ridiculous alright, and Cillin dared to say that not many people would believe him at all if he told them. A mouse that not only knows how to find and destroy a disguised signal receiver, but also destroyed every last one of them thoroughly? Is this even a mouse or a man?

Cillin did not underestimate the black mice's leader from the very beginning. The more information he acquired, the more he felt that this particular black mouse was very powerful, be it its intelligence or combat strength. Moreover, Cillin was gradually figuring out the frequency of 'that' sound.

Shute thought for a moment before taking out his sonar scanner and pressed a button. The reason he hadn't used it earlier was because there was an extremely high likelihood that the black mice might discover their location through it, but he couldn't be bothered by such details right now. He had a constant nagging feeling that something wasn't quite right.

When he saw the display, Shute's expression abruptly twisted, "Get out of here now!!"

They didn't even manage a few steps before the black mice drilled through the ceilings and the walls, and poured out into the

open. The locations from which the black mice appeared coincidentally separated Cillin and another squad member away from the other eight people of the group. As more and more black mice appeared, the distance between the two groups grew further and further apart. There was nothing Shute could do even if he wanted to save them. Their guns never stopped firing, but these big black mice were not nearly as easy to deal with as the little mice from before. The air was filled with heavy tension.

Cillin and the other squad member swiftly retreated towards the other end of the tunnel while firing their guns continuously. Luckily, the group of black mice wasn't so big that it was unmanageable, and after shooting and retreating for more than ten minutes, there were no longer any black mice that came after them. The duo hung back at the other side of the tunnel. They had already lost contact with the other eight people in the squad, and they did not run into the members of other squads either. Their breaths were the only thing that resounded inside the silent tunnel.

"It looks like we're safe for now." The person smiled and said.

"Yeah..." Cillin also smiled.

Splurt!

Blood shot out from the side of the person's neck.

The man's eyes were filled with disbelief. He really did not expect Cillin to act so quickly!! How could any normal person be on their

guard against a squad mate in this kind of situation?!

A normal person would have relaxed temporarily and loosened their tension when someone said that it's 'safe for now', not to mention when they were right next to a squad mate. But he had just taken out his knife before Cillin had cut right through his carotid artery, and due to the strenuous mice extermination exercise earlier, his blood flowed quickly, causing him to gasp his last breath in no time at all.

Cillin toyed with the mouse claw in his hands, and after glancing at the man on the ground let out a number of near inaudible noises from his mouth. This was the first time Cillin had used it after deciphering the black mice's leader sound frequency. Cillin had been searching for this sound and deciphering it ever since he entered into the network of underground tunnels.

He did not stay there longer than necessary and left the place. In less than a minute, a few black mice would appear and consume that dead squad member. It was only in this situation where he was alone could Cillin better eliminate those threats hiding inside the operation force.

Cillin had never forgotten about those hidden threats ever since he entered Seven Lights until now. Be it a student, a researcher or a soldier, Cillin had never let down his guard once. He found it pretty interesting that Aiflon's enemies had actually extended their fingers into the army. They were definitely Aiflon's enemies alright.

Cillin's performance was most eye-catching when they just

descended from the weaponized aircraft and fired at the black mice, but no one could have realized that Cillin was also paying attention to every little change in every squad member. It was through these miniscule details that Cillin had deduced that the hidden dangers existed, and after a series of events happened, Cillin became sure of it. In fact, Cillin had purposely walked a bit slower before the black mice had appeared and separated them from the other eight people. That man was obviously planning to seek an opportunity to kill Cillin as well. They were both at the back of the squad. The black mice's location, his own traveling speed and distance between him and the eight people in front of him were all within Cillin's calculations. It might have seemed like a coincidence that the black mice separated them both away from the eight other people, but in truth it was all within Cillin's predictions.

Cillin did not need a sonar detector to be able to sense the sound waves transmitted through the walls. A normal person couldn't even feel it. Cillin was like a precise multifunctional machine analysing every information around him at every moment. He knew that the black mice's appearance was not a coincidence. It was the result of the black mice leader's order.

Like a human-shaped detector, Cillin was well aware of every movement in his surroundings. Be it how many people of squad X had just passed through tunnel Y, or the number of black mice operating at a nearby tunnel, Cillin knew all of them. This also allowed Cillin to avoid a lot of trouble.

Glancing at the belt of his backpack, Cillin's lifted the corner of his lips a little. The next one should be appearing pretty soon.

There was a corner at the end of the tunnel before him. Cillin slowly walked in that direction, and just as he was about to reach the corner, he threw out the mouse claw in his hands like lightning.

Splurt!

At the corner, the throat of a man wearing a combat suit was pierced through as he was nailed right on the wall. His eyes was also filled with disbelief as the gun in his hand fell on the ground. He was originally planning to kill Cillin with this.

the mouse claw had curved during its flight! Not to mention that his aim was so true, even within a tunnel environment! This was something his enemy had not expected at all.

Cillin pulled out the mouse claw, before releasing a series of indistinguishable noises just like before.

Cillin took out another three people during the next period of time.

There was a micro tracker hidden at the belt of his backpack. It was installed even before the equipment was distributed specifically to Cillin. It was evident that they have been preparing to look for an opportunity to kill Cillin at this place for a long time. However, what they didn’t know was that Cillin had detected this trick from the moment he received his backpack.

And this is how you beat someone in their own game.

After walking inside the tunnel network for such a long time, Cillin could sense an obvious decrease in the number of black mice. It was thanks to Cillin providing the blood samples and relevant data just in time that the operatives were able to make full preparation beforehand. Casualties were minimized, and efficiency was increased.

While walking, Cillin suddenly came to a pause and turned around.

Within the darkness, a big black mouse about three meters long stood at the other end of the tunnel. Its red eyes glowed with a bloody light amidst the darkness.

“You finally appeared. I thought you would hide from me forever.” There was a smile in his tone, “I’m taking that thing inside your body.”

Chapter 41: The Hysterical Black Mice's Leader

Cillin had always suspected that there was something on the black mice's leader for it to experience such a transformation. Mutation was one thing, but a stability period should follow after a mutation had occurred. But this black mouse had undergone its second transformation not long after its first was completed, and it was so successful that it was as if its intelligence and combat strength were the culmination of hundreds of years of evolution. It was unheard of.

Who is better, a one year old mouse or a hundreds year old mouse that is just as strong as ever? The answer was obvious.

When Cillin was examining the traces left behind by this black mouse, he already discovered that there was a strange substance inside its cells, or should he say that there was likely something inside this black mouse's body that was stimulating all of its cells to produce enhancing substances.

It wasn't until the black mouse appeared that Cillin had a clear sense of a special signal transmitted from inside its body. This signal caused the biochips inside his body to grow incredibly excited, almost as if they had found their own kind.

The huge black mice's leader with a pair of frontal teeth that looked like large scythes emanated a strange 'chi chi' noise from its mouth that was unlike a normal mouse's. It had sensed Cillin's presence earlier but did not attack immediately. It felt that this human gave it a very special feeling. There was a faint sense of

danger, yet there was also a temptation that reminded it a delicious meal. Perhaps eating this human would benefit its evolution. After holding back for such a long time, in the end, it decided to attack Cillin.

The black mouse disappeared from its original spot and appeared right in front of Cillin within the next moment. Cillin's reactions were not slow either. His gun and backpack had been tossed aside while he faced it with his bare hands.

Dull banging sounds resounded as his reinforced body clashed against the black mouse's. The instant the black mouse's claw swiped at his direction, Cillin swiftly rebounded on his feet and kicked it right in the cervical vertebrae.

Bang!

The black mouse's neck didn't break, but the upper part of its body was knocked to the side by sheer force. The wall it slammed into was hollowed as shattered rock debris fell towards the ground. Bits of rocks flew everywhere, and the tunnel walls grew wider and wider as the black mouse's claw cut continuously through them like tofu.

After repeated contact, Cillin had already discovered where that thing was inside the black mouse's body.

Whoosh——

Two mouse claws flew towards the black mouse's bloody eyes, and the black mouse closed them while turning its head slightly away. The two mouse claws Cillin had thrown out struck at the bottom of its eyes, failing to scratch through its skin. But the mouse claws that were thrown out as a hidden weapon were only a distraction. Cillin's next target was its ears.

The moment it closed its eyes, Cillin had thrown out yet another two mouse claws towards its left and right ears at the same time. If they really sank into its ears, with this strength and speed, no matter how tough its auricles were, its inner ears and nerves inside the ear canal would be damaged.

The big black mouse also understood those consequences, and that was why it brought up both its front limbs to deflect the hidden weapons with its sharp claws while closing its eyes and avoiding the first first two mouse claws at the same time.

Now!

Cillin jumped at a slanted angle and passed right beneath the black mouse's frontal claws. His reinforced arm penetrated right through its stomach and sucked out that thing from inside it like a magnet. Then he pulled back and jumped away swiftly. The entire process took only an instant.

It was a fist-sized crystal white ball that glowed with a dense white light amidst the darkness. Holding the white ball, Cillin could feel clearly a huge amount of energy emanating from inside the ball. However, this was not the time to study the white ball. Cillin quickly evacuated after getting what he came for. Only an

idiot would fight head-to-head against this big guy.

The wound Cillin dealt to the black mouse's stomach didn't bleed much before it began to heal instantly. However, its healing speed was slower than when it still had the white ball.

After noticing that the white ball had been taken, the black mouse turned berserk. Its bloodshot eyes turned even redder than before as it screeched out angrily. The anger and killing intent brimming from its scythe-like frontal teeth had reached their peak.

It could forget about revenge and forget about the lives of the other black mice. But it could not lose the white ball. All of its reliance and fortune had come from this white ball!

The black mouse chased after Cillin like it had gone insane. For every step it ran, a layer of rock would be torn apart by its sharp claws. It did not even bother turning, and simply charged at a straight line through the shortest path towards Cillin. You could imagine how impatient it was. Many of the tunnels were destroyed by it, and the paths behind Cillin and the black mouse slowly began to crumble.

Cillin had chosen the path with almost no other operatives to run through, and since the black mouse itself had caused quite the commotion, the nearby operatives were also alerted. When they noticed that the tunnels were starting to destabilize, they swiftly began to evacuate towards the surface.

Cillin had formed a perfect picture of the tunnel in his head a

long time ago, so he knew very well exactly when to travel down which fork during his run. He had run through almost all of the tunnels, including the places where he took out those hidden killers, and after those tunnels collapsed, even the last vestiges of evidences had been buried as well.

The longer the chase went, the more the black mouse felt its weakness after losing the white ball, and thus, grew even more restless. Unfortunately for it, the human that took away its precious thing was incredibly quick. While running, the black mouse let out a long, drawn out howl that was less like a mouse and more like an ancient beast's.

The howl caused the entire underground network to shake. Even those fighting against the black mice on the surface could hear it clearly.

It was like the terrible howl of cold winds, or the devilish voice of a Shura walking through hell. At this moment, every operative and researcher who heard this voice felt a trembling cold chill.

What kind of creature must it be to let out such a noise? And what kind of state and mood was it befell on to let out such a hysterical howl?

When the howl had resounded, every black mice on the surface, be it the ones fighting against the operation squads, the ones hiding at a certain spot in the station waiting for an opportunity, or the ones that had almost dug through the final layer of defense of the station's central area, all stopped whatever they were doing and rushed towards the underground. They were utterly

indifferent even when the operatives shot them with their weapons.

"Tell all squads who haven't left the tunnel to evacuate immediately! Everyone else on the surface be on high alert!" Huo Neil roared into his communicator. He might not know what was going on, but judging from that howl alone, it was obvious that the mice's leader was about to appear.

At a certain spot underneath the tunnels, a squad of soldiers were heading towards the front. They had lost contact with the surface earlier, and they could not get even the slightest signal on their communicators. However, seeing that the tunnels were growing more and more unstable, the squad captain made the decision to evacuate. It would be terrible if they were buried at this place. His decision to retreat grew firmer after hearing that one terrifying howl just now.

"Captain, we got a signal!" A squad member cried out joyfully.

The closer they were to the surface, and the further away they were from the black mice's leader's location earlier, the more there were receivers installed earlier that escaped destruction. This wasn't the only squad either; all the other operatives evacuating towards the surface had also realized that they were receiving signals once more.

"All underground operation personnel are to retreat to the surface immediately! Retreat to the surface immediately!"

Huo Neil's voice resounded from the communicator with urgency.

"Retreat!"

The squad captain ordered immediately.

But before they took more than two steps, they could feel a distant tremor closing in on them.

"Alert!"

Every squad member readied their weapons and got into positions to fire, but they all knew that there was no way the few of them could deal with the amount of black mice that had caused such a tremor.

Go back? It was pointless. This was a very long tunnel, and to escape to the back now would only be wasting their strength and delaying the inevitable clash.

Previously, when they had first entered the underground tunnels, they had not encountered such a huge number of black mice. Now it would appear that the black mice had gathered as one and rushed onward as a single group. Moreover, judging from the commotion, they had not bothered to disguise themselves at all, unlike the silence when they were waging a guerrilla warfare against them before.

Sird was also part of this squad. Right now, he could no longer be bothered to wipe the sweat above his forehead. He recounted everything he had experienced up to this point, his dreams, his ambitions when arriving at Seven Lights... Do I regret this? He asked himself this.

He didn't know. He really didn't know. He wasn't thinking about anything else but his feelings when he was but a young kid and saw that golden, shining medal with a military emblem on his father's study. Perhaps it was that moment when an obsession was born inside his heart; that someday, he should get one not of his father's name but his own, Sird.

The black mice were closing in. The squad members could already smell that disgusting smell in the air coming from afar.

"For glory!"

"For glory!!"

The squad members roared after the captain and tightened their grips on their weapons.

Chapter 42: Escaped

When they noticed the unusual commotion, the squad leader had already reported their current situation and the names of his squad members to Huo Neil. They knew that Huo Neil would not be able to save them even if he wanted to. At the same time, there were multiple other squads at other areas who were facing a similar situation. It was just that Sird's team was the earliest squad to have run into the surfacing black mice.

Huo Neil listened with incredibly heavy feelings to the increasingly loud breathing of the squad operatives through the communicator. They were still alive at this moment and their breaths could still be heard. But what about the next? All of the operatives around Huo Neil wore bloodshot eyes, but they could neither do anything to help them nor rush there in time.

Meanwhile in the underground, the squad members could already see the black mice at the end of the tunnel through their night vision goggles.

"Ready... Aim... Fi -"

The squad leader didn't manage to finish the word 'Fire' before a voice suddenly rang up from the communicator.

"All squads who ran into a large group of black mice returning to the surface, do not open fire if you want to live! Quickly get to the sides and press yourselves against the wall! I repeat, do not open fire!"

Cillin! It's Cillin!

The black mice rushed closer and closer, but the squad leader hesitated.

"Listen to him! Do not open fire and keep to the walls!" On the surface, Knight, who was standing beside Huo Neil, snatched the communicator in Huo Neil's hands and roared.

The squad leader gritted his teeth, "Do as he says!"

When the squad members had pressed themselves against the wall and stood in position, the black mice had already arrived just three meters away from them. It wasn't like they hadn't gotten this close to the black mice before, but at the time, they were not nearly as defenseless as they were now.

When the first black mouse passed before their eyes, the squad members' hearts had nearly leaped to the top of their throats. The sharp front teeth and claws that passed right in front of them, the bloody red eyes and terrible stench caused them all to feel a tingle on their scalps. Some of them had even readied themselves to die.

However, as if it hadn't seen them, the black mouse passed right by them with a whoosh as quickly as it came.

Then there was another, and another, and another...

While feeling a sense of horror towards the black mice's tough black hair passing by again and again, Sird could not even begin to describe how shocked he was. This was a black mouse, a real big black mouse, a mutated black mouse that might not necessarily be killed even with two shots! He could still sense the violence and brutality emanating from their bodies, but... holy shit, they had passed by them just like that. They seriously passed by them without doing anything! They never even glanced at them once.

This was definitely the strangest and most terrifying thing they had experienced in their lives up until now!

Cillin was the only one who knew that the meaning behind the black mice's leader's howl. It was calling for all black mice to put down whatever they were doing, to ignore everything in sight and to do everything they can to block Cillin. As long as they had the white ball, they would have the chance to make a comeback.

On the other side of the communicator above the surface, Huo Neil and the surrounding operatives held their breaths and listened to the sounds of black mice rushing past the squad members. The video capture was on, but the image on the other side was dark and blurry. However, those blood red eyes were still just as clear. They could feel both fear and adrenaline rising just watching the image on the communicator. It wasn't hard to imagine how those people experiencing the black mice passing by them for real felt.

When the black mice had all ran past them, the rumbling noise too faded away.

Knight let out a sigh of relief. As expected, Cillin really was something special. However, when he realized that he failed to connect Cillin when he tried to contact him once more.

With this squad setting the example, the other squads that ran into the same situation also followed suit. But it wasn't until they did it for real did they realize exactly how much courage was needed to pull off this act. Those who were timid had fainted a long time ago.

Inside the tunnel, everyone's backs were almost drenched completely. They still maintained their standing posture and felt stiffness all over their bodies. They still did not dare to draw even a huge breath.

When they finally came to, the squad members experienced the mixed feelings of both joy and oddness after surviving this near death experience. The impassioned atmosphere of heroism and martyrdom they had cultivated earlier was completely destroyed by this turn of events. It was as hilarious as getting ready to shit for a long time but managing only a tiny fart in the end. Man, do they feel conflicted.

Thank god that kid had reminded them on time, or else... the mere thought caused the squad members to shudder.

That being said, if they knew that the culprit who attracted all the black mice over was Cillin, they would definitely be mad enough to break Cillin's neck.

While running, Cillin did some calculations in his head and thought that it was almost time. Then, he put the white ball into Genya's ring. Another subspace item might've experienced some instability, but after Cillin gave it a test earlier, he discovered that it was pretty stable after all. it definitely deserved its title as an item from the high tree Fuji and a possession of the Gen family

Once the white ball was placed into the ring, Cillin sprayed some medicine he prepared beforehand on his body, and got rid of the odor ointment that he had deliberately applied on his body. As a Hunter, Cillin had misled quite a lot of preys using the sense of smell.

Cillin had put quite a bit of distance between him and the big black mouse. If the big black mouse could speak, it would definitely say, "What the fuck, how can he possibly run so quickly? Just who is the real mouse here?! This fucka ain't human, this fucka seriously ain't human!"

When the black mice's leader had chased over to Cillin's location through his smell, what it saw was the fluorescent spray painting of a cat face smirking most disgustingly on the wall. There was even a huge 'Meow~' beside it...

Then Cillin's smell disappeared entirely further forward.

Cillin did not know if the big black mouse could recognize that 'Meow' word, but it did not change the fact that it was going to feel pissed as fuck. It was a success as long as it could add fuel to its anger. How would the black mice's leader act if it could not find the white ball thief Cillin and incited further by this cat face?

The matter about taking revenge against the station's researchers had been kicked to the other side of the universe by the big black mouse a long time ago. Now all it wanted was to find that despicable human, snatch back the white ball, then tear that human into shreds before stomping it into dirt!

All the operatives underground had already evacuated to the surface. What would be the black mice's leader's most possible action if it was pissed but could not find a target to vent its anger? It would charge up to the surface.

And what's above the surface? The concentrated firepower of the operation forces and air support from the weaponized aircrafts. Obeying to the rules of capturing a snake by first capturing its head, the big black mouse was obviously the common target the moment it showed its face. Now that it had lost the support of the white ball, the big black mouse's physical abilities were gradually decreasing. Its physical defenses had already decreased by a lot, so even if it still had powerful offensive capabilities, the big black mouse was far less threatening than it was before. Cillin believed that Huo Neil could deal with it without any problem.

Cillin headed towards the ground surface through a different route. Along the way, he avoided the black mice horde summoned by the black mice's leader. When he had almost reached the surface, Cillin felt a group of people nearby and swiftly overtook them through a different route. With the mouse claws he had gathered, he slashed his combat suit and drew lines of wounds across his body. He controlled the color and viscosity of the blood trace and the degree of mending of his wounds. They would appear as if he had been hurt for quite some time.

Both antiserums were injected into his body. Cillin forced his face to appear slightly pale, just like a wounded person who was exhausted and lost too much blood. His communicator was destroyed after the call from earlier to prevent other people from detecting his location through the signal of the communicator.

After preparing everything and inspecting his handiwork once, Cillin then laid peacefully on the ground and waited for the operation squad that was about to pass by this place. The development of events later on was more or less the same as Cillin had predicted. The members of the squad had seen Cillin as a wounded personnel, and they had even carried him all the way back to the surface.

Huo Neil also relaxed after seeing that Cillin's life was not in danger despite some wounds here and there. Otherwise, how was he going to explain things to old Mo?

Cillin then informed Huo Neil about his 'guess'. Once he was finished, Huo Neil immediately ordered his men to get ready and await the black mice's arrival. At the same time, Huo Neil thought, this boy's old Mo's prized pupil alright. His predictions are spot on.

Chapter 43: I Overestimated Them

Huo Neil arranged a single ward specifically for Cillin.

Cillin had not been sent to the sickbay of the aircraft for long before the sounds of intense fighting began to ring from below. There were even the blasts and rumblings of heavy weaponries. It would seem that the big black mouse had gone completely mad.

Cillin could deduce his allies' firepower distribution from the sounds of combat. He could tell that the black mice were growing increasingly disorganized. Their leader's confusion had severely affected their movements.

"Why, it would seem that the final battle has begun."

One of the medical staff treating Cillin's wounds said. Their tones were a little relaxed after hearing from their co-workers that the crisis was almost over.

The ship responsible for additional medical support had arrived at the space station outside the planet. Some of the emergency meds had also been sent over already, and once the matter was said and done, the rest of the medical staff would probably be sent over to treat the wounded.

"Yeah, boss Huo has this in his grasp." A medic who came in bringing more medical supplies said. He looked at Cillin lying on the bed and asked, "Are you a student too?"

Cillin nodded.

The medic gave him a thumbs-up, “I’ve heard from comrades; you all did really well this battle. However, things are a little unfortunate for that student named Hard.”

“Hard? What happened to him?” Cillin was surprised. Now that he thought of it, he hadn’t heard anything about Hard so far.

“He’s in the intensive care unit right now. I heard that he had suffered a few blows saving his squadmate, and then a few more wounds during the latter battle. The antiserums we injected were useless. The mouse poison had already seeped into his internal organs, and I heard that he won’t last for much longer.” The medic said regretfully. He was only a student in his teen years. In their eyes he was just a child, and for a child to be able to participate in the battle courageously and not leave or give up on his comrade was incredibly commendable.

Cillin leaped down from the sickbed, “Which ward is he in?”

“The third emergency room upstairs turn right.”

“Hey, your wounds are not…”

“I won’t die from this.” Cillin left the medical staffs behind, walked out of the room and headed upstairs.

When he got upstairs, Cillin did not need to look at the door number to know which room was Hard's. There were a few soldiers wrapped in bandages standing in front of a door. They were probably Hard's squadmates. There was also a man leaning against the wall and crying while hugging his head. It was Sird.

It was at this moment the door of the intensive care unit opened, and the doctor walked out while rubbing his forehead wearily, "I'm truly sorry, but there's nothing I can do. All the antiserums we've injected were useless. He is a strong man with a strong desire to live. It is amazing that he held out for this long already. Go… go and see him, all of you. He… should be able to hold out for five minutes at best."

Sird and Hard's squadmates rushed in almost instantly. As he watched Hard's blackened and rotting appearance, Sird rubbed his eyes, sucked in a deep breath and walked to his side.

Hard was wearing an oxygen mask. It was obvious that he had difficulty to even breathe. His eyes were so swollen that it was impossible to see their original contour. Hard could barely see the few people around him through the slightly opened slits of his eyes. Not only was his vision incredibly blurry, his hearing had weakened by a lot as well. But he knew who they were. He only needed to look at their blurry figures once to know their identities.

Hard could not utter a single word. Cillin could only distinguish what he said from the shape of his mouth.

"I… don't… want… to… die…"

“It’s gonna be okay, you won’t die. Didn’t you always say that you’re going to be a general so you can scorn those sarcastic sonuvabitches with your nostrils! Come on!” Sird nearly roared out those words with a shaking voice.

Hard’s tears were tinged with the color of blood when it dripped from the corner of his eyes and onto the white pillow. He knew very well what awaited him. He did not have much time. Still, he really wanted to go back home or at the very least call his family right now. But they were too far apart, and by the time the call came through, it would already be too late.

Looking at Hard’s eyes through the slits, Cillin knew that Hard did not regret his decision even at this point. He did not want to die, but he did not regret his choice.

Dias once said this: In the army and on the battlefield, a general’s responsibility is to command, and a soldier’s responsibility is to die. But even soldiers had their own glory and beliefs. They would die without regrets.

Raising his hand, Cillin placed his fingers on Hard’s arm. It looked like he was giving his comrade his final encouragement. But in truth, Cillin was analyzing the poison in Hard’s body. He then formed a special antibody from this poison, and secreted them through his fingertips. The antibodies seeped through Hard’s pores and entered beneath his skin before circulating throughout his body through blood circulation and other bodily functions.

Sird, who was doing his best to identify Hard's intentions suddenly realized that Hard's eyes were shut, and his lips were no longer moving. His tears immediately poured down his face.

Cillin poked the crying Sird wallowing in his sadness with his hand and said, "He's only fallen asleep. Look at his heart rate on the monitor."

Sird: "..."

It... it really looks like he's just fallen asleep.

Five minutes later, his heart was still beating.

Ten minutes later, his heartbeat seemed to be growing stronger and stronger.

After confirming that Hard's life was secure, he slapped Sird's shoulder once and said, "Call the doctor over. I guess the dude's so tough that even the grim reaper couldn't take him."

"Oh." Sird was still a little absent minded as he followed Cillin's instructions and called over the doctor.

Staring at the medical staffs bustling about while looking over Hard in amazement, Cillin shook his head and left the scene. However, he did not return to the ward and instead went to the temporary lab that was established in haste. Many researchers were busying themselves at this area. Some of them were

personnel who had escaped the station, and the rest came from the hospital ship as support. However, they had only managed to analyse dozens of antibodies up until now. There were still plenty of soldiers who were injured by the black mice and infected with mouse poison waiting for them to come out with the unknown antiserum that would cure them.

Cillin sighed in disappointment. He had totally overestimated them! Right now, he could really experience the same disappointment as Mo Heng when facing the other researchers at Seven Lights' Institute of Mechanical Engineering.

"Hey, who are you?"

"Get out of here, this isn't a place where a soldier should be!"

"How utterly undisciplined and ungrateful. Stop interfering with our work!"

Cillin ignored them. He walked towards a molecular synthesis analyzer on his own and moved the researcher sitting there out of the way by his collar. The man lifted his eyebrows and was about to say something, but without even looking at him, Cillin took out a portable handgun and pointed it at his mouth.

The moment they saw Cillin take out his gun, everyone in the surrounding immediately turned quiet. The few people near the door ran out to call the soldiers.

He sat down in front of the instrument. He only gave the case on the operation panel a single glance before looking away completely. His eyes stared only at the monitor as he withdrew his gun and began typing on the operation panel. His fingers fell danced across the keys perfectly and without any mistake as if he was very familiar with this instrument.

Cillin's hand speed grew faster and faster while appearing incredibly practiced. That was not all. The researchers inside the room realized that the instruments in front of them began to run on their own and automatically transferred all analysed data into Cillin's instrument.

He had actually controlled all the instruments inside the lab in such a short time!

At first, there were a few researchers who began scolding Cillin for screwing around. But gradually, the researchers inside the lab all turned silent.

Molecular formulae began forming one by one on the screen of Cillin's instrument. The data listed beside the turning molecule had told them enough that none of them had the qualification to say a word right now.

One, two, three... no one knew how Cillin did it, but the molecular maps of almost a hundred antibodies was displayed on the screen.

Chapter 44: Before The Curtain Falls

It would take at least three hours and five people working in unison to analyse and determine the correct antibody. But how long had it been since Cillin walked through the door?

Not even thirty minutes!

This fellow had spent less than 30 minutes to achieve seven times the result that the 50 plus people inside the lab have produced in half a day

What kind of concept was this?

How many things could a human brain process at the same time? What was its limits?

The researchers didn't know, because the answers they did know were completely overruled by the young man before them. The images flashing swiftly across the screen alone were enough to make their eyes spin.

One man—one pair of hands—controlled over thirty instruments inside the laboratory. In less than thirty minutes, he had used parameter calculation and statistical analysis to interpret and verify the data to come up with a hundred antibodies.

Cillin ignored the dumbfounded researchers and transferred his results to the synthesizer at the side, inputting the parameter

settings. He then aliquoted the antibodies acquired from the synthesizer and labeled the categories and dosages.

The researchers who ran outside previously and the soldiers who were called over quietly stood at the entrance to watch Cillin work in front of the synthesizer.

Cillin turned around and glanced at them, “Why are you still standing there and doing nothing?! Take these synthesized antibodies and use them for now. Test them one by one, and if one doesn’t work then try another. One of them will work, and the antibodies can be stacked.”

The soldiers who came over reacted faster, since the injured people who needed the antibodies were their comrades after all. They packaged the synthesized antibodies into boxes according to their labels, saluted once at Cillin before swiftly leaving the area.

Cillin let out a sigh of relief after all the antibodies had been synthesized completely. He had spent quite a lot of energy within the hour. Not only did he have to manage the data from thirty plus instruments simultaneously, he also had to include the parameters he acquired back at the underground tunnel. It definitely added to the amount of computation he had to perform. To be safe, Cillin also added the antibodies related to the big black mouse’s toxin and, at the same time, improved a dozen or so antibodies so that their side effects would be lessened.

Listening to the report from the communicator, Huo Neil, who was commanding the troops outside to fight against the black mice smiled and shouted at Knight who was holding two guns and firing

at the black mice, “That friend of yours is a fucking genius! He finished fifty researcher’s work by himself! Synthesized more than a hundred kinds of antibodies!”

“Well Duh! He’s my friend after all!”

Both of them felt a lot more at ease. Half an hour ago, Pride had suffered a blow and was sent to the intensive care unit. At first, they were worried that there might not be a corresponding antibody, but with more than a hundred antibodies in hand now, Pride’s health was without a doubt more secure.

Cillin walked out of the lab and returned to his ward. The medical staff treated his injuries again.

“Sleep well. You’ll recover faster that way.”

“Yes, I will certainly sleep well today.” Cillin smiled, but the medical staff did not notice the deep meaning hidden within his eyes.

Cillin’s communicator rang just as the medical staff had left the room. Huo Neil had specifically set this up for him after Cillin got ‘hurt’ and arrived on the aircraft. After the line was connected, Knight’s face appeared on it.

“Yo, looking pretty good there I see. You don’t appear to be severely injured.”

“I wasn’t hurt badly in the first place, it just looks bad.” Cillin said. Knight’s side was still pretty noisy. The sounds of gunfire and cannon shots were endless.

“Hehe, I haven’t told you that the big black mouse is dead, have I? You could never have guessed how it was killed.” Knight’s face was so cheerful that there were wrinkles on it. After hearing the news that the mouse toxin on Pride’s body was removed, Knight had been feeling pretty relaxed. Otherwise, he would not have taken the opportunity to share some funny stuff on the battlefield. At first, Knight was planning to call Pride’s communicator as well, but that brat had fallen asleep after taking an injection.

“Oh? Do tell.” Cillin also wanted to know how that big black mouse was sent to the afterlife.

“God knows what the big guy was so mad about, but it didn’t even look at what’s in front of him before running right into a warehouse at the station filled with more than two hundred square meters of liquid nitrogen. Hahahaha...”

Cillin didn’t need Knight’s help to imagine what happened after that. The cold damage caused by more than two hundred square meters wide liquid nitrogen warehouse was absolutely deadly, and considering the big black mouse’s running speed, the power of the cold explosion was not something the big black mouse could endure at its current state.

If the big black mouse still had the white ball, then these liquid nitrogen wouldn’t have damaged it too much. It would be hurt for one second, then be healed during the next. This supported further

the uniqueness of the white ball. It was impossible to guess what Cillin was thinking as he rubbed the green pattern on his finger.

It was easy to imagine the big black mouse's ending when it was attacked again by the operation team after suffering the cold damage from the liquid nitrogen warehouse.

Knight gave Cillin a vivid description of that moment. Right now, they were sweeping for the final leftovers on the battlefield. There wasn't much left to do.

"I even took the opportunity to grab some souvenirs of my own – the big black mouse's claws and front teeth. Hehe, the late bird gets no worms alright." Knight was very proud right now.

"Yeah, yeah. Oh, right, don't cut off the communicator yet. Let me show you a hot nurse." Cillin looked at the monitor by his side and said.

The monitor was displaying the image outside the door. A graceful and voluptuous hot nurse holding a medicine tray stood in front of the door and pressed the doorbell. Previously, Cillin had changed the lock on the door to 'don't disturb' mode when he was receiving the call, so anyone who wanted to enter must be let in by the people inside.

Cillin put the communicator at the corner of a bedside cabinet. On the surface it looked like the connection was cut off, but in truth, the people on Cillin's side would be blind and deaf to what was happening on the other side. However, the people on the other

side could clearly see and hear what was going on here. Add another book on top of the communicator as cover, and no one would find out his little trick.

Staring at the image of the hot nurse holding a medicine tray and walking into the room on his communicator, Knight let out a most sly and perverted smile. The girl had a good figure alright. It would seem that fortune was looking up with such a beautiful nurse looking after him.

The female nurse gave him a very friendly smile and said gently, “It’s time to change your medicine.”

“I am in your care.”

The female nurse simply pursed her lips and smiled at Cillin’s gaze on her full buxom. She swapped in a new infusion bag with practiced hands and pressed a white and soft finger at Cillin’s forehead, “Little flirt.”

Cillin was not embarrassed either as he chuckled, “Only for a beautiful lady.”

After the hot nurse left, Cillin opened the communicator once more.

“How is it? Not bad, eh?”

“Verification complete. Conclusion: Hot babe.” Knight winked.

“You wanna try mutilate yourself and enjoy some hot babe service yourself in the sick ward?”

“Ceh, enjoy it yourself. Alright, I’m hanging up. I’ll clean up the battlefield and sweep the last of the black mice before coming back later to talk to you guys about today’s ‘great decisive battle’. I heard that you gave those researchers, who have their noses high up in the air, a good smack in the face. Good job.”

“Alright, alright. Get out and get working already. Go grab some more mice claws to sell at a high price once we get back to Seven Lights.”

“Good point. I’ll go grab a big bag then.”

Cillin cut off the connection and dropped his smile. His eyes were icy cold as he stared upwards at the new infusion bag that was just switched in.

A killer could not hide its icy blood stench even if they had taken an entirely new skin. Still, this time, he would not need to make a move personally. Someone else would pursue this matter naturally.

Chapter 45: Old Mo Is About To Flip Out

Since the battle was nearing its end, the remainder of the medical staff put on standby in the ship that was parked at the space station were transferred to the planet. The research station's defensive shield was finally put down as well, so every aircraft had some nurses assigned on them to perform some simple treatments for the sick and wounded.

A patrolling nurse opened the door belonging to Cillin's bedroom, ready to record the patient's vitals. All the data displayed on the instrument were pretty normal, but when she touched Cillin's arm, she realized that it was ice cold. She checked the body temperature displayed on the monitor and touched both Cillin's wrist and forehead, but not only was it as icy cold as before, his pulse was so weak that it was almost non-existent!

How did it turn out like this!!

The little nurse panicked and quickly pressed the emergency call button.

The battle was over on the battlefield. Huo Neil was directing tasks such as post-battle cleanup, rescue of the wounded inside the tunnels and other locations of the station, and so on. The waste treatment plants had also returned with a report that the 'sweep was complete'. It was only now that Huo Neil relaxed a bit, although that did not mean the end of his work. After the mission was over, there was still a series of other matters that needed to be dealt with such as compensation for the wounded and the bereaved, mission reports and post-battle analysis. These were all

tasks that he had to manage personally.

Huo sucked in a deep breath. Today's suffering was finally over! Thank goodness that those little ancestors were safe.

Reality proved that Huo Neil had relaxed way too soon. He had just finished letting go of his breath before his communicator rang.

From way far back, Knight, who was dragging a whole sack of mice claws and teeth, and was walking this way could already see Huo Neil shouting into his phone, "Bunch of useless fucks! I'm coming over immediately!"

Huo Neil cut off the communication, spoke something to the captain beside him, asked Gerrard to take over command of the remaining tasks and ran right towards the aircraft.

"What happened?" Knight walked over and asked that captain.

The captain didn't think too much of it and said, "Something happened to a patient on the aircraft, I think."

Patient? There were only a few people who could incite such a reaction in Huo Neil that he would throw down even battlefield affairs and rush over like his life was on the line. But the comrades he was deeply associated with such as Gerrard and the other captains were all on the battlefield, and as for the patients on that aircraft...

Knight put down his sack, took out his communicator, pressed a few button and shortly after saw Pride's two nostrils. He said with a still sleepy and extremely impatient tone, "What's the fuss about, I'm still sleeping man. The doctor told me to rest some more, if my recovery was delayed you -"

Knight cut off the communication before Pride could finish and called Cillin's number instead, but this time no one answered despite waiting for a long time. At this point, Knight could not be bothered with his sack of 'trophies', and ran towards the aircraft. He was just fine during the call not long ago. What happened?

Back at Hard's ward. Although he was still lying in the ICU, it was obvious that he was healing nicely judging from the energy in his eyes and the subsided swelling of his face.

At this moment, Hard and Sird was talking to each other. Sird was telling him about some of the stuff that happened afterwards. While Sird was speaking, the duo heard a commotion on the outside. It seemed to be coming from the emergency room.

"I wonder who it is this time." Sird sighed.

Before long, a nurse came in and checked Hard's infusion bag. Then she took a sample from the bag and tested it using an instrument.

Seeing the obvious sigh of relief on her face, Sird asked curiously, "What is it?"

The nurse returned a soothing smile, “It’s nothing.”

“You know, I can just ask the doctor directly.”

“Sigh. It really is nothing for you guys, but something happened to the patient at the ward downstairs. We have to retest every patient’s meds.”

“The ward downstairs? Who is it?” Sird asked nonchalantly.

“I think it’s someone called Cillin…”

“Cillin?!”

When Huo Neil had arrived at the entrance of the emergency room, Sird had pushed Hard on a wheelchair and waited beside the room.

“Why have you come out? Rest is the most important thing for someone hurt as badly as you are right now.”

Hard could not salute like Sird when he saw Huo Neil. After Huo Neil had stopped the salute, he was about to raise with his hand, Hard said, “I don’t feel at ease there.”

A person wearing the clothes of a medic ran over from behind Huo Neil and reported the situation.

The ward's camera logs had been completely wiped out, and the two cameras outside the ward had also been manipulated. Someone had invaded and altered the program of the instrument inside the ward so that no alarms were sent out when the patient's vitals had fallen into critical condition. And the biggest issue of them all was that they could not identify the suspect... Huo Neil stared at the logs recorded on the tablet handed over to him as his frown turned deeper and deeper. He was careless.

A medical staff from the drug testing room walked over and said to Huo Neil, "There are highly toxic substances inside that infusion bag. Judging from its dosage, it could cause death in just half an hour, but the patient who was injected with this kind of substance would not experience any discomfort whatsoever. They would only feel sleepier and sleepier." Then they would fall into a deep sleep until they pass away. The medical staff did not dare to say the last line, but everyone knew it what he meant.

Knight, who had just rushed out of the ward downstairs after seeing that Cillin was missing, happened to hear the staff's words, and he was so mad that he took out his gun right away and pressed it against his head, "Do you people eat shit for a living?! You didn't know which bag has poison and which doesn't?! You didn't test them beforehand?!"

A soldier laments nothing to die on the battlefield. But if their soul could never rest if they were to die for unaccountable reasons without any value whatsoever.

"Calm down, Knight!" Huo Neil motioned for several medics to pull Knight away, although they failed to snatch the gun in his

hand.

Knight struggled out of their grips and withdrew his gun. He received the tablet Huo Neil handed over and read the logs.

The cameras were manipulated and did not capture anyone suspicious? Infusion bag…

Wait a second!

“I know who switched that infusion bag!” Knight opened his communicator and brought up that call log, “She’s the one!”

A nurse?

Huo Neil opened his communicator and hit a number. Then he transferred the video over and said, “Investigate this woman!”

The call didn’t end long before Huo Neil’s communicator rang yet again.

Huo Neil glanced at the number and discovered that it came from a special communicator from Seven Lights. Although the main mission was completed already, they were still in the middle of the follow-up works after all. Normally speaking, Seven Lights shouldn’t be questioning him at this time since it might involve military influences. He recalled a certain person, and suddenly, Huo Neil felt nervous. He gritted his teeth and pressed ‘Accept’.

The image blinked once and displayed Mo Heng's unusually kind smile.

"Ah, Little Nail."

I knew it...

The cold sweat behind Huo Neil's back was like a waterfall. He wasn't nearly as nervous as he was now, even when compared to the massive horde of black mice.

"Hello, E-Elder Mo!" Huo Neil gave a military salute with a stiff body.

Seeing Huo Neil's reaction, Mo Heng said, "What's wrong? You're sweating all over. Why are you so nervous seeing old me? Surely I'm not scarier than those mutated black mice?" Mo Heng was apparently fairly aware of this mission.

Scary doesn't even begin to describe it; you're a million times scarier than those things. Huo Neil thought to himself, but he really did not know how he should answer this question. However, Mo Heng had spoken first before he could figure out an answer.

"Did something happen to Cillin?" How could Mo Heng not guess a thing or two seeing Huo Neil's reaction?

While Mo Heng was saying these words, even Huo Neil could feel the unusually low pressure circulating around old man Mo on the other side of the communicator.

Old Mo was about to flip. The fuck. Out.

Chapter 46: Solace

Let's turn the clock back a little. After Mo Heng was finished showing off to his friend outside, he returned from his trip only to find the written request for leave Cillin had left behind in the workshop. His face had immediately turned from sunny to gloomy in an instant. Everyone in the research division was dead silent because of this. It was obvious that sir Mo was feeling down; very, very down.

Knowing some of the details of this military op, Mo Heng had restrained himself from contacting up until the point he heard that the mission had reached the final stage. Moreover, it was only when he heard that Cillin had analysed more than a hundred antibodies singlehandedly to completely trump over the fifty plus station researchers that his feelings improved just a tiny bit. Using vice headmaster An Ting's words, the old fox's tail was raised just a little taller.

But Mo Heng did not expect to hear Cillin in danger the moment communication was established. His already cloudy feelings immediately turned into a thunderstorm, and as he listened to Huo Neil's explanation, his expression had only darkened even further.

"You're telling me that my disciple made such a huge contribution while injured only to be stabbed in the back?!"

Huo Neil kept quiet. With his understanding of Mo Heng's personality, it would be best if he said nothing right now.

“How is he now?” Mo Heng’s voice grew deep and heavy; so heavy that it was almost unbearable.

“The doctor says that he has stabilized somewhat after resuscitation…”

“I’m worried. I’m bringing some men over right now…”

Huo Neil was on call at a rest room beside the emergency room. Just as Huo Neil was sweating all over himself trying to deal with Mo Heng, a medic knocked on the door and walked inside. Huo Neil had told him earlier to inform him the moment there was any progress in the ER. Seeing that Huo Neil was on call, the medic passed over the tablet to him.

After reading the contents of the tablet, Huo Neil immediately felt a little more emboldened than before.

“Elder Mo, I’ve just received news that Cillin is now stable.”

Seeing Mo Heng’s obviously distrustful gaze, Huo Neil took the communicator and headed into the ER, showing Mo Heng the vitals on the instruments and the color of Cillin’s face. It wasn’t until he moved the communicator back and forth for a long time that Mo Heng finally believed him a little, but he still demanded that Huo Neil send Cillin back to Seven Lights as soon as possible. He couldn’t not worry otherwise.

“I’m telling you, this old man wouldn’t blink once even if all the

bastards in the station were eaten by those mice. You can put them all together and their sum value would not compare even to a shred of my disciple's! Why should someone else pay with their lives for the havoc they caused due to their incompetence – Pooh, pooh, fuck me he's alive what am I talking about – I mean, why should someone else clean up their shit, huh?!"

The moment sir Mo got angry, that temper of his immediately rose to the surface as well. His son General Mo Qing also fully inherited this trait from his father. Back in those years, both Huo Neil and Gerrard had tasted the brunt of General Mo's temper before. The moment his temper appeared, it would be difficult for anyone to stop him from whatever he wanted to do, not to mention that any statements that came out of his mouth were the absolute opposite of political correctness.

Someone like Mo Heng might put on the appearance of a kind and friendly senior academician when he was in a good mood in a normal day. But if his temper was to bare its fangs, then it was every man for himself.

This was what people meant to be bull-headed. The world they faced were big, but the world inside their hearts might not necessarily be big as well. Therefore, one must not stop them when they were protecting their own. Huo Neil knew this very well, which was why he kept quiet when Mo Heng flew off the handle and spittled his extreme remarks. Let's have them enter one ear and exit the other. Otherwise, it would affect sir Mo's kind image if this was spread to the public...

Thank goodness that the medic who came in just now had

already left, otherwise... Sigh, let's not go into that.

After instructing Huo Neil for a while, Mo Heng finally cut off the communication with much reluctance. However, before an hour was up, Huo Neil would have to report Cillin's condition to Mo Heng. Otherwise, if Mo Heng had run over here with his own men, how would he dare to excuse him...

Mo Heng's face did not improve by much after cutting off the communication. Ever since he decided to take Cillin as his direct disciple, he had made some investigations into the Douance family. He knew about its familial conflicts and all the tricky and dirty stuff that followed behind it. The Douance Family could be considered rather influential at the ten trade Sectors, but to Mo Heng, it amounted to exactly nothing. Mo Heng valued the ability of the person in question, not their background nor the benefits their identity could bring. He even wished that Cillin could detach himself from the Douance family and have no background at all, so he would not be involved in those dirty infightings.

That being said, now that something like this had happened, Mo Heng ain't gonna sit by and watch his disciple suffer. Someone had to pay the price.

While Mo Heng might be engaged in academics, the truth was that iron flowed inside his heart. Just look to General Mo Qing; if the old man could bring up someone like General Mo, then how could he possibly be a soft boiled egg?

Mo Heng entered a new signal transmission code into his communicator and called...

Someone had extended their hands too deep and lorded over the ten trade Sectors for too long that they forgot how big the universe was!

Huo Neil, Knight and the others had commenced their investigation of the poisoner, and before long, they heard that the woman had injected cyanide into herself at the medical depot and committed suicide. Moreover, she did not bother avoiding the depot's security cameras and injected a large amount of cyanide into herself right in front of it. She knew that she was a goner after failing the mission and exposing herself. She never figured out how Cillin survived until the very end despite being injected with poison for such a long time.

How did the woman slip into the hospital ship? And who was covering for her? The interrogation and examination of the medical personnel were also stricter than others. She most definitely had cohorts, and more than one no less. It could be a soldier, a researcher, a medical personnel...

Huo Neil also understood the complexity that laid beneath this matter, and the moment he remembered his own assurance to Mo Heng, he immediately decided to send the wounded back to Seven Lights, and Cillin, Pride and the others would have specially-assigned personnel to protect them. There must not be even the slightest trouble in between, or he would have to lose the badge on his shoulders.

While everyone was busying about, Cillin was still in bed. But, although he was sleeping, his mind was very clear. He knew about

what was happening around him; knew about Mo Heng's concern for him; knew about Knight, Hard and Sird standing by outside the door during the entire time he was in the ER.

He would be lying if he said he wasn't touched. When Cillin was still very young, Genya had already told him that man is a social animal. The amount of people he would come across or glanced over by in the entire galaxy exceeded hundreds of billions, and yet those who would truly treat you well could only be counted by fingers. This was a kind of wealth that could not be earned no matter how much money or time was spent. Even those who were used to being loners hid a deep longing inside their hearts.

This drama had developed according to Cillin's predictions. He had predicted that those people would have a backup plan, and the moment he saw the woman holding the medicine tray on the camera, he knew that backup plan had arrived. That was why he had left the communicator on so that Knight would have a lead to trace after, and even if the lead had met a dead end, it would be enough to force the killer to her death. The only way out for such a killer who failed her mission and exposed herself was death.

However, this matter had also caused Cillin to feel a long-lost warmth. Solace had come to him again after Genya and Hena had passed away. At the least, there was someone watching over him at the other end of the door while he lied on a sickbed.

As someone his age, he had experienced too much.

Chapter 47: Returning To University

On the ship, Cillin, Pride and Hard were assigned to the same sick ward. Sird and Knight were also there. Although knight wasn't hurt, He was still sent back to Seven Lights by Huo Neil. Knight did not mind, since he felt slightly more at ease because he was guarding the sick ward himself, just in case there was another assassination attempt

Since the matter had come to an end, naturally, Cillin 'recovered' really quickly, and now the five of them were chatting inside the room. Three were lying on their beds and two were sitting on chairs. Sird was peeling some fruits for them, and Knight was spitting saliva all over the place while talking about the news he had heard just recently.

"I heard that the big black mouse's chromosomes were multiplied after it had mutated and was able to reproduce to a bunch of little black mice asexually. Er... the hierarchy is just like the queen bee and her drones. But I'm not sure about the exact details either. The other research stations had come over to collaborate on the research. As you might imagine, if substantial results are to come from this research, then it can be published on an academic-type electronic magazine that would be at least seventy GAL contribution points or above. That way they'll become famous."

"Do the researchers on the station not feel any trauma from this incident at all?" Sird asked. To this point, he would recall the scene where the black mice brushed past him every time and would unconsciously feel a chill every time the mice were brought up.

“That’s their thrill. Take an example. You were shot during an operation and just barely survived it. Are you afraid of guns, then? Would you still pick up your weapon and join in on the next operation?”

“Of course I would join in on the operation! What’s so scary about guns; isn’t it a common thing to get shot at?”

“And they feel just the same. Isn’t it common for a researcher to come up with weird things? Hey, stop interrupting; let me continue,” Knight cleared his throat and continued, “I heard that the mutation produced some kind of enzyme inside their bodies that allowed the black mice to perform anaerobic respiration for an extended period of time. This also explains why they could survive inside the underground tunnels for such a long time.”

Knight was the kind of person who would give most people the ‘impatient daddy’ look, but would have an entirely different attitude towards someone whom he acknowledged. He also spoke a lot more.

Seeing Knight’s ‘I am an expert’ facade, Pride’s eyes zoomed to a corner as he tsked, “What shameful conduct!”

“Yoho, does our young master have an opinion for me? You should take a good look at your own cowardly face in the mirror. It’s pardonable that Cillin and Hard got hurt, but what about you? Young useless burden?” Seeing Pride’s indignant glare, Knight threw a grape right at him, “Don’t tell me you didn’t notice that

those soldiers in your squad were specially assigned agents."

"It's exactly because I noticed that they're specially assigned agents that I wanted to avoid them!"

"That's why you deserve to be scratched by the black mice. Do you seriously think you can handle that kind of situation alone? You fancy yourself a Star Rank Hunter or a Heavenly Edict Soldier? Use your brain, or you'll never catch up to your brother Feihang Zweig!"

"If I can't become a Heavenly Edict Soldier, do you think you can?"

"At the least, I'll be one before you." Knight said in disdain. If Feihang Zweig hadn't asked him to watch out for Pride, who would give a shit about this idiot?

Seeing that Pride was about to fight Knight to the death, Sird hurriedly went over to mediate thing between the duo.

Cillin watched the duo amusedly at the sidelines. If Sird hadn't gone over to mediate things, Pride was probably going to get smacked around by Knight again. A similar situation had already happened quite a few times.

That being said, the topic of Heavenly Edict Soldier and Star Rank Hunter did attract Cillin's attention.

There were countless Hunters in the GAL, and those who stood at the pinnacle were all bestowed upon the title ‘Star’, a.k.a the Star Rank Hunter Knight was talking about. As of now, there were six publically known figures in the world of GAL Hunters who owned the title ‘Star’. The leaders of the four great Hunter regiments and the two elusive and mysterious lone rangers were all Star Rank Hunters. Together, the six of them were known as the Six Stars of the Hunt.

Meanwhile, Heavenly Edict Soldier was the highest honor one could be bestowed upon among the soldiers of the army. However, their existences were overly mysterious, and many of their achievements were listed by the military under top secret. To the public, they only existed among legends, and even the offsprings of generals like Knight and Pride didn’t know who they were. They only knew that there were four of them.

The Four Heavenly Edict Generals and the Six Stars of the Hunt. These were the legends this era’s soldiers and Hunters chased after.

“It was only through this mission that I recognised the gap between students and the regular army. We still need to work harder.” Hard sighed while lying on his sick bed.

Both Knight and Pride looked towards Cillin in unison after hearing Hard’s words. They did not say anything.

“Hey, what kind of rewards do you think the university will give us after we went back?” Sird said expectantly.

“Rewards?” Knight rubbed his chin, “It’s either credits or cash. Although, a military merit will be marked under our profiles as well, it’s nothing big. However it is a badge of honor at least. It will be somewhat useful if you join the army in the future.”

“That will be good enough. A military merit is all I can ask for.” Hard answered with a grin.

The ship stopped at the space station when they arrived at Planet Seven Lights. They were then transported on an aircraft and landed at an airport in the training division. Both Cillin and Hard were pushed out on a wheelchair. Originally Pride should have joined them on a wheelchair as well, but he turned it down due to his pride.

There were plenty of people that were already gathered at the airport. Some of the higher-ups of Seven Lights were also here. This was an operation that started due to an accident on Seven Lights’ research station after all. The training division students were present; Lung and Ci Jincheng were also present. However, Lung winked at Cillin and used his chin to point at a certain direction. There was a very familiar flying limousine parked at that direction.

A person had walked over from the limousine after Cillin was pushed down the aircraft. After seeing that person, Knight threw away his so-called brotherhood code and dumped Cillin behind. From the looks of it, he wanted to stay away as far away as possible.

Seeing this person, Cillin pulled the corners of his lips, “Why have you come, sir…”

Maintaining a stern look, after checking Cillin all over very seriously and confirming that he had recovered pretty well, Mo Heng lifted a hand, and pulled.

The people at the training division airport, the students and higher-ups greeting and consoling the wounded, and those pouring down continuously from the aircraft should number around several thousands in total. It was under the attention of these several thousand people that Cillin was reprimanded while his cheeks were pulled by Mo Heng. The entire huge airport was filled with Mo Heng’s powerful and clear voice.

There were plenty of high grade students in the area, and they had only ever known Mo Heng’s kind appearance in the past. Since when had they seen such a vice headmaster Mo before? Their own faces felt painful just watching Cillin’s pinched cheeks.

However, the few higher-ups present were surprised by Mo Heng’s actions. Those who understood Mo Heng knew that the old man would only pull the cheeks of someone he really cared about. And while it might appear as if Mo Heng was reprimanding Cillin, in truth he was warning everyone that Cillin was under his protection, and anyone who would think to harm him must go through him first.

At a planet on Sector D of the ten trade Sectors; inside a manor not far away from the bustling city. Aiflon was holding a sprinkling can and watering the plants leisurely while his butler

Sopho reported the situation behind him.

"... Those families had suffered quite a bit of damage. The military's seizure of goods, the government's sudden investigation, business partners breaking off their cooperation and even several well-known academicians who were invited as guests changing their minds about things..."

Aiflon showed no reaction while he listened. After he finished watering the plants, he accepted the towel Sopho handed over, wiped his hands, and only then he said, "Let's triple his reward this time."

"Yes. And... about that person responsible for communication at Seven Lights..."

"We'll stick with the original plan."

"Yes. I'll work on it right away."

Chapter 48: Theresa Kiara

"Careful, watch out for the legs – hey! Be gentler…"

At Seven Lights' Technology Development Zone, Research Division Hospital, Mo Heng was commanding someone while they were transferring Cillin from his wheelchair to the sick bed.

Cillin already said that he could move on his own, but Mo Heng wouldn't listen to him at all. The old man wore a look of disgust as if Cillin couldn't be any more troublesome, and yet his hands wouldn't stop ordering the person lifting Cillin about, for fear that Cillin would bump or knock into anything.

Cillin's expression could only be described as one of absolute anguish. In truth, he could kill ten black mice with his bare hands right now and not be hurt in the slightest, but what could he do when he was the one who had chosen to feign sickness himself? Feigning sickness was such a terribly excruciating act; oh, the sins we bring upon ourselves!

Although the medical test reports indicated that Cillin could absolutely be discharged right now, Mo Heng had still forcefully requested that Cillin recuperate for another ten days, and during these ten days, no one was allowed to visit him.

In reality, this was his punishment for suddenly taking off and participating in a dangerous training division mission, wasn't it!

Every day, the microcomputer was Cillin's only method of

communication with others. Seven Lights had their own internal communication platform, and there were only five people in Cillin's friendlist: Knight, Lung, Ci Jincheng, Hard and Sird. That being said, the chat box pinged non-stop every day even though there were only five.

This morning, Cillin woke up, opened the microcomputer and immediately saw a few messages pop up on the display. They were all talking about the same thing – the mice extermination mission the five of them had participated in.

The troubles at the bio-station were resolved, so there was no longer any need to keep it under wraps. Moreover, even if every student in the training division had kept a tight lip about the matter, for certain students in Seven Lights who did not belong to the training division, it was something they could inquire one way or another if they really wanted to.

Since the incident at the station was exposed, naturally the five students who participated in said mission were exposed as well. Someone had even built them a power ranking.

Cillin opened the 'Seven Lights Forum' using the URL left behind by Knight, and as expected, the hot threads leading at the front was about them. There were even images of the black mice on top of the thread, and there were many people who replied to it. There were both positives and negative replies, and of course, some people who visited purely to check out some mice.

As for their ranking, in descending order from first to fifth, they were: Knight, Pride, Sird, Hard and Cillin. Naturally, there was a

reason as to why they were ranked in this order.

Why were Hard and Sird ranked last on the list? This was because they were seated on wheelchairs when they descended from the aircraft that day, and Hard was discharged the next day while Cillin had to wait several more. That was how he was ranked at the last place of the list. Pride should thank his own good fortune for insisting against sitting on a wheelchair that day, or he would have definitely been depressed to death to rank behind Sird.

But the more Cillin read, the more he discovered that the discussion was getting off rails.

Since when did things start to go awry?

The story should begin from the 1626th poster on the thread, ‘Sasa’. The moment this person replied, everything below her began to go crazy and disconnect from the thread’s original contents completely. This should also be the stuff Knight and the others had really wanted him to see.

That ‘Sasa’ had said this:

“Actually, I think the fifth person on the list is better.”

Then the replies began to pour it from the bottom, and looking at the time the masses’ replying speed was so quick that more than five pages were filled up in less than a minute.

“A wild Beauty Sa has appeared!”

“Beauty Sa, have you seen the love oath I wrote to you fifty seven days twelve hours thirty eight minutes and three seconds ago?”

“Is this the legendary Beauty Sa?”

“Could it be that Beauty Sa is interested in the guy that ranked fifth?”

“What? Beauty Sa is interested in the guy ranked fifth!”

“Beauty Sa, have you left your heart with the guy ranked fifth already?”

“Shocking news, Beauty Sa has a crush on a grade one student!”

“Who is that bastard at fifth rank; let’s drag him out to the open and strip him bare!”

…

Cillin was practically speechless reading the replies. He was truly impressed by their ability to distort one’s words. He had witnessed their ability to turn a grape into a durian, and each one of them was only more self-righteous than the next.

While Cillin was staring in speechlessness at the replies, the chat box flashed yet again. Both Lung and Knight's avatars were blinking rapidly.

What now?

After clicking it open, he discovered that the duo had sent him a large picture. The picture was of a girl dressed in refreshing light-colored casual wear. She had a ponytail tied to the back of her head and wore a pair of sunglasses. She was holding a bouquet of flowers in her hands. The focus of the picture was that the background was the hospital Cillin stayed in.

"Cillin, go take a look at the home page of Seven Lights forum." Ci Jincheng sent him a message.

Returning to the home page, he saw many glaring red highlighted threads that were all about that 'Beauty Sa', and the number of messages denouncing Cillin, Beauty Sa's scandalous boyfriend were countless. There was even a top thread that was titled, 'Live Stream of Beauty Sa Visiting Scandal Boyfriend'.

The more Cillin read the dizzier he felt. He didn't even know who Beauty Sa was so where the fuck did this scandal come from?!

The little trumpet beneath the chat box rang non-stop. Cillin clicked the simultaneous call button right away.

"Hey Cillin, have you seen Beaut Sa yet?"

“Cillin, how dare you raise a wildflower, correction, a house flower outside and not tell us! Something smells fishy. We demand the truth!”

While noise poured out of Lung and Knight’s big mouths, The door of Cillin’s sick ward slid open with a beep!, and the person following behind the entered robotic nurse was non other than the ‘Beauty Sa’ he had seen on the picture.

“Hi, Cillin Douance!” The visitor let out a cheerful smile and greeted him generously.

“Oh~~ It’s Beauty Sa beep ——”

The voice from the other side of the comm was cut off since Cillin had turned off the microcomputer straight away. He then looked at the visitor.

Meanwhile, both Lung at the Trade Zone and Knight at the training division were hopping mad. How dare Cillin turned off the computer at such a critical time! Could it be, that they were going to make love or something? The duo’s thoughts were already roaming wildly.

“Let me introduce myself. I am Theresa Kiara, Grade Five, from the Research Division’s Institute of Design.”

She carried with her a refreshing beauty that was not seductive.

Every one of her movements gave off a dignified feeling that was easily approachable. This was the people's first impression of Theresa.

Cillin didn't know who this 'Beauty Sa' everyone was talking about, but he did know the name 'Theresa'. There was an introduction to the university's celebrities in the Seven Lights Handbook, and Theresa was among them.

Theresa was the famous talented girl of the Research Division's Institute of Design. She was a specially recruited student who had risen to Grade Five in just three years of studies. She was also the disciple of Seven Lights' famous 'Queen' and headmaster's wife; Professor and Mrs. Lin. Professor Lin and Mo Heng were old acquaintances, so it was no wonder that Mo Heng would have given her special permission to come in.

"You're done with Professor Lin's project?" Cillin asked. He heard a long time ago from Ling Long that Queen Lin was about heading out to Sector A to work on a project, and from the looks of things, Theresa had probably gone along with her as well.

Theresa placed the flowers she held at a vase nearby, "Yeah, we just came back today actually. Professor Mo had praised you quite a bit at the dining table today, and there weren't many people who received such high praise from Professor Mo."

Cillin shrugged noncommittally.

Theresa casted a glance at the microcomputer beside Cillin and

smiled, “I’ve been away for a while, so I made a casual reply after seeing that thread on Seven Lights Forum today. I didn’t think there would be such a big reaction through.”

“You don’t look apologetic in the least though, senior-sister-in-learning.”

“Hehe.” Theresa did not deny it either.

After chatting casually for a while, Theresa then stood up and bid him goodbye. She had left Seven Lights for a period of time to work on the project, and Mrs. Lin was still waiting for her to deal with some of the trivial matters in Seven Lights. She could not afford to stay here for long.

“Thank you the the visit, senior-sister-in-learning. Allow me to treat you after I am discharged from the hospital.”

“Alright, I’ll be waiting.”

The total amount of time Theresa had spent in the hospital was no more than five minutes, but in Seven Lights Forum, the people had exploded into gossip already. Even though they only saw Theresa’s pictures entering and leaving the hospital, it was enough for the masses to conjure all kinds of imaginations in their heads. Then, someone used their god-knows-what means to confirm that Theresa had indeed visited Cillin’s backroom, and the entire Seven Lights Forum boiled into total chaos.

Cillin did not pay heed to those things, however. After Theresa left, Cillin turned his palm around to reveal a memory card in his hand. Theresa had slapped his hand once before she left, and it was It was at that moment that she passed the card to Cillin.

No wonder he kept feeling that something was a bit off. So she's the middlewoman. This was also why Cillin had offered to treat her after he was discharged from the hospital when she left. Cillin let out a meaningful smile. Other than knowing the fact that she was the middlewoman, Cillin had also discovered an additional secret.

Aiflon was truly a powerful contender of the position of heir of the Douance Family. His depths were deep!

Chapter 49: The Picnic Incident

Cillin barely got Mo Heng's approval to be discharged from the hospital, and to this aim he had even written a touching and trenchant ten thousand words self-reflection essay. But no matter how Mo Heng looked, he could not find any lines that stated the words he really wanted to see, such as, 'Never again in the future will I…" in the entire ten thousand words self reflection text.

Borrowing Mo Heng's remark, this was like machine that was missing a core component, or in one word, shit!

That being said, while it was a little shit, Mo Heng still framed and hung the self-reflection essay at his office, and every time Cillin went over to submit an assignment Mo Heng would point at the essay on the wall and go blah blah blah. Of course, this was the aftermath.

When Cillin got out of the hospital and returned to his accommodation, the door behind him had closed automatically. There were three people sitting on three chairs at the living room, putting on the impression of a Three-Judge Court. The trio who were normally too busy to even return home were all present today.

Ci Jincheng was toying with the control panel in his hands, it was likely that Cillin would be attacked by some unknown objects if he ran out of the house; Knight was wriggling his wrists and pressing his fingers until they cracked audibly; and Lung was letting out wicked laugh at the side.

“Confess and accept severe punishment, or resist and run naked on the streets! Make your choice!”

Cillin looked at the trio and calmly pulled over a chair, sitting down on the opposite side, “I choose C.”

“Fuck you!”

The trio rushed over and pressed Cillin to the ground. They throttled his neck.

“Quickly, what is your relationship with Beauty Sa?!”

“Even her supporters had run up to our front door! Look, they even threw rotten eggs at us!” Lung pointed at a yellow spot on the window and accused.

Bullshit, like there’s anyone in Seven Lights who dares to bully the lot of you? It’s obvious that you threw it out yourself while you’re trying to fry an egg! I can even see the oil on it; or do you think you can fool me!?

“Be gentler, my neck’s going to break if you throttle any longer; I give, I give okay.”

It took a while before his neck was finally released. After smoothing out his breath, Cillin then explained the ‘cause and effect’ of everything.

After a while, Knight asked suspiciously, “Are you sure she knows you because of Professor Mo and Professor Lin?”

“If you don’t believe me,go ask her yourself.”

Lung put on a deep, thoughtful look, “So this is a case of first come, first served then? The stars are aligned, man, if you still can’t take her down with these advantages you’ll be a candy ass.”

Knight too pressed closer while acting secretive, “So… what did you do during those five minutes?”

“We talked.”

“And then?”

“We talked some more.”

After analysing Cillin’s facial expression with everything they got, the trio said disappointedly, “You are sooo talented!”

Speaking of which, some of the students sounded the gong of retreat when the crowd at Seven Lights Forum had dug out Cillin’s identity and background.

Speaking of appearance, Cillin was in fact a pretty handsome man. That temperament of his was definitely dazzling when he put

it on display. Speaking of background and identity, Cillin came from the Douance Family, and as of late, his father Aiflon was riding the crest of success and not far away from becoming the heir of the Douance Family. If that time did arrive, then Cillin would become the prince of the family, and there weren't really many families who could exceed the Douance Family other than some forces at the three Sectors A, B and C. Speaking of knowledge, Sir Mo a.k.a Mo Heng was his master, and how could Cilin have become Sir Mo's student if he didn't have some ability of his own? And finally, the subject of Cillin's power was but a moot point. The guy had fought in the army and killed some mice. His personal combat strength ranked fifth in the training division. How the hell were they going to compete with this guy?

Therefore, the majority of the people were leaned towards watching a good show from the sidelines and gossiping.

On the next day, Cillin got ready to leave while holding his hoverboard.

The trio eating breakfast looked towards him at once, "Today's a weekend. There's no class."

"I'm treating Theresa to lunch today." Cillin was very forthright.

"Fuck!"

"Shit!"

“You animal!”

Cillin’s barely had one leg out of the accommodation before the trio took out a bunch of tools.

“The signal is clear.”

“Debug the satellite monitoring will you.”

“We must get a good look on how Cillin hits on a girl this time.”

…

Cillin knew that the three scums in the accommodation would not sit by and watch just like that, but he had nothing to hide either. After buying some things along the way, Cillin arrived at a forest outside the school zone, which was the location they agreed upon. Theresa was waiting for him already. She was dressed simply and elegantly as usual; connecting with the surrounding sceneries and appearing incredibly harmonious.

“Excuse me, I’ve kept you waiting.” Cillin withdrew his hoverboard and took out the food he just bought.

“It’s nothing, I came earlier on purpose.”

Many people were surprised that the duo didn’t go to a restaurant, and instead came to the forest for a picnic.

And why ‘a lot of people’? That’s because there were plenty more people who were tracking Theresa’s movements other than the three idiots in Cillin’s accommodation. However, be it monitoring through a binocular or a satellite, the lush forest would be their greatest obstacle. They would not be able to see clearly even with a see through glass. Therefore, they could only see the duo sitting there, watching the flowing stream and savoring their picnic. It appeared that they were chatting very happily.

There were already plenty of photos leaked out on Seven Lights Forum. The tree leaves might’ve been in the way, but it was impossible for the people’s imaginations to sit still when they could see the duo sitting by the stream.

Meanwhile, Lung was complaining non-stop in the accommodation, “That Cillin is so sly. To think that he would choose such a secluded location!”

“The video is blocked by the tree leaves.”

“We really should’ve placed a bug on him.”

Of course, Lung was just saying without meaning it. They knew that there should be a limit to everything. Ci Jincheng had thrown the tracer into his Cillin’s bag openly, and the fact that Cillin had said nothing meant that he didn’t mind giving away his whereabouts at all.

“They must be discussing their beautiful life and romantic

future.”

There were countless who thought that way, but in truth the topics Cillin and Theresa were discussing with each other had nothing to do with romanticism at all.

“Since this incident has a great impact on his opponents, Mr. Aiflon Douance had paid you three times the usual reward. You can expect the same thing for the next two months.” Theresa said.

“Is it my mentor, Professor Mo?”

“It’s not just him. All three of your housemates had acted, and the military, business, government and academia had exerted some pressure of their own. I’ve also heard that the killer organization was put on the wanted list. Recently they’ve been planning to take revenge against their employer, you know.”

Cillin smiled at the news and said nothing.

“Although those people would restrain themselves a little after these pressure from all sides, Mr. Aiflon had asked me to tell you this: Some of the people from the main family might seize this opportunity to act, and put the blame on those unlucky fellows. Therefore you should be careful for the meanwhile. Still, I think that Mr. Aiflon was worrying too much. With your abilities, there’s absolutely no chance that you would be unable to handle these small fries.”

“You sure think highly of me.” Cillin turned his head and looked at the small stream.

Different from Planet Brown Earth’s artificial stream, there was a beauty to this stream that was closer to nature. There was even a crab underneath a rock. When he was young, he would often play with Hena at the stream slightly far away from the poverty area, but it had only rocks and water, nothing else. Hena had even said that such a stream had no life in it. She said that if one day she could see a stream filled with abundant life such as the fish, prawn and crabs shown on TV, it would definitely be a very happy thing.

Cillin touched the pendant hung at his chest inside his clothes. Do you see, Hena? There are crabs here. This stream is alive. In the future, we will see even livelier streams.

“Who are you thinking of?” Theresa asked. During that one instant, the gentleness in Cillin’s eyes was one that could cause someone to drown in it.

“I’m thinking of crabs.” Cillin stretched his back, “Is there anything else?”

“No. I’ll tell you after I receive new instructions in the future.”

“As long as you remember my reward.”

“We will absolutely not undercompensate you. Let’s end our meeting here today; it seems like your patience is at its end

anyway. Let's have a goodbye kiss before we part." Once finished, Theresa then leaned forward and got closer to Cillin.

Countless Seven Lights students watched Beauty Sa leaning towards Cillin as the distance between them grew shorter and shorter until...

FUCK! THE TREE LEAVES ARE IN THE WAY!

Lung pointed at the tree leaves in the screen and said furiously, "I'll reward anyone who chops that tree in half a billion!"

At the same time, in a different accommodation on the other side, Ling Lung had crushed her fifth microcomputer today with her bare hands.

Everyone knew that the duo had kissed, but did they really? It's true. But... just the face. Theresa had only kissed Cillin's face, but because of the tree leaves, everyone else was thinking about the obvious.

Theresa's grasp of the angles was terrific. She knew by heart exactly where the surveillance were coming from.

Aftering cleaning up the stuff on the ground, Cillin extended his hoverboard while Theresa pressed the button on her key. Not far away, a flying car flew up as its colors turned from green to white. She was using a camouflage color earlier.

“Want me to drive you?” Theresa sat inside her car and asked.

“It’s fine. A pleasure to work with you. Remember the reward.”

“Pleasure to work with you.”

Both parties parted towards different directions. Cillin flew along the stream for a time, but there weren’t many people who paid attention to him any longer. Knight and the others also opened the forum and checked the threads. The hottest threads of the entire Seven Lights Forum were all about Cillin and Theresa; they were talking about the ‘truth’ behind the photo.

Cillin had just returned to the accommodation before Knight and Lung threw down the microcomputer and ran towards him.

“You have better tell us that critical segment right away… fuck, crabs, where did you get these crabs? They’re so fresh!” Knight and Lung no longer cared about the picnic kissing incident or whatever and rubbed their hands excitedly at the huge sack of crabs.

Ci Jincheng: “…” These gluttons!

That night, while the rest of the people in Seven Lights were salivating all over the forum, Cillin and his friends enjoyed a fine meal of crabs around the table.

Chapter 50: Sector Championship

The ‘Ci-Sa Incident’ made quite the noise, but it lasted only for a few days before it was completely covered over by another event – the Sector Championship was about to begin.

And what is the Sector Championship?

The Sector Championship was the contest joined by all higher education institutions of Sector B and C, and the top ten higher education institutions of the ten trade Sectors. It included contested sports such as ACM (Air combat maneuvering or dogfighting), gun fights, full-contact combat, integrated warfare and so on. This was a contest in which all the pros were gathered and where geniuses from all around the universe were looking to unleash their capabilities. This was also the most influential contest among the higher education institutions every year. ‘Gathering of Titans’, an electronic magazine with over seventy GAL contribution points had a special column reserved for this contest.

‘Gathering of Titans’ was an electronic magazine that specialised in reporting all kinds of sports events. It was the sports events type electronic magazine with the highest contribution point, and its influence on the entire GAL was extremely huge. The importance of this championship could be seen from the fact that it had a specially reserved column in ‘Gathering of Titans’.

Moreover, this contest was also closely related to the higher education institutions’ source of students in the coming years. If a certain higher education institution had failed to perform

admirably in the Sector Championship, then who would be willing to apply into such an institution?

Seven Lights was without a doubt a beneficiary of this contest. In recent years, Seven Lights sat solidly at the fifth spot in the contest, and this was an achievement that all higher education institutions in Sector B were jealous about.

And why would they be jealous about a mere fifth spot? That's because the top four spots of the Sector Championship were all landed by the four military academies from Sector C. After all, the people of Sector C were honestly trained and had true skills and abilities. That's why Sector B's higher education institutions would content for the fifth spot every year, but most of the time, that spot would be occupied by Seven Lights. That was how Seven Lights had come to enjoy its fame and reputation today.

This was also one of the reasons why so many great forces and families tried so hard to send their kids to Seven Lights. Seven Lights was just like a rich and powerful family, and it would definitely be most beneficial to one's future development if they could join this family.

There were no lack of offsprings of 'wealthy and powerful' families like Lung and Pride, but those who lifted Seven Lights to the top were mostly specially recruited students. This was why Seven Lights' treatment of specially recruited students were extremely generous, and why old professors like Mo Heng rather preferred specially recruited students over regular students. It was because they all had the potential to step into the top.

As of late, there were a lot less people frequenting the trade zone districts and entertainment zone's Sleepless City. The training division and the school zone's training rooms were fully occupied almost everyday, and there were also those who stayed in their accommodations the whole day, going online and entering the Sector Championship's combat platform to warm up and train.

The Sector Championship's combat platform would only be opened a month before the contest began, and after it ended, the platform would be shut down along with it. Every contested sport had their respective training grounds in the Sector Championship's combat platform. While they were just virtual zones, some training grounds were still filled to the brim, so the people could only wait in queues for practice.

In reality, all contested sports were conducted in this Sector Championship's combat platform except the last sport of the contest integrated warfare, which would be conducted in real life. However, the sensors would reflect a person's physical condition on the platform, and the virtual character on the combat platform was nearly the same as the person's physical condition in real life. Therefore, the tempering of one's constitution was a must.

There were no special criterias in order to become eligible to participate in the Sector Championship. All Grade One to Four students were allowed to participate, but Grade Five, Six and Seven were forbidden from joining the contest. In reality, they could only be considered as half a student; those who had continued to pursue further study could already be considered as half a professional and thus, barred from the Sector Championship. There was also the fact that the military academies in Sector C or the higher education institutions in the ten trade Sectors had only four grades

in their system. Therefore, for the sake of fairness, the students who pursued further study in Sector B did not have the right to compete in this contest.

It could be said that Knight had been looking forward and extremely gratified by the coming of this contest. He wasn't able to enter a military academy, and so he had set his mind to knock those people in the military academies down a peg so he could absolve this particular grudge.

For the past few days, Knight had almost never left his doorsteps. A fridge was purposely placed in his bedroom, which he would eat directly from after he was hungry, before returning to the Sector Championship's platform after he was filled to fight again. His only regret was that he could not hug the sensor to sleep.

Seven Lights' identity card was needed to register on the Sector Championship's platform, and every student could only have a single account. Therefore, the students who were Grade Two, Three and Four already had their own accounts, which would be deleted only after they had graduated from the university.

No classes were held during the Sector Championship, and even if there was, Cillin could choose not to attend. He had accumulated enough credits to rise straight to Grade Three, not to mention that he had Old Mo, Mo Heng backing him up. All of the tutors had taken no notice to Cillin's absence in class.

He opened his microcomputer, put on the sensors, opened the Sector Championship's platform and scanned his Seven Lights account registration number. The account name Cillin entered was

‘Shadow X’. The account name was shown to be usable. After a variety of verifications the message of successful registration was finally displayed. Only a brief introduction was shown in ‘Shadow X’’s information window.

ID: Shadow X

Gender: Male

Genotype Rank: B

Institution: Seven Lights

Combat Information: No record.

Other than his ID, the rest of the information had been automatically generated from his Seven Lights card. They were all real information, because he hadn’t competed in any contest yet, many of the display fields were blank.

After confirming his information, a choice to configure his appearance and body size appeared. He could choose to display it as it was or modify it to his wishes.

Its initial appearance was very much like the domestic robot Mo Heng and the others had created. It appeared very common with nothing special to speak of at all. However, Mo Heng had never liked to add unnecessary beauty modifications to his robots, and Cillin was too lazy to bother with such non-essential things himself. It’s not like it would affect his participation in the Sector Championship.

From the beginning, the reason Cillin had participated in the

Sector Championship was simply to get to know the geniuses around the universe and improve himself through combat. He did not plan to fight for an actual place for himself. After all, even if he did become number one of the contest, it would still belong to Cillin Douance and not him.

However, Cillin still underestimated the significance of face engineering to the masses. The first thing Cillin heard when he finished registering and officially walked into the Sector Championship's platform was:

"Fuck! This guys is openly streaking on the Sector Championship's platform!"

And so Cillin entered the first page of the Sector Championship's platform forum on his first day of entering the Sector Championship's platform – 'The Sudden Appearance of the Streaking Male'. Shadow X became known to the public before he had even started in a single match. There were even some Seven Lights students who accused 'Shadow X' of throwing the university's face and ruining the university's reputation.

Cillin was speechless. It's not like this robot's appearance had an exposed dick, and it looked just like those humanoid domestic robots running about daily on the streets. Since such a generic robot choice was setup in the system, then of course it's there to be chosen! The hell does it have to do with streaking! Not to mention that a university's reputation was not built on empty talk, but on blood, sweat and tears.

Cillin no longer paid heed to those silly personages. He decided to

find someone to practice a bit and get used to platform fighting. There just happened to be a man who just finished registering and walked out of the newbie zone at this moment. He wore a camouflage suit, and through it informed everyone right away that he was from a military academy in Sector C. Cillin looked at his information. Fang, Male, Third Military Academy, rank A genotype.

Not bad. This is a good target for practice.

Cillin sent out a 1v1 challenge request to the man straight away.

Fang seemed a little surprised to be challenged right after he came out, and by a rank B genotype non-military academy student no less. Where did he find the courage to challenge him, a rank A genotype who hailed from a military academy?

Normally speaking, there were plenty of cases where rank B genotype military academy students had fought non-military academy students to a standstill or even defeating them outright. It was no wonder that Fang was so surprised.

Fang's first reaction was that this kid's brain was addled, but it would be too embarrassing to reject Cillin outright as well. This was his first challenge request on the Sector Championship's platform after all.

And so, Fang clicked the accept button.

Chapter 51: Followed By All

There were from thousands to tens of thousands of students practicing against each other on the Sector Championship's platform at every moment. Therefore, no one had applied to spectate the newbie match between Shadow X and Fang. Plus, both their accounts were just newly registered, so their follows and followers were completely blank, and so no one learned about their battle in time.

The people who had published the 'streaking' incident on the forum's front page did not follow 'Shadow X', it was just an amusement they had found after a period of intense training. Meanwhile, those who had accused 'Shadow X' did not follow him either. This was because they felt like they would shame themselves by doing so. This had also caused them to pass by a huge opportunity.

Both sides automatically entered a single combat battlefield after agreeing to a versus battle.

After pressing 'Start', Fang did not move. After all his opponent was just a rank B non-military-academy student. If he had acted first, it would feel a little like he was fighting a one-sided battle or bullying the weak. Cillin also knew what his opponent was thinking, so he attacked first.

A white shadow flashed towards him. For an average person, it might appear to be very swift, but to Fang it was just passable. Hence, Fang had even split his attention to evaluate his opponent's movements and posture while he lifted his hands to block the

attack at the same time.

Not bad...

While Fang was still thinking, he then realized that his arms were somehow knocked slightly off position just before they were about to block his opponent's attacks. It was just a single opening, but his opponent's hand had already cleverly pierced through the gap with twice the traveling speed, and hit him.

Bang!

Fang was struck backwards a few steps away.

Cillin made his own silent appraisal. He hails from a military academy alright. If this was someone else, they should've been sent flying, but this person before him had only taken a few steps backwards. His body was very tough, and his reactions were also swift. Although he wasn't able to avoid the attack due to being distracted, Fang's chest bones and muscles were all in a state of high alert, which lowered the offensive power of his strike. Moreover, even if Cillin did seize the opportunity to put in a combo, he was sure that Fang would be well prepared against it.

After Fang had stood still and stared at this generic robot-like fellow, he suddenly felt a little heat rushing to his cheeks. He was actually beaten back by a non-military-academy rank B newbie! Moreover, Fang was a little angered when he saw his opponent stayed quietly at his spot instead of rushing towards him, seemingly waiting for him to recover.

I was careless. Before the Sector Championship's platform had started, the instructors had already told them not to belittle those who hail from non-military higher education institutions. There were plenty of people who were hiding their true strength, and it was up to their luck whether they would encounter these people. He did not expect to encounter such a person right after he registered his account.

He felt anger, but that anger was eclipsed by the fighting spirit inside him. Fang put up a defensive stance and signaled his opponent to attack.

Seeing that Fang was ready and not distracted this time, Cillin too kicked his strength up a notch.

Cillin's attacks appeared light and floaty, but at close range, they would suddenly speed up and become extremely unpredictable. It was incredibly hard for Fang to instantly predict Cillin's intentions. Moreover, Cillin's attacks contained heavy strength behind them, and a single blow was enough to strike Fang backwards a few steps. The more he was beaten, the further back he was blown away.

Fang himself noticed that something was amiss after he was blown backwards for the fifth time. It felt like his opponent was just probing his strength all this time, or to put it bluntly, playing with him.

A rush of anger flooded to his head. Fang couldn't give a care

about keeping his tricks under wraps any longer; it wasn't his style to hide himself anyway. He wants a fight, I'll give him a fight.

This time Fang did not defend, and went on the offensive instead.

At the same time, at a certain accommodation at the Third Military Academy, three people exited from versus mode after ending their respective battles.

"As I thought, we can only versus against someone from a military academy. Those people from Sector B are just too weak." A person complained.

"You're still searching around Sector B? Leave those for Grade One students, man, at our level we can only seek out our own kind. Look, I've always challenged those from the First and Fourth Military Academy."

The First Military Academy had ranked second place in the Sector Championship last year. The Third Military Academy was ranked third as usual, and the Fourth Military Academy was the champion. As for the Second Military Academy, they were laughed at quite a bit by the other academies for ranking bottom out of the four military academies.

"Right, that Grade One fellow should've registered by now, should he?"

"You mean that 'Fang' Faratin?"

The Third Military Academy's Grade One student, Faratin's individual combat strength was ranked fifth in the entire academy. The students all called him 'Fang'. However, it appeared that he was sent away by the instructor on some mission a few days ago, and there was no news from Faratin during the first few days of the Sector Championship's platform's opening.

"Do you know what's his ID? Let's search around for a bit."

"Just search for 'Fang', he should be using this nickname."

"Eh, there really is a 'Fang'. The account was just registered today, and the information board indicates it's from our Third Military Academy. But he's in versus battle right now."

"Versus battle?" Everyone in the accommodation rushed over.

Most of the accommodations in military academies were communal, with four to tens of people living within them. This accommodation had eight people in it. The eight of them were all gathered around in a discussion.

"His opponent actually comes from Seven Lights, and he's a rank B genotype no less. With Faradin's strength, why would he bully a student from Seven Lights?"

"The battle has been going on for sixteen minutes, and it still hasn't ended yet. That Faradin kid is probably not going all out, his

opponent is a newbie after all."

While speaking, the screen showed that the versus battle had ended.

"Hah, there's the game over. I told you that Faradin kid is... huh? He... he lost? How is this possible!"

Fang's combat result was a shocking 1 loss, whereas Shadow X's was a 1 win.

After a long silence, someone asked.

"This Fang isn't our Fang, is he?"

No one said anything. According to the information, this Fang should be Faradin alright, but this combat result was just way too bizarre.

"Give me a minute. Let me ask someone." One of them turned on the Third Military Academy's on-campus chat app.

Meanwhile, at an accommodation in the Third Military Academy.

Faradin sat at his place with sweat all over his body. His arms were shivering, while he panted heavily.

The rest of the people inside the accommodation were shocked by his appearance, but when they saw ‘Fang’s’ combat result on the screen, their faces were as if they had seen a ghost.

Faradin could feel the pain in his muscles. The sensors had clearly transmitted that pain to his body. That Shadow X’s entire style earlier could almost be summed up with a single word ‘entangle’; entangling him while continuously increasing his own force until he was finally forced to convert his fighting spirit to murderous intent at the end. And then…

Faradin hugged his head. The sweat on his forehead dropped incessantly the moment he thought of that single instant.

Shadow X, while wearing the appearance of a generic robot, had looked like a Demon King back then. If this was an actual combat, Faradin was absolutely sure that he would be dead already. There would be no chance of survival, and both his arms would have been torn to shreds.

After getting his thoughts and emotions under control, Faradin sucked in a deep breath and moved his somewhat stiff arms a little.

“Faradin, that Shadow X…”

“Very strong. That guy’s very strong.” Faradin sighed. Then he got up and headed to the balcony with his communicator.

After Faradin had walked out, the people inside the

accommodation matched each other's glances. There weren't many peers at all who could get a 'very strong' appraisal from Faradin. And so, they logged into the Sector Championship's platform, searched for the ID Shadow X and followed him.

Meanwhile, the people at the high grade accommodation were still guessing after sending an all chat on the on-campus chat app and getting no response. Then, one of them cried out, "Someone followed Shadow X!"

There were five people who were shown to have followed Shadow X, and when they clicked open the window, they discovered that all five were new students of the Third Military Academy. Five minutes later, Fang himself had followed Shadow X. Meanwhile, Faradin had also replied to the all chat on the on-campus chat app and said, "I am Fang. Shadow X is very strong."

Faradin did not grow dejected just because he experienced a loss on his first battle on the Sector Championship's platform. On the contrary, he was extremely excited, and he did not intentionally hide the fact that he had lost to Shadow X either. He had told his instructor about this matter, and his instructor had assisted him in analysing the reason behind his defeat. Moreover, this was very beneficial in helping Faradin to discover his own flaws and shortcomings. Every encounter with a new combat style was a perfect opportunity to improve himself, and Shadow X's combat style was without a doubt a very good example.

Faradin's words caused every high grade student to boil up, and so the words began to spread from one to ten, and ten to hundred...

And this was how the epic scene where the generic-looking ‘Shadow X’ had come to be followed by tens of thousands of people on his first day, and all of them were Third Military Academy students.

Chapter 52: Observe, And Realise How Much Your Master Spoils You

After his battle with Fang, Cillin would often receive challenge requests from military academy students, but he would only receive a single challenge each day due to lack of time. Although the Sector Championship was a pretty weighty contest for a lot people, to his mentor Mo Heng, the Sector Championship couldn't even compare to a tiny, little assembly part.

Other than Mo Heng, there were also people like Ci Jincheng and Lung who did not hold the Sector Championship at great value. Ci Jincheng had gone out to the communication station on the nearby asteroid on an 'errand' once more; Lung on the other hand had gone to manage his business. Some of Seven Lights' supply procurement came right from the Andrea Family, and since the Sector Championship was near, the demand for certain necessities had begun to increase sharply. More than half the necessities such as microcomputers, sensors and other goods were all supplied by the Andrea Family to Seven Lights before they were resold to the students. Lung was probably collecting money even in his sleep; to him a Sector Championship or whatever was purely a money earning tool.

During the first three days he registered and entered the Sector Championship platform, Cillin would discover a huge amount of challenge requests in his inbox every time he went online. Moreover, they all came from military academies'. On the first day, the Third Military Academy was still the only one who sent him challenge requests, but on the second day the rest of the military academies had all jumped out and joined in the party. Cillin simply chose one person at random to initiate versus battle,

and once the battle was over, he would sleep all the way until the next day before heading to the research division to complete Mo Heng's assignments.

These were also the only three days Cillin had fought in versus battles on the Sector Championship's platform. On the fourth day, Cillin was ordered by Mo Heng to stay in the research division and complete the assembly of a large machinery. It would take him several days at least to complete.

To quote Mo Heng's words, "It's just a pre-game warmup; the hell are you wasting time screwing around with those people for. Quickly get down to business already."

And this was rare euphemism coming from Sir Mo. If he was being any more direct, those hot-blooded students full of passion and fighting spirit would probably run their heads into a wall and commit suicide. This was because Cillin once heard Mo Heng mutter: It's not like they're gonna get any higher than fifth spot no matter how hard they work...

And so Cillin temporarily bid goodbye to the Sector Championship's platform and immersed himself fully into Mo Heng's grand scheme of machinery. That was to say that Cillin had only logged onto the Sector Championship's platform for a total of three days; challenged one person and accepted two challenges; fought a total of three battles with a battle record of three nil.

Three wins and zero losses. If you judge from the battle record alone. it was nothing special. There were plenty of people who had hundreds of wins and zero losses. However, what's special was that

there were two special figures out of the three people Cillin had fought. One was the first person he challenged, the new Grade One student belonging to the Third Military Academy who ranked fifth in terms of individual combat strength, ID ‘Fang’; and the other was a Fourth Military Academy fellow whom Cillin had randomly selected with the ID ‘Invincible Brave’. He was not a new student.

It was exactly because of these two people that there were an unusual amount of Third and Fourth Military Academy students who challenged Cillin during the time after those victories. But of course, at the least Cillin was unbeknownst to these recent commotions. He had no heart to think about the Sector Championship while he was assembling machines.

Cillin’s current workplace was not his own workshop, but Mo Heng’s big workshop. At the moment, Cillin was staring at several categorised mountains of parts in a daze. This many?!

Meanwhile, Mo Heng sat leisurely on a chair not far away. He dropped his legs on the table, lifted his cup of tea and sipped.

“As punishment for your previous leave without cause, you shall finish these in my stead instead. There were ten piles to be assembled originally, but your master has specifically picked the most complicated pile for you. Observe, and realise how much your master spoils you.” Mo Heng laid there and uttered with a tone that demanded Cillin to kowtow and thank him for his kindness.

Leave without cause my ass! Cillin lifted the corner of his mouth and said, “Master, you… certainly spoil me so much that I can die!”

Cillin had especially emphasised the word ‘spoil’.

(*The chinese character of the word meaning ‘spoil’ can also be interpreted as ‘pain’)

“What can I say, you’re my disciple after all.”

Ever since Cillin learned that in this circle a research assistant was pretty much the equivalent of a disciple, and a direct disciple no less, he thought: the future is full of parts.

“Don’t just stand there, get working already. Don’t think i don’t know that you’ve eaten three large bowls of rice, a pot of noodles and a plate of roast chickens for breakfast; strength is the one thing you don’t lack right now. Also, since I’m your supervisor, don’t you even think of loafing on the job. If your overall accuracy doesn’t reach 99.96% of the theoretical value then you’ll have to strip it and start over.” Mo Heng slapped the monitor beside him. The programs were all set just waiting for Cillin to start and begin calculating his overall accuracy.

Cillin casted Mo Heng a helpless glance, “Thank you for your benevolence, master.”

“Hmm~ You’re welcome.”

If the students outside were to notice Mo Heng’s appearance right now, their jaws would definitely drop to the ground. Right now Mo Heng had completely dropped his usual mature temperament of a kind and smiling senior professor. Vice headmaster An Ding described this Mo Heng as his senior academic

mode.

Cillin arrived in front of the pile of parts and gave it a rough look. First, he needed to assemble the categorised parts into components and modules. Moreover, there was a certain sequence behind the assembly of these components. He should first decide which pile of parts to assemble first, then he would be able to save more time when he actually began the assembly later.

Cillin only needed one glance to decide the best assembly order of the piles of parts. After choosing the correct pile, he then began assembling.

Mo Heng nodded in satisfaction. It appeared that his disciple was the better after all; those old fellows' disciples did not have as much of a keen eye as Cillin.

Every finger, every muscle, every joint; the right strength, the precise timing, the lack of unnecessary movement. And yet they were as captivating as a perfect piece of art. The feeling Cillin gave off was that he only needed move a finger slightly to assemble a single part without effort. But in reality, at that instant, many actions were executed simultaneously. It's just that it would be difficult for a normal person's eyesight to capture those movements.

Every time Mo Heng watched Cillin assemble, he would have the feeling that the 'Golden Point' was just within reach. It was a very fine feeling. Cillin was Mo Heng's hope; his hope to reach that legendary point.

The monitor beside Mo Heng showed that Cillin's overall accuracy theoretical values were all 99.96%. These values were incredibly hard to maintain; not even the chief mentors of Seven Lights could maintain such a high overall accuracy for such a long time. This was the difference between constitution and concentration.

For a mechanical engineer, one's constitution was also a vital factor.

Every time Cillin assembled, he couldn't shake the feeling that he should be able to assemble faster with higher accuracy. But no matter how hard he tried, his overall accuracy just maintained at 99.96%. It was like an invisible threshold that he could see to the other side, but not jump over.

Oh, never mind. It's not a limit that can be forced anyway. If my hands accidentally shook and dropped the overall accuracy to 99.95% then according to Mo Heng's standards, I'll have to dismantle the whole fitting and reassemble...

Dismantle and reassemble?

Suddenly, Cillin felt as if there was a flash of blurry light across the darkness. Dismantle and reassemble. Dismantle... and reassemble...

At first, Mo Heng was watching Cillin assemble with great relish.One moment he was sighing over his disciple's impressive

assembling talents, and feeling smug and pleased at himself on the inside, and the next he saw Cillin's hands suddenly coming to a pause, standing there immobile as if he had sunk into a daze.

Chapter 53: Back Analysis

Mo Heng did not disturb Cillin; he looked like he had caught onto something. Sometimes, if one could recapture that sudden flash of brilliance, it would be greatly beneficial to one's personal progress. Such an opportunity could only be stumbled upon by luck, but not sought for.

Of course, he hoped that it really was a flash of inspiration that Cillin was experiencing, and not another pang of hunger. Mo Heng would not be able to hold himself back from flinging a cup at him otherwise.

Cillin stayed in that posture for several minutes without moving. Then, he put down the parts he was still holding in his hands, put the component that he had nearly finished assembling at a side, took out his utility knife (Literal: assembly tool knife) and began taking it apart one by one. Up until now, Cillin had only assembled but never truly taken apart any machineries before, which was why he had always felt as if something was missing from his thought process.

To achieve mastery in something, was to have a deeper comprehensive and thorough understanding of said something. Front and back, forward and reverse, assembly and disassembly; they should all be comprehended and practiced thoroughly. During this disassembly process, Cillin was able to analyse and reflect on this machine from a different perspectives. So this is what I've been missing all this time.

Every time Cillin glanced over an assembled machine, he would

only consider how it was assembled, but not analyse how the instrument should be properly dismantled. From where should he commence his work, beginning from which part, and in what order?

Inverse deduction or induction, was just like backtracking during a hunt. This method of thinking should sit equal with logical thinking, and yet it was often neglected instead.

Divergent thinking and convergent thinking were both equally important roles.

Cillin's dismantling movements were not slow; everywhere his knife swiped across, the parts that were solidly assembled into a wholesome form would be separated perfectly. Every angle of applied force questioned the wholeness and potential deformation of the dismantled parts, and these dismantled parts fully displayed Cillin's capability as an analyst.

There would be more or less some marks left behind on the parts wherever the utility knife was used on, and and these marks do exist even if they might be invisible to the naked eye. Even the smallest changes would affect a part's integrity, so during the dismantling process, Cillin had done his best to minimise the amount of times he used his knife. That was how the scene where multiple part were dismantled with a single flash of the knife came to be.

Mo Heng nodded on the inside as he watched Cillin's actions. So it was a flash of inspiration, and not because he was hungry…

After Cillin had dismantled the nearly completed component back into parts, he then sat down on the floor and tossed a part into the air. He grabbed it, then tossed it again, then grabbed it, then tossed it again... finally, he placed the parts at the side and laid on the ground. He stared towards the ceiling.

In his head, there were many individual parts scattered at every corner. Then they began assembling themselves one by one into a whole component, before coming apart again on their own. Then they assembled again, and disassembled; assembled, and disassembled...

After thinking for a moment, Cillin climbed up and began assembling. His method was different from before. When he was assembling, he would throw a few parts into the air, and when they fell downwards and reached the spots they should be assembled into, Cillin's hands blurred and fixed the parts tightly into their respective places.

At first glance, one would feel as if the parts were tossed into the air in succession before they fell downwards to become assembled into a complete whole. If someone was to pay closer attention, then they would notice that the parts had fallen downwards in a specific order. At the same time, Cillin had tweaked three spots during the assembly process. These were the shortcuts he had found when he was performing induction.

A series of data was displayed on the screen.

“Overall accuracy at 99.96% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.96% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.97% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.96% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.97% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.97% of theoretical value.

Overall accuracy at 99.97% of theoretical value.

…”

Mo Heng was so excited that his old face was glowing red. Genius, Cillin was absolutely a genius. Just how long had it been since Cillin officially came in touch with mechanical assembly and received formal education? Cillin’s overall accuracy was already almost the same as his own, a veteran who had spent many years in his craft. Cillin could be ranked even in the entire GAL.

If he could improve his overall accuracy from 99.95% to 99.97% in such a short time, then how much longer would it take for him to reach 99.98%?

Cillin was completely immersed in that world, where he assembled the piles of categorised parts into components, then assembling these components into a whole unit.

Mo Heng no longer looked at the computer's display and watched Cillin's assembly with his full attention. This series of assembly from Cillin was absolutely fit as an excellent teaching material, but exactly how much the rest of the people could learn from it was unknown. This was something that strongly tested a person's vision and creativity.

Cillin did not stop for the whole day, and Mo Heng just sat there and watched Cillin's assembly. Nether of them ate lunch, nor did they have the consciousness to stop and do so.

This situation continued until Cillin assembled the final part into the machine, inspected it for a moment before pressing the 'On' button. The machine began switching forms continuously with smooth movements with no unexpected or suspicious noise whatsoever.

"There's no need for examination; you completely passed." Mo Heng said. He could not conceal the excitement in his voice, and just as he was ready to get up and examine Cillin's work thoroughly, he realized...

"Hiss, Aiyo, it's completely numb!" Mo Heng said while rubbing his legs. He had stayed the same posture for far too long, and it was only now that he realized that his legs were numb, "Cillin, come over quickly and give me a hand!"

“Just give it a bit of rest, sir. Sit there for a moment.” Cillin walked over, lifted two chairs and stacked them together before placing Mo Heng’s legs slowly on them. Then he began rubbing and massaging Mo Heng’s legs.

“Sigh, I’m getting old. I’m growing senile.” Mo Heng sighed.

“From what I can see, you were pretty fierce when you were disciplining the crowd yesterday, sir. None of those mentors could even lift their heads.”

It was a coincidence that Cillin had run into the scene where Mo Heng was teaching the mentors a lesson yesterday. Forceful was the description, and it was as if Mo Heng’s entire body was emitting with the air of wang ba (shamelessness / turtle). Those mentors who were used to looking down on their students with proud attitudes had buried their heads so low that they could almost kiss their own pants.

Let me paint the image: Imagine Mo Heng bearing down on the mentors while steam is gushing out of every pore of his body, choking them with his absolute smugness and authority.

Mo Heng leveled his head high, “That is what you call temperament! Born temperament!”

“Even if you still wield the air of wang ba (kingliness) you still should not skip your meals or sleep during work, right? I heard that you would often stay inside the workshop and work for several hours straight, sir.”

And yes, this is a Chinese word play used to insult people who doesn't have a measure of their own worth, although in this case Cillin is just making fun at Mo Heng's expense. Just like there's a fine line between genius and madness, there is also a fine line between kingliness and shamelessness / turtle(?)...

"This is what you call professionalism!" Mo Heng said with a face full of awe-inspiring righteousness.

"Right, right, professionalism."

"Heh, you little brat..." Mo Heng reached out and tugged at Cillin's cheeks, "What's with that incredibly disdainful look on your face?"

"How would I possibly dare, sir, but really, even machines need to be maintained, much less a human. As the pillar of the research division you should take better care of yourself, or I will be in trouble if no one covers for me."

"Tch, you little bastard!" Mo Heng half-laughed and scolded before pulling Cillin's cheeks once with force before waving, "Alright, my legs are fine now. I'll have a look at the machine first."

Mo Heng circled around Cillin's assembled machine and examined carefully the end product before his eyes.

"Master, I want a leave. I'm exhausted today."

“Granted! Leave, leave.” Mo Heng continued to circle around the machine with bright eyes, reaching out and fiddling with it from time to time.

“Master, I want a raise.” After he came to the research division, every time Cillin completed a task, he would receive additional income other than his fixed salary as a research assistant. Of course, Mo Heng was the one who paid for it.

“Sure. Raise, raise.” Mo Heng answered very candidly.

“I want three times the usual.”

“No problem, three times it is.”

“Also…”

“Get out and get to dinner already!”

Seeing that Mo Heng was still not yet ready to leave, Cillin booked their meals and had a robot send them over. Of course, it was on Mo Heng’s tab.

After Cillin had eaten dinner with Mo Heng inside the workshop’s rest bay and discussed about his afterthoughts on the assembly, Mo Heng had called for Cillin to sleep in the rest bay since it was already late. Up until today, his son and his grandchild

were the only ones who were allowed to stay in Mo Heng's rest bay. Cillin was the third, so one could see exactly how much Cillin amounted to in Mo Heng's heart.

Mo Heng's office and workshop both had rest bays specially built into them, and since Mo Heng was both 'important and powerful', the rest bays were fully equipped. Therefore Cillin did not turn him down and took over the rest bay in Mo Heng's workshop for himself. He ate dinner and took a soothing bath before sleeping comfortably for two days straight.

Cillin had slept well, but he had no idea that it was chaos on the Sector Championship Platform.

Chapter 54: Wronged Knight

After a satisfying meal and a couple of good night's sleep, Cillin got up and opened his communicator. There were thirty or so missed calls displayed on it, and they all came from the same person. Looking at the call logs, they were all calls during Cilin's break time. However, this time Cillin had slept for two days straight and turned off his communicator.

Looking at the number and the many 'Reply ASAP after you see this' messages, Cillin wondered to himself, what is this guy up to again. However, Cillin still called back at the first moment. There was basically no pause in between before the call was connected, and Knight's haggard and utterly grieved face appeared on the panel.

"... Cillin..."

Cillin nearly spat out the water that he was drinking. Just how big of a grievance did it take to make Knight, someone who normally carried himself in a 'I am number one under the sky' manner to speak with such a tone?

"What now?"

"I was bullied."

Bullshit, who on earth has the guts bully you?! who in the entire Seven Lights could bully you?

“Get to the point.”

After listening to Knight’s explanations, Cillin finally understood why this fucker had made more than thirty calls to his communicator. Knight had run into his old friend at the Second Military Academy, Stantine while warming up and practicing on the Sector Championship platform. However, Stantine and another student from the Second Military Academy were defeated by the Visby brothers from the Fourth Military Academy in the middle of warming up and practicing, hence drawing Knight’s thirst for battle. However, for a time Knight couldn’t find anyone suitable to team up with in Seven Lights. The reason he needed a partner was because the Visby brothers only participated in the less popular double format content and not the more popular single format contest.

The first person Knight had thought of was Cillin, but Cillin’s communicator was turned off and he did not reply to his messages as well. When he checked with Ci Jincheng and Lung, both of them were busy as well. Sird and Hard? Their abilities were slightly lacking. Pride? No way, Knight felt that if Pride had gone he would not be able to hold back from 1v3 soloing all three of them by himself. So Cillin it was.

And so he called Cillin’s communicator the first time and found that it was unavailable, called a second time and found that it was unavailable again, called a third time and found that it was still unavailable… repeating the same action all the way from yesterday until today. Knight’s face looked haggard from the act. There were a couple of times he wanted to go straight to the research division and catch a Cillin, but if he did, Mo Heng would most likely detain

the both of them. All hope would be lost if that really happened.

The Sector Championship was about to officially begin soon, and the small contests at the start of the Championship were the first to be open for registration. There were only two days time for registration, and they were yesterday and today. It was no wonder that Knight was in such a hurry.

Cillin wanted to laugh at Knight's grievance-filled look, "Alright. I just got a few days off, so I'll accompany you and check out those twins for a bit."

Hearing Cillin's words, Knight's eyes turned bright and his haggardness vanished as if he was injected with drugs, "Brother you must come back soon then, the registration will be closed by tonight. I'm going to send the battle request right now! Beep –"

Cillin looked at the communicator that had already been cut off speechlessly. Just how thirsty was this fellow?

After stretching his back, washing and tidying up for a bit, Cillin walked out of Mo Heng's workshop. After sleeping for two days straight he was hungry. He must forage for food above all else.

While walking to the research division's restaurant, a pale-looking student greeted Cillin feebly.

"What happened, Singh? You don't look too well." Cillin asked.

Singh was about the same age as Cillin and a specially recruited Grade One student. However, most of the time he spent tackling problems at the research division instead of attending lectures.

“Let’s not talk about it. Constipation much, bringing shit to work.” Singh had always felt that being in the research division was like going to work; punching cards and checking in, tackling problems and earning salaries just like a salaryman.

“Pwack —— Singh, this is a restaurant. Can you have a bit of culture?” Someone spat out their orange juice at the side and glared angrily at Singh.

“Excuse me, do understand the pains of a man with periodic constipation.” Singh made an apology gesture before leaving the restaurant.

Cillin shook his head while smiling. This guy’s periodic constipation was well known already.

Once he was done feeding, Cillin returned to his own workshop to pack and to get ready to return to the accommodation. While he was packing, Ling Long had come around.

After entering, Ling Long asked in a small voice, “There’s no one else in here, is there?”

“Nope, the cameras aren’t turned on either... what are you planning? You gonna force yourself onto a man?” After eating and

sleeping well, Cillin was feeling a lot better. He was even cracking jokes more frequently.

Ling Long curled her lips, closed the door tightly before folding her arms together and smiling sneakily at him, “How would I dare take Shadow X all for myself?”

Hmm?

Cillin was surprised. The way Ling Long put it, she was very sure without the slightest bit of guess in it whatsoever. How did she know? He even implemented the safeguard on the platform’s information himself.

Ling Long stared straight at Cillin, “No matter your ugliness or your beauty; the water you swim or the sky you soar; I will always know you at first glance.”

Cillin smiled, “Levine’s ‘Colors’, Chapter 7, ‘The Butterfly and The Dragonfly’.”

“You read Levine’s books as well?” Ling Long’s eyes lit up as if she had finally found her confidant after overcoming countless hardships, “There are very few people who would read Levine’s literature-oriented fantasy fairy tale. I didn’t know you read it as well, and remember it so clearly.”

Cillin didn’t answer.

Chapter 7 of Levine's 'Colors' talked about the story of a butterfly and a dragonfly.

There was a very large tree besides a river. Its branches stretched far, and there was one thick tree branch that was stretched across the river. A very disgusting caterpillar had laid there while eating a tree leaf. The tree branch was very close to the water surface, and after it was full it looked down from the tree branch at the water surface on a whim. Through the reflection of the water surface, the caterpillar saw a very ugly and very fearsome-looking worm underneath the water surface, and that worm saw it in turn as well. For a while, the caterpillar would go there everyday to meet the worm, and the worm would wait at the same spot everyday beneath the river for the caterpillar as well.

The days passed by, and the caterpillar was about to turn into a cocoon. On that day it crawled back to the same spot, looked once at the worm beneath the water, before crawling to a place on the tree where its companions are spinning themselves into a cocoon. On the next day after the caterpillar had left, the worm under the water climbed out of the water surface and hung onto a plant jutting out of the water. There were many of its kind that had also climbed out along water grasses as their bodies began to change.

After the caterpillar had undergone metamorphosis and flew out of its cocoon as a butterfly, it immediately returned to the same place from before. However, the worm's figure could not longer be seen beneath the water surface. The caterpillar was very sad, and it followed its companions to fly to a land of flowers not far away from this place. There were colors everywhere; from colorful flowers to colorful butterflies, dragonflies, bees and more. It was very lively.

The butterfly flew and flew, and when it flew across a sea of irises, its gaze fell onto a purple iris where a dragonfly was flapping its wings and flying towards it. A golden sheen shone as sunlight reflected across its thin wings...

At the conclusion of 'The Butterfly and The Dragonfly', Levine wrote a passage as she always did, and one of the lines were, "No matter your ugliness or your beauty; the water you swim or the sky you soar; I will always know you at first glance."

"Do you believe in what Levine wrote?" Ling Long asked.

"I don't know." Cillin answered. But Hena believed in it, and she loved this fairy tale very much. That was why Cillin had remembered this chapter.

Ling Long looked at Cillin and said, "You don't believe it." She leaped onto a nearby table and began shaking her legs like a little child, "There are many things that aren't logical in fairy tales, but I agree with Levine on this line."

She turned around and looked at Ling Long seriously, "From the very first moment I saw Shadow X, I knew he was you."

Sweat appeared behind Cillin's back. Was this a confession?

Thankfully, Ling Long did not press the matter and instead took out a microcomputer from her bag and turned it on. She looked

onto the Sector Championship and opened the Sector Championship form.

“Look, Shadow X. You’re famous now.”

Chapter 55: Knight And Shadow X

In the first place, the amount of times Cillin had fought on the Sector Championship Platform were little; only a match a day. This already caused a lot of people to feel so mad they could flip out, and this time Shadow X had vanished again for three days straight without accepting even a single challenge. There were people who could not hold it in and accused him of fault already.

On the Sector Championship forum, there were many people who directly posted their challenge requests and openly challenged Shadow X into a fight. Most of these people came from military academies and were of rank A genotype.

These challengers were actually rank A genotypes from military academies!

Students at the level of rank A genotype from military academies had actually challenged a student of rank B genotype from a Sector B university? Moreover, all four military academies had acted the same without the slightest fear that they might be called fools by others at all.

Everyone could not help but wonder: Just who exactly was Shadow X to force these military students who normally looked down upon all students from other Sectors into such a state?

Shadow X had only appeared for three days, and the amount of time he showed up during these three days weren’t long either. However, his generic, initial-state robot appearance had already

become a major defining feature, which at the same time caused a lot of people to feel helpless. The information about Shadow X on the forum was an image of a generic robot, and a simple and drab information list that stated male, Seven Lights, rank B genotype and three wins zero losses. That was all.

It was so simple that it was mysterious.

After the first battle against ‘Fang’, several tens of thousands of people had followed Shadow X. Three battles later, the number of people who challenged him rose to five digits, and they were mostly military academy students from Sector C. A large majority were military academy students from Sector C. The number of his followers had reached six digits and was rising towards seven with ferocious rally. It was unprecedented.

Since Shadow X had not logged onto the Sector Championship platform for three days, someone jumped out and accused Shadow X of being stuck-up.

Stuck-up? Why don’t you show us what you can do then, sucker!

The people from Seven Lights immediately retaliated; those who had accused Shadow X of undermining the school’s reputation and morale also had steered around. Right now Shadow X was the treasure of Seven Lights.

There were also some people who said that Shadow X was intentionally avoiding a match, but this voice was quickly shouted down by the other military academy students; especially those

whose voices were given much value and consideration. They believed that Shadow X was temporarily busy with something and so did not log onto the Sector Championship platform.

There were people in Seven Lights who purposely prepared a list of names of all the people whose combat prowess were impressive and genotype at rank B. Cillin's name was among them, but he was excluded on the first round of screening.

A man who was just recently recovered from a great illness and discharged from the hospital would be capable of challenging someone from a military academy? No one would have believed it, even if the truth had gone out. Moreover, while the students of the training division had commented that Cillin's marksmanship was pretty okay, no one knew about his combat prowess. He was placed last among the five students during the previous operation after all.

But even after many rounds of screening, they could not find anyone who might be the person behind Shadow X.

There was a thread that guessed that Shadow X might not be a Grade One student at all. Grade was not listed inside the information list at all, so they could not assume that he or she was a Grade one new student just because it was their first time registering on the Sector Championship. One must understand that there were many pros who missed out on the Sector Championship when they were Grade One due to certain missions.

Many people supported the thread the moment it was posted.

In short, there were all kinds of speculations.

Therefore, when Cillin saw the Sector Championship forum page Ling Long had shown him, his mind went blank. Even he did not expect that he would cause such an effect after using the Sector Championship platform for just three days.

“So as I say, Shadow X, you’re famous now.” Ling Long looked at Cillin, “What are you going to do?”

“We’ll see. I got a few days off anyway. I’ll log back in and look around once I get back today.”

“I don’t know how many challenge requests you got, but the Sector Championship is about to officially start real soon. Are you going to participate in the small contests prior to it?”

Small contests referred to single and double format contests, and big contests referred to contests that involved entire groups as single units. But be it big or small contests, it had nothing to do with the Championship’s popularity, just like how single combat tournament was always filled to the brim with spectators, and double combat tournament were slightly less so because there were less chance of a ‘superstar’ appearing in double combat tournament than in single combat tournament.

“You want to know?” Cillin got up and packed his backpack, “Wait for tomorrow’s news.”

Ling Long wrinkled her nose in dissatisfaction and humphed softly, “Stingy!” She packed away her microcomputer, and before she left she even made a funny face at Cillin.

Ling Long ran into a certain someone after she left Cillin’s workshop and exited the Institute of Mechanical Engineering. As usual, she was dressed in refreshing clothes that was not flirtatious, but very brilliant.

Theresa did not turn around to look at Ling Long. She continued to look at the faraway scenery with a smile at the corner her lips.

The moment Ling Long saw Theresa, she lost all semblance of playfulness inside Cillin’s workshop just now. Her deep, amber eyes were filled with ice; so cold that Theresa could feel a clear murderous intent from them.

“Cillin already has someone in his heart, you know.”

“Even if there was it won’t be you, Theresa!” Ling Long called Theresa’s name directly.

Theresa did not pay heed to her outburst either. She continued to smile lightly while feeling the gentle breeze.

“Theresa, I don’t care what kind of deal you have with Cillin. If anything happens to him, the Kiara family will suffer my wrath!”

“Just you? Or the powers behind you?” Theresa played with her hair blown up by the breeze. She seemed to pay no heed to Ling Long’s words at all.

Ling Long glanced at Theresa once before letting out a sarcastic smile, “Theresa, you’ve always thought you’re so smart.” Once she said this she left without turning back.

Cillin had returned to the accommodation on the same day. As usual, Knight was the only one at home, and the moment he saw Cillin’s return, he dropped everything about the Sector Championship platform and urged Cillin to log in and register. While Cillin was logging in, Knight had run back to his own bedroom to grab his own microcomputer. Both of them had to enter their information at the same time while registering, and for convenience purposes, Knight had brought over his own equipment directly.

However, Knight’s jaw had fallen to the ground when he saw a window popping up on Cillin’s microcomputer.

On Cillin’s screen, there was the unusually familiar appearance of a generic robot moving casually about. The name displayed was Shadow X.

“... Cillin...”

“What?”

“Fuck you man!”

Knight rushed over to grab Cillin’s neck, “I can’t believe you’re that fucking mysterious generic Shadow X famed throughout the entire Sector Championship platform who ignited the fighting spirit of all four military academies singlehandedly! How dare you hide this from us for so long!”

“Hey, it’s not like you asked me. Let go of me and let’s register already; registration is of the utmost importance, right!”

“Oh, right. I’m letting you off today, but you’re not getting away for lying to us next time!”

“A great man won’t stoop to pettiness or harbor grievance for past wrongs. I’ll treat you to crabs next time.”

“I’m telling you, don’t you play that trick on me… Fuck I want to eat a fresh live unexperimented natural crab!”

I knew he was a glutton.

Cillin only glanced at his mailbox and voicemail once before ignoring it entirely. So many…

Although he had logged onto the Sector Championship platform, he was currently in invisible mode. He could neither fight nor train, but of course, it was still possible for him to register.

Knight's ID was a very simple and direct, 'Knight'. Knight could be said to be rather famous on the Sector Championship as well. There were many people in the military academy who knew about him, and Knight was the number one person in Seven Lights among this term's new students in terms of combat prowess. Naturally, he had a lot of followers.

However, when the names Knight and Shadow X had appeared in the participant list of the double format tournament, the entire Sector Championship platform erupted.

Just how big of a wave was this combination going to make?

Chapter 56: The Double Combat Tournament Where Stars Shine

The Sector Championship was a major event with great transparency, fairness and freedom. Every registrant would be recorded and made public so that those who logged on to the Sector Championship platform could seek them out. This way, anyone who saw someone whom they might be interested to challenge could register and participate as well.

Previously, single combat tournament was the most popular among small contests. It was the contest that easily incited the students' battle lust. Anyone would wish to become a powerful figure who could match thousands and tens of thousands of enemies alone. Why would anyone be willing to share such a glory and spotlight with another person?

But this term was different. When the pair of Knight and Shadow X had appeared on the participant list, the entire atmosphere of the Sector Championship platform began to shift.

The single combat tournament and double combat tournament were held nearly at the same time. Normally, the students would only pick one out of the two to participate; at the same time, they could also measure every institute's combat rating more comprehensively.

Ever since they discovered this duo's existence on the participant list, many participants who had already registered for single combat tournament also registered for double combat tournament as well. This also created a situation where the number of entries

of the double combat tournament exceeded the single combat tournament's entries.

Thankfully, this was a virtual platform. It could accommodate multiple matches at once and not cause a phenomenon where further participation was prevented due to having exceeded the number of participants allowed. There was no upper limit to the number of participants of small scale tournaments. This was also one of the Sector Championship's platform defining traits.

In the Third Military Academy's gravity training room, Faradin was dueling against another combatant. The sounds of banging fists and legs exchanging blurry hits against each other resounded incessantly. It was obvious that Faradin was slightly inferior, finding the attacking shadows of fists a little hard to deal with.

One must say that their strengths were pretty impressive to maintain such high speed under a gravity field.

Bang!

Faradin 'thump thump thump' backed away a few steps before shaking his arms after blocking a kick from the opponent while saying somewhat vexedly, "I missed a hit again."

"It's okay, you did remarkably well already. There isn't anyone else in Grade One who can block so many of my hits."

After fighting for such a long time, Faradin's opponent actually

didn't sweat much at all. His slightly rapid breathing had also calmed down pretty quickly.

Faradin looked at his opponent and said for the umpteenth time, "Boss Boer, I really want to see you and Shadow X's fight. It will be amazing."

Standing not far away and relaxing his muscles, Boer shook his head, "Shadow X is too mysterious. There were many people I knew who had sent them a challenge request but did not receive a reply. No one knows their identity. However, I would suggest you meet Knight when the time comes."

"Seven Lights' Knight? I think he has a little fame of his own. I heard back at my accommodation that he was also a Grade One new student." Ever since he had lost to Shadow X, Faradin hadn't paid much attention to other people. Most of the time he learned about others only when someone had told him.

"Originally, Knight could attend a military academy, but for some reason he went to Sector B instead. However, his strength cannot be underestimated. Do you know what Knight's full name is?"

Faradin shook his head.

"Knight's full name is Knight Feigler."

"The Thunderstorm Feigler?!" Faradin's interest was

immediately piqued.

“The kid had never used his Thunderstorm Fist once ever since he entered the Sector Championship platform.”

Faradin felt his hands and feet turn itchy, “I will definitely meet him when the time comes. He should be participating in the single combat tournament, right?”

“I believe so…”

Di di di ——

The emergency pager on the wall rang. Since communicators weren’t allowed inside the gravity training room, both of their communicators were turned off. In the case of emergencies, the pager specifically setup on the wall would transfer the call.

Boer walked to the side, turned off the gravity field and received the call.

“What is it?”

“Boss Boer, there’s major news on the Sector Championship platform! Knight and Shadow X had formed a team and registered for the double combat tournament!”

Faradin, who was wearing his jacket felt his ears straightened,

and he accidentally lost control of his arms' strength and tore the poor clothing in half. But Faradin did not pay attention to the jacket. He simply tossed the two torn pieces of cloth casually at the side before zipping right beside Boer while keeping his ears wide open, afraid of missing out even a single word.

Once the person on the other side had finished, Faradin was so excited he couldn't wait to run back home and register for the double combat tournament this instant.

After cutting off the call, Boer turned quiet for a moment before asking Faradin, "Is Shadow X really that strong?"

Faradin's expression immediately turned incredibly serious, "He's very strong. I do not know about his strength, because I feel that he did not use his full strength at all that one time he fought against me. From the beginning to the end, I felt like I was being led by the nose, and that final strike... It was just one strike, but it was enough to directly kill me at my top condition."

When he heard Faradin's words, Boer laughed once and said, "That's good then! Let us meet this Shadow X and Thunderstorm Knight together then, Faradin."

"Boss Boer, you're attending as well? Didn't the instructor say that you are going to fight against Comos for first place in the single combat tournament this year?" Although Faradin was very moved by Boer's suggestion – Boer was the second place finalist of last year's single combat tournament, and so had indisputable strength, plus the fact that he had gotten used to training with Boer and hence teaming up to participate the double combat

tournament was definitely not a problem – but since the instructor had given his word earlier, it wasn't exactly the best idea to change things up now.

"The instructor also said. 'Isn't the battle platform all about fighting to one heart's content? Why would you need so much bubble reputation for.'"

Faradin pressed his fingers together and muttered on the inside: The fart-like bubble reputation the instructor had said was directed at people of the internal division like us, but to those of the Third Military Academy's external division this fame was very important since it was connected to their welfare. If we lose it they'll punish us and have us run naked on the fields.

Knight and Shadow X's duo didn't appear on the double combat tournament participation list for long before the Third Military Academy's Boer and Faradin duo caused everyone's eyes to fall on the double combat tournament once more.

Half an hour later, Second Military Academy's Ryan and Bonn and First Military Academy's Comos and Feng Haichao set off the third wave of climax on this term's double combat tournament.

It would not be an exaggeration to describe this particular double combat tournament as the tournament where stars shone.

The Visby brothers; last term's double combat tournament champions had returned. This year, there was the Thunderstorm Knight and the much anticipated shadow X participating. There

was also the second place finalist of last year, Boer, and the Third Military Academy's emerging seed Faradin. Another pair entering the tournament consisted of Ryan and Bonn. Ryan was the 4th place combatant of the singles tournament last year, while Bonn missed that particular tournament, but was rumoured to be stronger than Ryan. Up next was last term's single combat champion, Comos, who was paired up with Feng Haicao. Feng Haicao was also rumored to have missed last term's contest for a mission, however his strength was known to be no weaker than Comos.

At a glance, other than the Fourth Military Academy's Valente, who was second place finalist during last year's single combat tournament just like Boer, three of the top four contestants of last year's single combat tournament had appeared on the double combat tournament participation list.

The entire Sector Championship platform had descended into utter madness. Since the top contestants of the four military academies of Sector C had participated in the double combat tournament, naturally the rest of the institutes could not be left behind as well. Although in terms of strategy regarding combat score, the best course of action was to avoid such a contest filled with aces and participate in something else. But personally speaking, this particular double combat tournament was simply too significant. They had never seen such a grand scene for innumerable years – at the very least, they had never known of any double combat tournament in any term that had attracted so many top talents from all parties. But it was different this time. If they missed this, who knew how many more years they'd have to wait to encounter a similar situation again. If they missed this they would regret it, and if they didn't want any regrets then of course they had to register!

The higher-ups of every institute had worn black faces for this matter. They could not stop the students from registering for the double combat tournament even if they wanted to. No matter what kind of methods they used, spilling saliva everywhere good cop bad cop so on and so on, these little bastards would not stop wiggling their way to the tournament registration. The higher-ups of those institutes were absolutely furious.

The night of the registration deadline was a crazy night. Be it the electronic magazines responsible for reporting the news or the weaker students who weren't able to register themselves, they were all so agitated they could not sleep soundly for the entire night.

On the other side, Cillin, who was getting ready to sleep and rest and Knight, who was still fighting hard on the Sector Championship platform had their attentions forcefully dragged back to reality by the dreaded give-me-your-life serial calls.

Cillin pressed the answer key, "You calling for our souls or what?! It's fine if you just call our numbers, but what the fuck is with calling all five communicators installed inside the house? You calling the cops?"

"Cillin, Knight, wait for me you heartless bastards, I'm returning to the accommodation this instant. Don't sleep, and even if you're asleep I will drag you out of your beds!" on the other side of the communicator, Lung roared loudly.

Chapter 57: Disappointing Match

Although Lung didn't have time to participate in the Sector Championship, he had always been paying attention to every happening on the Sector Championship platform. Previously, he wasn't quite sure if Shadow X was Cillin, but when the duo team Knight and Shadow X had appeared on the double combat tournament participation list, Lung knew that Shadow X must be that bastard Cillin. Therefore he had immediately called Cillin and Knight's communicator numbers at the same time, and just in case, called the other five public communicators in the accommodation as well. Just think of it an alarm.

The moment Lung walked through the accommodation entrance, he was met with Cillin and Knight sitting gloom-faced and cross-legged at the living room waiting for him. Judging from their faces, if he could not give a satisfying explanation he might have to sleep on the streets today.

Lung had planned everything before he came over. First, he must express his apologies and lower the other parties' anger.

"These are shortcakes bought from a newly opened biscuit shop of meat fillings or fruit fillings. They're stored inside a crisper and are still crisp, you know. Oh, right, here are also two cups of hot milk tea; isn't it nice to eat shortcakes and drink milk tea together, hehe." Lung handed over to Cillin and Knight a cup of milk tea each before taking out a cup of his own.

According to Cillin's understanding of Lung, he would never have thought of buying a drink like milk tea, and even if he did, he

would've bought alcohol instead. Adding this up with other factors and coming to a conclusion, there was a ninety percent chance that the first two milk tea were gifted by the shopkeeper when Lung was buying the shortcakes, and the third milk tea was probably Lung unleashing his unique trait called utter shamelessness and forced it into his hands.

Seeing that Cillin and Knight had picked up the shortcakes and milk tea and began to eat, Lung relaxed a little. Now, he must seize the initiative for himself! While Knight was chewing on the biscuit and getting ready to open his mouth for another bite, Lung swiftly put down his cup and criticised the duo righteously, "How dare you two not discuss something so important with me! Do you know that what you're fighting isn't a match, but money! Money!"

Cillin and Knight: "..."

Knight's mouth maintained at an open state. He paid it no heed even when crumbs fell out of his mouth.

Lung opened his own microcomputer and surfed to a particular web page. He enlarged the screen and pointed at it, explaining, "Gambling is available on the Sector Championship; undertaken by the officials themselves!"

While speaking, the trio's communicators and the five public use communicators inside the accommodation rang at the same time.

After glancing at the name displayed on the communicator, Cillin pressed a hand to his forehead. Why do they all like to play this

trick.

After the call was connected, Ci Jincheng's image appeared on the display. He was still in his overalls, and his background was his workshop.

"You guys are plotting an evil scheme!" Ci Jincheng said with an 'I knew it' look.

"Didn't your base have a rule about communication with the outside world? Also, doesn't Seven Lights have a rule about interplanetary communication as well?"

Ci Jincheng said with disdain, "That's for the average people; it's useless against me. What were you saying just now, repeat everything from the beginning."

"Alright, since everyone is here now, I will explain my grand plan once more!" Lung cleared his throat and began explaining about the gambling scene.

After finished listening, Knight said hesitantly, "But sometimes, it's not something that we can control. Suppose if we run into those people from the military academies. When they fight, they fight with everything they have, because their combat results will affect their mentors or instructors' welfare. If the welfare of their higher-ups were affected, then the little ones would not be better off as well. They will definitely fight with everything on the line. In this case, it will not be easy for us to control the time."

“They haven’t joined GAL’s regular army, have they? Also, what’s the welfare of their instructors and mentors? According to my knowledge, the ranks of those military academy instructors or mentors were pretty high up. They definitely earn a lot of money.” Lung did not understand.

Knight shook his head, and while cracking his fingers said to the trio, “Sector C’s military academies are slightly different from the other Sector’s military academies in that they’re attached under the GAL army. Every student who comes out of Sector C are definitely elites, not to mention that those top students were all booked by garrisons everywhere a long time ago. People like the First Military Academy’s Feng Haicao and the Second Military Academy’s Bonn had begun performing missions under external orders since way back, so they did not need to worry about their futures at all after graduation.

However, the military academies’ instructors and mentors are different. There is such a word called ‘relegation’. They are all officers of the GAL army, but some of them were at Sector A, B and C; some of them were transferred to the ten trading Sectors, and some were even relegated to the thirteen backwater Sectors. As a serviceman, do you want to lead your men to hunt down galactic robbers and suppress local Sector rebellions, or develop an untamed land?”

Cillin and Lung let out looks of sudden realization. So it appeared that there were so many unspoken words behind the term ‘welfare’ the military academies were talking about.

“But I believe Cillin and Knight’s team can take them all down.”

Ci Jincheng said affirmatively.

"Blah, of course I believe it as well. Otherwise I wouldn't dump my business on the other side and run back the same night." Lung looked expectantly at both Knight and Cillin.

Knight rubbed his chin. Although he was frowning, the upturn lift on his lips could not hide the true thoughts inside his heart, "This will be pretty challenging." said he, but it was exactly this kind of extreme challenge that he loved.

The trio turned to look at Cillin. Cillin slowly put down the cup in his hand, "There certainly is a level of difficulty here."

Although he said this, he had taken out his card at the same time and passed it to Lung. Lung understood his meaning and took it, "How much?"

"Everything. As long as I didn't give you a sign, go all in every time."

Lung swiped Cillin's card across the card reader he carried wherever he went, glanced at the numbers on the display and lifted an eyebrow, "Hmm, it looks like you're pretty confident."

Knight also threw his card over, "Bet everything on it as well."

"Lung, I'll send the money to your card in a moment." Ci Jincheng also said on the other side.

On this night, while the other students were either so excited they couldn't sleep or training overnight, these four men were stuck inside their accommodation conspiring to make boats of cash. What human trashes.

On the next day, the first match of the Sector Championship on the battle list was announced. The battles were randomly assigned by the system, and Cillin and Knight's first match was against the IDs Dominate The World and Break Thousand Forces, who were also Sector B students from Prometheus College.

Their pre-match training records weren't bad. They had over ninety percent victories and they were both A rank genotypes. But of course; who among the participants of this Championship did not have some capabilities to show? Moreover, Dominate The World and Break Thousand Forces were both among the top 50 in last year's single combat tournament. After a year of hard work, their capabilities were definitely not weak. They wouldn't be considered weak on Sector B at least.

Naturally, there were plenty of people who went to watch Shadow X's first match. Even those who had a match at the same time were ready to end them as soon as possible so they could watch him fight.

It was only the first round, but the number of viewers watching the duo Shadow X and Knight had already reached the equivalent of the peak level of viewers during a quarter final. When Shadow X's symbolic generic robot appearance had appeared on the stage, all of the viewers had boiled up. This was the first time Shadow X

had showed himself since he disappeared for four days.

However, the audiences were destined to be disappointed. During the first match, Shadow X had simply folded his arms and stood motionlessly at the sides from the moment he entered the stage. Then, he watched the battle from the beginning to the end as Knight won it all by himself. Moreover, Knight had fought with ease even though he did not use the Thunderstorm Fists, and in five minutes, he sent the Prometheus pair flying away with a kick. Of course, if he restrained himself slightly, then the other party would have been able to hang on for five minutes at least, or if Knight was slightly more serious, then he would be able to take out his opponent in less than two minutes. But what could he do; Lung had placed his bet under five minutes after all.

Shadow X did not act during the first round, and Knight had won one versus two. The second round was the same, and the third, and the fourth...

Gradually, some people were beginning to lose their patience. Could this fraudulent system arrange them a stronger opponent already? It's been five matches and Shadow X hadn't acted even once!

The teams who were defeated by Knight couldn't help but want to bawl their eyes out. We're actually pretty strong in our institutes, you know...

Finally, under everyone's expectations, the duo Shadow X and Knight was met with a special opponent. They were not from a military academy. The reason they were called special was because

one of them wielded guns, and the other swords.

The contest rules did not forbid anyone from bringing weapons. As long as the party who brought them applied for it and received the consent from both sides of the match, then it wasn't a problem. Obviously, Knight and Cillin did not turn down the request. In fact, they were rather looking forward to it.

Guns and swords? That sounds interesting.

After five disappointing matches, the audience grew excited once more. This was because Shadow X would definitely act during this match.

The crowd had only heard of Shadow X's abilities, but had not seen it with their own eyes. After all, Shadow X had only fought three times, and no one recorded the battle footages, so no one could imagine exactly how powerful he was in their minds.

The daylight for Shadow X and Knight's match was different for people of different Sectors, different planets or different places within the same planet, but if they could witness Shadow X's fight with their own eyes, then it would be worth staying up for the night!

Chapter 58: Act

There was a reason why so many people paid much attention to this match.

Firstly, the team Shadow X and Knight was about to face wielded weapons. One of them wielded dual swords, and the other wielded dual guns.

Secondly – also the reason why many people were excited – both of the combatants wielding dual swords and dual guns were females, and the two famous beauties of Sector B's Billy University no less. Since they're both beauties, the two guys Shadow X and Knight would probably be more tactful when fighting against them. Moreover, these two women were extremely lethal. They would definitely force out Shadow X's hands.

In truth, there were even some people who were guessing if Shadow X and Knight would be toppled this match. After all, someone spread out the news prior to the match that Shadow X and Knight had given the consent to their opponents to wield weapons, but still chose to fight bare handed themselves. This narrow-minded gentlemanly demeanor would become their fatal weakness. As the saying goes, even the strongest warrior would fall in the hands of a beautiful woman if he does not exercise self-restraint.

The above saying is actually two sayings in one: A fickle man would get no true love even if he has a thousand choices, and capsize in a gutter. After some thoughts I combined them into one sentence above plus this explanation here for better understanding.

Thirdly and the most important point was that this sword and gun combination, Liu Yewu and One Smile Kill (T/N: Just a reminder, but I will literally translate any names that doesn't sound like proper names since these are virtual IDs) were runner-ups of last term's double combat tournament, and just one rank below the Visby brothers. Last term's runner should be able to force Shadow X's hands no matter what, right? It would be somewhat unrealistic for Knight to hang on on his own.

There were even more viewers on the Sector Championship platform watching this match than the first. The amount of viewers of those matches that started at the same time as this one was pitifully small, and even if there were teams that enjoyed some small reputation of their own, their viewership was absolutely eclipsed by Shadow X and Knight's.

"Boss Boer, do you think that Shadow X will act this match?" Faradin asked Boer in front of the microcomputer.

Boer thought for a moment before saying, "If Knight still does not use his Thunderstorm Fist this match, then Shadow X will act. This is because both of their opponents wielded weapons. One Smile Kill's marksmanship is pretty good, and although it's a little unorthodox to use a gun in a double combat tournament, she would not reduce her offensive power just because of it. There were more than a hundred people who were killed by One Smile Kill's gun in close combat during the pre-match training. One Smile Kill's gun could also be used as a blade, so her close combat skills would not be weaker than Liu Yewu's."

Although Boer was a military academy student, he had never looked down on the people of Sector B. He had done some research on the veterans of Sector B as well.

Faradin and Boer weren't the only ones who were watching. Comos, Feng Haicao, Ryan, Bonn and more were also sitting in front of their microcomputers and watching this match. They really did want to know exactly how strong Shadow X was! If his abilities weren't up to par, then they would no longer join in this little game and head straight for the throne of the single combat tournament. That was why they had registered for both contests.

Under everyone's gazes, the duo One Smile Kill and Liu Yewu walked into the ring. Pretty faces, tight midriff-baring dresses, and fantastic waistlines. Even though they were just virtual avatars, it was enough to strongly attract the audience's attention. However, in the next moment, the other duo who appeared later pulled the spotlight onto themselves.

His appearance was still the look of a generic robot just like before, but it drew the gazes of the viewers in front of their microcomputers directly away from the two ladies.

Shadow X!

This time you will fight, won't you?

Shadow X and Knight continued to walk leisurely onto the ring just like usual. What was different was that this time, it was Knight was the one who was folding his arms at the edge of the

ring looking like he would enjoy a good show, and Shadow X walking step by step towards the center.

The people in front of the microcomputer instantly turned frenzied.

OHHHHHHHH~~ Shadow X is going to fight, Shadow X is seriously going to fight!!

Boer, Faradin and the rest subconsciously straightened themselves and stared closely at the generic robot on the computer display.

As Shadow X walked closer, the pair One Smile Kill and Liu Yewu who were standing side by side split up. One headed towards the back, and the other headed towards the front.

One Smile Kill's thin fingers hooked the guns at both side of her thighs into her hands and twirled them once skillfully between her fingers. Judging from her practiced motion, he could see that One Smile Kill had been toying around with guns for quite some time already. But that was all. In Cillin's eyes, she really was just 'toying' with guns.

Liu Yewu also brought out her twin Liu Ye swords. There were very few people who could wield such an ancient weapon well in this era. Those who wielded such weapons were usually the offsprings of some ancient legacy.

Watching Shadow X stepping slowly and coolly towards her direction, Liu Yewu suddenly experienced an inexplicable sense of oppression and urgency. His expressionless generic face, his excessively calm movements; they all gave off an unfathomable feeling. In that case...

Liu Yewu leaped into the air, unleashed her silver white blades and rushed towards Shadow X with the sounds of swords cutting through the air.

It was strange, however. Shadow X seemed unperturbed as he continued on his seemingly careless way. It's just that when Liu Yewu's twin swords slashed at his direction, his figure blurred.

Bang!

Liu Yewu was jarred so fiercely that she flew all the way back to where One Smile Kill stood. Her sword dance fell into shambles.

In that instant, when Liu Yewu was confident that she would be able to cut down her enemy, Shadow X's instantaneous high speed movement and a sudden force had caused the edge of the swords to shift away from its original spot. At the same time, Shadow X's palm had slipped through the gap between the two swords and chopped towards Liu Yewu, forcing her to block it with her swords.

Although Shadow X's movements when dodging the sword edges were incredibly fast, the attack he threw at her was not. It's just that Liu Yewu could sense the strength behind this palm, and as

expected, it had blown her all the way to the back. While she was flying backwards, Liu Yewu was still thinking why One Smile Kill had not opened fire.

It wasn't that One Smile Kill didn't want to open fire in that instant, but that she could not find the chance to open fire at all. Shadow X was nearly completely covered up by Liu Yewu. Previously, there were many people who tried using similar methods to avoid One Smile Kill's gunshot, but they were all blown up by her without fail. In that instant, One Smile Kill had wanted to smile (T/N: and kill Shadow X, as her ID suggests), but she still couldn't catch a glimpse of his outline even after she shifted to another angle!

Shadow X was just a few paces away from Liu Yewu's figure. As Liu Yewu was thrown backwards, he too moved along with her and used her as his shield at every moment, preventing One Smile Kill from discovering the perfect opportunity to kill him. If One Smile Kill opened fire carelessly, there was an extremely high chance that she would hurt Liu Yewu instead.

Liu Yewu sensed Shadow X's thoughts and swung her swords towards the floor, leveraging the force to twist her waist and slash her other sword at Shadow X. Even if she could not hit Shadow X, she would still be able to force him out of that angle and allow One Smile Kill to shoot him.

However...

Impossible!!

Liu Yewu eyes widened as she watched her opponent catching the tip of her sword with two fingers. Her eyes were filled with shock and disbelief.

At the same time, a pulling force came from the tip of her sword, to which Liu Yewu responded with a tight grasp to stop her opponent from pulling her sword away from her. In the next moment, a tremendous shockwave spread to her thenar space, causing her to feel as if her entire wrist was about to shatter from the shock.

Liu Yewu felt both her hands turned numb. Her swords left her.

Ka!

A sound rang from the gun in One Smile Kill's hands, but it wasn't the sound of a bullet exiting its chamber.

What followed after was silence.

There were two swords. One was pointed at Liu Yewu's forehead, and the other placed beside One Smile Kill's neck artery.

Chapter 59: The Second Person To Wield Guns To That Extent

It was fast. Too fast.

The time from the moment Liu Yewu began her offense until the situation right now was only five short seconds.

Five seconds. It was the time some people took to yawn, open their eyes and witness the scene before them. Before they could understand what they were seeing, before they could reflect upon anything, it had already turned like this.

Her weapon was pointed at her own forehead. Her hands were still numb. Liu Yewu did not understand how exactly Shadow X had did it, or should she say that she did understand somewhat, but wasn't willing to accept it.

Two fingers were enough to catch the edge of a sword? Was it really as simple as it looked? Such a situation had not happened even during last year's double combat tournament. She had no choice but to admit that Shadow X was really strong.

"A sword is a killing tool. If you cannot evoke a sword's killing intent, then it is no different from a soft wooden stick to an expert." This was what her father once told her. Was he talking about this situation?

Ka!

Ka! Ka!

Pak ——

One Smile Kill pulled the trigger repeatedly in disbelief. Then her gun fell apart with a ‘Pak’ noise and dropped to the ground piece by piece. Among the pieces was an unused clip.

Cillin’s sword drew even closer. One Smile Kill still had a long way to go; Aiflon’s bodyguard didn’t even need to open fire to know that there was something wrong with his gun. It was something only those who had wielded guns to a certain extent could detect. They could detect even a tiny change in their weapons, and not act like One Smile Kill who absolutely refused to believe that her gun malfunctioned by pulling the trigger repeatedly even in the face of death. This was the sheer gap of skills.

Hesitation, doubt, lack of resolution, lack of killing intent when striking and lack of decisiveness when firing. This were the weaknesses of a student.

As the sword pressed closer, the mere chilliness One Smile Kill felt earlier had now turned into blood flowing down the sword’s edge. Although this was just a virtual platform, reflex sensation and the pain transmitted by the sensor still caused her to feel the illusion of bleeding.

Liu Yewu and One Smile Kill could clearly sense the killing intent

from the sword. If they still would not surrender, then the generic robot before them really would splatter their blood across the ring. If that happened, then they would appear even more humiliated than now.

The entire match did not exceed even one minute from the beginning until the end. One of them had her swords snatched away from her, and the other did not manage to fire a single shot. Although they were very reluctant to admit defeat, this was the reality they had to face.

“One Smile Kill and Liu Yewu surrenders. This match is won by Knight and Shadow X!”

When this line appeared on the screen, many people had turned silent. More accurately speaking, they hadn’t recovered from the shock yet.

Boer withdrew his gaze and pondered on his seat.

That palm strike from Shadow X that blew Liu Yewu backwards was intentional, or his actions would’ve been much faster. But what Boer did not understand was why Shadow X had not killed Liu Yewu in one hit. He obviously had the ability to do so, and if that palm strike had more strength and speed behind it, then there was no way Liu Yewu would have had the time to react and block it in time. If the attack had hit her, then Liu Yewu would have been effectively put out of battle, not to mention that if he could easily find the gaps between Liu Yewu’s sword dance, then he could dodge One Smile Kill’s gunshots as well.

Liu Yewu's sword was incredibly quick. The average person couldn't even differentiate between the real swords and the afterimages of her sword dance. Since Shadow X could weave through her twin swords and attack through the gaps of her attacks with such speed and ease, Boer absolutely refused to believe he couldn't dodge past One Smile Kill's gunshots.

In truth, there were many people who did not understand why Shadow X had used such a method to win the match. It was a little cheap, mean, and even took advantage of the system's loophole.

And why did they say that?

Shadow X's generic robot appearance was thinner than most and not too tall. Thus, the situation became greatly advantageous for Shadow X where he could easily hide himself from One Smile Kill's aim. If Shadow X had been in his true form, then One Smile Kill might have had a chance to hit him.

Someone posted a thread on the Sector Championship forum accusing Shadow X of being too mean and cruel. It was bad enough he used a cheap trick to secure victory, but he even used such a method to humiliate the two ladies. Their swords were taken, not a single bullet was fired, and they were even pointed at their forehead and neck by their own weapons. How did he expect One Smile Kill and Liu Yewu to swallow this humiliation?

When Comos and Feng Haicao saw this thread, they only smiled sarcastically. If Shadow X really didn't hold back, how could this

possibly be the extent of One Smile Kill and Liu Yewu's fate?

Let's put everything away and focus on that sword pointed at Liu Yewu alone. In truth, Shadow X could totally slice her from top to bottom. But Shadow obviously left his opponent some face and retracted his sword a little so that it would only point at Liu Yewu's forehead. If this was Knight, he would've sliced his opponent cleanly in half regardless of their gender or identity.

"What do you think of this?" Comos asked Feng Haicao in front of the microcomputer.

While turning his cap Feng Haicao said, "He's just playing; he really is just playing, that's all. It's not just Shadow X, but Knight as well. Up to this point, Knight has not used his Thunderstorm Fist, and no one knows how far he has trained his Thunderstorm Fist. He got such high praises from Ji Feihang, so it isn't really easy to estimate Knight's strength."

"Yue Lou, what do you think?" Comos then turned to look at Yue Lou, who had been toying with his gun on his seat all along.

Yue Lou did not participate in the contest. In fact, he had never even registered an account on the Sector Championship platform since he entered the military academy for three years. However, Yue Lou was someone even Comos and Feng Haicao were very impressed with. The First Military Academy's best marksman Yue Lou was known throughout the entire Sector C. The reason Yue Lou was never interested in the Sector Championship was because there was no shooting contest (T/N: What? Seriously?).

Yue Lou's head was bowed and his eyes were drooped as if he was asleep. However, his hand movements weren't slow at all. When he flung his handgun to the air it was split into parts, and when they dropped back down they were assembled back into a handgun once more. Moreover, Yue Lou was only using one hand, and his fingers were so quick that even Comos admitted inferiority. Meanwhile, Yue Lou's other hand was propped against his chin, giving off the impression of laziness and that he would fall asleep whenever he felt tired. But everyone who knew Yue Lou knew that they should not disturb the man even when he was asleep. There were plenty of people who saw him playing around with his gun in his dreams, and was able to blast a soccer ball that was kicked at his direction into smithereens by pure instinct.

Hearing Comos' question, Yue Lou spent a tremendous amount of effort before he finally opened his eyelids to look at Comos, "Ah? What did you say?" He only remembered that it was a question.

Comos, Feng Haicao: "..."

This guy fell asleep again, huh.

Feng Haicao rubbed his forehead helplessly, "Comos asked you about your opinion about that previous match."

"Opinion?" Yue Lou pulled his own face with the hand he used to prop his chin, "Shadow X is very strong."

It’s pretty rare that someone made you say the three words ‘is very strong’, you know.

“And then?” Feng Haicao asked again.

Yue Lou yawned once and stretched his lazy back, “I only watched Shadow X.”

That meant that he didn’t pay attention to anyone else at all.

He ignored the other three people on the ring again, didn’t he? Sigh, why is it ‘again’ again?

Yue Lou stood up from his chair, moved his fingers, the gun that was still parts earlier became assembled perfectly in his hand. He shoved it with practiced motion into his pocket.

Every time they saw Yue Lou shoving his gun into that wide pocket of his, Comos and Feng Haicao could not help their eyes from twitching. Bro, aren’t you afraid of misfire? That spot is close to the crotch.

Stretching his arms wide for a little and letting out yet another huge yawn, Yue Lou lazily walked his way to the microcomputer, brought up the recorded combat footage from earlier, slowed down a section of it and pointed at one of Shadow X’s movements, “He is the second peer I saw who could wield his gun to such an extent.”

Feng Kaicao and Comos pressed closer to the screen. It was the

scene where Shadow X snatched Liu Yewu's twin swords and pointed them at Liu Yewu and One Smile Kill. When Shadow X had pointed a sword at One Smile Kill, there was an instant where his hand had swiped across One Smile Kill's gun. After that, One Smile Kill pulled the trigger but fired no bullets from her chamber. At the same time, Shadow X's sword was placed at the aorta of her neck.

This was to say that in that instant, Shadow X had tampered with One Smile Kill's gun, but One Smile Kill did not notice it in the slightest.

He had such amazing hand speed and was able to disassemble a gun with the one hand that was still holding a sword. No wonder Yue Lou said that Shadow X was very strong.

Feng Kaicao and Comos stared thoughtfully for a moment at the screen before they came around and asked curiously, "You said that Shadow X is the second person among our peers who could wield his gun to such an extent. So who's the other one?"

Yue Lou wobbled his way to the storage cabinet and grabbed some food. He was hungry after a nap.

"He's also from Sector B. The name's Ci Jincheng."

Chapter 60: Sniffing

It wasn't Cillin and co's concern what the others were discussing about the match. They would, as usual, finish a match and continue on with their own thing.

Once the match was over, Lung immediately called Cillin and Knight on their communicators. Judging from his high-pitched voice and the eyebrows that were about to fly off his face, their profits must be pretty sizable.

They weren't wrong. Lung was so happy that his mouth cramped.

The first few odds weren't huge, so they didn't earn too much money. But this time, Lung had betted on Shadow X winning within a minute and without a single shot fired from the opponent. The odds on this bet was very high, and Lung had betted all their money on it. So when he saw the numbers on his card after the match had ended, Lung's mouth did not clam up even once. This was also why Cillin had chosen to win the way he did.

After the match had ended, the threads relating to this match on the Sector Championship forum filled up the entire screen. The news of Pride's victory in the dogfight contest and subsequent entry to the quarterfinals was pushed right down to the bottom, not even a trace of it to be found.

There were praises and there were criticisms, but there was one point that everyone agreed on, and that was the match had ended

way too quickly. From the moment the system had displayed start to the moment it announced the end lasted less than a minute, and within this minute, the actual time when both sides had actually fought against each other was five seconds. What were five seconds? Some people turned their heads, chatted a little, turned back around and then discovered that the match was over. That was five seconds.

I shouldn't have done that!

And it was deep. It was the kind of depression where someone closed their eyes, opened them again and discovered that the match was fucking over.

Although it was possible to watch a recording, but the mentality of watching something live and watching something recorded was completely different.The latter was completely void of anxiety and excitement. Therefore, the crowd came to the conclusion post-match that they would not be distracted no matter what when watching Shadow X's matches. Otherwise, they might miss out on a brilliant kill even they were distracted for even a second.

Following Shadow X's action-packed match, some of the people who loved analysis began analysing Shadow X's strength and real life behavior from many angles. However, they continued to come up with nothing because there was just too little data on Shadow X.

It was exactly why some people had begun issuing tremendous rewards for the truth behind Shadow X.

The moment the reward was announced, the people in Seven Lights were riled up.

In fact, before the other people in Seven Lights had officially begun the uproar, before two seconds had even passed after the reward was announced, Cillin's communicator rang.

"You mustn't mustn't ruin our great muture (T/N: money bound future!) just for that teeny weeny bit of money, Cillin!!"

Lung was howling in high decibels the second the line had connected. Cillin pulled the communicator further away and looked at the shining seven figures of the reward on the forum. You call this a teeny weeny bit of money?

Before Cillin could say anything, Lung's lips began rattling off constantly like fireworks, explaining to Cillin about long term analyses and macro perspectives. In short, he meant that if Cillin was to divulge his identity right now, it would be detrimental to the betting scene.

Cillin dug his ears, "I got it. I'm not ready to stand up now anyway."

"That's good then," Lung let out an obvious sigh of relief, "I'll go check out the next betting scene right now. You keep doing your work. Beep ——"

Cillin looked at his disconnected communicator and felt his

mouth twitch. Greedy bastard! He set the communicator aside and began assembling the parts piled on the top of his study desk.

Cillin had modified his study a little into a study and a workshop. Competing in the Sector Championship was a must, but he must also complete the assignments Old Mo had arranged him. Otherwise, with that difficult temper of his the old man would definitely feel as if he was ignored. He would not be able to participate in the Sector Championship if that happened.

While he was assembling, the doorbell of the accommodation rang.

Normally, Cillin and co's doorbell would never ring because they never had any visitors up till this point. Even if there were, they were led in personally like Sird and Hard. After that mission, Knight had once invited them over to their accommodation for a drink. As for Pride, unless they invited him personally, he wasn't someone who would not lower himself to visit them.

After the doorbell had rung for a few times, Knight turned on the intercom inside the accommodation from upstairs and said, "Cillin, I'm challenging that snotty brat Pride to a dogfight right now!"

What Knight meant was that he's busy and he had no intentions of opening the door. The even deeper meaning was that if Cillin was also busy, then he could ignore it as well.

Cillin did not stop his work immediately, and instead had the

security system to turn on the display and see who was on the screen. When he saw the person, Cillin let out a small smile. That was fast. Oh well, at least I can save the trouble of you people coming over again and making blind guesses.

The people of Seven Lights had always been extremely curious about Shadow X's identity. To think that such a master was hidden within their own academy!

The reward aside, Shadow X was the most mysterious and most concerning person on the Sector Championship platform right now. If they could discover Shadow X's true identity and expose it themselves, then their own fame would rise by leaps and bounds.

And how would they discover Shadow X's true identity? Hack into the Sector Championship platform's system? Unlikely, since the Sector Championship platform's systems were developed hand-in-hand by the specialists of Sector B and Sector C. Their security defense could only be described as impenetrable.

So hacking was out of the question. What about connections? Some people had tried making friends with the Sector Championship platform's maintenance crew with their fine backgrounds, but they could not obtain an answer from them either. Although the Sector Championship platform's maintenance personnel could not publicly divulge a student's information, they could investigate into it themselves. It's just that they discovered that Shadow X's information had many layers of additional protection, and those complicated programs were very difficult to resolve.

Since both of these methods didn't work, then the most direct way was to seek out Knight himself.

Knight was the kind of person who dared flip the table and grab his gun even in front of Seven Lights' headmaster. Moreover, he had an incredibly deep military background. Everyone knew about this, which was why not many people dared to ask Knight directly even though they were very curious about Shadow X's identity.

But although they did not dare to provoke Knight, one thing many of them did know was that there were four people in total in the sickest accommodation in Seven Lights. They could at least beat around the bush, couldn't they?

They did not dare to provoke Knight. Ci Jincheng was not on Planet Seven Lights. Take it to Lung Andrea? Out of the question; they would be played so hard they wouldn't even be able to differentiate head and toe. In that case, the only choice left was Cillin Douance, and the forerunner of this inquiry was none other than Allen Chev, the guy whose family had set up an electronic magazine.

When Shadow X had logged onto the Sector Championship platform and became the top three followed person in just three days, Alen had already guessed about Shadow X's identity, but never obtained actual confirmation. After Shadow X and Knight had teamed up and participated in the double combat tournament, Allen's suspicions that Cillin was Shadow X was renewed once more.

Cillin opened the door to let Allen in. he did not let Allen take up

the living room and instead led him to his study.

“Cillin, that BPT growing outside your accommodation looks pretty well. It’s just as the rumors say.” Alen chose a opener.

“It’s just coincidence.” Cillin handed a cup over to Allen, “There is fruit juice, milk, beer, tea and so on in the water dispenser. Don’t hold back; pour yourself anything you want.”

“Got it.” Alen glanced at Cillin’s study while he was taking his fruit juice from the water dispenser. There weren’t many books, and his desk were filled with parts. There were several spaces inside the study were filled with categorised parts as well. He saw Cillin sitting back down beside the study desk assembling parts, and felt slightly embarrassed. He seemed to have disturbed Cillin’s work.

“About that… sorry. I’ve troubled you.”

“No problem, I can speak and assemble simultaneously.” Cillin turned around to speak with Allen, but his hands continued to move just as swift to prove his point.

Allen admired Cillin. He knew who Cillin’s mentor was, and anyone who could learn under Professor Mo most definitely had genuine talent and ability. But when he witnessed Cillin assembling the parts with his own eyes, Alen’s feelings took yet another turn. He seriously felt as if he was watching some kind of elegant art.

Cillin’s hands were very swift and very accurate. One could see that one moment the parts were dancing between his fingers, and in the next it was already assembled onto the machine. While watching, Alen began to zone out as if he was dragged in by Cillin’s swift, blurry hands and the assembling parts. Although he was still staring at Cillin’s work, Allen’s eyes had already turned lax and lost all focus.

Allen could never have imagined that he was hypnotised after just staring at Cillin assembling for a moment!

Chapter 61: Induction

Cillin wasn't actually assembling that quickly in front of Allen; he was much slower when compared to assembling in front of Mo Heng. The reason he slowed down was so that Allen's eyes could follow his hand speed.

When Allen's attention fell on his hands, Cillin's assembling movements began to change little by little. His hand speed changed, following a specific pattern without Allen noticing at all. It was by coordinating this rhythm, parts jumping in the air at certain times and the orbit of his movements that he slowly dragged Allen's consciousness into a whirlpool.

Cillin's voice became deep and low as he said unhurriedly, "I have to finish assembling these parts today. This is the task my mentor had assigned me to. You can see that there are a lot of parts, aren't they?"

Allen nodded, but his eyes were still lax and unfocused. He seemed to be in a state of half consciousness.

"Yeah, there are a lot of parts. Most of my time is spent on assembling these parts, and not much left for anything else." Cillin's hands did not stop, "My mentor, Professor Mo dislikes the idea of me participating in the Sector Championship..."

Although Allen was in a completely hypnotised state, and Cillin could totally draw out everyone in Seven Lights' opinion and assumptions on Shadow X from Allen, he did not do it. He did not

even touch on the topic of Shadow X at all. For someone like Allen, these keywords might trigger a rebound effect from Allen's subconsciousness, hence giving himself away unnecessarily.

The human brain is a very strange thing. The people had only understood a small portion of the human brain, and even if the other party was hypnotised, one must not presume that they had complete control over their thoughts. A different person required a different solution. This was what Genya had told him when he taught Cillin hypnosis.

Therefore Cillin employed only indirect induction to mislead Allen. He kept talking to Allen about things that weren't related to the main subject in question, causing Allen himself to come to a conclusion that there was no way Cillin was Shadow X.

Ka——

Allen woke up to the sound. His gaze was focused on a completely assembled machine placed on top of the desk. Cillin moved it into a huge box. There were already several identical machines wrapped in shockproof bags inside the box. Allen sweated as he read the dates written on the shockproof bags. It looked like Cillin was impossibly busy alright.

It was only when he looked at the time again that Allen realized that it had been more than two hours! When he recalled his memories, he only remembered Cillin's movements as he assembled the machines. He had actually stared at Cillin assembling for two hours straight!

Although he was a little groggy, Allen still remembered the things Cillin had talked to him about and how he answered them. When he looked at the parts and assembled machines inside the study again, Allen believed that he had overthought things. There was no way Cillin was Shadow X; can't you see just how busy he was?

Cillin swayed his arms around a little looking very tired, "That's one more finished finally! Oh, right, are you hungry, Allen?"

While speaking, Cillin opened the storage cabinet in the study, but discovered that there was only a lone bag of red bean buns left inside it.

"Let's go to the living room."

"Er, Cillin, you don't have to trouble yourself, I'll be going after a chat."

Cillin took out two bags of jerky from the kitchen's cabinet and passed one to Allen, "Don't give me that routine, since when are you a shy guy? C'mon, the jerky's pretty tasty. Try it."

"Thanks." Allen accepted the cup and jerky Cillin passed over to him, paused for a moment before asking, "Cillin, you've logged onto the Sector Championship platform, haven't you?"

"You want to ask about Shadow X, right?" Cillin cut Allen off, "I

can tell you nothing about Shadow X. I've promised them."

Cillin's answer was 'them' and not 'him', so this caused Allen to be even more assured that Cillin wasn't Shadow X. In Allen's mind, 'them' should probably mean Knight and Shadow X.

Allen let out two dry laughs, "We're just too curious, really. We didn't even know there's such a powerhouse in Seven Lights."

"Let me tell you something. In fact, Shadow X and Knight are pretty familiar with each other. They just don't see each other often."

While he was speaking, Knight bounced his way down the stairsteps while humming a small tune. From the looks of it he had beaten Pride in the dogfight.

However, when he saw Allen sitting in the sitting in the living room, his face immediately fell, "What the hell is this situation?!"

Allen's hands shivered the moment he saw Knight. He could feel the anger radiating from Knight's body. Could it be that Knight really disliked visitors?

Allen carefully glanced at the serious-looking Knight. He really was pretty scary; it was no wonder those people didn't dare to ask him directly, "Ahem... excuse me for the disturbance. I am here to see Cillin..."

“I gave him the jerky; he didn’t take it by himself. There are still plenty of them inside the cabinet, don’t be such a miser.” Cillin said calmly (T/N: says the guy who compensate a person’s mental manipulation with someone else’s riches~).

Allen: “…” Was that the point? I knew I thought too much about myself; my entire being couldn’t compete with a bag of jerky.

After staring dead-eyed at the jerky in Allen’s hands, Knight wobbled his way to the kitchen for some food of his own. He was obviously hungry after challenging Pride to a dogfight.

Allen immediately took the opportunity to bid Cillin goodbye while Knight went to the kitchen. The moment he saw Knight he felt prickles all over his body; the man’s aura was just too strong.

When Knight came back out he did not see Allen’s figure, “He left so quickly?”

“That aura of wangba of yours is too powerful. He couldn’t take it so he ran out right away.”

“What did you do to that kid?” Knight asked while sitting on the sofa, shaking his legs and chewing his jerky.

Cillin threw a slice of bread at him, “What do you mean what? Do I look like such a bad person?”

“Ceh——” Knight’s expression was filled with disdain, “You may

look like a pretty straight person but it's in fact the exact opposite. You're always up to something, and those people who were swindled by you wouldn't even know that they're cheerfully counting the price of their own coffins!"

"Thank you for your praise."

"You thought too much. I am just lamenting about my supernatural deductive abilities."

Due to Cillin's intentional misinformation, Allen really did exclude Cillin from suspicion. Seeing that Cillin wasn't a good target either, the people of Seven Lights turned their sights somewhere else.

In truth, it couldn't be said that Cillin had lied to Allen. It was just slightly one-sided.

He only said that Professor Mo dislikes the idea of Cillin participating in the Sector Championship, but he didn't tell about whether he actually participated in the contest. As for that thing about him being very familiar with Knight but them not seeing each other often... It was the truth. Other than the mission prior to the Sector Championship, most of the times they had communicated with each other were on communicators. Even during the Sector Championship, for the last few days, the moment he finished competing in the match he would return to his own study and start on the assignments Mo Heng had left him. The time they saw each other everyday didn't even reach an entire hour.

The crowd continued to twist and tangle themselves over Shadow X's true identity, but the Sector Championship went on as usual. The next two matches was fought by Knight alone again, but during the final moments of a match Knight was forced to use the Thunderstorm Fist. It was only an incomplete and blurry punch with electric sparks on it, but it was enough to cause excitement in some students.

The further they went, the tougher the opponents they met. Although matchups were randomly assigned by the system, some of the veterans and teams with incredibly high win rate would still be kept away from each other so they didn't face off each other too early. However, the fire of the Sector Championship combat tournaments were lit as the remaining thirty two teams made their appearances. This was because the matchups would now be drawn by the contestants themselves. It was possible that the best would fight against the best straight up during the first match.

There were twenty teams out of the thirty two remaining that were from Sector C, three from the ten trade Sectors and nine from from Sector B. Meanwhile, the opponents Cillin and Knight had to beat to become one of the sixteen teams left in the tournament hailed from the ten trade Sectors. They also had the best combat results out of the three teams from the ten trade Sectors. They had a perfect win streak just like Cillin and Knight.

Chapter 62: Code

The team Cillin and Knight were about to face was a little special. They came from the ten trade Sectors, and the kind of people who could stand out from the ten trade Sectors were definitely no weaker than those of military academies. Another peculiarity was that there was a non-average human in this team.

ID Eight Claws, Octopus human. Just like his ID suggested, he had four more arms when compared to the average human. Moreover, Octopus humans were normally stronger and considered to have both strength and speed. His performance in the previous matches were very eye-catching. However, Cillin's attention was biased towards the other person of the team.

ID Coy Behind The Smile might have displayed his skills plenty of times in the previous battles, but his performance was a lot more low key than Eight Claws'. After watching the recordings of the previous matches, Cillin felt that this man was definitely not weaker than the Octopus human. He was an extremely low key person just like him.

Cillin thought that he would be able to verify this feeling when he stepped onto the Sector Championship platform battle ring again.

Coy Behind The Smile and Eight Claws entered the ring before Cillin and Knight. Eight Claws was warming up, and his six arms were very eye-catching. Moreover, Cillin also noticed that his six arms were incredibly flexible and had a very wide reach. It would actually be somewhat problematic to find an angle of attack from

the back.

On the other hand, Coy Behind The Smile stood very quietly at his spot, and when he saw Cillin and Knight entering into the ring, he lifted his hand and made a greeting gesture. However, when Cillin saw Coy Behind The Smile's gesture, he narrowed his eyes a little.

When Coy Behind The Smile lifted his arms, he had made some miniscule movements with his fingers that most people would not notice. Setting aside whether they could even capture the instantaneous movements, who would pay attention to the miniscule movements in a person's fingers while he was greeting someone before the match had even begun? However, Cillin's habit forbad him from overlooking every tiny bit of changes in his opponent, and especially their fingers. One must never overlook a Hunter's fingers, for they could easily take a life without being discovered, even with just a finger.

Coy Behind The Smile's finger movements was a Vanguard Sixth Squad code.

Therefore, Cillin replied with a 'Hello' hand gesture. Just the same, his fingers moved swiftly while he was raising his hand.

Coy Behind The Smile was taken by surprise for a second. Not bad, he found out this quickly. Originally, he did not think that Cillin could understand the meaning behind his hand gesture. No wonder the commander had placed such high expectations on him.

“You deal with Eight Claws. I’ll deal with the other one.” Cillin said towards Knight.

Knight lifted his eyebrows once. This wasn’t part of their prior arrangement, but since Cillin had given his word, Knight did not voice any objections whatsoever. He wondered what Lung’s reaction would be after the match.

Once both sides were ready, the system began counting down from ten to match start.

During this ten seconds, Coy Behind The Smile swung his arms about, and Shadow X too shuffled his hands and feet in activity. While looking like they were performing another warm up prior to the match, the duo had in fact exchanged codes with each other for more than ten times already. Their finger movements were so quick that they could form over hundreds of codes in an instant.

Vision, calculation and reaction. These were all qualities that must be fulfilled, or else a fracture would happen during the communication. The demand to capture the hundreds of codes the other party made during that one instant, convert them into information, process the information and come up with a reply greatly tested a person’s abilities.

However, when the match had officially begun, both sides stopped the exchange of codes. After all, once the match officially began, the monitoring on the Sector Championship platform would become a lot stricter and the match itself would be officially recorded. The warm ups prior to the match would not be recorded, which was why Coy Behind The Smile had chosen that moment to

exchange codes with Cillin.

Knight immediately rushed forwards to battle against Eight Claws. There weren't many Octopus human in the army at all, but since he ran into one here then naturally he could not let go of this excellent opportunity. This was a new challenge to him.

Knight was very excited by the battle, and Eight Claws was obviously more or less the same. They fought harder and harder, faster and faster.

Eight Claws truly was a capable fighter. When electrical sparks had appeared on both of Knight's fists, Eight Claws still looked like he had some reserve strength to spare.

In comparison, while Shadow X and Coy Behind The Smile's battle was very quick and intense on its own, they neither looked as gorgeous as the electricity flashing from Knight's Thunderstorm Fist, nor were they as special as Eight Claw throwing six arms into the battle at once.

Coy Behind The Smile and Shadow X's fight could not be called boring, and every one of their movements could be used in a class as teaching examples. And yet Boer and the others couldn't help but feel that the whole thing was incredibly strange and awkward. It wasn't what they imagined of Shadow X's combat style.

Eight Claws was eventually worn out by Knight's ferocious attacks, and after he was punched backwards by Knight, Eight Claws and Coy Behind The Smile chose to surrender the match.

For Knight, the battle obviously left much to be desired, and when he heard the system declaring the end of the match he was incredibly dissatisfied with the outcome. He could feel that that Eight Claws hadn't reached his limit yet, and this shouldn't be all of his abilities. He could sense Eight Claw's muscle strength behind their clashes, and although Knight was confident that he could beat Eight Claws had the fight continued, that Eight Claws had surrendered just like that left him somewhat unwilling and reluctant. To put it shortly, he didn't have enough yet.

Although this match appeared splendid and eye catching, they couldn't help but feel like something was missing.

"Something's wrong." Comos frowned in front of the microcomputer.

Feng Haicao nodded, "It felt a little showy but lacking in substance. Although the battle was incredibly intense and impactful, it isn't what we're looking for."

"Our expectations were too high, I guess."

Regardless of the reactions to the match, Coy Behind The Smile and Eight Claws had completed their mission. They were the members of the Vanguard Sixth B Squadron, and because their age fitted the requirements, they had been sent by Shawton to universities to study. Normally speaking, a Hunter would not participate in such contests, but this time Shawton had ordered the duo the bring Cillin a very important news.

“Impending assassination. Red alert!”

“Impending assassination. Red alert!”

This was the news Coy Behind The Smile wanted to transmit to Cillin. They were neither interested nor caring about getting a place in the contest or scoring a victory.

After the match had ended, Cillin immediately received Lung’s complaints on his communicator. He had earned a lot less money this time due to the last-minute change of their battle plan. However, Lung did not question Cillin for a reason and continued to work on the analysis of the next match.

Knight felt like his hands were still itchy after the fight, and he went to the mech training ground again and challenged a couple of military academy people to a fight. Many of these people were his former classmates, and after they were finished watching and fighting their own matches, they gathered once more to pick their preferred model and armor. This was something the group had done quite often while they were still at high school. Now that they had all entered into higher institutes of learning, they had a lot less free time than before. The Sector Championship was a rare event, so naturally they needed to take this opportunity to enjoy themselves as much as possible. However, Knight did not reveal Shadow X’s true identity, and because of this, he was even ganged up upon by his friends on the mech training ground.

“Knight, I’m heading out for a walk and I’ll pass by the

supermarket along the way. My cabinet's out of stock. You wanna get something?" Cillin pushed open the door and asked.

"Just get me one of whatever you get... and more dried meat!" Knight yelled without even looking back at Cillin. He was in the middle of a heated fight against his military academy friends on the mech training ground. He absolutely must take revenge for their encirclement last time.

Cillin walked out of the accommodation. He was feeling a little stuffy today and came out to walk and get some fresh air. That was why he hadn't ordered a takeout. It was nighttime, and there weren't many people about. However, the supermarket was open for 24 hours a day.

But he hadn't managed a few steps before his communicator rang. There were no images except a single, encrypted message: It was a line of text and a map.

The map marked a spot at the forest between Seven Lights commercial trade zone and the entertainment zone's Sleepless City.

"We have Theresa. You have an hour."

Chapter 63: The Hunt In The Forest Beneath The Night Sky

The message automatically deleted itself after display. It was untraceable. It looked like these people had made full preparation before they came.

An hour. Cillin's opponent had left him with no additional time to prepare at all. It was also three days earlier than the time Coy Behind The Smile had told him.

After returning to the accommodation, he took out his modified hoverboard and left a timed voice message on the answering machine. If he did not return after a specific time, the answering machine would tell Knight what he should do. Cillin did not bring his communicator with him either. It was too easily exposed.

A muffler was installed in his modified hoverboard. The energy installation was improved as well. Cillin rode the hoverboard and vanished into the darkness, heading towards the location marked on the map.

At a certain accommodation in Sector D of the ten trade Sectors, Coy Behind The Smile sat very indecently on the chair while speaking on the communicator.

"I've already sent out the news. He should know what to do."

The reason Coy Behind The smile and Eight Claws had

participated in the Sector Championship was purely for fun's sake. Although Hunters would not normally participate in such contests, Eight Claws and Coy Behind The Smile were really bored out of their wits, plus they were also rather curious by the news of Shadow X prior to the event launch. And so they registered for the tournament. However, they did not expect that they would receive a mission to transmit codes, and they were even more surprised to find out that the legendary Shadow X was actually one of their own.

Coy Behind The Smile and Eight Claws had never planned to perform too well in the Sector Championship in the first place. It's just that their luck was too good that all the opponents they ran into weren't strong; not even the students from military academies. That was why the duo was able to become one of the remaining thirty two contestants of the tournament. Even without the mission, they did not plan to continue further. It wasn't a Hunter's way to expose their true capabilities in front of everyone's eyes. They didn't care for the extent Cillin wanted to fight either.

The person on the other side said something, and Coy Behind The Smile sat up straight with a frown.

"Didn't you say that it is three days later... alright, I'll keep an eye out for him at the Sector Championship platform. If he still hasn't shown up before tomorrow's match then he's probably... alright. Got it."

"What is it?" Eight Claws looked at Coy Behind The Smile, sitting like a statue after the call had ended.

Coy Behind The Smile sighed, “Something happened over at our employer’s side, and the assassination was brought forward. The exact situation is unknown. The hidden contacts arranged by the commander in Seven Lights could not contact Cillin either.”

“Judging from their habits, if he still hasn’t shown up during tomorrow’s last-16 match, then logically speaking, he will never show up again. If he does show up, it would mean the disappearance of the ‘Black Thorn’ killer organization from the killer leaderboard forever.”

“Yeah… but just how likely is that latter situation?”

Coy Behind The Smile didn’t say anything.

When Cillin arrived at the edge of the forest zone between the commercial trade zone and the entertainment zone’s Sleepless City, he retracted his hoverboard and stored it and his jacket into the ring. He ran into the lush forest.

Deep inside the forest, there were three men dressed in black whispering about something. Beside them was Theresa, both hands and feet tied while laying on the ground. Her hair was a little disheveled, she had dust and grass stains all over her, but her eyes had not lost its spirit yet. She had only suffered some bruises, and everything else was still fine. The ‘Black Thorn’ would not silence her yet until they found Cillin.

Theresa also knew that it was better for her to act obedient right

now. If these people found out that she was pulling any little tricks on them, they would kill her without hesitation.

She did not expect that those people from the Douance Family would contact the ‘Black Thorn’, the killer organization who was almost on their last legs already. After their failed assassination on Cillin during their last mission and and consequent pressure and attacks from many sides at once, the Black Thorn’s remaining strength was no longer sufficient for them to float around the killer leaderboard any longer. However, the competitors within Aiflon’s family had lent them a helping hand when they were about to eliminated completely.

Although she wasn’t sure about the details, even Theresa could guess that this matter was definitely related to a deal between the Black Thorn and those few people from the Douance Family. Without their interference, the Black Thorn alone would’ve found it difficult to infiltrate onto Planet Seven Lights.

“Brown Thorn, how’s it going?” Someone said.

Theresa lifted her eyes and looked. She couldn’t see the person’s face clearly in the night, and he was walking really quickly. But Theresa did not hear any walking sounds whatsoever. It was like watching a ghost drifting back and forth.

Brown Thorn looked once at the obedient Theresa who was doing nothing at all before turning to his pals.

“We’ve found him. But according to Eagle Thorn, he disappeared

after he had descended from his hoverboard."

"Disappeared?"

"We can't find him. We can't even detect his hoverboard. It was like he had never appeared. But Eagle Thorn most definitely saw him riding over to the forest on a hoverboard." Brown Thorn sounded very doubtful as well.

Tiger Thorn, the person who had spoken up earlier, let out a ferocious smile, "This young master has some abilities of his own. Otherwise, Gentle Thorn and the others would not have failed either."

The Gentle Thorn Tiger Thorn had mentioned was the woman that had disguised herself as a nurse during the previous bio-station mission.

"What do we do now?" Brown Thorn asked.

"Tell Eagle Thorn and the rest to keep their eyes open and not screw up when they least expect it. Otherwise, Gentle Thorn's fate will be their final lesson. This is our last chance." At the end of his words, Tiger Thorn's voice was already emanating with cold murder.

Black Thorn's leaders were watched too tightly by all sides, which was why they hadn't joined them on Planet Seven Lights. This operation was led by Tiger Thorn and supported by Brown

Thorn.

Although the school zone and residential zone had gone dark for quite some time now, this forest zone had just entered nighttime not too long ago (T/N: Remember, this place's a planet).

After running into the forest, Cillin did not hurry his way to seek out his target. Instead he slipped quietly between the trees looking for something. Cillin discovered what he was looking for at a lust, tall tree.

There was a hollow in the tree trunk, and there were many little things that were flying back and forth beside it. They were a kind of flying ant that were different from termites. They were the primitive inhabitants of Planet Seven Lights. Its body were only a few millimeters long, and even the big ones did not grow over a centimeter. Its adult form gave it a pair of wings that was slightly longer than its body. Its wings would not fall off, and it also had a developed upper jaw. It disliked light and consumed just about anything. These insects were what Cillin was looking for.

He sprayed an odorless solution into the hollow and its surroundings. The solution would form a thin crystalline film on the surface of the flying ants' bodies. Then they would slowly change from solid to gas over time. These sublimed gas had no effect on the flying ants, but a human body was different. After a human body had inhaled the gas, they would exhale a different kind of gas that would cause these little fellows to become excited, just like how the human body inhaled oxygen and exhaled carbon dioxide. Again, the person who breathed it in would not feel any discomfort whatsoever, but they would unknowingly become these

little fellows' target.

Other than the flying ant nest he had found inside the tree hollow, Cillin seeked out a couple more nests and dealt with them the same way.

This was the edge of the forest, and these little fellows would fly everywhere at night in search for food. Moreover, the night breeze spread the odor they're carrying deeper into the forest. Night had just begun at the forest, and these little fellows had a long night of work ahead of them.

Cillin had paid special attention to these flying ants when he was surveying the area on his first day arriving at Seven Lights. The forest was the best place to resolve grudges in secrecy and an easy place to lose satellite monitoring as well. There were many flying ants in the forest, and Cillin had researched them a long time ago. He had designed a few types of solutions according to their bio parameters.

Not even Mo Heng knew that Cillin had assembled a drug synthesizer on his own. Otherwise he would have definitely run out to brag about it. This was because the demand for precision to assemble a drug synthesizer was higher than the norm. The assembly of a drug synthesizer normally took three or more people to complete.

The fact was this was hardly the first solution Cillin had synthesized for his own use. He had made them during his leisure for emergencies, and he never fought a battle he did not prepare for. These synthesized drugs were all stored inside Genya's coiled

leaf patterned ring.

Cillin did not know how many people were hiding in this forest, but according to the information he obtained from Coy Behind The Smile, there was definitely more than 10 at least. These people were cruel and decisive, and most importantly they had hid themselves very well. Infrared scan would not find them, and without external support, Cillin's predicament would become a lot more difficult. A single misstep would end his life.

However, most of the time, those that could help us were not necessarily human.

Cillin watched the little fellows flying far, far away before darting into the forest.

The hunt has begun.

Chapter 64: Who's The Trapped Beast

The drugs wouldn't take effect this quickly; the forest was really big after all. It was entirely possible that many of these flying ants wouldn't run into those people at all. However, if even one flying ant had managed to reach them, then a chain reaction would be triggered.

Without backup, Cillin's preliminary work must suffice in order to seize victory in this hunt. Along the way, whenever he ran into a flying ant's nest, he would spray the solution so that the insects would carry the crystallized drugs into the deeper parts of the forest, enlarging his chances of success.

Cillin was not in a hurry. 'Black Thorn' hadn't told him to do anything specific within the hour, so he spent it doing preparatory work patiently instead.

Cillin had not spent more than fifty minutes from the moment he received the message to the point he slipped into the woods. His travelling speed was at least twice as fast as Seven Light's direct train. The spot marked on the map was deep inside the forest. It was impossible to reach that location in ten minutes, and that was obviously not his opponent's objective either. The reason they told Cillin an hour was just to prevent him from calling in reinforcements. They would not pay heed to Theresa as long as Cillin showed up in their radar within the hour. After all, Cillin was the one they're gunning for.

They left him no means of communication. They did not show up to explain things, negotiate, or follow up on the communication

even though they obviously knew of Cillin's arrival at the forest. They had only one objective, and that was to kill Cillin. Every other place in Seven Lights was tightly watched by the police. This was the only and best place to resolve their conflict.

Time passed by slowly, but Eagle Thorn found no traces of Cillin anywhere at all. It was as if he had vanished into thin air. Seeing nothing amiss in his surroundings, Eagle Thorn got ready to contact his other companions. However, when he lifted his arm he realized that there were a few flying ants on it. He shook his arm slightly to shake them off, but this was just the beginning. The flying ants flew towards him one after another. His elbow, his pants, his back, his mask; the flying ants were starting to drop all over himself.

Because this operation was carried out too hastily, they knew nothing about this particular forest. Eagle Thorn thought that he might have accidentally ran into a flying ant nest and retreated a few dozen meters towards the back. But the situation did not improve, and there were more and more flying ants landing on his mask, severely disrupting his vision. He was just about to wipe them off when suddenly, warning bells began to ring at the back of his head. This was an instinct that was bred through many years of experience.

Eagle Thorn swiftly leaped away from his original spot and made a few dodging movements along the way. However, the angle of the needles flying towards him was so tricky, so swift, and not even travelling in a straight line that, even though he managed to avoid the first few needles, one of them still managed to cut through his skin and left two holes in his camouflage suit.

It was a three prong needle with three sharp points. However, when the needles pierced into the trees or slammed into rocks, they shattered before slowing melting into nothingness.

While Eagle Thorn was moving swiftly, he took out some meds and sprayed them on his wound. The meds quickly formed a film that sealed the wound and kept the smell of blood from spreading. It also controlled the wound within the area, so even if the needles were poisoned, the poison would not spread too quickly.

Eagle Thorn's reactions could only be described as swift. His movements were skillful and he made almost no noise as well. After dodging nimbly a few times, he hid behind a big tree and kept watch of any surrounding movements.

He still hadn't found his enemy!

Eagle Thorn did not dare act carelessly. These days people preferred guns over other weaponry, and even the 'Black Thorn' preferred to use guns to take care of their targets. However, Eagle Thorn also knew that anyone who could use archaic hidden weapon like this was not easy pickings either. In fact, Eagle Thorn felt that Cillin was more of a killer than they were; stealthy, calm, hiding at an even darker place while watching them.

However, Eagle Thorn only paid attention to Cillin and ignored the flying ants that were landing on him one after another. His wound was sealed with the medicine alright, but the two holes in his camouflage suit gave way to convenience for the flying ants.

Eagle Thorn himself was slowly starting to feel that something was wrong. The itch and pain brought by the biting ants were starting to spread throughout his entire body. One after another, the flying ants began landing on Eagle Thorn in search of entry points such as his shoes, pants, the needle holes etc and slipped inside them.

To prevent himself from being sneaked upon once more, Eagle Thorn endured the discomforting mix of pain and itch, forcing himself to calm down and ignore these sensations. However, it only grew more and more out of control. Eagle Thorn hoped that Cillin could act quicker so that he'd have a chance to move and get rid of these flying ants, but since the first attack, there hadn't been any movement at all from Cillin. It was as if he was a Hunter quietly watching his prey struggling to escape its predicament.

The flying ants' toxin wasn't lethal, but it could irritate a person's nerves and cause them to feel restless. Right now Eagle Thorn was obviously edging towards that result.

Eagle Thorn knew that his enemy was just waiting for that one fatal opening where he failed to endure the sensation and lose control, but this sensation of being bitten alive by thousands of flying ants was truly worse than death. An average person would have lost control a long time ago and rather kill themselves than withstand this torture.

The inside of Eagle Thorn's mask was completely drenched with sweat. The toxin was already starting to irritate his nerves, and he didn't know how much longer he could endure this. Making up his mind, Eagle Thorn gritted his teeth, sucked in a deep breath and

abruptly zipped towards the far distance, running in an irregular pattern to make it harder for his enemy to lock him down.

Let's get away and get rid of these ants inside my clothes first. Otherwise, if this continues, the one who loses this fight will definitely be me.

A flying ant bit open the breathing hole of his mask and crawled inside it. It slipped into Eagle Thorn's nostrils and caused his running footsteps to pause just a moment. It was also at this instant a needle pierced through his throat.

The fresh blood caused the flying ants to grow even more excited because there was a smell that they liked inside the flowing blood. More and more flying ants landed on Eagle Thorn, covering the surface of his body in dense masses.

Shortly after, Eagle Thorn stopped breathing.

It was only after determining that Eagle Thorn had lost his life that Cillin had slipped out and arrived beside Eagle Thorn.

Eagle Thorn was wearing a special camouflage suit that blocked infrared thermal imaging and automatically changes colors according to the environment. There was a silencer on Eagle Thorn's hand that Cillin chose not to touch. The gun was modified before, and there was a mini self-destruct device installed inside it. Cillin had no intentions of keeping a bomb beside him.

Cillin found yet another sonic gun from Eagle Thorn's body, and after giving it a look he decided to keep it. This one's safe.

Deep within the forest, Tiger Thorn's expression was extremely dark and gloomy. This was because the dot representing Eagle Thorn on his biomonitor the size of a pocket watch in his hand had extinguished, indicating that Eagle Thorn had died.

"Eagle Thorn's down!"

"How is that possible!" Brown Thorn ran over and glanced at the biomonitor in Tiger Thorn's hands. Seeing the extinguished dot, Brown Thorn paused and said, "I'll deal with the bastard." If even Eagle Thorn could die, then the rest of their men might not necessarily fare better against Cillin. He had no choice but to go out himself.

"There's no need, Brown Thorn. Snake Thorn and I will be more than enough." A person beside Tiger Thorn stopped Brown Thorn and said.

Tiger Thorn nodded to show his agreement.

After the duo had left, Tiger Thorn saw yet another light spot vanishing from the biomonitor and twisted his head to look at Theresa on the floor.

Chapter 65: Eerie

Beneath the dark sky, within a lush forest, resides murder.

Yet another two hours passed by, and on the surface, the dense forest appeared to be as normal as ever. However, if someone were to walk in, then they would discover that the reality was something else.

There were more and more excited flying ants, and Cillin no longer had to seek out their nests. They would naturally transmit this excitement to the others and trigger more of their kind to become active.

Tiger Thorn sat beside Theresa and said nothing with his eyes glued onto the biomonitor in his hand. Brown Thorn grew a little worried now and came closer to check out the light spots on the biomonitor.

A total of 13 people had come to Seven Lights for this operation, and including Brown Thorn and Tiger Thorn, there were originally 13 light spots on the biomonitor. However, six, no, seven of them had already been eliminated. Another light spot had disappeared while Brown Thorn was looking at the biomonitor.

“It definitely looks like we’re missing some critical info on our target.” Tiger Thorn said while staring at the biomonitor, “Why does a young master of Douance Family have such skills?”

Tiger Thorn pressed a sonic gun against Theresa’s head, “You

know, if I pull the trigger, then those intricate nerves inside your head would become chaotic, and you yourself will die a most horrible death."

Theresa lifted her head and stared straight at Tiger Thorn, "I am just a middle woman who communicates Aiflon's will. I know nothing else. I know nothing about Cillin Douance's past!"

Tiger Thorn knew that everything Theresa said was true, but this sense of unknown towards his target made him very uncomfortable. Usually, they would analyse their target before carrying out a mission to guarantee complete success, but everything was different ever since they accepted the mission to assassinate Cillin Douance. The losses caused by all sorts of unexpected or expected variables, the pressure that followed from all sides, and the vultures harboring dark designs watching them from the back had ultimately caused the Black Thorn's current predicament.

It's fake. Every intelligence they got on Cillin Douance at the time were fake. Aiflon had been preparing for this since decades ago, and all of the information provided by their employer were untrue! Right now, they even felt as if they had never understood this Douance Family young master at all!

Black Thorn was about to disappear into the canals of history, and even if they were to rise once more, it wasn't something that could be done within a short amount of time. Those people in the Douance Family had promised them enough money to hide themselves safely from the many enemies chasing after them, and their condition was the killing of Cillin Douance.

While Tiger Thorn was pondering, two more light spots vanished from the biomonitor.

Brown Thorn seriously could not hold back any longer and looked towards Tiger Thorn, “I’m contacting Golden Thorn for a bit.”

Golden Thorn was the guy who stopped Brown Thorn earlier, and entered the forest together with Snake Thorn. Normally speaking, the commander would not easily contact their operation personnel unless it was an unusually urgent situation. This was because the receiving device’s electromagnetic wave might expose their location, unless the operatives themselves felt that they were safe enough to contact the commander on their own accord. But Brown Thorn could no longer sit by when he saw the light spots vanishing one after another.

Tiger Thorn did not say anything, meaning that he acquiesced in his decision.

Brown Thorn took out his communicator. It was a communicator exclusive to their internal personnel. Its signal was set so that it covered only a specific range and hence would not be detected by the satellites or affect any signal receiving equipment in Seven Lights.

However, they couldn’t get a response from Golden Thorn.

“Contact Snake Thorn!” Right now, Tiger Thorn was

experiencing a terrible premonition. The enemy's actions might be a lot faster than they thought. Their bio signature hadn't disappeared, but why...?

Unlike Golden Thorn, Snake Thorn's communicator was connected very quickly.

"What's going on?" Brown Thorn asked urgently.

"Beware..."

Snake Thorn only managed to say a word before his voice was gone completely. Tiger Thorn looked at the biomonitor on his hand. The light spot representing Snake Thorn was still there, and this proved that Snake Thorn hadn't died yet. But for some reason, he wasn't able to utter any sound at all. Just what was going on here?!

"Snake Thorn? Shake Thorn!"

Brown Thorn yelled twice, but he still didn't get a response from Snake Thorn. However, there was a faint blurb blurb sound that sounded like flowing liquid resounding from the communicator.

Snake Thorn wanted very much to tell Tiger Thorn and Brown Thrown to beware of flying ants. His assassination skills might not compare to Golden Thorn, but his ability to analyse clues were better than either Golden Thorn, Eagle Thorn or anyone else in the team. He already noticed that something was wrong with the

flying ants when he went into the woods, but in the end, he was too late.

The three needles behind his neck prevented Snake Thorn from uttering any sound whatsoever. It was as if his nerves were completely cut off, and he could not move at all. The needle slowly melted into Snake Thorn's body, and he felt as if every blood in his body was flowing the opposite direction out of his nostrils and mouth. Sensing the excitatory factor in his blood, the flying ants sprang towards him in droves. Snake Thorn's face, twisted by pain could no longer be seen as the flying ants covered it completely.

Brown Thorn's end was eerily silent. Even Theresa on the ground felt a little frightened.

A gust of wind passed by, accompanied by the rustling of tree leaves. It caused everyone to feel unusually chilly.

The silence lasted for a little while longer before the clear, steady sounds of footsteps resounded from the communicator.

Tiger Thorn snatched the communicator from Brown Thorn's hand and said in a low voice, "Cillin Douance, I know that you're there -"

"Beep ——"

The communicator lost connection before Tiger Thorn could finish his sentence.

Although she could not see the person on the other side of the communicator, Theresa felt that the Cillin now was so calm that he was almost detached completely from emotion. If Theresa was confident that she weighed at the very least something in Cillin's heart before, then now she suspected that Cillin would actually shoot without hesitation if Tiger Thorn used her as a hostage.

This was bad. They're being pushed around completely!

Both Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn thought at the same time that perhaps Cillin Douance wasn't here for Theresa at all. Perhaps Cillin Douance's objective was the same as theirs, and that was to eliminate his enemies. Perhaps...

They were the only two people left out of the original thirteen now.

Tiger Thorn grabbed Theresa's long hair and dragged her to his side. Brown Thorn understood his meaning, got up and put his back against Tiger Thorn's, watching the surroundings warily. The reason they kept Theresa alive was to use her as their final shield. From the information provided by those people from the Douance Family, Tiger Thorn knew that Aiflon valued Theresa greatly, so Cillin would probably take her consideration no matter what the circumstances. Probably.

By now they already realized that this forest did them more harm than good. The tens of people before them had already been eliminated, and the chances that they might assassinate Cillin

from concealment weren't too high either. In this case, they might as well put their cards on the table.

An hour later, under Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn's vigilance, the sound of footsteps gradually came closer to their position.

Brown Thorn did not dare to act carelessly. This person had given him an all-too eerie impression, and he did not know if this clear footstep was a trap of some kind. After all, no one would dare expose themselves so openly when they knew that they might be sniped by the enemy.

Chapter 66: Kill

Tiger Thorn pressed his gun against Theresa's head and watched the slowing approaching figure. Brown Thorn's entire body was tensed in a high alert state.

"Cillin Douance. You truly are something alright. Even if you die, you can be comforted by the thought that you managed to push us, the Black Thorn, to such a state."

Cillin did not react because of Tiger Thorn's words. His footsteps were the same as ever.

Tiger Thorn pushed his gun against Theresa's head once more, indicating that he would blow this beautiful girl's head apart if he came any closer.

Although it was night time, Tiger Thorn could see the expression on Cillin's face.

This young kid looked too tranquil, too calm. He couldn't figure out what was behind his mask.

Cillin came to a stop fifty meters away from the group of three. He looked at Theresa once, then at Brown Thorn and Tiger Thorn, "You want to kill her?"

Perhaps it was because Cillin's tone was too calm that Theresa felt a little scared. She really couldn't see through Cillin right now,

or guess what he was going to do in the next moment. Perhaps it was because she herself didn't dare to guess further.

Seeing Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn's silence, Cillin said as if he had just realized it, "Oh, you want to use her to threaten me."

Cillin's tone made Tiger Thorn incredibly uncomfortable. He felt as if he was slapped in the face.

"Your father, Aiflon values her a lot."

"But you're still going to kill her anyway. If you can't do it, do you... want me to help you?"

Cillin had just finished speaking, when he threw three needles right at Theresa being held right in front of Tiger Thorn. At the same time Cillin immediately jumped backwards, and a bullet hole was left at the spot he just left behind.

When Cillin threw out the needles, Brown Thorn, who had been watching him all this time immediately shot him without any hesitation. But Cillin's movements were incredibly swift. There were two bullets that practically brushed past him as he retreated towards the back. After a couple of dodges, he then hid himself back into the forest.

Brown Thorn did not pursue him. If he followed Cillin inside, then his fate would definitely be no different from Snake Thorn and the others. Returning to Tiger Thorn's side, Brown Thorn

glanced at Theresa, thrown on the floor by Tiger Thorn and no longer breathing, traces of fresh blood still visible at the corner of her mouth.

As if in disbelief, Brown Thorn checked Theresa's pulse and heartbeat once more before frowning, "That kid is pretty ruthless."

"He's not the kind of people who would be moved by threats." Tiger Thorn stared at the spot where Cillin had vanished into the woods and said in a low tone, "He does not feel like the young master of a rich family. He feels more like a different kind of person."

"A killer like us?"

"No. A Hunter... But no matter what kind of person he is, he must die!"

Previously, they had planned to lure Cillin to them with Theresa as bait, but they did not think that Cillin would kill Theresa immediately the moment he saw her. Now, they were the only three people left in this forest.

Murder was a show being played in the middle of the thick forest.

Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn were afraid that Cillin would lure them into a trap, and so every time they would first observe their surroundings closely and confirm that there was no danger before

continuing the pursuit. However, Cillin was too slippery. Every time they lifted their guns, Cillin would immediately escape as if he could sense the danger.

Suddenly, warning bells rang loudly inside Tiger Thorn's head as he abruptly exerted strength onto his feet, leaving behind a deep footprint on the ground before dodging rapidly to avoid the incoming attacks.

Brown Thorn had dodged out of the way just like Tiger Thorn.

Needles weren't the only thing that was shot at them, there were also bullets. To Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn's surprise, these needles were actually almost as swift as bullets!

At the same time, Tiger Thorn also noticed that these needles were different from the one used to kill Theresa!

Tiger Thorn's night vision was very good. He could see clearly that when those needles pierced into the trees or smashed against the rock, they would shatter, melt, and volatilize.

Poison?!

Tiger Thorn swiftly suspended his breathing and put on a poison filter on his respiratory mask. Seeing Tiger Thorn's motions, Brown Thorn too got ready to install a poison filter in his own mask.

After all the mask they're wearing wasn't a specialised gas mask. This poison filter might be able to prevent poison, but it would affect their breathing to a certain degree. The average person might not be able to get used to it, but Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn could withstand the discomfort for a very long time, though normally they would not put on a poison filter.

However, just as Brown Thorn took out his poison filter and was about to install it, a bullet went right through his temple.

Brown Thorn was hiding behind a rock, and this rock was enough to obstruct the enemy's shots. He had already used it to block a couple of gunshots just now, and there were nearly ten needles that had smashed futilely against the rock. But he could never imagine that he would be killed by the enemy in this situation with a single shot.

Curve shot?!

The moment he saw this, Tiger Thorn instantly understood that the kid had done it on purpose. His previous shots were all in a straight line, but this particular shot was curved!

Such a person would normally appear only inside a military academy. Why would such a person be in Seven Lights?!

Tiger Thorn did not have the time to ponder those things. He was now alone, and he needed all of his energy to guard against the kid. Perhaps Tiger Thorn himself did not realize that he subconsciously no longer put killing Cillin as his first priority. Guarding against

him, was.

Strangely, Cillin did not move at all. He had turned quiet after that shot.

Then, Tiger Thorn saw a scene that shocked him to the core. A huge swarm of flying ants flew towards his general direction and landed on the dead Brown Thorn. The parts that were bleeding were especially densely covered.

This was definitely a mental shock for Tiger Thorn, and it was at this moment a dozen or so needles were shot at his direction. Tiger Thorn dodged out of the way, but in the next moment a shadow zipped swiftly towards him. Tiger Thorn's speed wasn't slow either, as he lifted his gun and –

Ka!

The gun barrel was immediately twisted into a bunch of useless metal, and at the same time a needle stabbed right at Tiger Thorn's heart.

Before he died, Tiger Thorn suddenly realized that he had not sensed the slightest killing intent from the beginning to the end, even when he was opening fire at them. Moreover, Cillin was not wearing a camouflage suit either, and yet the infrared sensors detected nothing at all.

Cillin Douance was a cold-blooded animal. Not only did he

possess the coldness of a killer, he also possessed the blood of a cold-blooded animal.

That was Tiger Thorn's assessment of Cillin during his final moments. However, if Mo Heng learned that someone had evaluated Cillin this way, he would probably grab a knife and swing it at the evaluator. His disciple was not a cold-blooded animal! He wasn't cold either!

It was only after checking the biomonitor on Tiger Thorn's hand and ensuring that all of the dots on the display had disappeared that Cillin finally let out a relaxed breath.

The half-life of the drug that caused the flying ants to grow excited was twelve hours. Once the time was up it would automatically break down, so there was no need to worry too much about it. In the future, the people who came into this forest would not discover this drug either.

Cillin rejoiced at the fact that Black Thorn's core members had been eliminated beforehand. Otherwise, if the people standing here today were the real elites of Black Thorn, then he would not be as fortunate.

There was no doubt that the strength of an organization that could place itself at a certain position on the killer leaderboard was absolutely not to be trifled with. If he hadn't cheated and used those flying ants to his advantage, it would have been incredibly difficult for him to obtain a good outcome today. If the people who weren't even the core members of Black Thorn had such strength already, then just how powerful those core members really were?

And how powerful were those people who managed to kill the core members of Black Thorn?

It might not necessarily be a single person or a couple of people who had taken out Black Thorn's core members. It could be another organization, a family's hidden hand, or an army.

Cillin would encounter these forces when he returned to the Sixth Squad in the future.

Cillin loosened his shoulders. His arms were sore from tossing bullets and needles today. After he had cleaned up the traces of battle Cillin headed towards Theresa's direction. If he delayed it any longer, then she would probably really lose her life.

Chapter 67: Instant Kill

Speaking of which, the next day Knight got woken up by a tremendous need to pee and relieved it with a big dump at the same time(E/n: classy), he immediately felt his empty tummy and took a look at the cabinet in the kitchen. There was nothing but a few lonely bread lying inside it.

Knight scratched his head. He remembered Cillin saying that he would buy some supplies during his walk last night. So why was it still empty?

“Cillin ——”

Knight raised his voice and shouted once. No one answered him. He went to Cillin’s bedroom and study. He found no one. He called his communicator. No one picked it up. Left without a choice, Knight used the satellite to locate and lock down Cillin’s communicator, but the signal indicated that it was inside Cillin’s bedroom. Cillin had put his communicator in the bedside cabinet.

Knight checked the time. There were only three hours left until their next match.

On the other side, when Theresa opened her eyes she saw a dark golden hue. There were also a string of numbers blinking on it. Beside the number was a logo in the shape of a sharp dagger.

The Vanguard’s bill.

The bill was given to Cillin by Shawton when he left the Sixth Squad. The ideology Shawton had instilled in Cillin was: We're Hunters. We can't work and bleed and sweat without pay, right? Plus, it's not like people like Aiflon would mind about a little 'tip', so he should absolutely bill when he could and 'slaughter' his clients without mercy.

A Hunter should treat themselves kinder, and treat their employers harsher.

This time it could be said that Cillin had taken care of a huge problem for Aiflon and even saved Theresa's life, so there was absolutely no reason for him not to ask for more remuneration. And Cillin didn't go soft either; he had written eight figures on the bill directly.

Suspended animation was not something that could be detected without using a rigorous life detector. The needles Cillin had shot at Theresa were to make her fall into a state of suspended animation. Only then he could save Theresa, and more importantly keep her from becoming his burden in battle; not to mention that Aiflon would definitely pay less if Theresa had actually died.

After she woke up, Theresa did not express any opinion about the numbers on the bill. She simply stared at Cillin with a complicated look on her face. To be honest, when Cillin had walked out looking completely calm as if he was indifferent to everything around him, Theresa no longer counted on Cillin to put her life as a priority. During certain moments, Hunters were very similar to killers in

that they were just as relentless, cold, and ruthless.

Moreover, Theresa felt that her entire body was ice cold when Cillin had said to Tiger Thorn and Brown Thorn, “Do you… want me to help you?”. She was in despair when she was pierced by the needles Cillin had tossed at her and lost consciousness.

Theresa realized that she had been underestimating this man who was even younger than her all this time. Right now, Cillin’s eyes made her feel as if he knew about everything. And yet she could not be certain. After all, there were only five people who knew about that secret, and those five people would never reveal that secret unless it was the right moment.

“How much do you know?”

“I only know this.” Cillin pointed at the dazzling bill before Theresa, “Do remember to pay me on time. Of course, if you guys are willing to pay me more as thanks, I will not turn it down.”

After putting the bill away, Theresa tried to stand up. However, she was still feeling a little dizzy and had no choice but to sit down once more.

“What happened exactly?” Theresa asked.

Cillin did not answer her question directly. Instead he said, “You still need a bit of time to recover. I believe that you can contact someone to take you back home, in which case I’ll be taking my

leave.”

“Wait.” Theresa stopped Cillin just as he was about to turn around and leave, “Are they all dead?”

Cillin nodded.

Theresa took in a deep breath and calmed herself down a little, “If they’re all dead, then Mr. Aiflon’s plans will advance quicker as well. In that case, you will have to get ready sooner.”

Knowing what Theresa meant by getting ready sooner, Cillin gave her an ‘OK’ gesture before he slipped into the woods and disappeared. When Cillin returned to the accommodation, Knight was discussing countermeasures with Ci Jincheng and Lung on his communicator.

“Cillin! Did you walk all the way to another planet or something?!” Knight rushed over and grabbed Cillin’s collar while roaring. However, his face relaxed a little when he saw the bags Cillin was lifting. It looked like his decision to buy food from the supermarket along the way home was the right choice.

“Cillin, if you were any later I was going to get some men to search for you. We need to nail down our bet an hour before the match starts.” Lung urged him from the other side of the communicator.

They said that, but Cillin knew that Lung, Ci JIncheng and

Knight truly cared for him. He gave them a smile and said, “For our next match, let’s bet on ‘one hit kill’.”

When Lung heard this, both his eyes turned bright. Their opponents this time was last term’s champion the Visby brothers. The odds must be shockingly massive.

Knight rubbed his chin, “That’s pretty difficult.”

“Enough already, your grin is about to stretch all the way to your ears.” On the communicator display, Ci Jincheng wore a disdainful expression.

“Oh, right. Cillin, do you want to take the first place in the double combat tournament?” Knight looked towards Cillin.

“Nope. But if you want to, then why not.”

“Haha, great, you’re a true brother! I feel better now that you’ve said that. The reason I participated in the double combat tournament was to take revenge for a friend and teach the Visby brothers a lesson. I don’t want to fight anymore after we take them down.” He had already disobeyed his father’s will when he participated in this contest. If he continued any further there was no telling if his father would give him a good beating.

To borrow his father’s words, the Thunderstorm Fist was not a plaything! Its purpose was to live in the battlefield, and not in this kind of childish, boastful game done purely for the sake of

attracting new students!

The students who were treated as secret weapons by the military academies would not participate in this contest. This was because they were busy with their missions, and could be considered proper soldiers already. They were completely uninterested in these ‘little games’ between students, and even if they did participate, they would not fight seriously. In their opinion, the drawbacks of exposing their true strength completely to the public were greater in their opinion.

“That’s fine.” That’s the best really. Cillin needed to prepare for the aftermath, and if he ended this sooner, he might even be able to save some time for something else.

“Sigh, I wonder how much resentment those people gunning after Shadow X will feel.” Lung faked a sad face on the other side of the communicator.

“Lung, remember to place another bet. There might... be a new record at the end of this.” Ci Jincheng said.

Because he came back earlier than expected, Cillin deleted the messages and traces he left inside the answering machine, replenished a short nap and logged onto the Sector Championship platform with Knight. Knight and the other did not ask about Cillin’s business last night. Even if Cillin hadn’t told them, they could guess more or less themselves.

The match versus the Visby brother went just as Ci JIncheng had

predicted earlier. They had broken the last-16's combat tournament record. The match was incredibly short; it was even shorter than the previous match against Liu Yeuwu and One Smile Kill.

It was an instant kill.

The moment the system had displayed 'Match Begin', Cillin and Knight immediately charged towards their opponents. Because they had acted too swiftly, the Visby brothers couldn't dodge out of the way in time and had no choice but to bite the bullet and block. The rampaging electricity generated from Knight's fists immediately cause one person to lose all fighting capability, and the other person going up against Cillin did not feel too well either. He felt as if he had run into a mech and lost all fighting capability instantly as well.

While the system displayed the sentence 'Team Knight and Shadow X is victorious', it also notified everyone that this match had set a new record with an eye-catching light dot.

The students in front of their microcomputers turned silent for a moment before boiling up completely. Instant kill, they actually pulled off an instant kill!

But their excitement didn't last long before a message crashed down on them like an iceberg.

Shadow X and Knight had forfeited the double combat tournament.

There were many people who joined only because of Shadow X, and without him they immediately lose half their interest in the tournament. Half an hour later, Comos, Feng Haicao, Boer, Faradin, Ryan, Bonn and many other teams withdrew themselves from the double combat tournament.

Thus, there really was nothing to look forward in the double combat tournament any longer. Their boiling blood freezing in their veins, the students and the entire Sector Championship forum page exuded with thick, unending resentment.

Cillin and co did not pay heed to the students' reactions. After Cillin and Knight had announced their withdrawal, Knight received a message from Comos in his Sector Championship platform mailbox. As for Cillin's mailbox... there were plenty of messages, but in general Cillin would not read them at all.

"Cillin, Comos and his pals want to fight us in the final integrated warfare contest." Knight was a lot more interested in integrated warfare, because it involved actual combat.

Only the academies that were placed top ten in the leaderboard were allowed to participate in the live combat competition. However, with Seven Lights' foundation entering top ten was no problem at all.

"Sure, I look forward to it." Cillin didn't turn him down. The integrated warfare contest was also a great opportunity for him.

Chapter 68: Integrated Warfare Candidates

Yet another week had passed after the small scale contest had ended. The large-scale team contests such as dogfights, multi-person shootout, mech battles and more also ended in succession, and according to the ranking and accumulated points of each contest, the top ten academies were allowed to participate in the integrated warfare contest. Seven Lights was again placed fifth this term, but the higher-ups of Seven Lights were already very satisfied with this result. After all, it was no easy task to conquer a title, and even less so to defend one. However, the final ranking wasn't set yet. The points for integrated warfare dominated 30% of the total score. There were plenty of academies who put on a wonderful comeback during the final integrated warfare contest.

The electronic magazine 'Gathering of Titans' had reported some of the highlights of the contest in a special column. Unlike last year, the report that took up the most space this year wasn't any large scale contest or the champion or runner-up of a certain final. It was a fellow with the appearance of a generic robot – Shadow X.

Shadow X's appearance had set off a ten thousand follower typhoon on first day on the Sector Championship platform, and after that, all sorts of abnormal events began to happen one after another. It was exactly because of his appearance that particular seeded students of military academies who had never showed up in the Sector Championship participated because of his participation, and withdrew because of his withdrawal from a tournament. The spotlight was all on Shadow X.

An authoritative critic on 'Gathering of Titans' had appraised Shadow X to be in no way inferior to the military academies'

superstars among honor students.

Some people said that this critic had exaggerated things. No matter how exceptional he was, a Sector B university student could never exceed the honor students of Sector C, couldn't he? There were also people agreed with him, but ultimately, there were even more people who adopted the 'wait and see' attitude. After all, the live combat in integrated warfare was the contest that most tested a student's ability. They would know immediately after this contest if he was gold, or scrap.

The most important thing was that Shadow X's true identity would be exposed during the integrated warfare contest. The students of countless higher institutes of learning counted down each day and looked forward to the exposé.

For each academy, the total number of people chosen to participate in the integrated warfare contest for each academy was ten, and the person in charge to make the picks would be the chief of the training division. However, Huo Neil had gone to Sector C to make his report due to the previous bio station operation, so this time the task was taken over by Gerrard.

Gerrard would choose the suitable candidates and report them to the higher ups of Seven Lights. At the same time, the list would also be announced on the Seven Lights forum so as to notify all Seven Lights students. If there were no major issues, then the higher ups would confirm the final name list.

The students who wished to participate in the integrated warfare contest would report their own Sector Championship platform ID

and record to Gerrard for evaluation. Normally speaking, the better the record, the higher the chances to be selected. Everyone wants in on the integrated warfare contest, and anyone who believed themselves capable had all reported their information to the upper level.

If they could have the experience in integrated warfare put down in their graduation info, then they would be in a much higher demand after they graduate. They would be able to shout with a straight back at the top of their lungs: See, I've participated in the Sector Championship before!

Gerrard laid lazily inside the office and watched the many names and combat record descriptions on the screen. The number of registrees alone was close to a thousand, and some Gerrard had kicked right out of the pool at first glance. He only needed to sweep through the combat footage to know who was a paper tiger, and who was the real thing.

There were only ten openings, but three of them had already been set from the beginning. The selection had been decided by the higher ups a long time ago. That being said, these three default candidates were truly capable, so Gerrard had no objections to the selection.

These default candidates were Fu Luo, Kang Man and Ci Jincheng.

Fu Luo was the precious granddaughter of the vice headmaster, An Ding. She was a top student in the School of Medicine, and medical staffs were absolutely necessary in integrated warfare.

That was why Gerrard really had no objections towards Fu Luo whatsoever.

Kang Man was a specially recruited student and a research division IT developer. He had published his findings on an electronic magazine with quite the contribution points since a young age, and he also had a lot of understanding in regards to site-specific teleportation and decoding. He was a technical staff and also absolutely necessary.

As for Ci Jincheng, even if he did not know what outstanding achievements Ci Jincheng had, Gerrard would have to think through the matter seriously before voicing an objection. The public might only know about some superficial information about the Ci Family, but Gerrard did hear to a certain extent about the Ci Family. However, those information were all highly classified, and no one dared utter a word about them.

While propping his chin, Gerrard swiped his finger across the button again and again and he flipped through the various student information displayed on the screen. Suddenly, his hands started, and he stood up and pushed his face right in front of the monitor.

“That little punk!” Gerrard couldn’t help but swear with a laugh.

There were two pictures on the screen. One was Cillin, and the other one was the generic robot Shadow X. The introduction of his combat record was below the pictures. Gerrard dragged Cillin into the list without even looking at the report. After the last bio station mission, every man and woman in the training and police division were full of praise for this less than twenty years old

young fellow. Be it his individual prowess or technical application, Cillin's performance far exceeded the average student.

The next person after Cillin was Knight. Just the same, the moment Gerrard saw Knight's face, he had dragged him right into the name list as well. This guy was supposed to be a good seed that should've entered a military academy. He was the son of a general and his prowess was indisputable. There was nothing to be criticised about. Plus, even if Gerrard had skipped over him, as long as Knight expressed his wish to participate in the integrated warfare contest, Seven Lights' higher ups would still add him into the mix.

He flipped through yet a few people and picked out Pride, Sird and Hard. Now he had eight candidates already.

Two more...

Gerrard rubbed his tired eyes, and just as he was getting ready to squeeze two droplets of eyedrops into his eyes, his communicator rang. Gerrard glanced at the name displayed on the panel and curled his lips. Here we go. Here's most likely another person looking to pull some strings and open some backdoors.

Gerrard's guess was spot on. The headmaster of Seven Lights himself had called him personally. Someone did knock on the headmaster's door and requested him to negotiate directly with Gerrard, and this person was none other than young master Lung of the 'So Poor All That is Left is Money' family. At first, young master Lung really didn't plan to participate in this integrated warfare contest. It wasn't like he could earn money by

participating, and he didn't care anything for glory or whatever. However, all three of his housemates had participated in the contest, and he felt uncomfortable being the only one left out. So while still on his slippers he went straight to your great headmaster's home and blocked the front door.

Gerrard wasn't familiar with the Andrea Family, and the public's impression of them was that they're the 'So Poor All That is Left is Money' family and nothing else. But this wasn't the whole truth. Even if he wasn't familiar with the Andrea Family, Gerrard knew a little something about them. The Andrea Family was very much familiar with many of the big bosses within the military, and many of the military's weapons were supplied by them as well. The Andrea Family had never skimped on military funding. Based on this fact alone, Gerrard was not in a good position to object his selection. Besides, the headmaster's here. If anything happens his headliness would be the one flying.

For the last candidate, Gerrard chose Copley, the fifth place finalist of this term's single combat tournament. As for why he was only fifth need not be said. The people of the military academies were right there to prove the point.

The reason he chose this person wasn't only because of this single combat tournament result, but also because of the man himself. Copley wasn't your generic human – he was a Hosenfaith. An average human's static field of view view was only slightly more than a hundred degrees, but a Hosenfaith's field of view was about two hundred and seventy degrees. Their eyes were slanted closer to the two sides of their head, granting them their natural advantage. A wide field of view and keen vision made them better adept in scouting. This is it!

And that was the ten candidates. Three defaults, one backdoor, and six handpicked by Gerrard himself. This was the first batch of name list for the integrated warfare contest. After that, he picked a few more candidates for the reserve's name list, and reported it to the higher-ups.

Sigh. He wondered what the people's reaction in Seven Lights would be when they saw Cillin's ID.

Chapter 69: It's Time To End This

Due to the integrated warfare contest, Ci Jincheng returned to Planet Seven Lights earlier than was originally planned. Inside the accommodation, Cillin, Knight and Ci Jincheng sat together inside the living room and observed last year's integrated warfare contest.

There were two locations where the integrated warfare was held. First, they would have to gather at the asteroid C-N976 supervised by the GAL Army at a junction between Sector B and Sector C. The representative team of each higher institute of learning would have to undergo an identity check there, receive their tools and so on. Then they would all depart towards their destination, another asteroid C-N300 which was supervised by the military at the same time.

While the trio was watching the footage, the door opened, and Lung walked in with his iconic singlet, flowery pants and slippers.

"Hmph hmph, now I can participate in the integrated warfare contest just like you guys!"

Lung kicked his slippers to the shoe rack and walked barefooted into the living room. He grabbed an iced beer from the fridge and sat on a sofa just like Cillin and the rest.

Seeing no reaction from the trio, Lung complained in dissatisfaction, "Hey, aren't you guys curious?"

Cillin and the rest turned towards Lung at the same time while wearing a ‘curious about what’ look on their faces.

Lung’s mouth widened, “I went to block our headmaster early in the morning so that he would open a backdoor for me!”

Cillin and the rest were speechless. He was the only one who could walk a backdoor with such righteous indignation.

Although the list hadn’t been finalized yet, there was no doubt that this group of four was absolutely set for the contest.

On the next day, the preliminary list of the ten candidates to participate in the integrated warfare contest was announced on Seven Lights forum. After seeing the name and information listed on the announcement, there were strangers roaming around Cillin and co’s accommodation at every moment, hoping to catch a glimpse of Shadow X’s actual figure.

The name listed under Shadow X’s information display everyone was looking forward to was none other than the impressive Cillin Douance. Every student’s first reaction in Seven Lights after seeing this was – holy mother of balls, how could it possibly him?!

When Allen realized it, he wanted to cry but failed to shed a tear. He finally understood that he was fooled by Cillin. Other than the fact that he was outwitted by a wordplay, Allen also bore a faint guess about a certain something from this revelation. His father was right after all; he should always believe his first instinct, or he would run around in circles without ever realizing that he was

duped.

Although the commotion caused by the name list announcement was huge, in truth there weren't many people who objected to it at all. There were many people who suspected the validity of the information that Cillin was Shadow X, but when they thought about it, they found themselves warming up to the idea. After all, Cillin did participate in a military operation, went on a battlefield, killed black mice and was very close with Knight and several other people. Even if they wanted to object to his selection, they had to weigh their own capabilities first.

Since there wasn't too much problem, the higher ups of Seven Lights quickly finalized the name list. The ten official candidates were: Fu Luo, Cillin, Knight, Sird, Hard, Lung, Pride, Ci Jincheng, Kang Man and Copley.

What was worth mentioning was that six out of ten people were new students. Regardless whether or not they were specially recruited students, if they managed to obtain a good result in this integrated warfare contest, then Seven Lights would utilise this image to advertise themselves.

The day before the integrated warfare contest, the quartet was tidying their stuff when Cillin's communicator suddenly rang inside his room. Before long, Cillin came out.

"I'm going out for a little."

Lung's eyes narrowed, "A date?"

“Nope.” Before he left, Cillin even stole a bag of Knight’s jerkies.

“Dammit, you better give me back twice the amount when you come back!” Knight raised his voice and roared.

Cillin waved his hands to indicate his acknowledgement.

Watching Cillin departing on his hoverboard, Lung let out a cheap and perverted smile and said, “Not a date? Like hell anyone will believe that. Let’s have a guess: who do you think Cillin went out on a date with?”

“Is that even a question? Of course it’s beauty Sa. They must be up to goodbye kiss.” Knight opened the cabinet and counted how many bags of jerkies were left inside. He planned to take all of them with him during tomorrow’s departure.

“That’s not necessarily true. I heard that the research division’s Ling Long was a little interested in Cillin.” While speaking, Lung even put Ling Long’s picture on display intentionally for Knight and Ci Jincheng, “Not bad, right? They are both the elites of the research division…”

Lung hadn’t finished saying when the accommodation doorbell rang.

“Who would come over at this time?” Lung complained and reluctantly ended the conversation. He turned on the HUD and

looked at the image of the person standing outside the door. When they saw the image on the HUD, Knight and Ci Jincheng turned their heads towards Lung.

Lung raised both his hands and said, “Alright, I never said anything.”

The visitor was none other than Ling Long.

This was the first time Ling Long had visited their accommodation. After entering the house, Ling Long looked obviously disappointed when she did not see Cillin anywhere at first glance.

Ci Jincheng checked the time and said, “Cillin had left two minutes and twenty five seconds ago. Judging from the speed in which he rides his hoverboard, you are too late to catch up to him.”

Ling Long frowned and looked at the decoration inside the accommodation. She accepted a water from Lung’s robot servant.

“When will Cillin come back?”

“That we have no idea. Who knows what’s he doing with Beauty Sa.”

Lung didn’t know if Knight had said it on purpose or not, but he could obviously feel the surrounding air pressure taking a nose

dive after Ling Long had heard his words.

The trio pretended not to notice the crack sound and the hairline cracks forming on the poor cup in Ling Long's hands and busied themselves with whatever they were tidying in hand. Knight flipped a single singlet back and forth for countless times and actually managed to put on a rather busy look.

An hour, two hours... three hours passed by, but Cillin still hadn't come back.

Cillin had left his communicator inside the accommodation and hence could not be contacted. While feeling the air pressure growing lower and lower around Ling Long, Knight shot a glance at Lung to come up with something asap. But Lung expressed wordlessly that he couldn't do anything about it either.

However, after Ling Long received a message, the trio suddenly felt as if spring had bloomed indoors.

A brilliant smile appeared on Ling Long's face as she got up and said, "Cillin had gone to Professor Mo, and it'll probably take a while before he comes back. I'll be taking my leave then. Goodbye."

After Ling Long left, Ci Jincheng said with a pondering look, "She looks somewhat familiar."

Old Mo did summon Cillin to his side with a message. Since Cillin

went directly to Mo Heng's staff dorm and not the research division, Ling Long had received the news later than expected.

Mo Heng was a little unhappy with Cillin participating in the Sector Championship, so he ordered Cillin to assemble one more machine before he departed for the contest. If he passed, then he could compete in the integrated warfare contest. Otherwise, he would have to say obediently at the research division and assemble more machines.

Mo Heng did not specifically request Cillin to assemble a particular machine. He allowed Cillin to design and choose his own parts. As the vice headmaster, Mo Heng had his own exclusive workshop in his own accommodation. Parts and equipment were the one thing he did not lack, and they were all high grade production as well.

Cillin had exerted a lot of effort into building this particular machine, so he used more time than usual to assemble it.

Cillin was very satisfied with the assembly of this machine. After it was completed, the examination results also satisfied Mo Heng a lot. There was no regression; it was still 99.97% overall accuracy. And so two clear fingerprint marks were left on Cillin's face again. Cillin suspected that his face might regress back to 'baby fat' stage if this continues.

After leaving Mo Heng's accommodation, Cillin took a trip to the research division and tidied up the things in his workshop for a little. After he walked out of the research division, he ran into Theresa, and Theresa smiled at him and said, "Congratulations on

your father’s succession.”

It was only one sentence and not many words, but there was only too much information contained within this simple line. All was understood, and no words were necessary.

The mission, had reached its end.

Chapter 70: Arrival At Asteroid C-N976

The sky was still grey dark at the training division, but the place was already bustling with activity already. It had turned lively an hour earlier than the usual time.

The students attending the military class had ran surprisingly early to the training division's airport. They were all extending their necks and glancing at their surroundings. Gerrard did not restrain them either; it was something that happened every year and not necessarily a negative occurrence for these students. At the very least, it could incite them to work harder in the future.

Before long, a passenger transport had flew over and descended at a parking spot at the airport.

The first person to descend from the transport was a dean in Seven Lights. The dean were followed by Fu Luo, Pride, Knight, Cillin...

All ten candidates wore special uniforms. The main color of the uniforms was sky blue. Seven Lights integrated warfare uniforms were different every year, rotating between seven colors. Last year's was green, so this year's theme was the color after green, blue. The chest area of the uniform was imprinted with Seven Lights' seven-colored school badge of the seven colors: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. The back of their jackets had Seven Lights' logo and the candidate's name. Every one of their clothes were unique.

This uniform represented a kind of honor, the honor to represent Seven Lights to compete in the Sector Championship integrated warfare contest.

The moment they saw them, the surrounding students began to discuss among themselves.

“Which one is it? Which one’s Shadow X?”

“That guy with light grey hair next and next and next to Fu Luo! He’s Shadow X!”

“He really doesn’t look like it!”

…

The ten candidates did not care what the students were saying about them and followed the dean to the front.

Cillin and co were still in a sleepy and groggy state. Last night, Lung, who was so excited that he could not sleep, had dragged the three of them together to play cards with him for the whole night. Although they won every cent of the dividends he got from selling the black mice claws in his pockets, but it was at the expense of their sleep time. Therefore all four men had come over in disgruntled moods and dark circles around their eyes.

“Yo. You guys went out to catch thieves last night or something?” Gerrard watched the incoming group and set his eyes

on Cillin and his friends. He immediately noticed the serious lack of sleep on their faces.

“We played cards for the whole night…”

Cillin covered Lung’s mouth before he could continue further. Only this idiot with a screw loose in his head would tell the truth with easy conscience in this situation. Did he not notice the green vein throbbing on the dean’s forehead?

Knight and Ci Jincheng looked away from Lung in unison. Brother, just how thick could you get?

The dean’s task was to deliver these ten candidates to Gerrard, and Gerrard would lead the team to asteroid C-N976. After the discussion, Gerrard then led the group up the starship.

The starship had Seven Lights’ logo on it. There were medical staff and workmen inside. These people had been trained and handpicked for this journey. The majority of them were people from the training division and the police division.

The ten candidates were arranged Individual lounges on the starship. Cillin and co had gone straight to their own lounges to catch some Zs after boarding the starship. The rest of the candidates were also bored and went back to their respective lounges to watch the footage of last year’s integrated warfare contest.

For the next few days on the starship, Gerrard would talk to them about things to take note of and some past experiences, before answering some of the questions raised by the candidates. Teamwork was the most important factor to obtain a good result, which was why Gerrard allocated more time for the team to familiarise with each other so that accidents would not happen later.

When Cillin's group had arrived on asteroid C-N976, the people of the four military academies were there already. The teams of two Sector B institutes of higher learning had also arrived before them.

Just like the students in Seven Lights, the thing these people were most concerned of was Shadow X's identity. However, when they saw Cillin, they found that it was truly difficult to believe that he was Shadow X. From his appearance, Cillin truly did not look like the Shadow X in their hearts. He looked more like the young master of a rich family.

The twelve floor building in the camp was built specifically for the participating students. The second floor was a restaurant, and everything above the second floor were accommodations. Every team had a floor to themselves, and prior to this, every institute drew lots to decide which floor they were staying in. Therefore the decision was finalized long ago as to which floor belonged to which institute, and even if there were opposing opinions, it wasn't anything to be disputed about.

There was also a gym covering a wide area beside the student accommodation. They were both indoors and outdoor. The indoor

gyms did need not be described; Cillin and everyone else were familiar with them. The outdoor gyms had a much larger variety.

There were all sorts of vehicles such as hoverboards, flying cars, mechs, fighter aircrafts and much more. Moreover, they were of military grade and were of much better specs than the usual stuff. Many of the students who came here and felt bored could even fly a fighter aircraft and take a spin around the area. Regrettably, the scenery of this place could not be considered great. Mechanized buildings could be seen everywhere, and it was either that or large areas of battlefields. Forget about beautiful country scenes; it was only possible to meet a thousand blooming flowers in one's dream.

"Cillin, do you want to give it a try?"

While clinging to Cillin's shoulders, Knight pointed to the fighter aircraft parked on the field. For some students, a fighter aircraft might be something fresh since it was usually something they could come into contact with only on virtual platforms. There weren't many people who had flown a real fighter aircraft before. But Knight came into contact with one real early; his father had flown circles with him in his lap before he even knew how to walk. Though, of course, at the time Knight was put inside a safety compartment, or with his baby constitution, it would've been one hell of a ride.

"Sure." Cillin answered crisply.

"I want to fly too. How about... the four of us have a match?" Lung pointed at Ci Jincheng reading a book at the back and said.

“Great idea! Wanna go, Ci Jincheng?” Knight looked at Ci Jincheng.

Ci Jincheng closed his book, “Of course. The four housemates shall go for a stroll!”

Pride lifted his chin and humphed. In his opinion, there was nothing here that was worth strolling. These aircrafts didn’t even have homing missiles on them; they were put here purely for the sake of fooling the students. Only those who had neither seen nor flown a fighter aircraft before would be curious about them.

Knight’s eyes zipped right over at Pride’s disdain-filled ‘hmph’, “Guys who lost a dogfight have no right to ‘humph’ others!”

Pride choked and turned beef red at Knight’s words. Oh, how he wished he could lock horns with Knight there and then. It was a fact that he had lost to Knight on the Sector Championship platform in a best of three dogfight.

One must register first to use the fighter aircraft on the training field. Originally, Sird and the others wanted to join them as well, but since Knight said that they wanted a fight between the four of them, Sird decided to wait and see how they fly first. Although he had flown a fighter aircraft before, this was Sector C. It made Sird even more excited.

Cillin and co all chose the same model. After registration, they climbed their respective fighter aircraft.

Not far away, the people of the four military academies, be it in the training rooms or accommodations, all wore expectant smiles on their faces as they watched the four fighter aircraft flying up from the field.

Comos leaned against the railing and looked towards the four fighter aircrafts rising to the sky and said, “They will probably run into that, won’t they?”

Feng Haicao flipped open the display device on his hand. The light screen that popped up showed the images of the four fighter aircrafts, “But of course, the people at the upper level really likes to tease their students, you know. Even Knight probably won’t realize it until it’s too late By then he wouldn’t be able to contact the others anyway.”

“Can’t wait for it!” Yue Lou yawned and moved closer to the screen.

Chapter 71: Tricks

On the other side of the camp, the officers who brought the teams over, and the officers who were stationed at the camp gathered to chat with each other. The officer with the lowest military rank in this house was at least a lieutenant colonel. Because there was no one else around them, the normally serious-looking officers all appeared to be more relaxed now, and judging from their conversational tones, they all knew each other well.

“Gerrard, why are you the one bringing the team this time? Isn’t Huo Neil the one who usually does this?” someone asked.

They all knew that the thing Gerrard hated the most was being a ‘nanny’, which was why Gerrard had chosen the police division and not the training division when he and Huo Neil were sent to Planet Seven Lights back then. Gerrard had nowhere near enough patience to baby those young masters and mistresses at the training division.

Leading soldiers was one thing, but leading students was completely out of the question. If he was to apply what he learned from the army onto the students, they would have to shed a whole layer of skin in less than two days, assuming they even survive it. Moreover, the students in Seven Lights all had a certain level of background. Gerrard might not fear them, but he did not wish to go for wool and come home shorn, and he was lazy to deal with the twists and turns of politics either. It was exactly why the last few years’ integrated warfare contest were all led by Huo Neil.

“Huo Neil’s got business, so I’m leading the team this time.”

“But you don’t look reluctant either. So it was an excuse, wasn’t it?” The speaker lifted his leg and kicked Gerrard on his seat while saying.

“The main reason is because our candidates this time were pretty good, and I even hand picked six of them myself.” Gerrard felt like laughing the moment he thought of them in the team. He wondered if those punks would cause some sort of trouble.

“You got to pick six candidates yourself? I only got to pick four at our place; the remaining six were all cut and dried for someone already.” another person complained. People like them usually talked with their fists, but Sector B’s rules were obviously more complicated.

“Sigh, let’s not talk about those sickening topic. It’s annoying enough being a ‘nanny’ already and you people just had to talk about them.” one person slapped the chair’s armrest and said.

The leaders of the four military academies and base officers grinned at their complaints; thank goodness they weren’t assigned to Sector B.

“Speaking of which, Gerrard, you’ll be coming back after another year, won’t you?” A base officer asked.

“Yeah!” The moment the topic was brought up Gerrard grew incredibly excited.

Everyone here had five years of away mission, and once the mission has ended, they would return to the army and have their military ranks would increased. Currently both Gerrard and Huo Neil were colonels, and their next step would be to rise as major generals.

“Heh, congratulations on your early freedom. We still have two years ahead of us.”

“Don’t forget to treat us then!”

While they were speaking, someone suddenly said, “Yo, Gerrard, it’s one of your brats.”

Gerrard looked at the monitor the person was pointing and chuckled, “Why is it them four again!”

The rest of them also looked towards the monitor. There was a list beside them that displayed the registration of the fighter aircraft in use.

“I knew that Knight wouldn’t be able to restrain himself.” someone laughed while speaking. Some of these people were soldiers under Knight’s father just like Gerrard, so they were familiar with Knight as well.

“This is the Shadow X they speak of.” one person pointed at Cillin.

“The young master of the Andrea Family is in this as well? I heard that the old man (Lung’s father) from the Andrea Family pissed off a few old generals so badly that they nearly spew blood not long ago.”

Everyone here knew about the trivial matters between the Andrea Family’s old man and the few heads within the army. They argued against each other almost every day, but although the argument had gone on for nearly a hundred years, no one actually pulled any real punches because of it. But for whatever reason they just loved picking at each other’s faults and trigger a topic to be quarreled about. Some of the fundings in the army were bamboozled by the old generals from the Andrea old man, and anyone who could shakedown a person of the Andrea Family is a crafty old fox.

As for Ci Jincheng, they very tacitly avoided discussing about him. They did not wish to dwell anymore than necessary when the surname ‘Ci’ was involved.

“Should we toy with them a little?”

“Bullshit, you gonna just sit by and leave this golden chance to waste? They literally delivered themselves to our doorsteps!”

Gerrard dragged his chair over and said, “Do your worst. The four of them have quite the big heart.”

“Roger~~”

That officer was so excited he rolled up his sleeves, wriggled his fingers and chuckled evilly. Besides him, the few other people inside the room had also dragged their chairs closer to the screen and looked on with incredible interest in their eyes.

Meanwhile, at this very moment, the quartet flying happily on the sky were still chatting very leisurely and had not entered into a competitive state from the very beginning. In fact, most of the time Cillin, Knight and Ci Jincheng were listening to Lung making a loud ruckus in their earphones.

“Holy shit, there’s a sea! I can’t believe there’s a sea at this place! Eh~~ Cillin y’all look quickly, the shape of that coral reef zone looks like the ass of a hot babe bending downwards!”

Cillin and others: “…”

Most people would describe it with a heart shape, wouldn’t they?! Why does everything comes out weird from his mouth!

Back at the monitor room, Gerrard facepalmed. He had a taste of this fellow’s idiocy a long time ago, so it could be said that he was somewhat prepared for it.

Meanwhile the team leaders in the room looked at the base officers with a ‘oh so that’s your taste’ look on their faces, pissing off the base officers so much that they wished they could run right over and beat that fucker to a pulp. That coral reef zone was formed naturally, so what the hell did it have anything to do with

them! It was only now they finally understood why the old generals were the way they were after getting pissed off at the old man from the Andrea Family.

A drill was being conducted at the sea surface beneath them. The explosion beneath the water caused the sea water to be splashed sky high. Since this wasn't an official drill, no lockdown was carried out in this area. But most students flying a fighter aircraft would know to avoid them if they were passing through this area.

"Oh, are those caused by torpeeeeeeeeeee~dos? How spectacular! Truly an eye opener!"

Bullshit! What's the act for? Have you really never seen a torpedo before? Your family built so many torpedoes they could blow up an entire Sector!

The base officers inside the monitoring room were so pissed they couldn't wait to pull out their guns and charge out into the open. How could this bastard use that 'no big deal' tone of his so naturally and say something as bullshit as 'truly an eye opener'!

Gerrard continued to facepalm.

After a base officer opened communication and gave out a few orders, the warships on the sea began to open fire towards the sky.

Although those people on the sea were firing at the sky, it was very obvious that they were just pushing them away.

Cillin and co pulled their fighter aircrafts upwards towards higher altitude. However, when they rose about twenty thousand meters or so, Knight suddenly recalled something. Before he could speak, his communicator already let out static sounds that indicated that the signal was interrupted.

That wasn't all. Something happened to the fighter aircraft's propulsion system and the engine had shut down on him. The current situation was that the fighter aircraft was headed straight for a nosedive!

Motherfucker!

Knight swore. Why had he forgotten about this!

Those officers must be waiting full of expectation for them to embarrass themselves right now. All sorts of confusion and bewilderment, panic and helplessness, fear and despair; these were the thing those officers sitting in their monitoring room were looking forward to!

Such similar incidents would happen during the selection of certain pilots in the army to test their adaptability. Knight had forgotten about this shit after his long stay at Sector B. This place was under the army's supervision, and thus their tricks would be army-style as well.

But those three should be able to handle this, right?

Chapter 72: Everyone's Got A Trick Up Their Sleeves

The on-board communicator was useless. Both the communication and positioning equipment they brought were unusable.There were no parachutes, and the emergency cockpit could not be accessed. Logically speaking, the pilot sitting inside the cockpit would not be feeling too well either.

This was exactly what the officers wanted to see. In this almost completely desperate, isolated and helpless situation, the students' inner self would normally be exposed more truthfully.

The officers were looking forward to seeing the reaction of these four fellows, but contrary to their expectations, reality threw them a harsh slap across the face.

Never mind about Knight. He most definitely had a certain level of understanding towards this type of situation, and the fact that he was able to face it calmly was not beyond their expectations. However, Ci Jincheng was even calmer than Knight. At the least, Knight had expressed more or less some worry for his fellow companions, but Ci Jincheng had no such worries at all. The instant the power went out Ci Jincheng coolly took out a book and began reading with great relish. Before he started reading, he did not forget to nod and smile politely once at the direction of the hidden camera. This caused the faces of the officers inside the monitoring room to fall.

Downer.

They looked at Lung.

After the power system had gone down, young master Lung froze for two seconds before he began expressing his greatest disdain, “To think that our grand army would buy such substandard goods. But, I remember that the army’s resource allocation was pretty good, could it be that there are only defective goods left when the resources are passed down to this area? Or maybe…”

Lung kept talking to himself incessantly and paid no attention to the falling fighter aircraft at all. In the end, he even came to an astounding conclusion – as he thought, the army stationed at the borders were all raised by their stepmothers!

Meaning to say that the children of stepmothers are usually not loved.

Although the quartet’s communicators could not be used due to interference, there were hidden cameras in the cockpit, and hence, the officers heard very clearly every word young master Lung was saying.

The team leaders inside the monitoring room all looked sympathetically at the base officers. It wasn’t that they agreed with Lung, but that they sympathized with them for being scorned upon by Lung.

The base officers nearly spat blood from sheer anger. Our Sector is nothing like the primitive zones of the borders of the thirteen backwater Sectors, and even if this place is at the border, it is still

the border of Sector B and Sector C. How the hell could it possibly be compared to those primitive borders?! Not to mention that their highly weaponized fighter aircrafts and other armed vehicles were not placed within the student camp, but somewhere else.

It was completely beyond their imaginations that, not only did they fail to intimidate Lung, they were instead harshly scorned upon, and worse this was but the beginning of it. After Lung was finished slighting the army, and the fighter aircraft had descended until roughly ten thousand meters above ground, Lung suddenly took out a small square box and ejected it out of the fighter aircraft through a small exit. The small square box split into five smaller blocks outside the aircraft before sticking themselves onto the aircraft's wings, body and tail respectively.

Lung held a palm-sized controller in his hand, and when he pressed a button on the controller, huge wings stretched out from the five smaller blocks. The fighter aircraft's descent speed slowed abruptly, and in the end, it almost drifted like a piece of thin paper floating in the sky. While using the controller in his hands, the block at the tail of Lung's aircraft began spitting out some white smoke.

And so, the officers in the monitoring room watched Lung piloting the aircraft that, despite losing its power system, was floating about slowly, until a huge smiley face was drawn in the sky.

Gerrard continued to facepalm. He seriously did not know what to say about this Andrea Family young master.

As for Cillin, the moment the power went out, he swept a glance around the cockpit before he opened up a spot, took apart the remote controller inside, opened the control panel, and began entering a new decoding program on the control terminal which screen had winked into existence in order to reassume control.

At the same time, the fingers of the person in the monitoring room in front a screen danced as he entered his own control program to stop Cillin's decoding.

Fifteen seconds later, the screen inside the monitoring room displayed the word 'Connection Terminated'. This meant that the plane's access rights had fallen completely into Cillin's hands. The officer in front of the screen blushed bright red, unable to utter even a single word for a long while. He was actually taken out by an academy student, and in less than twenty seconds, no less!

Gerrard slapped his shoulders, and said, "There's nothing to be ashamed of. His mentor is that old Mo, Mo Heng. Give him a small purpose knife and he'll be able to take apart the entire aircraft into its base components, and reassemble it as good as new."

Gerrard's words might have been exaggerated a little, but there was no denying that Cillin's ability had truly astounded them.

After reacquiring access rights of the fighter aircraft, and reactivating the power system, Cillin piloted the plane and flew downwards. It didn't take long before Cillin saw Ci Jincheng and Knight's aircrafts both regaining flight capabilities and their respective power systems returning to normality.

The quartet looked for a parking spot and landed their aircrafts. Knight also explained to Cillin and the others about the trick that the army often used. Most of the time, the new students' fighter aircrafts were tampered with, and could be remotely controlled. Sometimes the plane would break a wing, sometimes its power system would fail, sometimes its energy would suddenly fall to zero, and so on. It was all just a trick played by the officers on the students, although it was also how the officers reevaluate a student's ability.

"Ceh, they just have to make everything oh-so-mysterious. My grandfather once said that one must not completely rely on someone else during a crisis. They must learn how to save themselves, and save up for a rainy day." While juggling with the little square box in his hands, Lung gave Cillin a huge thumbs-up, "That being said, Cillin sure is impressive; snatching back access rights of the fighter aircraft just like that. It's like giving that mastermind a direct slap to the face. Awesome!"

When the quartet returned to the camp, the gazes of the surrounding students were obviously different from before. The news that they were played by the officers but remained safe and sound and dealt with the situation with ease had spread. Sird, Hard, and a few other people were impressed by the feat. If they had been the victims, they would have definitely made a fool out of themselves in front of those officers. Although they did not know how the quartet had actually dealt with the situation, it did not affect their opinions about them.

The gazes of the military academy students were even more complicated. It wasn't just anyone who could cause their officers

to flip out, and judging from their faces, no one but colonel Gerrard looked happy today.

"Sigh, I really wanna know how they did it." Yue Lou leaned against the railing and sighed.

"Ah, I can't wait." Feng Haicao clapped the display device close in his hand. The device could only display the flight status of the fighter aircraft, yet not the pilots' reactions inside it.

There were quite a few people whom Knight knew inside the military academies, such as the Second Military Academy's Stantine. During dinnertime, Knight was called down by Stantine for a drinking game, and he wasn't gone for long before Cillin and the others' communicators began to ring.

"Come down quickly, fuck, these shameless bastards are planning to use sheer numbers against me!"

The Second Military Academy's accommodation was at the sixth floor, and Seven Lights' accommodation was at the eighth. When Cillin and the others went downstairs, they saw Knight and ten other people from the Second Military Academy surrounding a table inside the common living room of an accommodation. Knight had one foot on the stool and an arm on his waist. His face was already red from drinking, and when he saw Cillin and the others walking towards him he let out a grunt of laughter, "Say hello to my accommodation's brothers. Today the four of us are gonna go all out against ya! Let's see who falls first!"

“Fuck off and get a few more people over here already, otherwise you’re gonna complain that we dropped you with mere numbers again… Isn’t there still a girl at your place?” Stantine let out a cunning snicker.

“No need. The four of us are enough!” When Knight’s stubborn temper flared up, no one could change his mind.

“Yeah, the four of us will do. I’ll take four, and you guys split the remaining six among yourselves.” Cillin walked beside the table and said.

Bang!

Before the Second Military Academy students could offer an opinion, Knight had already slammed a fist on the table and said, “I’ll take four, and the rest of you take the six!”

Lung patted Knight’s shoulders and said, “Hey, there’s no need to fight amongst ourselves. We’ll take three each and leave the last guy for Ci Jincheng.”

Ci Jincheng lifted his eyebrows but said nothing.

“How should we drink?” Cillin asked.

“What nonsense are you spouting, of course we’re gonna down a whole bottle at a time! Don’t tell me you’re gonna drink sip by sip like a girl?” Stantine yelled.

Without a word Cillin took a bottle, and downed the whole thing in five seconds.

“Alright, you’re the real Shadow X alright, I’ve been wanting to fight against ya a long time ago.” Stantine took up a bottle of his own and began pouring it down his throat.

On that night, the Second Military Academy’s leading officer had an expression so dark he looked like a brooding storm.

The ten of them actually lost the drinking game to their opponent’s four people!

Knight really drank too much, and went down after taking out three people by himself. He was dragged back to his bed by Cillin. Lung also drank too much, but his drunk performance was different in that he became overly excited, yelling that he’s “gonna play cards” and if he didn’t get to play cards, he’s “gonna sing” and if he didn’t get to sing, he’s “gonna make a scene and refuse to leave.”

Cillin dragged Knight upstairs first before coming back to grab one of Lung’s arms each with Ci Jincheng, forcefully dragging him back upstairs.

That night, Lung sang love songs for the entire night. Thank goodness every room had excellent sound insulation, or the instructors might have just pumped a bullet down his throat.

They had their fun. When the people of all ten institutes were gathered, the integrated warfare contest officially began. The Second Military Academy students rubbed their fists and wiped their palms. They lost in the drinking game and were called up by their officer to ‘sober up’ at midnight. They must take revenge.

Chapter 73: Assignment

The ten teams departed from asteroid C-N976 in unison and headed to their destination asteroid C-N300. These two asteroids were both situated at the edge of Sector C and supervised by the military.

Every team was allocated a small starship and a hundred or so technical engineering type robots to assist with the management of the starship and other matters. However, the assistance was strictly limited to the journey to their destination, and once they arrived at the space station outside their target asteroid, the robots would all be put into sleep mode. They were not allowed to be brought into the planet as martial force for offensive purposes against the other teams.

When they reached the space station outside the asteroid, all team members would switch to air transports that were prepared beforehand and head to the planet's stronghold. When that happened, the ten competing team members would truly be left alone in that area. If any technical issues were to arise, they must be resolved by the team members of the respective team alone.

Team members were not allowed to bring weapons, and would receive a uniform distribution from the base. If there were any special requests, they could make an application to the base. The applied items must be inspected and verified by the responsible person in charge of the base before they were allowed to be taken. No subspace containers were allowed to be carried, and all food, energy batteries and so on must be uniformly received from the base as well, hence ensuring basic uniformity among the ten team's equipment. the only way to differentiate the abilities of the

students of each institute was by having everybody at the same starting line.

Gerrard and the other team leaders were not allowed to accompany their team members, and could only be transported by air to a different location. Moreover, while the integrated warfare contest was ongoing, they could only stay at asteroid C-N300's space station. They were forbidden from interfering with the students' actions.

The students' job was to gather ten energy blocks, and whoever turned in ten energy blocks the fastest would complete the mission first. There were a total of one hundred energy blocks in the area, and they were all buried in the ground beforehand. Only the person in charge of this contest would know the exact location of each energy blocks. Everyone else knew nothing about them.

Although looking at the average, it might seem that every team could obtain ten energy blocks equally, in reality things were different. The aircraft parked above the stronghold consumed energy, and after they landed the security system installed on the aircraft, livelihood, electronics and other necessities all consumed energy. Normally speaking, the team members would need to gather a total of 12 to 13 energy blocks to smoothly complete the mission. Ten of them would be turned over for the mission, and the rest were used for energy consumption.

In Seven Lights' ten man team Knight was appointed team leader, and Cillin the assistant team leader. Knight might look like he couldn't give a rat's ass about anyone normally, but when he had real responsibility put on his shoulders, he would become a lot

more steadier.

The ten teams of ten institutes all gathered at the port not far away from the base and departed towards asteroid C-N300.

As the battlefield for every year's integrated warfare contest, asteroid C-N300's mechanization wasn't too severe. It even had a sea, although it was not part of the integrated warfare contest's battlefield. There were also garrisons and observation stations on the planet, and they were not within the integrated warfare contest's combat zone.

A majority of the combat zones on the planet used to hold the integrated warfare contest were jungles. There were also some large lakes. In order to ensure that the students would have enough food supply, some small mammals were also specifically raised in the jungle. There were also fish in the lake. Highly dangerous large fishes and animals did not exist in the integrated warfare contest combat zone, which was why the biggest threats of this contest were still the students of other institutes.

Every student wore a special sensor suit on themselves. The guns distributed by the base were not of the usual lethal kind, but specially modified so that the student who was hit could judge from their sensor suits if they were 'dead'. If they were judged 'dead', then this student would be already out of the contest, and at the same time, the military would come over to take them to the observation station on the planet. The student would no longer be able to participate in combat.

For Cillin, this was nothing more but a game. It was a classic

educational game with no life or death stakes involved. But for many of the non-military academy students, this was their first, and most significant battle.

Every team had their own specific stronghold. During earlier integrated warfare contests, the participants had to seize a stronghold for themselves, but later on it had gradually developed to the point where strongholds were distributed right away.

The surroundings of every stronghold always had a lake so as to take care the students' water problems.

After arriving smoothly at the space station of asteroid C-N300, the engineering robots all went into sleep mode and became completely immobilized. Cillin and the others had long since switched transports to the aircraft prepared beforehand and drove it to the surface. From now on, everything must be carried out by the students themselves.

The first thing to do after landing wasn't to scan the surroundings of the stronghold to check if there were energy blocks around or where the closest energy blocks were. It was to conduct a good preparatory work.

"Scan the surrounding terrain and open the solar panel." Knight ordered succinctly.

Although they were given maps beforehand, those maps were all from last year. There might be crustal movements or other special circumstances that altered the terrain. Moreover, they also had to

consider the growth of the grasslands and forestries, and the distribution of small mammals. Scanning the surroundings and acquiring a real-time map facilitates the later operations. As for opening the solar panel, it was for the purpose of conserving energy and absorbing solar energy from the sun. This was to avoid using a hard won energy block due to lack of energy later.

"Map acquisition successful." Kang Man's fingers moved across the control panel and brought up the map.

"Analyse for strategic points and begin the assignments."

Once the strategic points were analysed based on the terrain, it would be time to begin deploying 'Sentinel' on the ground within a certain area, so that the alarm could be sounded in time when the enemy team members attacked. Besides that, they also had to place traps etc. and improvise based on their respective needs.

At the same time, Ci Jincheng analysed the weather condition and made some predictions about the weather for the next five days so that it'd facilitate future plannings and operations.

On the night they arrived on C-N300, Knight decided against taking action and instead called for rest. This was because that rest would become a luxury, and they would have to stay tensed and alert when the battles began. Therefore, before either sides had started fighting, they would take the opportunity to get in a good rest.

Lung ran to the lake to catch some fish. Judging from his

appearance, he wasn't anxious in the least. He looked like he was on a trip.

While eating dinner, Knight looked at Cillin and Lung and said, "I heard that the two of you were marked."

The team leaders of each team had told their own members that whoever manages to send Cillin or Lung out of the contest would be amply rewarded when they got back. These two fellows seriously pissed off the officers that day.

"I was born to be dazzling star, capturing everyone's attention in the limelight." Lung did not have the slightest consciousness as a marked man at all.

"As long as you don't act like an idiot when the time comes."

The people who needed to be heavily guarded against in every institute were explained a long time ago, so Knight refrained from nagging further. Fu Luo and Kang Man basically would not participate in any external confrontations, since Kang Man was pure technical personnel and Fu Luo was responsible for health care. They both belonged at the rear.

After dinner, the rest of the team members rested while a member on rotation was left behind to guard the night. The person to keep vigil for the first night was Cillin. He had requested this himself. He had had his beauty sleep back on the starship when they came over after all.

You gotta do something when you’re on night watch, after all.

Chapter 74: Marking Red

“What… is this?”

Inside the control room, Knight stared blankly at the items on top of the table.

Knight had climbed out of his bed a long time ago. The moment he entered the control room, he discovered that there were five fist-sized warheads on the table in front of Cillin. Knight dared wager that he had never seen the base handing out such warheads to them. This was because the rules of the integrated warfare contest forbad the distribution of air-to-ground weaponry.

Sird, Hard and the others also woke up early, and when they saw the five items in the control room they too were pretty amazed.

The five warheads had spiral patterns like a screw’s.

Ci Jincheng stared at the five warheads as his eyes lit up, “Is there something inside?”

“Correct.” Cilin nodded.

Ci Jincheng walked over and examined the warheads closely. Then he said, “Are they detectors?”

Cilliin gave Ci Jincheng a thumbs-up and explained, “According

to the plan, today Knight and Pride will pilot the plane and take us to San Border. Although the plane isn't equipped with assault weapons, it can carry them. These five warheads are all installed with detectors and jammers. We will fire these five warheads before Knight and Pride land the aircraft, and they will dig into the ground and transmit signals from underground, thereby cutting off the Sentinel defense network and scan for external changes…"

Cillin explained the function of these five warheads to the group. According to the rules of the integrated warfare contest, the planes on the aircraft are not allowed to be installed with assault weapons. Normally speaking, they could only be used to transport people. In the past there were people who installed some portable weapons on the plane, but the effects were not as good as they hoped.

It might be because that many students nowadays were used to high-tech battles that they gradually overlooked some of the primitive, and most basic way of combat. Overreliance on high-end technology and WMDs (Weapons of Mass Destruction) were not really meaningful to a student's growth. Therefore, large-scale weaponry were not allocated in the integrated warfare contest. All students basically had to lift their guns and 'mark red' the enemy one by one.

The meaning of 'Mark red' was to 'shoot dead' an enemy. If a student's sensor suit judged that the level of damage sustained was enough to cause death, then the student's clothes would turn red color to indicate that that student was already 'dead'. The students who were 'marked red' could only stay at the same spot and wait for the garrison troops to come and pick them up. The students who were 'marked red' would be taken to the observation station.

Although they were out of the battle already, they could still watch the battlefield from the displays of the observation station.

The closest academy to their location was San Border College, also hailing from Sector B. San Border College's total score put them at eighth place of the integrated warfare contest last year, and it was also a rather famous academy at Sector B.

Knight had made some minor changes to the battle plan based on the five warheads Cillin provided. If they succeeded, the time spent on this endeavour would be three times shorter; and the less time they use, the bigger the advantage they would gain.

Some teams would go search for energy blocks first, but there were also some teams who would first take out the competitors close to them. As the saying goes, how could one tolerate others snoring at one's bedside? If they did not take out their competitor, then they would be met with bigger obstacles when they were searching for the energy blocks. When that happened, the time they would waste would not be just a day or two.

Obviously, Knight had chosen the more forceful strategy of the two. In the past, the four military academies would also make such a decision. In general, every stronghold that was close to the four military academies' would be 'marked red' on the next day, so when San Border's participants learned that it was Seven Lights and not the four military academies that was nearby, they were so happy their mouths nearly got stuck. The difference in prowess between the four military academies and them was huge, but the overall prowess of every academy on Sector B was more or less the same. There was no such thing as an absolute advantage, so even if

Seven Lights had produced two powerful nemeses Knight and Shadow X this year, San Border wasn't really too afraid of them. It's not like they're military academies, so what the fuck was there to be afraid about?

There were seven people who had taken the initiative to participate in this offensive. Fu Luo, Kang Man and Ci Jincheng were left at the stronghold, whereas the remaining seven had joined the fray.

Every aircraft was equipped with two planes. Knight and Pride piloted one each, with Knight taking Cillin, Lung and Copley while Pride taking Sird and Hard. Although Pride usually looked at people with his nostrils, he would not be careless during a real operation.

"We're almost at their stronghold, any closer and we would be discovered by their Sentinel."

"Ok. This place is enough."

"Execute plan A." Knight said through the communicator."

"Understood." After receiving Knight's notification, Pride turned the plane and headed towards another direction.

After Pride's plane had flown far away, Knight's plane circled around the area to check in passing whether there were energy blocks around the area. Unfortunately, there were none.

Ten minutes later.

“Time’s up.”

To avoid having their communications tapped by their opponents, Knight and Pride had agreed on a time. Once the time was up, both sides fired their warheads in unison.

The trajectory of the warhead wasn’t like the near straight line of other warheads. Instead, it flew in a flight pattern that was erratic and incredibly unpredictable. After the warheads were shot, Knight parked the plane nearby and disguised it in full before sneaking towards San Border with Cillin, Lung and Copley.

It must be mentioned that Pride’s ability was pretty impressive. When Knight fired his warhead, Pride too had arrived at the expected location and fired his warhead.

When San Border’s air-raid siren indicated that there were fast-moving missiles in the air, their students still couldn’t quite believe what’s going on. Wasn’t there no ground-to-air weaponry in the contest? If that’s the case, then what were with these five objects? The air defense system did not detect any planes entering the alert zone either.

Since the missiles were travelling very swiftly and in an unpredictable pattern, plus they never thought that Seven Lights would actually attack them, and from the air no less, they failed to intercept the missiles.

The missiles weren't aimed at their aircraft. More accurately speaking, these missiles had just barely entered the edge of their alert zone. After the missiles had impacted against the ground they did not explode. Instead they penetrated straight into the underground before everything turned peaceful once more.

But this peace did not last very long before San Border's people realized that their Sentinel defense network was being hacked. Moreover, the speed at which it was hacked was incredibly quick!

But of course that was the case. It would really be strange if the combined efforts of the two experts Ci Jincheng and Kang Man at Seven Lights' stronghold had produced a slow hack.

San Border' Sentinel defense network lasted only thirty seconds before it was completely paralysed. Although San Border had guessed that the cause was the five warheads, they were unable to settle the matter immediately. After all, the five missiles had all penetrated into the ground.

Inside Seven Lights' aircraft, Ci Jincheng turned on his communicator, "Hack successful. Marking red."

San Border's Sentinel network was paralysed, by the sensors inside, the missiles could sense everything around them and display them on Ci Jincheng's screen. What Ci Jincheng needed to do now was to report these circumstances to the seven people carrying out the operation. He would need to explain in detail who had enemies around them and how many, how much danger was

lurking in the area and so on.

In the space station outside asteroid C-N300, the team leaders of the ten teams were watching the battle while seated. There were plenty of monitors, and every team's outdoor activities could be captured through satellite monitoring. Right at the center, there was a monitor that wasn't displaying these activities, but some blue and red dots.

The monitor was still completely blue yesterday, but red dots were already filling it today. These red dots represented those who were 'marked red'. Every dot was labeled with the student's info so that the officers would know that which dot belonged to whom. From this monitor filled with dots, one could see that the military academy students were much stronger than the other students of Sector B. As usual, any academy that was close to a military academy would be marked red on the second day. No matter how much preparation they'd made, they would not last over the second day.

The team leaders of the four military academies were numb to this situation already. Although the team leaders of the academies that were marked red had mentally prepared themselves, they still felt more or less unhappy on the inside. But the person who was even unhappier than them was the team leader of San Border. Anyone who saw his dark expression could see that the guy was roaring on the inside.

Gerrard sat at a side and leisurely picked his teeth while he watched the students of San Border being marked red by Seven Lights. From time to time, he would even hum a martial tune,

pissing off the San Border team leader by his side so much that he ground his teeth repeatedly.

Chapter 75: Inferior

After the second day's 'Mark Red' battle, half of the ten teams were kicked out of the contest.

In the first place, Seven Lights' goal was only the fifth spot. Judging from the current situation, the four military academies would contest the top four, and all Seven Lights needed to do was to drift along and pass the time. The remaining energy blocks were enough that they could do whatever they wanted to. But Gerrard was slightly dissatisfied with this result. Perhaps those fellows would bring everyone a pleasant surprise?

In fact, the five forces could be said to be rather docile during the few days after the 'Mark Red' battle. They only searched their surroundings for energy blocks and did not attack the people of other teams.

Seven Lights had already found seven energy blocks, but used one for daily consumption. That was to say that they needed to search another four or so energy blocks. After five teams were kicked out of the contest, the task to search for energy blocks became a lot easier.

Lung sat against a tree and plucked at the leaves beside him in boredom. Not far away, Cillin was thinking with his eyes closed.

Their patrol group of six was split into three teams: Lung and Cillin, Knight and Copley, and Sird and Hard. Meanwhile, Pride was responsible for piloting the plane between the three teams and

the stronghold to transport supplies. If any energy blocks were discovered, Pride would transfer them to the stronghold to avoid them being intercepted by the military academy students.

Up until yesterday, every team was able to find two energy blocks respectively. However, Knight's team found yet another energy block way early in the morning today, resulting in Lung yelling about not wanting to lose to Knight and finding another energy block to match the score. This was the extent of Lung's interest in the integrated warfare contest.

However, energy blocks gets harder and harder later on, and in the previous contests, the time spent on searching energy blocks could last up to ten days or so. Sometimes there wouldn't even be any findings for a day or two.

In Cillin's head, he had already marked down all of the locations of the energy blocks that were discovered. Some were Seven Lights', and some were their opponents'. From these burial spot one could deduce how the mind of the person who buried these energy blocks acted, and predict where the next burial spot might be following this line of thought. Otherwise, it would waste too much time to continue searching blindly like this. This might be just a game, but it was Cillin's final game in an institute. He might never experience such a thing again in the future.

When he saw Cillin opening his eyes, Lung grew spirited, "You're done calculating?"

Cillin nodded, pointed at a direction, and walked there with Lung. But half a day later, the sensor still did not detect anything.

There were no mountains in their surroundings, and the land was as flat as they could see. There was a lake before them.

"Could it be inside the lake?" Lung pointed at the lake and said. Lung believed in Cillin's calculation abilities, but the reason the sensor could not detect anything might be because that it was shielded in some way or inside the lake. The match officials could not have isolated the block's energy reactions completely, or they might as well not bury it at all.

Cracking his neck, Lung took off his jacket, took the sensor from Cillin's hands and jumped into the lake. Before long, he appeared and said excitedly, "There is a reaction, and two no less!"

Lung tossed the sensor to Cillin, "You don't need to come down. I can handle this myself!"

"Okay. Watch yourself." Cillin said as if to mean something. When he grabbed the sensor he made a secretive hand gesture.

"Got it!" said Lung before diving back to the bottom of the lake.

At the same time, there were two people not far away from Cillin and Lung. After interacting with each other through a series of hand gestures, one of them closed in on Cillin whereas the other went into the lake to seize the energy block while his companion was holding Cillin back.

Before the person closing in on Cillin could even act, Cillin

immediately turned around and fired a single shot. Then he swiftly left the lakeside and went into the forest in search of obstacles to hide behind. The opponent's gun was probably equipped with a silencer, but Cillin's wasn't. This gunshot was to warn Lung under the lake that someone was coming. Previously, he already noticed that there were people around them, which was why he made that gesture to tell Lung to be careful.

Cillin did not assume a defensive state and instead closed in on his opponent using the forest as cover.

Thud thud thud. The bullets slammed into a tree Cillin was passing by, but it did not hit Cillin at all.

If the bullets could penetrate the tree trunks, it would have definitely hit Cillin. However, while the firearms distributed by the base shared nearly the same firing speed as real firearms, they could hardly kill a person, much less penetrate a tree trunk. This was the vulnerability Cillin exploited to close in forcefully towards his opponent.

His opponent got a little anxious as well. He knew that Cillin was Shadow X, but he didn't think that Cillin would be able to close in on him so quickly. Moreover, Cillin basically dodged the second he was ready to open fire, almost as if he could predict his every move. Although he knew that Cillin was closing in on him, he was unable to stop him. Therefore he had no choice but to back off for now.

While Cillin was closing in on the enemy, his hands weren't resting either. Bullets flew at that person from tricky angles,

although his opponent was an experienced person himself and was able to dodge bullets while backing into the forest.

But right before his foot was about to step on the ground, the person came to a stop. While he was shooting, retreating and avoid the bullets, he had also forgotten about the trap beneath his feet! Although he had sensed it just now, a bullet slammed into his chest during this less than a second's pause of time.

Mark red!

Now he understood that Cillin's goal was to force him to the location where the trap was set! To think that he was marked red by Shadow X himself; he wondered how his teammates would look when they heard about it.

In reality, Cillin did not count on these vine-made traps to trap a military academy student at all. He was only borrowing these traps to distract his opponent's attention.Such traps might be good for catching rabbits, but as military academy students, there was no way they could trap their feet at all. It was exactly because of this mindset that he had neglected the extremely short but fatal pause these things could bring upon them during a critical moment.

Since he was marked red, the guy laid on the ground straight away and gave Cillin a 'well done' hand gesture.

Cillin walked towards the person and took a glance, "The Second Military Academy's Ryan?"

Since a person who was marked red wasn't allowed to speak, Ryan could only nod his head helplessly. He wasn't able to meet Shadow X in the combat tournament, but he didn't think that he would be marked red by Shadow X in the integrated warfare contest. He supposed that this was what they call inferiority in skill.

"I'm very sorry for disqualifying you from the contest. Also," Cillin pointed at the direction of the lake, "That partner of yours has also been disqualified."

"What?!" This time Ryan was so shocked that he accidentally spoke up in agitation.

There was the sound of slithering rope as Lung lifted a fainted person in one hand, and the two energy blocks tied together in the other.

Ryan's face changed colors when he saw Lung holding his partner. His eyes looked conflicted. It would appear that the Second Military Academy was going to left behind just like before. If even Boen had been marked red, then the rest of their teammates wouldn't be able to hold out for long. Lung Andrea was much stronger than they had imagined.

Cillin obviously recognized Boen. He read the name list and memorised the faces of everyone who participated in the integrated warfare contest.

Lung tossed Boen directly at a side and smiled so widely that his

eyes were slits, “Now we’ve found four energy blocks, which is one more than Knight’s group. Let’s see if he dares to show off to me again!”

No longer bothering with Ryan and Boen, Cillin and Lung left the place and sent an encrypted message to Pride to come and take the energy blocks.

“Sigh, if only we have some laxatives to use. We’ll dump them right into their lakes and wait until they shit themselves silly before catching them all in one go. Then we can snatch their energy blocks all for ourselves!” Lung was a little tired of this energy block hunting game already.

“Lung.”

“Hmm?”

“You’re a goddam genius.”

Chapter 76: Do Not Judge A Book By Its Cover

"What kind of effect do these things have?" Lung pointed at the categorised variety of plants on the rock that were almost done drying and asked.

"You'll know when the time comes."

Cillin dealt with the remaining plants in his hands before setting them aside. Cillin really hadn't thought about using this method at first, but the moment Lung mentioned laxatives, the idea immediately came to his mind.

Lung had only ever seen researchers isolating a plant's medicinal properties before creating more drugs basing off its functional chemical formula. But now that he saw Cillin doing the same thing, he thought that it was incredibly novel. His choice was the right one after all; it would definitely not be boring to pair up with Cillin. Hmm, there seems to be a huge business opportunity here...

"Are these things really going to work?" It's not that Lung didn't believe it, but because he felt that it was novel. There were many plants here that he did not recognise. He would pull whichever grass Cillin had him pull, and the treatment for each type of plant was different as well. For some flowers he needed to collect their pollens, and for some he needed to collect their nectar or petals. Although Lung had memorised all of these, he did not really understand how they could be used.

Cillin pointed at the collected herbs and said, “Do you know that before humans step into the age of machines, there were no drug synthesizers, no needles, no antibiotics, no analysers or any kind of mechatronics at all, but they were still able to create all kinds of drugs? Be it poison or tonics, they were all made using the primeval method, and through this method, we will be able to mix the drugs we need.”

“This way we can poison their lake and make them shit?” Lung narrowed his eyes as if he could see it in his mind the Fourth Military Academy shitting en masse already.

“No, it’s useless to dump poison into the lake; their drinking water would all be filtered and detoxified… Don’t mess with those herbs!” Cillin threw a rock and struck Lung’s hand fiddling with the herbs.

“It’s just grass, plus didn’t we touch them already back at the forest… Aiya!” Lung looked at his right hand. A red rash appeared on where he just touched the herbs, and it was both numb and itchy. But contrary to expectations, not only did he have not the slightest self-consciousness whatsoever, he even let out a silly smile as if he was taking credit for the act, “Look, it really works!”

What the hell’s so funny about this! How much stupider can you get?!

Cillin itched to send this idiot flying off with a kick.

There was a bottle carved from stone at the side, and there were

several kinds of herbs soaked inside it. If someone was to sniff it, they would even find the scent of nectar. Cillin poured out some and applied it to Lung's hand, and five minutes later, the red rashes gradually faded to leave behind only a faint mark. Ten minutes later, even the mark itself was gone.

Lung began turning his right hand back and forth and examining it all over like it was a rare object. Then he used his left hand to touch the herbs again...

"Eh? Cillin, why isn't there a reaction any longer?" Lung lifted his left hand and saw not a single red rash.

Cillin rolled his eyes at him, "This is a type of allergenic drug. After the first allergic reaction, the body will produce the antibodies to fight it off, although the average person wouldn't be able to grow accustomed to it so quickly. It means that you have a pretty good constitution."

Cillin sent a secret message to Knight using acoustic ciphers. They had defined each representation of the acoustic ciphers, so even if it was intercepted by the enemy team, they would not know the meaning behind the secret message.

While Cillin was making drugs over this side and Knight was developing the next operation plan, Sird and Hard had run into the students of the Fourth Military Academy. Sird was marked red, and Hard managed to escape by luck.

At the same time, in Seven Lights' stronghold, Kang Man who

was operating the Sentry's surveillance system suddenly discovered an intruder showing up in their alert zone. Moreover, this person had walked out leisurely and openly without any intention of hiding himself at all.

Kang Man notified Ci Jincheng and Fu Luo. Both Ci Jincheng and Fu Luo were very familiar with the person on the screen.

"This guy..." Fu Luo did not express her opinion, but she did not tell Kang Man to activate Sentry and attack him either.

"Ignore him." Ci Jincheng said after glancing at the intruder once.

"But he's holding a gun."

"You won't see his gun if he really wants to attack; especially not this type of gun."

"Alright." Kang Man did not operate the Sentry, but he did not let down his guard either. He just thought that the man was very dangerous.

However, exceeding Kang Man's imagination, after the man walked past the Sentinel's alert zone and arrived at the aircraft within their stronghold, he began overtly knocking on the door.

"Open up, I'm dead tired here!"

Kang Man looked at Ci Jincheng. When the others were out, Ci Jincheng was responsible for the duties inside the stronghold.

“It’s fine, just open the door.” Ci Jincheng said.

Kang Man sighed once. Since Ci Jincheng had given the word and Fu Luo did not express her opinion on the matter either, it was not something he needed to bother with. He opened the hatch and let the person inside.

“Hey, sister-in-law Feng, long time no see!” The guy greeted smilingly at Fu Luo when he came in and saw her, acting like he knew her for a very long time.

“Yue Lou, what did you come here for?” Fu Luo raised an eyebrow at the ‘sister-in-law Feng’ greeting before asking.

Yue Lou shrugged his shoulders, “It’s too noisy over there. They’re busy marking red the Second Military Academy, and since I have nothing to do I came over here to catch a nap.”

Nothing to do… catch a nap…

Kang Man could only think of how ridiculous the situation was. While his teammates were busy fighting, this guy actually had the leisure to search for a quiet place to sleep?! But looking at Fu Luo and Ci Jincheng’s expressions, it seemed like they were well accustomed to statements like this.

“If you’re not going to help in a mark red fight, then why did you join the integrated warfare contest?” Fu Luo asked.

“To watch a show, of course, not to mention that I’m on vacation right now. I have nothing to do anyway, so I came over to play.”

Seeing Kang Man staring closely at the gun he’s holding, Yue Lou smiled, flicked a finger, then broke the gun down to several parts before sending them falling neatly onto the round table nearby.

Kang Man’s eyes twitched. This guy was a dangerous person!

Yue Lou yawned and asked, “Is there any place I can sleep?”

“Find one yourself.” Ci Jincheng answered without even turning around.

“Can I go to the bedrooms?”

“No.”

Yue Lou looked at his surroundings before dragging over a few chairs and joining them together. Then he laid on top of the chairs and broke into yet another yawn, “Wake me up whenever they’re turning in the mission. Otherwise, don’t wake me even if they’re all marked red.”

When he finished saying this, Yue Lou closed his eyes and slept right away without caring whether he got their permission or not.

Kang Man was dumbfounded. This guy was seriously a weirdo.

“Ignore him. Just pretend that he doesn’t exist.” Ci Jincheng said to Kang Man.

How could I possibly ignore such a dangerous man? Kang Man curled his lips and sat down in front of the monitor, resuming his previous work. Five minutes later, Kang Man could hold it in no longer and turned his head around to ask Ci Jincheng and Fu Luo, “Just who is this guy?”

“First Military Academy’s Grade Two student, 18 years old. Within the First Military Academy, he is hailed as a genius that appears only once in a millennium. At Grade One he was already the undisputed king of the shooting leaderboard, and it was also during the same grade in which he began carrying out missions for the army. After he graduates, at the minimum he will be commissioned as a second lieutenant in GAL.” Fu Luo introduced Yue Lou to Kang Man.

An 18 years old… GAL second lieutenant?!

GAL’s military ranks were in no way easy to climb at all!

“To him, the guns used in the integrated warfare contest are not guns at all. Therefore, he probably hasn’t fired a single bullet yet.”

While listening to Fu Luo’s explanation, Kang Man looked at the man snoring on top of the chairs. It really was as the saying goes: do not judge a book by its cover.

Chapter 77: They're Playing With Fire

"No way, I'm not doing it!"

Pride said looking like he would rather be beaten to death than complying. He could even give up on flying and challenge those military academy students on foot, but that was the one thing he simply refused to do!

He's a jet fighter pilot, not an agricultural aircraft pilot!

Knight had told Pride about the plan when he came over. After considering Cillin's suggestion, Knight remade the operation plan so as to spray the drugs directly from air. Not only would it be highly efficient, the plan's success rate would be higher as well. Since Sird was marked red, they only have six people left in the operation team now. The best way to marshal their forces was to have one person piloting the plane and the remaining five on the move. It would be too difficult if two people were to pilot the plane and four on the move otherwise. But Pride rejected it right away before he even finished listening to the plan.

As if predicting this from the start, Knight did not react much to Pride's outburst and simply said indifferently, "Go join the mark red team then. I'll pilot the plane, it's not like the results will be any different with or without you anyway." When Knight turned around and left he even muttered to himself, "Ceh, fool can't even do something as simple as dusting, it's no wonder he can't beat me in a dogfight!"

The full term would be crop dusting, meaning to spray pesticide/fertilizer from an agriculture plane, but this is different

so I just use the word ‘dusting’.

“You… you… I’m telling you, goading is not a tactic that’ll work on me!” Although he said that, Pride obviously looked like he was now ready to obey the plan in full.

Knight’s mouth twitched. He seriously had no idea how the Zweig Family managed to raise such a weirdo.

Ignoring the fiasco, after Knight had explained the plan to Pride he then sent an encrypted message to Ci Jincheng and Cillin. Hard was on his way to meet up with Cillin and Lung, and when that happened Cillin would tell him what to do then.

If the game followed the same old routine, it would have been incredibly boring. So when Knight heard of Cillin’s suggestion he was very much in agreement. Perhaps this operation might even leave a mark in the history of the Sector Championship’s integrated warfare contest. After all, no one else had thought up such a despicable plan before, had they?

After a few days of peace, the atmosphere between the four military academies began to tense up. Normally, this would be the time where they began to attack each other.

The Prometheus Institute marked red by the First Military Academy, the Billy University marked red by the Second Military Academy, the Wanna Institute marked red by the Third Military Academy, the Kililak Institute marked red by the Fourth Military Academy, and the San Border College marked red by Seven Lights

University were all present at the observation station of asteroid C-N300. Some of the military academy students who were marked red such as Ryan and Boen were there as well.

When Sird was first brought to this place, he could not help but be overcome with emotion. Moreover, the people of other institutes were all looking at him with strange eyes. It wasn't the look of someone staring at a loser, but one that held both curiosity and fear of the unknown. Of course, absolutely no one from San Border showered him a friendly look.

Seven Lights really was pretty extraordinary this year. No one could have imagined that Seven Lights would employ the same offensive tactic as the military academies, and the time they used to slaughter San Border was no longer than the rest of the four military academies as well. Many people were looking forward to Seven Lights playing the dark horse this year and stepping on a certain someone or someones' heads among the four military academies. If they succeeded, then the myth of the undefeated military academies would become broken.

When Ryan and Boen were brought to the observation station, many had stared at them – especially Boen – as if they had seen a ghost. Boen belonged under the 'special' category among the students, and although the public had never seen him participating in the Sector Championship combat tournaments, it was publicly accepted that Boen was stronger than Ryan.

There were plenty of displays in the observation station, and through the multi-angle view of satellite array, one would be able to observe the movements the participants who were not yet

marked red. Every academy and every student's focus of attention was different. Most of the attention was put on Shadow X and Lung because the instructor had declared them both 'VIPs', but now that they no longer had the chance to exact them the treatment they deserved, they could only wait to see who could mark red these two.

It was exactly because of this sentiment that some people saw the scene between Boen and Lung.

No one saw what happened beneath the lake; they only knew that Lung was carrying a fainted Boen when he floated out of the water, climbed upshore, dumped Boen at the bank and marked him red in one shot. At that moment, many people had shivered unconsciously, and that included several military officers as well.

In fact Boen himself did not know what happened. After he dove into the lake and swam downward, he could clearly sense Lung's position. But before he could act, Lung suddenly changed directions and swam straight towards him. Boen had thought that that speed wasn't something a human could possess. At the time, he felt more like he was facing a sea monster. But before he could react, his eyes turned black and he fainted. When he woke up he was already at the observation station.

It was exactly because Seven Lights was being paid much attention right now that the moment Sird was brought to the station, many people had chatted him up to acquire some inside info. But Sird did not have the heart to deal with them right now. Since he was marked red, Seven Lights operation team should have undergone some changes as well.

Sird switched viewpoints and observed everyone's actions. After cooperating with them for so many days, Sird had some understanding as to how everyone worked.

Suddenly, Sird's hand paused and stopped hitting the switch key. He enlarged the image, and his eyes immediately narrowed when he saw what he was looking for. A device was planted on the plane Pride was piloting when he switched to Pride's viewpoint, and Sird dared wager a gamble that it was definitely Cillin's handiwork!

What kind of insidious plan was Cillin up to again?

Sird got ready to lock onto Pride's viewpoint. He knew that if there was an operation, this thing Cillin had installed on the plane was definitely the trigger! It would definitely be the highlight of the operation!

When some people saw Sird locking onto Pride, they adjusted their own viewpoints to do the same as well. Although they did not know what was going to happen on Pride's side of things, but since Sird chose to lock onto him, there was no harm in doing the same. Sird was a Seven Lights after all, so there must be some kind of understanding between teammates. Yes, something was definitely going to happen.

At the same time, the people who did not notice Sird's strange actions and were observing the rest of the students of Seven Lights began to cry out, "Seven Lights is playing with fire this time!"

“It looks like they’re going to execute an operation, and they’re gunning for the Fourth Military Academy no less!”

The direction of the Seven Lights students were headed was exactly the Fourth Military Academy’s stronghold.

“They’re planning to go up against the Fourth Military Academy?! Isn’t that too bold?”

Hearing these words, the rest of the students began to pay attention as well. It’s just that more people still chose to pay attention to the First Military Academy, since the First Military Academy and the Second Military Academy were currently knee deep in combat. The battle between the two military academies was very entertaining, very intense, and very enjoyable, which was why they chose the First Military Academy over Seven Lights. It was also why they would be filled with regrets later on.

The Third Military Academy attacked the Fourth Military Academy’s stronghold half a day ago. But since the Fourth Military Academy’s outbound personnel had returned quickly, and their defense work were pretty solid as well, when both sides were one member down the Third Military Academy retreated after seeing that their assault was a failure. Therefore, logically speaking, it was unwise to attack the Fourth Military Academy’s stronghold at this time because the Fourth Military Academy’s outbound personnel had almost all returned to the stronghold. The person who took out Sird had returned to the stronghold as well.

An hour later.

“Holy shit, what the hell is this!”

The people who had pointed their viewpoints onto Pride roared.

Chapter 78: All's Fair In War

The exclamation attracted quite a lot of people's attention. The person who saw the image couldn't help but sigh: Seven Lights truly was a persistent troublemaker!

Pride's piloting skills were pretty impressive. He might have lost two out of three rounds to Knight in a dogfight, and in terms of offense, Pride might be just a little weaker than Knight, but if he chose not to attack and went full on evasion instead then even Knight would find himself hardpressed to catch a flaw in his flight pattern.

The Fourth Military Academy was very surprised by Seven Lights' attack. Had Seven Lights gone crazy choosing this particular time to send all their members to assault their stronghold?

However, Pride in his plane was the only one who showed up at the outskirts of the Sentinel's alarm zone, and no one else from Seven Lights could be seen. That being said, since Pride was here, then the others could not be far behind as well. Hence, The Fourth Military Academy began to keep vigilant. Although Seven Lights wasn't from Sector C, they had a couple of people who were very tricky to deal with. Therefore, to avoid screwing up when they least expect it, the participants of the Fourth Military Academy still decided that it was better to be safe than sorry.

The strange thing was that Pride was only flying around the outskirts. The Fourth Military Academy's Sentinel's offensive power couldn't be considered powerful at the perimeter, and they

were lacking in ground-to-air firepower as well, thus allowing Pride to leisurely circle around the outskirts here and there.

"Ignore him. Just let him do whatever." The Fourth Military Academy's captain said. In his mind, Pride wasn't someone who would pull a stunt like this just because he was too bored. There must be mastermind behind this, and Seven Lights was definitely cooking up some evil scheme. Therefore, his choice was to stay firm and see what would happen before reacting accordingly. After all, right now their opponent was just hovering around the outskirts.

However, Pride's leisurely flight about quickly took on a sinister change. The thick brown yellow smoke sprayed out from the plane began shifting along the breeze towards the Fourth Military Academy's stronghold slowly. As Pride flew his plane at the downwind and sprayed back and forth, the brown yellow smoke grew thicker and thicker. No optic equipment could see through the smoke at all.

Inside the observation station, what the students saw was a scene filled with brown yellow smoke.

"Are... are they using smoke against us?!"

"That's not the point; the point is how on earth did they get this kind of smoke? The base didn't distribute anything like a smoke grenade at all!"

Inside the Fourth Military Academy's aircraft, the student

responsible for technical support did not tense up just because of the spread of the brown yellow smoke. Just their optic equipment wasn't working didn't mean they had no other alternatives.

"Smoke is an outdated tactic..." Before he could finish, he immediately realized that there was a missile alert.

It was the same missile as the one Seven Lights used to slaughter San Border, but the Fourth Military Academy were pretty capable and managed to intercept two out of three missiles before they landed. Only one missile had successfully penetrated into the underground.

The Fourth Military Academy had made the own relevant preparations to counter this tactic after learning how Seven Lights had taken out San Border. Therefore, the moment the missiles appeared they were able to adjust on time to intercept them, and although they did let one slip, they were able to swiftly activate the anti-intrusion program.

However...

"A Sentinel at the perimeter has been destroyed manually!"

"There are people sneaking through the smoke area!"

Although Seven Lights' intrusion hadn't worked until now, it did cause some problems in the Sentinel system that its reactions weren't as swift as usual, hence giving the infiltrators an

opportunity to sneak in. The moment they did, destroying the Sentinel that was disrupted by the hack became as easy as ABC.

Seven Lights' breakthrough point was exactly where the missile had successfully penetrated into the ground, since radar scans would not work in that area. Moreover, that area was also covered in brown yellow smoke. Seven Lights must have prepared for this part of the plan as well, and if the Fourth Military Academy would not gain the upper hand even if they sent someone over. At the same time, the smoke was slowly spreading towards their direction, giving Seven Lights the choice to raid them from behind the smoke's cover if they wanted to. If they did not implement countermeasures in time, the moment Seven Lights broke through they would be in trouble.

"Captain, let me out there and 'Red' those people!"

"I'm going too!"

"Me too…"

"Wait a minute!" The Fourth Military Academy's student responsible for medical care frowned and said, "I've analysed the smoke's components for a bit, but because the instrument we're provided is missing certain functions, I cannot tell if they're harmful to the human body even with the results of their compositions."

From the analysis of the smoke's components, it could be stated that most of its composition were made up of plants from this

planet. They had all come into contact with these plants in the forest, and they were even briefed on the flora and fauna on this planet quite some time ago. There was no mention in the briefing about any plants that were particularly deadly, and the plants that were poisonous were mild enough that they would not cause too much damage. Still, the medic couldn't put away the feeling that something wasn't quite right. Although the results showed that every type of plant were harmless on its own, there was no telling if they would be deadly when mixed with each other.

Due to the smokescreen, they did not know if the Seven Lights attackers were wearing gas masks. They did not have a machine with more well-rounded functionality to analyse the smoke in greater detail and determine its harmfulness either.

Back in the camp, they were routinely issued each a set of protective suit that covered their entire body from head to toe, but for the longest time, there were very few integrated warfare contest participants who would actually wear them. This was because the protective suit would inhibit their movements slightly, and in a battle between masters this tiny bit of effect was fatal. This was why more often than not, the participants would choose not to wear a protective suit than the other way around.

Just in case, two out of the four people who went out wore protective suits. The other two did not, but they did put on gas masks. It didn't take long for them to discover that something was amiss after the quartet had entered the smoke-filled area.

Number one. No one from Seven Lights were wearing protective suits, which was why the two Fourth Military Academy students

who were wearing them were taken out by Cillin and Knight respectively.

Number two. The two Fourth Military Academy students who weren't wearing protective suits found many red rashes appearing on their exposed skin. It was numb and itchy, and even though they were trained in this regard they still found it incredibly difficult to tolerate, not to mention that they had to watch out for attacks from their surroundings at the same time. They did not last too long before they were marked red as well.

The duo who were marked red without a protective suit and laid as stiff as a corpse on the ground felt like weeping as they stared at the large sections of red rashes covering their bodies.

"Yo. You guys seem to be having a good time." Lung walked over with an infuriating smile.

"You're all fucking contemptible, I can't believe you actually made such a thing." One of the person lying on the ground said.

"All's fair in war. This is called skill, you understand?"

The duo obviously knew this; it's just that they were experiencing some hard feelings and spoke up just for the heck of it.

Lung stared at the duo and took out a bottle while wearing a 'oh poor thing this gentleman shall bestow upon you mercy' look. He

poured the liquid inside the bottle onto the rash covered spots, and when he saw the red rashes gradually fading into nothingness, he turned his back on the duo suavely while wearing a shit eating grin, “I knew I have the potential to become a savior!”

The duo lying on the ground was seriously considering going against the rules and shoot this fucker red. Anyone can see that this thing isn’t made by you young master Lung, so why the hell are you taking credit for it and showing off!

The students at the observation station could not see what’s inside the smoke. They only know that the four people who went in were marked red.

“What’s going on?”

“The Fourth Military Academy got fucked this time.”

“Seven Lights’ performance is truly astounding. I didn’t think they would actually be able to take out a military academy team.”

Since Sird was marked red by a Fourth Military Academy student before, he was really happy with the current outcome. Now that the Fourth Military Academy was forced into such a state, at this rate they obviously could not hold out for long. Sird felt a surge of happiness to have his revenge for being marked red repaid in full, although it was regretful that he wasn’t able to participate in this extremely meaningful mark red battle.

At first, the Second Military Academy thought that they would sit at the bottom of the board for sure due to Ryan and Boen's unexpected drop out. Their current massive decrease in strength was also why the First Military Academy had set their eyes on them. But contrary to expectations, they received yet another news that the Fourth Military Academy had been utterly annihilated even earlier than they were. This caused their originally heavy hearts to soar instantly like a balloon.

Chapter 79: Assassination

After the Second and Fourth Military Academy were disqualified, the game was also almost at its end. The First Military Academy was the fastest to collect ten energy blocks, and surprisingly, Seven Lights was two hours ahead of the Third Military Academy to collect the energy blocks they needed and obtained second place, for the first time ever in Seven Lights' history. The higher ups of Seven Lights were probably smiling so much that their mouth got stuck. Only god knows how many people would sharpen their heads and try to squeeze their way into Seven Lights.

A metaphor describing that since a round head can't squeeze into narrow gap, you sharpen it into a pencil shape so that it'll fit.

At the space station, the military officers were seated inside the observation room. It was rather quiet in the observation room right now unlike the time at the camp. Every military officer except Gerrard were silent and appeared to be in deep thought.

Gerrard was very happy. The kids certainly had not disappoint him! He had to thank Huo Neil for being too busy later, or this cushy task would not have fallen onto his shoulders instead. Although he had to admit that he was slightly reluctant when he took over the task, now looking at the current results, it was a cushy task.

"Gerrard, just what kind of pedigree does he have?" The team leader of the First Military Academy pointed his chin at Cillin on the screen and asked.

"He's from the Douance Family. Exactly how did he grow up to

be like this, I have no idea." Gerrard expressed his own ignorance in the matter.

"That modified missile wasn't something any average engineer could do, plus Elder Mo probably didn't teach him to make that, did he?"

Although it was theoretically possible to use the materials that was provided to create such a thing, in reality none of the military officers had seen a student in the integrated warfare contest who was actually capable of doing it.

Regarding that modified missile. The first time Seven Lights had used all five missiles to paint San Border red. The materials inside the aircraft were just sufficient to make five in total. After slaughtering San Border, Cillin had removed more applicable materials from San Border's aircraft to make the three modified missiles that were used to attack the Fourth Military Academy's stronghold during the latter half of the contest.

"This I have no idea. Do you want to ask Sir Mo yourself?" Gerrard made a helpless shrug.

The First Military Academy's team leader shook his head like he was having a stroke, "Like hell I'm gonna do that!"

"Actually, we have the full right to absorb such a great talent into the army while it isn't too late. It is too wasteful to let him develop anywhere else." Another military officer sighed.

Gerrard cast him a disdainful glance at the corner of his eyes, “You think we haven’t tried that before? This kid performed outstandingly during the previous Seven Lights mission, and he even caught the eye of a lieutenant general who was sent over by the upper chain of command. Later on, said lieutenant general went to see Sir Mo to recruit Cillin, and he was cursed on the spot by Sir Mo so badly that he dared not utter even a mouse squeak. Even Huo Neil and I were dragged into the mess. For the next few days, we could not lift our heads up high, and we ran like hell every time we see Sir Mo’s car.”

Everyone else in the room shut up. They all knew more or less about Mo Heng’s personality, and they could imagine the scene in their heads themselves. If even a lieutenant general was cursed at this badly, then there was no need for colonels like them to even bother trying.

Following the end of the integrated warfare contest, the students were to return to their starships parked at the space station. This time the military officers had accompanied them as well. To commend the group, Gerrard deliberately used his connections and acquired some alcohol from the garrison of asteroid C-N300. The path between C-N300 and C-N976 could be considered a military route and was thus relatively safe, so it was enough to have the robots that piloted the starship to do their jobs.

The drinking party was a little wild, and even Fu Luo, someone who didn’t normally drink much, drank a little bit herself. Adding that to a period of high tension, once the drinking party was done everyone collapsed in their rooms and slept all the way until the landing.

After the landing on asteroid C-N976's base and a post mortem general meeting, the ten teams returned to their respective institutes.

"Cillin, Seven Lights is going to hold a feast for us!"

Hard said excitedly while grabbing his microcomputer.

The Sector Championship forum was currently in a state of extreme excitement. This was especially true for people from Seven Lights, who lifted their heads tall no matter where they went. Back in the past, whenever they met anyone from a military academy on the Sector Championship platform, they would unconsciously think that they were three inches shorter than the other party. But things were different now. They were now the number two university in the Sector Championship, and no longer the eternal number five!

The students themselves had organized a welcoming feast without needing the school authorities to say anything. Moreover, Seven Lights' higher-ups had upgraded the Seven Lights card of all ten students to Cyan rank right away. There were also relevant events to be held at Sleepless City and the financial trading zone, and various invitations extended to the ten participants become a spokesperson as well. In short, they had soared into popularity, and they would have a shiny golden runner up badge on their graduation certificates, which was incomparable by those who participated in the integrated warfare contest last year.

"Hehe, here's also some photos of us wearing our team's uniform! I'm going to distribute our photos on asteroid C-N300

later – it's so going to charm a whole bunch of girls! Oh, and let's not forget to sell these signed specimens at the high-end auctions as well!" Lung's eyes were lit like Christmas trees.

Lung had collected some plants and rocks from asteroid C-N300 and processed them into specimens. Moreover, he made everyone sign them so they could be sold at auctions later. Once he got back and had the rocks processed, they should look pretty attractive to customers.

"Yeah, we'll rake in a big one once we get back to Seven Lights, and when that happens I'll open a small shop at the financial district. You guys must simply come to support it, especially you, Cillin. You will dress up as Shadow X and play the mascot at the entrance of the shop!"

Seeing Lung's excited look, Cillin smiled and said, "Sure."

Not far away, Ci Jincheng frowned slightly. He couldn't shake the feeling that Cillin's smile was a little off from usual. Moreover, Cillin gave him a slightly strange vibe during this integrated warfare contest; he was more proactive than Ci Jincheng thought he would be.

Ci Jincheng was a person who was well-versed in analytics. Those who were good at mathematics were also better in the logic and analysis department, and from certain clues, Ci Jincheng was capable of deducing things that most people would fail to notice. The people around Cillin might not have noticed his smile or feel odd even if they did, but Ci Jincheng could not shake the feeling that something was going to happen next.

Hard, Copley and the others were really looking forward to what would happen when they returned to Planet Seven Lights. Through the Sector Championship's platform's internet, they already knew what kind of scene was awaiting them at the airport of Planet Seven Lights right now.

All kinds of slogans and billboards with their images on it, all kinds of fresh flowers and beautiful babes...

The forum was already filled with the happenings at the airport, and the only thing that was missing now was the heroes' arrival. They had to admit that the feeling of anticipation was pretty exhilarating.

Copley wasn't paid much attention in the past, and because he didn't participate in the biohazard mission earlier, his influence in Seven Lights wasn't high either. But after this mission, everything about Copley was dug out and thrown to the surface: His origin, his personal info, the courses he took, the other honors he'd gotten and so on were now all known by the public.

In comparison, Knight was a lot more calmer than him. Calm wasn't the right word to put it either, in fact he should say that he wasn't feeling much of anything at all. The integrated warfare contest was just a game; a game without life and death and war. The moment he saw those people boasting about how they were better than the military academies, Knight couldn't help but want to laugh. Better? Like hell that's true!

In a true battlefield of life and death, it was an uncertainty if Sird, Copley, Hard, Pride and the others would have survived. That was why Knight paid no heed to this game at all.

The aircraft landed at the airport beneath the passionate and expectant gazes of the Seven Lights' students. This time, they did not land in the training division's airport, but the Seven light's main airport, because there were too many students who requested to participate and welcome the party. In order to make a grander welcoming scene, Seven Lights' school authorities decided that they would allow the aircraft to descend at the main airport. At the same time, it was a good opportunity for them to promote this kind of atmosphere and attract even more people to Seven Lights University.

The escalator descended, and after the team leader Gerrard and accompanying personnel came down, the participants of the integrated warfare contest began to come out in succession. Their blue uniforms and rainbow patterned school badges were especially dazzling amidst the lively voices of the crowd.

All kinds of close-ups and photographs from all angles began spreading on Seven Lights' network at the same time. Live broadcasts were available at the entertainment zone's Sleepless City, the financial trading zone, the training division, the research division, the school zone, the accommodation zone and many other places.

Cillin wore a perfect smile on his face. Knight kept a straight face and even looked impatient at the scene. Pride lifted his chin high as usual with fully exposed arrogance. Ci Jincheng was very calm,

and Lung was smiling very brightly and throwing out kisses from time to time. Kang Man looked a little nervous; Hard smiled so much that the corner of his mouth was a little stiff...

However, it was at this moment.

Puchi——

The bullet penetrated his body, carrying with it a trail of blood. The filming cameras transmitted every reality of it to every corner of Seven Lights.

It was all so sudden.

Chapter 80: Goodbye, Seven Lights

As Cillin fell, the students at the airport began to scream. The excitement from before was completely gone. It was all panic now as they rushed en masse towards the exit. If the security division wasn't controlling the situation, there might very well be stampedes, car crashes and more incidents happening one after another already.

It was a fact that the school authorities had allowed far more people than usual into the airport for publicity purposes, and it impeded the police and security division's ability to act. But because a public assassination like this hadn't occurred for nearly a hundred years or so, they had grown careless.

Since the school authorities had organized an honor guard to welcome the ten participants, Gerrard and the others were immediately pushed to the side the moment they came down. Since Gerrard and the others were obstructed, Gerrard was unable to determine the attacker's location at once either.

Knight's body was shaking. He felt as if someone was choking him; a terrible weight in his heart. His father once took him along on a mission to pacify a rebellion, and although he had not truly come in touch with that cruel battlefield, seeing those people from afar flying, falling; blood splattering at every direction was no different from what he was experiencing now. It was just a lot worse because those people back then were strangers, and the one who was currently on the ground was his roommate and teammate whom he had drunk and fought together with.

No one, be it Knight, Gerrard, or everyone else sent down by the army had detected the slightest bit of killing intent. There were no murderous look, no killing intent. It was a sudden shot that came out of nowhere, and there really was nothing they could do to analyse the attacker's location in time. They didn't notice anything amiss from the surveillance footages sent over from each zone either.

Lung took out a shot and injected it into Cillin lying on the ground without hesitation. It was something he had always carried with him to preserve his life during an emergency. The medicine would tap into the body's greatest potential in order to give the patient a stronger vitality. After the injection Lung immediately called a number; it was the number of his own private medical team in Seven Lights. They had the latest analysers with them. Lung wasn't going to put all his hopes on the people of Seven Lights.

Fu Luo and the medical staff rushed over and performed emergency first aid on the spot. She noticed immediately that the bullet had struck too close for comfort even though it just missed the heart. Moreover, normally speaking Cillin's condition shouldn't be as bad as he was right now, so it was likely that the bullet contained some other substance inside it.

The bullet had struck the aircraft behind Cillin after penetrating his body, shattering and disintegrating swiftly. It was impossible to use the bullet to analyse anything, but it showed that this assassination was a premeditated affair.

Since Lung had injected the medicine on the spot, Cillin's vitals

were somewhat stable even though they weren't strong. But along the way to the emergency room, Cillin's vitals began to weaken rapidly, and before any effective measures could be taken, the vital signs monitor already showed that Cillin, was dead.

Even then the medical staff still transported Cillin into the emergency room and attempted to resuscitate him, but was met with no success. Lung's private medical team came, but was unable to overturn the lost cause just the same. The toxin was a kind of plant toxin from Sector Z and was rarely seen in the first place, which was why they had few corresponding antidote in stock. They did have the molecular formula of the antidote, but by the time it was synthesized, Cillin's vital signs were long gone.

Knight had smashed apart a couple of walls inside the hospital. Seeing his bloodshot eyes and the vicious aura enveloping his being, no one in the hospital dared to say a thing in front of Knight even though they were angry at his actions.

No one actually dared to tempt fate and drag the obviously murderous Knight and Lung back to wherever they came from. But when the duo received a call they hurriedly the place, leaving people wondering what had happened again.

Aiflon, who had become the successor of the Douance Family was already notified of of Cillin's assassination. Very soon, Aiflon's men had come over to take Cillin's 'body' and 'personal possessions' back home.

The call Knight and Lung received was from Ci Jincheng. All sides were investigating at the moment, but no one had a clue or

made any progress regarding the assassin yet, so the moment they heard from Ci Jincheng, the duo immediately returned to the accommodation in haste.

Ci Jincheng sat in the living room. He was the calmest out of everyone in regards to today's matter.

Knight was extremely dissatisfied with Ci Jincheng's reactions, and he expressed this dissatisfaction directly in his tone, "Speak!"

Lung said nothing and sat down on the sofa. He still hadn't put away the murderous aura around him, and his face was just as ugly. Everyone who knew Lung would know from his appearance that a foul wind and a rain of blood was coming. Lung had never been a kind and gentle person.

Ci Jincheng did not mind Knight's tone. Instead he passed over his personal tablet.

"This is the message I decrypted from the code Cillin left behind. Read it first."

When Cillin was shot, Ci JIncheng was the closest one to him. This was obviously not a coincidence. When Cillin had fallen Ci Jincheng was crouching right beside him, and at the time Ci Jincheng was pretty worried and anxious as well. But the moment he saw Cillin's finger movements, he knew then that the matter wasn't as simple as it seemed.

The finger movements he made were a kind of code. It was a more complicated code, different from the one Cillin had used during the double combat tournament. The former wins at speed, and the latter wins at complexity. One would need to perform multidimensional decoding and matrix analysis to understand it. At the time Cillin's movements were rather subtle, so even if the medical staff did notice they would only think that it was caused by a wave of spasms.

The killing intent on Knight and Lung faded after they read the contents on the tablet. However, their faces were a little distorted. Right now, all they wanted to do was to drag Cillin out of the hospital and whip his 'corpse' bloody. Knight even purposely ran into Cillin's room for a look and, motherfucker, there really was nothing substantive left in the room at all. The whole thing was premeditated from the start!

In the message on the tablet, Cillin had only explained briefly that this assassination was something that was planned for; that they need not worry about it and that Cillin Douance would disappear from this world from hereon.

The first reason he gave them an explanation was because of trust. Cillin was confident that the trio would not hurt him. The second reason was the consideration that the trio would probably turn Seven Lights and a couple other Sectors upside down if he chose to say nothing.

At the same time, in the research division, the chief Mo Heng had shut himself up in the workshop after he returned from the hospital. Even if someone had something to say to him, they would

swallow their words the moment they recalled Mo Heng's ugly expression and low pressure surrounding him.

Anyone would think that his current state was due to the fact that his beloved disciple was assassinated, but this was in fact, not the case.

Mo Heng was feeling horrible, that much was true, but it wasn't from sadness but from depression. He knew about this 'assassination' a long time ago. The machine Cillin assembled prior to the integrated warfare contest had a code in it, and it was something only an engineer would understand. But although an engineer would know that it was a code, they would not be able to decipher its meaning because it was arranged in the order of a person's habit. The message was different in each person's eyes, and unless they knew the correct order, the message was nothing more but gibberish.

From the code, Mo Heng had learned of Cillin's intent and that he would leave after the integrated warfare contest. Although Cillin promised that he would contact Mo Heng, but man, what was he going to do with this annoying feeling in his heart? Now that Cillin was gone, he could no longer boast openly to anyone about his disciple.

Kang Man, fard and the others felt that the whole thing about Cillin's assassination was surreal. They found themselves unable to quite accept that such a great and outstanding person, who was just talking to them about the welcoming feast a moment ago, would disappear just like that in the next. It was without a doubt a shock to them.

Lung offered a one hundred million bounty to search for the murderer, but of course this was but a mere guise. Otherwise, with the kind of blood that flowed inside young master Lung and the Andrea Family's veins, the bounty would not be a mere hundred million.

Since there were no progress made despite prolonged investigation, Seven Lights announced to the public that the assassination was probably carried out by 'Black Thorn'. This was the statement Aiflon of the Douance Family had provided, therefore Lights had borrowed it themselves. Moreover, this statement would minimize Seven Lights' responsibility in the assassination, which was something the higher-ups of Seven Lights were happy to see.

Twenty day later, on a starship in Sector D, a brown-haired, sturdy built and honest-looking young man walked into a room while carrying a backpack behind his back. The person inside the room had been waiting for a while already.

"Long time no see, commander." The young man smiled good-naturedly and said.

"Welcome back, Cillin."

Chapter 81: Tang Qiuqiu

Other than Shawton, there was another little girl who looked about six to seven years old inside the room. She held a lollipop in her mouth and was engrossed in playing a shooting game. She kept her eyes glued to the screen and did not bother to acknowledge Cillin's entry.

"The remuneration settlement just came in. It looks like Aiflon is very satisfied with this case." Shawton flicked the card in his hand and said.

Cillin Douance had already vanished from this world, and even Aiflon himself would not recognise Cillin's current appearance. Aiflon, who had become the successor very generously gave them the remuneration settlement. One portion belonged to Cillin, and the other belonged to the Sixth Squadron. This remuneration settlement alone was enough to pay for a whole year of the Sixth Squadron's daily expenses.

It had been almost a full year since Cillin had accepted the mission. Barring specific personnel, no one else in the Sixth Squadron knew about Cillin's existence or whereabouts. It wasn't until the end of the mission that Shawton told Eudy, Cary and a few others about Cillin's mission, since they were among the very first people to have met him, and a part of Dias' squad as well. From here on, they would continue to get along with each other.

"Eh? Who are you?"

After completing a game round, the little girl who was playing raised her head to look at Cillin. Her big, sky blue eyes were filled with caution and curiosity.

Cillin too was very curious about her. He was surprised to see that Shawton had brought this little girl with him. Could she be his daughter? But they don't look alike.

Shawton smiled and pointed at Cillin, introducing him to the little girl, "He's Cillin." Then he pointed at the little girl and said to Cillin, "She's our new arrival, Tang Qiuqiu."

Before Cillin could be surprised at their unbelievably young teammate, Tang Qiuqiu had let out her own outburst first, "Impossible! Cillin doesn't look like this!"

Cillin pulled a chair over and sat in front of her, "I am Cillin. You got a problem with that?"

"You're not! Cillin has light grey hair, and his eyes isn't like yours either. You don't look like him, and Cillin is thinner than you as well!" Tang Qiuqiu said with certainty.

"I did plastic surgery."

"You're talking nonsense."

"I'm not talking nonsense."

“You just are!”

“I am not.”

“You…”

“What about me? Why do you say that I’m not Cillin?”

“Because I’m the one who shot and killed him!” Tang Qiuqiu shouted angrily.

Cillin was well and truly shocked. He looked at Shawton, and Shawton nodded. All this time Cillin thought that he was the one who fired the shot at Seven Lights’ airport, since that was what he said he would do during the deliberation. If the commander of the Vanguard’s Sixth B Squadron was the one who attended to the matter personally, then it would be incredibly hard for anyone to track down the perpetrator. The fact was that the incident was handled very well, and to this day, Seven Lights still hadn’t found the suspect yet. But he never thought that the one who fired the shot was actually the child before him!

No wonder those people couldn’t find or track down a suspect. Who would connect a cute and innocent young girl about six to seven years old chewing lollipop in the middle of a crowd to the suspect of an assassination?!

“Qiuqiu, he really is Cillin. He just changed a look; the needs of a

mission.” Shawton said as he walked over and patted Tang Qiuqiu’s head.

Tang Qiuqiu looked Cillin up and down before jumping down her chair and circled around him twice, “He doesn’t feel like the same person at all.”

“That’s why he’s an excellent Hunter.” Although Shawton didn’t know how Cillin managed to transform from his old looks to his current self – even if he took Cillin at his word, he did not quite believe that a plastic surgery would cover the entire range of the human body – these answers were his members’ own secrets. After all, who doesn’t have a trump card or two of their own? That was why he would not ask unneccessary questions. As long a person’s capable and moral, then their Sixth Squadron would welcome all the same.

“Hmph, I will become better than him in the future!” Tang Qiuqiu returned to her seat and unwrapped another lollipop to put in the mouth. Then she continued playing her game.

Shawton motioned Cillin with his eyes to talk at the room next door.

“You aside, we have a few more new members joining the team this time. They’re all in Dias’ squad, and speaking of which, you should know them. You’ve met Eight Claws and Coy Behind The Smile on the Sector Championship platform. Eight Claws’ real name is Ba Dao, and Coy Behind The Smile’s real name is Xiao Shang. Since they met the age requirement, they were sent to higher institutes of learning to receive their educations. We may

be Hunters, but we're also civilised Hunters."

Cillin knew the moment Shawton mentioned Eight Claws and Coy Behind The Smile. Those two fellows were pretty good.

"The other newcomer who was placed under Dias is Tang Qiuqiu." When he talked of Tang Qiuqiu, Shawton let out a heavy sigh, "She came from Sector V."

Sector V was one of the more chaotic Sectors among the thirteen backwater Sectors. Since it was further away from the Sectors that were more well developed, it was ranked among the last of the thirteen backwater Sectors; utterly incomparable even to Cillin's old home Sector X. The habitable planets of Sector V were in a perpetual state of war with no peace in sight. It wasn't just a pure conflict between local forces and foreign forces, but something more complicated than that. The GAL garrisons of Sector V would not interfere with the war, or at least not now right now. They would wait until both sides had almost completely expended themselves before sending the troops to suppress them by force.

Since the development of civilization, after the people of Sector V had come in touch with higher civilizations, they would become split into many factions who contested for superiority and status through war. The permeation of external forces provided them with weapons and wealth, and at the same time, the invading forces too bribed the people they needed to expand their power and domain.

Moreover, many children were reduced to war slaves in that Sector. The first thing they picked up wasn't a feeding spoon, a

doll or a starship model; it was a gun. The adults in the war zones would teach them how to use a gun and how to murder; they would make them believe that killing a person was the most pleasant thing in the world. Many of these kids killed their first human being before they grew taller than their guns. The purpose for murder was to survive to the next day, and to them the act was just like killing a fish for the purpose of eating it. It was nothing to be thought about.

The children of Sector V basically had none of the so-called innocence and naivety that belonged solely to their age. Instead they were replaced with numb and empty looks in their eyes since their entire lifespan might not even compare to that of a G rank genotype person. This was especially true for girls. The older girls who were slightly more than ten had to fight, and work as the men's sexual objects.

In that sense, Tang Qiuqiu should fall under the same category as well.

"Qiuqiu may appear to be six or seven years old only, but in truth she's already eight. Since she suffered from undernutrition at a young age, she appeared thinner and weaker than the average child. We met her while we were hunting down a 'prey' at Sector V. Dias said that she was the only child he had seen in Sector V who wasn't tainted by war. At the time, those who went together with him did not believe him, because when we saw Tang Qiuqiu, she was busting an adult's head with a shot expressionlessly."

Shawton took out his electronic notebook and opened a picture, "This is Tang Qiuqiu at the time."

Cillin looked over, and on the electronic notebook, there was a little girl whose hair was withered and messy and her face covered in soot, carrying an old rifle about her size without an expression on her face. The background was a street filled with blood and violence, noise and unrest.

“As you know, Dias may not excel in other areas, but he has a really good eye for people. At the time, Dias had tossed away his firearms right in front of Tang Qiuqiu, and walked towards her with a friendly smile. He motioned to us not to follow him and not to take out our guns. In fact, it would be best if we don’t look at his direction at all, he said. If Dias hadn’t told us not to act recklessly before, we might have fired when we saw Qiuqiu lifting her rifle and pointing it at Dias. He really gave us a cold sweat at the time.”

At this point Shawton couldn’t hold back a smile, “Dias did not pay attention to Qiuqiu’s gun barrel. He walked in front of her, took out a couple of sweets he bought along the way to keep his teeth busy from his pocket, and passed them over. At first, Qiuqiu’s eyes were still wary and suspicious. Then Dias unwrapped one of the sweets and stuffed it into his mouth, making all sorts of grinding noises and he ate. Perhaps it was the sweet scent of fruits that attracted her, but when Dias unwrapped another sweet and passed it over, she took it, and stuffed it into her mouth.”

“When she stuffed the sweet into her mouth, she smiled at Dias.” Shawton opened yet another picture.

Cillin looked at it. It was still the same soot-covered face on the notebook, but the icy cold gaze from before was gone. It was a very

clean smile.

And at that moment, her eyes were as free as the sky.

Chapter 82: A Grave Sin Indeed

Tang Qiuqiu was bought out from Sector V by Dias. In reality, a war slave at Tang Qiuqiu's age was extremely cheap and wasn't worth even a thousand galactic credits. Many people from other Sectors would buy war slaves from Sector V, and due to the nature of their environment, these war slaves basically fell under the category of cannon fodders.

Since most war slaves at war torn zones did not have a name of their own, after he bought her and took her back to the Sixth Squad, Dias had her come up with a name for herself. Thus, 'Tang Qiuqiu' was born.

Every newcomer must complete a mission prior to entering the team in official capacity. Therefore, after Shawton had tested and trained her for a while, he then handed her the 'assassination' mission. After all, with Tang Qiuqiu's qualifications, her invisibility was far greater than Shawton's.

"The squadron's pretty active in Sector T recently. Dias's squad is currently hunting alien beasts; once we reach the transit planet, you and Tang Qiuqiu will go over and meet them. I'll be returning to the main starship right away, there are things to be done there." Shawton explained the next few arrangements to Cillin. As the commander of the Sixth B Squadron, Shawton was a very busy man.

"Alright, got it."

“The remuneration you got belongs only to yourselves, and the squad will not ask for additional dividends. So buy whatever you want to, you do have some wealth of your own now.” Shawton said smilingly.

It was true that Cillin had gained quite a sum from Aiflon through the mission. The total amount was close to a hundred million galactic credits, which was something both Shawton and him did not imagine at the beginning.

They had nothing to do before they reach Sector D, so Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu played the shooting game for a little while. It must be said that the kids who grew up at Sector V were really different from the norm. Her shots were only more decisive than the next, and her judgment and accuracy were pretty good as well. Otherwise, Shawton would not have let her to act as the shooter in the first place. As long as it was not a fast moving target, and the target was within her shooting range, it could be said that Tang Qiuqiu simply could not miss.

After coming in touch with the Sixth Squad, Tang Qiuqiu saw many great shooters and gained access to many different types of guns. At the same time, she learned quickly, and she was able to learn almost every type of gun the moment she used them. A child at her age usually had amazing learning aptitude. That being said, she learned what she shouldn’t learn pretty quickly as well...

“Fuck! What the fucking dick hair is this!”

Pu——

Shawton, who was drinking tea and pretty engrossed watching at watching the duo fighting it out spat out everything in his mouth.

Cillin stared speechlessly at Shawton. It was simply way too ‘thrilling’ to hear such a thing from an eight years old’s mouth, and a girl’s no less. Who taught her that?

Worse, the person who said it had not the slightest self-consciousness of the inappropriateness at all. She continued to suck on her lollipop and frowned at the screen.

“Ahem, Tang Qiuqiu, a girl should be more refined.” Shawton wasn’t sure what to say. He had no experience teaching little kids.

Tang Qiuqiu looked very doubtful, “Am I not allowed to say that? Brother Xiao Shang always say such things.”

Xiao Shang, you’re just asking for a beating aren’t you! It’s fine if you say it during other times, but how dare you speak such bullshit in front of a child! Shawton gritted his teeth.

“Cillin, you may sentence that horny bastard Xiao Shang to punishment when you see him later!”

“Yes sir!”

Shawton turned around and straightened his expression, “Tang

Qiuqiu, Xiao Shang and the others can say that line, but you can't say it, okay? It's not good for a girl to say that."

Tang Qiuqiu frowned and looked conflicted, "But it feels pretty cool to say."

Like fucking hell it's cool!

Shawton nearly slipped into swearing rant, but he forcefully swallowed it all back down his throat.

Do you know that a single slip may cause everlasting sorrow? Oh, Xiao Shang, your sins have just become greater.

Dias' squad was the one squad that loved to act like a hooligan the most. As the saying goes, a subordinate imitates their superior's vices. Since Dias himself was of such conduct, his squad of course left even less to be desired. When Cary and Xiao Shang ran into each other, the only thing that filled their mouths were indecency. But there just was no other place Tang Qiuqiu would go but Dias' squad. She simply refused to join any other squads at all.

To think that such a beautiful flower escaped the taints of war at Sector V, only to be dyed in the Sixth Squad instead. Shawton seriously did not dare to imagine how Tang Qiuqiu would turn out in an environment like this that's full of profanities.

Shawton said seriously, "Tang Qiuqiu, if a girl says this she will not be beautiful."

But Tang Qiuqiu frowned even deeper than before, and her expression obviously stated the words: What's beautiful? Why is beautiful necessary?

Shawton and Cillin both turned quiet.

Yeah, that's right. In Sector V, everything else but life and death was about as important as the clouds on the sky. Anything like beauty or ugliness could all be equalized with a single shot.

"Ahem, Tang Qiuqiu, are you unhappy because you lost?" Shawton changed the topic and no longer persisted on the slur incident. The next time he saw Xiao Shang he was absolutely beating the shit out of that punk.

The moment the match was brought up, Tang Qiuqiu immediately pouted, "I lost by one point."

Back at Sector V, Tang Qiuqiu did not have this many expressions, but after coming in touch with the people of the Sixth Squad, her face gradually became rich with expressions. She saw on TVs or magazines that kids pouted when they feel dissatisfied or conflicted, so she too copied their behavior and pouted as well. Dias had even purposely filmed Tang Qiuqiu practicing her pouts in front of a mirror. It was very funny, but it also left behind a bitter taste in the mouth.

"When we first started you even lost by a full ten points, but didn't you lose less and less during the latter rounds? You're

improving tremendously, aren't you?" Cillin did hold back, but even then he could obviously sense Tang Qiuqiu's improvement. Her ability to learn was simply too amazing, and her speed at which she corrected her mistakes was also impressive.

Tang Qiuqiu said nothing, imagined that Cillin was the lollipop and crunched down fiercely until it made a crunching noise.

"One more round!" Tang Qiuqiu rolled up her sleeves and prepared herself for another battle.

"Let's do that next time. We've reached Sector T, and we still have to search for the lieutenant and the others."

"Okay, we'll find brother Dias and the others first. Then we'll see who can hunt down more alien beasts!"

"Who knows, we might surpass Cary and the others from behind and hunt even more beasts than them."

"Yeah, and that horny bastard brother Xiao Shang as well!"

Shawton, who was just about to exit the door tripped and nearly fell on his feet. As expected, one should not use their words carelessly, should they?

"Tang Qiuqiu, 'horny bastard' is not a good word. A girl will not say it carelessly, okay?"

Seeing that both Cillin and Shawton wore serious expressions, Tang Qiuqiu continued to pout, “Alright, I won’t say it.”

After entering the transit planet T-C100 in Sector T, Shawton split away from the group. There would be someone who would take him back to the main starship. Meanwhile, Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu went to buy a flight to planet T-H001. Right now, both Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu had new IDs of their own. With the Vanguard’s means, it wasn’t hard to acquire such legal IDs.

The flight departure was still more than half a day away, so Cillin took Tang Qiuqiu to enjoy a fulfilling meal first. Tang Qiuqiu’s appetite was bigger than her average peer, but she wasn’t picky about her food as well. Moreover, she would do her best to finish any food that was ordered. Having experienced true hunger, Tang Qiuqiu disliked wasting food.

Cillin looked at the time and saw that they were still more than five hours away from departure. After opening a map of their surroundings and giving it a glance, he said to Tang Qiuqiu who was drinking a fruit juice, “Qiuqiu, the flight is still five hours away. Do you want to go take a walk? There’s an amusement park nearby, we’ll play inside for a little while and it’ll be time before we know it. It’s better than sitting here and doing nothing anyway.”

The moment she heard the words amusement park, Tang Qiuqiu’s eyes lit up immediately. She had only seen them on TVs and magazines, and had never experienced them for herself. Tang Qiuqiu herself desired it after seeing the kids on the screens

seemingly have a great time playing at the amusement park.

“Okay, let’s go to the amusement park!””

Tang Qiuqiu followed Cillin out of the restaurant while holding her fruit juice, and sat in a taxi headed towards the amusement park.

Chapter 83: Back In The Team

“I want that!”

Tang Qiuqiu looked excitedly at the variety of sweets displayed on top of the counter. These sweets were all finely packaged, and the cutely designed boxes attracted kids more easily than the actual sweets inside them. But...

Why the heck is she pointing at the dinosaur that looks like green poop and not the pink rabbit or dolls or whatever at the side?

The sale was a kind of automated selling of sorts, and there were no human shop assistants about. Otherwise, a shop assistant would have looked at Tang Qiuqiu with strange eyes.

That being said, since Tang Qiuqiu liked it, Cillin wasn’t going to comment on her choice either. After swiping his card, he passed over the green poop dinosaur sweet box to Tang Qiuqiu, who took it excitedly.

“Why did you choose this one? The little animal boxes beside it are cuter.” Cillin asked.

“Because it looks like Dough.” Tang Qiuqiu’s smiled very happily.

Dough was that weird but quick-witted chameleon Eudy owned.

They circled the entire amusement park once. Most kids would have been so tired they would have fallen asleep already, but Tang Qiuqiu's stamina was unusually good despite her thin and fragile appearance. She was still spirited and energetic after three hours.

Cillin allowed Tang Qiuqiu to sit directly over his shoulders; this way she could see the faraway scenes as well. Cillin's current physique was much more bigger and solid than before, and with Tang Qiuqiu's tiny figure on top of him, they painted quite the heartwarming image.

"Oh, what's that?!"

While seated on Cillin's neck, Tang Qiuqiu hugged Cillin's head with one hand and pointed at a direction with the other.

Cillin looked at the direction she was pointing. There was a big floating cotton candy balloon.

"That is cotton candy."

In truth the words 'cotton candy' was floating beside the balloon, but Tang Qiuqiu only recognised the word 'candy'. Back at Sector V, she basically did not know any words at all, and even her discourse was in native language, with little to no experience with GAL linguistics. She learned a little of the language after joining the Sixth Squad, but was not used to it yet. That was why Tang Qiuqiu would diligently memorise what everyone said to enrich her own vocabulary.

There were many children around the cotton candy shop, saliavating at the cutely shaped candies and pulling and crying to their respective adults about buying them.

“Which one do you like?” Cillin asked.

Since Tang Qiuqiu was sitting on Cillin’s neck, she saw every cotton candy up there clearly.

“That one!” Tang Qiuqiu pointed at the cotton candy with a funny face.

“Boss, give me that candy with a funny face. Also, I’d like a custom-made candy that looks just like us.”

“No problem, but you’ll have to wait about ten minutes or so.”

“Sure.” Cillin paid for the sweets first.

The cotton candies were made on the spot, and they sold like hot cakes. They were bought almost the instant they were made. Some people were waiting because they chose to make a custom cotton candy.

At first, Cillin wanted to bring Tang Qiuqiu somewhere else for another twirl, but Tang Qiuqiu refused and wanted to stay there to watch the process of the creation of a cotton candy.

Some of the surrounding kids hugged the adults beside them and asked for the same treatment when they saw Tang Qiuqiu sitting on Cillin's neck. Tang Qiuqiu glanced at them once and smiled until her eyes were bright with joy.

Tang Qiuqiu ate her cotton candies all the way back to the airport. Cillin carried a huge bag in his hand, and it was completely filled with sweets. Of course, there was also a bottle of denture cleaner, or with the way Tang Qiuqiu were consuming her sweets her teeth was most certainly going to rot.

Tang Qiuqiu fell asleep soon after getting on the flight from T-C100 to T-H001. It had been an all-too-wild day, and she was still just a kid who needed her rest. Even when she was asleep, she wore a smile on her lips, hugging the dinosaur sweet box in her lap.

Cillin pressed a button beside his seat, and a panel popped out. He began reading magazines on it. There were plenty of news on the electronic magazines recently, and while Cillin was reading he saw the news about himself.

'The son of the successor of the Douance Family assassinated', 'Seven Lights' genius falls to gunshot'...

Many of the details of the reported news were watered down, with no negative sayings of Seven Lights' role in the incident. In fact, the majority of it absolved Seven Lights from their responsibility, proving that Seven Lights' higher ups put in quite the effort to see that it was so. The title itself might look pretty shocking, but there weren't much actual content or even video footages to show. Everything was severely trivialised. Cillin's

name didn't even appear and was replaced with the term 'son of the successor of the Douance Family', so it would appear that Aiflon had a hand in this matter as well.

This news was also connected to the other news about the Douance Family where Aiflon buckled the matter of the assassination on a particular group within the family and dealt with them with an iron fist. He used the assassination as an excuse so that he would appear to be standing in the right.

After arriving at planet T-H001, they would still need to switch to another passenger transport if they were to meet up with Dias. There were many small passenger transports parked at planet T-H001's main port, headed to different planets.

At Sector T, any planets that started with H were categorised as hunting planets. These planets were not suitable for human habitation, and were basically the world of beasts. Hunters loved to hunt in these planets, the transfer their catches out of the planet and sell them.

The beasts in this Sector's planets were all pretty special, and most species were valuable from head to toe. Their skin, hair, horn, teeth, bones and so on sold like hotcakes outside. However, to ensure the preservation and survival of the alien beasts in this Sector, GAL had a treaty where they forbad the use of weapons of mass destruction, the use of radioactive weapons, the destruction of the environment so on and so on...

Sometimes, if the Hunters used a weapon that was more powerful than anticipated and blew up a mountain or a forest by

accident, they would be fined or worse, sent to jail.

Dias' squad's hunting spot was at Planet T-H036. When Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu took a passenger transport and arrived at the planet, they immediately saw the familiar starship parked at the spaceport. The starship's gigantic dagger symbol was incredibly eye-catching, and it also warned the rascals to take a measure of themselves before planning anything funny against them.

At this time, the personnel responsible for guard duty should be the only ones left on the starship, and all the core members of the group should have gone out to the planet to hunt. However, an aircraft had just coincidentally flown out of the planet at this time and back into the starship. When Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu entered the starship, they immediately saw Cary ordering the men unloading some items from the aircraft.

"Eh, Qiuqiu, you're back!" Cary walked over and was about to give Qiuqiu a hug. But when he looked down and saw the blue and red alien beast's blood on himself, he ultimately decided against it.

Seeing Cary's questioning gaze on his own, Cillin smiled and said, "Long time no see, Cary!"

Cary was even more doubtful now. He was sure that he had never seen this foolish-looking man before him.

Tang Qiuqiu giggled right away. It would seem that she wasn't the only one who couldn't recognise him, "He's brother Cillin!"

The fact that Tang Qiuqiu added the word ‘brother’ in front of Cillin’s name meant that she had acknowledged Cillin now. Before this, she would either call him ‘Cillin’ directly or without adding a title at the front.

“Cillin?!” Cary’s mouth fell open as he looked Cillin all over before voicing his amazement, “No wonder the lieutenant said that you’ve changed into a new skin.”

Chapter 84: Arrival At Planet Hunt

The aircraft Cary flew over were packed full with the results of his hunt. The alien beasts' skins, bones and other materials were already categorised and packaged properly in place, and it would be up to the support staff on the starship to process these goods further.

Once the goods were completely unloaded, Cary flew the aircraft out of the starship and returned to the planet. Cillin and Tang Qiuqiu accompanied him as well. Tang Qiuqiu had been looking forward to this for quite some time now, and she wouldn't stop toying with her gun on the aircraft.

Tang Qiuqiu's gun was modified so that the body was lighter, and its recoil not as powerful as the one she used before. However, it was far more lethal than her old rifle.

A couple of physical bullets lay at the side. Laser type firearms were not used during hunting because it would burn the alien beasts' skin and fur, hence causing a drop in their selling price. Moreover, it wasn't exactly safe to use a laser type firearm in a dry forest either, not to mention that it could easily put an alien beast in alert. Therefore, the Hunters who came here to hunt preferred using modified bullets instead. Among them, some of the bullets were specifically modified to capture living creatures. The tip of the bullet held drugs in them, and it would melt and break apart the moment it entered they prey's body, releasing the drugs into its blood.

During the short period of their flight, Cary grabbed two thermal

wears for Cillin and Tang Qiqiu to put on and explained to them briefly about the terrain. There might be plenty of species living on this planet, but for a human, the environment wasn't nearly as friendly.

The planet was almost perpetually at a sub zero temperature, and the alien beasts on this planet were mostly covered in either thick fur or scales. Moreover, they were incredibly fierce, and some of the animals that appeared harmless were actually even more so.

"Normally speaking, the beasts at the cold zones are larger than norm, and in this place cats are about the size of leopards in another Sector..." Cary chattered.

Tang Qiuqiu's head cocked, "But how do you know it's a cat and not a leopard?"

"There's this one night I heard them caterwauling as they..."

Before Cary could finish, Cillin immediately covered up his mouth. It's probably for the best if that word was not spoken in front of a child.

At first Cary didn't understand why Cillin had stopped him from speaking; it's just cats yowling in heat as they fuck, wasn't it? But then he saw Tang Qiuqiu's curiosity-filled gaze and immediately came to realization.

"Basically, a leopard and a cat's cries are different." Cary said

with a straight face.

Tang Qiuqiu thought for a second, and found that his answer made sense, and so she stopped pressing him about the subject.

Cillin and Cary met each other's eyes and let out a sigh. As expected, things were different when there was a child in the team. They even had to watch their mouths real tight when they were around her.

The aircraft descended in front of a small three-story building. There was another identical aircraft that was parked beside the building, and someone was just transporting goods into that aircraft. This time the transported goods were basically all living creatures, and they were contained inside specially made cages. Since the alien beasts were injected with drugs, they lay sluggishly inside their cages.

Cary pointed at an animal that looked very much like a squirrel, but was three times the normal size and said, "Look, aren't they just cute? Girls love these kind of furry animals the most, and it is extremely easy to feel pity for them when you look into their black, round eyes. But the fact is, just these squirrels bit god knows how many Hunters and killed them."

Seeing Tang Qiuqiu staring at those animals, Cary got closer and asked, "Do you like them? Should I find a smaller one later to gift it to you as a pet? There's a type of squirrel that has white fur and looks a lot more cuter than this one. There are lots of rich girls and ladies who prefer them as well."

Tang Qiuqiu frowned, “What’s the use of raising them anyway?”

Cary was going to say that they could be raised for fun, but he swallowed his words just as they reached the back of his mouth, because if he did say that, then Tang Qiuqiu would certainly answer: In that case it’s better if we sell them for credits; the credits we get can buy a lot of sweets, you know.

These animals were only dangerous when their animal instincts were still present. Moreover, once they were tamed, they were basically timid and harmless. The only reason the rich girls and ladies raised them was for entertainment purposes, and when they had nothing to do, they could touch and hug and tease them for fun. But for Tang Qiuqiu, it was unnecessary. In terms of intelligence, these animals were far surpassed by Eudy’s little devil of a chameleon, Dough.

Seeing Cary choking on his words, Cillin patted Tang Qiuqiu and said, “Get ready. We’re going out for a hunt.”

“Alright, hunting!” The moment the matter was brought up, Tang Qiuqiu no longer cared for Cary’s answer and followed Cillin outside.

“Hey, wait for me, I’m coming with you two as well!”

Cillin had just walked out the aircraft when he saw Beaver moving all ten fingers across a keyboard and calculating something.

“What’s wrong, Beaver? Did something happen?”

Beaver raised his head upon hearing his voice, “Yo, Cillin, you’re back!”

Cary was crestfallen, and Tang Qiuqiu was disappointed. They didn’t think that Beaver would actually be able to recognise Cillin.

In truth, Beaver had already seen Cillin’s new face from the image Shawton sent him, so naturally he wasn’t as surprised as Cary. He had already gotten over that phase.

“It’s nothing, I’m just checking to see which place has more alien beasts. Oh, are you looking for the lieutenant? He’s at this location.” Beaver brought up a picture and pointed at a dot.

After the map transfer was complete, Cillin, Tang Qiuqiu and Cary then departed on a small airship towards Dias’ location.

Looking down from the airship, the planet’s unique cold-resistant coniferous forest and some evergreen species could be seen everywhere. From time to time, they could see black shadows passing through the forest, but since they weren’t the preys they were looking for the small group did not bother with them. Dias was currently tracking down a group of alien polar bears, and their fur could be sold for a huge sum of money.

In a highly technological era where the variety of materials were

inexhaustible, the demand for natural fur, leather and skin objects had only gotten crazier. The higher someone stood on the pyramid, the more they loved these kind of objects. In the eyes of the rich ladies, a precious natural skin was equal or better than expensive jewelry.

The airship had a radar that revealed any surrounding living creatures, but Cillin did not fully rely on the radar to sense them. He would watch with his eyes, and listen with his ears. This was a habit of his.

Caw caw caw caw——

A flock of birds was surprised and flew up into the air. Their cries were a little eerie.

From the data revealed on the radar's scan, there were only a few cats and wolves at that direction. None of these animals were up to Cary's standards, so he ignored them. Hunting them would be a pure waste of bullets.

Cillin's ears moved, and he suddenly said, "Cary, stop here for a bit!"

"What's wrong?" Cary slowed down the airship and asked.

Cillin grabbed his backpack, "I'm going down for a look. You guys go meet up with the lieutenant first."

“Hey, those things aren’t worth looking at. We’re still at the outer edge of the forest, and there ain’t anything valuable out here.”

“It’s okay, I’m just taking a look, that’s all. You guys go first.” Cillin grabbed a hoverboard from the airship’s equipment hold and extended it, “I’ll catch up to you guys later.”

Once finished, Cillin then rode the hoverboard out of the airship and flew downwards.

“This kid is really…” Cary shook his head and accelerated away.

Tang Qiuqiu asked while licking a lollipop, “What is brother Cillin trying to do? Isn’t there no good prey at that spot?”

“Who knows, maybe he’s gone nuts.” Cary said without thinking.

“What’s a nut?”

Cary: “…”

After a pause, Cary answered carefully, “It’s a kind of fruit.”

Chapter 85: Cyborg

After he rode the hoverboard down into the forest, Cillin put it back into his backpack, took out a canister and sprayed its contents onto himself, causing his body to be enveloped in an odor that smelled similar to his surroundings. Then, he squeezed his backpack into a crevice, and quietly sneaked his way towards the place where the birds were surprised.

If Cary conducted a spectral analysis with his equipment just now, he would have discovered a particularly strange wave pattern. It was a machine-like cry that was mixed within the cries of the birds and cats, and the cause of Cillin's piqued curiosity. He had the feeling that he would find something there.

Cillin slowly searched his way forwards. Unlike humans, the animals here had very acute hearing, which was why Cillin was treading with the utmost carefulness. If he wanted to know the truth, then he must hide himself well. Although he had sprayed himself with the deodorant, Cillin still chose to move from where the wind was blowing against him. This way, his odor would not be easily detected by the animals at the upwind.

The leaves susurrated in the breeze, and from time to time, there would be needlelike leaves falling off the branches. These tiny noises were enough to aid Cillin in masking his stealthy approach.

Gradually, Cillin could hear a couple of low growls and the warning growls of a cat. He went closer, and saw the the situation upfront.

There were six wolves and three cats – wait, four – cats. A small cat was surrounded at the center by three large cats, and it looked both sick and dispirited. Its eyes were closed, and its breathing was a little weak.

It was as Cary had said earlier. These cats were as big as leopards, and in comparison, the small cat was the only one whose size could be considered normal. The size difference was glaring with it being enclosed at the center by the three large cats.

But while the cats were big, the wolves were even bigger. Have you ever seen a wolf the size of a bear? Nevertheless, this was the first time Cillin saw a wolf this big, although considering the fact that he had seen mice the size of bears back at Seven Lights, the novelty already rubbed off him already.

Cillin found it strange that the six wolves would hesitate in front of the three cats, however. The small cat was of course a non-factor. Logically speaking, be it in terms of size or numbers, the wolves had the absolute advantage, so they shouldn't be acting this hesitant as if they wanted to charge forwards, but couldn't help but be wary about something.

Something's wrong.

Cillin held his breath and continued to watch the scene unfold. He kept feeling that something was off, but could not find anything amiss whatsoever. There were neither mechanical activities nor energy fluxes in the area. There were only these few animals.

A wolf roared twice in a low tone and took a step forwards, causing the hair all over the three large cats to stand immediately on their ends. Previously, only the hair behind their backs were puffed up, but now it was as if their entire bodies had gone completely stiff with tension. Their tails were stuck straight up, and their puffed hair caused them to look a size bigger than normal. At the same time, the three large cats took yet another half a step backwards and got closer to the small cat.

The wolf did not pressure further, and instead circled around the area restlessly. Its claws cut through the rock hard ground frozen hard by sub zero temperature like tofu.

Maybe it was because of the low growls of the wolves and the sound of their claws grinding against the ground, or it could be because of the growls of the three large, tensed cats. At any rate, the small cat inside the encirclement opened its eyes with great difficulty.

The small cat was leaning against a rock that wasn’t much bigger than it, and there were also some primitive ferns inside the seams of the rock. The first thing the small cat looked at wasn’t the large cats or the wolves, but the few small ferns between the seams.

The small cat opened its mouth and revealed its fine teeth. It was no different from a normal cat’s, unlike the absolutely savage-looking teeth the large cats owned. The small cat bit at the fern leaves extending out of the seams of the rock, rubbed its paws, closed its eyes and dropped its head on the floor just like before. It was as if the mere act of biting those leaves had consumed it much

energy.

Cillin narrowed his eyes. Something's definitely not right!

When the small cat opened its mouth just now, the six wolves obviously looked shaken by it. The foremost wolf had even backed away to stand with its companions, as if it was the only way it could regain some courage and assurance.

At first, he thought that the three cats surrounded the small cat in the middle to protect it from harm, but the truth might be that the three large cats were just scared, and the one the six wolves were truly scared of was not the three cats, but that sickly-looking small cat lying on the floor!

Cillin continued to observe, but the situation remained the same as ever. He couldn't let it keep going on like this. In order to confirm his assumptions, Cillin grabbed a needle and shot it at one of the wolves. It was only by aggravating the conflict that the situation could better resolve itself.

It was during the standoff where both sides were baring fangs at each other, when the wolf who was shot in the butt jumped upwards and let out a yelp. It wasn't a yelp of pain, but of surprise. The wolf's skin was very thick, and Cillin's needle could not have entered deep into the flesh. But the wolf, in a high state of tension had reflexively jumped a step forwards after it felt pain from his backside. The couple of wolves behind him seemed encouraged by its movements and leaped forwards as well. Seeing that the wolves were actually going to charge them, the three large cats decided to go all out as well. The situation instantly fell into chaos.

It was exactly thanks to this fallout that Cillin saw something that shocked him to the core.

The head of the small cat that was originally lying dispiritedly on the floor, giving off the impression that it was exhaling more than inhaling, suddenly swelled bigger than even the wolves themselves. Its grey hair swiftly contracted and transformed to reveal a metallic skin, and at this very moment, it looked nothing like an animal at all and more like a robot. But no, the small cat should be a combination of both animal and machine, for excluding its bizarre mechanical head, its body and limbs remained the same as before.

The swollen mechanical cat head opened its mouth and swallowed the closest wolf in one gulp. Then mechanical cat head then slowly shrank bank to its original size, losing its metallic luster and regrowing its hair. It regained its original looks and went back to looking delicate and half-dead on the ground.

When the small cat was transforming, the six wolves already tried to leap out of the combat zone right away. But the wolf that was closest to to the cat failed to escape in time and suffered the fatal consequence. The rest of the five wolves escaped with their tails between their legs until they were at least fifty meters away, panting heavily from their flight.

Meanwhile, Cillin dropped a sweat at the sight.

Holy shit, that thing’s a Transformer! It might not be a full

machine, but it most definitely looked like a robot just now!

Is it a Cyborg?

The topic of cyborgs once came up in some articles Cillin read from electronic magazine with great contribution points. This kind of lifeform was incredibly unstable, and could only live for a very short amount of time. There were many researchers who once attempted to create such a life that was half flesh and half machine, but the results were never as good as they imagined. With time limit being its only flaw, the transformation between carbon-based lifeform and mechanical lifeform of a naturally occurring cyborg was near perfect, whereas an artificially created cyborg would not be able to achieve this level of perfection. They would always score either below or above the point of balance.

One of the two magazine giants of GAL, ‘Code’ once speculated on the potential causes of the formation of a cyborg, but the explanation provided was very vague. It could be that Cillin’s reading privilege wasn’t high enough to access the true research secrets.

The researchers described this semi-mechanical alien lifeform as a miracle of the universe. A certain substance that was formed randomly in the universe was the core of the formation of this type of lifeform. These substances could not be replicated, and when they drifted to a planet with life, these substances would then capture a certain biological creature’s genetic information, and with this genetic information as basis, turn into a pseudo-lifeform. This was what they called a cyborg life.

The universe is a place where all kinds of miracles happened. Cillin did not know how it was formed, nor did he know if those researchers managed to come up with a perfect cyborg already. However, this being before him was most definitely a cyborg life of perfect transformation!

Chapter 86: It Speaks!

It was back to the same situation Cillin had seen earlier, but with one less wolf now.

The little cat continued to lay there dispiritedly, barely even moving its tail. But Cillin dared not look down on the little guy now. He wasn't sure that he could win against a cyborg that could swallow a wolf in one gulp.

He still couldn't decide if this cyborg cat was really sick or just faking it, though. If he assumed that it was sick, the speed in which it swallowed the wolf just now was literally as quick as lightning. If Cillin didn't have good eyes and saw through its movements and certain details, it would've looked like the wolf had just suddenly disappeared. But if he assumed that it was faking it, it was undeniable that the cat did look sickly and listless. If it was in good spirits, these wolves would probably all be devoured already.

In order to figure out the cat's condition, Cillin decided to wait and see if a change occurs. Now that he knew that the cat was a cyborg, he did not dare to act recklessly anymore.

But reality did not go the way Cillin wished for. The little cat that was lying listlessly on the ground, looking like it was asleep abruptly opened its eyes and stared right at Cillin's hiding spot. Gone was the half-conscious look from before, as its eyes opened wide and its pupils narrowed into thin, long slits.

It appeared incredibly excited, and this time it wasn't just its

head, but its entire body that had begun to change, twist and transform. However, it couldn't seem to settle on a definite form as it transformed continuously between hairy and metallic, big and small. It looked incredibly strange.

Cillin truly believed that the cyborg cat was in poor health now that he saw it lifting and supporting its body on four limbs, but was unable to take even a step. Perhaps it was as the researchers said: A natural cyborg could not enjoy a long life because their bodies weren't stable enough. This cat's condition was obviously one such example in that it could transform very smoothly between a machine and a carbon-based body, but could not stabilize itself and maintain either one of its forms right now. Earlier, the cat had probably stayed as a carbon-based lifeform because a carbon-based constitution consumed less energy, and could be maintained longer than a mechanical body.

The remaining five wolves escaped the instant they witnessed the cat in its current state. Right now, the strange cat was giving them an incredibly dangerous feeling. The five wolves aside, the three big cats themselves had also backed away shakily before running away after witnessing that the wolves' escape. They left behind the cat that could not stop transforming and settling on a definite state.

Cillin did not move. In that instant, a very familiar feeling struck him: the chips inside his body had become excited once more. At the same time, he felt as if something was about to break out of its metaphorical cocoon.

Hmm?

Cillin looked at Genya's curly leaf tattoo on his finger, and found that something was growing restless inside. It was the white ball he had obtained earlier!

The cyborg cat stared straight at Cillin a hundred meters away, and lifted a foot with great difficulty. After stopping itself from falling, it continued to move towards Cillin's direction once more.

Every time the cyborg cat took a step towards him, Cillin could feel the restlessness inside the white ball growing stronger. Even more amazing was that the closer the cyborg cat got to him, the livelier the cat seemingly became.

Cillin could take out his gun and shoot it straight away, but his instincts prevented him from doing so. If he did that, then the one to die would definitely be him.

Like two mutually attracting magnets, Cillin's left hand rose uncontrollably against his will. There was a dominant force in his left thumb that was pulling him towards that cat's direction.

Cillin gritted his teeth and steadied himself, but the force was so powerful that he was being dragged across the ground.

As if dissatisfied with the current situation, the surroundings of the curly leaf tattoo on Cillin's left thumb began to distort. An invisible force was literally tearing the subspace apart.

The white ball flew right out of the subspace and straight to the cyborg cat. Then, it vanished into the cat's body.

There were no dazzling white light, or explosions of epic proportion. There was only a cyborg lying there on the ground, transforming.

However, Cillin knew that everything was definitely not as calm as it seemed. Thanks to the chips, he was able to sense the abnormality happening around him. The surrounding electromagnetic waves and charged particles were all undergoing a change.

At the same time, every communication device in the entire Planet T-H036 was interrupted, and every electric grid paralyzed. Not even the solar-powered panels could be used at this moment.

Dias was laying out the tactics to surround and hunt down the polar bears on the other side, but then he discovered that his communicator had gone out after a bzzt noise. What's strange was that the polar bear that was howling arrogantly above the hill just now had suddenly fallen to the ground and trembled non-stop.

Dias and the others also experienced a little bit of discomfort. They felt as if some unseen sound waves were disrupting their thoughts. However, since none of their instruments were currently functional, and hence they could not seek out the source of this discomfort either.

The satellites and aircrafts outside Planet T-H036 were also

affected somewhat. The satellites could not transmit any signal or monitor the planet's surface, and the magnetic and ray analyser could not be used either. They were unable to make contact with the planet's surface or any other planets. Prior to this situation, no abnormalities were detected from the high energy particles, rays or magnetic fields at all.

Someone suggested that it might be a solar flare, but Planet T-H036 was one of those planets that orbited further away from its sun. Otherwise its temperature would not have been this low. There were also plenty of planets that were closer to the sun than Planet T-H036, but they did not hear anything from those planets about such occurrences. Of course, it could be that they were experiencing the same phenomenon right now, and were unable to communicate it in time before communications were interrupted. Regardless, what they needed to do right now was to analyse the approximate length of this abnormality. Only then they would be able to come up with the appropriate countermeasures.

However, without their analysers, it was not entirely realistic to come up with something substantial within a short time.

In the forest on the planet's surface.

Cillin watched the cyborg that was lying on the ground and still hadn't stabilized. He did not walk closer for a better look. He had no confidence that he would be able to take a blow from such a powerful lifeform, not even in its current immobile state.

About an hour later, the cyborg cat gradually stabilized. It was still the same little cat, but it appeared lively and full of energy,

unlike its sluggish appearance from before. Its full fur of grey also gave off a shiny reflection under natural sunlight.

After the cyborg cat had stabilized, the communication device in the whole planet also recovered and began functioning normally as usual.

The cat lifted its head and stared at Cillin. There was no malice in its eyes, but Cillin would not grow lax just because of it and stayed on high alert. He was so out of this place the second this cat did anything unusual. Seriously, who in their right mind would want to fight such a cyborg head on unless they have a death wish?!

When the cat had reached less than fifty meters away from him, Cillin let out a warning, “Take another step forwards and I’ll blast you.”

Normally, Cillin would not waste his breath on such nonsense when he’s about to shoot. He just wanted to remind the cat to keep its distance. He wondered if the cat could actually understand him though.

When the grey cat heard his words, it stopped its feet and sat on its butt. Pulling its ears behind its head, the cat let out an incredibly disdainful look, “What the hell’s with that temper, man!”

Cillin: “?!”

It talked?

Holy shit, the cat seriously just talked!

Chapter 87: Debt Settlement

Cillin stared at the cat who was despising him from not far away. He seriously did not remember reading anywhere in those documents that a cyborg could speak. However, it could just be that he had not accessed the real core content of the study. Regardless, this type of lifeform was truly astounding.

“I can’t believe you can speak.”

“I learned that more than a hundred years ago!” The cat lifted its hand, no, its paw and pointed at a direction, “I remember that there weren’t that many buildings over there back then. The entire planet only had a single aircraft landing zone.”

It was more than a hundred years ago when GAL gave permission to hunt on this planet, and there weren’t that many human buildings back then. The direction the cat’s paw was pointing at was exactly where their aircraft were parked.

“I can’t believe you can live for such a long time.” Cillin sighed emotionally.

“You don’t say. I may not know how long I can live, but I certainly didn’t feel like I’ve grown up much after so many years.” the gray cat was very dissatisfied with Cillin’s doubting his own lifespan.

“What’s with your look just now then? Was that sickly appearance where you’re so weak that you’re about to RIP just an

illusion?” Cillin said disdainfully.

“There will always be such a period every dozen of years or so. I will become weakened at the time. My state will become extremely unstable, and both of my forms will become very difficult to control. Moreover, I will also let out a kind of magnetic wave that attracts a lot of ill-intentioned species to attack me. Those wolves are an example of that.”

Cillin abruptly came to realization. So this is why. They were unstable, but it did not necessarily meant that their lifespan was short. The reason those researchers said that their life was short was probably referring to their periodic phase of weakness, and if they attracted a more powerful species to attack them during that time, then they would be dead for sure.

The cat continued to speak on its own, “In the past I do not understand why my body would let out that kind of magnetic wave uncontrollably, but I finally understand now that it is to attract that white ball. I do not know what that white ball is; I only know that it is useful to me and is able to stabilize my chaotic state.”

It was true that Cillin could not sense the white ball’s existence any longer. It seemed that a cyborg’s ‘coincidental’ birth also included the white ball. Without it, even if a cyborg could switch flawlessly between two forms, they would not be able to maintain stability.

“It feels like you’re the same kind of lifeform as I am.” The cat looked at Cillin. When he arrived at this world, he already knew that he was different from the lifeforms around him. However,

right now Cillin was giving him a very strange feeling; an unspeakable sense of familiarity.

“I am a normal carbon-based lifeform and a pure human. Pure.” Cillin said definitively.

“I know that you’re human, that’s why I’m only saying that you feel the same like me. Hey, why don’t you come with me. Now that I’m stable, I no longer have a weakness phase like before. On this planet I stand on the apex, you know.”

“Not interested.” Cillin turned around and left. He had better take his backpack and search for Dias and the rest.

“Hey, don’t leave man. How about I come with you then?” The cat ran after Cillin eagerly from the back.

Cillin paused his feet and looked at the cat. This time he didn’t tell it to stop and allowed it to walk in front of him.

“You want to leave?”

“Yeah, I’m tired of this place. I wanna go out and get some knowledge and experience.”

“You can look for someone else. There are plenty of people who hunt here. Maybe you can enter a certain aircraft sneakily and enjoy a free tour.”

“No no no.” The cat head shook with all its strength, “They’re unreliable. They’re either too weak or too immoral.”

Cillin crouched and stared seriously at the gray and boring-looking cat before him, “Speaking of which, you did remind me of something important.”

“What?”

“It took me quite a bit of effort to get that white ball. If I sold it to those crazy researchers, I could’ve maybe gotten a few hundred million credits, but now you’ve robbed me of it. You just have to compensate me no matter what. You can come with me, but you have to settle your debt then.”

“Settle my debt?”

“Yeah.” Cillin took out a knife and began carving some numbers on the ground,

“You know about the polar bears of this planet, don’t you? One polar bear can be sold for around ten thousand GAL credits each. If we convert the money you owe me to a polar bear, you owe me at least ten thousand polar bears then. Of course, some alien beasts are more valuable than the white bears, and certain species are even valued over a million credits. If we hunt those down then you’ll be able to save yourself some energy.” At this point, Cillin paused for a second and looked doubtfully at the cat that’s staring at the ground intently and listening to him count, “Of course,

maybe you won't be able to deal with that kind of alien beasts..."

Can't handle them?! Claws and hair puff, on!

"I'll prove it to you! I'm telling you, I haven't met a beast that can take two swipes from me!"

"If you're just going to demonstrate how you can swallow a wolf then forget it. It only shows how big of an eater you are and how much food money you're gonna cost me."

The cat scoffed and huffed through its nose before looking at its surroundings, circling around Cillin one time. Then it raised its paw and pointed at its own head, "Take out your gun and shoot here."

Cillin did not object to the suggestion. Theoretically a cyborg or whatever should be pretty niubi (amazing), so maybe it really could take a bullet and a shell; fly into the air or drill into the ground.

Bang!

The gun roared, and the cat was blasted right off its feet. The gray clump of shadow flew way back into the distance.

Cillin: "..." You call this a proof?

However, very soon the gray cat ran back unhurriedly and spat

out the bullet in its mouth. The bullet itself was perfectly intact, and the drugs sealed inside it did not leak out either.

The most amazing thing was that Cillin had aimed and fired at the cat's forehead, not its mouth. The cat's head was perfectly undamaged, but somehow it managed to spit out the perfectly intact bullet from its mouth instead. Moreover, this type of bullet was specifically made to deal with large alien polar bears, and a single shot was all that it took to penetrate the skin. He didn't think that this fellow would actually be capable of taking the shot without any injury.

"How is it? Not bad, eh?" The gray cat said complacently.

"Yeah, there's certainly no shame in getting blasted right off your feet in one shot."

"If I switched a form I wouldn't be blasted off, okay!"

Cillin put away his gun and asked curiously, "How do you change between the two forms exactly? Even the elements have changed."

When a cyborg was in a biological form, it was also a carbon-based lifeform. The composition of its elements was no different from the average organism. However, the moment it switched to a machine-like form, its elemental composition would change entirely. Despite learning under Mo Heng about machine assembly for such a long time, Cillin had never seen this type of metal before.

“I don’t know, I was born with it. I can easily undergo elemental directional transition.” It continued to act complacent.

“Why don’t you let me see you change something into gold?”

“Do you not understand what is called directional transition?”

The gray cat put on a teaching appearance and drew a circle on the ground with its paw, “This is the elemental composition of my current form.” It drew another circle, “This is the elemental composition of my other form.” Then it marked the center of the two circles with a bidirectional arrow, “This is the so-called directional transition.”

Cillin said disappointedly, “So turning into gold is impossible.”

The grey mouth’s ears flicked backwards in depression. Suddenly, it felt that it was scorned to the point of utter uselessness.

“Never mind, I suppose this will have to do. Just follow me for now and repay your debt slowly. This way you may yet run into something like that white ball again and improve your constitution. Plus, if you come with me you won’t have to worry about being sold to research institutes, lying on operation tables and be dissected into tiny parts by crazy researchers seeking to uncover your secrets.”

The gray cat that was about to object to the first half of Cillin’s

words immediately turned meek the instant it heard the latter half. In truth, it wasn't that bad after it thought over the situation. It's just a few hundred million GAL credits; a few valuable alien beasts later and its debt would be settled right away.

It didn't take long before the gray cat realized that it was too naive.

Chapter 88: Wheeze

Cillin took out a stack of dark gold-colored things from his backpack and began writing on it. The gray cat lay on the side and watched, its tail swaying leisurely from side to side. It knew GAL's common language, and the word 'Bill' was clearly written on the stack of dark gold things.

Therefore, when Cillin took out this item the gray cat looked very disdainful. It's only a couple hundred million credits, and It wasn't going to renege on its debt at all. So was it seriously necessary to do this?

"What's your name?" Cillin asked. He couldn't exactly write 'gray cat' on the bill, could he?

"Whebeze."

"Hah?"

"Whebeze. It's this Sector's native language, and one of the very first languages that I came in contact with. Whebeze means 'overlord'."

Originally, there were no humans on this planet, and the very first humans who came here were none other than the humans of the planet's belonging Sector, Sector T. Later on, there were people from other Sectors who came here as well. In the end, everyone used the GAL's common language, which was why the gray cat learned the lingua franca later on.

“Nuo, I’m done writing. Have a look and see if everything’s proper? If it is then you can sign it... or slap a paw print is fine too.” Cillin passed the written bill to the gray cat for viewing.

The gray cat glanced at the number Cillin had written – five hundred million credits – and thought nothing of it. Without giving it a second glance it raised its paw and slapped a print on the bill straight away.

“Heh, we’re done. Every bill has two copies; one for you and one for me. This is just in case one side refuses to acknowledge the promise.”

Cillin passed a copy to the gray cat, but it simply swallowed it in one gulp.

The gray cat raised its butt, stretched its back and shook its fur before saying, “We can leave now, right?”

“Wait a second, there’s something that I must clarify with you first.” Cillin put the bill safely away before staring seriously at the gray cat.

“What is it?” The gray cat asked lazily.

“I am now a member of a Hunter regiment. If you wish to come with me, then it will be not as a member of the Hunter regiment, but as the party who owes us money. In short, I’m the creditor and

you're the debt slave."

"Debt slave? That's so vulgar." The gray cat flicked its ears and said.

"A pet then, to disguise your identity."

"Pet? I am the magnificent..."

"A debt slave then."

"... Fine, a pet. But let's be clear: once I paid my debts I am neither a pet nor a debt slave any longer!"

"Of course."

"You should be proud to have me as a pet. To think that I, a magnificent – er, by your terms it will be – cyborg am treated as a mere pet. Do you know that I'm..." Blah blah blah the gray cat began advertising exactly how special, smart and tough of an existence it was.

Through the cat's incessant prattle, Cillin knew that the cat would often hang around the base after the humans had built it on this planet. Through those experiences it learned the GAL language, learned how to memorise a given year, eavesdropped on the human's development plan for this planet, imitated the human's weapons...

The cat was very proud because of these achievements. No matter how you looked at it it was gifted, outstandingly capable, and a self-made genius.

Cillin shook his head and ignored the fellow who was busy sublimating its ego. He took out the hoverboard from his backpack, extended it, activated it and left.

“Hey, wait for me!”

The gray cat limbs pushed, and it quickly caught the backside of the hoverboard with its claws and jumped right onto it. Then it lay on top of the hoverboard and watched the ground growing further and further away, its bright round eyes full of excitement.

“Remember not to tell anyone that you’re a cyborg and save yourself some trouble.”

“Yep yep, gotcha gotcha.” The gray cat knew that a human’s madness was difficult to imagine, and that it really wasn’t easy to find one that was actually reliable. That was why it had not revealed its existence to the humans for so many years.

When Cillin found Dias and the others, they were almost finished with their tasks already. At the time the communicator could not be used, and the polar bears were all lying flat on the ground. Although Dias was feeling uncomfortable at the time, he also knew that it was a golden opportunity to take down the bears, and indeed it didn’t take them much effort before they dealt with all of

them.

Tang Qiuqiu was currently grabbing Ba Dao's (T/N: In case anyone forgot, this is Eight Claws) tallest arm and swinging herself off it. Ba Dao used only two hands to process the animal skins while he allowed Tang Qiuqiu to play with his remaining four arms however she wanted to.

When she saw Cillin walking towards their direction, Tang Qiuqiu put some strength into her arms and threw herself into the air, flipping once before landing gracefully on the ground.

"Really, Brother Cillin! You came only after we're finished the mission!"

Cillin smiled and patted Tang Qiuqiu's head, purposely making a mess out of her short hair. Tang Qiuqiu did not turn angry either as she gripped Cillin's patting hand and giggled out loud.

"How many polar bears did you catch?" Cillin asked.

"We got seven in total. I took down one of them myself!"

No wonder she's so happy!

When these polar bears stood up, they were more than seven meters tall. It would be an impressive feat for anyone to hunt down such a beast, much less a child at Tang Qiuqiu's age.

“Not bad at all. Great job!”

Not far away, Eudy, Xiao Shang and the others were all staring at Cillin in amazement. He really did switch into a new skin! Not only could they not recognise him, even his physical body had become more robust. He no longer looked as thin as he was before.

The gray cat was very dissatisfied by the fact that it was ignored. It jumped right off the hoverboard and walked with graceful steps towards the side to watch the men process the white bears.

It ate so many of this kind of polar bears that it lost count already; it was a number no less than the amount of polar bears the Hunters hunted every time the planet was opened for hunting. It didn’t know that their skin could be sold for money as well. Sigh, it would have to pay attention in the future. It would separate those that could be sold for money first, then eat the rest of the meat.

“Eh, a cat! Brother Cillin, where did you find it?” Tang Qiuqiu stared at the gray cat strolling leisurely on the field and asked.

“I picked it up somewhere.”

“Why did you pick up a cat for, and a young cat no less. Just look at its size, it probably won’t live for a long time if you left it in the forest. You went out for a stroll just to pick up this little cat?” Cary said.

Hearing Cary's words, the gray cat turned around and very disdainfully looked down on him.

"Yo, that cat actually looked down on me, it totally looked down on me just now didn't it?" Cary cried out as if he had discovered another chameleon that was like Dough.

"Oh wow, it's true! Brother Cillin, what's its name?" Tang Qiuqiu asked.

"Whebeze, or in short, Wheeze."

Hearing Cillin's words, the gray cat who was watching rather interestedly at Cary and Dias skinning the polar bears felt rather dissatisfied. But seeing as Cillin was his creditor, the gray cat decided not to bicker with him over the matter.

"Hehe, it's so cute." Tang Qiuqiu laughed.

"Cute? This gloomy and dull color is ugly as hell."

The second it heard Cillin's words, the gray cat puffed up again, "You're the ugly! Your entire being is ugly!"

Cary, who was skinning the bears accidentally dropped his knife and nearly cut his own hand.

"Oh my god, this fellow can actually speak! Not bad, it can

definitely fetch a good price.”

“It’s not for sale!”

“It’s not for sale.”

Cillin looked at Tang Qiuqiu. She was the one who said ‘it’s not for sale’ unanimously with him.

“Those polar bears are enough already to sell for money. We’ll keep it as a friend for Dough!” Tang Qiuqiu did seem treasure the gray cat quite a bit.

Dias waved his hands, “Alright, let’s finish our work first. Our guys at the main ship are urging us to speed up already. We’ll be doing a big one after we’re done with these goods.”

“A big one?” Cary’s eyes lit up, “Boss, is it time for our five-year mission already?”

The Sixth Squad had a rule where every member was required to perform a major mission that might take half a year or a year, or four to five years if not longer. If they managed to complete it in a short time, then they would have a long period of holiday, or else vice versa. The purpose of the so-called five-year mission was also to report their achievements to the A Squad of Vanguard. If they did not have anything to show, then their squad’s status in the entire Vanguard would fall. On the other hand, if their achievements were impressive, then their squad’s status would

rise.

Chapter 89: Parasite

The five-year mission was a standard to measure a squadron's overall strength and state of development. It could bring a squadron to the top and turn them into the limelight of the entire GAL, and it could turn a squadron into the world's object of ridicule as well. This was also the second time Shawton would be performing his five-year mission after he became the Sixth B Squadron's commander. His previous mission's performance was neither good nor bad either. It did not make him famous or notorious, but at the least it proved his ability as the commander of the Sixth B Squadron.

A five-year mission was a very difficult task to accomplish, this much was certain. They might be met with unprecedented crisis, and no one, not even the commander or the lieutenant commander could guarantee that they would survive a five-year mission intact and unharmed.

To lose one portion of men and temper the other portion, was the Hunter regiment's way to continuously temper and grow themselves. The Hunters were used to dancing on the edge of life and death all year round, and it was exactly because they had gotten used to such an exciting and adventurous life that they felt neither nervous nor panic when they heard that there would be a dangerous mission, but near intolerable excitement instead. The veteran Hunters were especially so.

After acquiring Dias' affirmation, Cary and the others cheered. They weren't able to get much experience during the last five-year mission, and they didn't get much of a kick just following their seniors' lead either. This time, they must absolutely enjoy the five-

year mission to the fullest! When Cary and the others thought up to this point, they began to work faster as well.

Cillin joined them in their work, while Tang Qiuqiu and the gray cat crouched at Cillin's left and right side to watch the processing of the spoils.

Seeing that the gray cat was so engrossed at the sight that it did not even blink, Tang Qiuqiu asked, "Wheeze, are you interested in this?"

"Call me Whebeze!" The gray cat was very dissatisfied.

"But Wheeze sounds cordial."

Cordial? The gray cat immediately felt elated and did not fuss over Tang Qiuqiu's way of addressing it any longer. However, it did not mention that it owed Cillin money; it was just too embarrassing to admit that it was a debt slave or something.

After they were finished processing the polar bears, the group returned to their temporary base, tidied things up and flew back to their starship parked at the space station on their aircrafts.

The gray cat walked here and there around the starship with a straight tail as if it was patrolling its own territory. Dough followed behind the gray cat eagerly, excited that it had finally met another kind like his own that was not a human on the starship. If it got into trouble in the future, at the least it would have someone

to share its fate with.

Although the five-year mission had not started yet, the people aboard the starship did not turn idle. They had to examine their food supply, energy supply, weapons and equipment, and inspect the starship itself carefully to see if there were any aged parts that needed to be changed. Since they're gunning for a big one, then they must not allow any slip-ups to occur. The devil is in the details after all.

Cillin and the team members responsible for engineering on the starship inspected the ship together. The engineering person-in-charge, Enji, was also an Octopus human. The difference between him and Ba Dao lay in their physique, where Ba Dao was robust and Enji was thin. Although an Octopus human's incredible height was evident, in terms of actual weight, Enji might not even compare to Cillin. There were plenty of people like Enji. They belonged under the support division, and they would not fight at the frontlines of combat. Of course, a technician who could work long in a Hunter's regiment could not be a common person, and at the least they would not be lacking in the courage department. If there was a need, they could pick up a gun and rush to the battlefield all the same.

While servicing, Enji and Cillin exchanged insights with each other. Enji very much admired the young Cillin. Although Cillin was young, he had genuine ability and knowledge, and he was able to identify the critical areas of certain machines' structure with a single glance. Moreover, Cillin was able to accept opinions and suggestions with modesty, which was a very admirable trait for someone his age.

All six of Enji's arms worked non-stop; holding tools, parts and apparatuses with each hand. Cillin was making records at the side.

"Alright, we're done with the servicing of this area. Let's rest for a bit before we move to the next area."

Enji accepted the water Cillin passed over to him and drank two full gulps. After a short breath, he looked at Cillin's log.

"Very good, this is a very professional log." Enji did not save his praises as he opened a chair and sat down, putting the tools one by one back into the toolbox.

"Big brother Enji, what's that?" Cillin pointed at a small reddish brown crystalline block inside Enji's toolbox and asked.

"Oh, this." Enji smiled and picked up the small block before passing it over to Cillin, "Look at it carefully and see if you can guess what it is."

Cillin accepted the small crystalline block. The entire block was only half a thumb's size.

"Resin?" Cillin could differentiate the item's main composition, and at the same time he also noticed that there was an organism trapped inside it. Its length was less than a centimeter, and its body was semicircular in shape. It had a pair of ambulatory legs and many chelipeds. It looked rather sinister, "I've never seen such an organism."

“There are all sorts of life in the universe, and it is natural that you haven’t seen this before.” Enji smiled and said, “Can you guess how I got it?”

Cillin shook his head. Although there were plenty of organisms which living environment could be deduced from their physique alone, there were even more that was beyond his imagination. Cillin’s instinct told him that this organism trapped inside the resin was no simple thing.

Enji chuckled gently and took back the small reddish brown block. As his fingers rubbed across the object’s surface, he sighed, “This is a parasite!”

“A parasite?!” Cillin knew what Enji said was not the kind of parasite that lives inside a human’s body, but the kind that lives on starships and vehicles that could traverse through the universe.

“Yep. This is something that we give special attention to every time we service the ship. We have to inspect from time to time during long flights, and if a parasite was discovered, then we must either eliminate them in time or face endless troubles. They may be tiny, but this wee bit alone can potentially destroy an entire starship. They can endure cosmic rays and vacuum environment as they clamped themselves tightly onto an aircraft. Moreover, most of the substances they secrete can erode an aircraft too. Although it isn’t visible at first, if the erosion continues for too long and isn’t found out in time, then it will be too late. Do you know what happens when a hole suddenly appears on a starship in flight, and it isn’t fixed in time?”

Cillin shivered subconsciously. Scary.

“That’s not all. They may damage certain critical areas of the starship as well. Be it the weapons system, the energy delivery tubes, or some interface ports, they are all potential parasite habitats. There are all kinds of parasites in the universe, and they all have a preferred environment of their own. Some parasites love places with high amounts of energy, and some love places with a lot of oxygen. In summary, what we need to do is to inspect the whole ship periodically to prevent any potential concerns.”

Enji tossed the small block in his hand to the air before catching it again, “Every time we perform an inspection, we will prepare an embed fluid so we can embed these tiny parasites in them. They look just like amber, and they can also be sold for a high price to researchers or hobbyists during the aftermath of a mission. There are plenty of people who likes to collect cosmos parasites, and to a certain extent, these cosmos parasites are something that can only be found serendipitously. It is during the last five-year mission that I got this parasite; sold one and kept this other one to myself as a souvenir. If you’re interested, I’ll call you to have a look if I find and clean up any parasites in the future.”

“That’s great. Thank you very much, big brother Enji!”

“There’s no need to be so courteous, kid! Come, let’s go service the next area.”

After Cillin was done servicing the ship with Enji, Cillin got ready

to return to the lounge and lay down for a bit. But before he managed to take a few steps, he abruptly heard Cary's roar.

"Cillin, look at your cat's handiwork!"

Chapter 90: The Two Pets And Their Misdeeds

Facing the storage cabinet inside his room, Cary looked so angry that his complexion was ashen from anger. Eudy was already there, dressed in a strawberry pajamas a pair of fluffy slippers, whereas Cillin was just coming around. He pointed a shaky finger at the near empty storage cabinet and said to the duo, “The two of you must take responsibility for the wicked behavior of your pets!”

Cillin cast a glance at the storage cabinet and thought, wow, they sure cleaned it up real good. No wonder Cary was so angry.

Eudy let out a yawn and said without the slightest bit of guilt, “I told you long ago that you should lock your food cabinet. You have no one but yourself to blame for the consequence.”

So you’re saying that this is justified?!

Cary was so pissed that his eyebrows were about to turn into straight, vertical lines, “I did!”

“And the door?”

“…”

He didn’t lock the door.

The second he saw Cary's constipated look, Eudy knew that he must have forgotten to lock the door again. Eudy said lazily, "How many times has it been already? I can only say that you're stupid, without an ounce of alertness in you at all."

"Y-you... you...!"

It was all Cary could do not to grab his hammer and swing it at Eudy's direction. How dare you even say this when your damn chameleon raided my food for god knows how many times already! It's just a chameleon, and yet it's as sly as a spirit. Just what kind of chameleon knows how to disguise its own toeprints and use a decoder! The moment he thought of this, Cary grew sulky with anger.

"And you, Cillin, listen to this!" Cary pressed the communicator in his hands, and a sound recording was played from the device. Cary had it installed on the lock, and the second the cabinet was unlocked it would begin recording automatically on its own.

Some sneaking sounds later, two different rhythms of food chewing sounds could be heard through the device. Eudy's Dough had a specific chewing frequency that Cary was extremely familiar with. He could even hear the sound of that damnable chameleon sucking at his food with its tongue.

It must be said that Dough was a freak among its kind. Its diet was incredibly varied; capable of eating vegetables, consuming meat, swig wine and quaffle fruit juice. It's not actually a chameleon but some fucking demon from someplace, isn't it?!

It was no wonder the first Dias inquired Dough after a greeting, when Cillin boarded the starship for the first time was about the bad things it did. Again.

Since Dough's feeding sound had been identified, then the other sound should be the gray cat's.

"Meow~"

The pleased meow after a heartfelt meal caused blue veins to pop out of Cary's temples. His heart was bleeding; my hardtacks, my jerkies, my fruit pies...

Cillin felt the corner of his eyes twitching rapidly at the meow. What the hell was that meow for! If you want to do bad things at least do them sneakily, or are you afraid that no one realizes that you're the only cat on the whole ship?

"Sigh, that's enough. I get it." Cillin patted Cary's shoulder, "When we meet up with the commander, we'll stock up some food together. I guarantee that your cabinet will be filled to the brim. As for that cat, just think of this as a treat to celebrate your first meeting or something. Who knows, maybe it'll repay your kindness today by saving your life when you're in danger."

"That cat? That kitten that hasn't even fully grown up yet?"

"Don't judge a cat by its appearance, mate, that little fellow is

plenty formidable."

Cary fell silent for a moment before waving his hands, "Get out of my sight already, you two. I'm going to change the lock! Eudy, tell your Dough that it better hide itself well and don't let me catch it or else!"

Previously, Cary still used fingerprint recognition on his cabinet, but after that shameful chameleon stole his fingerprints, Cary had since reflected upon his mistakes. It was just fingerprints after all; where in the entire ship could it not find such a thing? After mingling around Beaver and Eudy for such a long time the chameleon was used to doing such things, which was why Cary's locks had only gotten more and more complicated, with the sole purpose of keeping that gluttonous chameleon away.

Somewhere on the ship.

The gray cat licked its claws and wiped its face, extending a tongue to lick the corner of its mouth before looking at Dough, "Are there any food stains left on my face?"

Dough shook its head.

"That's good then. Hehe, it's not bad to eat something else for a change." The gray cat was very satisfied.

Dough grinned. Finally, it had a partner in crime whom it could pilfer food with.

Dough's nest was inside Eudy's room. It was a lush little tree that was only half a man tall but was rich with branches and leaves. Dough loved to sleep on top of the tree.

To sleep after it filled its belly was Dough's self-consciousness as an animal. However, its footsteps were a little meandering. After all, it had committed a misdeed again.

Arriving at Eudy's front door, Dough lifted its front limb to press a button and opened a small hole. Dough stretched out its tongue into the hole, and after its tongue was scanned, a little door opened with a beep sound.

Dough climbed in, and just as its front limbs hit the ground, it raised its head and immediately saw Eudy waiting for it.

"What are you waiting for? Close the door. I have something to ask you." Eudy's voice sounded unhurried.

Dough entered slowly, and even after the little door had closed, it continued to stick against the wall, eyes looking everywhere else but Eudy.

"Cary found you out again when you pilfered his food."

Dough froze, and lowered its head.

“Next time, don’t forget to check if anything was installed on the lock before unlocking it.” After a pause, Eudy continued, “You’re not the one who unlocked Cary’s cabinet, are you? I remember that Cary purposely switched to a multiple encryption lock last time, and I haven’t taught you how to decrypt that kind of lock yet.”

Dough nodded.

“How did it open it?” Eudy took out an electronic drawboard.

Dough self-consciously walked over and began drawing on the drawboard with all four limbs. It was incredibly difficult to imagine that a chameleon could use its limbs this flexibly.

Looking at the drawing on the drawing board, Eudy’s eyes flashed once before he smiled, “Get along better with that cat in the future. You’ll benefit a lot.”

Dough nodded repeatedly.

“Alright, get out yourself and find another place to sleep. You’re not allowed to sleep in your nest tonight. Cary told you to hide better and don’t let him catch you.” Eudy put away the drawing board and no longer looked at Dough, lying back on the bed to sleep. He was woken up by Cary before he managed to get a good sleep in today.

Dough looked miserably at his own little green nest before

climbing out of the little door again. He would have to find some other place to sleep again today. Dammit, let's go find that cat. At least there would be someone to share the punishment with if Cary caught me.

The fact was the gray cat didn't fare much better than Dough either. It was given an earful by Cillin, and it had a new debt and a favor registered into the books. However, its gloom lasted for only a moment before it curled itself into a ball and snored soundly.

This time, the Sixth Squad's objective was Sector Z. It was also one of the three most dangerous Sectors that was yet to be developed by GAL. There were very few official star map publication of Sector Z, and they were mostly of the outermost zones only.

Sector Z was a dark triangular shape on the overall GAL map. The darkness meant that it wasn't developed yet, and since it was triangular in shape, it was also called the Dark Triangle. Of course, this was just the official statement. If a Hunter regiment had explored an area on their own, then the star map was either sold for a high price, or kept to themselves. Normally, such dealings and discoveries would not be announced to the public unless something unusual happened.

If a Hunter regiment could discover a habitable planet, then the discovery that would gain them both fame and fortune. GAL had established the relevant policies since a long time ago, and their course of action for any habitable planets discovered in an undeveloped Sector was to reward the Hunter regiment that unearthed it with a huge sum of bounty. At the same time, the

electronic magazines with high contribution points would also report the news and increase the Hunter regiment's fame. Some would even allow the Hunter regiment the chance to name the planet themselves.

The reason the four great Hunter regiments were so famous was exactly because they appeared frequently enough on these magazines to eclipse any other Hunter regiments.

Shawton's choice of Sector Z was made after careful deliberations, and the votes of the six lieutenant commanders by show of hands. If they wanted to increase their influence now, then they would have to have something to show for it. Excluding the unearthing of habitable planets, the places left that were truly valuable would be those areas that had yet to be explored.

Danger and fortune are two sides of the same coin.

Chapter 91: Secrets

When Cillin and the others arrived at the rendezvous point designated by Shawton, the rest of the five B Squadrons were already there. After linking the starship with the Sixth Squadron's main starship, the spoils of the hunt were reported and traded with the buyers who had been communicated with beforehand.

But those jobs did not require Cillin to do anything. Right now, he was sitting inside the room and reading a book. It was a book he borrowed from Enji about cosmos parasite. There were plenty of information inside that could not be found on the federal network, and the average electronic magazines would not log such information too extensively. Some of the information that was truly useful was locked behind reading privileges. With his current identity as a Hunter, Cillin was not allowed to read through those official documents.

Hunters kept their stuff for their own people, and would not easily publish them. This book in Cillin's hands right now was just that something that belonged and was known only to Vanguard.

The book was more like a journal; a journal where the recorder would jot down every line with his pen. Although it wasn't the original, every other copy was copied to be exactly the same. Therefore, Cillin was able to make out the writer's feelings at the time through his handwriting.

The person who wrote this journal was called Chamonidine. However, Enji only told him that the journal was something left behind by a senior who had passed away, and did not explain more

than necessary about the person named Chamonidine. Still, from the recorded content, Cillin could guess more or less the person's identity.

From some of the contents recorded inside the journal, Cillin knew that Chamonidine was someone from the Third B Squadron. Moreover, he was probably an engineering technician aboard a starship just like Enji. However, his status was higher than Enji, and since Chamonidine had brought up the Third B Squadron's commander Nata quite a number of times, it would seem that his relationship with Nata was pretty good. The problem was that the current commander of the Third B Squadron wasn't called Nata, but Falvey.

That being said, forty seven years were enough for the common people to welcome a new generation already.

From the ephemeris time (ET) recorded in it, this journal had existed for quite some time already. The final record was made forty seven years ago, and there was nothing else beyond that.

There were a lot of pictures in the journal, and they were all depictions of the parasites Chamonidine encountered when he was in the Third B Squadron. Moreover, there were labels and explanations beneath the pictures, definitions regarding the parasites' partial habits, fondness for certain things and more.

While Cillin read, the doorbell of his room rang up. From the display, he could see that it was none other than Cary, whom he hadn't seen for more than half the day. Although he was waiting outside the door, Cary looked like he was filled with excitement.

“What, did you win a lottery? You look so cheerful.” Cillin shut his book and said to Cary walking into his room.

“Hehe, I have something to show you!”

Cary took out his tablet, and even brought up a 3D hologram on purpose.

“Look, it’s our new equipment! Don’t you think it’s just overflowing with power? The commander sure spared no effort this time around!”

Cillin was astonished just looking at those images alone. The batch of weapons were plenty and varied ranging from equipment to firearms, and although there were plenty of strange and weird weapons that he did not recognize among them, he knew that they cost a lot judging just from the ion guns and shoulder rifles alone.

Cary pointed at one of the wrist blades and said secretively, “Do you know how much this wrist blade costs?”

“What material is it made of?”

“I don’t know, but I asked the lieutenant earlier, and he gave me this number.” Cary showed five fingers.

“Fifty thousand?”

“Five hundred thousand!”

He was well and truly astonished alright.

Cillin had thought all this time that he was more or less well-off, but this new revelation was truly a blow to the gut.

“This work truly is a money burning business!”

Seeing Cillin’s expression, Cary said, “You didn’t really think that those lousy guns we use to hunt down the polar bears are enough to make it through a five-year mission, did you? Space exploration is a money burning business in the first place, and if your equipment isn’t good enough, then there won’t be nearly enough lives to fill the void. I remember that during the previous five-year mission, I was fighting an alien lifeform; and that thing kneaded my high density alloy knife into a ball like it was mud. I nearly lost my life then.”

Cary dragged over a chair and sat down, “Before I became a Hunter, I saw everything through a lens of naivety. It was only when I truly became one that I knew how stupid I was being at the time. Lady luck isn’t always going to bless you, and good fortune isn’t something you’re always going to pick off the road. Using the Commander’s words, we’ve got to be pragmatic, and the build up of confidence needs the investment of capital. Therefore, the random missions we perform usually were all in preparation for the five-year mission.”

Cillin agreed with Cary's words. Several hundred millions of credits might seem a lot, but when the money was actually invested in high level missions, they would be gone in a flash. This was just like the achievements published in 'Glory' and 'Code', they were all the products of countless of people, lives of test subjects, and money. Where else would their illustrious success, capable of influencing the entire GAL come otherwise?

This included the maker of the chip, Horay as well. He might not necessarily have spent much money, but he must have sacrificed the lives of many for his experiment. Cillin could still remember those failed human test subjects who were preserved in liquid like specimens in Horay's laboratory.

Looking around Cillin's room, Cary asked, "Where's that damned cat of yours?"

"It's gone patrolling its domain."

That fellow would patrol the whole starship once every day, obviously having partitioned the place as its own territory. Dough had joined in the fun as well. However, Cillin forbad the gray cat from entering any other starships. It was only allowed to move about their own.

"Right, Cary. Do you recognise Chamonidine?"

"Chamonidine?" Cary frowned in ponderment before shaking his head, "Never heard of him."

“How about Nata?”

“Nata... I think I heard of him before. Oh, you mean the Third Squad’s commander Falvey’s daddy! Nata is the previous Third Squad commander, but more than forty years ago...”

At this point Cary paused and scratched his head, “Cillin, some things aren’t easy to talk about.”

Cillin waved his hand, “It’s okay, I was just curious and thought that I’d ask. This journal was written by Chamonidine, and Chamonidine was once a member of the Third Squad. But big brother Enji said that senior Chamonidine had passed away a long time ago, and the final record in this book was from forty seven years ago.”

“Forty seven years ago, huh. There were plenty of legends who passed away that year... Sigh. Even I heard only a short word or two. If the commander himself doesn’t talk about it, then it’s best if we talk less as well. Do you know that that years’ incident affected a lot of people? It was just too complicated. The four great Hunter regiments, the army, and some political figures were involved as well.”

“Alright, I understand.” He said that, but in truth Cillin was very curious about the incident from forty seven years ago inside. After all, he had never heard anything about that year’s incident up to this day. That being said, it was one thing to think about it, and another to show it on the surface.

“Okay. I’m just here to tell you that we got some new stuff. We frontline combatants have the first right to the goods, although there is a limit of course. I’m sending you the information, and take your time to think through which one you’d like to pick up first. The lieutenant and the others should be done with their meeting and returning pretty soon. Once they’re back, we will depart for Sector Z. This time we must put on a good show!”

Cary did not leave for long before Dias came back from his meeting and notified the squad’s members to gather over, instructing on the relevant matters. Once he was finished, everyone returned to their respective positions. Although they were currently connected the A Squadron’s big starship and thus did not need to perform additional piloting, it was still necessary to pay attention to some details and be ready for any emergencies at a moment’s notice.

Amidst the Vanguard’s theme music, the giant starship branded with the Vanguard’s symbol left the Sector and flew towards their current destination: the Black Triangle, Sector Z.

Chapter 92: Operation Begin

Sector Z might be called the Black Triangle, but it wasn't really completely black. It was marked black on GAL's star map simply because it was an undeveloped zone.

Cary looked at the screen displaying the outside sceneries and mumbled to himself, "This place seriously does not resemble its name."

Not unlike the other Sectors, the scenery outside the starship was filled with glittering stars. However, according to their knowledge, the life forms in this Sector were incredibly dangerous, and magnetic anomalies happened frequently as well.

There were small teams made up of specialized personnel on the main starship that were responsible for scanning and probing. Going by the standard rules, they'd have to probe at least ten planets whenever they reached an undeveloped zone, or the Vanguard would lose face otherwise.

The outer zones of Sector Z had already been explored, and some of these explorations were carried out by the Vanguard themselves. However, no Hunter regiment would explore and calculate the statistical data of more than a specific number of planets each time. Probing too many planets in one go was inadvisable. Exploration did not equal giving up one's lives, and it was fine to perform within one's capabilities. At the very least, one must recognise their own limits.

After roughly looking through the star map, Shawton selected a course. The course went into Sector Z at a certain angle, but not too deeply. Steps should be taken one by one.

The partial results of the probing team would transmitted to the six B Squadrons connected to the main ship at the same time.

Cary sighed as he watched the data displayed on the screen. This was the third planet they'd probed after arriving at Sector Z. There was one planet at Rank C planetary habitability, and two planets at Rank D.

The so-called planetary habitability referred to the measure of a planet's habitability to human life. Normally, it was divided into four ranks of A, B, C and D. Rank A meant that the planet was extremely suitable for human life, and if such a planet was discovered, then the Sixth Squad would immediately rise to fame and be rewarded with a huge sum of wealth.

Rank B planets were just okay. The planet's condition could not be considered great, but it was still sufficient to make do. But while many Rank B planets were not very suited for human life, they were suited for other life forms. Therefore, many great families would purchase such planets specifically for breeding purposes.

Rank C meant that a planet was unsuitable for living. Its environmental conditions would not allow human beings to live naturally on it for a prolonged period of time. Rank D meant that the planet was extremely unsuited for human beings to live in. It was not a problem of time, and simply that humans could not live naturally on such a planet at all.

If the planetary habitability of a planet was rank D, then all they needed to do was to send out probes to search and collect samples, record parameters and coordinates etc. However, these were the technicians' jobs and had nothing to do with Cary whatsoever.

But if the planetary habitability was Rank C, then it would not be just the probes' work. It would also involved the dispatchment of operation teams to search, explore, collect live specimens and sort out the evolution of life on the planet.

When Cary heard that one of the planets was Rank C, he immediately jumped to his feet and got ready to grab his weapons. But contrary to his expectations, Shawton had sent another small team down the surface to conduct the operation instead. The team did not discover much at all on the planet, and the evolutionary grade of its life forms were relatively low as well. There wasn't even a single high grade plant to be found. Still, Cary was bored out of his wits and wouldn't mind taking his mind off on a simple stroll.

In boredom, Cary glanced at Dough who was rolling on the floor with the gray cat. He chuckled and grabbed Dough's tail before it sensed the danger, rolled it into a ball, and tossed it against the wall like a ball. He grabbed Dough when it bounced off the wall, tossed it again, then grabbed it again when it bounced back.

The gray cat's eyes turned round with widened pupils when it saw this. Its head followed Dough's trajectory, and it jumped right before Dough hits the wall and, smack!

“Not bad. I guess you have some use beyond eating and sleeping after all.”

As he said this, Cary tossed Dough, who had bounced back to his hand at the wall from a different angle this time, but it was smacked right back by the cat again.

He switched a tossing angle, and was return served by the cat right away. He switched again, and it was returned just the same…

The one man and one cat had quite a lot of fun playing.

“Attention to all teams, a planet at planetary habitability Rank B has been discovered. All teams be prepared!”

Pak!

Dough smacked against the wall. It was no longer being smacked around since both Cary and the gray cat’s attentions were drawn to the news.

Everyone was gathered in front of the screens closest to their positions. The screens were displaying the results of the probing and analysis team’s findings.

“Low atmospheric pressure and PO2, slightly strong radiation… hey this is just fine really; it shouldn’t be a problem even without protective suits!” Cary stared at the monitor and said excitedly.

A planet at planetary habitability Rank B wasn't easy to discover, and a Rank C planet was already enough to excite Cary for half a day. A Rank C planet normally required only the dispatchment of one team. However, a Rank B planet normally required the dispatchment of all available teams.

The group began preparing themselves with the information gleaned from the images, and the analysed data and a variety of parameters transmitted back by the probes. Each of the six B Squadrons must first send a vanguard to head out.

Seeing that Cillin, Xiao Shang, Ba Dao and Cary were all in the vanguard team, Tang Qiuqiu wanted to follow them as well.But Dias turned down her request and put her in the second team to be dispatched to the planet instead. A Rank B planet meant that there were plenty of life forms around, and no matter what evolutionary grade they were at, no matter how similar they were to humans, and no matter what level of civilisation they were at, the living beings on this planet could not be underestimated! Even plants had a time at which they preyed on human flesh.

Tang Qiuqiu was young after all, and her adventure experience was absolutely incomparable to the others. Therefore, for her own safety, Dias turned down Tang Qiuiqu's request to join the vanguard team.

Seeing that Cary and the others had left, Dough slowly crawled beneath Eudy's feet with a heavily injured appearance. It hugged Eudy's trouser leg and looked incredibly wronged. It wanted to make an appeal; it was tortured!

Eudy sipped his cup of tea calmly, “You can rob Cary’s cabinet today.”

Dough, who was just looking weak and depressed immediately turned as excited as a chameleon on chicken blood. It turned its head and immediately ran towards Cary’s room, crawling ridiculously quick without a hint of the injured look from before.

An ancient Chinese pseudo-medical therapy

On the other side.

The gray cat most naturally followed Cillin into the aircraft, and when Cary saw it, he touched the gray cat with his gun and asked, “What are you following us for?”

The gray cat answered with a matter-of-fact look and expectation, “Of course I’m out here to hunt for food.”

Cary choked before asking Cillin, “Cillin, aren’t you worried that this little thing might run into trouble?”

Cillin swept a glance at the gray cat at his feet shaking its head rhythmically in self-narcissism and said, “It may not necessarily do worse than you.”

“Yeah, I may not necessarily do worse than you.” The gray cat answered.

Yeah, no! Don’t think I can’t hear that disdain in your tone just because you switched a word order!

Cary knocked the gray cat’s head once with his gun, “I heard that cats and tigers are of the same ancestry. We’re about to set off, so why don’t you give us a loud and domineering roar to boost our morale.”

Cary was thinking of cracking down on this gluttonous and lazy cat, but contrary to his expectations, the gray cat really did open its mouth.

“Remember that we’re on an aircraft.” Cillin reminded it.

The gray cat’s widening mouth paused for a moment, and adjusted itself for a moment. Then it drew in a deep breath and, ROAR!

The communicators of all six vanguard teams in the six aircrafts were all on. The main ship’s communication channel was open as well. And so, a sudden roar that was like a giant, prehistoric beast’s blew everyone out of their minds. The aircraft Cillin and the others were in even drew an S shape flight path in the air. The pilot was so shocked just now he nearly leaped off his seat.

Is that a beast roar?

But where’s the beast then?

Is it a sound effect purposely played for the occasion?

“Dias, what’s going on?!” On the main ship, Shawton immediately shouted at Dias.

“Ahem, uh, it’s just one of our team members letting out a roar to well, boost morale…” Dias wiped his sweat and stared at the slightly dazed Cary and the gray cat that was licking its paws nonchalantly after the roar, thinking, this is truly our team’s cat alright.

The six aircrafts that had flown out of the starship were headed towards six separate locations on the relatively green colored planet upfront.

After scanning the terrain and confirming the landing spot, the aircraft descended and activated its defense system. The ‘Sentry’ were released and scattered around the aircraft in a regular pattern. The hatch opened after safety had been confirmed, and the first one to come out wasn’t the lieutenant commander Dias, but the gray cat.

The gray cat jumped out impatiently as it twitched its nose and sucked in a deep breath, letting out a deep sigh, “The smell of food!” Then it moved all four limbs and ran off.

“Ignore it. We do what we came here to do.” Cillin said.

Dias nodded. Since they had split the task earlier on the starship already, there was no need to any additional explanation, “Begin the op.”

Everyone wore protective suits and masks on their faces. Other than shielding radiation, resisting pressure, and maintaining constant body temperature, the main purpose of the protective suit was to prevent direct contact with poisonous plants. Since this was an unknown planet with unknown species on it, it was necessary to take every precaution. The protective suit was equipped with weapons, and everyone’s rig was different from the other. They were chosen and arranged in a way that was most familiar and convenient to the user.

The masks were equipped with a scanner that had zoom-in, filter, lock-on and more options. They provided many kinds of vision while enabling the user to lock onto their targets. Such equipment did cost a lot of money, and it also proved the words Cary had said earlier that this was a money burning business.

Chapter 93: Jungle Hazard

Although the probes and the six small teams scattered at every location did not find anything resembling a machine civilization, everyone still armed themselves to their teeths. Sometimes, the native plants and animals were even more difficult to deal with than machines.

Cillin's group was led by Dias as they walked into the woods. The reason this planet looked green was because it had a lot of jungles. Its trees were lush and plenty, and there were a lot of new breeds that had never been seen before. The collection and analysis of the plant species would be completed by the probes, whereas Cillin's group would gather data on the animals in accordance with the situation. Even if it was just data, as long as the species was new and special, their data would be worth a lot of money.

The results of their sensors' work would be displayed onto their masks. The surrounding humidity, temperature, atmospheric pressure etc would all be displayed.

Birds flew across the sky above the jungles. Their speed was very quick, and through instant image capture they could see that these birds were similar to eagles with some minor differences. Moreover, their cries were occasionally high or low-pitched, sharp or deep, long or short.

While stepping on a thick floor of leaves, the group carefully proceeded forwards.

Cillin loosened the mask on his face and inhaled once the air around him, identifying the scent mixed within the air.

The tree species in this jungle was a kind of tree with recognisable trunks that had never been seen before. Dias chopped down one of these trees that grew better than the others and found that its hardness was pretty impressive. They should be pretty suitable for certain manufacturing industry. From its exposed stump, they could see its rings and determine its age, which were densely packed with not much space in between each ring. Dias sent a picture of the tree rings of the exposed stump to the aircraft, which was then sent again by the people of the aircraft to the starship outside the planet. There would be professionals who would collect, sort and analyse these data.

“Yo, the flower on that tree sure is pretty.” Someone said.

Not far away there was a tree that wasn’t too tall, but was pretty thick. Its diameter was around five meters, but its trunk was about one meter wide. It had plenty of branches that were spread on two sides like stretched wings. Its leaves were very thick, and there were rows of dark brown spots that were aligned vertically on its main trunk.

What’s strange was that there were some vine-like plants above the trunk. One end of these vines were connected to the tree, whereas the other end was connected to a large number of colorful red and white flowers.

The red and white petals were arranged in a way that looked like a layer of thin scales. The sporadic rays of light scattered by the

thickets fell onto the flowers and were reflected by these scales, twinkling like the brilliant starlights of the universe. A person would feel the impulse to pluck them just from their appearance alone.

While sniffing the air, Cillin sensed that there was also an enticing, slightly sweet scent in the air. Without a mask, a normal person would have failed to resist against this temptation and walked up to those flowers.

Although the flowers were pretty, not a single person in the group went closer a better look. Although the flower was breathtaking from the moment they set eyes on it, their experiences also taught them that the prettier a flower was, the more likely it contained a hidden threat.

Cary cut off a new section of the plant Dias had chopped down earlier and tossed it at the tree. Almost the instant after the broken tree trunk touched one of the flowers, the surrounding, wing-like branches immediately folded together like lightning to trap its ‘prey’ within. At the same time, everyone saw rows of sharp thorns piercing through that tree trunk amidst a series of whooshing sounds.

These sharp thorns were the dark brown spots that they had seen on the trunk earlier, and from this string of reactions it was obvious that the setup was a literal nature-grown trap!

Everyone in the group shivered a little at the sight. The tree trunk Cary threw just now was pretty strong, but those sharp thorns had pierced right through it about as it was made from tofu.

It showed exactly how hard they were those thorns were.

Dias waved his hand, and the group continued to move forwards.

The more they walked, the stranger the group felt. The jungle was actually relatively safe other than the small amount of deadly plants they encountered earlier, and there weren't much poisonous plants around either. However, other than some small insects they ran into, wasn't this place a little too quiet? By quiet, they did not mean the audible kind, since there were the occasional sounds of insects beating their wings, and invisible birds flying across the sky as the greenery above the group grew thicker and thicker. What they meant was that after walking through the jungle for such a long time, they did not encounter a single animal even the size of a wee at all!

Rabbits, monkeys, boars, mice, nothing! The group searched some holes and caves that might hide an animal or two using their past experiences, but still, they found nothing at all!

Could there really be no animals at all in such a good environment? Of course not. Earlier in the ship, they had seen some ferocious, large-sized animals from pictures captured by the probes in space. While it could be said that there was no machine civilisation on this planet, its species should have evolved to a pretty high level.

Dias' heart was clouded with doubt. He felt a strange sense of crisis that he could not make head to toes with. He had always trusted his instincts, and his instincts were telling him that the situation they're in right now was very bad. They were now deep

within the jungle, and the deeper they went, the more he felt like there was a huge jaw at the end of their journey, waiting to swallow them whole.

While the group was pondering, their sensors sent out an warning. Through the information relayed by their masks about the surrounding scanned area, the group discovered that there were many unknowns heading towards their direction. The unknowns numbered around thirty and were three times their group's number. Moreover, they moved fast.

Dias didn't need to say anything. The group automatically fell into formation and readied their weapons.

The things were close. They could hear them running and letting out pitapat low growls even without the scanners.

Bang, bang, bang, bang!

The group opened fire before those thing completely reached into their sight range. If they opened fire only after they saw them, it would already be too late.

Everyone in the group were experienced fighters, and even new members like Cillin, Ba Dao and Xiao Shang had plenty of experiences themselves. Therefore, the men felt no panic, wielded their guns steadily, and shot pretty accurately in the face of this situation. With the target lock of their masks, they could boast a ninety nine percent shot accuracy even if a hundred wasn't possible. The heat signature display enabled them to hit their

enemies whenever they left the cover of the thickets.

Conserving ammo was a habit they had cultivated through many years of experience, but this time they could not afford to do so. This was because those things did not die even after they were shot once. There would be a momentary pause, but it did not affect their zeal at all as they charged towards the group like they wouldn't stop unto their last breath.

Dias mentally calculated and found that he needed around five bullets to kill those things. He was sure that his bullets struck the thing's head every time, and yet they just wouldn't die. It was only until the fourth or fifth bullet that those things would finally come to a stop. Perhaps they were truly dead then. Dias couldn't be sure.

Looking at their speed, the time gap between every four or five bullets was definitely enough for them to cover a lot of ground. Moreover, they were only twelve people, and not everyone could kill three of those things before they charged over.

Cillin had already killed two of those things. His firing frequency was so rapid that the others suspected that he was wasting bullets.

In reality, through the heat signature display of his mask, Cillin would open fire and hit a beast if it slipped out of cover for even an instant. He even calculated both the bullet's speed and the thing's running speed so that he could achieve near perfect precision. Moreover, Cillin targeted three of those things at once, so when the others had just killed off their first target, he was already in the process of taking down the third.

Finally, the first thing leaped out of the thicket, and it was shot at nearly at the same time by both Cillin and Xiao Shang. Perhaps it was shot earlier, which was why it collapsed after taking two more shots only.

Dias did not have the time to give it a close examination, and so simply gave it a hurried glance. He immediately realize the reason behind the thing's durability.

Chapter 94: One Thing After Another

That thing's appearance was very strange. It's head was way too small compared to its body, and a thick layer of hardened stratum corneum covered its head almost entirely. The stratum corneum and lamella behind its head stretched all the way down to its back, covering one third of its body and was spread out in a certain angle that fully protected it from frontal attacks. The areas that were not covered in hardened stratum corneum had thick fur instead, and although the remaining two thirds of its body were not covered in thick horny armor, there were many thorns jutting out of its body, giving it an increasingly sinister-looking appearance the more they looked.

the horny outer layer of the skin

a thin layer, membrane, scale, or platelike tissue or part, especially in bone tissue

They had short and thick leg. The sole of their feet were shaped like hoofs, and on the whole the creatures looked very bulky. But who would've thought that such bulky-looking fellows could run so quickly?

The thing's body was very well protected. Someone once said that an animal with a small head and poor IQ would evolve its body into a strictly defensive form, compensating for the flaws of its intelligence with heavy defenses on its body instead.

Cillin didn't know how smart these things are, but even if they didn't have great intellect they were definitely not stupid either. When they attacked, they would aim their heads at their enemies and attack in a straight line. Moreover, they would do their best

not to expose the part of their bodies which weren't covered in hardened stratum corneum.

It was just a momentary glance, but everyone already had an idea what they should do next. They were veterans after all. Without a word, they corrected their shots and this time, primarily aimed at the things' bodies. This way, if a shot was accurate then a single bullet would be enough to incapacitate them. In fact, hitting their limbs wasn't a bad idea either, but unfortunately the thickets and lush bushes in the jungle covered their short and thick limbs a little too well. Even with thermal sensors, they might not be able to hit them precisely.

They were lucky that the things numbered only about thirty or so. If the enemy group was any bigger, then they would have to fight them in close range. When the last of these fellows was taken care of the group finally let out a temporary sigh of relief. However, they didn't dare to grow grow too lax either. Temporary silence did not equate temporary safety.

A few people went over to kill the remaining things that weren't dead yet. Dias also approached one that was the closest to them. Since it was the one that came the closest to their group, it was also the one that was the most devastated by gunfire.

After taking a good look, Dias fired a shot at the thick stratum corneum covering its head. The effects of the shot was shocking. The gun Dias wielded was powerful enough to blow a huge hole in a alien polar bear's chest, but on this thing it was only enough to peel off a fragment of its skin. If the second shot was fired at the same spot as the first, then the shot could penetrate its skin and

enter into the body, but exactly how deep the shot would go, and how much damage it would cause was unknown. After all, the muscular tension of a dead body and a living body that was poised to attack were different, not to mention that they might have some life saving technique that they could implement in the face of danger.

"If these things come at us again with a bigger group, then we may have to use armor piercing bullets." someone sighed.

Armor piercing bullets were specially made to be used against armored life forms, not armored tanks or armed aircrafts. Their targets included both humans and a specific range of life forms. Unfortunately, the amount of armor piercing bullets they carried was limited, which was why they chose not to use them earlier.

"Who would've thought that there are life forms on this planet this well protected? That hardened stratum corneum and lamella are just too strong. If these thing came at us in swarms like rats then..." Cary did not finish his sentence, but everyone felt a shiver down their spine. What a terrifying image.

While speaking, their sensors let out yet another warning, and this time it was a lot more rapid. The type of warning was the same as before, meaning that there were alien lifeforms closing in on their direction. However, not even the previous warning had been this urgent-sounding!

"What's going on?!" someone asked.

Everyone fell into high alert.

Before long, many fist-sized black insects began appearing from the ground. They were crawling out of the ground those killed things were lying on. The black worms bored their way through the horny skinned creatures' wounds, and it didn't take long long the huge amount of black insects began devouring the creatures from the inside, deflating their bodies at a visible rate. When the insects finished consuming and bored back into the ground, all that was left was layer of horny skins and piles of bones.

These insects were the street cleaners of the jungle. The moment any animals died, they would crawl out of the ground and consume their bodies. Then they would go back underground and hibernate once more, awaiting their next big meal.

Cary let out a long sigh of relief, "That got me good."

The warning sounded again just as he finished his sentence. This time it wasn't rapid, but that didn't mean that things would be easy on them.

"God dammit! They just don't stop coming!" Cary said angrily.

Cillin frowned. He heard a bird cry just now, and although its voice was soft – probably because it was rather far away from their location – and brief, he was sure that it was the same kind of bird that they'd seen earlier.

“It’s snakes! Holy fuck, these snakes could actually change colors!” The scanners of their masks revealed the newcomers’ true identities. It would’ve been very difficult to identify the snake accurately if they relied on naked eye alone.

Snakes were cold blooded animals. Their heat signatures were different from the one discharged by the horny skinned creatures, but their sensors were still able to perfectly identify and display the creatures on their masks, informing group about the snakes’ position.

“Dammit, why are there so many snakes? We didn’t run into any snake earlier, so why are there suddenly so many?” Yeah, why is this happening? Everyone had their own doubts, but they still needed to come up with a response to the situation.

Since it was just snakes, then there would be no need for them to retreat.

“Don’t use a flamethrower. Freeze them with ultra-low temperature.” Dias said.

“Got it.”

Everyone in the group took out a cylindrical object, and when the snakes closed in about fifty meters away, they pressed the button on the cylinder and pointed the device at the snakes. A white fog gushed out, and every snake that came into contact with the white fog instantly hardened and became frozen. The snakes at the back could only approach them by circling around the frozen snakes,

because even the unharmed snakes found the ultra-low temperature unbearable. It was just too cold.

With the ultra-low temperature condensers, it did not take much effort for the group to freeze the snakes and shatter them all with expandable batons.

Watching the floor of shattered white objects, Dias waved his hands and continued forwards.

But he didn't manage a few steps before the warning fucking sounded yet again.

This was truly starting to feel like being under siege.

It was the same horny skinned creatures from before, but this time there were at least a hundred of them!

Cary looked at the submachine gun he brought with him and sighed. SMG's bullets were seriously ineffective against these fellows. They wouldn't compare even to armor piercing bullets.

"Retreat!" Dias ordered immediately. The current environment was just too disadvantageous to them. At the same time, Dias sent out a request for help and manpower support. He also uploaded out some data on these horny skinned creatures to the ship.

Outside the planet, Shawton was observing the six teams situation on the starship. Three out of six of the teams had sent out

requests for help, and Shawton reckoned that the other three teams weren't having a good time either. It was only a matter of time before their requests for help came.

"Second group, standby!"

After leaving a few instructions to the people beside him, Shawton grabbed his equipment and joined the second group of men personally to provide backup.

Chapter 95: Clash

Inside the jungle, Dias opened the subspace container in his hand and replenished everyone's ammo.

Normally speaking, subspace containers were unstable on planets that were below the habituality rank. Therefore, it was only on habitable planets that subspace containers were more frequently seen and used. On the other hand, the user would have to shoulder various degrees of risks if they opened their subspace containers on planets that was at habituality Rank B or below. But still, Dias took the risk. If they did not replenish their bullets now, they would have little time to do so when the fight started. Luckily, the subspace container had opened rather smoothly, and although there were some level of impact and instability, at least they managed to take out the supplies.

"Lieutenant, those things aren't just coming from one direction!" Xiao Shang said in alarm.

The scanner displayed yet a couple of dots. A second scan and parametric cross analysis confirmed that it was those those life forms with horny skin on their head area.

The beasts had surrounded Dias and the others in a pig's head formation, and they were either planning to encircle and annihilate them or... force them into a certain location behind them.

"They're forcing us to move backwards!" Xiao Shang said.

That's right. If they were planning to encircle and annihilate them, then why would they only approach them in a pig's head formation?

If they're forcing them backwards, then what exactly was waiting for them at the back? They did not know, but it would definitely be more dangerous and disadvantageous to them.

Therefore they cannot retreat! They were already in a crisis now, and if they fell back, then they might find themselves standing at death's door or even pass right through it!

It would seem that these things were intelligent far beyond their imagination. With their ammo replenished, the armor piercing bullets should be enough to take care of all of them with some solid aim. However, these fellows moved even faster than before as if they were the grim reapers themselves looking to claim their lives.

Bang!

The bullet struck and penetrated the hardened substance that made up the horny-skinned creature's skin, entering its head.

It was a lot easier now that they were killing the creatures in one shot, but because there were too many enemies, the distance between the two sides was still shortening.

The group was somewhat confident of their chances even though

they were only twelve facing down more than three hundred of those fellows. At the very least, the situation wasn't too dire just yet.

But just as they had this thought the alarm rang again, and this time their hearts sank the instant they saw the things that were displayed on their scanners.

Yet another group of unknown creatures had shown up behind the horny-skinned life forms. They had terrific speed, and they did not move in a straight line.

Even more unusual was the fact that these unknown creatures had maintained a pig's head formation even as they zigzagged to avoid their shots.

It didn't take long before everyone saw the creatures running behind the horny-skinned creatures through the Farsight system. They were bigger than the horny-skinned life forms. Discounting the thorns behind their backs, the horny-skinned life forms were about a meter tall, but these new life forms were at least twice as their size.

If they were to say that horny-skinned creatures were partially protected, then this new group of enemies was fully protected!

It was yet another damnable group of enemies with 'armor', and the level at which they were armored made them far more difficult to deal with than those horny-skinned creatures that were only armored around the head and part of their torso! Their bodies

were fully covered in a hardened red-and-black substance that looked like crystals, and they looked a little bit like leopards on the outside.

Cary fished out a different type of bullet. This bullet looked very similar to armor piercing bullets, but its color was different, and there was a special label imprinted on every one of these bullets.

Bang!

The bullets hit one of the big guy, penetrating the hardened substance of its surface and entering its body. Then it exploded. Blood sprayed out of the creature's mouth, and much of the hardened red-and-black substances were blown away due to the internal shockwave. However, its body looked fine on the surface and was not blown into pieces. Of course, even though it looked fine, its internal organs were completely destroyed, so after twitching a couple of times it lost all signs of activity.

When its kind saw this, they sped up even further with high nimbleness and leap range and more skillful running. It was very hard to lock down and shoot them. The two shots Cary fired later on missed and hit the tree trunks instead, and the explosions caused by them did not affect those creatures too much. As long as it wasn't a direct hit, they would not take much damage even if the explosion happened right beside them. The hardened skin on their bodies was enough to protect them from this level of explosion.

The horny-skinned beasts at the front ran even faster since the red-and-black monsters were right behind them.

The horny-skinned beasts were the cannon fodders to attract the group's firepower and die first. The monsters at the back numbered about twenty or so, and this was just their apparent numbers. Dias wasn't sure if there were more of them hiding beyond their scan range, or even lying in wait behind them. Up to this point, the only red-and-black monster that was killed was Cary's. It was incredibly difficult for them to defend against both types of life forms at once.

The two sides drew closer and closer to each other.

"Fall back for the moment! Delay them! The commander and the others will come over and support us soon enough!" Dias roared. Right now he too had no way of dealing with this kind of offense. If they did not make a tactical withdrawal and find a suitable cover to defend themselves in, it would become very difficult to kill the enemies when they closed in on them. The monsters at the back could probably kill them with a single swipe.

Should they climb up a tree? Unthinkable; to do that would be no different from committing suicide. Even the thickest trees could not resist those claws, not to mention that judging from the way the creatures moved they could climb trees as well. In fact, they might even be a lot nimbler on trees. What about hoverboards? They brought them alright, but they didn't dare to use them. They could only fly above the jungle, and judging from the creatures' leaping power, they could reach a certain height as long as they used the tree trunks as stepping stones. Moreover, a lot of birds had gathered on the sky above the jungle before they realised it. They could only see their shadows whisking by through the gaps between the tree leaves, but the moment they went up they would

most certainly be attacked from all sides. A human was in no way nimbler than those big birds in the sky, and to go up there would only invite a quicker death.

Although there might be an even more difficult circumstance waiting for them at the back, they did not have a choice. At this point, they could only proceed without a plan and improvise when need be as they waited for reinforcements from the rear.

Boom——

Someone used their shoulder cannon. Although a shoulder cannon was more destructive, and its killing power was definitely a lot more stronger than bullets, the effect it had on the big guys was not too encouraging. The reason for that was the terrain and environment they're in. This was a jungle, and there were thick and tall tree trunks everywhere. Moreover, those big fellows were both acute and fast, so it was really difficult to actually lock onto them. The destructive power of the energy shell when it hit a tree trunk could at best damage the horny-skinned beasts to a certain degree, but on those big fellows, the damage was mostly superficial. At best, it blew off only some hardened skin. That being said, wiping out some of the horny-skinned beasts at the front with the shoulder cannon did relieve quite a bit of pressure from the group's shoulders.

Three quarters of the horny-skinned beasts at the front were eliminated, and the monsters at the back were not yet dealt with. They could not handle them with just twelve people alone.

One of the big guys running at the back ran into the trapper plant

with red and white flowers while dodging bullets, and it tore the plant in half instantly with its two claws. This gave the group an even clearer picture exactly how difficult it would be to fight these creatures in close combat. Even a rank A genotype would not dare to fight them head on without a weapon, not to mention that the creatures had the number advantage on their side as well.

Ba Dao's two extra pair of hands played an effective role in this battle. While his aim might not compare to the others, it was still additional support. Cillin's rapid fire killed most of the horny-skinned beasts in his area, and it should be within his comrades' ability to handle the last of them.

Cillin switched bullets and aimed his muzzle right at the big fellows behind the horny-skinned beasts. These beasts had incredibly acute awareness, and they had only grown more vigilant after watching Cary killing one of their kind with a single shot. They were very sensitive to being targeted at, and they would dodge out of the way before a shooter had the chance to pull the trigger.

Bang!

A gap burst open on a big fellow's head. Its red and black hardened skin scattered everywhere as it rolled twice on the ground due to inertia and became completely still. It didn't even feel any sensation of being targeted at; it was just running and running and suddenly it was shot and killed out of nowhere.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Three rapid shots followed, and three more red-and-black creatures collapsed to the ground.

When Cillin had killed a total of seven, the remaining horny-skinned beasts and the big guys in hardened skin finally reached them.

Zzzt——

Sparks appeared when their extended wrist blade cut against the big fellows' skin, showing exactly how tough the skin was. Although the blade did manage to sink through, the wound was still too shallow. Unless they slashed again at the same spot, they could be torn apart and still do no real damage to the enemy.

The ultra low temperature condenser and flamethrower were not really effective either. Their surface defense was simply too good. Thankfully, Cillin had taken out seven on his own, and adding that to the one Cary killed at the beginning there were now only fifteen of these beasts left.

The horny-skinned beasts did not stop to fight and instead continued to sprint away, so the group only needed to face these fifteen big guys.

Although they were all wearing protective suits, the group was still pretty quick at dodging attacks. They dodged as they sought out points of attacks.

Perhaps it was because Cillin had dealt them the greatest damage, but three beasts had chosen to attack him.

Using the rebound force of his wrist blade clashing against their bodies, Cillin leaped up to the air and shot a bullet right into a charging big guy's mouth. The impact of the bullet's explosion caused countless numbers of its hardened skin to be blown away, and dark red blood and bits of its innards gushed out of its mouth.

Cillin did not stop after the first shot. After avoiding the beast that attacked him from his back, he stepped on a tree trunk, twisted his body and jumped swiftly out of the way before firing yet another shot at the beast pouncing at him from the side. The chain of movements were so swift that even Dias would find himself hardpressed to move to such a degree while still wearing a protective suit. The big guy's feet was up in the air, which was why it could not make an instantaneous evasive action to avoid the shot.

He withdrew his wrist blade at fired three small hooks at the same time (T/N: Suddenly it's ATTACK ON TITAN) that fasten around the surrounding tree trunks. He twisted around the tree trunk, turned and fired yet another shot, hitting the beast that was just about to attack him perfectly.

Dias, who was brawling with a big guy himself roared on the inside, the kid took down three on his own before I could even kill one!

After he finished dealing with the three beasts, Cillin caught an opening and killed another for Xiao Shang. The mistake it made was to throw Xiao Shang away at this timing, hence giving Cillin an exploitable opportunity. If the two parties had been too close then it would actually be difficult to open fire.

“Cillin, go and help Cary! Two of the beasts were attacking him!” Xiao Shang roared.

Since Cary was the first to have killed one of their kind, these big fellows had labeled both him and Cillin as threats to be dealt with. Cillin was the biggest threat, so they sent three of their numbers to deal with him. The next biggest threat was Cary, so they sent out two of their numbers to deal with him. The remaining number were just enough to fight the rest of the group one on one.

Cary?

Even if that guy was pushed too hard by the two beasts and retreated further back than the others, but he couldn’t have possibly walked out of the scanner’s range, could he?

Cary was incomparable to Cillin In terms of agility, so the only thing he could do was to avoid being caught by the two beasts in a pincer attack. But even then, the guy couldn’t have withdrawn so far back that not even a shadow could be seen, could he?

Chapter 96: Cary's Crisis

The further in the direction he went, the thicker the bushes became. Through these knee-length bushes, Cillin ran along a trail of footprints and soon encountered a dead alien beast covered in red-and-black hardened skin. From the signs, this big guy was killed by an internal bullet explosion after it was shot. The black insects had crawled out of the ground and were currently feeding on it.

Strangely enough, the grass trail, not far away from this big guy's location, looked different. It looked like something was being dragged across it. There were many broken vines in the surroundings, and although these vines weren't thick, they were pretty tenacious. It looked like they were being forcefully pulled apart.

After tracking for yet another distance, Cillin saw the other big guy who was also shot and killed by an internal explosion. From this point onwards, there were obvious signs of a struggle, and when Cillin parted the bush, he discovered three deep scratch marks on the ground. Cary probably made it with his grappling hook when he was being pulled by the vines. Cillin didn't take more than a few steps before he saw some cut vines in a bush. The exposed stump was very smooth, and it was probably cut open by Cary's blade. Further ahead was a precipitous incline that led to a dark green river beneath. The river wasn't wide, but it was very rapid.

Cillin found one of Cary's gun on the incline. Cary had probably rolled down the incline and fell into the river. The protective suit was waterproof, but after the prolonged battle, Cary's protective

suit had probably taken some damage. The damage must have been pretty severe as well, since his positioning device wasn't responding either.

Cillin turned on his communicator and was about to leave a message to Dias and the others, but he discovered that only static sounds came from the device, and the signal display appeared to be completely chaotic.

What's going on?!

Never mind, I'll worry about this later. Finding Cary is more important right now.

Cillin installed a message button at the incline. If Dias and the others finished their fight and came after them along the trail, then they would definitely discover this button.

Cillin exhaled and began searching downriver. Hopefully, Cary was still safe and sound.

So, how was Cary right now?

He was in a bad spot. A very, very bad spot.

When he was being pursued by the two big guys, his leg was caught by the vines hidden beneath the bushes. However, it was also thanks to these vines that that he did not need to pay attention to his feet. The speed at which he was being dragged away was

swift, allowing him to put all of his concentration on the two big guys behind him. Moreover, the two big guys were obviously hindered by the vines as well, hence giving Cary the opportunity to kill them both. Otherwise, with their speed, there was no way he could've taken them out this easily.

However, the vines saved him, but the vines also damned him.

Cary's protective suit was swiped open by one of the big guys, but he was unharmed. When the vines trapped Cary, the capillaries on the vines pierced through Cary's unprotected skin and injected neurotoxins deep into his body. Therefore, when Cary was cutting the vines, his consciousness was already starting to blur and turn dizzy. Then, after stumbling a few steps, he rolled off the incline and fell into the river.

Before he fell, Cary pressed the life-saving button with difficulty before a life buoy surrounded him.

He did not know how far he was washed away. Cary's rank A genotype demonstrated its superiority as the dizziness symptom caused by the neurotoxin inside his body began to fade. Had it been a rank C genotype or below who suffered this neurotoxin, they would probably be dead in no time.

After recovering some of his consciousness and stamina, Cary pressed a device on his arm and fired a rope drill. The drill punched into a stone wall beside the river and penetrated it. Then the rope retracted and pulled Cary towards the shore. After climbing up the shore and withdrawing the drill inside the stone wall, Cary looked up and saw a jungle not too different from the

one on the incline he fell off earlier. He was not going to climb back up immediately, however. What would he do if he ran into those big guys again?

He didn't know if his communicator was broken or had no signal, but it wasn't working. While he was resting, Cary looked towards the dark green river. The river was so green that it looked a little eerie. This section of the river was much moving at a much slower and calmer speed.

Hmm?

It was then Cary saw many greenish-blue things the size of chicken eggs floating towards him on the river. Although his eyes weren't as sharp as usual due to the effects of the neurotoxin, but Cary was certain that he didn't see anything like this earlier!

The greenish-blue lumps on the river grew in number as they converged towards Cary's direction.

"Fuck!"

Even if his brain was any more addled than it already was, he would still know that these things weren't anything good!

He fired his drill hook again and swung it over the incline above the stone wall. After fastening it on the incline, climbing claws popped out of his wrist as he began climbing up the hillside very, very slowly. What would he do if he accidentally fell down again

otherwise?

After climbing up the incline, Cary laid face up on the ground beside a large rock. Right now, he felt like a bunch of wet noodle with not a bit of strength left inside his body. The symptoms of the neurotoxin might have faded, and his consciousness was much clearer than before, but he was still feeling feeble all over.

He had no idea where his guns were. If he ran into those alien beasts covered in red-and-black hardened skin again, then death would be his only option. At his current state, it was difficult for him to even cut a fruit with his wrist blade.

While thinking, Cary suddenly heard a familiar low growl. It was a slow, rhythmic low growl that sounded like breathing.

Am I hearing things?

After concentrating and listening for a while, he raised his head.

I'm a sad, sad Hunter today.

Cary wailed in his heart. He was just thinking about them, and then they appeared right away!

One, two, three... there were six alien beasts in total!

What happened to Dias and the others?! Why are there six of

these creatures at this place?!

If possible, Cary would very much like to grab a cannon and do battle against these creatures. He would have no regrets even if he were to die in the process! This situation however, was something he found really difficult to accept.

The six red-and-black alien beasts did not charge Cary in a hurry. Instead, they slowly walked towards him with eyes that made Cary felt as if he was a monkey on display.

Wait. Their eyes?

Cary looked carefully, and realized that their eyes revealed a kind of expression that differentiated them from the average animals. They looked similar to human eyes and had something that was called... intelligence! That's right, that's what Eudy would have said.

As he watched the six big guys that were gradually approaching him, Cary slowly supported his upper body against the rock and popped out his wrist blade. In truth, the arm that was connected to the wrist blade was trembling. The neurotoxin wasn't fully flushed out of his system yet, and his muscles were a little twitchy. But he still had a hand grenade in the bag around his waist.

Some people might choose to commit suicide in face of certain death like this one, but Cary would not do so. He would fight to the death, and he would not hesitate to drag his enemies to the abyss with him. This was his belief; the belief he had chosen for himself

when he walked on the path of a Hunter.

Seeing Cary's expanded wrist blade, all six big guys showered him with looks of disdain.

"Come at me, you ugly bastards!"

When they entered within ten meters of him, Cary's unarmed hand secretly reached towards the grenade, all but ready to push the detonate button.

ROAR——

It was at this moment a long, drawn out roar, one that sounded like it came from a gigantic, ancient beast happened and nearly burst Cary's eardrums. However, Cary nearly shed a tear when he heard this voice.

A gray shadow flashed by.

BANG!

There were six alien beasts. One was rammed away, and the other one was stepped beneath its claw. The remaining four were literally pushed twenty meters away by the deafening sound wave.

With a sleek body glowing with metallic lustre and a posture of extraordinary gracefulness, Wheeze stared downward at the four

red-and-black alien beasts twenty meters away from it.

Chapter 97: Wheeze Is Great

Cary stared blankly at the gray fellow that's even bigger than those red-and-black alien beasts. It looked a little like a leopard or a lion. Its skin glowed with a metallic luster, but for some reason it gave off the soft impression of liquid metal, plus it did not look as sinister as the red-and-black alien beasts.

But why did it sound like that gluttonous and lazy gray cat? Also, the roar just now was only aimed at the red-and-black alien beasts and not Cary, or with Cary's current condition, he would've bled from all seven apertures and died.

The big metallic fellow had sent a red-and-black alien beast flying, and stepped on another under its paws. The alien beast that was stepped on appeared to have its skin shredded, and there were a lot of hardened red-and-black skin on the ground.

It was no more fearsome than the red-and-black alien beasts, and it was just a tad bigger than them. Yet, it was putting on a full show of aggression; its elegant appearance failing to conceal its arrogance or wantonness at all.

It applied strength to its claws.

Crack!

The sound of breaking bones resounded from the red-and-black alien beast beneath its claws. Dark red blood poured continuously out of its mouth, dying its formidable white teeth completely in

red.

Howl——

A dreadful howl resounded throughout the forest; one that chilled even Cary's heart. The flying birds circling in the air let out a series of rapid cries before flying away in panic.

The four red-and-black alien beasts bared their fangs and let out low growls.

The big metallic fellow looked at the now immobile red-and-black alien beast beneath its feet and scoffed once. Its sickle-like claws extended.

Cary thought that the big metallic fellow was laughing disdainfully when it looked at the four red-and-black alien beasts. Then, its claws swiped across the immobile red-and-black alien beast on the ground.

Cary was left completely flabbergasted when he saw the red-and-black alien beast that not even he could take out immediately with his wrist blade become split into several chunks of meat. It really was like cutting apart a fruit, and there was no blood stains the big fellow's claws at all!

After it was finished, the big fellow glanced at the four red-and-black alien beasts in clear intimidation. There was no howls, no fang baring. It was only a simple glance, and all four red-and-black

alien beasts immediately turned tails and ran away.

"Yo, you look pretty beat up." Ever since he absorbed that white ball, the gray cat's metal form had become even better than before. It no longer had the coarseness of a machine, and looked a lot more sleeker.

Hearing the familiar voice, Cary asked still somewhat disbelievingly, "Whe... Wheeze?"

"It's Whebeze!" The gray cat's body slowly shrank until it returned to its original cat appearance. However, even though it was now in the form of a little cat, its arrogance was unconcealed. It was a lot shorter than Cary, and yet Cary couldn't help but feel that the little fellow was staring down at him from above.

Cary smiled and accidentally choked himself. He coughed twice before looking towards the gray cat who was licking its paws and wiping its face, "Wheeze, come over here and have a hug."

"Hug yourself. I could've eaten all four of them, but because of you I have no choice but to forgive them for now." The gray cat said in irritably. Cillin had specifically told it to put Cary's comfort as top priority, and to stop thinking only about feeding.

"Ah? I beg your pardon for holding you back." He said that, but there wasn't much apology behind his words at all. Cary was very thankful that the gray cat had saved him at a critical time. At the same time, he finally understood what Cillin meant when he said, 'Maybe it'll repay your kindness today by saving your life when

you’re in danger’.

“How about I treat you to a big meal when I’m free next time?”

“You have some tact in you after all.” The gray cat said with a tone that indicated that it was only saying this because it was giving Cary face.

“Oh right, how did you find me?” Cary asked.

“Cillin sent me a sound wave signal flare. It was only after I arrived that I knew that you’re the one who’s in danger. I should’ve known that with his abilities, Cillin wouldn’t have been done in this easily.”

“Where’s Cillin?”

“He’s coming soon.”

After Cillin dropped the task of finding Cary onto the gray cat, he himself had returned to Dias to check out their situation. The gray cat had a bigger advantage when it came to finding Cary, and Cillin believed in the gray cat’s abilities as well. Before he left, he even threw down the words, “Prove your worth other than your ability to eat and sleep. If you can’t even save a person, then you may as well stay here and live together with these alien beasts.” The gray cat was so furious back then that it nearly chopped off all the trees at its surrounding area.

It didn’t take long before Cillin came searching. He shared a special connection with the gray cat, which was why the gray cat had said that it was like they were of the same roots.

After investigating Cary’s health and finding no especially serious or fatal wounds, Cillin finally relaxed.

“The lieutenant and the others should be with the commander right now. Our reinforcements have also arrived; they flew here directly on an aircraft. I recorded a message and left a signal launcher along the way. This place is very strange, and disrupts signals quite a bit, but as long as they flew at this direction, they should be able to receive the signal within a small range.”

After learning that everyone was fine, Cary also relaxed quite a bit. “Wheeze is great.”

The gray cat narrowed its eyes and enjoyed Cary’s chin rubbing service. When it heard Cary’s words, it let out two purrs from its nose.

Cillin cast a glance at the two fellows and shook his head. Then, he arrived beside the red-and-black alien beast that was cut into several pieces by the gray cat.

“God knows how many there are of these things. Six of them popped out of nowhere just now, and if it wasn’t for Wheeze I would’ve been as dead as a dodo.” Cary said,

“No, that’s not right. These six beasts aren’t from the same group that we met just now.” Cillin frowned and said.

“Group?”

“Mm. These beasts are social animals. The ones we met in the jungle are all of the same group. There are many scents in the air, and one of them is the group’s territorial scent. However, the scent on this beast does not belong to that jungle’s.”

Cary’s face contorted uncontrollably. He considered his own sense of smell to be quite acute, but he did not smell any special scent in the air at all. Of course, that’s excluding the stench of blood.

“Their intelligence really is quite impressive. At the beginning, the horny skinned beasts were probably feeling out our strength, but it’s not that those horny skinned beasts were smart. The true masterminds behind all this are the beasts and those flying birds in the air.” While speaking, Cillin pointed above their head.

“It is those birds circling in the air who tossed down the snakes we encountered. The dense branches hid them from view, and the snakes wouldn’t die even if they thrown down from the air. These snakes should be pretty familiar with the scent of the horny skinned beasts, and they came after us by tracking their scent in the air. These snakes were also sent after us to measure our strength.”

Cary’s mouth opened wide. If what he said was true, then these

red-and-black beasts were a little too treacherous, weren't they?

"Then, during the third charge, they drove out even more horny skinned beasts after us in order to exhaust our ammunition. At the same time, they closed in on us in a pig's head formation with the intent of forcing us to the back while they got ready to attack with the horny skinned beasts in front of them. They wanted to drive us to the ledge where there will be vines to obstruct our path. It's like they're hunting us. They watched their prey struggle and forced them to walk step by step towards the point of no return. Their objective wasn't to feed, but to enjoy this pleasure and learn from the experience."

Cary felt chilled from the bottom of his heart. This was the first time he was retaliated at by animals and turned into a prey after being a Hunter for such a long time.

Cillin looked towards the sky, turned around and lifted Cary to his feet. Extending a hoverboard, the two men and one cat slowly descended on the aircraft with an opening hatch.

Seeing that both Cary and Cillin were fine, Dias' suspended heart finally relaxed, "We'll be heading back to the starship for now. Things are a little complicated this time."

Chapter 98: The Disgruntled Cat

All six vanguard teams had suffered some degrees of injuries, and excluding the teams of Dias and Lu Suo, another lieutenant commander, the other four teams all suffered different degrees of casualties.

After returning to the starship, Cary was sent to the medbay to receive treatment. Dias followed Shawton to the main starship, whereas Cillin and his team hung around each other.

“Thank goodness you’re there, Cillin, or we would have lost someone from our team.” Xiao Shang smiled at Cillin with both fatigue and gladness on his face.

At the time, Cillin hadn’t left for long before Shawton showed up on an aircraft with his men, so the remaining few red-and-black alien beasts gave up on the fight before swiftly escaping.

Cillin waved his hands, “Is everyone okay?”

“We’ve all had our wounds treated. Those who’re more seriously wounded are still at the medbay, but no one’s life is in danger.”

“Where’s Beaver?”

“He’s at his personal workshop. He’s processing the information that was brought back to the ship.”

A copy of the data was already uploaded to every personnel in the technical analysis team on the Sixth Squadron's main starship. But Beaver was curious about it, and he just had to analyse the data himself.

Cillin arrived at Beaver's workshop and knocked on his door. Beaver normally disliked people disturbing him while he was working, and his doorbell was set to silent mode. So Cillin had no choice but to knock on his door.

Beaver finally opened the door after he knocked on it for a very long time. His eyes were completely bloodshot. It would appear that the data analysis wasn't progressing well.

"What is it?" Beaver said weakly. He exhausted too much energy trying to analyse a mountain of data in a short time, and now his mind was still in a chaotic jumble. He just couldn't shake the feeling that he was missing something.

"I'd like to borrow your analyser to analyse a sound frequency." Cillin did not walk into Beaver's workshop. It was Beaver's private land, and Dias aside, no one had ever entered inside, not even the Sixth Squad's commander, Shawton himself.

"Sound frequency? What sound frequency?" The data Dias' group had gathered also included some sound frequencies, although they were all the horny skinned beasts' and red-and-black alien beasts'.

"The birds' sound frequency."

Beaver's eyes flashed, "Go sit at the room next door for a minute. I'll analyse it right away."

Nodding, Cillin walked and sat in the small room next to Beaver's workshop.

"Ceh, look at him being oh-so-mysterious, keeping us cold outside." The gray cat followed Cillin inside and jumped onto the table, requesting Cillin to pour it a cup of fruit juice. After licking it twice with a fussy look, it raised its head and said secretively, "Do you want me to eavesdrop next door and see which data he's processing?"

"Eavesdrop? You can hear the data he's processing?" Cillin said in surprise.

The gray cat's head shot up to the air in a pompous manner, "Of course! All machines let out a specific sound, and all the data they process are 'spoken' through a specific language. It's just that you guys don't know about it, and can only see the calculation results and some parts of the process on a monitor."

"Doesn't that mean that if someone invents a machine that can receive and translate this type of 'machine language', they can eavesdrop wherever they go?"

Hearing Cillin's words, the gray cat cast him a glance of disdain, "Ignoring the fact that whether those shitty low level machines can 'hear' them is a question in itself, even if they could, it's highly

unlikely they could understand them. For instance, do you understand the native languages of those borderline planets?”

“So you mean that a different machine will speak a different language. But why can you understand them then?” He agreed with the gray cat’s statement. Cillin knew that it was difficult to understand this ‘machine language’, or GAL would’ve invented an eavesdropping machine like this a long time ago. Cillin also had another question in mind: Beaver’s workshop had pretty good soundproofing, so how exactly was the gray cat able to ‘hear’ them? Could it be that this machine language wasn’t a kind of sound wave?

“I don’t know, I only know that they are speaking, and that I can understand them. Uh-huh, this is the power of the miracle life of the universe!”

Cillin rubbed his chin, and just when the gray cat was complacent enough to float on air he caught one of its ears and changed the subject abruptly, “You’re hiding something from us, aren’t you?”

“W... what? I didn’t hide nothing!” Suddenly, the gray cat’s proud feelings were completely blown away by Cillin’s words.

“Trying to cover things up only makes it worse. The second your ears twitch I know exactly what you’re thinking in your head.”

“Nonsense... That’s not possible!” The gray cat worked hard to control its ears and keep it from moving.

“Look at you, all tensed up looking like I’ve hit the nail right on the head.”

Cillin pressed a button, and a mirror appeared on the wall. In the mirror, the gray cat looked as frozen as it was encased in ice. It was literally so stiff that it could be nothing else but suspicion incarnate.

“Stupid little guy; can’t even lie to save its own life. How dare you even claim yourself to be a cyborg who has lived over hundreds of years!”

The gray cat opened its mouth and attempted to loosen its entire body. Then, it gave up and curled itself into a ball on the table, ignoring Cillin.

Seeing the gray cat’s disgruntlement, Cillin flicked the gray cat’s exposed ear tip in amusement, “Alright, stop being embarrassed already. This is also a learning process. If you run into some maniac researchers one day, they would scoop everything out of you in seconds and dissect you in detail.”

Cillin wasn’t trying to frighten it. Some GAL researchers really were bat shit insane, and they literally could do anything at any cost or means for their own purposes. As compared to the recorded cyborgs, the gray cat was absolutely an existence that was far more unique and valuable for research, so Cillin hoped that this little guy could live on its own if the day came when no one had the ability to protect it from harm. At the least, he hoped that the gray

cat would not be sold without its knowledge.

The paws covering the gray cat's head loosened a little, but its body was still curled into a ball.

Cillin rubbed the curled gray cat roughly, "Still unhappy? You're like a child or something." After a pause, Cillin smiled and said, "You found a mineral resource, didn't you?"

"Mm? How did you know that?!" The gray cat abruptly raised its head.

Cillin smiled and did not answer. He had deduced it through the various simple observations, and he wasn't sure himself if it was true. But if the gray cat had reacted this way, then his deduction was most likely correct.

"I've read in some high contribution publications where certain researchers stated that a cyborg will be forced to take a carbon form in certain high energy fields. It's because their machine form will be severely affected in that state."

The gray cat gave it some thought before shaking its head, "I don't know. I haven't experienced that myself. I do feel a little uncomfortable when I was near the mineral deposit, but it was simply a matter of adapting to it. No biggie."

"Is that so. It's probably the white ball then."

“Mm. Definitely.”

“Let’s forget the white ball for now. About that energy ore deposit. if I can guess it, then those experienced analysts most definitely could come to the same conclusion.”

“Ah?” The gray cat froze for a second before crying out loud, “It’s all your fault; if you haven’t called me over I could’ve mined the deposit all by myself! Now we’ve made them a profit while receiving nothing!

Cillin stretched out his hand and knocked on the cat’s head once, “What ‘them’ are you talking about! We’re in the same Hunter team, you know. If the team finds the deposit, then it will be greatly beneficial for its future development. Whose starship are you going to fly on if there are no mineral deposits? It’s not like you’re going to do anything but eat them anyway, or am I wrong?”

The gray cat pondered for a moment and thought that it was true. But it was still a little reluctant and it muttered in a small voice, “But I can use the energy ore deposit to repay my debt...”

“Alright, stop worrying about it already.” Cillin rubbed the gray cat’s head, “You saved Cary and found a mineral deposit, so that’s 100 million credits off your debt.”

“Really?!” The gray cat’s eyes lit up. It hadn’t been too long before it cleared out one fifth of its debt, had it? It would seem the day it escaped its identity as a debt slave wasn’t far away, meow.

While speaking, both Cillin and the gray cat noticed the activity in the room beside them and fell silent. Before long, Beaver walked in and said excitedly, “The analysis results are out, and I’ve figured out some of our problems as well! Cillin, let’s go find the lieutenant commander together. This is a very important clue!”

Cillin did not leave, “It’s okay, you go on ahead and report it to the lieutenant. Just announce the results when it’s time.”

“Alright then, I’ll be leaving then! You’ve done a great service this time, Cillin!” Beaver was very excited to be able to come up with greater results than the analysis team on the Sixth Squadron’s main ship.

Cillin sat back down after seeing Beaver’s departure. He already knew about the results of Beaver’s analysis long ago, and giving him the sound frequency was simply a way to tell Dias through Beaver about the data that was missing from the equation. That being said, now that he looked at it, it would seem that those beasts were not the most important thing of it all.

Chapter 99: Energy Ores

Dias returned before Beaver could leave the team's starship. After communicating with Beaver, Dias summoned all of the operation personnel, summing up both the analysis team's findings and Beaver's findings before explaining them to everyone.

"We're not facing just one high intelligence species, but two of them working together with each other during the previous operation." A so-called high intelligence animal was determined by an animal's standard, and not a human's. While a high intelligence animal might not necessarily be smarter than a human, it was definitely not stupid either. Dias called out the birds and red-and-black alien beasts' pictures on the huge screen and said, "There are two more photos that were captured from high altitude, and I believe that you'll have a more direct understanding once you've seen them."

On the screen, there was a stone circle formed from many huge rocks inside a basin, and the horny skinned beasts were captives inside it. There were some red-and-black alien beasts pacing back and forth outside the stone circle.

The image cut to a new scene. It was a cave, and its surroundings were filled with those eagle-like birds. They used their sharp beaks and claws to tear apart the horny skinned beasts from their skin before tossing them down into the cave. Their movements were practiced, and it was obvious that they had done this many times before. The team did not know what was deep inside the cave, but they knew that it was a snake den looking at the things that had crawled out of the cave.

There were many types of snakes that would not consume dead or still objects, but it was obvious that this particular type was different. They would fall over and fight each other for the mincemeat when they were tossed into the cave.

“These two life forms do not stand at the apex of this planet. There are plenty of other bigger and deadlier life forms than them. However, these two life forms lived very comfortably due to their mutualistic and cooperative relationship with each other. When the birds encountered their natural enemies, they would escape to the red-and-black alien beasts and seek protection. The birds would also warn the red-and-black alien beasts in advance when large-sized creatures that could threaten the red-and-black alien beasts were nearby. Through a long period of evolution, their interplay grew more and more practiced, and their intelligence grew as well.”

Dias cut to another new image, “This is a scene of them retreating when the commander came to help us. Look at this big fellow’s eyes when they’re retreating; it is a reluctance that is very much like a human’s. An animal’s intelligence can be determined from their eyes, and the more intelligent they are, the better their learning capabilities are.”

Dough zipped right behind Beaver’s pants after seeing those eyes. It’s so scary, it looked like it was going to jump right out and eat it.

Meanwhile, the gray cat only glanced at it once before yawning and returning to sleep. One must sleep after they eat. Yep, that’s the truth of the universe.

“No wonder it felt like we were being played.” Cary, who had finished treating his wounds sighed on the chair.

Eudy looked at him from the corner of his eyes, “Now you know what happens when a Hunter is stupider than his prey?”

Cary’s face contorted as he thought of giving himself a slap there and then. Why had he chosen this moment to speak up? It was like he was asking to be scorned upon.

Dias’ words gave everyone in the team much to think about. It would seem that they would be facing these two mutualistic high intelligence animals in combat, and they knew nothing about their trump cards at all. But if they wished to understand this Rank B planet, then they’d have to face these two life forms.

A lot of people were thinking after listening to Dias’ briefing. Cillin was also deep in thought, but he wasn’t thinking about Dias’ words, but something else.

Although his eyes were staring at the huge screen, his attention was placed on the invisible surveillance probes outside the ship. They were sent out to orbit around the planet and monitor certain phenomenon such as images, local weather conditions, energy detection and so on.

Cillin had given the matter special attention ever since listening to the gray cat about machine language, and he realized that at the peak of his concentration, he really could ‘hear’ certain things. He

was able to convert them into words and images, and although he couldn't make heads or tails of these scenes at all, it was enough to excite Cillin. He was sure that this was the machine language the gray cat was talking about.

The gray cat who was lying there sleeping suddenly flicked its ears and opened its eyes. At first it was looking strangely at Cillin, but then it seemed to understand something and became at ease once more. Then it buried its head and continued to sleep.

After explaining things for a little while longer, Dias turned serious. Cillin thought, here comes the real show.

Dias cleared his throat and said seriously, "We've talked enough about the animals, so let's talk about the main point now. The analysis team on the main ship deduced that there may be a large amount of energy ores on this planet. It's just that we are temporarily unable to detect it for some unknown reason. Therefore, our latter missions will involve returning to the planet and performing a more in-depth energy reading. The technical team has already modified our scan parameters and optimised our scanners. They will be delivered to us by the morrow, so everyone should take a good rest before the new scanners arrive. Once we return to the ground, we will be facing more than just two intelligent life forms."

The instant the gray cat heard about energy ores, its ears flicked upwards as straight as an arrow. Although it was still in the same eye-closing and head-burying posture, its ears had betrayed its current feelings. Cillin sighed on the inside when he saw this. It's a cat alright.

Once the team meeting was over, Cillin had just returned to the lounge and sat down when the gray cat jumped onto his thighs, “Are we just looking for one type of energy ore?”

Cillin give it a thought and said, “I don’t know, but the six teams will split up as before and perform scans at different areas. It’s possible that the other teams are responsible for seeking out a different type of energy ore. How many types do you know of?”

Cillin had seen the images captured by the orbiting observation satellites and a few simple parameters. From these parameters Cillin deduced that there might be more than a type of energy ore on this planet, although the exact numbers were unknown. The data they had were limited after all; the analysis team on the main ship would probably have a more precise conclusion. However, Cillin trusted the gray cat’s judgment more than the analysis team’s.

The gray cat narrowed its eyes, “I didn’t run too far, but I detected two types of energy ores in the area. One is in that jungle, and the other is in that green river.”

Cillin nodded. Those two places were a little strange.

The moment the gray cat thought that so many of its energy ores would be confiscated, it grew a little dejected and dispirited.

Seeing that the gray cat’s discontented look, Cillin pulled its ears and said, “If you can find the energy ores before the scanners, then

you can eat some yourself first.”

“Really?! I won’t be kicked out of the team and left with those ugly creatures on the planet?”

“Relax, as long as you limit your consumption, I’m sure the commander and the others will understand.” Seriously, who in their right minds would kick out a cyborg? There were plenty of smart people in the B Squadron, and they all knew where their vital interests lay.

“Hehe, that works for me. I will definitely find the energy ores before those dumb machines first! I’m going to eat first when that happens, and I’m going to inform you guys only when I’m full!”

Sigh, this guy’s so proud it lost measure of itself again.

“Idiot, keep that last sentence to yourself, or you’re gonna get beaten for it.” Cillin cupped the gray cat’s head with his hand and said.

“Mm hmm, keep it to myself. I’ll keep it to myself and not say a word.” The gray cat was happy now and thus did not mind Cillin messing around with its head.

During the time before they returned to the planet, the gray cat was in a highly excited state. It would patrol the B Squadron’s starship three times a day, although by now everyone had gotten used to it. Cary even brought food to the gray cat everyday to

thank it for saving his life.

When the aircraft landed back on the ground, the gray cat was gone the second the hatch opened.

Chapter 100: Red-And-Black Energy Deposit

This time, the Sixth Squad had even dispatched fighter aircrafts due to the importance of the energy ores. With spaceplanes and fighters in the air, those birds would not be able to circle above the skies and inform the red-and-black alien beasts to cooperate with them. The red-and-black alien beasts also stayed away and simply watched from a far distance, knowing that things would not end well if they charged forcefully this time.

Tang Qiuqiu followed behind Dias while holding a gun in her hand, but her eyes were staring curiously at the plants all around her. She had already seen these strange plants in pictures earlier, but it was a different feeling to see them with her own eyes. Mm, she should definitely

take more pictures as memento.

This area was the red-and-black alien beasts' domain, but none of the beasts had acted rashly despite the stance the humans assumed. It was exactly because they were smarter than every other animals living here that they chose not to act carelessly in face of such odds.

Now that the threat from the two alien beasts were temporarily gone, Dias' team would be able to spend more effort in finding the energy deposit. Even some technicians were sent to the field, and they would've sent in robots as well if it wasn't for the fact that machines grew more disrupted the closer they were to the planet's surface, experiencing some confusion in their programming. It was an expected result under high energy field, which was why the teams barely used any laser type weapons at all in the first place. In

the end, the suggestion to employ robots was rejected, and they would have to search for the energy deposit through honest manual labor.

Still, even after the parameters were modified and the scanners optimised, they still could not point out an exact location. They only showed that there was an energy deposit somewhere. If the team was to excavate blindly, then they could use up all of the power source they brought with them and squeeze out every drop of their manpower, and still not see a speck of the energy deposit they sought for.

Eudy held up the scanner nonchalantly. Right now he was just holding the thing to put on the appearance that he was working. From the looks of it, the scanners modified by the technical team were completely useless. They could starve themselves searching and still not come up with any real results at all.

Dough lay well behaved on Eudy's shoulders. It did not want to be left behind on the starship, and yet its nerves were lacking. It had stuck close to Eudy since the moment they left the spaceplane. Unlike the gray cat, it did not have the courage to roam carelessly about.

Eight hours later, Dias let out a sigh. There was still no progress to be made. If the situation continued, then they would have no choice but to ask permission to drill randomly.

Both fighter aircrafts and spaceplanes were very costly to pilot. If they could not find a power source, then they would lose out big time in this expedition. They still have quite a bit of time planned

in Sector Z, and if they could not replenish their power supply and dug into their power reserves too soon, then they would soon be met with a most difficult situation.

Di di di——

The alarm sounded to indicate that an animal life form was heading their way swiftly. Previous experiences caused everyone in the vanguard team to reflexively fall into combat stance; throwing the scanners to the back of their minds and getting all the firepower in ready first. It endless waves of schemes and traps was waiting in front of them?was an understandable reaction, as the saying goes, once bitten twice shy. Who knows if there would be another round of traps and evil schemes waiting ahead of them?

“Wait a second, it’s just Wheeze!” Cillin motioned for the others to calm down, “It probably found the energy ores already.”

If the first half of the sentence caused the group’s nerves to loosen a little, then the latter half was without a doubt a bomb that grabbed all of their attention once more. They spent eight hours scanning everywhere with the scanner to record and upload precise data back to the starship, so that the scanners could be further upgraded with improved settings and parameter calculations. Moreover, they did all this on foot, had to stay vigilant against the flora and fauna, and pay attention to the tiniest changes on the scanner as well. It was quite literally a most exhaustive task. And yet, after all that, he’s saying that the cat who vanished from view the second the hatch was opened what the one who ultimately discovered the energy ore? If that really was the case, then they were practically idiots compared to the cat.

A gray shadow flashed by and jumped on top of Cillin's shoulders. It was none other than the gray cat, Wheeze.

Cillin raised his hands and hovered it beside its mouth. Then, the gray cat spat out a red-and-black crystal about the size of a fingernail to his hand.

When he saw the crystal's size, Cillin glanced at the gray cat with meaningful eyes. The gray cat turned away and stared innocently at the surrounding landscape.

Indeed, the gray cat had 'eaten' quite a bit before it had returned to them. Moreover, despite purposely biting off an egg-sized energy crystal as proof before it came over, because it had held the crystal in his mouth it unconsciously absorbed a portion of it until all that's left was the fingernail-sized crystal.

When the gray cat spat out the tiny crystal, everyone's gaze was focused on Cillin's palm. Cillin handed over the crystal to Dias.

Dias carefully received the tiny red-and-black crystal. It was obviously red-and-black in color, and yet somehow, it was so bright that it was translucent, and so dark that it was deadly attractive.

Dias slowly approached the scanner with the red-and-black crystal, and when he was about five meters away, the scanner abruptly began to react abnormally. The closer he went, the more rapid and sharper the scanner's beeping sound became. After a

series of rapid high frequency noises, the scanner finally exploded. At this moment, Dias and the crystal was still three meters away from the scanner. There was no doubting the energy ores' power to have caused such a tremendous impact in just less than two meters of distance.

"What a powerful energy field!" Everyone's eyes lit up. They would need only a cubic meter of an energy ore of this quality to be able to cover all the energy they had depleted ever since they entered Sector Z.

"This reminded me of those red-and-black alien beasts, and the dark-colored hardened skin and bone plate at the front half of the horny skinned beasts' body. Perhaps it is precisely these invisible high energy fields generated by the energy ores deep underground that stimulated the alien beasts to develop hardened skins without them knowing it. Their hardened skin had slowly grown complete over a long period of evolution."

"Other than the animals, the plants inside the jungle are also unusually tough. Perhaps it really is because of this energy ore. If this assumption is true, then we have truly stumbled upon a treasure!" Dias said excitedly while staring at the red-and-black crystal in his hand.

Every appearance of a new type of high grade energy ore always set off a wave within the industry, and it would seem the Sixth Squad's expedition this time was definitely not in vain. As long as they had this energy ore, even if they were to find nothing else during their time in Sector Z, it was more than enough for the Sixth Squad to stand tall and chin up among the Vanguard.

“You truly are our Squad’s darling, Wheeze! Haha!” Cary tossed the scanner aside and walked over to scratch the gray cat beneath its chin.

The gray cat looked like it was enjoying the gesture with narrowed eyes, but Cillin knew that it was simply because the cat was full and pondering about sleeping, and not because of Cary’s praise or chin scratch!

“Hey Wheeze, where did you find these things? Is it okay if you take us there to have a look?” Dias said to the gray cat in a friend-to-friend manner without any hint of a command behind his tone at all. He knew who special this cat was.

The gray cat swiped Cary’s hand away, cocked its head, scratched an itch with a hind limb, yawned, stuck out its butt and stretched its back, then smacked its lips before finally saying unhurriedly, “Sure.”

It jumped right down Cillin’s shoulders and began running towards a direction.

“Follow it quickly!”

Dias immediately extended a hoverboard to catch up with the cat, and the others followed suit and flew after it as well. Those that did not bring a hoverboard with that went back to the aircraft to follow those who were flying on hoverboards at the front.

The gray cat led the crowd through a series of zigzagging paths in the forest. The trees here were densely packed, and the tree trunks were only thicker than the next. The group could only squeeze through them, and those who were fat or with muscles that were too well developed might not even make their way in successfully. When Dias tried to cut off a few branches with his blade, he quickly realised that these trees were at least ten times harder than the ones they saw in the forest, even though they did not look much different from the other!

Dias did not order the men to begin logging en masse. His intention was to find the location of the energy ore first before dealing with the situation accordingly later.

Just when Dias felt that his bones were about to be deformed from compression, the gray cat turned around to look at him, “You can’t squeeze through anymore? That’s fine. This place is fine too. There are energy ores beneath this ground.”

After gasping twice for breath, Dias asked, “The energy ore starts… from here?”

The gray cat said with innocent eyes, “No, it starts from the spot where your muscular guys can’t squeeze through.”

Dias: “…”

Words could not describe the regret in Dias’ heart, and he was this close from vomiting blood from his mouth and collapsing. The

spot the gray cat just mentioned was more than five hundred meters away from where they stood, so it meant that he had squeezed through the forest desperately to the point where his internal organs was almost deformed, only to be told then that more than five hundred meters of his efforts were all for nothing!

"Why didn't you say it earlier?!" Dias seethed through his teeth.

"That's because the quality of the energy ores over there aren't good. The one I'm about to show you is better, although we still have to go a little deeper." The gray cat said without any consciousness of its error at all.

Cillin could do nothing but shake his head at the side. This cat might look shrewd, but it was pretty dumb alright.