

Background Character? Nah, I'm Going To Be The Peak Instead

## Chapter 123: Chen Xing Heads to Steam City

The real world, Crustyroll.

As the interdimensional audience watched the Caroline who had not appeared for a long time on the screen, their hearts felt inexplicably heavy.

The Caroline before them had long since shed her youthful immaturity.

Her identity, too, had transformed—from a member of the universally reviled Embers organization to a [Genius Starbearer] officially certified by the headquarters of the Starbearer Association.

What's more, she was now a direct disciple of Grand President Tezcatlipoca, hailed as the strongest Starbearer.

By all accounts, she was far better off than she had been six years ago—radiant, dazzling, and standing at the very center of the spotlight.

And yet, when the interdimensional viewers looked at the image of her sitting alone, drinking afternoon tea by herself, a quiet sense of loneliness clinging to her figure, a wave of pity still welled up in their hearts.

Because those who had followed season 1 of Stellaris all knew this clearly: although Caroline often said things like *"I'm just Tendou's tool, merely a shadow that follows him,"* Tendou had never once treated her as a tool or an accessory.

The relationship between the two of them was more like that of kindred spirits—or something far beyond ordinary companions.

It carried that unmistakable feeling of *“more than friends, not quite lovers”*—each other’s one and only “exception.”

On top of that, both of them were strikingly good-looking. Tendou’s free-spirited unpredictability paired with Caroline’s cool rationality created a fascinating contrast.

As a result, the “TenCar” ship reigned supreme on Stellaris’ CP battleground, towering above all other pairings.

This single duo alone was enough to firmly crush every other CP faction.

And yet, no one had expected the Stellaris production team to be so utterly heartless as to tear apart this “official CP” in the finale of Season 1.

Now, Caroline was alone at the headquarters of the Starbearer Association. Meanwhile, the true identity of that mysterious masked man remained unknown, no one could be certain whether he was Tendou in disguise or not.

This uncertainty made it painfully clear that the once-perfect partners of “TenCar” would be hard-pressed to reunite anytime soon.

After all, the bounty notice for Tendou was still posted all across the New Federation. For him to show up at the Starbearer Association headquarters—located in the First Floating City, Luminous Ark—would be no different from walking straight into his own grave!

The moment this thought surfaced, the largest CP faction in Stellaris, the “TenCar Party,” completely lost its composure.

“Stellaris production team! I advise you to grow a conscience!”

“Family, I smell danger, should we band together and storm the production team’s lair?”

“Even with her memories temporarily sealed, she’s still unconsciously guarding the ‘shadow’ Tendou left behind... Caroline, you really—I’m crying my eyes out!”

“Something’s off. This stinks too much! What are the producers trying to do? Are they forcing a CP breakup?!”

Just as the barrage of comments raged on—defending Caroline, condemning the production team for being inhuman and pulling strings behind the scenes—Caroline on the screen had already left her exclusive research laboratory and arrived at her private room within the institute.

Contrary to what most people might imagine, Caroline’s room was extremely simple.

Aside from a necessary high-end quantum computation pod, the rest consisted of highly practical items such as workbenches and ordinary furniture.

If one had to point out any decoration at all, it would be the old, worn little dolphin plush placed by her bedside.

[Esteemed Lady Caroline, you have one private message that has not yet been reviewed. Would you like to view it now?]

The moment Caroline returned to her room, her personal Mechanical Intelligence Core AI—White Dolphin—sent her this notification.

And the number of people Caroline had marked as “special attention” was extremely small.

Because aside from her mentor, Tezcatlipoca, she only still kept in contact with one group of people—her childhood companions, Chen Xing and Jing Liuli.

Her master rarely contacted her through data terminals, and Jing Liuli had recently been busy preparing for a New Federation concert tour.

So there was only one possible person who would send her a message at a time like this.

“Open it.”

【Acknowledged.】

Before long, Caroline received a message from Chen Xing.

【Caroline, I’ve found some leads regarding the organization you hypothesized, the one that was possibly formed by sapient Starbeasts.

However, what I’ve managed to capture so far are only defective specimens. All of them show obvious signs of artificial modification, so I can’t verify whether your hypothesis is correct or not.

I'll be heading to Steam City in the near future to investigate the possible presence of sapient Starbeasts there. Once I have any new findings, I'll contact you immediately.” —Chen Xing】

After reading Chen Xing's message, Caroline quietly shut down her data terminal.

Sapient Starbeasts species—this was an existence Caroline had encountered by accident three years ago, when she completed her Star Core Awakening.

Because Caroline's Star Core was the Heavenly Mechanisms Feline, she gained a rather special enhancement upon awakening.

That enhancement was the ability to perceive Star Core frequencies.

Relying on this passive ability, Caroline discovered a Starbeast disguised as a human.

What was more shocking was that this being had even infiltrated the Starbearer Association headquarters, reaching the rank of a high-level Association Starbearer.

The discovery instantly put Caroline on edge, like a thorn in her back, and she began to investigate in secret.

After a series of covert inquiries, Caroline realized that the number of sapient Starbeasts hidden within the Starbearer Association was far greater than she had initially imagined.

Because of this, Caroline did not act rashly.

Instead, after meticulous planning, she seized a rare opportunity to contact Grand President Tezcatlipoca, and reported the information she had uncovered to him.

To Caroline's surprise, the Grand President did not seem shocked by the revelation at all.

In fact, it appeared as though he had already known about it.

For some special reason, however, he had deliberately chosen not to make this information public.

And after learning that Caroline possessed the ability to distinguish sapient species, the Grand President directly accepted her as his disciple.

He used his own status as cover to protect her, and entrusted her with full authority over the investigation into the sapient Starbeasts.

Although Caroline did not know why the Grand President did not personally handle the matter, she understood one fundamental truth:

The more unfathomable a problem is, the more cautious and restrained one must be.

Only by doing so can one avoid being dragged into an unknown vortex.

Thus, even though Caroline had already obtained critical evidence on several sapient Starbeasts, she chose not to expose a single one of them.

Instead, she quietly suppressed the information and handed the concrete investigation work over to Chen Xing.

Because she knew very well that Chen Xing—having experienced a beast tide in her childhood—harbored a bone-deep hatred toward Starbeasts.

Coupled with Chen Xing's own strength, as well as her special standing within the Blazing Sun House, even if something truly were uncovered, those beings would not dare act rashly against Chen Xing.

She was the perfect investigator.

Although there was undeniably an element of *using* Chen Xing in this arrangement, Chen Xing herself had no real objections to it.

In fact, she could even be said to enjoy this kind of work.

After all, in Chen Xing's "Perfect Awakening Ritual," combat was an indispensable component.

And so, Chen Xing took to this task with genuine enthusiasm.

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Link to the Novel Google Drive Fanart:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1f7oPMzGjLKukR1MXGik3EGs71RXZYJ2g>