

Crossing 151

Chapter 151: Only Chance is to Get Close!

Ling Lan's mecha suddenly dipped, the entire mecha somersaulting, then it bent both knees to kick out abruptly, sending the Twilight Empire mecha in its hands flying.

The Twilight mecha flew like a missile, hurtling straight for the sniping mecha in the distance. Meanwhile, riding the reaction force of the kick, Ling Lan's mecha flew backwards. Almost at the same time, Ling Lan activated the mecha's engines to full power, adding onto her momentum to push her mecha's large body further away from the kicked mecha.

From around 300 metres away, the Twilight mecha responsible for sniping pressed the trigger of the beam cannon. An extremely powerful energy beam shot out from the mouth of the cannon ...

An intense explosion rent the air. The force of the explosion was so strong that it sent out powerful shockwaves which could be felt from even 2 to 3 kilometres away. Meanwhile, close to the heart of the explosion, stretching out 500 metres, all the trees and plants had been ravaged by this great explosion. In particular, 100 metres around the centremost point, there was not a speck of greenery left. All that remained was turned up black dirt and a large pit of about 50 metres wide.

At this life-or-death juncture, Ling Lan's mecha control had exceeded her limits, achieving a realm regular people were unable to obtain. But despite her speedy reaction, she still did not manage to completely escape the range of the Twilight mecha's self-destruction. Her mecha's right leg was blown to smithereens.

This immense concussive force also dealt heavy damage to Ling Lan herself. With a cry, she once again threw up a mouthful of blood, her head spinning.

Ling Lan bit down fiercely on the tip of her tongue, letting the sharp pain force her back to wakefulness. She wiped away the traces of blood at the corners of her lips and asked, "What happened? How could the explosion from self-destructing be so strong?"

Little Four gave his analysis instantly, "The mecha self-destructed at the moment the beam cannon struck, igniting the full force of the cannon beam. The two energy waves added to each other, resulting in an effect N-times stronger than just pure addition."

"Looks like it involved some chemical reaction." Ling Lan frowned. This unpredictable explosive force was the cause of the severe damage to both her mecha and herself.

Marching rapidly, Qi Long and the others were thrown off their feet by the tremors from the explosion. The weakest Han Jijyun was even sent flying, but fortunately, Qi Long was able to react in time to press him down to the ground so he wasn't injured.

Qi Long waited for the tremors to stop and then climbed up quickly to look into the sky. He saw that the Federation mecha's right leg had been destroyed in the blast, and his complexion paled.

“We need to move a little faster.” The aerial battle did not seem too far, but was in fact 3 to 4 kilometres away. Qi Long and the others were already moving extremely rapidly, but still only managed to cover half the distance thus far.

However, this time, Qi Long’s decision drew his sworn brother Han Jijyun’s objection. “Qi Long, the closer we get to the mecha battlefield, the more danger we’ll face. Especially now, the mecha on both sides are obviously at the do-or-die moment — at any point, they could choose to self-destruct to bring the other with them. If we get too close, judging by the explosion just now, we will die immediately.”

Han Jijyun was extremely rational, not at all led by his emotions. Thus, seeing that progressing further would threaten their lives, he raised his objection, not allowing Qi Long to behave wilfully just because they were sworn brothers.

“I know.” Qi Long did not deny the truth of Han Jijyun’s words. He too knew that going closer was not a smart move, but a voice in his heart was yelling at him to get as close as he could — if he didn’t obey, he felt as if he would die from the tension and sense of suffocation in his chest.

Qi Long pointed at his chest and said, “But, my heart tells me that I should go there. You know well that many times, my heart is more accurate than my mind ... although I don’t know why it wants me to do this ... but, what you say is right. Getting close is really very dangerous. I cannot be selfish and ask you all to take this risk with me.”

Qi Long felt that he had been selfish. He should have explained things clearly to his teammates and discussed the matter first before making a decision.

Han Jijyun looked at Qi Long silently, and found that Qi Long’s gaze was extremely determined — he was dead-set on getting close. As his sworn brother, Han Jijyun understood Qi Long well. Although Qi Long seemed brash and forthright on the surface, not placing anything but combat in his mind ... In truth, Qi Long’s personality was very stubborn. Once he had made a decision, even a herd of thousands of cows would not be able to hold him back ¹.

“I want to go,” said Luo Lang suddenly.

Luo Lang’s abrupt interjection caused Qi Long and Han Jijyun to turn and look at him with some befuddlement. With some embarrassment, Luo Lang scratched at a cheek and said with a smile, “Actually, everyone knows that Qi Long’s animal instinct is very accurate. If instinct is telling Qi Long that he must go there, then there must be something there. Perhaps it might even be safer there. Besides ...” Luo Lang’s expression became serious, “I also want to watch our saviour kill off the enemy and return safely to camp ...”

At this moment, Lin Zhong-qing chimed in as well, “Honestly, I want to go too ...”

Even Luo Lang was surprised by this, looking over in shock. Luo Lang’s support of Qi Long’s decision was largely due to the fact that he had become sworn brothers with Qi and Han Jijyun since they started school, so it made sense to advance and retreat in accord. However, Lin Zhong-qing joined later, so his relationship with all of them naturally wasn’t as deep. It was understandable that Luo Lang and Han Jijyun were willing to take the risk with Qi Long, but Lin Zhong-qing’s decision was obviously a little beyond their expectations.

The three of them focused their attention on Lin Zhong-qing, waiting for his explanation.

Lin Zhong-qing said seriously, "Whether the team leader's instinct is right or not, I do not know. However, the fact that I want to become strong is not a lie. So, I cannot retreat because I fear danger ... cowards will never become strong."

Regardless of whether Lin Zhong-qing's reason was true or false, his support undoubtedly stunned Qi Long and the other two. Lin Zhong-qing's willingness to risk his life by throwing in his lot with them proved that he truly considered himself a member of their team now, and wasn't just here because he had been forced to by circumstance.

Han Jijyun forcefully held back the surging emotions in his heart and said, "In that case, team leader, bring us along."

Qi Long looked around at the three people in front of him, nodded solemnly and said, "Okay! Let's go!"

From then on, they no longer doubted; there was only the strong bond between brothers who were willing to brave life and death together.

The four of them moved with Qi Long in the lead, Han Jijyun right behind, Lin Zhong-qing in third, and Luo Lang watching their backs. They swiftly made their way through the dense forest. The violent tremors caused by the previous explosion were not purely bad — it also brought about a small benefit. There were no longer any savage beasts in this area of the forest. Even if some savage beasts were lingering around previously, the force of the explosion had scared them enough to send them running into F-class territory. Therefore, Qi Long and his company did not meet any obstacles whatsoever; it was smooth sailing all the way to their destination.

Along the way, Han Jijyun quietly said to Qi Long, "Qi Long, you must definitely become a qualified team leader!" Han Jijyun's voice was extremely, extremely soft, so soft that it was more like Han Jijyun talking to himself.

At the front, Qi Long jerked. His chest throbbed. In a position no one else could see, his fists clenched.

Meanwhile, in the aerial battlefield, Ling Lan was facing another crisis. In order to dodge the opponent's snipes, Ling Lan had no choice but to once again control the mecha to execute irregular flight. However, this type of advanced flight movement put a heavy burden on the mecha.

Right then, on the secondary screens on both sides, many areas had lit up with flashing red warning alerts. The entire cockpit was drowned in a sea of alarms.

"Little Four, scan damage condition." Ling Lan commanded Little Four to report as she controlled her mecha to dodge the opponent's fire.

"Right leg damage 100%, left leg damage 30%, right main engine working under duress, the entire mecha's overall damage at 52% ... Ah, it's 53% now ... Boss, every time you execute irregular flight with the mecha, the damage rate goes up. Estimated 10 more minutes at max before the mecha disassembles ..." Little Four quickly reported the condition of the mecha to Ling Lan. "Most importantly, because of the continuous fighting, there's only one secondary energy block of the mecha's driving

energy remaining. 20% has already been used. If we fight at full strength, it can only hold out for 5 minutes!”

“That’s really bad news!” Ling Lan grit her teeth. In short, this mecha would not be able to hold out for much longer, so she would need to find a chance to counterattack within this limited time. Otherwise, she could only let the opponent chase her around and be beaten to death.

“Little Four, how many more usable weapons do we have?” Ling Lan controlled her mecha to dodge another of the opponent’s attacks, and the screen flashed with red warnings. The alert that the mecha’s damage levels were at 55% caused her brows to furrow.

“Hanging on the left shoulder, a 57mm high-energy beam rifle, able to fire 18 shots. In the two slots on the outer thigh, a high-frequency blade in each one,” said Little Four regretfully, “Only these.”

“We need to think of a way to get close ...” Ling Lan silently planned. Solely depending on the 18 projectiles of the 57mm high-energy beam rifle, it was impossible to finish off the opponent. Only if she got close would she have a chance. Even though the high-frequency blades were a little blunt, a few extra hacks would make up the difference.

However, the opponent also knew what the consequence of letting Ling Lan get close would be, and so was extremely cautious. Every time Ling Lan attempted to get close, the opponent would swiftly back away to keep a certain distance between him and Ling Lan. In other words, the opponent was planning to attack Ling Lan from a distance till she died ².

“Little Four, analyse the surrounding terrain!” While flying, Ling Lan took down the 57mm high-energy beam rifle with the mecha’s right arm as she waited for the results of Little Four’s analysis.

“The north, east, and west are all just filled with endless plain and forest shrubs. The ground condition is soft and the earth is slightly loose. About 300 metres to the west, there is a rock mountain. The close-up image indicates that it is adamantite ³ ...” Little Four reported on the surrounding terrain one by one to Ling Lan.

“Adamantite?” Ling Lan’s gaze flashed, as if thinking of something, “How high is its hardness factor?”

“Up to 12!” responded Little Four with certainty.

“That’s enough!” Ling Lan instantly made her decision. Still in flight, she lifted the beam rifle in her right hand and began shooting at the opponent.

Shooting was certainly not her one of her strong suits. That said, this was only in comparison with her personal strong suits. If compared to another person, Ling Lan’s marksmanship was considered in the upper range of good — it just wasn’t at the most excellent level, that’s all.

Chapter 152: Self-Destruct!

It was extremely difficult to shoot accurately while flying at high speed. Furthermore, ace mecha operators basically all knew how to dodge using irregular flight, some even able to use irregular flicker for long periods of time. Thus, in a battle between opponents of the same level for advanced mecha operators and above, to defeat the other with pure gunfire ... this was almost impossible.

However, Ling Lan had not planned to incapacitate the opponent with just her beam rifle to begin with. She was only using it to create the impression that she was fighting for her life; in reality, she was preparing to lure the opponent to the rock mountain.

The two mecha shot at one another with the guns in their hands, neither doing damage to the other. Still, because the Twilight mecha operator's beam cannon was a more powerful weapon, Ling Lan was at a disadvantage.

In this manner, Ling Lan had no choice but to retreat as she fought, slowly drawing the opponent to the rock mountain.

18 beam shots were not much. Ling Lan had already calculated and used them sparingly, but they were gone in a blink of an eye. Though she knew very well that she had no shots left in her rifle, she pretended not to know, pressing her trigger once more as she aimed at the Twilight mecha ...

No more? Panic. The anxious Federation operator once again controlled his mecha to press down on the trigger again and again ... but there was still nothing!

Mecha operator Shikamaru saw that the Federation mecha's movements were somewhat flustered — repeatedly pressing on the trigger, but its beam rifle did not respond. He paused, thinking to himself. Could this be a trap?

Shikamaru cannot be blamed for being wary. The example of his squad leader was still fresh in his mind. Remembering how his squad leader fell for plot after plot before finally self-destructing had made him jumpy and paranoid ¹. His first reaction to any strange situation now was to wonder whether the opponent had some plot up his sleeve.

However, when he saw the Federation mecha throw away the beam rifle in the end and turn tail to run, he knew that the other's rifle had truly run out of power.

Shikamaru's heart leapt in joy. This meant that the opponent no longer had any long-range attacks. As long as he kept his distance, long-range attacks were his domain now. He immediately controlled his mecha to chase after the fleeing Federation mecha.

Of course, Shikamaru could only give chase without worry because Ling Lan had thrown away her beam rifle. If the opponent were still holding onto his rifle, Shikamaru would definitely be on his guard and not chase so closely on the opponent's heels.

The two mecha began a game of tag — at one point, the Twilight mecha shot its beam cannon once, but the shot was dodged nimbly by the Federation mecha operator. This caused Shikamaru to curse internally. It has already been three rounds of continuous battle — why was the opponent still so focused?

"Little Four, have you finished calculating?" Ling Lan asked calmly, not at all influenced by the cascading flashing red alerts all over her screen.

"The beam cannon requires roughly 55 seconds to gather its energy, but this doesn't exclude the fact that the opponent could be faking," responded Little Four. While the opponent had been firing at them, Little Four had been constantly gathering data and analysing it. However, what he could analyse was

merely what the opponent revealed. If the opponent just happened to be as cunning as his boss, then his analyses could very well all be wrong.

“How likely is that?” asked Ling Lan.

“About 15% chance,” replied Little Four. After all, this data was gathered within a short period of time, so some error was to be expected. Thus, the risk of this being a plot was still quite high.

“In other words, 85% chance of winning. It would be stupid not to take the risk.” A trace of a smile appeared on Ling Lan’s lips. In the learning space, as long as there was more than 50% chance of winning, she would fight for it, because if you didn’t, you would definitely die.

“Yup. Also, the mecha’s damage levels are already at 75%. From this point on, the mecha’s damage rate will double, so it may not hold out for even 2 minutes ...” reminded Little Four, looking at the horrifying damage levels of the mecha and its almost depleted power.

Ling Lan did not respond. Her fingers sped up even more, and this time, her fingers completely disappeared. Focused on the controls, Ling Lan did not notice, while Little Four did not dare to say anything about it, afraid that he would distract Ling Lan.

Ling Lan’s mecha began circling the rock mountain as it flew; she was still waiting for an opportunity.

“Boom!” The Twilight mecha on her tail fired its beam cannon once more. The immense beam flew at her from a diagonal angle. Ling Lan calmly executed a small range irregular movement, dodging the attack.

Irregular movement placed a heavier burden on mecha — Ling Lan could even hear the mecha’s body emitting creaking noises. The mecha was very likely to break apart soon.

However, Ling Lan paid no attention to all this. Instead, she continued by pulling off a surprising move — she turned off the mecha’s engines. Then, she controlled the mecha to get into a pose where all four limbs were facing the ground, and with the limbs as landing pads, her mecha began falling towards the rock mountain below.

Ling Lan was not very high above the rock mountain to begin with, and the mecha itself was heavy, so it took less than 10 seconds for the mecha to crash into the rock mountain.

A loud “Boom”! The forceful impact caused the rock mountain to quake, throwing dust into the air, and Ling Lan’s mecha was soon obscured within it.

Shikamaru had quickly halted his mecha when Ling Lan’s mecha had dropped, keeping his distance. Extremely cautiously, he kept his cannon trained at the dust cloud. At any odd movement, he would dodge and shoot. Ling Lan had been wily from the start; this made Shikamaru very wary.

Of course, all this happened within the blink of an eye — Shikamaru had just gotten ready when a blue and white figure leapt out from the dust cloud, lunging at him at a frightful speed.

This speed was definitely not a speed an advanced mecha could achieve — Shikamaru’s first reaction was to retreat and then he reflexively pressed down on the trigger of his cannon ... but nothing happened. He glanced at the indicator on his screen, only to find that the 55-second recharge time wasn’t over yet; there were still 11 seconds remaining.

Shikamaru gritted his teeth and pushed his engines to their limits, letting the mecha retreat at full speed. He needed to get past this brief 11 seconds — as long as he could survive till then, a shot from his beam cannon would be enough to destroy this detestable Federation mecha in front of him.

The Federation mecha leaping at the Twilight mecha was currently already worn and battered. Its initially still intact left leg had also disappeared by this time; all that was left were some broken edges at its thighs. The entire outer shell of the mecha was covered in scratches, and some of its internal parts were even exposed at certain areas. That last fall had indeed caused significant damage to the mecha's body.

"The mecha can only hold out for another 50 seconds at most ..." Little Four was doing his best to maintain the condition of the mecha so that it wouldn't break apart in the very next second.

Ling Lan did not seem to hear Little Four's warning. Right then, she felt as if she was an outside observer, watching herself operate the mecha with cold eyes. Her thought processes were somewhat mechanical, accurately pushing the engines to the maximum speed the mecha could take, aiming the mecha to pounce at the opponent at almost light speed.

At this moment, the two mecha's roles in their game of tag were now reversed, and the distance between them grew increasingly closer ... One of them was anxiously waiting for his beam cannon to recharge, while the other was waiting for the final gap between them to close. She had done everything she could, now it was up to the goddess of luck to decide who she would favour.

Shikamaru watched as the Federation mecha got closer and closer. 10 metres, 5 metres, 3 metres ... a feral smile emerged on his face, "Die!"

He decisively pressed the button to fire his beam cannon. At that very moment, the cannon's power had finally finished recharging, allowing it to fire once again.

A crisp yet resounding "SNAP", and Shikamaru saw sparks bloom at his right shoulder from the corner of his eyes. Then, he realised in shock that the beam cannon on his right shoulder had not fired at all ...

"Warning! Right arm control system has been destroyed. Please repair immediately!" The A.I. mechanically reported the damage sustained by the mecha.

Shikamaru had no idea what had happened, but still understood that his mecha must have somehow been manipulated by the opponent, causing the cannon on its right arm to become useless ... cold sweat beaded on his forehead. Without thinking about it, he forced his engines to speed up even more, trying to pull away and distance himself from the opponent.

As long as he could pull away, his left hand could take over and use the weapon in his right hand. When that time came, victory would still be his.

Shikamaru's plan was beautiful, but reality was not as cooperative as he had hoped. He felt his mecha sink downwards. It turned out that the despicable Federation mecha had actually caught his mecha in a tight hug. In other words, no matter how much he accelerated, he would not be able to pull away from the Federation mecha.

This continuous series of actions caused Ling Lan's complexion to be as white as paper. Blood spilled uncontrollably from her mouth in large heaves. Still, Ling Lan tenaciously held on. She decisively pulled

up the self-destruct mechanism of her mecha, and pressed down on the cockpit's eject button at the same time.

"Little Four, the rest is in your hands." These were Ling Lan's final words before she lost consciousness. Of course, this was because Ling Lan fully trusted Little Four, otherwise she would not so easily allow herself to faint away.

The moment the cockpit was ejected, control would be handed over to the A.I.. The A.I. would calculate the best reactionary force to apply for a safe landing and determine a secure landing spot. On this front, Little Four was undoubtedly even more reliable than any regular A.I..

"Leave it to me, Boss!" said Little Four solemnly. He knew very well that Ling Lan was putting her life in his hands — this was a display of Ling Lan's faith in him. At this thought, Little Four's core chip burned. This made Little Four a little worried about whether his chip would overheat and blow.

On his side camera, Shikamaru saw the ejected cockpit of the Federation mecha and immediately realised what was about to happen. He tried to get the Federation mecha still clinging to him off, but either Ling Lan had made the mecha hold on very tightly, or Shikamaru himself was too panicked — he was actually unable to find a way to get the mecha off. He was trapped.

Right then, Qi Long and the others had already made their way to a spot about 1 kilometre away from the battle. When they saw the Federation mecha crash into the rock mountain, they could not help but be anxious and despair. But then they saw the Federation mecha shoot out once more from the dust cloud, and almost leapt up in their excitement.

They also saw the Federation mecha shoot a white light from its right hand at the Twilight mecha when the two were about 3 metres apart. This move was too sudden, so subtle that the Twilight mecha did not detect it.

Chapter 153: Goddess of Luck?

Subsequently, they saw sparks shooting out from the Twilight mecha's right shoulder joint. A high-frequency blade was embedded in it up to the hilt. The small group immediately understood what the previous flash of white light was. Apparently, the Federation mecha had hurled the high-frequency blade in its hands at the crucial moment, aiming for the weakest defensive spot of a mecha, its joints, and had succeeded in one go!

The Federation mecha operator's distinctive combat style undoubtedly expanded the group's horizons. This would also influence them in future when they learned how to operate mecha — they would not be limited by the doctrine of previous operators. Daring in both thought and action, they would create countless miraculous combat moves in mecha control in their respective domains ...

At present, the Federation mecha had successfully gotten close to the Twilight mecha, but having no more weapons, it could only rely on its remaining mechanical arms to hug the enemy mecha tight, and then the cockpit was seen to be ejected ...

With the exception of Lin Zhong-qing, Qi Long and the others were all from a federal military system background. Although they had not operated a mecha yet, they were still very familiar with mecha.

From this scene alone, they could tell that the Federation mecha operator had chosen to self-destruct to finish off this final opponent.

But was the 30 seconds before the explosion initiated enough for the ejected cockpit to safely escape the blast radius? Normally, the mecha's self-destruct mechanism was meant for the operator to die along with the enemy ...

"Boom!" "Crack!" "Kaboom!"

The first sound was the Federation mecha self-destructing, and then, perhaps the explosion sparked something, for the beam cannon on Twilight mecha's right arm suddenly split open, causing the Twilight mecha to blow up as well in a large blast.

Of course, before the big explosion, the opponent's cockpit had also been ejected, but the following second and third blasts undoubtedly intensified the concussive force — the opponent just did not have the time to escape the blast radius. He was instantly blown sky high right at the heart of the explosion, plummeting to the ground in blackened crisps and thick smoke.

Without even having to check, Qi Long and the others knew that that mecha operator was definitely dead. Just looking at the mass that was left — already a whole half size smaller than the cockpit was at the start — it was certain that the person inside could not have survived.

Fortunately, the Federation mecha's cockpit had been ejected much earlier and had been flying at a faster speed. It had shot away from the blast centre by almost 500 metres, just escaping the most dangerous zone. But even so, it was still thrown further away by the blast by about 100 metres before it began to descend in a natural curve, heading swiftly towards the ground.

Qi Long and the others were extremely anxious, hearts lodged high in their throats. Deep down, they prayed that the concussive force of the explosion had not destroyed the A.I. inside the cockpit ...

Their prayers were effective — when the cockpit reached a particular altitude, the cockpit's reactive thrust powered on, slowing the cockpit's descent.

After self-destructing, ejecting the cockpit had a 9 in 10 chance of ending in death; it was basically just there for self-reassurance. Not only did the cockpit have to get out of the blast range, it had to be ejected high enough, and the reactive thrust must activate accurately. Every single item on that list had to be met, otherwise ejection would still result in death.

Luckily, the cockpit was being controlled by Little Four. Otherwise, relying on the Federation's current A.I.s, who knew what the outcome would be? The Federation's A.I.s could only mechanically remember some data sets, and execute operations based on regulated settings — it would not consider other variable factors.

Seeing the cockpit land safely under the application of reactive thrust, Qi Long and the others instantly let out a sigh of relief. They hurriedly made their way over to the landing spot of the cockpit to check on the pilot. If they could help out somehow, then them rushing here would be so worth it.

"Boss, Boss, we're safe now." Little Four's calculations were accurate, letting the cockpit land safely. He called out in excitement to Ling Lan, wanting her to praise him.

However, the inside of the cockpit was still and silent. Only then did Little Four notice the blood still dripping continuously from his boss's lips. "Boss, stop scaring me, wake up! Wake up!" he shouted desperately, but Ling Lan remained silent. Thinking of something, Little Four quickly detached from the mecha's A.I. to look for Ling Lan in the learning space. However, inside, he still found no sign of Ling Lan. Instantly, he panicked, knowing that things were not good.

"Boss must have taken a great deal of damage and lost consciousness. At this time, I must let her eat some healing medical agents ..." Little Four figured it out, but he was just a formless intelligence entity, and so had no limbs to use to feed Ling Lan. At this moment, Little Four hated the fact that he was an intelligence bio-entity.

Right then, Little Four suddenly sensed people approaching! Anxiously, he scanned the surroundings, and when he saw those few familiar figures, he was instantly overcome with joy. Boss was saved! Qi Long and the others had arrived.

From a distance, Qi Long could see the cockpit lying silently on the ground. He signalled for Han Jijyun and the other two behind him to wait while he carefully crept closer to the cockpit, wanting to observe the situation.

He had just gotten within 100 metres of the cockpit when the doors to the cockpit suddenly swung open, startling Qi Long. But he was soon taken with joy — the fact that the cockpit was opened from within meant that the person inside was still alive, otherwise the doors would not open on their own. Of course, Qi Long did not know that this world had such a miraculous existence as Little Four.

Qi Long did not choose to go closer, patiently waiting for the mecha operator inside to come out. A stranger approaching without reason would be easily misunderstood, especially when on a battlefield. Warriors were extremely sensitive after fighting — any strange movements would just prompt a counterattack. Although Qi Long wanted to help their saviour, he did not want to randomly lose his life here, so he retained the necessary caution. Of course, Ling Lan's subtle training all these years was also a reason.

Qi Long waited patiently for a few minutes, but did not see anyone coming out. In fact, Little Four was already anxiously jumping up and down in the cockpit — if not for the fact that he had no voice, he would have otherwise long called Qi Long and the others over.

Qi Long's pause puzzled Han Jijyun and the others, so Han Jijyun led Luo Lang and Lin Zhong-qing over as well, coming to stand beside Qi Long. At this moment, they too saw the opened cockpit.

"Qi Long, could it be that the person inside is injured and can't get out?" Han Jijyun thought of this possibility.

Qi Long's eyes brightened, thinking to himself that what Han Jijyun said made sense. He decided to go forward on his own and see, and let Han Jijyun and the others continue to wait here. He got closer and closer, and when he saw the blood within the cockpit, all wariness he still had fled instantly. He hurriedly quickened his pace to rush to the door of the cockpit and looked inside.

"Jijyun, it's not good, come over quickly!" Qi Long's voice actually held true grief.

Han Jijyun's heart skipped a beat — could the mecha operator inside be one of Qi Long's relatives? He hurriedly ran over with Luo Lang and Lin Zhong-qing. When he saw the unconscious small figure inside who was still bleeding from the mouth, his expression changed drastically, and he shouted, "Boss Lan! This cannot be, how can it be him ..." Those were ace mecha operators he was fighting! Boss Lan was only 10 years old — there was no way he could control mecha ... Han Jijyun felt everything he thought he knew about mecha completely collapse at this moment.

"Will Boss Lan die ...?" Seeing the terrible state Ling Lan was in, Luo Lang felt a chill spread throughout his entire body, and his body began shivering uncontrollably. Meanwhile, Lin Zhong-qing was even more stunned, unable to form a coherent thought for a long moment.

"Quick, feed him some healing agents!" Han Jijyun saw that the others were panicking, and so quickly collected his emotions to order calmly.

"Oh, oh!" Qi Long and the others hurriedly pulled out the medicinal agents they had in their backpacks and tried feeding them to Ling Lan. However, because their hands were shaking, the agents spilled, missing their mark to slide off Ling Lan's lips.

"Let me!" Han Jijyun quickly pushed away the typically bold and brash idiots who were currently flailing in their panic. He took one pack of agent from Luo Lang's hands, and using his left hand to pry open Ling Lan's mouth, he poured the agent in.

"Another!" Han Jijyun indicated for them to pass him more and continued to pour, only stopping after five full packs were gone.

The effect of five packs of medicinal agents were pretty good. The initially pale-white complexion of Ling Lan started to warm, and the blood flowing from her mouth started to slow. Three minutes later, Ling Lan was no longer spewing blood.

"We have to return to the camp site immediately, otherwise Boss's injuries will not be able to be healed. If any aftereffects are left, this might destroy Boss's future!" Seeing Ling Lan no longer at the brink of death, Qi Long's rationality returned.

Qi Long's words naturally obtained everyone's agreement. They carefully lifted Ling Lan out from the cockpit, and then looked for materials in the surroundings to make a simple stretcher to carry Ling Lan in. After all, it was better for Ling Lan to lie down and be still in his current condition.

While searching for materials, they actually stumbled upon the beam cannon discarded by the Twilight Empire's squad leader previously. The beam cannon was very large and heavy. It was impossible for the four of them to carry it with them.

After some thought, Han Jijyun asked Qi Long and the others carry Ling Lan's cockpit over to the beam cannon. Under Qi Long and the others' confused gazes, Han Jijyun positioned the cockpit within the line of attack of the beam cannon and triggered the cannon. The shot utterly destroyed Ling Lan's cockpit, melting it down, leaving no trace.

At this moment, Qi Long and the others finally realised why Han Jijyun did this. Destroying the cockpit would also destroy the black box within it. Consequently, no one would be able to find out about Ling Lan's battle and defeat of the three Twilight ace mecha. (They did not know that Little Four had long

wiped the data files within the black box.) Then, Ling Lan's true capabilities could be concealed and remain undiscovered. Mind you, if someone else were to find out about this, Ling Lan would definitely be embroiled in much trouble in the near future, and her life may even be threatened. They all understood the theory of the wind toppling the tree above the treeline.

In this manner, the four of them destroyed anything that could expose Ling Lan's capabilities, and then began to trek back to the camp site carrying the still unconscious Ling Lan.

This journey was very difficult — many times, they almost ended up becoming a meal for the F-class savage beasts. However, each time they were in a tight spot, those savage beasts would suddenly get spooked and turn tail and run away desperately, disappearing into the forest ... Even as this puzzled them, they couldn't help but be thankful for the blessing of the goddess of luck, letting this miraculous thing happen again and again.

Little Four pursed his lips, pouting, displeased with this so-called 'goddess of luck' who was claiming the credit for his work. Dammit, if I hadn't released the blood-tinged killing intent concealed within Boss's body to scare off those small fry, you would all be the excrement of those savage beasts by now ... Hmph, goddess of luck, my foot!

Chapter 154: Awakening!

In outer space, in the control room of the Twilight Empire interstellar mothership, a group of people had already been waiting patiently for several hours. But as time went by and there was no news from below, they began to grow restless and began discussing what they should do next.

"Commander, the enemy's reinforcement fleets are at this point, while our reinforcement fleets are here," reported the chief of staff, pointing out the locations on the star map on the big screen.

"In three hours, the enemy's starships will appear in the outer space of this planet," the chief of staff continued to say after referencing the information.

"This fleet — before they can reach here, they should be attacked by our empire's reinforcement fleet. We still have time." The commander was unwilling to just give up now. The planet below was currently in a melee combat stage — no one could tell yet who the final winner or loser would be.

"Where are Ikeda-kun and the others now?" asked the commander.

"They've already landed safely and are currently carrying out Operation Decapitation. However, only two teams have managed to assemble. The others are either missing or have been nobly sacrificed in battle," replied a staff officer in charge of keeping track of the dead and injured.

"Any movement from the other fleets of the Federation?" the commander asked the chief of staff.

The chief of staff immediately pointed out three dots closest to this planet and said, "At each of these three points, a fleet is stationed there. Although our covert scouting did not manage to find out their destinations, based on the current situation, they will definitely be heading our way."

“If they rush here, we will have no chance of winning this battle.” This planet was the closest to the three countries — the Federation, Caesar, and Gelland — and was honestly a bit far from Twilight. Thus, their interstellar fleets could not speedily send assistance, unlike the Federation.

After a thoughtful silence, the commander asked, “How much time do we have left at most?”

“If we don’t consider that first fleet, at most 7 hours.” The chief of staff gave his verdict.

“Pass on the order to Ikeda-kun. They only have 7 hours, no, 6 hours and a half. If they cannot carry out Operation Decapitation in 6 and a half hours, they will be abandoned,” said the commander ruthlessly.

“Hai!” Everyone bowed their heads fearfully as they accepted the order. Within Twilight, the supreme commander had the ultimate right to decide whether the warriors below lived or died.

Time passed bit by bit. The first reinforcement fleet was attacked by a Twilight Empire reinforcement fleet even before they entered the starspace of this planet. Both sides began an intense starship battle, involving thousands of starships respectively. Over a hundred thousand starship warriors were killed in this space battle.

When only half an hour remained on the clock, dark clouds blanketed the whole Twilight interstellar mothership control room. Everyone’s face was a sheet of grey — they could already feel the failure of their invasion plan this time.

“Why do we still not hear anything from Ikeda-kun?” Seeing that the opponent’s reinforcements were almost here, the commander of the mothership in outer space started yelling in anger.

The people around him could only bow their heads in silence. At this moment, everyone felt that the odds were not in team leader Ikeda’s favour.

“Baka! All useless trash!” Frankly, the commander did not have a good feeling about this as well; he was just unwilling to accept it. Of course, they did not know that of their two surviving teams of ace mecha, one had died without fanfare, courtesy of Ling Lan. It was just that no one would ever know, besides Qi Long’s group of four.

Meanwhile, the other team very unfortunately crossed paths with the mecha squad of the camp’s supreme commander. The supreme commander himself was an ace operator at his peak, just one step away from advancing to imperial level. And the weakest member of the squad protecting him was still a special-class mecha operator. The camp commander was extremely cunning — seeing this ace mecha team, he immediately ordered his mecha team to surround and kill them.

That team did not even have the chance to fight back, dying under the collective shots of countless beam guns. In this way, Operation Decapitation was easily nipped in the bud.

As Qi Long and the others were rushing back to the main camp, the battle was already reaching its end. The starships in the space above the planet were beginning to retreat systematically in the directions of their respective countries.

Of course, the departure of the starships meant that any mecha operators left on the planet had basically been abandoned. The planet’s main camp released the call to surrender — however, the Twilight Empire mecha operators had been brainwashed very thoroughly by their nation. When they

knew they had no more chance of survival, these Twilight mecha operators did not lose their fighting spirit, nor did they choose to surrender. Instead, they exploded with astounding combat ability, dragging quite a few Federation mecha operators down with them as they died. This frightened the cold sweat out of the Federation mecha operators, so they no longer dared to hold any sympathy for these abandoned soldiers — they began shooting the moment they saw one alive.

This situation resulted in very few injured members on both sides. Twilight did not need any prisoners, so if they won in a fight, they would immediately take the opponent's life. In return, the Federation returned tooth for tooth, blood for blood — by the end, no one was willing to spare the lives of these enemies who had taken their comrades' lives and take them prisoner anymore anyway, so the killing continued.

After rapid-marching for a whole 15 hours, Qi Long and the others finally managed to get back to the main camp. When the camp's medical officer saw Qi Long and the others carting in the unconscious Ling Lan, he hurriedly let them put Ling Lan into one of the healing pods for treatment.

"Luckily you lot came back in time. If you all were just an hour later, the healing pods might not be even be effective anymore." Seeing the information released by the healing pod, the medical officer could not help but exclaim.

Qi Long asked anxiously, "How long does he need to be treated before he can wake up?"

"If just for waking up, perhaps about three days. However, to fully heal his body, he would most likely have to lie in the healing pod for up to 3 months." The medical officer was not exaggerating. In truth, Ling Lan's body was near the brink of collapse. There only remained a tendril of vitality left in her body, and this tiny tendril was what would power Ling Lan's recovery. If this tendril was utterly destroyed, then it would be useless even if Ling Lan laid in this healing pod for 10 years.

"Three months? That long?" The companions were struck with belated fear. They had known that Ling Lan had been injured badly, but they did not expect the injuries to be this severe.

"That long? Little fellows, you all should be grateful that it is only three months, and not no time at all," sighed the medical officer. Only kids like these would be bothered about the length of time needed for healing. For people like him who were used to seeing life and death, as long as there was a chance to lie down and receive treatment, it was a blessing no matter how long it took.

Every day the medical officer had to oversee countless patients coming and going, so after settling Ling Lan in, he did not pay any more attention to the matter. Meanwhile, Qi Long and the others came every day to the medical department to watch over the healing pod, waiting for Ling Lan to wake up.

The medical officer was very reliable; three days later, Ling Lan hazily woke up.

The others were thrilled, rushing to ask if Ling Lan needed anything.

Ling Lan shook her head at them. Little Four had told her everything that had happened after she lost consciousness, so she knew that Qi Long and the others were aware that she was the one operating the mecha. However, Ling Lan was very pleased with the clean-up that Han Jijyun had done. She had originally planned to do the same to destroy all evidence of the incident.

Meanwhile, at this time, this planet was finally fully back in the control of the Federation. They successfully killed all the invading Twilight warriors, though of course there were some mecha operators who had chosen to abandon their mecha and flee on foot into the forest to hide, biding their time for an opportunity to counterattack.

With regards to those people, the Federation did not specially send out teams to clear them out. This was because once they entered F-class savage beast territory, those mecha operator without their mecha were really unlikely to be able to handle those savage beasts ...

The rebuilding after the battle also commenced very quickly. The Federation delivered materials and resources in an endless stream to the planet. Some credit had to be given to the Twilight Empire for this — their invasion this time forced the Federation to publicize the coordinates of the mysterious planet and include it into the Federation's maps, where it was given the name 'planet Demonbeast'. This was because there was nothing other than endless savage beasts on the planet ...

Half a month later, Qi Long and the others resumed their hunting assignment. Of course, every time they returned, they would not forget to give Ling Lan a share of their earnings. In this way, three more months passed. Ling Lan finally obtained the approval of the medical officer to leave the healing pod and could once again move around freely.

The first thing Ling Lan after regaining her mobility was to go eat. She was seriously starving — although nutrient solutions could replenish all the minerals and other elements needed by the body, her stomach, which was used to working for over 10 years, just could not help but feel hungry.

After she finished eating her fill, she looked up to find Qi Long and the others sitting beside her, waiting patiently.

"When did you guys arrive?" Ling Lan was startled. She had been too focused on eating that she had not noticed anything happening around her.

Of course, she also questioned Little Four inside her mind, asking him why he had not alerted her. Little Four was speechless — Boss was the one who said that these few people were on the list of people whose presence did not need to be announced. When had Boss changed her mind? Why did he not know about it?

"Not too long ago. Seeing Boss eating so happily, we're also very happy," replied Han Jijyun with a smile.

Ling Lan rubbed her brow helplessly and said sulkily, "Han Jijyun, just ask if you have a question, this sneaky look doesn't suit you." Han Jijyun's sudden change from a cool and serious scout into a warm and smiling gentleman just seemed really awkward to Ling Lan; she couldn't help but feel goosebumps rising all over her body.

"Here is not a suitable place," said Han Jijyun regretfully, keeping his smile as he looked around.

Due to the rebuilding spanning 3 months, many of the veteran soldiers all managed to obtain new weapons of their own. Thus, they were in a great mood, so it was easy to see tables after tables of rowdy celebrating soldiers.

Observing the situation around them, Ling Lan nodded and said, "True. Then let's go back to the dorms."

Ling Lan led Qi Long and the others back to their dorms. She then took a quick shower and changed into a new set of protective clothes before sitting at her usual spot. Then, she said, "Alright, ask if you have any questions. But, this is only for today." Ling Lan wasn't someone who liked to talk about herself, which was why she had dragged on so long in revealing to the others that her father was Ling Xiao.

Chapter 155: My Father Is Ling Xiao!

The group stared at one another, and Han Jijyun was the one who asked in the end, "Boss Lan, who are you really?"

Helplessly, Ling Lan rubbed at her forehead once more. In the end, she still could not avoid answering this question, but since she had chosen to be honest, she should really introduce herself properly. Thus, she answered seriously, "My name is definitely real. I am really called Ling Lan. My family background isn't fake as well, but, I just didn't tell you all who my young dad who passed away was."

"Boss Lan's father? Surname Ling? Sacrificed 10 years ago?" Qi Long muttered to himself as he thought.

All of them here were intelligent children. Almost immediately, an astounding yet sorrow-tinged name emerged in their minds. All of them could not help but stare at Ling Lan incredulously, "Ling Xiao?!"

Ling Lan nodded expressionlessly, indicating that their guess was not wrong.

"Ah ..." Knowing that they had not guessed wrongly, Qi Long and the others couldn't help but exclaim. The shock of this answer was really too much for them.

It should be known that Ling Xiao was one of the twelve god-class operators of the Federation, as well as the only human being who had managed to successfully advance to god-class operator status at the young age of 24. Throughout human history, the youngest to advance to god-class operator status before Ling Xiao was a 33 year old mecha operator from the Caesar Empire. In one jump, Ling Xiao had raised the bar by a whole 8 years, proof of just how aberrant he was.

Thus, to the people of the Federation, Ling Xiao was a godlike existence. Although he died early in the end, having been killed in a plot by the Twilight Empire in the death tunnel, this did not stop the passionate soldiers and those children chasing their dreams from viewing him as their lifelong idol.

Moreover, Qi Long, Luo Lang, and the others had grown up within the federal military system. All along, Ling Xiao had been a figure often mentioned by their guardians, in tones wistful for what might have been. They even emphasized the fact that if Ling Xiao had lived, the Federation would have been able to hold complete deterrence ability over the other nations for the next 50 years, with no worry of border trouble. So, as they gradually grew up learning about Ling Xiao and his exploits, they also began viewing Ling Xiao as their own idol. They hoped that one day, they would be able to achieve everything Ling Xiao had achieved, and perhaps even go one step further to complete what Ling Xiao did not get to complete.

Right now, Qi Long and the others actually learned that their Boss Lan was the son of that aberrant genius, Ling Xiao, the people's idol. The lot of them were instantly stupefied by the news.

Ling Lan coughed empathically, shaking them from their stupor, before continuing to say, "Because my father died young, and also because his circumstance is a little special, it didn't seem very appropriate to talk about him."

"No wonder Boss is so good at operating mecha," sighed Han Jijyun softly, his entire body relaxing. He had actually been afraid that Ling Lan was from a major faction from within the military. If that was the case, their relationship would very easily drag their paternal families into an unnecessary faction feud, and this was something he did not want to see. If that happened, their friendship would certainly change, no longer able to stay pure and simple.

"Boss, could you teach us how to operate mecha?" The mecha maniac Qi Long's eyes were sparkling; he had really been fantasizing about this moment for so long.

Qi Long's suggestion stirred the hearts of the other boys as well. With faces filled with expectation, they looked at Ling Lan with stars in their eyes, hoping that she would agree.

"I cannot," Ling Lan refused resolutely.

She had secretly absorbed so much gene agent, and then trained both body and spirit repeatedly in the learning space and in reality. Besides that, she also had Little Four doing his best to keep the mecha in check, lowering the feedback energy to the absolute minimum. Under these circumstances, her body still received heavy damage. Not to mention, Qi Long and the others were children who had not been through specialised training for mecha. Qi Long may still be fine, but the others' bodies just would not be able to support even two or three mecha movements.

Seeing their stubborn gazes, Ling Lan said sternly, "Because of our Ling family secret methods, that is why I can learn mecha a few years earlier. Even so, I still was not able to take the feedback energy of the mecha and was injured badly. What will support you all to learn mecha now? The Federation does not allow children to learn mecha before the age of 13 for a good reason. Don't play the fool with your lives."

Ling Lan was most afraid that these children would not listen to reason, secretly sneaking off to try and learn control on their own. This was no laughing matter — a misstep would easily end in disaster. They could even lose their lives.

Ling Lan's scolding words caused the boys to break out in cold sweat instantly. Because they had seen Ling Lan dispatching the three enemy ace mecha so efficiently, they had naturally assumed that they could also learn how to operate mecha, completely forgetting the repeated warnings of their own parents and instructors. It should be known that the reaction force from operating mecha was very powerful — even for adults, not everyone was suited for operating mecha.

"Even with our Ling family secret arts, my father never wished for me to operate a real mecha before I turned 13 ... if the situation hadn't been desperate, I too wouldn't have done it," said Ling Lan to Qi Long and the others. She had only operated the mecha because the situation forced her to.

Qi Long and the others were ashamed. They knew very well that Ling Lan had done all of it to save them. Otherwise, Ling Lan would not have left the outpost to look for them, and so would not have operated the mecha and ended up with a body covered in wounds.

They no longer felt the restlessness they had felt before, nodding to show they understood. Still, deep in their hearts, the seed of yearning to become ace operators had been planted. One day, those seeds would sprout and grow tall and strong.

The hunting course was not as long as Qi Long and the others thought it to be. After spending about half a year on planet Demonbeast, the academy finally sent a starship to collect them.

Initially, they had intended to take them back after the battle ended. However, due to the planet being invaded by Twilight Empire forces, the Federation had no choice but to reveal the existence of the planet to the public. This incited a great uproar within the Federation. The citizens were very unhappy about the Federation's concealment of this auxiliary planet, and had begun to organise large-scale demonstrations on various planets.

This caused the Federation government and the Federation military to become primarily reactive — they had to first focus on settling the commotion inside the nation. Therefore, they forcefully suppressed the request of the Central Scout Academy to retrieve its students. They were afraid that if the public found out that they had sent a batch of the Federation's most exceptional youths to the dangerous planet Demonbeast for training, the demonstrations would intensify.

Still, thanks to this, Ling Lan managed to avoid drawing attention and subsequent trouble from her injuries this time. If the Central Scout Academy had sent a military ship to retrieve them, then they would certainly have found out that their prized student had been seriously injured during this battle. Then, they would definitely have assigned a specialist medical team to treat Ling Lan. If that happened, the secret of Ling Lan's concealed gender might very well be exposed! (All the information the Central Scout Academy received was that out of the 50 students, there were 0 deaths, 0 missing, 21 injured, 29 unharmed, and that none of the students had any risk of dying.)

This was also why the Central Scout Academy was willing to wait. If there really had been any fatal injuries or casualties, the dean of the Central Scout Academy would likely have stormed into military headquarters and forcefully commandeered a starship to go pick up his students already.

Just like this, Ling Lan and company safely returned to the academy. After saying goodbye to her friends, Ling Lan hurried back to her villa.

At the garden gate to the villa, a lovely figure was peering out anxiously ...

Ling Lan felt tears spring to her eyes, once again experiencing the bittersweet¹ feeling of having a relative worrying about her ... she had almost forgotten what it was like.

"Mummy!" Ling Lan shouted the moment she was within sight of Lan Luofeng. Lan Luofeng rushed out at a supernatural speed, sweeping forwards like a gust of wind, pulling Ling Lan into her arms.

"Ling Lan, you're really back! That's great! Mummy missed you so much." Lan Luofeng, who had always faced Ling Lan with a smile, actually had tears in her voice at this moment. This was a sign of just how much she had worried over this half a year.

Ling Lan abruptly realised that Lan Luofeng was still haunted by the shadow of her father's mysterious passing; perhaps she was afraid that Ling Lan too would disappear as Ling Xiao had. If Ling Xiao had

taken away half of Lan Luofeng's soul, then the remaining half was undoubtedly tied to her. If she really passed away, Lan Luofeng would likely follow her into death without any hesitation. Losing her, Lan Luofeng would no longer have any soul left to keep her alive.

Ling Lan was unbelievably touched by Lan Luofeng's deep motherly love. She hugged Lan Luofeng back with all her might as tears fell silently from her eyes. "Mummy, I'm sorry for making you worry."

In her previous life, although her parents loved her, due to her illness, they were already slowly giving up on her. They gave most of their love to her younger brother, and the remaining love they had for her was slowly being worn away by the endless treatments and care she needed. Ling Lan did not blame them. This was a basic human instinct — to avoid the pain they saw coming, they voluntarily chose to slowly divert their love.

Thus, the death of Ling Lan in her previous life was actually a type of release for her parents and her brother. Of course there was sadness, but there was even more a sense of relief at finally laying a burden to rest.

The Ling Lan of this life had constantly been guarded with her affections, because she too was afraid of being hurt. Towards Lan Luofeng, she had deep respect and love, but not a lot of intimacy. Because she had taken over the body of Lan Luofeng's child, she needed to bear the responsibility. Her impression of Ling Xiao was mostly based on descriptions from Lan Luofeng. She had taken so long to tell Qi Long and the others that Ling Xiao was actually her father, in large part due to the fact that Ling Lan had never really registered that she was really Ling Xiao's child.

However, when Ling Lan personally felt the tremors running through Lan Luofeng's body right now — the physical manifestation of her deep-seated worries and fear, a reflection of that unnameable adoration of motherly love — the generous warmth of it instantly wrapped around her entire body. Ling Lan could no longer hold back her brimming emotions, sincerely saying sorry to Lan Luofeng!

Only Ling Lan truly knew what this apology meant — it wasn't purely referring to this most recent injury, but was for her closed-off heart over these past ten years. She was sorry for not responding properly to Lan Luofeng's ten years of unstinting motherly love.

Perhaps Ling Lan's warm response surprised Lan Luofeng, for she quickly gathered herself and pulled away a little from Ling Lan. After looking her over carefully, she asked worriedly, "Ling Lan, are you alright?"

Ling Lan patted her chest and replied, "All is well. I can even put away 20 servings of steak with no problem." Fully accepting Lan Luofeng into her heart, Ling Lan once again recovered her previous composure and began to joke around light-heartedly with Lan Luofeng, smiling.

Chapter 156: Why Did You Die?

"That's good. Did you know? Your expression now is a little richer now than it was previously. Mummy can stop worrying now." Lan Luofeng patted Ling Lan's adorable shota face, satisfied, before pulling Ling Lan by the hand into the villa.

Meanwhile, Ling Lan's heart throbbed at Lan Luofeng's words — so Lan Luofeng had always been watching and observing all the changes she went through. The only reason why she never said anything was that Lan Luofeng chose to believe in her own child.

Perhaps only a mother who loved you fully would pay attention and notice all these minute changes. Lan Luofeng did not seem to care much for her academic results, and seemed not to worry about Ling Lan's future; in all appearances, not a responsible parent. However, looking closely, from birth till now, in the minor details of her life, anything or anyone who made Ling Lan feel uncomfortable would unknowingly disappear ... this was definitely Lan Luofeng's doing — she could not bear to see her child suffer.

The more she felt Lan Luofeng's love, the more remorseful Ling Lan felt. She pressed down on Lan Luofeng's hand, drawing Lan Luofeng's questioning gaze.

Ling Lan smiled radiantly at Lan Luofeng and said, "Mummy, have I told you earlier that I love you?"

Lan Luofeng covered her mouth in pleasant surprise. Since she was little, Ling Lan had had a heavy burden on her shoulders, deeply pressured. While she was still an infant, she still liked to laugh and play pranks at times, but as she grew up, she became increasingly colder and began emanating an antisocial presence. This made Lan Luofeng's heart ache for her child, and she was also extremely regretful, wondering whether her initial decision had doomed Ling Lan.

Later on, Ling Lan had truly become the family head of the Ling family and took the responsibilities of the Ling family onto her shoulders. From then on, Ling Lan never liked to speak much. Of course, to get Ling Lan to speak more, Lan Luofeng had tried pretending to be ditzzy to cling to Ling Lan, trying to cajole Ling Lan into talking to her or to tell her 'I love you, mummy' and so on, but all she got in the end was just perfunctory responses. This had really made Lan Luofeng a little sad.

Now, seeing Ling Lan say this voluntarily, Lan Luofeng couldn't help but be overjoyed. She was very afraid that Ling Lan's spirit would be twisted because she had to pretend to be a boy, but seeing Ling Lan's sincere smile now and her slightly cheeky tone, all seemed well with Ling Lan. This was undoubtedly what Lan Luofeng was most happy to see.

"It's such a shame, Ling Lan, you really forgot to tell mummy this earlier," replied Lan Luofeng with a smile. Yet, two crystal tears fell from her eyes, and one coincidentally fell onto Ling Lan's palm.

Ling Lan stared at that warm tear in her palm, so warm that it seemed to sear, and then lifted her head to say again seriously, "Mummy, I love you! From now on I will take over Daddy's duty and tell you every day that I love you!"

"Ling Lan, Mummy loves you too!" Lan Luofeng hugged Ling Lan close once again. Eyes blurred with tears, she looked up at the sky and felt as if she could almost see Ling Xiao smiling at her and saying that he had found someone to love her in his place.

"Thank you, Ling Xiao, you've given me the most precious treasure, my Ling Lan!"

Ling Lan and Lan Luofeng ate a great meal in the villa as they talked and laughed. Ling Lan picked and chose some interesting stories from her time at planet Demonbeast to tell Lan Luofeng. Of course, she said nothing of her getting injured. Since she was now safely home, why bring up these things which would make her mum worry?

She then told Lan Luofeng about the followers she had gathered. Lan Luofeng was extremely interested to hear about them and immediately instructed Ling Lan to bring those followers of hers here tomorrow afternoon after classes ended, for her to inspect and to share a meal or something.

Ling Lan was instantly speechless. Inspect? What did her mum take her followers to be? However, when Ling Lan saw Lan Luofeng's disappointed expression and low spirits, she couldn't bear it and so could only nod and agree.

The moment she obtained the answer she wanted, Lan Luofeng instantly revived to full health, excitedly calling for Ling Nanyi to arrange tomorrow's dinner menu. Seeing her mum so lively and energetic, Ling Lan was resigned yet happy as well. Even if this was a little troublesome, she felt that it was still tolerable. Ling Lan suddenly wondered — would her dad also lose to such an expression?

Thinking about it, it was entirely possible. Because Lan Luofeng's expression earlier was obviously well-practiced — it was definitely not the first time she had used it. And the only person who could let Lan Luofeng gain such experience, aside from her dad Ling Xiao, there was pretty much nobody else.

When housekeeper Ling Nanyi heard that Young Master Lan was inviting classmates over for dinner, she too was swept up in the excitement and immediately jumped into the discussion animatedly. Because this was the first time Ling Lan was inviting friends home ... although this was just a temporary living area within the academy, it was still their temporary home, wasn't it?

Watching the two fretting women loudly discussing at the dining table, even going back and forth multiple times over a single dish on the menu, Ling Lan knew that she was unnecessary here. Resigned, she quietly left the dining hall and logged on to the virtual network. There, she contacted Qi Long and the others who were also online and arranged for them to come eat at her house. Only after that did she secretly slip into Ling Xiao's legacy space.

At the same time, Little Four created a fake Ling Lan to walk around the virtual world randomly, creating the illusion that Ling Lan was nowhere near the legacy space.

This time, the moment Ling Lan entered the legacy space, it was no longer as complicated as before. There were no tests; she immediately arrived at the Ling family mansion. Ling Lan took the familiar path to the study and pushed the door open to see Ling Xiao sitting behind the study desk. He was in the middle of writing something, and when he heard the noise of Ling Lan entering, he lifted his head. Seeing Ling Lan, he smiled warmly and said, "Ling Lan, you've come?"

He immediately followed up by saying, "Looks like you've already met the requirements needed to receive the next part of the legacy. In that case, show me." That said, he brushed his hand lightly over the surface of the table and six translucent crystal beads appeared.

Ling Lan did not look at the crystal beads on the table, only keeping her eyes trained steadily on Ling Xiao's face. That face with such a warm and kind smile on it — the last time she saw it, she did not feel much resentment, but this time, seeing it again, a surge of negative emotion rose in her heart. She wished she could just leap forward and punch the smile off that face.

During this time, Ling Lan had already learned a lot more about god-class operators. She knew very well that they were near-godlike beings and definitely did not die easily. Even if the energy turbulence in the death tunnel back then had been overly terrifying, that did not mean that Ling Xiao could not escape. Just looking at a god-class operator's horrifying speed which was close to lightspeed, escape was not impossible.

What was it that made Ling Xiao willing to abandon Lan Luofeng and herself to choose death?

"Why did you die?" Ling Lan bit out word by word, voicing the doubt in her mind.

Ling Xiao was taken aback, as if unprepared for Ling Lan to ask this question.

"I ask you, why did you choose to die?" yelled Ling Lan with mingled grief and rage. Lan Luofeng was such a perfect woman — how could Ling Xiao bear to make her sad? He should know that without him, Lan Luofeng would lose her happiness — even if she had a child, she would still lose the vibrancy and colour she should have had ...

Ling Xiao smiled bitterly, his aura still so warm and calm that he seemed beyond reproach. "I am a soldier. I cannot refuse the military's commands! Besides, I have never thought of dying. I really wished I could have lived ..."

After a brief moment of silence, Ling Xiao continued, "I don't know whether I am dead when you entered this legacy space. But I can tell you with certainty that I would not choose to kill myself, and I would not leave things to fate. If there is any hope of survival, no matter how difficult things may be, I will persevere and fight with all my strength to obtain it."

"If that is the case, why are you still dead?" Ling Xiao was a god-class operator! Could it be that that magnetic field energy turbulence still had some hidden story behind it that even Ling Xiao had no way of piloting his god-class mecha to leave?

"I do not know. I just sensed danger! After achieving a certain level of strength, one obtains the ability to predict danger. Which is why I prepared a legacy space beforehand. This was to be my last resort. It doesn't mean I am truly dead ..." Ling Xiao's smile slowly faded, "Of course, it is also possible that I am really dead!" Ling Xiao's aura exploded — only now did Ling Lan sense how terrifying the spiritual pressure of a god-class operator was.

Luckily, the press of Ling Xiao's aura came and went. But just that brief taste of it was enough to drench Ling Lan in sweat. In that moment, she had even had the wrongful feeling that she would die under its pressure.

"Originally, we had wanted to settle things once and for all. We were going to locate the greatest parasite hidden within the Federation. But unexpectedly, that parasite was deeper and higher up in rank than we had anticipated. It was very likely that the opponent saw through our plans and so set up a counterplan. It was a loss by just one move; there was no shame in losing. You just need to be careful, for the opponent may very likely try to end things by killing out my line." Ling Xiao revealed just a little of the information back then. "Of course, I have also made some arrangements. If those people do not go against their word, perhaps you will be able to grow up in peace and also obtain my legacy."

At this point of his recitation, Ling Xiao snorted and said, “When a man dies and the lights go out, whether those people are still willing to take the risk for me, no one knows. This is not something I can control. So Ling Lan, you must remember. No one is reliable — the most reliable thing is to become strong yourself. Besides that, intelligence is also something you cannot lack. If I, Ling Xiao, am truly dead, at the heart of it, I must have died by the opponent’s plot.”

Ling Lan did not expect that Ling Xiao had long thought of this and had also made the appropriate arrangements. It was just that in the end, things must still have happened outside of Ling Xiao’s expectations, causing all of Ling Xiao’s plans to be useless.

These words of Ling Xiao caused the negative emotions in Ling Lan’s heart to slowly melt away. It was just as Ling Xiao said — this was not something he could control.

She walked forward and swept her hand over the surface of the desk. The six crystal beads instantly disappeared. Subsequently, four beads appeared in the gaps of Ling Lan’s fingers, while two more rested in her palm.

Ling Xiao nodded lightly. Just that last move alone showed that Ling Lan’s speed had already reached his minimum requirement.

Ling Lan did not look at Ling Xiao’s expression. Her fingers folded and began dancing swiftly. Then, layer after layer of afterimages of Ling Lan’s fingers appeared, and countless clear sounds of collision started to ring — ding ding dang dang ¹, extremely pleasant to the ear. Gradually, these tinkling sounds became powerful ringing, reverberating like stormy winds and driving rain, an endless assault. It was clear to see that Ling Lan’s hand speed had already reached a significantly terrifying speed.

Chapter 157: Innate Talent Awakens!

Ling Xiao’s gaze was filled with satisfaction. This speed of Ling Lan’s had indeed met his requirement, and was actually a hair better than what he required. Just as Ling Xiao was going to say that she had passed, the ringing sounds of the crystal beads colliding sped up even more, merging the separate noises into one collective consistent peal of sound. Meanwhile, at this time, Ling Lan’s fingers had disappeared ...

Seeing this, the expression of the initially smiling Ling Xiao shifted. If he weren’t afraid of disturbing Ling Lan’s attention, he might have just yelled out in shock. Ling Lan’s hand speed had actually reached the step of Void — this was a definite step into the standard requirement to become an ace mecha operator. His child should be no more than 10 years old ... right?

With a dull ‘puff’, Ling Lan’s fingers stopped and she woke up from the state of Void she had been in. Her brows furrowed lightly, and she opened her palm. Inside it were still four crystal beads, but now there was also a little powder.

“Clap clap clap ...” Ling Lan heard the sound of applause coming from beside her. She lifted her head to look and saw Ling Xiao clapping sedately. He smiled and said, “Ling Lan, very good. You’ve actually reached the state of Void.”

“Void?” asked Ling Lan, puzzled. Ling Lan had learned mecha training exercises on her own, other than those things taught by the instructors in the learning space. Therefore, no one had explained the relevant standards to her. Little Four should have been the one to gather this information for her, but Little Four was under the mistaken belief that his boss only needed to learn the techniques of Mandora, and so had neglected this front.

Ling Xiao seemed to be prepared for this. Hearing Ling Lan’s question, he explained, “The hand speed for mecha control is split into 5 stages. Base, representing the foundational speed — most mecha operators in training and low-level mecha operators are within the range of this level. Diligence, the next stage after Base — typically putting in hard effort will be enough to bring one up to this level. Intermediate mecha warriors belong at this level. Apex, representing the advanced mecha warriors — this means that one’s hand speed has already reached the standard limits of the human body. Shade, a stage belonging to special-class operators — of course, a part of those here could also advance into novice ace operators. Meanwhile, Void was the standard by which operators were judged to be ace operators or not ... originally, my requirement was for you to achieve Apex speed, but unexpectedly, you’ve given me such a great surprise from the start.”

Ling Lan listened closely to Ling Xiao’s explanation, then after a pensive silence, she asked, “After Void, is there a higher speed? And also ...” Both of Ling Lan’s eyes focused on Ling Xiao, “What is your speed?”

Ling Xiao was silent for a long moment, but then he said, “Above Void is Form ... but, that’s still a long way away yet for you. You don’t have to know about it now.” Ling Xiao only mentioned a title, but did not go into the specifics.

“And you?” Ling Lan doggedly continued to ask. The second question was the one she was more concerned about.

Ling Xiao looked placidly at Ling Lan, and Ling Lan looked back unflinchingly at Ling Xiao. Her gaze was filled with the message that she would not back off on this.

Ling Xiao sighed deeply. “My hand speed is Space ...” His tone was somewhat fond, as if a little resigned at his child’s stubborn personality.

“That’s the highest speed, right?” said Ling Lan decisively. Otherwise Ling Xiao would not have become a god-class operator.

Ling Xiao shook his head and said, “No one knows where the true limits of the human body are. Space may be the limit right now, but is it really the ultimate limit? No one is able to foretell the future with absolute certainty ...” Ling Xiao’s gaze was somewhat vacant, as if reminiscing about something.

Thoughtful, Ling Lan nodded. In her previous life, she had never even considered that humans could be this strong. Just looking at the physical body alone, human strength in this world was over ten times greater than it was in her previous world ... For instance, the extraordinarily strong men of her previous world, would only match up to the strength of a 10 year old child here. It was clear to see that in these ten thousand years, humans had made countless breakthroughs in the so-called human limits.

Ling Xiao abruptly came to himself, and sensing that Ling Lan had no more questions, he continued to say, “Since you’ve already met my requirements, then the second part of the legacy is yours now.”

That said, Ling Xiao waved a hand in Ling Lan's direction, and Ling Lan instantly felt a large surge of energy push her out. And then, she was falling rapidly, just as if plummeting uncontrollably from the sky.

Ling Lan's complexion was extremely pale. Even though she had already conquered her fear of heights after a period of bitter training, still, when faced with this sort of uncontrolled free-falling, she felt all the hairs on her head stand on end. If not for the fact that she was certain that her cheapskate dad Ling Xiao had no bad intentions towards her, she would certainly have started screaming by now. But even so, she was so scared that her body was drenched with cold sweat.

Ling Lan fell into a grey-coloured area. Mist covered everything, hiding the surroundings from her eyes. Just when Ling Lan was wondering what to do, countless information and precious images were crammed into her brain ... numbers, movements, formulas, experience — in short, everything that Ling Xiao had learned, from control intuition, battle experience, and all sorts of miscellaneous insight were shoved unceremoniously into Ling Lan's little head.

"Once you've absorbed all this, come find me again then ..." In a daze, Ling Lan heard this final statement by Ling Xiao, and then fainted dead away ...

Oh, but before fainting, Ling Lan at least remembered to point a savage middle finger at her old man. Hells, this legacy was just way too tyrannical! It was truly over the top!

Meanwhile, Ling Xiao thought: What a tenacious child! Luofeng, you raised her well!

When Ling Lan woke up again, it was already the morning of the next day. She climbed out from the virtual logon pod, and cradling her head, she shuffled to her bedroom to get some proper rest. Of course, this drew the concern of Lan Luofeng. However, Lan Luofeng still chose to believe in her child, thinking that Ling Lan had everything well in hand.

After a good sleep, along with Little Four's help, she managed to seal away anything currently inapplicable into the depths of her brain, thus clearing up a great portion of her overloaded brain. Only then did she have the space to continue processing. This is when Ling Lan found that, in the second part of Ling Xiao's legacy, the most important bit was the training and control of spiritual power. Moreover, this was the key for an ace operator to advance to imperial status.

Most notably, after turning 10 years old, mutations may occur in a child's spiritual power ... this would influence the developmental path of the child.

"Little Four, do you know anything about this spiritual deviation?" Ling Lan suddenly realised that she was currently at this crucial moment.

"This is how this world refers to it, but according to the studies of our Mandora star system, this is an inevitable manifestation. After 10 years of age, humans start to step onto the course where their various functions gradually mature ¹. The initially slowly developing spiritual power enters a period of rapid growth, starting to awaken the innate talents within the body at the same time. This type of spiritual awakening combined with the stirring of the dormant talents are what this world calls spiritual mutation," Little Four reported all the information he found on their studies of the subject.

"If so, then spiritual mutation is a good thing." Ling Lan was instantly reassured.

“Of course it’s a good thing, but it may not definitely be a good thing.” Little Four’s words made Ling Lan frown. So was this a good thing or a bad thing at the end of the day?

“It depends on what the awakened talent is. Not every talent is suitable for operating mecha.”

“Oh? How so?” Ling Lan was curious.

“Some innate talents, like Decadent Voice, Soaring Dance, Conquering Smile ...” Little Four began laying out the information he had gathered.

“Be detailed when talking about the talents. Just saying the name, what can I know?” Ling Lan glared fiercely at Little Four, dissatisfied with his laziness.

Little Four rolled his eyes. Something so easy to understand, yet his boss wanted to make things complicated. He pouted and said, “It’s actually very easy to figure out. For Decadent Voice, the awakened talent affects the voice. It makes the bearer’s voice attract people’s attention without them noticing it, even able to make them drunk on it. Meanwhile, Soaring Dance is a type of body language, able to make people feel what it is conveying, as if they were in a dream or an illusion. Conquering Smile is even easier to understand. One smile conquers cities, another smile conquers countries, a third smile conquers galaxies ... hehehe, in fact, Boss, you have talent in this area.” Little Four started giggling behind his little hands. Naturally, he was then captured by an angry and embarrassed Ling Lan for some domestic violence ...

With great difficulty, Little Four finally managed to escape Ling Lan’s demon clasp, and whined, “How violent, I can’t even speak the truth anymore ...” Seeing Ling Lan’s pointed glare, he quickly clammed up and stopped joking around. Pulling on a straight face, he continued to say, “Those talents earlier are more suited for the entertainment industry. Many of the world’s popular singers, dancers, and performers are all people with awakened talents in these areas.”

“For instance, that evolved spectre hacker we met a few years ago was also due to a type of talent awakening. It’s just that his awakened talent is destructive strength on the virtual side.” Little Four raised another familiar example to clarify things for Ling Lan.

In the end, Little Four glanced at Ling Lan and said teasingly, “Actually, Boss, your innate talent is already awakened.”

“What?!” exclaimed Ling Lan, “Why didn’t I know of this?”

“Haven’t you noticed, Boss? Isn’t your ability to see through an opponent’s weakness with a glance very miraculous?” Little Four pursed his lips, looking down on his boss for being so slow.

Ling Lan was enlightened. No wonder every time she fought she would see through the opponent’s weakness straightaway. Even when she was on planet Demonbeast, fighting with the Twilight Empire mecha, she also had this feeling. That was why she had been able to successfully come up with a strategy on the fly, and make the opponents act as she willed so that she could finally kill them.

“Boss, this is your innate talent! It’s just that Boss’s innate talent still hasn’t awakened completely. You still need to work on it. Right, Boss’s number two follower (the number one follower is him, Little Four, the others are all after him), that one called Qi Long — that so-called animal-like instinct of his is also a type of talent awakening ...” Little Four continued with the revelations.

“So Qi Long has also awakened his talent!” exclaimed Ling Lan in astonishment. Suddenly, tone puzzled, she said, “That’s not right. Qi Long already had his animal instinct since young. Didn’t you say that innate talents could only be awakened after 10 years old?”

“Silly Boss. Talented children can naturally awaken their innate talents earlier. Like you, Boss, and Qi Long, are both this type. Still, early awakening is relatively uncommon. Most children only begin awakening from 10 years old onwards. And even if the talents are awakened early, they won’t be noticed unless the changes are extremely obvious. Like yours, Boss, and Qi Long’s covert type of awakened talent, it is not obvious at all and will be easily overlooked ... Before I said anything, didn’t you yourself not notice anything, Boss?” said Little Four disdainfully.

Chapter 158: The Instructors of the Learning Space Assemble!

Ling Lan could only rub her nose and accept Little Four’s contemptuous glares. Who asked her to be a real dimwit when it came to things like this? In future, she would still need Little Four to explain things to her. Ling Lan knew well that she could not use pure force on Little Four all the time — when appropriate, she should let him have his fun, so that he would put in even more effort in future to provide information of this sort.

It had to be admitted that Ling Lan herself was actually pretty black-bellied at times. Let us surrender some compassionate tears for the clueless Little Four in advance!

In fact, the spiritual power training method passed down by Ling Xiao’s legacy was extremely reasonable. Even Little Four, who had N-amount of materials saved in his databases, could not help but have an intense light in his eyes at seeing these systematic training methods. While Ling Lan was not looking, he swiftly made a digital duplicate of the material in his hands, which then vanished instantly after without a trace. Who knows where he sent it to ...

In a particular exclusive space within the learning space, below the dark and gloomy skies, there was a towering mountain peak. At its highest point, there was a flat cloud platform. Number One was sitting there in solitude, eyes closed as he meditated. Suddenly, his brows lifted and he reached out a hand in a quick grab, and a file appeared just like that out of thin air into his hand.

Only then did Instructor Number One open his eyes and start flipping casually through the file. Then, his expression abruptly turned grim, and his cold voice thundered throughout the entire space. “Assemble!”

His voice had just dissipated when in that gloomy patch of sky, about 10 metres or so above the area Number One was meditating, eight dark vertical lines suddenly appeared.

Subsequently, those vertical lines grew thicker and thicker, and then they actually split open from the middle, and the first thing that came to sight was a pair of hands in each line. After that, the hands forcefully ripped those black seams apart, revealing the figures they were attached to. They were the instructors of the learning space, from Number Two to Number Nine, all eight of them with no absentees.

The seemingly simple and honest Instructor Number Three laughed heartily and said, “Big Brother, what has happened, actually calling us to assemble?”

Number Five’s eyes narrowed slightly, and a harmless smile emerged on his handsome face. “It must be something big, but who knows if it can make me excited ...” That said, he licked at his lips, his demeanour one of profound interest. Speaking of which, ever since little Ling Lan had graduated from his tutelage, he had felt as if life had lost all meaning, he no longer had any desire or motivation to do anything ...

Number Four was a sexy great beauty. Even dressed in compact military clothes, her sexy curves and buxom figure were still clear enough to cause massive nosebleeds in men — oh, the allure of a woman in uniform ...

She sighed and said grumpily, “I only care about when I can debut ... I really want to teach our family’s Baby Lan!”

Number Nine sniffed coolly, “Ling Lan has no need to learn those things of yours ...”

Number Four smirked and shook her hands, “No, no, no. Sister Nine, don’t be so sure. Baby Lan will still need a man someday. When that time comes, she will need everything of mine. I will let her master all the methods she needs to control everything of a man’s ...”

Number Nine was about to retort when she seemed to recall something, and so held back and said nothing ...

Number Six, Number Seven, and Number Eight were triplets, all male. They all looked to be around 25 to 26 years old, faces attractive and masculine, the type that would easily inspire trust in others. The three looked exactly the same. At a glance, it was impossible to tell one from another. They looked balefully at their big brother Number One, their gazes just short of directly complaining to their big brother — why didn’t he let them go out and teach their baby disciple?

Number One seemed unable to withstand the wronged-wife look ¹ coming from three identical handsome faces at the same time, for he coughed and said, “Before Ling Lan has decided her future developmental pathway, you all just have no way of coming out ...”

Who asked the three of them to be specialists in specific areas? Number Six was a whiz at anything to do with finance and investments, Number Seven was a master at administration and management, while Number Eight was an expert at military planning, strategy, and tactics. They were obviously respectively a money bag, a major-domo, and a military advisor. If Ling Lan had decided to conquer the world, the three of them would have appeared much earlier, but Ling Lan was still somewhat unsure about her future plans, so they could only keep waiting ...

“Eh? Where’s Number Two?” Number Four suddenly recalled that there was still Number Two who shared their sad fate, not being able to debut as well. Could it be that Number Two, unlike them, did not want to interact with their Baby Lan?

Everyone abruptly realised that Number Two who had come here with them had actually disappeared ...

Number One coolly thrust the document in his hands behind him, saying calmly, “Number Two, take a look at this document.”

The shadow of Number One's right hand suddenly moved, stretching up to take the document from Number One's hands. The moment the document left Number One's hands, it became a shadow too, returning to join Number One's shadow, merging seamlessly into it.

Watching this scene, everyone present felt a chill invade their hearts. However, they all seemed to have some resistance built up against this creepy shadow play — most of them just shifted a little, but then stood steady and pretended not to see anything.

Very soon, the dark shadow spoke, "A very perfect set of spiritual power training methods, even safer and steadier than the triggering method that our Mandora star system has to awaken innate talents. Compared to this method, our measures are clearly a little violent." The shadow's voice was hoarse and ragged, somewhat grating on the ears, making anyone who heard it feel uncomfortable.

"It's really that good?" Number Five's eyes finally sparked with some interest. His voice had barely faded when a copy of the document sprang out from the shadow and flew straight at Number Five.

Number Five caught it deftly and began browsing through it. His gaze flickered and he sighed in awe, "So that's how it is. This way, the effect of awakening the innate talents will be doubled with just half the effort. This is a good lesson, I'll need to see how I can integrate this with my Hell Training ..."

Number Nine grabbed the document from him, and sniffed coldly. "Don't ruin this great thing ..."

Number Five just smiled without retorting, and did not try to take the document back either. Frankly, as beings made from data, they could clearly know all the content within the document just by touching it; browsing through it was just a habit they had.

Everyone took their turn to take a look, and they each had their respective insights. Spiritual power training had a certain boosting function upon high-intelligence bio-entities like themselves. Or should we say, every one of them obtained differing types of insights applicable to their own domain — this was beneficial to their evolution.

"Who'd have thought that we would one day receive a present from our host ..." sighed Number Four. Her words caused everyone to fall silent. Due to the bindings of the rules, they would have to repay their host for the gift. However, at present, it was rather difficult to repay their host properly, because this was not the Mandora star system. Without the relevant technology, they could not materialize ...

"This matter, let's leave it till later. There will be a chance somehow." Number One closed the issue for now, in wait for a future opportunity. For this reason, at some time in the future, Number Six, Number Seven, and Number Eight would be working hard to develop the technology of this world, fighting to hasten the arrival of the day they could materialize.

Instructor Number One considered for a moment, and then said to Number Two, "Number Two, it's time for you to debut."

"Yes, Number One!" said Number Two darkly. This time, he had once again changed his manner of speaking. Being voiced by the shadow, the entire scene was made dark and eerie.

This sort of supernatural atmosphere displeased the other instructors. They all put forth their protest for Number Two to change his image so that he would not frighten their beloved Baby Lan.

Their protests were only met by Number Two's gruesome, cold chuckles. The entire space was filled with the hair-raising sound of his laughter, and then the entire space suddenly dimmed. Dark winds rose on four sides, a ghostly chill swirling into the air, and nameless will-o'-the-wisps fluttered in the distance ... it was as if they had abruptly been plunged into the abyss of hell.

Other than Number One who still remained expressionless, as unmoving as a mountain, the others, even the extremely perverse Number Five, could no longer hold onto their smiles. At this time, Number Two said faintly, "If Ling Lan could endure Number Five's torments, then I think she should not be afraid of me ... me ... me ..." His voice echoed endlessly within this space ...

At these words, Number Five instantly became the focus of everyone's anger as they vented their fear on him. They glared fiercely at Number Five, wanting him to fix things with the gaslighting² Number Two ... Number Nine, in particular, huffed coldly, her expression one of great displeasure. If Number One had not been there, she would definitely have challenged Number Five to a fight. Mind you, since a long while back, she had already wanted to give Number Five a good beating on behalf of their adorable Baby Lan.

Facing the crowd's anger, Number Five could only smile stiffly. With regards to Number Two, no matter how perverse Number Five was, he did not dare to push Number Two too far. That fellow was extremely proficient at spiritual manipulation, and was good at concealing himself. If he angered him by accident, he would definitely be greatly brutalized by the other. Number Five was a sadist, not a masochist.

Besides, towards Ling Lan, he really had no evil intentions. Why couldn't these companions beside him understand this? It should be known that their soft namby-pamby methods would never be able to cultivate an unparalleled prodigy — it could only be said that a genius was always lonely and misunderstood ...

Number Five cravenly pretended to be lost in the silence of his own genius and swiftly departed!

Ling Lan did not know yet that her good days were over. Very soon, she would be greeted by yet another wave of the learning space's torments. Currently, she was anxiously standing at the entrance to her villa, waiting for the arrival of Qi Long and the others. Not just them, even the other members of group 072 were coming, as well as the new addition Lin Zhong-qing.

This was the first time Ling Lan was receiving a visit from classmates in both her lifetimes. Even the typically calm Ling Lan could no longer keep her calm in this moment; she was actually quite nervous.

"Boss Lan, we're here!" This voice was most certainly that of the loudmouth Qi Long. Ling Lan walked out of her little garden, and immediately saw a group of children dressed in red uniforms and white uniforms about 100 metres away. The fellow right in the front waving wildly at her was none other than the brash and forthright Qi Long.

Right behind him, a girl was also waving just as vigorously. It was the candid, tom-boyish Han Xuya. Meanwhile, Luo Chao was closely tailing Han Xuya, tugging on the other's sleeve with a red face, trying to remind Han Xuya to be more reserved.

Yuan Youyun, Luo Shaoyun, He Chaoyang, and Li Jinghong were looking at Ling Lan with faces filled with excitement. They looked as if they really wanted to greet her but was unsure whether they should. Ever since Ling Lan and the others had gone to planet Demonbeast to hunt, they had not seen them for as long as half a year.

Chapter 159: Take a Wife or Marry a Husband?

Speaking of the four of them, they were now all students of Special Class-B. In particular, He Chaoyang and Li Jinghong, due to their weaker talent, had worked themselves to the bone just to chase up to Ling Lan and the other elites. After four years of tenacious struggling, they finally managed an upset to squeeze into the competitive ranks of Special Class-B. Becoming classmates with Yuan Youyun, Luo Shaoyun, Han Xuya, and Luo Chao, the six of them successfully built their own team, becoming team members who would grow together. To commemorate group 072 where they had taken the exam together, they named their team '072'!

Most surprisingly, the team leader of team 072 was actually the easily embarrassed, shy and often blushing Luo Chao ... it was true enough that people could not be judged by their appearances.

Meanwhile, Ling Lan's team had been short of one person all this time. Ling Lan was unconcerned by this, so Qi Long and the others also did not worry.

Behind Yuan Youyun and the others were Han Jijyun, Luo Lang, and Lin Zhong-qing. Although they were restraining their excitement on the surface, their gazes revealed their true emotions. In contrast to the ignorance of the others, Qi Long and the other three knew the true meaning of this visit — this would be the first time they would encounter the world of god-class operator Ling Xiao, especially the wife mentioned in the legends of Ling Xiao. (That's my mum! ← Ling Lan was moody; these bunch of followers were actually ignoring her ...)

The group nervously followed Ling Lan into the villa, and then saw a beautiful lady smiling gently at them. Of course, in this time period, beautiful men and women were everywhere, but still, the children could feel a warmth coming from Lan Luofeng's body, easing their initially high-strung nerves.

The half-grown kids greeted Mama Ling politely and bashfully. This greatly pleased Lan Luofeng, because her Ling Lan always had a serious adult-like expression on her face, giving her no sense of achievement as a mother. But now, she could finally have a taste of what it felt like ... Boo hoo hoo, if only her own daughter was as lively as these children before her eyes ...

The intent behind Lan Luofeng's gaze rendered Ling Lan speechless — how had her mum come to the conclusion that these kids were lively? Setting everything else aside, just looking at Han Jijyun alone — that stern expression of his was not much better than hers ...

All that could be said was that parents would never be satisfied with the current situation. They would always admire the things that their child has yet to accomplish, regardless of whether it was apt or not.

In a great mood, Lan Luofeng's demeanour was naturally very welcoming to the children. In comparison with their fierce dragon mums at home, the children could not help but admire Boss Lan's blissful life. It was once again proven that the grass was always greener on the other side.

During the meal, Ling Lan observed her mum's formidable diplomatic methods for the first time. Without any notable signs, she managed to coax out the family backgrounds of all ten children by beating around the bush. Of course, not everyone was oblivious — Han Jijyun noticed, but he was not surprised by it. This was an expected measure by any responsible mother to understand the friendships of her child. Han Jijyun had already been mentally prepared for this, and so was the one to handle the subtle interrogation the best.

Lan Luofeng looked at the children before her with extreme satisfaction. It had been a really long time since the house was this lively; her child finally had her own friends now ... who knows which of them would become the right one for her daughter ¹ ?

That one called Qi Long had a good personality, very obedient, not bad not bad; but then that one called Luo Lang was just so pretty, she liked him by just looking at him (Lan Luofeng was a certified face-con); that Han Jijyun was a bit stern, but he was very clever and handled things in a very organized manner, seeming to match well with her daughter ... and that Lin Zhong-qing, although his family background was a bit weaker, he knew how to compromise and seemed adaptable, and would most certainly do well in the future, also a good choice. What a shame she only had one daughter ...

In short, Lan Luofeng was extremely satisfied and pleased with all the boys here in front of her; she had actually already begun debating with herself over which one was the best choice.

These impure thoughts of Lan Luofeng were quickly seen through by Ling Lan, and cold sweat sprang out from her forehead. Oh mum, can you stop looking at my friends as if you are looking at your future son-in-law? Your daughter is only 10 right now, okay? And most importantly, right now your daughter is still male ...

Just like that, under Lan Luofeng's special ministrations, the dinner table was a lively affair for both host and guest. The atmosphere was friendly, and the children soon lost their initial reservations.

Of course, there was also an exception. Luo Chao was the only one at the dining table with her head bowed, only eating the white rice in her bowl, not even daring to lift up her chopsticks to get any of the other dishes. Watching her, Ling Lan wasn't sure whether to laugh or cry. Was this little girl going to eat only white rice till the end?

"Hey, eat more Duomo meat ² . Your body is too weak." Ling Lan's seat was diagonally across from Luo Chao. She picked up a piece of white meat with her chopsticks and placed it into Luo Chao's bowl. The shy and adorable Luo Chao's gentleness melted Ling Lan's heart ... In truth, because Luo Chao's spiritual power increased at a greater rate than average, her body condition had always been a little unwell. This struck a chord with Ling Lan, bringing up memories of her past life, so she would always pay a little more attention and care to Luo Chao.

"Thank you, Big Brother Lan!" Luo Chao's entire face flushed red, and her eyes were glistening like those of a baby deer. Ling Lan pulled back her chopsticks speechlessly. Oh, little girl, big sister is only concerned about your body; there really isn't any deeper meaning ... perhaps she needed to tone down this type of involuntary care a little in the future.

This action of Ling Lan's caused the initially lively dinner table to suddenly fall silent. Qi Long, especially, was gaping, extremely shocked at Boss Lan's sudden kindness in caring for Luo Chao. Meanwhile, Luo

Lang's expression was conflicted — should he push away his boss to safeguard his little sister, or should he just go with the flow ... The others kept stealing glances at Ling Lan and Luo Chao — could it be that without them knowing, Boss and their little sister had developed some relationship?

Only Han Jiyun remained composed, as if unaffected. Unfortunately, his chopsticks slipped a few times, unable to pick up the dishes he wanted. From that, it could be seen that he currently was not as calm as his appearance would suggest ...

Ling Lan swept an exasperated glare at the group of brats with varying expressions on their face. This glare frightened the kids so much they hurriedly pulled their rice bowls close and began gulping down the white grains. Boo hoo hoo, as expected, they had no right to be nosy about Boss's business ... what a waste of all the delicious food on the table — they now did not even dare to reach out to take any!

Lan Luofeng's originally decorous and demure smile suddenly froze, and her gaze became somewhat unfocused. Could it be that these boys all had no chance? Would she obtain a daughter-in-law in the end instead? No, that's not right, she gave birth to a daughter, right?

At the end, the evening ended and the group dispersed. The children left Ling Lan's home satisfied. The fact that Ling Lan had invited them to be guests at her home proved that Ling Lan had truly accepted them. This was the main reason for their satisfaction with this visit.

All said, they finally succeeded in hugging onto a big thigh ... er, that is to say, they have finally become Boss Lan's sworn siblings!

Lan Luofeng waited impatiently for Ling Lan to return from sending her friends off, and then she pulled Ling Lan close and asked anxiously, "Baby Lan, do you like boys or girls?" Whenever Lan Luofeng was in a panicked state, she would default to calling Ling Lan 'Baby Lan'.

Ling Lan secretly rolled her eyes in exasperation — she's still a 10 year old child right now, okay? Isn't it a bit too early for her mum to be worrying about this?

"You still remember that you didn't give birth to a boy, right?" Big sister here is female in both body and soul — how could I like girls?

"Then what's going on with that Luo Chao?" Lan Luofeng still could not let it go. Even she had rarely ever gotten such caring treatment from her Baby Lan ... alright, so Lan Luofeng was a little bit jealous!

"Don't you think she's really sweet? So much cuter than that bunch of smelly brats ..." replied Ling Lan, "I like this kind of little sister!"

Seeing Lan Luofeng's stricken face, Ling Lan added on helplessly, "Purely as an elder brother towards a younger sister. Mum, don't overthink it."

That said, Ling Lan ran away! Leaving behind a petrified Lan Luofeng.

And then, in the vast and vacant great hall, a hysterical cry rang out:

"AHAHAH ... Nanyi, I'm going to go insane!" Lan Luofeng pulled at her hair wildly; at this moment, she no longer retained any of her so-called decorum.

A knife in hand, Ling Nanyi rushed out from the kitchen in shock, "Mistress, what happened?"

“Boo hoo hoo, Nanyi, Baby Lan has really started thinking of herself as a boy ... what should we do now?” Lan Luofeng’s mind was echoing with the phrase ‘purely as an elder brother towards a younger sister’ ... That ‘younger sister’ was most definitely referring to Luo Chao, then wouldn’t the ‘elder brother’ be referring to Ling Lan herself?

Hearing this, Ling Nanyi’s expression calmed down. “This is how it should be, otherwise Young Master Lan would not be able to pull off the role so well.”

“But, I don’t want to have a daughter-in-law in future, I want a son-in-law ...” said Lan Luofeng in distress.

“Don’t worry, Mistress. Even if Young Master Lan takes a young mistress, with the current technology, it will still be possible for the young mistress to give birth to Young Master Lan’s child ...” Ling Nanyi’s eyes were shining, starting to consider the possibilities along this avenue — where she could go to obtain excellent sperm, and then let Young Master Lan’s and the young mistress’s eggs combine to take the sperm and merge so that a pair of twins could be born ... Of course, only Young Master Lan’s child could be considered as family head for the Ling family. As for the young mistress’s child, they would just be trained up as a loyalist to accompany Young Master Lan’s child ...

Listening to Housekeeper Ling Nanyi’s counsel, Lan Luofeng felt that it made sense. After all, no matter whether her daughter took a wife or married a husband, it would not affect her getting grandchildren. Thus, her mood brightened, no longer conflicted.

Ling Lan, who had barely turned the corner, heard this conversation between her mum and the housekeeper, and was instantly rendered speechless. What was up with these people ... she really could not think on the same wavelength as them.

However, Ling Lan did not take this matter to heart. She was still only 10 years old — whether she would marry a wife or husband, the choice was still very far off. Right now, she might as well make full use of her time to get stronger instead. Might was the true right!

Time passed swiftly, three years went by just like that! In these three years, Ling Lan grew from a short little bean sprout into a stately and well-proportioned, aloof youth. Compared to three years ago, Ling Lan’s current status within Special Class-A of Year 4738 was also extremely noteworthy. Even the influential types like Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie could only turn their blades away, full-heartedly acknowledging Ling Lan as the only boss of Class-A.

In reality, these three years were not as pleasant for Ling Lan as everyone assumed. By day, her authority was indeed unchallenged, but by night, she was thoroughly living a tragedy. Within the learning space, she was going through countless torments, being bullied endlessly by Instructor Number Two.

Chapter 160: A Grand Game?

Still, Instructor Number Two was not as crazy as Instructor Number Five. Of all the countless ways he could use to torment Ling Lan, he only used the simplest of them, but it was still enough to frighten Ling Lan to within an inch of her life during every training session with him.

Who knew where Instructor Number Two obtained his intel? (Little Four was cackling smugly; of course the info came from him.) He brought the ghost movies and horror films of Ling Lan's previous world to life. Ling Lan had thought that after Instructor Number Five's perverse torments, she was already immune to any other torments, but who knew she still had a weakness ... actually being terrified of those illusionary ghosts and spirits.

These eldritch ghosts had no form, so physical attacks were useless against them. Many times, Ling Lan found her own sword turned against herself by these ghosts to disembowel herself or stab out her own heart, where she then breathed her last without being able to do anything. This greatly frustrated Ling Lan — she had never felt so helpless before. At least during Instructor Number Five's insane training, she had not been completely unable to fight back.

From the start, Instructor Number Two had not told her what she should do. Every time she entered the learning space, she would be thrown directly into all sorts of horror films to train, putting Ling Lan through time after time of unending terror. Ling Lan finally knew what a so-called endless trial was now ... it was truly unbearable.

In the course of dying five or six times, Ling Lan had tried countless ways, finally grasping the use of spiritual sensing to kind of sense the existence of those eldritch ghosts. And so she began to focus on training with the spiritual power training methods bequeathed to her by her father, trying to use her spiritual power to fight these ghosts in these horror films ... Only at this time did Instructor Number Two appear to instruct Ling Lan on how to pull out her spiritual power and teach her the way to divide it.

This extraction and fragmentation of spiritual power was agonizing — every time, Ling Lan would go through the suffering of having her spiritual power being forcefully ripped apart. This was much more painful and much more unbearable than the feeling of her physical body being torn apart — every time, Ling Lan would only barely succeed after she started puking from the pain. If it weren't for the fact that she did not want to die in myriad strange ways, Ling Lan would have lost all courage to even attempt a second time.

Still, this inhuman torment had significant results. Ling Lan's original one cord of spiritual power split into two cords, and then the two cords split into three cords, and so on until she finally succeeded in splitting out 12 cords of spiritual feelers. In Instructor Number Two's words, she had succeeded in becoming an initiate level spiritual power user. Of course, from the moment Ling Lan succeeded in extracting and projecting her formless spiritual power, this meant that she now had the ability to defend against those formless spirits, giving her the possibility of survival in those endless horror film scenarios.

In these three years, Ling Lan had pretty much lived through all the horror films in her previous world. From the start when she could only defend passively, till the point when she could finally fight back, to now where she could kill her way through the sea of ghosts — these three years caused Ling Lan to grow up very quickly! This method of Instructor Number Two's which forced Ling Lan to reincarnate repetitively caused Ling Lan to master the various uses of spiritual power in a very short amount of time. Ling Lan even managed to invent several spiritual power attacks of her own ...

Regarding this, Instructor Number Two could only exclaim in silence at how aberrant Ling Lan's tolerance was. Consequently, he further increased the difficulty — in several attacks in some scenes, he took part personally ... and so Ling Lan once again experienced the sensation of dying at ghostly hands, welcoming yet a new round of evolution.

Due to the endless pressure of terror, Ling Lan's innate talent awakened at a much faster rate than other people. Not only did her Profound Insight talent awaken completely so she could now use it as she willed, she even awakened a second innate talent — Ice Affinity, which allowed Ling Lan to learn the element of ice. This caused Ling Lan's body to emit a faint chill, and in tandem with her cold and expressionless ice-block face, a new generation cold-faced pretty boy came into the world!

The awakening of Ice Affinity not only took Ling Lan by surprise; the instructors of the learning space were also very surprised. Ling Lan's body clearly was not born with the element of ice, so why did this innate talent awaken? Later on, Instructor Number One made an irresponsible guess — perhaps because in her heart Ling Lan believed that cold-mannered slackfaced people were all good, while those who liked to smile were a black-bellied lot full of bad water, so the element of ice had become fond of her ...

Wasn't this just ridiculous? Look well, this was what is meant by an irresponsible guess!

Ling Lan truly shocked and surprised everyone with the awakening of her innate talents. The awakening of the innate talents of others would always show some sign, whether big or small — for instance, Qi Long's Animal Instinct had presented young and just became more and more obvious. During this period of time, his initiate instructor mentored him for a full year, letting him fully master Animal Instinct. He was now especially sensitive to those who tried to get close to him, directly being able to intuit their true intentions ... he was just like a human lie detector. Moreover, under his instructor's invitation, Qi Long also officially became his true disciple ...

Han Jiyun's awakened innate talent was Strategy, an enhanced version of intelligence. This would definitely aid him in becoming a perfect intelligence-type staff officer.

In comparison, Luo Lang's awakened innate talent was rather unexpected — Alter Ego! When his innate talent activated, it would automatically create a new personality — this personality could be passionate, or heartless, or wrathful, or cold-blooded ... once, it even presented the personality of a ruthless fighting machine. At that time, both his attacks and his tactics were extremely scary, because Luo Lang had become so cold-blooded that he would even risk himself in his calculations ...

Whenever Luo Lang's innate talent activated, Qi Long would become extremely agitated, because only Qi Long's Animal Instinct could tell whether Luo Lang's new personality was good or bad. If it were a bad personality, the group would pounce on Luo Lang to control him, to prevent him from doing anything unforgivable. It was truly an undeniably dangerous innate talent to awaken! Of course, this type of uncontrollable innate talent like Luo Lang's was pretty much half-useless ... without Qi Long there, if a bad personality presented, no one would know. These personalities were all able to fake normalcy, so only Qi Long's Animal Instinct could detect it as its natural counter. Of course, this was also true of Ling Lan's Profound Insight, but no one knew about this innate talent of Ling Lan's. Everyone just assumed that Ling Lan's awakened talent was Ice Affinity.

Both Han Jijyun and Luo Lang had also been taken in by their instructor as true disciples; this was especially imperative for Luo Lang. His dangerous innate talent gave his instructor no choice but to seek help from his sect, hoping they would be able to think of a good way to resolve this latent threat of Luo Lang's.

Of course, both Qi Long and Luo Lang's talents were suitable for operating mecha, but compared to the relatively unstable Alter Ego, Animal Instinct was undoubtedly a level better.

Lin Zhong-qing's awakened innate talent was Concealment. When it was activated, his presence would vanish without a trace. As Ling Lan would say, he was a person very suited to become an assassin.

Han Xuya's awakened innate talent was Violence. Once it activated, her combat strength would multiply by several folds. This was also a low-level innate talent very suitable for mecha operation. Everyone lamented that this innate talent was wasted on Han Xuya, causing Han Xuya to fly into a rage and demand a PK¹ from them with her talent activated. Then, this strongwoman would beat them into the ground with her abominable strength ... it was clear to see that the talent of Violence was very helpful in terms of providing combat strength.

The most unique talent was Luo Chao's. Initially, everyone thought that the shy and pacifist Luo Chao would awaken some type of lifestyle related innate talent, such as Favourable Impression, or Voice Control etcetera ... But surprisingly, she actually awakened Navigator, which was very rare among females. This meant that Luo Chao would become an excellent starship captain in the future.

Yuan Youyun's awakened talent was Energy Reservation, most suitable for drawn out battles, while Luo Shaoyun's was Berserker, the complete opposite of Yuan Youyun's. Luo Shaoyun's talent lent itself well to a quick-paced battle, where he could just rain a torrent of blows down on the opponent to crush them, and was not good for a drawn out battle. He Chaoyang awakened Phantasm, while Li Jinghong awakened Thousand Li² Astral Projection. Both these innate talents were not really combat-suited and were extremely common. Still, the two boys were very happy, because many of the other students in their class did not even awaken any innate talent at all. In other words, they did not undergo a spiritual mutation.

Some of the awakened talents of the members of the two teams were counters of each other or very similar, so the two teams often PK-ed among themselves. The relationship between the members increased steeply till they were all bosom buddies, however, they all also knew that some of them would be leaving once they turned 16. This was because the paths they would walk in the future were divergent.

Everyone also knew that the youngest little sister Luo Chao had a crush on Boss Lan, but Boss Lan did not seem to reciprocate ... he treated Luo Chao exactly the same as he treated them all. They felt that this was a bit of a shame, for they were actually very willing to leave the adorable little sister Luo Chao in Boss Lan's hands.

One day, Ling Lan was studying some class materials on the virtual network when she suddenly heard her communicator ring blaringly.

Ling Lan glanced down and saw with some surprise that it was Luo Lang. Normally, either Qi Long or Han Jijyun would be the one to contact her; it was extremely rare for Luo Lang to do so. Why was this fellow contacting her ...? Curious, Ling Lan connected the call and asked, "Luo Lang, what's up?"

"Boss, come to the academy canteen quickly! Qi Long is going up against some tenth grade students ... the other side has over about 20 people!" Luo Lang's tone was anxious. Qi Long was indeed very strong, but against so many people, his pair of fists would still be unlikely to defeat the opponents' horde of fists.

"Calm down. What happened?" asked Ling Lan calmly.

"A female student from Class-B accidentally bumped into the other, and an argument broke out. One of the girls on the other side actually slapped the Class-B student several times. We just happened to be in the area, and Han Xuya could not overlook it and so went out to defend the student. Boss, you know how hot-tempered Han Xuya is. After some bickering back and forth, they almost wanted to hit Han Xuya as well, so Qi Long stepped out. And then twenty students suddenly emerged from their side to surround Qi Long, demanding that Qi Long kneel down and apologise! They also said they wanted to teach us arrogant juniors³ a lesson ..." Luo Lang detailed the entire stream of events to Ling Lan.

"Got it. I'll be there at once! Also, delay for as long as possible!" After giving these instructions to Luo Lang, Ling Lan hung up. After some thought, she immediately contacted Wu Jiong, "Wu Jiong, notify all the students of Class-A and Class-B to gather at the academy canteen!"

"Uh? Okay!" Wu Jiong was stunned for a moment, but immediately agreed and then asked, "What's going on? Why do the students of both classes need to go there?"

A sly smile appeared on Ling Lan's lips, "Do you want to play a grand game with me?"

"A grand game?" Wu Jiong's interest perked up instantly.

"I'm very curious ... what the 'grand armed melee' which has disappeared from the academy for over a hundred years is like ..." Ling Lan's smirk was sinister. At this moment, she seemed to be channelling a faint shadow of Instructor Number Five.

"A grand armed melee!" yelled Wu Jiong in shock. He was drenched in cold sweat in an instant.

"What? You don't dare to play with me?" Ling Lan's tone seemed mocking, but sounded more like the seductive tone of a demon.

Wu Jiong felt his heart pounding violently, his mind filled with the idea of a grand armed melee ... He gulped audibly, swallowing a mouthful of saliva then said, "Fine, I'll play with you! Who's the opponent?"