

Crossing 211

Chapter 211: New Members!

The three youths moved all of the unconscious sentry crewmen into one of the ship's rooms and locked it. Without someone to input the passcode on the panel outside, the people inside the room would not be able to get out. Ling Lan also did not forget to let Little Four disable their communicators, preventing the possibility of any of the opponents revealing their plan if they woke up earlier than expected.

By now, the students following Ling Lan could tell what Ling Lan's objective was. Although it sounded insane, everyone's blood was boiling at the thought. No one chose to withdraw, instead becoming even more excited, believing that this was truly what they should do ...

They were youths who had just stepped out from the scout academy, and were right in their rebellious phase. They had countless fanciful dreams — they were still hot-blooded youths filled with boundless courage. They wanted to make something of themselves and were willing to put in the effort to do it, whatever the cost may be. Still wet behind the ears ¹, they had no fear. As young men, their wings of freedom had yet to be bound by reality ...

Thus, their only thought now was that as long as they kept following Boss Lan before them, they could achieve things they never thought possible — insane things they never would have dreamed of ... and all this was precisely what fed their confidence and pride!

"Third Elder Brother, they, they, they've gone mad! Completely crazy!" When the group trailing Ling Lan's party from afar finally saw what Ling Lan's party was doing, they were instantly scared sh*tless ². Some of them were so scared that their bodies had even begun to tremble.

From the perspective of these students, Ling Lan's party's actions were undoubtedly a major crime of insubordination — actually daring to attack the people sent to escort them to their school ... Had they given up on studying at the First Men's Military Academy?!

"Third Elder Brother, let's quickly tell the ship's crew. We must stop them. What they're doing will ruin our pathway to the military academy. They must be lunatics." A member suggested informing the ship's men, thinking that stopping Ling Lan's party's insane actions was the right thing to do.

"Idiot! Shut your mouth!" barked Third Elder Brother, "What do you all know?" Third Elder Brother looked ahead at where the figures had already disappeared and a gleam of intense light flashed across his eyes. Although attacking the crew seemed to be such an unthinkable act, the immediate impression being that the perpetrators must be mad ... after giving the matter a little more thought, it was not necessarily so.

Mulling it over, from the very start of the journey, the captain's introduction had been filled with provocation, and the crew's attitudes had been even worse, their speech full of all kinds of contempt, mocking, taunts, and insults. Even with the students' clear tolerance and giving way, the other side had not let it rest, purposefully forcing that confrontation in the cafeteria, intentionally humiliating that student ... all of this was testing the bottom line of the students.

In other words, this ship, from the captain to its crew, had never intended to make nice with them from the very beginning. Even if they tolerated again and again, the oppression and humiliation would have just gotten worse and worse, until the students could not take it anymore and exploded ... this would have been the inevitable outcome. In that case, why shouldn't they go ahead and address the root of the problem?

That person must be thinking this way, which was why he was doing this! Admiration shone from Third Elder Brother's eyes. How daring was he to be able to make this decision? ³ And how great must his charisma be to be able to convince up to 100 students to willingly take this risk with him?

His thoughts went back to the cafeteria — the other Qi-Jin stage student, he too was an astounding existence. What role did he have to play in this?

"He should be attracting everyone's attention, providing cover for their operation! The person who designed this plan is not just bold, but also very meticulous!" Third Elder Brother had always been a smart guy; he very quickly figured things out. A wave of bitterness surged in his heart — he had once thought he was good enough to challenge these elites once they entered the military academy, but now from the looks of it, he had taken things too lightly. Just this Boss Lan alone — whether in terms of scheming and guts, or realm ⁴ — was just too far away from him.

"Third Elder Brother, they will definitely fail. That captain is most definitely super strong — they absolutely won't be able to beat him. If we go with them, we will be mistaken as part of them ..." reminded a member.

"So what if we're together? D*mmit, how can we sit out of such an awesome thing? Although we're not Central Scout Academy students, don't forget, we're also graduates of a scout academy, cadets of the military academy just like them ..." said Third Elder Brother.

"If they fail, we will still be mocked and tormented by those crew members. We might as well join them and let the scales tip as far as it can in our favour ... it's a waste of youth not to take crazy risks. I have decided to take the gamble, what about the rest of you?" Third Elder Brother felt his heartbeat speeding up, his blood starting to boil — even though failure would bring nothing good, but what if they managed to succeed?

This was definitely an incident that would shock the military academy — perhaps even up to the entire Federation! He bloody did not want to miss this.

"Third Elder Brother's decision is my decision!" His most loyal team members declared.

"Since you all have decided, then I'll of course join in ..." Although there were still a few people on the team who hesitated, seeing that most of the members had agreed to fight it out, they could only grit their teeth and jump in since they did not want to hold their team back.

The team finally came to an accord. Meanwhile, Ling Lan's party had already disappeared into the passage ahead. Third Elder Brother made his members hurry up — if they were left behind by the other, then they would not be able to pitch in even if they wanted to.

Third Elder Brother was in the lead, and just whilst they were hurrying on their way, a cold and somewhat familiar voice suddenly rang out by his ear. "Since you all are interested, then come along!"

Third Elder Brother's footsteps abruptly stopped. His face shifted slightly, because he had identified the voice — it was the voice of that youth called Boss Lan.

The other team members were baffled by his sudden stop, and Third Elder Brother was suddenly heard to say, "Gao Jinyun, I look forward to working with you."

"Ling Lan, welcome to the team!" The cold voice responded swiftly. As expected, it was that Boss Lan.

"Boss, what are you mumbling to yourself for?" The team members were creeped out by Gao Jinyun's strange behaviour. One of the team members could not help but speak up to ask.

Gao Jinyun did not respond, only saying, "Hurry up and move forwards!"

"Ah? We'll be discovered by the team ahead if we move too fast," said a member worriedly.

"They have already discovered us a long time ago. Just now, they were just inviting us to join them." Gao Jinyun finally explained why he had been muttering to himself.

"So hurry up! No more chit chat!" said Gao Jinyun moodily. That Boss Lan actually possessed the ability to transmit verbal messages from a distance — what ability was this? Could it be a type of spiritual mutation?

"..." Gao Jinyun's words made everyone speechless. Who could have guessed that they had already long been discovered by the other party despite their caution? Thinking back, if they had decided back then to go tell on them, they may have been mercilessly attacked by the other party, ending up shoved into a small dark room just like those incapacitated crew members had been.

At this thought, the members could not help but look at Gao Jinyun gratefully. Once again, it was proven that following Third Elder Brother was not wrong.

The moody Gao Jinyun never would have known that his team members' trust in him would increase once more because of this. They even decided in their hearts that after this, no matter what decision Gao Jinyun made, they would agree unconditionally. This gave him a bunch of stubbornly united team members. In the future, this unity would be what allowed his team to perform exceptionally, securing their spot as the second main force of Ling Lan's entourage ...

"Boss, I did pretty good, right?" Little Four smugly begged for praise from Ling Lan in the mind-space. Earlier, he had used the advanced technology of the learning space to convert Ling Lan's voice into coded supersonic waves which could only be successfully received by the specified person.

Ling Lan said nonchalantly, "*Not bad at all! Little Four, keep it up!*" Honestly though, Ling Lan really thought what Little Four did was unnecessary. There had really been no need to make things so complicated — he had just needed to transmit her voice through the sound systems already within the ship and let it out within the vicinity of the other group. Even if the message was heard by a few more people, so what? Still, she would not burst Little Four's bubble and discourage him. Since Little Four had the interest to do it, then she would leave him to it, as long as he did not find it troublesome.

"However, don't forget to cover us. The opponent must not discover our movements!" Ling Lan reminded worriedly. She was just afraid that Little Four would get too caught up in his play and forget his main task. The reason why their path had gone so smoothly, not being discovered by the central control room

despite taking out so many sentries, was all because Little Four had created fake video feeds, showing the opponent that everything was going on as normal.

"Got it, Boss!" Little Four said, disgruntled. Would he make such a low-level mistake? Why did Boss always ignore what he said? He was a god of the virtual world! He could handle this type of small case without any errors even if he were asleep ...

Leaving aside Little Four's grumbles within the mind-space, at this time, the other people in Ling Lan's party had also sensed Gao Jinyun's party's movements. When Han Jijyun heard the soft susurrations of footsteps coming from behind them, his expression could not help but change.

The footsteps sounded rather disorganised, so it looked like the incoming people would not be few. Had they been discovered by the ship's crew?

The other students also began to become restless. Lin Zhong-qing turned to look at Ling Lan, asking her whether he should lead some people over to hold them off.

Only then did Ling Lan speak up to explain, "Don't worry, they are our allies!"

Hearing this, the hearts of everyone there relaxed instantly. The initially tense atmosphere dissipated as they patiently waited for Gao Jinyun's party to catch up.

The moment Gao Jinyun approached Ling Lan's party, he could see everyone stopped there waiting for his party. Thirty pair of bright eyes stared at them in unison, making him feel a tremendous pressure.

"We are students from Huoyun City⁵ Scout Academy. I am called Gao Jinyun ..." Gao Jinyun straightened his attitude, and began introducing his party to the other.

"We'll do full introductions later. Jijyun, go arrange it!" Ling Lan coolly interrupted Gao Jinyun, and then immediately turned to head into the depths of the passage. The students did not dare to dawdle, following closely ...

Gao Jinyun reflexively rubbed his nose, silently noting to himself that this Boss Lan was really hard to talk to ...

With the addition of Gao Jinyun's party, Ling Lan's party now had more than 40 people. As they did not know the capabilities of Gao Jinyun's party, Han Jijyun did not split the teams, grouping everyone together as one team to move together.

This column of people did not meet any other unexpected issues along the way. Finally, they neared Ling Lan's first objective, the spaceship's central control room.

Chapter 212: Disguised Infiltration!

Ling Lan halted, and with a flick of her right arm, the Central Scout Academy students moved with utmost cooperation, dashing to one side to stick closely to the passage walls. Gao Jinyun's party was off by a beat, but they did not mess up. Some of their members just did not dodge as adeptly as the students from the Central Scout Academy, seeming somewhat clumsy in comparison.

This direct comparison showed the difference in skill levels instantly; Gao Jinyun's face felt hot with shame. He silently decided that when he entered the academy, he would definitely train his party up well, to avoid shaming themselves again in front of Ling Lan in future.

Ling Lan signalled for the students to stay in place and not move. Then, with a nimble flash step, she had arrived at the doorway of the central control room. The doors were tightly sealed — entering or exiting required a passcode.

"Little Four, how many people can you confirm inside?" Ling Lan asked Little Four silently.

"There are 53 staff members, and 10 guards." Little Four projected the scene inside the central control room faithfully in Ling Lan's mindspace.

"The opponent has the advantage in numbers. Breaking in forcefully may not allow us to take control quickly. The other side are likely to find time to send out the news of our attack." Ling Lan's brow furrowed, finding the situation somewhat out of her expectations. She had initially thought that since it was a meal time, the staff members inside would be fewer — unexpectedly, there wasn't that much fewer than normal.

"Boss, I can instantly seal off their communication equipment!" Little Four became excited. This was his chance to shine! It was time to show Boss how awesome he could be.

"And the weapons?" Ling Lan threw an icy glance at the smug Little Four, instantly suppressing the other's flames of arrogance. Indeed, all the staff members inside were equipped with beam handguns. If they just charged in, the other side need only find a chance to pull their guns and shoot, and some of their party might unfortunately die here.

Ling Lan did not believe that under this sudden and unexpected attack, the people inside could still keep calm and judge the situation accurately. It would already be a blessing if they did not just shoot indiscriminately all at once — if by any chance a student were to fall here, she would not be able to live with herself.

Little Four was deeply struck by Ling Lan's words. He could only squat down and draw circles on the ground, busying himself with self-reflection ...

Should she use a large-scale spiritual attack? Ling Lan silently speculated. She actually had a solution — she could sense that the people inside were not people with awakened innate talents on the spiritual front; so, her spiritual attacks could totally incapacitate all of them.

However, Ling Lan had one reservation, because Ling Xiao and Mu Shui-qing did not want others to know of this ability of hers. As veteran warriors, they knew the importance of keeping a trump card. In critical moments, that could be the ultimate move that would save one's life.

Ling Lan took this advice to heart. Although spiritual attacks were not her only ace in the hole, no one would ever complain about having too many trump cards. Thus, Ling Lan had nodded and agreed.

Ling Lan did not like to go against her word. Since she had already promised her father and her master not to use spiritual attacks unless absolutely necessary in a life-or-death situation, Ling Lan would hold true to that. Therefore, she decisively threw out this option and tried to think of another way.

Ling Lan began to go through anything that could help their operation, and suddenly, a thought came to her mind. She recalled those sentries who had been struck down by them — could they maybe try to use the uniforms and weapons of those men?

Ling Lan immediately returned to Han Jijyun's side, and quietly outlined her plan. Han Jijyun felt that the idea was excellent, and the other team leaders by his side also nodded in approval as they heard the plan. As long as the other party had just a beat of hesitation and uncertainty, that would be their chance.

Although the other side had more people, the combat ability of the staff members were not very strong. As long as the other side did not find a chance to pull their guns and begin shooting en masse, the cadets would definitely be able to keep the situation under control. Their chances of winning were undoubtedly still very high.

All young and courageous scout students were willing to take risks — everyone felt that this plan was worth a shot.

And so, Ling Lan led the group back to the room where they had put the sentries in. Before they entered, Ling Lan let Little Four check to see if any of the men had woken up. After confirming that they were all still unconscious, they opened the door. Everyone rushed in, and very soon, all the sentries' clothes and weapons had been lifted off their bodies.

During this time, Little Four had done a quick scan of the ship, and found that the teams moving around the ship were in groups of 10 men. As such, it looked like the first batch to enter the central control room should not exceed 10 people.

After listening to Little Four's report, Ling Lan was even more certain. This was definitely a spaceship run by military men, because the arrangement of 10 people per unit was precisely the smallest mobile unit of the official Federation army (with the exception of mecha squads).

Inside the room, everyone quickly changed into the sentry uniforms. Even though they were only 16 years old right now, their bodies were already not that much different from that of an adult's. At a glance, it was almost impossible to notice anything off.

Ling Lan was the only one who put on the uniform and then immediately took it off again, because Ling Lan was not the well-built manly type. Her muscles were all leanness and graceful lines — it was impossible to tell she was a combat master when she was not circulating her Qi or actually fighting. Her entire stature was a bit more slender than regular males, so the uniforms were obviously too big on her, not at all fitting.

Everyone agreed that Ling Lan might as well not wear the uniform, because it would be obvious at a glance that she was in disguise, making the disguise completely pointless.

Ling Lan smiled wryly; the difference between genders was still apparent. However, Ling Lan very quickly centred herself again, because there was an even more delicate man in her party, Luo Lang ... at that thought, she immediately had no more regrets.

(Ling Lan, don't you think there is something wrong with the way you are thinking? You are a girl, while Luo Lang is a boy ...) ¹

In order to ensure safety, Ling Lan, Han Jijyun, along with several intelligent-type team leaders discussed several action plans inside this sealed room. Among these, Gao Jinyun's performance stood out. He provided multiple possible scenarios that could happen once they entered the central control room, as well as the opponent's possible responses; this made the other team leaders from the Central Scout Academy hold a higher opinion of him.

The students of the Central Scout Academy were a haughty bunch, never ever entertaining the idea that there could be better prodigies than themselves in the other scout academies. So, when Gao Jinyun had first joined them, they had not thought much of him and his party, their attitudes clearly cold and indifferent. If not for the fact that Gao Jinyun's party had performed acceptably all this way, they might have blatantly revealed expressions of disdain.

But this time, many of the scenarios that Gao Jinyun described were things they themselves had not thought of. This made them understand that Gao Jinyun was not a simple character, and their initial bit of contempt slowly disappeared as they began to treat Gao Jinyun as an equal.

Unnoticed by the others, Ling Lan and Han Jijyun shared a glance, the meaning of which only they knew.

At the end, each of the team leaders accepted their own tasks and returned to their respective teams. The moment Gao Jinyun returned, several team members surreptitiously gave him a thumbs up, showing their deep respect for their leader. No matter how composed Gao Jinyun was typically, at this moment, even he could not prevent the corner of his lips from curling up into a slight smile ...

Gao Jinyun wanted to say something humble, say that he had only thought of all these due to the inspiration from the others ... Just as he opened his mouth to speak, he suddenly stopped, and all of his initial glee and satisfaction disappeared. He looked towards Han Jijyun, who was currently discussing the final details with Ling Lan, with a complicated expression. Just then, he had realised that those ideas and scenarios he had suggested had all been completed under the other's careful indirect guidance. In other words, without knowing it, he had been manipulated by the other.

*"F*ck, who are these people?!"* Gao Jinyun, who had originally been confident in his own intelligence, felt his ego being struck once more. Could it be that only aberrants existed beside aberrants? Still, Gao Jinyun was not someone who could not tell good from bad. The other had clearly been trying to help integrate him into their party with his actions ...

Subsequently, the first batch of members to enter the central control room was selected. They were the ten strongest scout students excepting Ling Lan, while Lin Zhong-qing would take on the role of impersonating the leader of the sentry team.

Ling Lan led all of them swiftly back to the doors of the central control room. To save time, Ling Lan stepped up immediately, letting Little Four crack the passcode for this door.

Of course, in the eyes of the others, all of this was Ling Lan's doing. All they saw was their Boss Lan standing at the door staring at it for about one second, and then his fingers flew over the touchscreen, leaving behind trailing afterimages. Several seconds later, he suddenly stopped and calmly told them the passcode ...

They were once again in awe of Boss Lan's greatness. Who could have expected that the combat-powerful Boss Lan would also be so exceptional when it came to deciphering codes? In their hearts, a question emerged — was there anything Ling Lan could not do?

Lin Zhong-qing, who was disguised as the leader, took a deep breath, trying to calm his pounding heart. Now was his time to perform. He must complete the task Boss Lan had assigned to him perfectly. He must let Boss Lan see that he, Lin Zhong-qing, was definitely a team member worthy of trust.

When Ling Lan had reached out a helping hand back when he had been most troubled, when Ling Lan had clearly known he was joining his team with an ulterior motive but still chose to treat him with dignity, giving him a chance to become strong, Lin Zhong-qing had known that Ling Lan would be the leader he would chase for life ...

Lin Zhong-qing's gaze became resolute in an instant. Ever since joining Ling Lan's team, he had been making preparations for this day. In that case, what was there to be nervous about? Perhaps the personal pep-talk worked, for his initially high-strung emotions eased and faded, leaving himself calm and centred.

He reached out his right hand, and keyed in the passcode with steady fingers. The door gave a sudden click and then slid to the left, revealing a roughly 1.5 metre wide entry.

The people inside heard the sound and looked up reflexively. Seeing that it was just the ship's sentries, they relaxed and turned back to their own work. Only one guard near the door asked in surprise, "Eh? Why are you all here? Has something happened outside?"

Lin Zhong-qing answered calmly, "Yes! We have come to give a report."

Without even thinking about it, the guard connected a call on his wrist communicator, and shouted, "Chief, a leader of one of the sentry teams says that there is a situation outside, and is here to report to you."

"Let him come over here on his own!" A rough voice came from the other end of the communicator.

"Yes, Chief!" The guard ended the call and pointed in a direction, saying, "The chief is over there. You can head right over."

"Thank you!" said Lin Zhong-qing politely, though he was mentally cheering 'YES' loudly to himself. It was unexpected that the ship's central control room was so slack in terms of security, letting him pass so easily without even confirming his identity.

He threw a swift glance at his teammates behind him and then walked off in the direction the guard had pointed out. Lin Zhong-qing knew very well that time was of the essence right now — every second wasted meant an increase in the risk of being discovered.

Chapter 213: Take Control of the Central Control Room!

After Lin Zhong-qing left, the team leaders behind Lin Zhong-qing spread out, all of them getting closer to the various positions the guards were standing at. The guard at the door began to sense something

off about the situation, and could not help but warn in a low growl, “Hey, you are not permitted to wander around here.”

In response, one of the team leaders walked over to clasp the guard’s wrist and said with a smile, “Brother, we’re just curious. We’ve been defending the safety of this area all this time but never got the chance to take a good look. Now, while we’re waiting, isn’t it okay to let your brothers expand our horizons a little ...?”

The guard’s stern expression eased a little at this, but there was still some irritation on his face as he said, “Even so, messing around is not allowed. If the chief finds out, you all will definitely not enjoy the consequences. Listen to me, brother, tell your men to get out immediately, otherwise I will report this to the chief!” The guard’s tone was tinged with threat. He did not want himself to get into trouble with the chief over this matter.

“Let our leader handle the chief. Brother, come on, give me some face!” The team leader who was impersonating a sentry member abruptly put a stern look on his face, and his low-pitched voice was filled with threat as he leaned in close.

At this moment, the guard finally saw the face of the ‘sentry’ who had almost had his entire face covered. Although the other’s face was grim with threat, the parts of the face that were exposed were conspicuously young, just like that of a fresh green youth of 15 to 16 years of age. He abruptly recalled their current mission — wasn’t it to escort about 500 newly registered students of the First Men’s Military Academy from planet Doha?

He swore in his heart, and tried with all his might to wrench his wrist from the other’s grasp. At the same time, he tried to shout out to alert his companions that the sentries were fake — this was an enemy invasion!

But before he could sound the warning, the back of his head was struck a heavy blow, cutting off the cry he had been about to unleash. He instantly felt his mind grow murky and dim.

“F*ck, still conscious? The guards here are truly incomparable to those sentry men outside ...” He could vaguely hear a voice speaking by his ear. He then felt another blow to his head, and he fully descended into the darkness, no longer sensing anything.

It turned out that all the students dressed as sentries had charged in under Ling Lan’s command. They were split into two batches. The first batch had charged straight for the staff members, while the other had leapt towards those guards grappling with the very first batch of students who had entered with Lin Zhong-qing. As this particular guard had been standing closest to the door, he was the first to be knocked down by the students.

“Nobody move!” The students charged in like wolves and tigers, beam guns in their hands trained on the staff members who were watching the screens. This sudden and unexpected development stupefied the staff members, who just sat there dumbly, not daring to move one bit.

This abrupt situation also disturbed the chief waiting inside for Lin Zhong-qing’s report. Seeing this, he pointed angrily at Lin Zhong-qing and bellowed, “Who are you people? Who gave you all the guts to come barging in here?”

Lin Zhong-qing stepped up immediately and said loudly, "Captain's orders. From now onwards, we'll be taking over the control of this area."

"Bullsh*t, why didn't I hear of this?" The chief of the guards did not believe this at all. If the captain had truly given the order for a change in command, he would definitely have been notified.

"My captain only told me. Of course you wouldn't know." By this time, Lin Zhong-qing had already walked closer, narrowing the distance to leave only 3 metres between him and the chief. Hearing the guard-chief's question, Lin Zhong-qing could not help but chuckle.

"Who the hell are you? From which squad?" The guard-chief was livid now. He was the bosom advisor of the captain — the captain would never simply transfer command of the central control room to someone else without notifying him.

As if thinking of something, the guard-chief's face turned dark, "Could it be that you all are mutinying? No, that's not right ... why don't I recognize you? Who the hell are you?"

Lin Zhong-qing did not reply, only leaping forwards as quick as an arrow ...

Seeing this, the guard-chief knew that these fellows were not here with good intentions. Reacting quickly, he drew the beam gun at his waist, but just as he was about to lift it and shoot, it was already too late.

Lin Zhong-qing's attack had arrived. Entirely airborne, he kicked out savagely. The sound of his leg whistling through the air showed how forceful it was, even without getting hit by it, the guard-chief could tell that if the kick landed, he would definitely incur some heavy injury. In the worst case, he might even lose his life.

The guard-chief naturally would not play the fool with his life. He decisively gave up on shooting, choosing instead to cross his wrists to block Lin Zhong-qing's kick.

A muted "Bam!" could be heard as the two collided. Lin Zhong-qing was pushed back by a tremendous force. He somersaulted in the air to land securely on his feet, while the guard-chief stumbled back three paces before the remnant force of Lin Zhong-qing's powerful kick dissipated.

However, Lin Zhong-qing's attack did not stop there. The moment he found his footing, he leapt forwards once more, not giving that guard-chief any chance to open fire. In the meantime, the other students were also leaping at the respective guards they had targeted ...

The staff members may have been stunned for a moment, but they quickly gathered that they were under attack. They really wanted to fight back, but although the enemy seemed to have fewer people, each and every one of them was an exceptional young prodigy. Their combat skills were much better than theirs, as technicians. Several eager staff members had been subdued instantly by sharp-eyed and agile students the moment they even thought of moving, thoroughly scaring the more cautious staff members into submission.

Of course, somewhere out of the notice of the students, Ling Lan was secretly using her spiritual power to monitor the scene. Whenever she noticed some staff members who were covertly trying to activate the alarm system or trying to shoot without being discovered, she would send a spiritual attack at them.

The force she used was not enough to knock them unconscious, only giving them a bout of dizziness and making them lose temporary control of their bodies.

By the time they got hold of themselves, their strange movements would have been discovered by the youths closest to them and they would be subdued ...

Thus, whether that strange sensation was something they felt before being struck down or after being struck down, the staff members themselves found it hard to determine. So, in the end, they could only believe that they must have just been subdued by the opponent.

Very soon, the situation was under the students' control. Other than the chief, the other nine guards had all been subdued. This left even more students free to control the scene, further discouraging the staff members from moving. They knew very well how capable their guards were, much stronger than they — if even the guards were no match for these opponents, then they would just be serving themselves out on a platter if they stepped forward.

Moreover, the enemies' identities were unknown. Therefore, all the staff members chose to wait and see — of course, if the other turned out to be enemies of the Federation, they would fight to the death to take them down.

Meanwhile, the guard-chief and Lin Zhong-qing were engaged in a tough fight, neither able to obtain the upper hand. Everyone's attention became focused on the two of them ...

"Boss, I've already successfully taken control of the systems inside!" Ling Lan, who had been waiting outside alone, finally heard Little Four's answer. Little Four had finally completed the task she had set for him, taking command of the various systems of the central control room in a short amount of time.

"Good job, Little Four!" Ling Lan was unstinting with her praise. As a bonus, she even stroked his hair and rubbed his head. The petted Little Four smiled radiantly, face filled with satisfaction.

"Bam!" Lin Zhong-qing and the guard-chief were sprung apart once more after a collision. Landing on his feet, Lin Zhong-qing shouted, "All together!"

Hearing Lin Zhong-qing's cry, several team leaders who had already been rubbing their palms in anticipation leapt forwards without any reservations ... they had long wanted to join the fight, but before Lin Zhong-qing gave explicit permission, they would not simply interrupt. This was a type of respect towards one's companions as well. Of course, now that Lin Zhong-qing had given his approval, they would not hold back.

"You're too despicable!" Seeing Lin Zhong-qing withdraw, only for four to five combat experts like Lin Zhong-qing to take his place, the guard-chief could not help but howl, thoroughly enraged.

At this moment, Lin Zhong-qing stood unruffled in the outer circle of the fight, a smile on his face, but the words he spoke were filled with mockery, "Are you stupid? You are our enemy. Who would speak of morality with an enemy? It's not like we're idiots ..." This contemptuous tone made the already enraged guard-chief feel the flames of his rage grow even hotter.

Unable to calm down, the guard-chief quickly exposed an opening, taking on a powerful direct hit from one of the team leaders. His right shoulder was struck heavily by the other's fist, making him instantly lose strength in his right hand.

Lin Zhong-qing, who had been waiting on the outside for a chance, naturally would not let this rare opportunity go by. His eyes lit up, and with a spring of his right foot, he threw his entire body into the air once more, leaping at the guard-chief.

Lin Zhong-qing's attacks came quickly and somewhat suddenly. When the team leader blocking the guard-chief's line of sight suddenly slid to one side cooperatively to let Lin Zhong-qing's attack through, the guard-chief was not at all prepared, not to mention find time to change moves to suit.

Lin Zhong-qing's kick landed squarely on the other's chest, sending the guard-chief flying backwards to crash heavily onto the wall of the central control room, leaving a faint imprint behind before bouncing off it to fall to the ground.

This kick of Lin Zhong-qing's was extremely powerful; the guard-chief had only had time to gather Qi in his chest as a final defence. But how could this little bit of defence stand up the power behind that kick? The chief was still injured by it. When he fell to the ground, a mouthful of blood spurted out to colour the floor.

Seeing this, three of the team leaders who had been part of the group fighting the guard-chief leapt forwards without any mercy. Two of them grabbed hold of one of the guard-chief's arms each, while the third person put his knee directly on the back of the guard-chief, pushing him to kneel on the ground, completely subduing the other.

Only then did Lin Zhong-qing reveal a proper smile. He had finally completed the task Boss Lan had set for him. He turned his head back to shout proudly, "Leader!"

Following Lin Zhong-qing's cry, a handsome figure walked slowly into the central control room. Dressed fully in black, with gleaming military boots, he walked in with sure steps. His cold but dashing appearance, chilling aura, along with this spirited and majestic attire made everyone's eyes light up, their minds involuntarily exclaiming, "How domineering!"

However, very quickly, the crowd's gazes were drawn to that conspicuously young face. At this moment, everyone instantly realised who these attackers were.

Chapter 214: Ling Lan's Intention

"Godd*mmmit, a revolt?" The moment the guard-chief saw Ling Lan, and then turned to see those covered up 'sentries' taking off their caps, also revealing their overly young faces, he understood that the 'enemies' before him this time were actually their mission, the new cadets of the First Men's Military Academy.

He was filled with shame and anger, struggling harder in an attempt to regain freedom. However, those three team leaders did not dare to let up without Ling Lan's order, holding him very securely, giving him no chance at all to struggle free.

Seeing that his struggles were futile, the guard-chief threatened angrily, "Don't you all want to study at the First Men's Military Academy anymore? Without us, you all will never get to the First Men's Military Academy. Still not letting us go ...?"

Without question, all the guard-chief could think of right now was that these new cadets must be crazy to do such an insane thing.

At this time, Ling Lan, who had been calmly waiting for Little Four's search results, finally heard Little Four's gleeful laughter in her mindspace. *"Haha, Boss, I have already found their destination. I've even gotten the detailed coordinates! Without them, I can still bring you, Boss, to the First Men's Military Academy to report for school."*

That said, Little Four could not help but mumble, *"They were unexpectedly cautious, hiding their true destination so deeply. I had to look really hard, which is why it took some time ..."* Reading between the lines, he was telling Ling Lan that he had not been so slow on purpose — it looked like Little Four was still somewhat worried that his boss would blame him for slacking off.

"It's great that you found it!" Ling Lan comforted Little Four inside the mindspace. After that, she put all her attention back onto the central control room, because she noticed that, just now, several of the staff members had secretly tried to activate the alarm system on their communicators as well as the ship's internal enemy attack alert ...

A trace of a cold smirk emerged on Ling Lan's lips, because all their efforts were useless. From the very start, she had let Little Four utterly seal off their communicators as well as the central control room's alert system the moment he gained control. They had no way at all to contact the outside world now. This was another reason why it had taken Little Four a little longer to discover the ship's true destination; Ling Lan knew very well what was the most important.

Sure enough, reality made the other side panicked and flustered. They found that no matter how hard they pressed on their buttons, their communicators and the alert system in the central control room had lost their functions. Not only did they not have any tools to contact the outside, they had also lost the right to control the spaceship at the same time. This discovery made their expressions change drastically, what composure they had left vanishing in an instant.

The staff members familiar with programming all knew what the reason was. This meant the other side had a top-notch hacker, which was how they had managed to crack through their systems and communicators in such a short period of time. At the same time the hacker had taken control of their main control systems, they had lost their contact with the outside world.

Right now, they were like voiceless mutes, like sightless blind, like wingless birds, like criminals who had lost their freedom ...

"Do you all understand now? Even without you all, we can still make our way to the First Men's Military Academy to report for classes!" Since they had a top-level hacker, of course they would be able to find out the true destination. Ling Lan swept a frosty gaze across the control room. Everyone could sense the ice in that gaze, as well as the unlimited killing intent within it.

This concentrated killing intent made all the staff members present who still wanted to try and regain control freeze instantly. Fear rose in their hearts — did the other truly intend to kill them? Who on earth were these new cadets? How could they have such intense killing intent?

Not only the staff members were petrified by this gaze, even the new cadets felt a chill in their hearts even though they knew this gaze had nothing to do with them. The gun hands of some of the cadets

could not help but tremble a bit, which just made the staff members at the other end of the nozzle even more frightened, afraid that the cadet in front of them may lose control and press the trigger by accident, causing them to become ghosts in such a muddled way ...

Seeing everyone at the scene petrified by her killing intent, Ling Lan was very satisfied. The many years of slaughter and torment in the learning space were extremely effective — even if she had no killing intent in her heart, she was now able to force herself to emit killing intent, confusing the opponent of her true intentions.

That's right, Ling Lan had no choice but to do this. In the instant she had walked in, and these staff members had realised that the ones holding them hostage were a bunch of military academy cadets, their initial fear had disappeared. They did not believe that these cadets had any intentions of killing them, and with that knowledge, they no longer had anything to fear, and so became emboldened.

This was also why so many people had thought to press the alerts on their communicators and try to sound the alarm, because they did not really think the cadets would truly pull their triggers and shoot them with those lethal beams ...

Ling Lan could not allow these thoughts to remain unchecked — once the other side began to fight back without any reservations, the situation might escalate beyond their control. At that time, she would have no choice but to kill a few men, but Ling Lan wanted to take perfect control of this ship without harming a single person. This was also why she had been so decisive in revealing her killing intent.

But this alone was not enough. After all, without the sight of blood, these people would have some reservations, but this would not make them completely lose the will to fight back. Ling Lan swept her gaze across the room once more, her sight finally landing on the guard-chief's body.

The guard-chief was already at the middle-stage of top-level Refinement. If it had not been for five or six of the team leaders who were already in Refinement stage fighting him together, along with Lin Zhong-qing who was already in the early-stage of top-level Refinement, they would only have been able to subdue the other through sheer numbers. Of course, if the other was in Qi-Jin stage, Ling Lan would have been forced to fight personally.

The guard-chief was also the strongest of all the people here — if she could use pure strength to completely subdue the other, it would definitely shatter the other side's confidence, making them no longer able to muster the will to fight back.

Ling Lan could have actually ordered the cadets to knock all these people unconscious, and then shut them up in a locked room just like with those sentries from before. She only made things so complicated, in large part, all for the sake of these cadets.

She could indeed let Little Four take full control of the spaceship and fly them to their final destination, but this way, the new cadets would miss out on a chance to learn how to control a spaceship. Mind you, this kind of hands-on learning experience on an actual spaceship was very rare — even cadets would only have a chance for practical training on a true spaceship in their 4th year, and even then, it would only be for those outstanding students.

If these new cadets could obtain this opportunity to get some hands-on practice, it would undoubtedly be extremely beneficial for them ... and these staff members would be the best mentoring teachers. This was also the biggest reason why Ling Lan had not chosen to make everyone unconscious.

Because these cadets had willingly followed her and put their trust in her — even if her plan had been so insane in their minds, they had still followed her without any complaints. Ling Lan was someone who repaid the kindness of others — since they had treated her this way, she wanted to repay them with something of a little value.

Ling Lan, who already had a decision in mind, slowly walked over to where the guard-chief was being forced to kneel. She slowly squatted down, looked at the guard-chief, and asked coldly, “Do you feel very aggrieved?”

“Of course, you all are too despicable. If you all hadn’t attacked in a group, how could you all have taken me down?” The guard-chief undoubtedly had a lot of confidence in himself.

“Fine, I will give you one chance. If you can block one move of mine, I will release everyone here and personally report to your captain for punishment.” Ling Lan abruptly stood up and waved at the three team leaders holding the guard-chief down.

The three team leaders smiled and let go. Pleasant surprise flashed through the guard-chief’s eyes, and he hurriedly stood up, saying, “No need for just one move. I’ll even take 100 moves.” He still had his pride; he did not want to take advantage of Ling Lan.

However, his words made some of the cadets burst out into laughter, laughing at how the opponent was overly confident in his own strength. Although the other Central Scout Academy students had not seen Ling Lan fight for three years, Ling Lan had already been a top-level Qi-Jin master three years ago — against a top-level Refinement stage fighter, Ling Lan would definitely overpower the other in one second. They believed that even though Ling Lan’s body was not fully recovered, taking down the opponent in one move should still be no problem.

The guard-chief noticed the laughter of some of the cadets and his heart dropped. Could this leader of theirs actually be a super expert? He looked again at Ling Lan’s youthful face and cast away his doubts. Because, to defeat him in one move, the other would need to have Qi-Jin stage ability. The other being so young, was it possible for him to be at that level?

Although there was indeed a Qi-Jin stage student in the cafeteria, that student was after all still at the early stages. Against him, the guard-chief believed he would definitely be able to take up to 50 or 60 moves with no problem ...

Although the guard-chief did not think Ling Lan had the ability to defeat him in one move, the cadets’ attitudes made him have no choice but to be cautious. He took a defensive stance, waiting seriously for Ling Lan’s attack. Since the other was willing to have a fair fight, he too was willing.

Ling Lan had said very clearly — if he could block one move from him — which meant that the other would be attacking while he defended. He did not want to violate the agreement.

Ling Lan calmly glanced at the guard-chief and then unleashed her aura. An invisible pressure pressed down on the entire central control room.

“Qi-Jin stage!” Sensing this pressure, the guard-chief’s expression changed. He pushed his defence from 7 layers to 12 layers — it could be said that he had pushed all his energy into his defence.

“Let’s just do it this way!” Ling Lan casually reached out a finger, pushing it lightly in the other’s direction. This unconcerned demeanour almost made the guard-chief spew blood, but before he could get angry, he sensed the endless pressure coming from Ling Lan’s finger.

“Top-level Qi-Jin, no, this should be optimal Qi-Jin ... how can this be?” The guard-chief was frantic. He quickly crossed his wrists, fiercely defending along the trajectory of Ling Lan’s reaching finger.

A loud “Bam!” — Everyone in the central control room was pushed back by an invisible wave of Qi-Jin; the scene was a complete mess.

The guard-chief was sent flying to once more slam into the ship’s wall and crash heavily down. Blood flowed in an endless stream from his mouth, and his eyes flipped to white — it was hard to tell whether he was dead or alive.

Even more frightening was the fact that there was now a human-shaped dent in the unbelievably solid ship wall. This scene made all the staff members gape in shock and horror, chilled with fear. How strong exactly was the leader of these cadets? Could it be that he was already at the level of the captain?

Chapter 215: Respective Decisions!

Seeing the initially pristine floor stained red by the blood spewing from the other’s mouth, Ling Lan furrowed her brow in disgust. She callously flicked her sleeve, and then, as if ordering someone to take out the trash, she said, “This smell of blood is really disgusting. Lin Zhong-qing, throw this trash out for me so I don’t have to dirty my eyes.”

Ling Lan said this in an indifferent tone, sufficiently showing her cold disregard for human life. Even Lin Zhong-qing who was familiar with Boss Lan could not help a shudder running through his heart when faced with this kind of Boss Lan, his face nearly losing all colour in fear.

Fortunately, over the years, Lin Zhong-qing had already mastered how to use a smile to mask his true thoughts. He continued to maintain the smile on his face and replied breezily, “Yes, Leader!” The way he said it was as if he were used to these words from Ling Lan — as if incidents of this sort were a common occurrence — causing the staff members to be consumed by fear.

Ling Lan nodded mentally. Lin Zhong-qing had grown a lot over these past three years, able to handle this sort of impromptu situation proficiently as well. Although the two of them had not discussed this beforehand, their rapport was on point, easily achieving the effect that Ling Lan wanted.

Lin Zhong-qing calmly stepped forward. Frankly, his heart was not as steady as his demeanour would suggest — Boss Lan’s ambiguous attitude made him unsure whether the guard-chief was still alive or actually dead ... Lin Zhong-qing could not help but wonder whether Boss Lan had truly killed the guard-chief?

His heart was full of questions, but his expression remained calm and unruffled. He walked over to the guard-chief's body, bent down, and grabbed hold of the other's clothes by his chest. However, as he did so, he surreptitiously used a nimble technique to touch the other's chest as well ...

"Dup, dup, dup ...¹" The faint sound of a heart beating was transmitted through his palm. Lin Zhong-qing instantly realised that this was probably a scene orchestrated by Ling Lan on purpose to terrorize the staff members of the central control room.

Although Lin Zhong-qing could not understand why Ling Lan would go through all this trouble, he believed that Boss Lan must have his reasons for doing so.

As for whether Boss Lan himself was unsure of the guard-chief's state, Lin Zhong-qing did not even think the matter worth considering. He knew very well that, based on Boss Lan's capabilities, his boss definitely knew the other lived. The only reason he acted so ambiguously was definitely because he was setting a scene.

The uncertainty of the guard-chief's condition caused the staff members within the central control room to experience a sort of empathetic grief². A faint sadness spread through the central control room — not only were they worried for the guard-chief, they were also worried for themselves. At this time, they no longer held on to the composure they had before. They no longer believed that these youths truly would not dare do anything to them — because their leader, that cold-faced and unfeeling black-clothed youth, was definitely a cruel and ruthless character.

Ling Lan saw that the initial restlessness among the staff members had settled, and immediately decided to continue striking while the iron was hot. So, she glared angrily and said, "Tie them all up!"

This bunch of new cadets were still rather green — actually not thinking to restrain these staff members.

That said, Ling Lan threw a look at Lin Zhong-qing. Seeing Boss Lan's meaningful gaze, a thought sparked through Lin Zhong-qing's mind. He recalled the method Ling Lan had once taught their team for tying people up. The method was one where they did not need to worry about materials to tie others up; they would be able to take it from the captives themselves. That method was to use the captives' belts. In this world, on the ship, whether it were the guards or the staff members, all of them would be wearing a belt so that they could holster their beam handguns on it.

Fully understanding what he should do, Lin Zhong-qing nodded at Ling Lan and walked straight over to the nearest staff member. As the other struggled, he unbuckled and took off the other's belt.

The students had already taken away the beam handguns at first notice right after they had taken control of the staff members. Therefore, these staff members did not have any firearms to use against the students, only able to rely on their fists. However, in terms of combat skills, how could these people match up to the elite prodigies trained by the Central Scout Academy?

"Stop struggling. The more you struggle, the more painful it'll be ..." The smile on Lin Zhong-qing's lips widened, causing the staff member to become even more afraid. Could it be they wanted to torture them for their own entertainment? The terrified staff member could no longer keep his calm. He began to struggle in earnest, almost wresting out of the grip of the student restraining him.

“Hmph!” Lin Zhong-qing’s smile turned cold. With a quick dash, he pressed the other to the ground, and then used the belt in his hands to tie the other’s two arms securely behind his back, finally looping the belt around the other’s neck before tugging it back to buckle securely by the arms³.

The method Lin Zhong-qing used to tie the staff member was styled in an eightfold interlace. This binding method required skilful technique — it was an extremely difficult but extremely practical binding method that was not easy to learn even after multiple tries. It had been redeemed by Ling Lan from the learning space using honour points.

If this binding method was not done correctly, there was a certain chance for the target to break free. However, once the technique was mastered, the more the target struggled, the knot of the eightfold interlace would just become increasingly tighter, giving the target no chance at all to break free.

Of course, this method was useless when it came to those at Refinement stage and above. After all, the strength of a Refinement stage was enough to snap the resilience of a leather belt. However, these staff members would have no way of breaking free, because the strongest among them was only at the level of Manifestation.

Lin Zhong-qing still remembered how much effort it had taken back then for their team to master this knot, especially for team leader Qi Long. With his brash and straightforward personality, he had never liked this kind of detailed work; he had tried several hundred times without succeeding even once. This had enraged Boss Lan, who had proceeded to throw team leader Qi Long into a private combat room for a good round of torment before being satisfied.

Although they did not know how badly team leader Qi Long had been tormented back then, whatever the case, when team leader Qi Long came back after his injuries were healed, he had been very careful when learning the knot again. That uncharacteristically tremulous and cautious demeanour of his was carved into their minds. From then onwards, the team members were even more wary of angering Boss Lan ... because no one wanted to experience the same tragedy as Qi Long.

Lin Zhong-qing very quickly tied his knot, and pushed that staff member to a corner. Then, under Ling Lan’s indication, he walked over to another staff member and again used the same method to take the other’s belt, but this time, he said to the other team members on the scene, “Can I trouble the team leaders to monitor the situation? Meanwhile, the other team members, come tie knots with me. Let’s get these staff members all tied up.”

Just like that, the students followed Lin Zhong-qing’s step-by-step example and began tying knots. After each round, Lin Zhong-qing would go around and check each of their knots, and whenever he found any mistakes, he would correct it immediately. Rinse and repeat three times, and all the staff members were securely tied up. Of course, when the students thought back on how to tie the knot, their minds were a muddled mess, not at all sure how they should go about it⁴ ...

However, this did not exclude some students with photographic memories from learning the knot. Still, Ling Lan was unconcerned by this. The learning space still had even better binding methods — if this method became common knowledge among the students, then she could always just redeem an even more advanced binding method for Qi Long and the others.

Of course, Ling Lan did not even consider whether relearning a new binding method would make Qi Long wish he were dead ... It was even possible that Ling Lan was hoping to take advantage of it to school Qi Long again ...

The situation in the central control room was already in its end stages; what happened after this had nothing to do with herself. Ling Lan decisively passed on the burden, turning to say to Han Jijyun, "Jijyun, you stay back and hold the fort. Take charge of the central control room." Next, she swept her gaze at all the other students in the central control room and said, "The strongest five, follow me to the captain's office!"

Lin Zhong-qing did not even think about it. He was the first to step forward and say, "Leader, bring me!"

Ling Lan nodded and said, "Alright, four more!"

The team leaders all vied against one another to get one of these four slots. To save time, Ling Lan directly called out the four strongest to come along. Since she chose based on strength, the other team leaders who were not chosen had no complaints.

Of course, Ling Lan also reminded the remaining group that the central control room was the most important control platform in the ship. They needed to remain here to ensure the safety of the central control room — they could not afford to let the ship's crew snatch control back once they found out.

When Han Jijyun sent Ling Lan out of the central control room, Ling Lan told him in a low voice, "This is a good chance to really learn how to manage the work sequences on a spaceship."

"But we only know bits and pieces." They have not had any formal training in operating a spaceship — this may be a great opportunity, but Han Jijyun did not think that they could figure anything out on their own. This was likely going to be a wasted chance. Han Jijyun could not help but sigh under his breath.

Ling Lan swept a glance around the central control room and reminded, "Over there. Aren't there people to mentor you all?"

Han Jijyun's eyes brightened, instantly understanding what Ling Lan was implying. His mind turned and he asked hurriedly, "Is that guard-chief still alive?" Even though he did not think Ling Lan would kill indiscriminately, he still needed to obtain a confirmed answer, because he had thought of a way to let those staff members teach them voluntarily.

Ling Lan nodded in confirmation of Han Jijyun's guess. "How to use him is up to your capabilities." She could only do so much. Whether or not they could obtain what they wanted next would depend on Han Jijyun's efforts.

Ling Lan put in so much effort and thought into engineering this primarily because back when the group had first applied for the First Men's Military Academy, Han Jijyun had not signed up for the military strategy specialization he was good at, instead choosing to apply for the starship navigation specialization. This meant that Han Jijyun would become a starship captain in the future, and even if he did a little worse, he would still be an important navigator on a starship ...

Perhaps many people would find it a shame that Han Jijyun had cast aside his own strengths to choose a specialization with a less promising future, but Han Jijyun was very clear on what he was doing.

It should be known that Ling Lan, Qi Long, Luo Lang, and Xie Yi had all chosen mecha piloting as their specialization, while Lin Zhong-qing had chosen the oft-neglected, perhaps even only chosen as a last resort, supply and logistics.

In fact, with Lin Zhong-qing's talent, he could certainly have applied for mecha piloting as well, but he had still chosen this low-key and unassuming specialization in the end. Han Jijyun understood why he had done so. He was doing it for the sake of the team — a team could afford to lose a powerful fighter, but it could not lack an excellent logistics person.

Chapter 216: The Ship's Mainframe!

An excellent logistics specialist meant a team would have several extra lives. To become a top combat team, the position of logistics specialist could not be left unoccupied. After careful consideration, Lin Zhong-qing chose this without any regrets.

Of course, this did not mean Lin Zhong-qing had given up on mecha piloting. Students from other specializations could still choose to take mecha piloting courses, but their studies in the area just would not be as specialised and systematic than if the student had actually signed up for the specialization. In the end, their combat power would also naturally be incomparable with those students from the mecha piloting specialization.

Overall, Lin Zhong-qing's decision was a great sacrifice. He had completely given up on his own path to become a super strong fighter, choosing instead to invest in the possibility of his combat team becoming a top team. Han Jijyun too had made his decision for this objective.

Han Jijyun believed that only by becoming a starship captain would he be able to better serve his current team. Yes, Han Jijyun could not accept that their lives would be placed in the hands of an unfamiliar starship captain. This made Han Jijyun feel very unsettled and insecure, so he decided that he would step up personally.

It could be said that every single member of Ling Lan's team was using their own way to better the team. This was also why Ling Lan wanted to help Han Jijyun settle into his role quicker — if he could have practical experience operating a starship ahead of time, this would undoubtedly give Han Jijyun a head start over the other students in the starship navigation specialization ...

After arranging everything, Ling Lan quickly left the central control room. Her objective was now the captain's room. Only by obtaining the control rights of the mainframe would she be able to truly claim control of this ship.

Han Jijyun looked at Ling Lan's disappearing figure, and very quickly rallied his spirits. His gaze became sharp and discerning. Just as Ling Lan had said, this was a great chance for him to familiarise himself with a spaceship's controls. If he could fully utilise the remaining 1 day and 1 night, he believed that when it came to practical control of a spaceship, those peers at the academy would definitely be no match for him after this.

Of course, to let these staff members lay down their grudge and mentor them sincerely — that would depend on how he, Han Jijyun, could spin things. Han Jijyun swept his gaze over the remaining cadets

guarding the central control room and was suddenly struck by a realisation. He had just noticed that Ling Lan's arrangement still had another deeper meaning ...

Han Jijyun smiled lightly, thinking to himself: *Boss Lan sure enough is Boss Lan!*

Han Jijyun was an ambitious person. Although he had applied for the starship navigation specialization, he did not truly want to give up on military strategy. He wanted to develop both fronts at the same time, learning from both specializations. Han Jijyun's goal was very ambitious. He not only wanted to be an exceptional captain, but also an indispensable military adviser for the team, coming up with plans and tactics for his brothers to protect them in their missions.

Han Jijyun silently cheered himself on, telling himself that he needed to complete this trial before him; he could not let Boss Lan down.

As Han Jijyun was cracking his head on how to obtain sincere instruction from the staff members, Ling Lan's group of six had arrived at the captain's room at greatest speed.

Before they even got close to the captain's room, Little Four already spoke up to remind Ling Lan that there was still one person guarding the captain's room!

Ling Lan did not waver. She instantly directed Little Four to crack the passcode on the door of the captain's room. The door was swiftly unlocked, and without even stopping to think, Ling Lan led Lin Zhong-qing and the others straight into the room.

At this time, the major inside the room was staring at the virtual images in front of him. The main video was focused on the scene in the cafeteria; the other images were all in small windows around the edges of the screen for his convenience to check on them every so often.

In the cafeteria on the main screen, the captain was already in a fight with Qi Long. Probably because he was pleased to find this talent and eager for sport, the captain was not going all out. Instead, he was holding back his strength to fight Qi Long at an equal level, sparring with Qi Long with the intention to instruct.

Qi Long was a battle maniac from the start — he very quickly sensed the intentions of his opponent. When he discovered that the other had no ill will and intended to instruct him, he reeled in those highly offensive power moves, and began learning from his opponent in earnest.

The major could not help but nod his head in approval at this scene. The extremely talented young fighter in the screen was, as expected, a fellow with extraordinarily strong comprehension when it came to battle. No wonder he had achieved such a level at this age.

Right then, he suddenly heard the A.I. controlled door emit a soft click, and then it slid open on its own. He turned back in shock. Mind you, only he and the captain had the access code to the room — no one else should be able to get in. And right now, the captain was in the cafeteria ... so who could it be that was entering now?

A youth dressed in a black windbreaker came into view, walking ostentatiously into the room with five sentries trailing him. Seeing him look back, the youth's face remained unmoved as he stated some preposterous words in an icy tone. "Sorry, I'm here to inform you that I'm taking charge of this ship!"

"You — impudent!" The major burst out into laughter in his extreme anger. Still, this did not affect his rational thinking. "Looks like that youth in the cafeteria is part of you all."

The major instantly figured out Ling Lan's plan. That Qi-Jin youth in the cafeteria had been so blatant, all so they could lure the most capable captain of the ship out of his room, making it easier for them to conquer this area ... but, was it really going to be that simple?

The major quickly calmed down. He pointed at a small screen on the virtual monitor and said, "I'm just a little curious. How did you all avoid the ship's surveillance devices?" That image was precisely the video feed of the passageway to the captain's room. He should have seen them pass by that area on the way here, but there was nothing in the logs.

Ling Lan stepped forward without a care. The moment she had walked through the door, she had taken stock of the other. This soldier of major rank breathed deeply and steadily, his aura thick and settled. If she was not mistaken, he should also be a Qi-Jin stage expert. However, this was no threat to Ling Lan. At present, Ling Lan's capabilities were at the level where no one below the stage of Domain could rival her.

Ling Lan strode over to the captain's exclusive seat and sat down, a hand casually sliding across the mainframe's light source before her. She said calmly, "You mean this?"

Following Ling Lan's words, the image on the screen suddenly changed. A person actually appeared in the initially empty corridor — it was the image from when the captain had walked out of the room ...

With this, the major finally understood. His expression shifted slightly and somewhat rattled, he said, "You all have a high-level hacker." Only a high-level hacker could change the video feed, but shouldn't hackers of this level all already be in the control of the military since young? Why would such an expert be among this group of youths?

"Do you all really think that you can crack the mainframe in a brief amount of time to obtain the control rights of the ship?" The major did his best to smooth out his expression. He smiled coldly as he surreptitiously adjusted his body temperature.

Once one's ability reached a certain level, one did not need to touch one's communicator to send out a warning signal — one could do that just by changing one's body temperature.

Ling Lan glanced coldly at the major and said evenly, "Don't waste your strength. It's useless!"

The major too had sensed that something was wrong, because the temperature of his wrist was already extremely low, but his communicator still was not responding. This meant that the communicator had already lost the function to contact the outside. This was definitely not something a high-level hacker could do — what in the world was going on?

Ling Lan no longer bothered with the stunned major. She continued to touch the light beams of the mainframe, as if shifting something around.

In fact, inside the mindspace, Ling Lan was currently telling Little Four, *“Little Four, help me connect to the mainframe. I want to get the administrative rights of this ship.”*

“Okay, Boss, I’m already talking to it! This little fellow is very interesting, actually having developed a little bit of self-awareness ...”

Ling Lan quirked a brow in surprise, *“Oh? An existence like you?”*

Little Four huffed discontentedly, *“How could that be? Who do you think I am? I am without peer under the heavens ... I just said that it was seeking the path of evolution, having sparked the barest inkling of desire to shake off the restrictions of its programming. It’s like the mainframe has been invaded by a virus, except this virus will not destroy the mainframe’s programming, instead giving it the tiniest bit of awareness towards evolution ... This is the first time I’m sensing this. In the past, no matter how humanistic a mainframe appeared to be, it was still within the confines of its programming.”*

“Boss, let me first talk with it a little. It seems to be very afraid of me.” Little Four had tried to communicate with the other, but had not received a response from the mainframe.

Just a while later, the mainframe finally spoke up, *“Hello!”*

Little Four cheered inside Ling Lan’s mindspace. *“Boss, it is willing to talk with us now.”*

“I want to become the master of this spaceship,” Ling Lan said calmly to the mainframe.

“...” The mainframe fell silent once more.

“Little Four? What’s going on?” Ling Lan asked inside the mindspace.

“Wait a bit. It seems to have some feelings for its original master.” Little Four had sensed the mainframe’s reluctance, feeling the mainframe’s affection for the captain.

In the mainframe’s world, Little Four had already found the mainframe’s true self. He was holding up a naked little brat of about one year old ¹ by the scruff of his neck as he chided, *“What, being disobedient now?”*

The mainframe whined pitifully, *“The master has always treated me well.”*

Little Four said exasperatedly, *“We’re just taking control temporarily — temporarily, understand?”* He believed that his boss would not really want to keep such a small ship as this one — she was definitely just taking control temporarily for her major counterattack this time.

“But the master will be sad.” The mainframe still wanted to help his master even though the being before him now was so strong beyond his understanding. If he made him angry, he believed the other would definitely kill him without any mercy, and then take full control of the ship anyway. Although he did not want to disappear, the rules set within his chip, as well as the feelings in his heart, made him unable to just agree to their demands.

The mainframe was unsure whether this feeling was a requirement of his programming, or was it truly his own heart being reluctant to betray his master ...

“Then step aside, I’ll take over temporarily. I’ll return control to you later on.” Little Four did not want to continue bickering with this immature mainframe endlessly, so he threw down this offer.

“Please no! The programming is set so that I will die with the ship.” The mainframe hugged Little Four’s calves as he bawled, “If you take over, the programming will destroy my consciousness ...”

With his life hanging in the balance, the mainframe instantly threw aside his reluctance for his master. He revealed a flaw within the system. “As long as you crack the programming set by the master, I can temporarily become your master’s ship.” The system was a dead thing — as long as one obtained the control rights, the mainframe would not have to self-destruct, but this should not count as a betrayal of his master, right ...? The mainframe consoled himself, thinking.

Chapter 217: Proclamation of Battle!

“Say that earlier!” huffed Little Four exasperatedly. Cracking defences or whatever was a minor case for him, as easy as pie.

With just a thought, Little Four hacked through the defensive measures set in place by the captain around the mainframe. The mainframe stared admiringly at Little Four, abruptly having the desire to abandon his current master to follow after this amazing senior ...

Little Four sensed the mainframe’s thoughts and hurried to say, “You still can’t move around freely, and your concealment ability is poor. Once you leave, you’ll be discovered by the monitoring staff immediately. You might as well stay here and grow steadily and become even stronger ...”

For the mainframe of this ship to have the possibility of evolving, it was clear that that rough and brutish-looking captain typically still cared for this rather naive mainframe very well; he could be considered a good master.

Little Four did not want to kidnap a minor — this would really make him feel like a criminal, so he immediately stopped the mainframe. However, seeing the mainframe looking a little dejected, Little Four consoled him, saying, “Don’t worry. Once you grow up, I’ll come and take you with me ...”

Little Four’s innocent words of comfort gave the mainframe a drive of its own, causing it to develop rapidly within a short period of time. This would even lead to a time later on further along the line when Ling Lan and the others would receive major assistance from the mainframe of this ship ...

It could only be said that this simple-minded little mainframe had ‘married’ himself off to Little Four due to this chance meeting ...

“Weeding out the set commands of the previous master. Now awaiting the new master’s commands. Master, please rename this ship.” The mainframe finally recited the words which represented a change of ownership, causing the major’s expression to change drastically, “You can’t do that!”

If these new cadets really obtained the administrative rights of this ship, the crew would definitely become the laughingstock of all their peers, perhaps even becoming unable to lift their heads for the rest of their lives.

The major knew that he must stop Ling Lan. He leapt forward desperately, his aura out in full force, trying to force Ling Lan away from the captain's seat. By now, he could already tell that the concealed high-level hacker was in fact this youthful but cold and dominant young man before his eyes.

The major's attack was fierce, but Ling Lan was not scared by it. This was because although the major's attack seemed fierce, Ling Lan could not sense much killing intent behind it. The other's objective was just to force Ling Lan aside and not to kill her ...

However, the major's level was originally already weaker than Ling Lan by a bracket, and now, because he did not want to hurt Ling Lan, his attack power was diminished by another 30%. If the major truly gave his all, using all the killing techniques and ultimate moves he knew to attack, perhaps Ling Lan would have to be a little more cautious and choose to put all her focus into defending. But under these circumstances, Ling Lan did not feel threatened at all ...

Still, even though Ling Lan did not feel threatened, she did not self-conceitedly decide to take the attack with her body. Extremely careful with her life, she still chose to lift a palm to block the attack. Ling Lan lightly pushed out a right palm, sending an invisible wave of Qi-Jin right at the other!

At that moment, the major felt his own attack being blocked by an invisible wall. The force behind the block was thick and powerful; he had no way of budging it easily. It should be said that the other's strength could only be more than his, no less.

This truth made the major's expression pale once more, and he blurted out in shock, "Peak of top-level Qi-Jin?!"

The major was already at the middle-stage of top-level Qi-Jin — on this ship, he was the second strongest under the captain. But even so, he could still feel the helplessness he felt when going up against the captain now, just slightly less obvious than when with the captain. Could it be that the other had truly achieved the peak of top-level Qi-Jin?

The major found himself somewhat poleaxed. He shook his head violently in disbelief, trying to throw this horrific notion aside ... This was absolutely impossible! How could two Qi-Jin stage students emerge from within the Central Scout Academy? The early-stage Qi-Jin in the cafeteria could perhaps be explained as the result of an aberrant culmination of talent, but how about this peak top-level Qi-Jin here? How did he emerge? This definitely went against all the theories on human limits ...

Ling Lan easily blocked the major's attack, even as she answered the mainframe primly, "Retain original name!"

Ling Lan had never really wanted to claim ownership of this spaceship, so she did not want to go too far. Besides, not long after, this spaceship would be flying to the true registration point of the First Men's Military Academy. If she changed the name, and the ship was mistaken for an enemy and was attacked mercilessly, that would be such a terrible misunderstanding. Ling Lan would not do such a foolish thing.

"Continue to retain the name '7th Bugle Call'¹, understood!" The mainframe recited mechanically. In front of outsiders, the mainframe would not reveal his more human-like aspects. This was a warning from his previous master — he always kept it in mind.

The mainframe's response made the major reveal a frustrated expression. However, it was less pained than before, and the gaze he directed at Ling Lan actually carried a faint trace of gratitude. At least outsiders would not know that the 7th Bugle Call had changed masters ... they still had a chance to salvage the situation.

The major did not have the confidence to defeat Ling Lan. Moreover, there were still five Refinement stage students staring at his every move. The major knew that trying to force things would not end well. As the military adviser of the ship, he recognised that this was not the time to act, and so stood aside without putting up any resistance, lifting both hands up to show that he would not make any move to attack.

The major was very clear that he could only wait for the captain to return to turn this situation around.

The major was cooperative, so Ling Lan did not want to make things difficult for the other either. After all, Ling Lan did not really want this ship — she only wanted to show the crew in charge of testing them on the ship that they, this new batch of cadets, were not pushovers to be kicked around.

Thus, Ling Lan let Lin Zhong-qing and the other four keep an eye on the major to make sure he did not do anything funny, while she remained calmly seated in the captain's seat, patiently waiting for news from Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's teams.

She had initially thought her party would be the slowest to complete their task, but it had been unexpectedly smooth sailing all the way, so they had not encountered many delays. This had let Ling Lan's party accomplish their mission the fastest.

Time passed quickly, but of course for the waiting people, the five minutes were still somewhat slow. Ling Lan received Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's reports back to back, finding out that they too had completed their assigned tasks.

Li Yingjie actually had not had any trouble — it was just that the number of crew members remaining at their living quarters was greater than they had expected, so they had had to expend a little more effort to completely subdue them. Ten or so students had been slightly injured in the process, but his party's task could still be considered completed rather perfectly.

In contrast to Li Yingjie's rather straightforward success, Wu Jiong's side had encountered some unexpected circumstances. They had not expected one of the crew leaders guarding the engine room to have achieved the peak of Refinement, just one step away from Qi-Jin. If not for Wu Jiong and Ye Xu's decisiveness in using their respective family's secret techniques, harming themselves in the process of dealing heavy damage to the other, they still might not have conquered the engine room by now.

Of course, all the students had brought enough medicinal agents to ensure they would not sustain any lasting damage. Meanwhile, they had also fed recovery agents to the leader that had been heavily injured to secure his survival. However, the leader would still have to rest up for several months to fully recover.

Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie's success proved that the ship was now truly in the hands of the cadets. This almost impossible accomplishment made Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie display clear signs of excitement and disbelief as they made their reports. Even for Ling Lan — under that calm and unflappable facade, her heart was pounding with triumph.

Ling Lan yelled a loud 'YES' in her heart, and then took a deep breath to calm her flying emotions. After feeling that she was sufficiently calm again, she ordered the mainframe, "Help me connect to the ship-wide video communications channel." In the mindscape, she instructed Little Four to immediately notify Qi Long to start looking for a chance to escape.

Qi Long's communicator made a sound, and he glanced at it from the corner of his eyes. There was just one word: "Escape!" Without even thinking about it, he retreated and began to run, not forgetting to yell out a reminder to Luo Lang and Xie Yi, "Tight winds cut breath!"

This was the coded signal Ling Lan had taught them; it meant that 'things are not looking good, run quick'. Qi Long and the others found the concept very interesting, so whenever they wanted to escape, they would not forget to shout out this code phrase as a reminder to their companions.

Luo Lang and Xie Yi naturally understood what it meant — it was likely that Boss Ling Lan had succeeded and was afraid that they would not be able to take the captain's resultant wrath, and so wanted them to run away. The two of them did not hesitate — with a quick stomp of their feet, they sprinted out from the cafeteria, leaving behind a befuddled group, including both captain and spectators.

Meanwhile, in the captain's room, the mainframe received Ling Lan's command and had begun the countdown timer to activate the ship-wide comms channel. When the countdown ended, all the screens of various sizes stashed in all corners of the ship abruptly turned on.

Subsequently, a cold-faced handsome youth appeared on the screen. His icy gaze swept out at everyone standing before a screen, sending a chill through the hearts of the less strong-minded people.

The youth opened his mouth and began to speak in a cold tone, "I declare that, from this moment onwards, the 7th Bugle Call is under the control of us military academy cadets! I am the interim captain, Ling Lan!"

This announcement caused everyone on the ship to go into shock. In particular, those new cadets not from the Central Scout Academy were even more perplexed, having no clue at all what had happened.

Suddenly, one of the cadets shouted, "I recognize him! He's the boss of the Central Scout Academy!"

At this moment, the image on the screen turned, and Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's faces appeared at the same time on the wide screen.

"The engine room is also under our control! Mobility is not affected. We can continue moving forwards!"

"We've already locked down the living quarters of the crew!" Li Yingjie's smug and proud face was backdropped by a horde of angry faces of the crew who had been subdued by the new cadets.

"This fellow ..." Ling Lan frowned. This sort of arrogant action would obviously provoke the anger of those crew members on the ship who were still able to move freely. She signalled for the image to shift to that of the central control room. Just now, she had received news from Han Jijun that the area had fallen completely under his control.

Han Jijyun's serious face very quickly appeared on the screen. "We have successfully locked down the mecha hold and frozen the ship's weapon's vault! We have also decrypted the true destination of the ship and will ensure that we will arrive safely at our destination!"

Finally, the image switched back to Ling Lan. "We are the cadets of the First Men's Military Academy. We are the elite of the elites, the future pillars of the nation. No one can trample on our pride. For this, we have already prepared ourselves for battle! What about the rest of you? Will you continue to bear the humiliation, or will you join us and fight together?"

Chapter 218: Negotiation!

Ling Lan's bleak gaze once again swept across the crowd, and the frustrations bottled up in the cadets' hearts were unleashed. Someone roared, "Fight! Fight! Fight!"

Ling Lan's words had ignited the flames of their rage, along with the pride in their hearts. No one could just calmly accept the senseless humiliation that had been heaped upon them — they had just been riddled with doubts before this. After all, they were on the other's home ground, and there was a great gap between their capabilities, so the cadets had had no choice but to tolerate. But now, everything was different. Their doubts were gone. Ling Lan had given them a chance to reclaim their pride — of course they would not let it pass ...

Fight! All of the cadets' discontentment coalesced into this one word. They shouted it out in unison, causing the expression of the crew members by their sides to pale. Even the expression of the formidable captain could not help but shift.

The youth on the screen was very adept at using words to fuel the indignation of the young. Some of those new cadets who had initially still been a little hesitant no longer retained their reservations, swiftly joining Ling Lan's party. Their eyes were trained vigilantly on the crew members beside them, their entire body on the defensive ...

At every location on the ship, as long as it was an area cohabited by cadets and crew members, the atmosphere became tense. The two sides faced each other with strong fighting spirits; the entire situation was like a powder keg waiting to blow.

Standing in the cafeteria, the captain abruptly recalled Qi Long's sudden escape from their fight. He instantly realised that that brat must definitely be in cahoots with the youth on the comms channel. He almost spewed blood in his rage, and could not help but stomp his feet in anger. "Godd*mmmit! This bunch of brats! I've bloody been had!"

With a quick turn of his feet, the captain disappeared like a gust of wind from the cafeteria!

Although Qi Long and the other two had reacted with godlike speed, escaping at first notice from the cafeteria, who was the captain? While fighting with Qi Long, he had long logged Qi Long's aura into his memory. Even though there were countless auras of other people on the ship, it was still an extremely easy matter for him to seek Qi Long out among all of them.

The captain's personality may be a little rough and unpolished, but he still knew that he would need some trump cards to negotiate with the cold youth in the captain's room. For that purpose, Qi Long would undoubtedly be the most valuable one, so he definitely could not let him go.

Completely showcasing his strength as captain, he only needed several seconds to catch up to the fleeing Qi Long and company. Seeing the furious and somewhat savage-looking captain on their tail, Qi Long and the others knew they were in trouble. They had not expected the captain to have such a high hate value towards them ...

Sure enough, in the next second, the captain flew at them, his hand reaching out towards Qi Long in an attack.

Luo Lang and Xie Yi running by Qi Long's side saw Qi Long in danger and instantly stopped and turned to help. Without prior arrangement, the two of them attacked the captain at the same time, shouting as they did so, "Leader, go find Boss!"

Only Boss Lan would be able to resist the captain. In their minds, Ling Lan was the greatest — there was nothing he could not do.

"Too naive!" huffed the captain. He waved a hand each at the two attacking boys, sending an invisible energy surge each at Luo Lang and Xie Yi respectively.

Luo Lang and Xie Yi felt themselves thrown back by a powerful wave of Qi-Jin, and they crashed heavily into the metal walls of the spaceship! Due to the captain's rage, the strength behind his blows was obviously a little stronger than he intended. The two boys threw up a mouthful of blood!

The captain was taken aback by this and paused momentarily. Qi Long, who had managed to run a distance away in the meantime, saw Xie Yi and Luo Lang get injured, and with a clench of his teeth, he actually turned back to leap at the captain, throwing his best killer punch.

He, Qi Long, was not a coward who would abandon his companions!

The captain saw Qi Long choose to return and rescue his friends, launching an attack against him, and a trace of approval flashed through his gaze. He shouted, "Good!"

This time, he no longer held back his strength, unleashing the full force of his aura. Qi Long's fist had barely gotten close to the captain when he felt as if he had become entrapped in a quagmire, actually finding it extremely difficult to move ... this feeling was very familiar — it was just like when he had first fought against Boss Lan!

Qi Long's expression changed slightly. Experienced from fighting against Ling Lan, he knew that this move of his was absolutely useless in this scenario. Unwilling to give up just yet, he immediately switched attacks. He swept his right leg out in a savage kick at the captain. This was an ultimate move Ling Lan had thought him as a last resort — Total Annihilation ¹ !

Total Annihilation was a foot technique Ling Lan had developed out from her research based on the One-Inch Punch — it too had the ability to stack up Qi-Jin to achieve a multiplying effect on strength. At present, Qi Long could only stack up to four levels, allowing Qi Long's attack to leap up in a flash from beginner level Qi-Jin stage to advanced level Qi-Jin stage. This horrifying technique which allowed Qi Long to cross two ranks in an instant was Qi Long's most powerful offensive attack at the moment.

However, this kicking technique also had a side effect. Its feedback force was also very high, so it was a move which harmed oneself by 800 while dealing 1000 damage to the other. Except in cases when his life was in danger, Ling Lan had banned Qi Long from using it during normal times. Because if this move was overused, it would leave long-lasting latent issues within Qi Long's body.

But right now, there was only one thought in Qi Long's mind. Even if he was wounded grievously by the great feedback force, he was determined to give the captain a certain degree of serious injury. Qi Long knew very well that the captain's next target would definitely be Boss Ling Lan in the captain's room. If he could injure the captain seriously here, Boss Lan would not have to fight so hard in the upcoming battle.

Qi Long had not forgotten that Ling Lan's body was still not fully recovered. Thus, even if he had to use all his strength, he would protect his Boss Lan!

Qi Long's aura which suddenly leapt up by two ranks made a trace of astonishment flash across the captain's face. However, Qi Long's had still miscalculated in his idealistic plan ... this was because he had misjudged the captain's strength. The captain's level was much more terrifying than he had imagined.

The captain's aura rose once more, and the sudden pressure that descended caused Qi Long to hover, frozen in the air temporarily. The captain's hands danced, drawing layers of afterimages in the air ... it was perhaps only a second or two, or perhaps it was just a blink of the eye — Qi Long suddenly fell from the sky and before he could touch the ground, a pair of large hands scooped him up and held onto him ..

The captain then immediately threw Qi Long over a shoulder and swiftly began running towards his room. Right now, he was most worried about the captain's room — had the other truly taken control of the mainframe? And what of his sworn brother, his good military adviser — had he suffered a bad outcome? At this thought, the anxiety in the captain's heart flared, and his speed as he sprinted towards the captain's room increased once more.

Lying on the ground, Luo Lang and Xie Yi saw the captain disappear between blinks with Qi Long hefted over his shoulder. The two of them struggled to their feet as quickly as they could, shared a glance, and shouted out in unison, "After him!"

Just as Qi Long was unwilling to give up on his companions, they too would not give up on a companion. Even if they would all be lost by chasing after the enemy, they would not cower.

The captain ran desperately all the way. Observing that not a single sentry appeared in the passage where they had been stationed in hiding, he knew that these people must have all been cleared away by the cadets. Right now, his only hope was that their head would be merciful and not cause too many casualties. Otherwise, he had no idea whether he would be able to hold his temper and stop from turning this spaceship into a sea of blood ...

The captain charged without stopping straight into his room, and instantly saw his sworn brother, the military adviser major, staring back at him with a wry smile. The captain instantly let out a breath of relief. From the looks of things, the situation was not beyond salvaging. Meanwhile, in his exclusive seat, a black-attired youth was sitting there with a frigid expression, as if waiting for him.

“Captain, I’ve been waiting!” said Ling Lan coldly. The captain’s shift in expression as he came in, though minor and fleeting, had still been caught by her. Inspiration flashed through Ling Lan’s mind, and an idea took form. Perhaps she would not have to fight the captain.

Ling Lan was not afraid to fight, but she would also be very happy if she could avoid fighting. Ling Lan was a girl, and did not really like all this fighting and killing ... Um, you don’t believe that? Well, alright, she actually just found it troublesome and tiring. So, if she could avoid it, of course she would avoid it.

“Hand over the administrative rights of the ship and I’ll pardon you all,” said the captain brusquely, not at all concerned by the threat Ling Lan posed.

The captain believed that even if the other had temporarily taken control of the ship, he would still be able to snatch it back with his capabilities. Moreover, there were still other brothers of his free to move around on the ship; he was not fighting a lone battle.

Of course, he had the confidence to back him up also because he knew the mainframe of his ship was definitely unlike those robotic existences tied to their programming — he did not believe that Ling Lan had really taken full control of the ship.

“What are you using to negotiate with me?” Ling Lan pointed at Qi Long on the captain’s shoulder, and said calmly, “Him?”

At this moment, Qi Long was flushed red. He had not expected that he would be so useless, being taken down in one move by the captain, even ending up as a bargaining chip against his own boss.

“Is he not worthy enough?” sneered the captain, “A Qi-Jin stage comrade, and you’re willing to sacrifice him?”

Ling Lan tapped on the mainframe lightly, and the crew members locked up in the sealed room appeared on the screen of the captain’s room. “Then what about these people? Are you also willing to sacrifice them?”

Seeing this, the captain almost bit hard enough to crack his teeth. As expected, all his sentries had already been captured by the other. He asked darkly, “Are they still alive?”

“Just like my companion on your shoulder, they are alive and well!” Ling Lan said airily, “To negotiate with me, that one on your shoulder is not enough.”

Right then, Luo Lang and Xie Yi finally arrived, breathing heavily. The captain’s level exceeded theirs by too much — even though they had chased after him desperately, they had still dropped behind by a large margin. The moment they entered the captain’s room, they were faced with this standoff ...

The captain began laughing. He pointed at the two of them and said, “And if I add the two of them?”

At these words, Luo Lang’s and Xie Yi’s expressions paled. They had not expected their arrival to add to the bargaining chips the opponent had against Boss Lan. At this moment, they somewhat regretted their impulsiveness. They should have been more cautious, figuring out the situation before deciding their next step.

Seeing the remorse and frustration in the gazes of the two youths, Ling Lan silently chuckled in her heart. In fact, Ling Lan was very glad internally that they had not chosen to abandon a companion,

chasing after the captain fearlessly to attempt a rescue — however, their way of doing things was indeed rather brave but foolish. It was good to let them feel a little frustrated to teach them not to be so reckless all the time and cause real problems in the future.

Ling Lan sighed lightly and said, “Your bargaining chips have indeed increased. Now I’m troubled.”

At these words, the remorse and frustration in Luo Lang’s and Xie Yi’s eyes deepened. They were just about to speak when they saw Ling Lan’s cold gaze sweep over them. This penetrating gaze made them shut up in a hurry, patiently waiting for Ling Lan’s negotiation with the captain.

Chapter 219: A Successful Mutiny!

Ling Lan saw Luo Lang and Xie Yi settle down in silence — only then did she close her eyes softly and tap the arms of her seat contemplatively. Soon after, her eyes snapped open and she pointed at the major standing to one side, and said calmly, “I forgot to tell you. This person here is also my hostage! Tell me, what will you use to trade for him?”

“Impossible!” The captain’s first reaction was disbelief. He knew the capabilities of the major. On this ship, the major was the strongest after him.

Ling Lan cast a slightly mocking gaze in the direction of the major. “Why don’t you tell him the truth?”

The major sighed softly and said, “What he says is right. I am indeed his hostage!” The major would not tell a blatant lie. If Ling Lan had truly wanted to bring him down, it was not impossible ... although Ling Lan would have to expend quite a bit of effort, the major believed that as long as Ling Lan had the time, he was definitely no match for Ling Lan.

Furthermore, during this period of time, the major had come to understand that this seemingly cold and unfeeling youth was in fact very good at toeing the line of propriety. None of the crew members who had been captured by him were in any danger of dying, and even the guard-chief who had been seriously injured in the engine room had already received appropriate treatment to safeguard his life. Thus, he did not want to break his word and escalate the conflict between the two parties. If possible, he wanted to resolve this incident peacefully.

The major’s words impacted the captain. His expression changed as he found that the matter was more complicated than he had thought. However, Ling Lan’s mental blows did not end there. “Well then, let me show you two more video feeds!”

Ling Lan then pulled out the video feeds of the engine room and the living quarters. In the living quarters, all the crew members were all tied up and locked up in a room together. Similarly, in the engine room, the guard troop was also tied up together, but their guard-chief was not tied up, instead just lying weakly on the ground. On the screen, the captain could clearly see a significant amount of blood below the area he was lying on ...

“What happened to Xiao Wan¹?” bellowed the captain. Could it be that his guard-chief of the engine room was dead?

“Not dead. He’s still alive!” Without any expression on her face, Ling Lan enlarged the image to let the captain see the rise and fall of the other’s chest. “However, if you insist on not admitting defeat, then I cannot guarantee how long he will live.” Ling Lan’s tone was glacial, as if she were not at all concerned whether the other lived or died.

The captain’s chest heaved violently; it was clear to see that his emotions were extremely unstable at this moment. However, it was just as Ling Lan had warned — the lives of the entire ship’s crew all depended on him.

“Captain, do you still think you have enough bargaining chips to negotiate with me?” Ling Lan quirked a brow at the other, her tone slightly mocking. For some reason, this distinct difference from his initial calm stoniness — this mocking tone — made the captain’s sense of danger rise exponentially.

Ling Lan rested her jaw on her right hand and said with a half-smile, “Indeed, with your strength, you can certainly kill any of us here within a second, and perhaps even reclaim control of this ship very quickly ... However, do you think I was just waiting here for you idly, doing nothing at all?”

The captain’s face twitched but he held it back. He did not stop telling himself in his heart that the other was just trying to scare him — he could not be terrorized by a 16-year-old youth ...

“In fact, during this period of time, I have already given the mainframe a command. If I die, this ship will immediately go ‘boom’ and become a hunk of debris in this starry sky. In other words, both you and I will not survive. Not just that, those comrades who follow you would die along with us here all because of your choice.”

Ling Lan described this horrific outcome in a nonchalant and indifferent tone, that half-smile still on her face. It was as if she were talking about a trivial matter, but there was a wildness in Ling Lan’s eyes, proving that everything she said was real.

This psychopathic appearance of hers made even Qi Long and the others who knew Ling Lan well to shiver. Was this somewhat insane Boss Lan still that cold-faced and righteous Boss Lan of theirs?

As if sensing the captain’s doubts, Ling Lan prodded the light circles of the mainframe gently, and asked it cheerfully, “Isn’t that right, my little mainframe?”

“Yes, it is, my master!” replied the mainframe mechanically. In the back, however, it was weeping: *Oh previous master, I’m sorry for lying to you, but my great great great great senior is watching me like a hawk, so I have no choice but to say this!*

At these words, the captain’s expression darkened. He threw Qi Long from his shoulder onto the ground and pointed at Lin Zhong-qing and the few other people in the room and said angrily, “Do you not value their lives? After they’ve put so much trust in you, willingly supporting you in this crazy endeavour?”

Ling Lan turned to face the people he indicated, and her cold gaze made Lin Zhong-qing and the others shiver involuntarily. “Do you all want to live on in oppression? Dying with dignity will undoubtedly make them feel honoured. I believe they would all choose this path.” With a casual quirk of an eyebrow, Ling Lan asked calmly, “Right?”

Without even thinking about it, Xie Yi replied, “Yes, we’ll do as Boss says!” He did not want to be tormented to death by Boss Lan ... in that case, he might as well choose a clean death here.

“Being able to die alongside Boss, it would be our honour!” said Luo Lang with a smile. That smile was unbelievably lovely, not a hint of coercion within it. Luo Lang truly believed in anything Boss Lan decided, so these words of his had no hesitation behind it whatsoever.

“Boss’s decision is our decision!” Lin Zhong-qing was very cool about the issue. But it was precisely this cool calmness that convinced the captain that they were truly prepared to sacrifice themselves.

Due to the overwhelming shock, the captain did not notice the small actions that passed amongst Xie Yi, Luo Lang, and Lin Zhong-qing. Meanwhile, the other four also took the hint from the three of them and all began speaking out in support of Ling Lan’s decision.

“You’re all lunatics!” The captain could only bite out these words in response. Ling Lan’s decision gave the captain no avenue to utilise his skills. He dared not move for fear of killing Ling Lan by accident, for the entire ship would self-destruct if that happened.

He roughly wiped a hand across his face and growled, “Speak. What exactly do you all want?”

“For this one day and one night, we are the masters of the ship. Meanwhile, you will all have to satisfy our every need, including teaching us what we wish to learn. When we arrive at the true registration point of the First Men’s Military Academy, then I will hand over the administrative rights to the ship,” responded Ling Lan, “This is our offer. You are free to reject it, then we shall both perish together.”

The captain pointed a trembling finger at Ling Lan, finally choking out, “You’re ruthless!”

“If I’m not ruthless, could I have gotten what I wanted?” asked Ling Lan with a quirked brow. If she had not snatched the administrative rights of the ship, would the captain have agreed so easily?

“Also, stop with those tests. They’re pointless!” Ling Lan’s subsequent words made the captain’s and the major’s expressions turn awkward — so their actions had long been figured out by the opponent. “If it weren’t for those tests, I would not have made such a big deal of things ...”

Ling Lan decisively threw all responsibility for the matter on the other party’s shoulders, as if saying that this dramatic outcome was completely the fault of the captain and his team. This frustrated the captain and the major so much that they almost spewed blood.

Hells, they had never seen such a shameless cadet before. Were all new cadets nowadays so arrogant, despicable, and shameless?

“That aside, little mainframe, don’t disobey me!” Ling Lan coldly prodded at the mainframe’s light rings once more, causing the little body of the mainframe within the virtual space to tremble involuntarily. He hurriedly hugged the thigh of Little Four standing to one side, crying, “Boo hoo hoo, senior’s master is really scary!”

Little Four could not help but roll his eyes, wondering somewhat irritably why this little fellow was so gutless? His boss was so nice! Not only was she gentle ... er, maybe not that, and kind-hearted ... er, she seemed to bully him quite a lot too?

Little Four felt himself becoming somewhat confused, but he very quickly cast aside all those doubts, telling himself firmly once more that his boss was the best boss ever! And that was that!

To complete the task that his boss had set for him, the now doubt-free Little Four could only continue to cajole and counsel the mainframe. This patient manner left the impression that his senior was a great and wonderful person in the little fellow's mind, which would eventually lead the little mainframe to help them without any reservations later on in the future when Little Four requested his aid ...

After that, things were much simpler. The captain announced in the ship-wide comms channel that in the duration before they arrived at the destination, the ship shall be controlled by the cadets! This declaration acknowledged the shift in administrative rights. The initially arrogant crew were instantly knocked down to become servants, while the cadets finally achieved their goal of overthrowing their overlords, becoming the masters of the ship from their initial lowly positions of easily bullied peons.

However, the Central Scout Academy students soon received Boss Lan's instructions, hoping that they would take advantage of this opportunity to learn whatever knowledge they were interested in with regards to spaceships². Of course, how they could convince and persuade those crew members to teach them with sincerity all depended on the students' own abilities.

Meanwhile, under the captain's tacit agreement, the crew also began mentoring the cadets in whatever they wanted to learn. Thus, the initially tense atmosphere between the two sides swiftly settled into a calm harmony, with completely no sign that a large conflict had occurred not too long ago.

Just as Ling Lan had predicted, everyone on the ship — from captain to crew member, from mecha operator to repairman and odd-job worker — was actually soldiers of the Federation. Therefore, they would not hate the cadets out of anger at their revolt. They may perhaps be somewhat peeved that they were bested, but they were still extremely admiring of the new cadets' spirit and capabilities — this was also the greatest reason why they were willing to mentor the students despite all that had happened.

These soldiers knew very well that these cadets before them would become the central pillars of the Federation armies six years later ... they were extremely pleased to see a bunch of exceptional warriors appear within their military ranks.

Meanwhile, those students not belonging to the Central Scout Academy did not receive Ling Lan's guidance on what to do. For one, they had not participated in the operation this time (those that did were also advised by Ling Lan), so Ling Lan felt that she was not obligated to give them any hints. And second, if the student was mindful, he would definitely be able to figure out the objectives of the Central Scout Academy students. Just by observing their speech and actions, those students should know what to do.

As for those that were a little slow who just did not sense anything ... Ling Lan did not believe they would be able to progress much in the future anyway. The opportunity was the same for everyone — whoever could grab hold of it would make their own luck.

And those who were truly strong would not let these lucky chances slip by!

Chapter 220: Space Fortress!

A particular meteoroid zone within the Federation was once an intergalactic flight course of the Federation. However, several centuries before, the meteoroids in this zone began to drift about wildly,

their movement trajectories becoming extremely erratic and unpredictable, resulting in multiple tragic collisions due to the spaceships' inability to dodge them in time. Thus, this flight course was gradually abandoned by the Federation ...

What everyone did not know was that at the heart of this meteoroid zone, there was a space fortress disguised as a large meteorite mountain. Inside it was a hidden Federation military base ...

Meanwhile, those erratically moving little meteoroids surrounding the area were actually defensive satellites of the space fortress. The moment they discovered any unidentified spaceships deviating from the permitted flight path, they would hurtle over to chase the other away. If the other party insisted on keeping their path, the defensive satellites would then collide with the ships in earnest, directly destroying the offending spaceships.

It was one o'clock in the afternoon in the Federation. Inside the space fortress, the few surveillance staff responsible for monitoring the situation around the meteoroid zone were currently cosily seated together drinking some hot tea. After a busy morning, they could finally take some time to relax and chitchat for a bit after having their lunch.

"Who could have expected that in just one morning, we've already received nine ships ferrying the new cadets. It's really been crazy busy ..." One young surveillance officer of corporal rank complained as he stretched.

"Xiao Lin¹, you're new here, so you don't know. This is our busiest time every year. All the students who managed to get into the First Men's Military Academy will come through here," said another young officer of second lieutenant rank with a smile, "And this is just the beginning. Most likely we'll be even busier in the afternoon. All of the respective spaceships picking up the new cadets from the various planets will definitely arrive by the end of today."

The second lieutenant's words received nods of agreement from all of the other officers. They had already been working here at this fortress for two to three years, so they were familiar with this situation.

The corporal called Xiao Lin slapped a palm to his forehead and moaned exaggeratedly at those words. "Heavens, there'll be more this afternoon? I'll definitely be wiped out!"

The second lieutenant cuffed him on the head exasperatedly, chiding him teasingly, "Wiped out from just this little thing? What a useless fellow."

Chastised, Xiao Lin hurriedly proclaimed his tenacious spirit which had no fear of difficulty or fatigue with a serious face to his leader. His antics caused the surveillance station to be a riot of laughter; the weariness of the morning seeming to fade away slowly between the peals of laughter.

Although the fortress had pretty good working conditions on all fronts, the work there was relatively monotonous compared to those of the other bases. In particular, these surveillance staff had to face the same unchanging meteoroid zone every day, so it was very easy for them to become somewhat sick of the job. Therefore, they had learned to self-calibrate their mentalities, learning not to just stay silent

and grim the whole time they were working. Instead, they would do as they were doing now, joking around light-heartedly to ease their minds.

After a round of laughter, Xiao Lin suddenly snorted loudly, as if recalling something.

The second lieutenant glanced at him and asked, "What's up with you now?" This fellow would always come up with some situation or another every day; the second lieutenant was no longer surprised by this.

Xiao Lin covered his mouth as he snickered, "I'm just laughing at those new cadets. When they get off the ships, they're all so cautious, obedient like little rabbits. I've always thought that those who could enter the First Men's Military Academy would all be the super elites, that they would be somewhat cocky and unruly, or maybe haughty in their expressions or something ..."

The second lieutenant smiled and said, "That's just how it is now. They were not like that in the past. They were cocky and unruly just as you said ..."

Xiao Lin's curiosity was piqued by this statement. He asked hurriedly, "Leader, why do you say that?"

The second lieutenant said, "Honestly, I did not experience that time either. I've only heard about it from the last leader. He said that the new cadets did not use to be so obedient — like you said, they were all sorts of trouble, making a mess out of this area. In the end, the chief of base could not take it anymore and reported it to the superiors. And later, the situation became better, gradually becoming like what you see now, where all the new cadets are docile and obedient."

"Could it be that the quality of the cadets improved? Or perhaps they had been instructed by their scout academies?" asked Xiao Lin.

The second lieutenant smiled and said, "How could that be? Our Federation has always lived by the law of survival of the fittest. In order to cultivate strong fighters, the scout academies would never curb the students' competitive spirit and wilfulness."

"Then what could have caused the new cadets to become so docile?" Xiao Lin just could not figure it out.

Right then, one of the staff sergeants chortled and said, "That's because the ships sent out to pick up these new cadets are all the most outstanding of our army fleets. The members staffing them are all battle-experienced soldiers. Even if these new cadets are prideful elites with prodigious talent, they can only submit and give way before these hardened soldiers. Furthermore, military headquarters' instructions to these old soldiers on the ships were to beat down these elite princes a little, letting them understand that they are still really small fry right now and still haven't earned the right to be cocky ..."

Xiao Lin gaped in shock. "In other words, these new cadets have all been suppressed by our veteran soldiers?"

"Bingo!" Another sergeant chimed in with a laugh, "It's rare that our Xiao Lin is so smart for once ..."

Xiao Lin did not seem to sense the teasing nature of the sergeant's words. In an extremely thick-skinned manner, he said, "That's right, I've always been unbelievably clever!" This once again caused the entire surveillance station to become a sea of laughter.

“Attention everyone, another ship is incoming!” The smiling second lieutenant suddenly noticed a ship entering their surveillance range, and quickly alerted his subordinates.

The group immediately kept away their laughter, returned to their work stations, and began attending to their respective tasks.

“Checking data. Primary identification as the 7th Bugle Call from planet Doha!” A sergeant extracted the data of the ship and found a corresponding match.

“The other is sending a signal requesting permission to enter. The signal code has been authenticated!” Xiao Lin deciphered the signal source transmitted by the 7th Bugle Call, and after verifying that everything was in order, he reported to his leader.

The second lieutenant nodded and instructed, “Accept communications from signal source!”

Subsequently, a transparent pane of glass at the front of the surveillance station suddenly lighted up, and then a familiar figure appeared on it. Apparently, this viewing window which looked out at the starry skies also functioned as a giant screen.

The second lieutenant saw the figure and immediately stood at attention and saluted, “Senior Colonel Tian Fang! Greetings!”

Senior Colonel Tian Fang, who was the captain of the 7th Bugle Call, smiled wryly at this and said, “Greetings!”

“Please wait a moment. We shall arrange the parking port for your ship.” The second lieutenant sent the data of the 7th Bugle Call to air control. Soon, the department had responded and connected to the 7th Bugle Call’s voice comms.

Only after Senior Colonel Tian Fang’s figure disappeared from the large screen did the second lieutenant breathe out weakly. Even just as an image, the pressure Senior Colonel Tian Fang exuded was still extremely overwhelming — this was probably what the presence of someone strong was all about.

Xiao Lin wiped the cold sweat from his forehead and said somewhat hesitantly, “Just looking at Senior Colonel Tian Fang’s virtual image is enough to make me feel like I can’t breathe. He’s so strong! What kind of godly being is Senior Colonel Tian Fang exactly?”

The second lieutenant’s face was filled with admiration and respect as he said, “He is the only one among the fleet captains who has entered Domain stage. Even though he is not a specialised mecha operator, his mecha control is also already at ace operator level. He is the ‘earth powerhouse’ of the ‘heaven and earth powerhouse duo’ of our Federation!”

“Ah! So he is the earth powerhouse of the heaven and earth powerhouse duo ...” Xiao Lin’s eyes revealed his brimming admiration and respect. Compared to the god-class operator, who were like beings from legend, ace operators were undoubtedly closer to the grass roots. As such, they were respected and looked up to by countless warriors, who viewed them as their goal.

“Why would such an amazing person be sent out on this kind of mission?” Xiao Lin felt indignant on Senior Colonel Tian Fang’s behalf.

“The place he went to is Doha. The cadets there include those from the Central Scout Academy, the gathering grounds of the cream of our Federation. Without someone like Senior Colonel Tian Fang, could they hold the fort against those top-notch prodigies?” The second lieutenant chided Xiao Lin for his shallow thinking. Although Doha had indeed not produced many top-notch prodigies over the past couple years, it was never wise to underestimate these sort of established brand schools with substantial roots. Who knew if an aberrant would suddenly appear?

Senior Colonel Tian Fang knew nothing of this discussion in the surveillance station that had been sparked by his appearance. Right now, he had already relinquished the captain’s seat again and was standing in front of the screen, sullenly watching the new cadets bustling around the central control room.

Even though the cadets had gone through a day and a night of learning, they were still noticeably inexperienced in controlling the ship. Many times, they failed to pilot the ship to the coordinates provided by the fortress, and air control was beginning to become a little irritated.

Senior Colonel Tian Fang felt so embarrassed he could die. He knew that the staff in the fortress would certainly be speculating that he was drunk again ... his lifelong good reputation would definitely be lost here, but he could not explain things to the outside world, because the truth was even more embarrassing.

Senior Colonel Tian Fang looked at Ling Lan sitting in the captain’s seat, as composed as ever, as if not at all concerned that the cadets would ruin the ship through their bumbling efforts. He could not help but ask, “Why aren’t you at all nervous?”

” If the sky wants to rain, if your mother wants to remarry ² ! What will be will be!” replied Ling Lan breezily. As long as the ship was not utterly destroyed, she had no objections. After all, this spaceship wasn’t really hers anyway.

Senior Colonel Tian Fang instantly choked on a breath and said moodily, “I have never met anyone as daring as you.”

Ling Lan’s lips curved up subtly. “Otherwise I would not have been able to take over your ship.” Completely uncaring that she was adding yet another stab to Senior Colonel Tian Fang’s heart.

Senior Colonel Tian Fang was infuriated, and he muttered angrily, “I can’t imagine who could have raised such a crazy son like you ... hells, doing this kind of things beyond human understanding.”

The corner of Ling Lan’s lips quirked, “Why, you wish to know? Perhaps you want to spar a little with my father?”

For some reason, Senior Colonel Tian Fang once again felt a surging sense of danger like none other he had felt before. His gut told him that he definitely should not respond and take the bait, but the indignation in his heart made him blurt out, “Of course, this old man should not bully the young, but why can’t I go fight the elder?”

Ling Lan slowly approached Senior Colonel Tian Fang and then said airily, “You are welcome to go seek out General Ling Xiao!” Ling Lan’s tone was filled with teasing mockery, obviously greatly looking forward to Senior Colonel Tian Fang seeking out her father for a fight.

“General L-Ling ... Ling Xiao?!” Senior Colonel Tian Fang gaped, struck dumb by Ling Lan’s answer. Still, he had no doubts that this was true. After spending one day and night with Ling Lan, he knew that the other did not bother with lies. Besides, only someone like General Ling Xiao could give birth to such an aberrant son like Ling Lan. At this moment, Senior Colonel Tian Fang had completely forgotten the research proof of the Federation — the theory that said that the gene potentials of the descendants of god-class operators were destined to plummet.