

Crossing 231

Chapter 231: Sneak Attack!

[No Mecha Unrepaired] knew that those seemingly harmless rabbits were actually extremely horrifying for low-level mecha operators, being able to kill them easily in an instant. However, this scene before him — this mecha rabbit, obviously still a trainee, going on a rampage — gave him the false impression that even he would be able to go forward and kick those rabbits around and slaughter them as he liked.

Time passed by bit by bit; the number of rabbits still alive on the field grew fewer and fewer. By the time the blood of the final rabbit was splattered onto the grassy field, precisely 2 minutes had passed, not a millisecond more or less than what the rabbit mecha had claimed at the start.

What strength and confidence was this, for the other to be able to give such an accurate timeframe? [No Mecha Unrepaired] could not help but pinch his cheeks within his cockpit, only believing that this was real at the resulting sting of pain he felt.

Heavens, what level of mecha operator had he ended up hiring? Even an advanced mecha would not have been able to defeat such a large number of mutated rabbits so easily within two minutes, especially under conditions like this where it had been surrounded on all sides. [No Mecha Unrepaired] could not help but shudder at that moment ... could the other be a special-class operator? Considering that possibility, he was beyond exhilarated. Perhaps this time he would really be able to successfully arrive at Suncreed City, no longer being stuck at Three-Seas Town, unable to improve his mecha repair skill level.

Ling Lan easily finished off the final rabbit — aside from a few drops of blood dripping from the red carrot weapon, there was not a single speck of blood on the white body of the rabbit mecha, which remained as pristine as before. This was the result of Ling Lan slowing down her speed and her skilful control.

With a stomp of its hind feet, the rabbit mecha sprang off the ground once more and engaged its thrusters, arriving in the blink of an eye to stand before [No Mecha Unrepaired]. This sudden movement once again gave [No Mecha Unrepaired] a fright. However, this time, he no longer reflexively shifted into a defensive stance — humans were truly extremely adaptable creatures.

Ling Lan controlled the rabbit mecha to use its carrot to rap on the humanoid mecha, and asked calmly, “So?” The voice was as frigid as before, but the threat behind the tone was palpable, as if at the first hint that [No Mecha Unrepaired] would even dare to utter ‘no’, he would be immediately destroyed.

Right then, [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s heart was filled with joy, not one bit of unwillingness to be found. He hurriedly replied, “It’s great! Sir [Lingtian First-String], this mission is in your hands now.” Then, he quickly contracted Ling Lan for his mission — he did it very speedily, afraid that Ling Lan might reconsider and refuse.

Of course, once this contract was established, it would be maintained by the mecha world’s mainframe, which would not allow either side to break the agreement without good reason.

Sir? Did her voice really sound so much like a man's now? Speechless, Ling Lan pressed the button to accept the mission. She did not know whether she should be proud of herself for impersonating a man so successfully ...

Since the two of them had come to an agreement, they did not continue to linger here, immediately beginning their journey towards Suncreed City.

Along the way, Ling Lan not only encountered small packs of mutated wolves and many mutated wild bulls, but even a pack of five mutated black panthers in the end. The further along they went, the stronger the beasts became. When a pack of mutated cheetahs showed up, they wasted quite a bit of Ling Lan's time due to their extraordinary speed. After all, in comparison with the mutated cheetahs, the rabbit mecha's speed was nothing. Fortunately, her innate talent Profound Insight was very helpful — it discovered the cheetahs' weakness not soon after, allowing Ling Lan to kill them. Still, the struggle had lasted a full five minutes.

"Looks like, against the stronger mutated beasts, a trainee mecha is still rather weak overall." If Ling Lan had been given an advanced mecha, these cheetahs would have been killed with a swing of her arm. Even if she had not been given an advanced mecha, but a lower mecha instead, Ling Lan still would not have wasted five minutes. It was likely that she would have only needed one to two minutes to wrap things up. This was the mecha's limits — even for Ling Lan, who was already at ace operator level control, it was impossible to execute an instant kill against a beast that was stronger than the mecha's abilities.

Even as Ling Lan was feeling rather sorry about the state of her mecha, [No Mecha Unrepaired] was filled with awe at how easily Ling Lan had dispatched these beasts. Mind you, back then, he and the three intermediate mecha warriors had been killed at this spot, instantly being sent straight back to revive by these cheetahs. Back then, they had not even seen much of the cheetahs before they had been killed and returned to the town.

But now, the five cheetahs had appeared at the same time, but had still been easily handled by the other within a short period of time. With this, [No Mecha Unrepaired] was even more confident in their chances of arriving at Suncreed City safely. Furthermore, he had also confirmed to himself that the one controlling this rabbit trainee mecha was most definitely a special-class mecha master. He felt extremely fortunate, actually being able to coincidentally meet such a strong person in the game world. Only a strong person such as this would be able to make his way freely around the low-level world using just a trainee mecha.

Ling Lan had just finished off the five cheetahs, not yet moving ahead, when she heard Little Four exclaim joyfully, "Boss, it's right here! The starlight conversion power core should be inside the ancient den of the monster of this mountain."

Ling Lan said calmly, "Done killing the viruses?" Ever since Little Four had been seen through by her, and had used the excuse of killing a virus to run away, he had not presented himself again. Ling Lan had thought that this brat would not dare to face her anymore — unexpectedly, he had suddenly emerged again now.

Little Four stiffened, and then forced a pandering smile on his face. “All done, all done. Oh Boss, you really do care about me! Little Four is so touched ...!” That said, he did not forget to hug Ling Lan’s thigh and act cute with all his might, desperately hoping for Boss to forget his previous disrespect.

Ling Lan lightly flicked Little Four on the head. “Don’t try to act cute and brush it off. In a bit, you’ll be helping me to redeem yourself!” Little Four hurriedly agreed. Boss was clearly prepared to let him off — of course he would not be so stupid as to let this chance go by.

And so, Ling Lan changed directions to follow an almost indiscernible mountain trail, heading into a dense forest.

Seeing this, [No Mecha Unrepaired] panicked, shouting hurriedly, “Sir [Lingtian First-String], where are you going?” Did the other not want to bring him to Suncreed City anymore?

Ling Lan replied, “I want to clean up the old den of the mutated beasts a little.”

“Ah, those mutated beasts in the home den are all very formidable! We definitely can’t go. It’s too dangerous! Besides, to get to Suncreed City, we only need to keep following Suncreed Road. There is no need at all to take this risk.”

Ling Lan abruptly turned her head to look at [No Mecha Unrepaired] and said flatly, “This is my mission. If you don’t want to go, then just wait for me here.”

Being pierced by the vacant gaze of the rabbit mecha, [No Mecha Unrepaired] did not dare to offer any more objection. Right then, he finally realised that he was really just a convenient tag-along for the other. Having figured that out, he came to find that Ling Lan was gradually pulling further and further away. He abruptly shouted, “[Lingtian First-String], wait for me! I’ll go too.” Leaving him here all alone ... it was definitely much more dangerous to stay behind than to follow the other. He had no intention of losing his life here.

“What? You’re not afraid of accompanying me to your death?” Ling Lan halted to mock icily.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] hurriedly said, “We’ve travelled all this way together. No matter what, there’s some bond between us now. How can I watch a friend brave danger on his own and stay behind alone? No matter what, we should share our joys and pain, and go through thick and thin together ...” As if knowing that these words of his were not at all convincing, [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s voice became softer and softer as he spoke, almost not daring to meet the spirited rabbit eyes of Ling Lan.

Ling Lan merely glanced at the other without puncturing his lies. Since [No Mecha Unrepaired] dared to brave danger with her, it meant that he trusted her abilities to a large degree. Ling Lan did not say anything further, tacitly agreeing to let [No Mecha Unrepaired] tag along.

The two of them entered the forest depths. They had not gone far when Ling Lan suddenly shoved [No Mecha Unrepaired]. This movement was too sudden — [No Mecha Unrepaired] was totally unprepared. He fell to the ground instantly, tumbling two circles away ...

“Boom!” Where [No Mecha Unrepaired] had been standing, some unknown item had crashed heavily into the ground, throwing up countless amounts of dirt and fallen leaves.

Right then, Ling Lan's rabbit mecha suddenly pushed its engines to send the entire mecha into the air, flipping into an upside down position with the carrot in its hands facing downwards. Then, like with a nail, it drove the carrot powerfully straight into the ground below.

"Boom!" This was the sound of the mecha hitting the earth. Immediately after, the rabbit mecha leapt up nimbly to dash 5 metres away and land securely on all four feet.

Following this series of actions, a string of violent snapping and twisting could be heard. In the end, everything fell silent again, and when all the flying dirt and leaves finally settled back onto the ground, the scene became clear to the eye.

Only then could [No Mecha Unrepaired] see that, where he had initially been standing was now a deep gouge of about half a metre wide and 30 centimetres deep. That gouge which looked like the result of a whip let [No Mecha Unrepaired] know that if he had been struck by it, even if his mecha had not been destroyed, the power behind the blow would have been enough to rattle him to death.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] could not help but glance gratefully at Ling Lan; the other had saved his life once again. If the other had not pushed him aside so decisively, he would have died and returned to Three-Seas Town. But before he could speak up to thank the other, he was shocked into silence by the scenario on Ling Lan's end.

Not five metres away from the rabbit mecha, a gruesome large mouth was opened ravenously. Four razor-sharp teeth shone with a chilling light as the jaw opened and closed while the creature continued to struggle, as if wanting to leap forwards to swallow the rabbit mecha not too far from it whole. However, no matter how much it struggled, it could not escape from its bindings to move even another step ...

[No Mecha Unrepaired] very quickly realised that he was looking at the head of a snake. Moreover, at the critical juncture between the head and the rest of its body, a sword had penetrated to the hilt. The hilt of the sword was green in colour, and was shaped like leaves. [No Mecha Unrepaired] naturally knew that this was that carrot blade of the rabbit mecha.

Meanwhile, the flesh beneath the pierced juncture, spreading as far as half a metre, had already become a mess of minced meat. The tail part of the snake, due to being disconnected from the head, had reflexively curled up on itself, unable to make any more attacks.

This horrifying beast before them was a gigantic mutated python, whose attack power must be unrivalled. If an intermediate mecha warrior had come here, he might very well have died from a sneak attack before even being able to actually meet it head on. No, perhaps even an advanced mecha warrior would have found it difficult to escape from this unorthodox attack. But now, this mutated python had had its vital point pierced by the rabbit mecha in the span of just one sneak attack, completely losing its ability to fight back.

"Can you still stand up?" Ling Lan looked towards [No Mecha Unrepaired], frowning. Had she used too much strength earlier, inadvertently injuring the other?

Only then did [No Mecha Unrepaired] stir from his stunned torpor. He quickly scrambled off the ground and said, "It's fine, I'm fine."

Chapter 232: The Python Family!

The gigantic python finally ceased its struggles. The giant snake head crashed abruptly to the ground, sending some dirt and leaves up into the air again. [No Mecha Unrepaired] said carefully, "It's dead ..."

"Not yet!" responded Ling Lan coldly. How could this petty trick fool her? In the primordial forest, what savage beast had she not seen? Some were even slyer than this python here.

"Ah ..." [No Mecha Unrepaired] stared gobsmacked at the python — in that state and it still wasn't dead?

Ling Lan drew a short sword each from behind the two hind legs of the rabbit. With a powerful swing of her left hand, one of the short swords flew, whistling through the air right at the head of the python.

Just as the blade was about to strike, the python suddenly raised its head to snap its jaws savagely over that flying short sword. With a loud crunch, that short sword made of high-durability steel broke into pieces. It was clear to see how great the bite force quotient ¹ of the python was. If Ling Lan had walked forward personally, her vital points might have accidentally been caught in its sneak attack, destroying her mecha and losing her life.

However, this frightening strike was also the python's final attack. Heaven knows when, the second short sword in Ling Lan's hands had been sent flying out without a sound. Even as the python's jaw shattered the first short sword, the second short sword buried itself in the snake's eyes, piercing through the entire snake head.

In the throes of death, the python seemed to be in great pain. It split its mouth open wide in a howling cry to the heavens. After a long ear-splitting wail, the snake head finally fell heavily to the ground once more, sending yet another spray of dust and dirt into the air.

Seeing this, Ling Lan made the rabbit mecha jump forwards. [No Mecha Unrepaired] was horrified by this, shouting loudly, "[Lingtian First-String], watch out in case it isn't dead!" If by any chance the other was playing dead again, wouldn't it be very dangerous for the rabbit mecha to just approach it like that?

"This time it's really dead," replied Ling Lan calmly as she walked up to the head. She pulled out the carrot sword pinning the snake by its vital point, placing it back securely into the rabbit's mouth. Next, she pulled out the short sword which had burrowed into the snake head, rubbing it against the ground a few times before putting it back behind her mecha's hind legs with some disgust. There was no helping it — the weapons on the trainee mecha were just too few; Ling Lan could not afford not to take it back.

As Ling Lan made preparations to leave, [No Mecha Unrepaired] spoke up once more, "Um, aren't you taking the spoils of victory?"

Previously, when the rabbit mecha had finished off those other mutated beasts, it had never once taken the spoils of victory off those mutated beasts' bodies. [No Mecha Unrepaired] felt his heart ache at the waste — mind you, those were all points! Although each spoil would only offer several decimal points worth of points, many a little makes a mickle ² ! With that many beasts, if they had collected all of the spoils, it would have amounted to over at least several tens of points.

Living in the mecha world, restrictions were everywhere if one did not have points. If he had countless points, then he would not have been stuck so pitifully at Three-Seas Town for so long. He could have just offered 10,000 points as a reward — then, even the Thunder King would not have been able to stop a strong mercenary from bringing him out of Three-Seas Town.

“Spoils of victory?” asked Ling Lan curiously. She truly had no idea about these sorts of things.

“Yes! The beasts have lots of good things on their bodies. As long as we collect them, we can take them to an exchange store to redeem points. For instance, the teeth of this python — each one could be worth 3 points, 4 of them giving a total of 12 points. Like the pelts of the rabbits you have been killing all this way — each would be worth 0.2 points, while the pelts of the wild wolves would give 0.3 points ...” [No Mecha Unrepaired] really knew the value of the spoils of victory like the back of his hand. He detailed all the wastage Ling Lan had committed this entire journey.

After listening for half a day³, Ling Lan finally got the gist that there was still this method of gathering points within the mecha world. However, she took a look at that snake’s head ... fine, she really had no interest in touching that ugly body again, so she said, “You collect it!”

[No Mecha Unrepaired] thought Ling Lan was letting him help her collect the spoils, and so happily made a sound of acknowledgement before moving forwards to collect those 4 sharp teeth from the snake’s head. Ling Lan’s terrifying combat power this entire way had let [No Mecha Unrepaired] understand that that bit of reward he was offering was totally insufficient to hire such a formidable mecha operator. He really wanted to use something else to supplement his payment — if he could help the other collect the spoils of victory and get a bit more points that way, he would feel less guilty.

As [No Mecha Unrepaired] harvested the teeth, he sighed, looking at that centre section of the python which had been smashed into mincemeat. This was the result of Ling Lan plunging down from a tall height, using gravity and the weight of her own mecha to crush the snake’s body with one strike. This move was flawless both in terms of timing and accuracy, proving that Ling Lan’s mecha control skills had already reached a point where her body and the mecha had become one. This was the mark of a special-class operator, which also proved that [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s deduction was correct. The operator of this rabbit mecha before him was most definitely a mysterious and powerful special-class operator.

Of course, [No Mecha Unrepaired] was not sighing over the other’s strength. Instead, he was sighing over the fact that that section of snake skin had been ruined by Ling Lan’s brute force. He silently thought to himself that, if they could have peeled it off in perfect condition, such a ginormous piece of snake skin would have been worth at least 30 points. This was already among the highest amount one could get from the redemption of victory spoils. Alright, in the process of accumulating points to hire a master, [No Mecha Unrepaired] had undoubtedly become somewhat of a point-freak.

[No Mecha Unrepaired]’s harvesting ability was rather strong — the four teeth took him less than two minutes. Still, even so, Ling Lan felt this was not worth it. Perhaps that was why Little Four had not suggested this method to her. Ling Lan only needed perhaps several seconds to kill a beast, but collecting the spoils would waste a lot of her time. This was definitely not something Ling Lan wanted.

Seeing [No Mecha Unrepaired] done with the harvesting, Ling Lan did not linger, continuing forwards. Although they remained vigilant for the rest of the way, they did not encounter any more savage beasts, nor did they meet any dangers. The strangeness of the situation made [No Mecha Unrepaired] become

restless and unsettled. However, for some unknown reason, seeing the rabbit mecha hopping unhurriedly before him — each hop eating up the same amount of distance, with the exact same arc and rhythm — this precise operation soothed his emotions, allowing him to regain his calm ...

After travelling for about 5 minutes, Ling Lan suddenly stopped and said, “Careful.”

Although [No Mecha Unrepaired] was not officially trying to become a mecha warrior, these couple of years of watching out for himself had given him extremely rich combat experience. Hearing Ling Lan’s warning, he instantly assumed a defensive stance, multiple viewing angles popping up on his mecha’s screen to cover his surroundings. However, aside from the silence, there was nothing else strange about the situation.

No, in fact there was still noise. It was the sound of tree leaves being rustled by the wind, but this was extremely normal ... Sweat beaded on [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s forehead — the calmer and more normal things seemed, the more it meant danger was imminent.

At this moment, [No Mecha Unrepaired] still did not realise that he now trusted Ling Lan unconditionally. It was because of this that he took Ling Lan’s simple warning so seriously, to the extent that he would believe a hazard was right before them.

“Jump!” shouted Ling Lan abruptly. Without even thinking, [No Mecha Unrepaired] operated his mecha to leap into the air. In his screen, he saw a flash of red light sweep beneath his mecha’s feet.

“Swish!” It was the sound of something piercing through flesh and blood, or perhaps stabbing into earth. [No Mecha Unrepaired] had not yet figured out the sound when he heard a tremendous snapping sound coming from not too far behind him.

Before [No Mecha Unrepaired] could expand the scope of vision of his mecha to look, he felt his mecha being thrown into the air by a great force.

From his screen, [No Mecha Unrepaired] could clearly see that the one who had attacked him had been the rabbit mecha. The other had given him a solid kick with its hind legs. This kick was even more forceful than the force Ling Lan had used to shove him aside earlier, causing [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s mecha to fly up high, soaring over several large trees, before crashing heavily to the ground about 30 metres away.

If not for the fact that [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s physical constitution could still be considered excellent, just this series of collisions alone could have given him grave injuries. Despite not being injured, [No Mecha Unrepaired] still felt his Qi and blood roiling from the concussive force, and could not help but spurt out a mouthful of blood ...

“Could it be that [Lingtian First-String] is trying to kill me?” This was [No Mecha Unrepaired]’s first thought. However, he quickly dispelled it, because he believed that with [Lingtian First-String]’s abilities, killing him would be as easy as a lift of a hand. He would not just be left with such minor injuries.

Meanwhile, on Ling Lan’s end, she had borrowed the reaction force from kicking [No Mecha Unrepaired], assisted by the thrust of her engines, to rise up swiftly into the air. This allowed her to dodge the speedy attack of a silver beam of light, while also helping [No Mecha Unrepaired] to dodge

this ruthless killing attack at the same time. Based on the trajectory of the silver light, the first one to be hit would have been [No Mecha Unrepaired].

Ling Lan controlled her mecha to land securely on the ground. She carefully observed a gigantic silver python coiled up approximately 10 metres away, which was already preparing to launch its next attack. This python was even more colossal than the python Ling Lan had killed earlier. Two snake eyes as large as lanterns were beaming with coldly sinister light, not at all trying to hide the killing intent within them.

“Who’d have thought that the savage beast occupying this area would be from the python family.” Ling Lan’s brow furrowed. Even though Ling Lan had been schooled by the learning space in such a way that she was already no longer like a girl, not at all afraid of any fierce beasts or savage creatures, this did not eradicate her inherent nature of loathing these types of slithery cold-blooded animals. Therefore, when she discovered that the opponent was these pythons, some dislike still reared within her heart.

Ling Lan cast a glance at a distance not too far off, where her carrot-sword had already pinned a slightly smaller python. That python was struggling desperately, trying to wrest free of the carrot-sword’s blade.

She could not help but ‘tsk’ in annoyance; Ling Lan knew that she would definitely not be able to retrieve the carrot-sword right now to attack. Furthermore, as the rabbit mecha was a trainee mecha, other than the carrot-sword, it only had two high-performance steel short swords as its cold weapons. One of the swords had already been ‘nobly sacrificed’ in the previous fight, so the only cold weapon Ling Lan could use now was that one remaining short sword.

Although there was still a beam handgun on the back of the mecha, Ling Lan knew very well that it would be impossible to overcome the defensive power of this humongous python’s skin relying on that handgun alone. Of course, it could not be said that it would be useless — if one managed to shoot a vital point, it would still be effective. For example, the eyes of the python, or perhaps the vulnerable mouth cavity unprotected by the skin ... however, in a moving fight, it would be extremely difficult to hit these points accurately. Unless it was absolutely unavoidable, Ling Lan did not plan to use that unreliable beam handgun.

Ling Lan lifted up the only remaining short sword she had with her left hand. Right now, she was a little regretful at her own overconfidence. She should have prepared a sharp long sword beforehand, or perhaps a lightsaber — that way, killing these pythons would be much easier.

Chapter 233: The Weapon ‘Regretless’ !

Another resounding “Bam!”

The giant python was pouncing forward again. Ling Lan controlled her mecha to leap up into the air, kicking forwards forcefully with its hind legs. The python was sent flying back by the powerful kick — the python and the mecha were only in contact for a brief moment before they were moving off in different directions again to land in two separate locations, once more facing each other in a standoff.

“Warning! Over-capacity usage of mecha’s hind legs. Damage at 7%. Please use with caution; cherish your mecha!” Within the cockpit, the mecha’s mainframe immediately issued a warning, protesting the brute actions of its operator.

That last kick may have pushed the python back, but because the giant python was really just too big and too heavy, the mecha had had to bear a force which exceeded its anti-shock capacity, causing the mecha to incur a certain degree of damage.

“Tch, even this is no good?” Ling Lan had thought to use the mecha’s own body to attack to compensate for the lack of weapons, but now it looked like things would not be so simple. She smacked the control stick moodily and said, “This trainee mecha is just too godd*mn fragile.”

Little Four could not help but dab at his sweat inside the mindscape. Since the start of her studies, Ling Lan’s mecha combat style was already showing signs of being of the wild and barbaric type. He still remembered how she had caused her mecha to be all scratched up, bearing wounds from being pushed beyond its limits. In the end, they had had no choice but to spend so much credits to repair the mecha, only thus preventing the mecha from completely breaking down. Therefore, regardless of how strong or solid the mecha was, it would not fare much better than this rabbit mecha in Ling Lan’s hands. This was because Ling Lan would forever bring out the greatest combat power a mecha was capable of, even pushing for more — it would be stranger if the mecha did not break down!

[No Mecha Unrepaired] rubbed away the trickle of blood at the corner of his lips, forcefully suppressing the nausea he still felt from the bloody stench as he operated his mecha to get up from the ground. Meanwhile, the inside of his cockpit had long become flooded with alerts from the mainframe, which was warning non-stop that the mecha had been attacked, and displaying the resulting damage levels. He unstintingly used a low-level repair kit, letting the mecha be completely repaired in a very short period of time.

Of course, while he did all this, his gaze had not once left the battle scene 30 metres away. When he saw that the rabbit mecha was left with only one short sword weapon, he could not help but become anxious; he understood that if the rabbit mecha could not finish off this frighteningly ginormous python, the both of them would definitely lose their lives here.

“No, it was so difficult to find such a strong mecha operator to bring me to Suncreed City, I definitely cannot die here, wasting all that effort!” [No Mecha Unrepaired] was naturally unwilling to just admit defeat. He opened up his bag, desperately searching through it to see if there were any cold weapons the rabbit mecha could use within it. Right then, he was somewhat thankful that he was in the wilds, and not in a combat arena. In a combat arena, it was not permitted to change one’s equipped weapons halfway.

When he came to a pitch-black weapon, he could not help but stare at it blankly. “Should we use this one?”

[No Mecha Unrepaired] looked at this cold weapon he had developed in Three-Seas Town. It was shaped like a tangdao ¹ of olden times, but its blade was not like the clean diagonal-cut edge of a traditional tangdao, instead sporting an extremely conspicuous concavity. This concavity was deep near the edge, becoming gradually shallower as it travelled along the body of the blade to spread along its entire surface.

The entire sword was a sheet of black, not as eye-catching as other brighter and flashier weapons. However, it silently emitted a type of killing intent, letting people know that this was no ordinary sword. Of course, that was all they would know — only its creator and the one who used it would be able to truly comprehend the fearsome nature of this sword.

This was a lethal weapon [No Mecha Unrepaired] had forged using the best materials he could gather in Three-Seas Town. Back when he had succeeded, it had let him advance two stages, from trainee mecha mechanic to advanced mecha mechanic, in an instant. Back then, he had been young and cocky — in his pride and joy, he had forgotten that he should hide his light under a bushel² until he was sufficiently strong enough to protect himself. He had proclaimed his name in a high-handed fashion, allowing the Thunder King to figure out his identity. In the end, whether it was here in the mecha world, or in reality, the Thunder King had been pressuring him with the power of his faction to join his organisation.

As a result of his unwillingness to submit, he had been restricted by the other to Three-Seas Town, unable to move. If he was not able to pass the assessment this year because of this, then he would be mercilessly cast out from the First Men's Military Academy. The Thunder King was precisely such a ruthless character. Anyone who did not submit to him would definitely have their future crushed by him.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] had never ever considered selling off this cold weapon. Even though a few strong fighters had tried offering extremely high prices before out of curiosity at this weapon's stats, and he too had known that he might be able to leave Three-Seas Town if he just sold this sword ... he had still decided to keep this weapon with him until he was pushed to the absolute brink. Not just because this was his pride and honour, but also as a reminder to himself of his ignorance, his hubris, his weakness, his shame, as well as his reason for resisting.

"I named it 'Regretless'³, to remind myself that I have chosen not to regret. At the same time, I also hope that this weapon will be able to display its glory in the hands of a mecha operator who would allow it to attack with no regrets ... perhaps, its master has appeared!" [No Mecha Unrepaired] looked at the nimble figure of the rabbit before his eyes, and with a grit of his teeth, he resolutely pulled out the sword Regretless which meant so much to him.

As Regretless fully appeared in the dense forest, the temperature of the initially already extremely cold and sinister forest suddenly dipped further, causing [No Mecha Unrepaired] to tremble involuntarily.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] stroked the blade of Regretless affectionately. When he lifted his head once more, his gaze was filled with conviction. He knew very well that if [Lingtian First-String] truly kept his promise and brought him to Suncreed City, he would definitely offend the Thunder King. Even though [Lingtian First-String] had yet to complete the mission, [No Mecha Unrepaired] found himself somehow trusting the other without reason. They had only spent a short while together, but he had come to learn that though the other was cold and domineering, he was definitely a responsible man.

Thus, he believed that Regretless would not fade into obscurity if he gave it to him. Under [Lingtian First-String]'s skilful control, Regretless would definitely shine its brightest. He hoped that one day, if [Lingtian First-String] really ended up clashing head-on with the Thunder King, the weapon he used in that encounter would be Regretless ...

Intense light flashed through [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s eyes. He shouted abruptly, "[Lingtian First-String], catch!"

[No Mecha Unrepaired] controlled his mecha to throw Regretless; Ling Lan could only see a blur of dark light flying towards her. She calmly operated her rabbit mecha's right hand to reach out in a grab, and abruptly felt a heavy weight in her hands. Unprepared, she almost lost her footing. However, Ling Lan's adaptive ability was extremely powerful. She instantly activated the engine on her right side, using the great thrust generated by it to stabilise the mecha's slightly tilting body.

"What weapon is this, actually so heavy?" Ling Lan peered curiously at the weapon in the rabbit's hands. It was a cold weapon like a dao ⁴ but not a dao, like a sword but not a sword. Still, based on its weight that almost unbalanced her mecha alone, she could tell that this weapon was definitely special.

However, reality did not allow Ling Lan to think too much about it; the giant python was attacking again. The rabbit mecha's forelegs were not very strong — Ling Lan was afraid that she would not be able to wield this clearly very heavy weapon single-handedly. So, she decisively gripped the sword with both hands and swung it out fiercely towards the python's attack trajectory.

A loud "boom" rang out! The body of the sword and the snapping sharp fangs of the giant python collided violently!

Screech ~! The sturdy fang and the sword scraped against each other forcefully, emitting an ear-splitting high-pitched noise!

Crack! A crisp sound, and a fang suddenly popped out, whizzing away to bury itself in a large tree not too far away from the fight.

This sword may seem extremely thin, but its hardness had exceeded that of the mutated python's fang. At the same time, this result also proved that the sharpness of the sword was at a fearsome level.

"Scram!" Ling Lan barked, revving her mecha's engines and its supplementary thrusters to the max. With a powerful spring of her strong hind legs, the force was transmitted to the sword in her hands, actually sending the entire giant python flying back.

A loud thump! The python once again crashed into the ground. But this time, things were different. It was actually writhing in agony, bellowing loudly to the skies.

It turned out that that previous strike had not only broken off one of the python's fangs, it had also left a wound on the python's face, which was currently bleeding profusely.

"Oh my god, this sword is so sharp!" Little Four was exclaiming in Ling Lan's mindspace. Mecha cold weapons in general sacrificed sharpness to maintain its sturdiness and strength. Many cold weapons were all made in the form of spiked club-like weapons, or perhaps extremely thick swords. Their characteristics were all focused on solidness and heft rather than sharpness.

"It's not just sharp ... its tensile strength is also amazingly good. Such a narrow blade actually having the same tensile strength as broader and thicker swords — no, perhaps even better by a bit." Compared to sharpness, Ling Lan was more concerned about its tensile strength, for this would decide the lifespan of a weapon. No matter how sharp a sword was, if it did not have enough tensile strength, breaking apart after just a few uses, then it would still be utterly useless.

“This mecha world is pretty interesting, actually having this sort of weapon ...” Little Four sensed that this mecha world was not completely the same as the real world. This piqued his interest to find out all the secrets of this mecha world.

“Having this complementary weapon in hand, I don’t need to waste any more time.” Ling Lan felt that she could finally let loose and attack now. She twirled her new sword once, then leapt unhesitatingly towards the giant python.

“F*ck! Why didn’t he first take some time to get used to the weapon? Attacking directly? Does he not want to live?” [No Mecha Unrepaired] was beyond anxious — mecha operators needed to familiarise themselves with their mecha’s weapons before they would be able to generate the greatest combat power with them. Using an unfamiliar weapon may backfire due to the resultant control errors, causing a person’s combat power to decrease instead. This was also why [No Mecha Unrepaired] was worried for Ling Lan.

The giant python saw its initially defensive opponent suddenly initiating an attack. Feeling as if it had been impugned, it was instantly in a towering rage. It ignored the pain of the wound on its face to leap forwards once more, ready to teach this detestable fellow before it a profound lesson. It would let him know that a king’s dignity would not be trod upon.

Both sides clashed once more, and this time, Ling Lan no longer had any reservations. She used the rabbit mecha’s full power from the start, causing Little Four’s heart to ache, as well as causing the cockpit to be filled with the ringing warnings of the mecha’s mainframe, “Warning! Engine power exceeded 120%. Mecha operating over-capacity. Mecha is sustaining damage, 5%, 7%, 10% ...”

Chapter 234: Starlight Conversion Power Core!

“What a nag!” Ling Lan turned off the mainframe’s voice systems, putting all her attention into piloting her mecha. On the mecha’s control panel, Ling Lan’s fingers once more could be seen producing layered afterimages born of rapid speed. Stacked together, those layers of afterimages looked like a slowly blossoming lotus flower, insubstantial but unbelievably beautiful.

The rabbit mecha crouched abruptly, its forelegs holding the sword dipping slightly. This minor shift let Regretless swiftly evade the giant python’s attacking fangs, sweeping below the python’s jaw to get to its vital point, where the sword was suddenly twisted upwards. At the same time, the still crouching rabbit mecha had long made preparations to leap.

And so, a white rabbit could be seen to spring up from the ground into the air. The sunlight streaming in from between the tree leaves reflected off the mecha’s body, causing the entire mecha to gleam brightly, dazzling the eyes. This flash of reflected light also caused the screen of [No Mecha Unrepaired], who had been closely watching the rabbit mecha, to suddenly white-out, going into a blinded state for a brief moment.

“HISSSS!” The giant python made a terrible cry. Regaining his vision, [No Mecha Unrepaired] saw the hissing head suddenly drop off the snake’s body to fall to the ground. A fountain of blood gushed out from where it had been chopped off, spraying the ground about 10 metres around it crimson. And then, the humongous snake’s body finally toppled down as well ...

Ling Lan had already piloted the rabbit mecha to land about 10 over metres away from the snake's body, and so had not been hit with any of the blood spray. Her mecha suddenly swept a cool gaze in a particular direction, honing in on a patch of grass. This abrupt movement caused the grass there to shift slightly and then grow still, not to move again.

Ling Lan turned her gaze away in satisfaction. As long as they did not obstruct her from completing her mission, she too did not want to kill all of these savage beasts. After all, she had never wanted to accumulate points by collecting savage beast materials anyway. With a bound, the rabbit mecha appeared before [No Mecha Unrepaired], reaching out a hand to return the weapon to the other. "Thank you. This weapon is very impressive. Now, I return it!"

Though the weapon was great, Ling Lan did not have any intention of claiming it for her own. As long as she upgraded to a better mecha and had it outfitted with the standard weapons, it would already be sufficient for Ling Lan's use.

Hearing this, [No Mecha Unrepaired] was taken aback. He had not expected [Lingtian First-String] to be unmoved by Regretless after experiencing its power first hand, that the other would still choose to return the weapon to him. From the other's tone of voice, [No Mecha Unrepaired] could tell for sure that this was not an act — the other really had no intention of taking the sword. This caused [No Mecha Unrepaired] to be deeply moved. Mind you, in the mecha world, in order to make their mecha stronger, some supreme weapons would often be fought over by the various strong fighters. Some would even resort to forceful and overbearing means to snatch these weapons from the hands of the weak.

This only further cemented [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s determination to gift the sword to [Lingtian First-String]. He said, "No need to return it to me. I'm giving you this weapon."

"For me? I don't think the mission reward included this." Although this weapon was great, Ling Lan did not want to owe [No Mecha Unrepaired] for no good reason.

"This is an extra. Consider it a token of my goodwill," said [No Mecha Unrepaired] with a smile. Just those rewards by themselves were not at all sufficient for him to hire a special-class operator.

"Since the mission reward had already been agreed on, you don't have to take out anything further to supplement it." Ling Lan quirked a brow, as if understanding [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s worries, and continued to say, "Don't worry, I will safely bring you to Suncreed City. I won't go against our agreement, and I won't ask for anything extra."

Ling Lan's words caused [No Mecha Unrepaired] to flush. He waved his hands frantically and said, "It's not like that. I have never doubted that you will honour our agreement. This weapon ... for me, is special, because it was created by me." [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s voice became very soft, "Although many people had wanted to buy it, I have never been able to sell it, always hoping that one day, someone who understands it will be able to take it together into battle, fulfilling the dreams I entrusted to it."

[No Mecha Unrepaired] lifted his head and said firmly, "It's called Regretless. I hope that someone strong can let it have no regrets in battle. After this period of time, I feel that you can fulfil my dream, and so, I want to give this weapon to you."

[No Mecha Unrepaired]'s words made Ling Lan take a close look at the stats of the weapon in her hands. Sure enough, its details stated — Weapon's Name: Regretless (equippable back weapon for mecha); Characteristics: Sturdy, sharp; Weight: 206 kg. Creator: [No Mecha Unrepaired]. Quality: Superior.

Little Four was supplementing the information with explanations inside the mindscape for Ling Lan. Cold weapons like these of superior quality, with both high tensile strength and sharpness, were extremely rare. On top of that, its weight was enough for it to be used as a heavy weapon at critical moments as well. Regretless, which had no obvious weaknesses, could be used long-term, as long as it was not damaged, even up till she became an ace operator ¹. Meanwhile, in the mecha world, the level of familiarity one had with one's weapon would be completely reflected in the mecha's combat power. Thus, this sort of long-term weapon was what all mecha operators loved and appreciated. It could be said that if this weapon were to be auctioned, it would attract the attention of all mecha operators below the level of ace operator.

Ling Lan agreed with what Little Four was saying — when she had first begun practising with that carrot-weapon, she had also had to take a long time to get accustomed to it. Later, when she had switched to other mecha, in contrast to the relative simplicity of firearms, she had had to spend the most time on cold weapons. This was because battles involving cold weapons were extremely dangerous — any bit of carelessness could bring great calamity on oneself.

Ling Lan, who had not been moved by Regretless earlier, was really somewhat interested now. For a mecha operator, finding a suitable primary cold weapon they liked was an extremely key thing. Initially, Ling Lan had planned to change her mecha before considering this matter, but now, such an exceptional cold weapon had appeared, so Ling Lan had no choice but to begin thinking about it now.

Ling Lan did not struggle over the issue for long. She took Regretless back, slinging it into place at the only weapon's bezel at her mecha's back, and said, "Thank you. This weapon is indeed very exceptional. It is precisely what I need, so I will gladly accept it. However, the rewards we had previously agreed on, you don't have to give those to me anymore." At this point, Ling Lan suddenly remembered that without those 200 points, she would not be able to get the full 1010 she needed. So, she added somewhat sheepishly, "Uh, the points are still needed. To compensate you for your loss, in future I can accept one more task from you. Of course, that task must be something I can do."

Ling Lan decided to fully end this entanglement here. She did not like to drag things out, and so stated things plainly right now. This was to prevent problems in future if they could not agree, wasting the ties of friendship formed here with the gift of this sword.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] had never intended Ling Lan to pay any price from the start, very sincerely wanting to entrust the best weapon he had created to the other. Therefore, hearing Ling Lan's words, he did not take Ling Lan's promise to heart, merely nodding happily in response. Right then, he did not know that this promise of Ling Lan's would cause his future to become extraordinary ...

Ling Lan very quickly came to the place that Little Four had indicated, picking up an extremely common-looking rock. Seeing this, [No Mecha Unrepaired] said with some confused annoyance, "What's this? Is that your mission?" This dusty, grey, and unassuming rock could be found anywhere, but Ling Lan had selected it out very carefully from a pile of rocks.

"Yes, this is a starlight conversion power core," replied Ling Lan.

“What? This is that rumoured starlight conversion power core?!” [No Mecha Unrepaired] instantly exclaimed in shock.

“Rumoured?” Ling Lan blinked blankly at [No Mecha Unrepaired], unsure why the other would be so shocked.

“Oh [Lingtian First-String] ... this is the only main storyline mission of Three-Seas Town. Although many people have accepted it before, no one has ever been able to find the core. Many people think that it’s because the starlight conversion power core hasn’t appeared yet, considering the mission an impossible mission to complete at the moment,” explained [No Mecha Unrepaired].

“Is that so? I just saw that the points it offered was pretty good, so I accepted it,” said Ling Lan nonchalantly.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] almost wept — was this the difference between the strong and the average person? Missions that they did not even dare to think about, and the other had only casually accepted it because it offered more points ... A thought suddenly occurred to [No Mecha Unrepaired]. “How did you know there would be a starlight conversion power core here? That this mission could be completed?”

Ling Lan replied calmly, “I’ve come here before and seen this. But I didn’t know what it was for back then, so I didn’t take it and just left it here ...”

Didn’t take it? [No Mecha Unrepaired] almost spewed blood. Alright, so the other had long been to this savage place before. Recalling how the other had seemed extremely familiar with the surroundings here, as if strolling through his own backyard, [No Mecha Unrepaired] understood and decided to let it go.

Ling Lan put the starlight conversion power core into her mecha’s equipment storage and said, “Alright, let’s go.”

Having been stunned multiple times by Ling Lan, [No Mecha Unrepaired] naturally had no objections, quietly following Ling Lan away from the area.

The two of them had retraced their steps for about 10 minutes when Ling Lan suddenly glanced at [No Mecha Unrepaired] and asked, “Have you offended someone?”

While they had been at the town’s western gate, the intermittent stares [No Mecha Unrepaired] had attracted from some people had let Ling Lan sense that her employer may very likely have offended someone. However, Ling Lan was not concerned by this — as long as she could obtain points, she would still accept the mission to escort the other.

[No Mecha Unrepaired]’s heart jolted and he croaked, “Why do you ask?”

“These mecha probably followed you here. However, they don’t seem to be strong enough and were killed by the savage beasts.” Ling Lan pointed at the forest ahead, signalling [No Mecha Unrepaired] that he could go take a look.

[No Mecha Unrepaired]’s expression paled and he hurriedly piloted his mecha over. Several quick bounds later and he could see several greyed out mecha laying flat on the ground. This meant that these mecha were already in the state of death. Even if they decided to revive, the mecha would only

disappear from this location 20 minutes later. During this period of time, anyone could come and take the equipment and weapons the other had dropped, or perhaps any other tools.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] saw that familiar lightning bolt ² symbol on the mecha's chests and instantly said through clenched teeth, "It's them again, the Thunder King's faction."

"Thunder King?" Following behind [No Mecha Unrepaired], Ling Lan could not help but think that this name sounded really familiar ...

Chapter 235: It's Time to Change!

At Ling Lan's question, [No Mecha Unrepaired] turned his head to smile wryly and said, "The Thunder King is the leader of the most powerful faction in our school. His faction is also good enough to rank within the mecha world ..."

[No Mecha Unrepaired]'s words caused a thought to tumble through Ling Lan's mind. Suddenly, she recalled — wasn't there someone with the nickname of 'Thunder King' at the First Men's Military Academy? Could it be him? Ling Lan could not help but narrow her eyes. She asked slowly, "From ... the First Men's Military Academy?"

"Ah? So you know of him too? Indeed, we are from the First Men's Military Academy," said [No Mecha Unrepaired] dejectedly, after his initial surprise.

"Aren't you all schoolmates? How did your relationship become so terrible, that he would even send people to come after you?" Ling Lan was now rather curious about how [No Mecha Unrepaired] had offended this Thunder King, causing the other to expend so much effort in monitoring him, yet not finishing him off completely.

"Actually, I don't have any real grudge with the Thunder King. I just refused to join his faction. I had thought that even if the other was unhappy about it, he wouldn't go too far. Unexpectedly, they actually began to restrict me on all fronts in the mecha world, not allowing me to get out of Three-Seas Town," explained [No Mecha Unrepaired], "I'm not a combat mecha operator, so I don't really go out much. Plus, as long as I don't join the arena fights in the town, they can't attack me there. They have no other choice than to restrict me from going to other towns to harass me."

At this point of his narration, [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s tone turned slightly bitter, "You don't know, but a portion of our results at the military academy comes from the mecha world. The deadline to produce results is three years. If we don't achieve the lowest requirements of the military academy in three years' time, we will be expelled. And this year, is my third year ..." [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s gaze was currently extremely complicated, there was stubbornness, but also a trace of self-doubt. He gritted his teeth and said, "I need to leave Three-Seas Town this year and go to Suncreed City. This is my final chance. I cannot just admit defeat like this."

[No Mecha Unrepaired]'s dignified tenacity moved Ling Lan, and her impression of the Thunder King changed from indifference to a slight dislike. She scrunched her brow and asked, "The Thunder King is that overbearing?"

If the other's style was really like that, Ling Lan could almost guarantee that their new cadet regiment would definitely be targeted mercilessly by the other. An overbearing person like that would definitely not allow a new cadet faction he could not control to emerge. It looked like she would have to consider things properly now.

"Overbearing?" [No Mecha Unrepaired] shook his head. "He doesn't have much interest for normal students, never bothering them. However, he highly values some talented students, and will even use manipulations to force the other to join him. That said, I've heard that towards those people who join his faction, he takes care of them well in terms of both resources and physical support. Some students who were forced to join around the same time I was pressured to now don't seem to have much complaints, instead advising me to not miss the chance ..." said [No Mecha Unrepaired] with a bitter smile. This was also why he had begun to waver.

"Of course, if those talented people are already being protected by some other faction, he will not intervene," added [No Mecha Unrepaired].

As Ling Lan listened, her sharp eyebrows ¹ drew close together — from [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s words, Ling Lan could tell that this Thunder King was definitely an intelligent person. He knew how to ensure his own power base, while not allowing other factions to band together against him ... if they had to face such an opponent, it would indeed be pretty troublesome.

At this moment, Ling Lan somewhat regretted accepting this mission. With the Thunder King's abilities, it was likely that even if [No Mecha Unrepaired] did not reveal her name, he would be able to find some clue to seek her out. This was not to say that Ling Lan feared the Thunder King; Ling Lan just did not want to offend the military academy's most powerful faction before she had figured out the full situation in the school. For Ling Lan, the later she became exposed, the safer it was for her. After all, the secret of her body made it inappropriate for her to stand in the limelight ...

"Ling Lan, gold will always shine. This is not something you can hide just because you want to hide it. Even though your gender needs to remain hidden, so you will indeed have some reservations at the military academy, this doesn't mean that you need to hold back or tolerate disrespect and humiliation. You must understand. A child of mine, Ling Xiao, has no need to fear anything. When there is something you want to do, just charge forwards bravely and do it! Your father, Ling Xiao — me, is more than capable of bearing any consequences." At this moment, the words that Ling Xiao had said to her when she had left home once more flashed within her mind, causing Ling Lan's heart to throb.

Ling Lan could not help but cover her face as her lips quirked up. Indeed, things were different for her now. She was not alone in protecting Lan Luofeng and the whole Ling family. Now, there was a large mountain standing behind her, the Federation's great general Ling Xiao, her most awesome dad of this life.

Ling Lan could not help but mock herself internally: *Ling Lan, you need to get used to this identity of yours now. You are no longer that background character lying on your sickbed waiting for death in your past life. You are now the 'son' of the Federation's great general Ling Xiao, the Federation's strongest god-class operator. You have enough clout to stand up to anyone's provocation. Even if the Thunder King is fiercer or stronger, so what? As a second-generation ancestor, do you really need to fear him?*

Back then, didn't you tell Qi Long, Wu Jiong, and the others that, to live freely in the military academy, besides some things that have to be kept under wraps, they also cannot lack the necessary cockiness and aggression? As the person who said those things, how can you shrink back just because of the Thunder King's overbearing manner? You need to discard the you from your previous life, and truly become this world's Ling Lan ...

Right then, Ling Lan finally understood — ever since Ling Xiao had returned from the dead, her original goal of living a stable and peaceful life had ended. As the child of one of the Federation's generals who was also a god-class operator, she was destined not to have an ordinary life. Even if she regained her gender, she still would not be able to return to her initial tranquil life ². Her future was destined to be thrilling and dramatic ...

It was time to change! A cold light flashed through Ling Lan's eyes, which held a conviction like never before!

[No Mecha Unrepaired] did not know that Ling Lan had already thought through certain matters, thus heralding a change in her personal style, making her even more proactive and forceful. Beaten down by the guilt in his heart, he began apologising, "I'm really sorry. This time, you sending me to Suncreed City will definitely offend the Thunder King."

"That's alright!" Having cast away her doubts, Ling Lan was calm as she said, "Thunder King? Perhaps other people might fear him ... me, I'm not afraid."

That said, Ling Lan looked at [No Mecha Unrepaired] and said, "If by any chance you have any trouble, you can come look for me. You still have one chance to hire me. Don't waste it." Ling Lan's meaning was very clear. If the Thunder King came to pressure him again, [No Mecha Unrepaired] could seek her help.

Ling Lan's words caused [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s eyes to light up, but they very quickly dimmed again. He knew very well just how massive the Thunder King's faction was; although [Lingtian First-String]'s mecha combat skills were very strong, no matter how strong, it still could not stand up to the power of the Thunder King's faction! He could not be so selfish and let a friend be dragged into danger.

Seeing [No Mecha Unrepaired] fall silent, Ling Lan naturally knew what [No Mecha Unrepaired] was worrying about. This further improved her impression of [No Mecha Unrepaired], and she could not help but say, "For numbers, we have people too."

If she told Qi Long and the others that they may be going to war against the school's strongest faction soon, that bunch of brats would definitely be thrilled out of their minds ... Ling Lan could almost see the eager appearances of Qi Long and the others grinding their fists and rubbing their palms gearing up for a fight, and her heart actually begun to heat up as well.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] was sceptical of Ling Lan's words, but he had still sensed the depth of Ling Lan's good intentions, and his heart could not help but feel thankful towards this mecha master he had met serendipitously. Even though he did not believe that [Lingtian First-String] would really be able to resolve his dilemma, he was still extremely grateful.

[No Mecha Unrepaired] made a low, solemn sound of agreement, his initially somewhat fluttering heart calming down instantly. Even though he knew the path before him was cloaked in uncertainty, right now he had rekindled his confidence, restored his fighting spirit, and was ready to continue walking

courageously. Thank the heavens that he had not been abandoned by this world — there was still someone willing to give him a hand!

The two of them ended their conversation and continued their journey. As they left, [No Mecha Unrepaired] did not forget to pick up the equipment dropped by the 'dead' mecha operators. Since he was already at odds with the Thunder King, he was not worried about adding on to his grudge.

Perhaps those on his trail had all died on the road, for Ling Lan and [No Mecha Unrepaired] did not see any sign of being followed as they journeyed, safely and peacefully arriving at Suncreed City.

Amidst [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s grateful thanks, Ling Lan received the 200 points she was owed and then bid farewell to him.

Seeing her original total of 0 points instantly jump to 200 points, Ling Lan's mood became exceptionally good. Subsequently, she took a trip to the city council to complete the letter delivery mission, before running non-stop to return to Three-Seas Town.

The moment she arrived at Three-Seas Town, Ling Lan discovered that quite a significant number of people were watching her. Ling Lan did not have to guess to know that these people must be the Thunder King's men. She had only entered the mecha world for a couple of hours — she had done nothing other than helping [No Mecha Unrepaired] complete his mission to get to Suncreed City and offending the Thunder King, so other people would really have no reason to notice her.

Ling Lan was not afraid. If the Thunder King's men did not come to mess with her, she would not actively go and provoke them either. After all, the Thunder King helmed the military academy's number one faction. At the heart of it, Ling Lan did not want to engage the Thunder King while her side was still disadvantaged on all fronts. Ling Lan was used to having the initiative, so she hoped to gather more first-hand information on the other first before making a decision. Moreover, the other factions were still observing coldly from the side-lines. Ling Lan did not want to weaken themselves unnecessarily for some other faction to swoop in and profit.

Ling Lan pretended not to know anything, going off to see the mayor to submit her mission. Besides gaining some equipment, she also received another 900 points, finally obtaining the minimum point requirement for her to challenge the arena fights. As soon as she was able, Ling Lan chose to enter the arena to take part in the arena challenge, hoping to speed up her point gathering process. She needed to level up as fast as possible so she could redeem the mecha with the lowest point requirement and then leave this place to meet up with Qi Long and the others. This was the task that Ling Lan had to complete first.

The moment Ling Lan entered the arena fights, several people behind her opened their communicators to contact some other people.

"Head, the other has entered the arena challenge fights. Now what?"

"Hmph, daring to oppose Leiting, this person is really seeking death. Spread the word — all the new trainee mecha operators who just joined the organisation in this district are to stop their activities and collectively take part in the challenge fights. If they meet the rabbit mecha, they should thrash him. I want him to have no chance of levelling up, forever remaining at Three-Seas Town as a trainee mecha!" From the other end of the communicator came a dark voice, coldly declaring Ling Lan's fate.

Chapter 236: Newcomer Matchups!

“If the other really escorted [No Mecha Unrepaired] to Suncreed City, those trainee mecha operators may not be able to handle him,” reminded the person reporting, somewhat hesitantly.

“Even many of our intermediate mecha warriors had died on the road to Suncreed, do you think they managed to get to the city alive?” barked the other side in response, “Idiot! It goes without thinking that they failed. That’s why that damn rabbit would think to go to the arena fights to gain battle experience ...”

“Yes, yes, yes, I’m overthinking it.” The contacting person dabbed at the cold sweat on his forehead, regretting his big mouth, as he shut his communicator. He then immediately sent the head’s orders out. Subsequently, a considerable number of mecha ported back to enter the mecha combat arena fights ...

The moment Ling Lan entered the mecha combat hall, the system delivered an alert, asking her to decide whether to remain anonymous or to make her name public. After some thought, Ling Lan still decided to remain anonymous. It was better to be cautious — even if they really would have to go up against the Thunder King in the end, she wanted to leave enough preparation time for herself.

As Ling Lan was still considered a trainee mecha operator, she could not join the real arena fights yet. In other words, the official arena fights and cross-level challenge fights had nothing to do with her. She could only take things one step at a time, so the ones she would be facing, would be those at the same level as her, the other trainee mecha operator newbies ¹.

The arena fights at Ling Lan’s level were called the newcomer matchups. The points awarded for each match were not much, just 1000 points, and there were no additional betting awards. Of course, if she lost, Ling Lan would be deducted 1000 points, once again becoming the penniless pauper she had been at the beginning.

Ling Lan did not think she would lose — this was not blind arrogance, but informed confidence. Of course, she also did not mind that each match would only net her 1000 points — compared to those time-consuming missions earlier, the points she could get here were incomparably greater. Ling Lan was very satisfied with this. Thus, without giving the matter further thought, she instantly submitted a request for a match.

Very soon, the system’s voice rang out by Ling Lan’s ear, “[Lingtian First-String], welcome to the Mecha World’s arena fights. As you are still a trainee mecha, you can only take part in the newcomer matchups (a tournament exclusively for trainee mecha). Entering you into the newcomer matchups’ matchmaking system now. Please wait!”

Ling Lan thought that she would have to wait a long time, but surprisingly, it had only been a few seconds when she heard a ‘ding!’ and the system spoke up again, “Please note, your opponent has been randomly selected by the system — trainee mecha [Dream Butterfly Dance]. Three seconds later, you will be transported to the match arena. There will be 10 seconds of invulnerable protection time. Once the protection disappears, the match officially begins!”

[Dream Butterfly Dance]? Ling Lan's first thought was that the other was a girl, though of course it could also be a more effeminate young man ... As Ling Lan was wondering, her mecha's screen suddenly turned dark before lighting up again, and she found herself in a flat plain, endless to the eye, but there were no places to conceal oneself. This meant that this match would be a clash of sheer strength.

The opponent's choice was a flying transformer type mecha — this meant the other was extremely confident in their control skills. Otherwise, they would not have chosen the flying transformer mecha, which had the highest control difficulty coefficient among all the basic mecha. This made Ling Lan's heart sink as she grew serious. If the other was truly a control prodigy, she needed to make sure she would not capsize her boat in a ditch here.

The 10 seconds of protection time went by quickly. Ling Lan was curious about the opponent, and so decided not to attack first. She wanted to see the other's attack — as long as the other made a move, she would be able to tell how strong the opponent was.

The opponent's first decision was to transform, and then piloting their mecha to fly into the air, they chose to launch a long-range attack. This was the most basic strategy of flying transformer mecha. A flying transformer mecha's main advantage was that its long-range attacks were the strongest among all the three basic mecha. Thus, this decision of the opponent was undoubtedly extremely accurate.

With a "bam", Ling Lan operated her mecha to leap away. A light beam exploded at the spot where she had just been standing, sending countless amounts of dust and dirt into the air. As she leapt, Ling Lan was already on the lookout for the opponent's following attacks, but unexpectedly, after failing in their first attack, the other chose to retreat once more, pulling a distance away from her. This caused Ling Lan to become rather disappointed.

Just in that last attack alone, the opponent had already made three mistakes. One, during the flying transformer mecha's first long-range attack, they should not have aimed at where she had been standing; instead, they should have considered where she would dodge to — this was called prediction. Of course, if one did not have enough confidence in one's predictive ability, one could fire multiple shots towards several potential areas where she could dodge to. This was one of the requisite abilities of a long-range attacker. However, the opponent had not done so, only using a common mecha operator's most basic shooting skill, firing some beams and calling it a day.

Two, even if the flying mecha did not have any predictive ability, they could have watched where she was dodging to and followed up by firing consecutive attacks after her. This would pressure the opponent, giving the opponent no chance to counterattack, only able to dodge reactively.

Three, an experienced flying transformer mecha would know to maintain distance with their target during attacks. However, when she had dodged, she had caused the distance between the two of them to already be very far. The rabbit mecha's long-range weapons were completely incapable of striking the opponent, so it was completely unnecessary for the other to be so cautious and give up on attacking to put even more distance between them.

Without question, whether in terms of basic control, or in terms of decision-making, the opponent was green beyond green. It could be said that, based on the other's control skills, they were not at all qualified to operate a flying transformer mecha with its high difficulty coefficient. If Ling Lan was asked

to advise, she would say that the other should obediently stick to operating bestial mecha, mastering the basic controls before choosing other types of mecha.

Ling Lan had been able to tell the opponent's base line from just one attack. Initially somewhat interested, Ling Lan instantly lost the mood to continue dragging things out with the other. And so, Ling Lan activated all the engines of the rabbit mecha — the rabbit leapt and ran as if it were airborne, like an arrow; the opponent's attacks had no way of keeping up with this speed. Seeing the other coming closer and closer, the opponent started to panic, actually turning to run away desperately ... but in the next second, they suddenly found that they could no longer see the rabbit's figure in their mecha's screen. What in the world was this?

The opponent did not dare to move recklessly, quickly stopping the mecha and carefully scanning for signs of the rabbit mecha. But before they could look closely, the mainframe of their mecha began blaring a warning, "Danger!"

They only managed to hear this one warning, and then they immediately felt their mecha being struck by a tremendous force — they were almost rattled unconscious by the collision, and then their mecha's screen turned black. Closely following that was a notification from the system's voice, "Your vital point was struck by the opponent, causing your mecha to explode instantly resulting in your death. Please choose whether to continue to the next round or to leave ..."

They had actually died? How the heck did they die? The flying mecha chose to continue to the next match, but selected the option for a temporary rest to reorganise. They then immediately looked up the battle feed of the fight between the rabbit mecha and them, and finally found out how they had died.

Apparently, the rabbit mecha had already ducked below him, going into the blind spot of their mecha. Then, with a powerful leap, the other had charged into the air from below, using that extremely characteristic red carrot to violate their chrysanthemum ² ...

"How despicable!" [Dream Butterfly Dance] could not help but slam their hand onto the control panel. That image of violating her chrysanthemum was really too sleazy and revolting. As a girl, she really could not accept this. At this moment, hatred towards the rabbit surged within her heart — the other's attack was just so humiliating ...

An angry woman often could not be reasoned with!

Ling Lan did not know that due to her desire for efficiency, she had actually incited the hatred of a girl. Right now, she was waiting for her next match — even though she had already obtained 1000 points from her first fight, she would need at least 100,000 points to redeem the worst lower mecha. This was just the first step of her long journey — she needed to win at least 100 consecutive matches to obtain these 100,000 points.

Very soon, the system notified her that a new challenger had been found — the trainee mecha operator [All-Rounded Expert ³]. As before, she would be transported to the battlefield three seconds later.

[All-Rounded Expert]? It looked like this person was very confident, actually daring to pick such a name. Ling Lan looked at the name and began to deduce the other's personality.

This was a habit she had picked up from Instructor Number Five. Number Five liked to manipulate the opponent, so would often approach from unexpected angles to dig out some secrets. For example, words or phrases the opponent liked to use, or perhaps some pet names or nicknames they gave themselves — oftentimes, these fine details would be a surprisingly accurate reflection of their inner heart. Of course, this did not exclude the possibility of there being some masters of deception who were good at pretending, purposefully spouting some nonsense or naming themselves based on completely irrelevant things. For those people, one needed to use reverse psychology to figure them out.

The battlefield she was transported to was still an endless plain, exactly the same as in the previous match. This made Ling Lan suspect whether this was the only battlefield for the newcomer matchups. If her suspicions were correct, then the system probably did not think highly of the combat between newcomers. The system must have reckoned that newcomers would not be able to use their environment to do anything, and so had set this unchanging flat plain as the battlefield.

“Haha, who knew I’d be so lucky! Actually running into the rabbit mecha the team had sent out an alert telling us to target!” Taunting laughter rang out by Ling Lan’s ears, extremely wild and uninhibited.

Ling Lan frowned and looked over to see a humanoid mecha standing conspicuously not too far away from her. Slung casually over its shoulder was a huge metal cleaver, and the mecha just stood there relaxed, not at all vigilant, no sign at all of the tension of someone here to participate in a match.

Ling Lan could not help but snort softly. This fellow was really asking for death — being so loose and careless in front of an opponent, pretty much no combat standards at all.

In Ling Lan’s eyes, the other’s entire body was full of openings. It could be said that, if she attacked, Ling Lan could definitely kill the other in one second without breaking a sweat. She had initially thought she would encounter a mecha operator of a better standard, but it was unexpectedly another weakling-fodder ... this made Ling Lan rather disappointed once again. Although Ling Lan wanted to gather points as fast as she could, she also wanted to find an opponent worthy of a fight, and not these trash who had not even passed the mecha control basics.

These past few years, she had trained long and hard. Whether in terms of physical combat skills or mecha combat, Ling Lan had always harboured a deep respect for all combat arts in her heart. Seeing the opponent being so flippant and irreverent, she was filled with extreme dislike.

Chapter 237: Combat Style!

After the 10-second protection period, Ling Lan did not wait for her opponent to make the first move like in her previous match. Ling Lan believed that [All-Rounded Expert]’s irreverent attitude made him unqualified to even operate a mecha into battle.

Thus, Ling Lan operated her rabbit mecha to leap forwards without any hesitation. With a powerful spring, her mecha flew like an arrow parallel to the ground. In an instant, she had removed the carrot-sword from the rabbit’s mouth and swung it forwards fiercely, drawing a brilliant red trail of light through the air, slashing at the cockpit of the humanoid mecha.

“Warning! Danger!” The other’s mainframe only had time to give this one warning before the initially brightly lit cockpit was plunged into darkness. Then, the system’s voice rang out, “You have died in battle. Please choose whether to continue to the next match or to leave?”

[All-Rounded Expert] blew a gasket at this unexpected outcome. He believed that his opponent must definitely have used some illegal controls in this attack, otherwise how could he have been insta-killed in just one move¹? This rabbit was really too despicable! No wonder the team had sent out a kill order on it. Hmph, and to think he had even felt sorry for the other ...

[All-Rounded Expert] decided that he would go back and seek the other out again to teach him a good lesson, letting the other understand that one could not live in such a despicable manner. [All-Rounded Expert] chose to withdraw from the matchups and look up his own battle records, trying to seek out information on that rabbit. Unexpectedly, the other had chosen to remain anonymous. This further cemented [All-Rounded Expert]’s belief that the other had come prepared to use some underhanded rule-breaking methods to rob him of his points. He was filled with indignant rage, immediately raising an objection to the mecha world’s system, hoping that the system would disqualify the other’s win. Not only that, he also complained that the other had used illegal methods which broke the system’s rules.

Very quickly, the system responded. The system judged the match valid; [All-Rounded Expert]’s objection was refuted. Furthermore, the contents of his complaint were judged by the system as groundless assumption, a form of false accusation.

With regards to false accusations, the punishment was extremely severe both in the real world and in the virtual world. [All-Rounded Expert] was immediately deducted 2000 points, and was given a 10-match ban by the system. This outcome made [All-Rounded Expert] even more infuriated. Mad from anger, he could not control himself, curses and profanities pouring endlessly from his mouth. And then, a greater tragedy occurred — this behaviour of [All-Rounded Expert] made the virtual world system kick him out, along with the notification that he had been banned from entering the virtual world for 3 days.

[All-Rounded Expert] stared at the red-worded warning on his screen and kicked open the virtual world login pod in a towering rage. Crawling out from it, he roared, “Blasted mainframe! I’m so pissed off!”

Right then, the hatch of the login pod beside his suddenly opened. A young man sat up from inside and asked with a baffled expression, “Qiao Lin, why have you come out? No wonder I could not find you in the mecha world.”

He had tried to contact [All-Rounded Expert] in the mecha world, but was informed by the system that the other was unreachable. Out of worry, he had then decided to go offline to check on the other, and sure enough, the other had left the virtual world.

Qiao Lin looked at the other and then, as if finding a confidant, he immediately broke out into a rant telling the other everything that had happened in the mecha world.

The other youth frowned slightly, disagreeing with Qiao Lin’s point of view. He said, “Since the mainframe did not find anything wrong with the other, that means the other didn’t cheat. Perhaps you just took your opponent too lightly.”

Qiao Lin retorted angrily, “How could that be? Even if I did not take the other seriously, as peer trainee mecha operators, is it possible for him to insta-kill me? It’s not like I entered a cross-grade challenge

match.” At the heart of it, he just could not believe that he could be killed instantly by a trainee mecha operator of the same level. He could not accept this outcome.

At these words, the other youth paused. Knowing that Qiao Lin could not accept this result, he tried to counsel him gently, “It’s likely that the other is a hacker, and did something the mainframe cannot see through. Your anger is wasted for now. Why not save it and look for a chance to take revenge in the future?”

Although the youth was comforting Qiao Lin this way, a trace of disagreement could be seen on his face. The mecha world was renowned to be the most secure virtual world — hackers would never be able to manipulate anything inside it unless they were the even more terrifying spectres. However, spectres relied on directly damaging an opponent’s spiritual power to obtain victory ... seeing Qiao Lin’s hysterically exuberant demeanour right now, that possibility could be excluded. The truth was very likely as he had guessed — Qiao Lin had been too careless and, by sheer fluke, this insta-kill was the outcome.

If Qiao Lin had not been the Thunder King Qiao Ting’s younger brother, he would not have even bothered with these comforting words. Glancing at the bristling Qiao Lin, he could not help but sigh. Even though they were brothers with the same bloodline, their talents were completely incomparable. The Thunder King Qiao Ting was the prodigious mecha operator in the limelight, while Qiao Lin was an incapable fool, only able to bank on his elder brother’s reputation to act like a prince ...

After spending a little more time consoling Qiao Lin, the youth then said goodbye to the other and laid back into the virtual login pod. In that instant before the login pod closed, a mocking smirk suddenly appeared on the initially discontented face of Qiao Lin ...

Over the next two days, a piece of news went viral among the lower mecha operators. In the newcomer matchups, a particular trainee rabbit mecha had consecutively killed over 40 other newcomer trainee mecha operators in one day, immediately leaping to the top of the newcomer rankings.

40 consecutive victories was not any great news — many people before this had also achieved this type of results. Though of course these people did not accomplish it in one day ...

Indeed, in terms of time, the rabbit mecha’s achievement was rather remarkable, but this was not the reason for the uproar. The reason why the entire mecha world was so shaken, was that this rabbit mecha had managed one-hit kills against opponents of the same level. Not just once, or twice, but every single time. These results were certainly unprecedented — though it could not be known whether this feat would not be replicated in the future, within the near future at least, no one could do the same ...

Moreover, this was not some cross-grade arena fight, where it was easy to get a one-hit kill due to the great difference in strength between the two fighters’ levels. In a newcomer matchup, as both sides were newcomers, it was very rare to see such an overwhelming difference between participants. Many people suspected that the rabbit mecha must have stayed back at the mecha training hall to keep polishing its basic controls, waiting until it was honed to the max before entering the mecha world ². This would explain why its strength was so high.

Of course, there were also people who suspected that this was the alternate account of some expert. However, this supposition was soon outright refuted by the official authorities, because the mecha

world did not allow alternate accounts. Every person's brainwaves and spiritual power was unique, and they used that to login to the virtual world, so it was impossible for someone to have a second account.

Even hackers with spiritual self-mutations or spectres could not modify their brainwaves and spiritual power to establish a new account. They could only use shielding methods to hide their true identities from the system. However, they too could not change the facts, for example, changing their level from a mecha expert to a trainee mecha operator ...

The declaration from the authorities only escalated the matter further. More and more people were leaning towards the idea that the rabbit mecha had trained within the training hall for several years to achieve this grand debut. In the meantime, the rabbit mecha did not stop its winning streak. In the second day, 60 people fell to its sword, pushing its total victories to 100 matches. Each and every one of these 100 matches were finished with one-hit kills.

This achievement caused those lower level mecha operators to grow even wilder — many of them were filled with regret for not training properly in their basic control, for not appreciating their first mecha, for switching over to a better mecha before they were fully familiar with their first mecha. Quite a number of people began idolising the rabbit mecha, even believing that one day, he would become the most talented mecha operator of the Federation ... it was highly likely that another prodigy like Ling Xiao had appeared.

On the third day, just as everyone was eagerly anticipating the rabbit mecha's continued victory streak, they found that they could no longer see any sign of the rabbit mecha in the newcomer matchups ... just when everyone was boggled by this, someone calculated the rabbit mecha's points and found that the points from the 100 consecutive wins was enough for the rabbit mecha to advance to lower mecha operator.

In other words, the rabbit mecha could now join the lowest tier of cross-grade challenges. Many people assumed that the rabbit mecha would definitely participate in a cross-grade challenge, but soon found that the mysterious rabbit mecha had truly disappeared from the entire arena. It was as if its fervent battle exploits of the previous two days were just a dream, a mass hallucination.

"Li Lanfeng, you've recently been researching the combat methods of the rabbit mecha. Did you find anything?" In the 4th year dorms, the regular visitor Zhao Jun, who came to see Li Lanfeng studying those videos again, could not help but ask.

"Just as everyone is saying, their basic control is close to perfect. Not a single move is wasted. It's so clean and efficient that it's scary," replied Li Lanfeng with a serious expression.

"Looks like, the other's combat style is very similar to yours!" Zhao Jun understood Li Lanfeng. His good friend was also someone who pursued the perfection of basic controls. This was the reason why Li Lanfeng had still not yet advanced to special-class operator. Staying as an advanced mecha warrior for two years was so that he could train in the advanced mecha warrior basic controls until he mastered them till perfection. Otherwise, Li Lanfeng's current mecha level would have already been the same as his. Two years' time was enough for him to peek into the doorway to the secrets of ace operators.

Zhao Jun had always thought that Li Lanfeng had a sort of problematic obsession with basic controls; he himself did not think much of it. Everyone knew that the more advanced a mecha operator was, the more complex the manoeuvres they could learn would be, with a corresponding greater power. Many people would not want to waste time on the basic controls of lower mecha — in Zhao Jun's eyes, the basic controls of each level need only be learned until one was familiar with them; it was completely unnecessary to hone them till perfection. Zhao Jun was of the firm opinion that Li Lanfeng was wasting his time.

However, Zhao Jun would not force Li Lanfeng to change his ways. Compared to Li Lanfeng's mecha control skills, he trusted and valued the other more for his brains and strategic mind. In fact, he felt that Li Lanfeng was better suited to be a strategist rather than a full-time mecha operator.

"Yes, this style is indeed very similar ..." mused Li Lanfeng, who seemed to be recalling something, his gaze distant.

"Could this be someone from your sect?" asked Zhao Jun jokingly, still remembering Li Lanfeng's mention before that the perfect mastery of basic controls was the hard-and-fast rule of his sect.

At these words, Li Lanfeng blinked, startled, as if realising something. He very quickly regained his composure though, to say, "Zhao Jun, you have finally said something useful. Perhaps, that rabbit mecha really has some relation with our sect."

Chapter 238: Phoenix Thrall Fate!

"Really?" Zhao Jun's interest was hooked. He quickly said, "Then, you should ask the people of your sect, see who's the one who most recently entered the mecha world. Ask him to level up quickly. Damn my hands are itching for a fight with him."

Li Lanfeng glanced at Zhao Jun with a half-smile and did not reply to his words, instead bringing up another topic, "I hear the Thunder King is in Closed Door Meditation. Once he succeeds, he will advance to become an ace operator. You probably won't have a chance to fight him anymore."

As if being doused by a bucket of water, Zhao Jun's initial excitement vanished. He rubbed fiercely at his strong face and said sulkily, "Dammit, that fellow really isn't human. I just became familiar with special-class mecha and built up the confidence to go fight him, and he goes ahead and advances to ace? Is the gap between us really that wide, that I'm unable to catch up no matter how I chase?"

Zhao Jun was rather discouraged — he himself was considered someone with great talent in mecha control, but compared to the Thunder King Qiao Ting, he was still weaker by a hair, forever chasing with all his might behind the other. He had finally caught up this year with great difficulty, at last seeing the chance to fight the other evenly, but immediately found himself being left behind yet again. This feeling was very mentally damaging. Mind you, even now, he had not managed to even touch the gateway to the profound secrets of ace level.

"Not human? Wide gap? You think too highly of him." A trace of contempt appeared on Li Lanfeng's lips, as if he did not consider the Thunder King much of a threat.

“Saying that ... you don’t think he’s going to advance this time?” Li Lanfeng’s words made the low-spirited Zhao Jun revive instantly. Zhao Jun really deferred to Li Lanfeng’s judgement. If the other failed to advance, it would prove that he had not been left too far behind by the other.

“I did not say that. Whether or not he can advance, depends on his capabilities, and also, luck.” As he spoke, Li Lanfeng flashed a half-smile and a teasing gaze. This expression made Zhao Jun’s attention waver involuntarily for a moment ...

Zhao Jun hurriedly gathered his emotions, forcing his eyes away from Li Lanfeng’s gaze, shifting his vision to one side. Damn, what kind of spiritual mutation was this exactly? It was too lethal — many times, he would be struck uncontrollably, losing his focus and dropping his guard in an instant. If Li Lanfeng was his enemy, he would have long been dead several times over ... of course, only he knew a thing or two about this ability of Li Lanfeng’s. Before outsiders, Li Lanfeng was still very restrained, never activating this particular ability.

Regaining control of himself, Zhao Jun turned his full attention onto the Thunder King. Through gritted teeth, he said, “Right! We still need to look at luck! Damn, I hope his luck is blastedly terrible this time, that he doesn’t manage to advance.”

“Rather than pinning your hopes on that fickle and uncertain luck, you might as well go and properly study your mecha control and try to elevate your realm as soon as possible ... even if the Thunder King fails this time, he won’t be staying as a special-class operator for long,” Li Lanfeng reminded Zhao Jun kindly.

Li Lanfeng knew well that Qiao Ting’s advancement to ace operator was just a matter of time. If he was lucky, he may just advance to ace operator tomorrow — and even if his luck was terrible, in the two years before graduation, even if he had to grind, he would have grinded his way up to ace operator level.

“I’ve got it. I’ll go now to the mecha world. Not going to waste a single minute ...” Li Lanfeng’s reminder made Zhao Jun feel the pressure bearing down on him. Losing the interest to keep nattering on with Li Lanfeng, he immediately went back to login to the virtual world to study his mecha control. The only path to advancement was to train hard and break past one’s own control limits.

Li Lanfeng sent Zhao Jun off with a smile. When he was the only one left in the room, his initially warm and smiling gaze gradually turned cold and focused, with a trace of anxiety hidden deep within it.

Li Lanfeng looked once more at the rabbit mecha on the screen. And right at that moment, the rabbit mecha once more blew up its opponent’s mecha cleanly and efficiently, proudly turning to leave the match arena. That calm indifference towards victory was so familiar that it made his heart ache. Li Lanfeng’s fists curled up tight involuntarily. “Who are you really? Is it him? No, he would not have stopped where he was 7 years ago. But that style is so like him ... could it be a junior brother or junior sister from his sect? Or perhaps his disciple?”

Li Lanfeng instantly made a decision. He would definitely find this rabbit mecha and find out for sure whether he had any relation to that person he had known back then ...

If he was lucky enough to find him ... the anxiety and nervousness in Li Lanfeng’s heart suddenly eased a little, the courage inside him rising up once more. Yes, as long as he could find the other, as long as he

was willing to teach him again, he would have the confidence not to lose against that so-called destined life ¹ !

Right then, Li Lanfeng could not help but recall the dawn of several days back, when his grandfather had called ...

Li Lanfeng, who had just woken up and was washing up, had received a rare video call from his grandpa. Li Lanfeng had been a little startled. Mind you, ever since he had been accepted by the First Men's Military Academy, in order to prevent his identity from being exposed, his grandfather had almost cut off all communications with him. Moreover, he had been shunted from being the inheritor of the main family, to become a branch disciple who was performing acceptably. He had then been living a low-key life at the First Men's Military Academy for four years.

"Grandpa, why are you contacting me?" After his grandfather had hinted that this call would not cause any trouble, Li Lanfeng finally relaxed to ask.

" Lan-er ² , I hope you can ascend to special-class mecha as soon as possible ..." The Li family patriarch's expression was rather grim.

Li Lanfeng was gobsmacked at these words. "Why? Grandpa?"

A few years back, Li Lanfeng had once told his grandfather that a mecha expert in the mecha world had instructed him on the importance of the basic mecha controls. Furthermore, he had already tasted the fruits of mastering the basics — if he truly did well with them, he could even manage a cross-grade challenge. His grandfather had been extremely supportive regarding the matter. So why would he suddenly make such a request today? It should be known that he was still that little bit away from fully mastering the basic controls of advanced mecha warrior level. This was why he had kept staying back instead of advancing to special-class operator.

"A few days ago, I asked the Zhuge family head to help read your fortune. The signs show that that king is already by your side ..." Grandfather Li's voice was extremely grave, even a little troubled. "All these years, making you conceal your identity and hide your face, sending you off far away and cultivating you in secret — all of this was to let you become supremely strong, so you would have the capability of changing your destiny ... now the signs have shown that that person has appeared. There is no more time for you to slowly accumulate your strength. If you are not strong enough, and catch his eye, how will you escape your destined Phoenix Thrall Fate?"

Li Lanfeng heard that the king had emerged and his heart jolted. His brow became deeply furrowed, and when he heard that annoying Phoenix Thrall Fate being mentioned again, he could not help but clench his fists tightly. His fingernails almost broke through the skin of his palms, but that minor pain was nothing compared to the rage brewing in his heart.

Every direct descendant inheritor of the Li family would always have the family head of the Emyreal Zhuge divine their life fate, to better determine the cultivation pathway best suited for their destinies.

From birth, he had been assessed to have astounding talent. His grandfather had been overjoyed, thinking that he would become the most outstanding prodigy of the Li family, but the Phoenix Thrall Fate reading of the Emyreal Zhuge had instantly slammed him down from the skies into the dust ... this was also why he could not appear blatantly in front of the other Li family members, because the first

inheritor of the Li family definitely could not become some king's plaything. The Li family could not suffer that disgrace ...

His grandfather had been too soft-hearted though, at the same time unwilling to give up on his talent, and thus had decisively hidden away this reading. His grandfather had then announced to the public that his talent was not good, and sent him off to the third-rate planet Azure. To the outside, his grandfather appeared to be letting him while away in obscurity, to live or die on his own merits, but in truth, his grandfather was spending a lot of effort in cultivating him. If not for these arrangements by his grandfather, he would long have been confined within the family's forbidden district by the other Li family members. They would wait for him to grow up, then deliver him right into that king's hands to become the other's personal plaything, to trade some favours for the Li family ...

Li Lanfeng could not help but snort in his heart. What goddamn Phoenix Thrall Fate? He was a man! How could he ever submit and lie below another man's body³? Even if the other was a king with unparalleled strength, he would not submit to fate. He had trained hard to improve himself, racking his mind to plot and plan, all for the sake of going against the heavens to change this fate. He had gotten so far; he was definitely not going to give up now.

Although his grandfather's words made Li Lanfeng fearful and indignant, they did not make him lose his cool. He replied softly, "Grandpa, I understand. Don't worry, I will arrange everything. In just a little more time, I believe I will be able to advance to special-class mecha operator level."

"As long as you know what you're doing." Grandpa Li was silent for a moment before reminding, "Lan-er, be wary of the strong people that appear by your side this year, or perhaps those geniuses advancing to ace operator this year. Your destined king may very likely be among them. Keep your distance from them as much as possible. Don't let the other become interested in you ..."

Li Lanfeng smiled bitterly and said, "Looking like this, how could someone still have interest in me⁴?"

Had grandpa become overly caught up in that reading? Honestly speaking, he had always been sceptical — was the reading really that accurate? If it were that accurate, then why would the Zhuge family head cooperate with his grandfather to try and help him go against the heavens and change his fate?

Grandpa Li fell silent once more. How could he tell his grandson that, at times, interest in someone was not purely due to appearance? It could be due to attitude, behaviour, or perhaps one's way of handling things ... "In any case, you have to be careful!" That said, he hung up and ended the video call.

After hanging up, the Li family head on planet Doha had a trace of contemplation on his grim and weathered face. He was thinking back on the reading by the Empyrean Zhuge — *peeking out from under the dazzling Phoenix Thrall Fate was an undefined Supreme Commander Fate* — if not for that last half of the reading, he would not have invested so much to arrange for his grandson to defy his fate, even if his potential had been so astonishing ...

"Grandpa has helped you as much as I can. Now it's all up to you to choose." The family head of the Li family sighed softly, gaze distant as he looked out the window. For him, the best outcome was undoubtedly for his grandson to become a supreme commander.

Li Lanfeng looked at the blank screen with a deep frown, thinking, *“Who could that king be? Rumour has it that the Thunder King is about to advance to ace operator? Looks like it’s about time to think of a way to restrict the Thunder King’s faction.”*

Chapter 239: Slaughter a Chicken to Strike Fear into the Monkeys?

Ling Lan patted the humanoid lower mecha she had just redeemed. The entire outer shell of the mecha was dark grey — although it was not particularly eye-catching, the mecha was a great improvement from her previous one whether in terms of durability and safety or weapons.

It not only had a beam energy gun with extremely high destructive power, it also possessed a high alloy steel broadsword. Two sai ¹ hung at the back of its waist, while high alloy steel short swords were hidden in compartments at the side of its thighs — their tensile strength completely beyond what the short swords of trainee mecha could offer. However, it was still lower mecha at the end of the day, so it still did not have the right to carry a beam saber. But Ling Lan no longer needed a beam saber anyway, because she now had the primary cold weapon Regretless which was 100 times better than any common beam saber. She could use it until she became an ace mecha operator without any worry.

After she was done admiring this lower mecha that now belonged to her, Ling Lan finally pressed the remote control button in her hands. The initially closed hatch of the mecha cockpit swung open — Ling Lan did not choose to use an escalator, instead leaping up with a dash to clamber up the mecha with light touches of her hands and feet. She flew swiftly upwards in this manner, ending up seated within the cockpit in the blink of an eye.

Ling Lan casually closed the cockpit and activated the mecha, waiting for all of its systems to come online. Only then did she operate her mecha to login to her personal space and execute several basic movements. The controls felt much smoother than that of the trainee mecha — if she had used this current mecha to escort [No Mecha Unrepaired] to Suncreed City, Ling Lan believed that even without weapons, just relying on the ability of this mecha alone, she would have been able to finish off those few large snakes bare-handed.

After familiarising herself with the controls for a period of time, Ling Lan drew out Regretless from her backpack with satisfaction, and unequipped the lower mecha’s basic cold weapon, the common high alloy steel broadsword. Since she already had a better weapon, Ling Lan would of course use it. She would only be able to use Regretless to its full capabilities if she came to know it as well as her own arms.

Ling Lan stashed the high alloy steel broadsword into her backpack ². Recalling how, not too long ago, she had treasured the carrot-sword which wasn’t even as good as the high alloy steel broadsword, Ling Lan could not help but sigh to herself. Humans were just so fickle, casting away the old for the new ... seeing something better, they would heartlessly abandon that which was worse. It was truly heartless.

After that bout of sentimentality — Ling Lan so rarely giving free rein to her so-called female tendency of overthinking things — Ling Lan then calmly chose to enter the mecha world. As Ling Lan had already switched to a humanoid lower mecha and Three-Seas Town was half-teeming with mecha of the same type, her appearance did not attract any of the townsfolk’s attention.

Since she had converted to a new mecha, Ling Lan no longer had any interest in abusing those newbies at the mecha combat hall. She felt that it was time to contact Qi Long and the others. Thus, Ling Lan entered the name [Lingtian Combat] into the system and sent a friend request over.

Very quickly, [Lingtian Combat] had accepted her friend request. At the same time, the mecha's mainframe suddenly said, "[Lingtian Combat] is requesting communications, YES or NO?"

Heh, what a quick response! Ling Lan of course agreed, and then a voice loud enough to shatter her eardrums rang out in her cockpit, "Boss, you've finally contacted me!" It was Qi Long's unapologetically loud voice.

At the same time, the system's voice began ringing out constantly by Ling Lan's ear, sounding out ding after ding of notification. [Lingtian Abacus], [Lingtian Parcel], [Lingtian Razor], [Lingtian Substitute] ³ requesting to add you as a friend ...

Ling Lan decisively approved all these requests. She knew who they were — [Lingtian Abacus] was Han Jijyun, [Lingtian Parcel] was Lin Zhong-qing, [Lingtian Razor] was Luo Lang, so [Lingtian Substitute] was undoubtedly Xie Yi then ⁴.

Of course, as Ling Lan approved the requests, she was complaining internally. This group of idiots — what kind of stupid names were they choosing for themselves? No standards whatsoever.

After Ling Lan had finished approving everyone, Qi Long dragged the others into the comms channel as well. Then, Qi Long could be heard to ask excitedly, "Boss Lan, was that rabbit you?"

Ling Lan was startled, "What rabbit?"

"That rabbit which killed other mecha of the same level in one move! Those 100 newcomer matchups, we've all seen them!" Qi Long's tone was hinting strongly that she should stop hiding; Ling Lan's skills in mecha control were known by all of them here, other than the last to join them, Xie Yi.

"It's not!" Ling Lan denied firmly. She would never admit that adorkable rabbit was her — this would affect her great and formidable image too much.

Ling Lan's resolute denial left Qi Long speechless. In his mind, only Ling Lan was capable of operating a trainee mecha to achieve instakills. This had always been Ling Lan's style — hadn't he advanced to the top 5 at the Central Scout Academy in precisely this manner? In the end, Ling Lan had encountered himself and Luo Lang, which was the only reason why he had not progressed further.

"If it's not Boss, then who else could it be? I cannot imagine anyone else able to do this," Luo Lang was equally sceptical.

"Alright, since Boss Lan doesn't want to talk about the matter of the rabbit mecha, let's not ask anymore!" Han Jijyun stepped in to stop them decisively. Of course, he too did not believe Ling Lan's denial — in his eyes, this was already an irrefutable fact. However, since Boss Lan did not want to mention it, he must have his reasons. Han Jijyun did not want to trouble Ling Lan.

Although Han Jijyun had put a stop to the topic, Ling Lan could still tell from their demeanours that no one had believed her words. Still, at this point, all she could do was stiffen her jaw and continue to lie

through her teeth. She would never admit the rabbit mecha was her anyway; as for what Qi Long and the others wanted to think, that was not something she could control.

Qi Long and the others could not wait to meet up with Ling Lan. Considering that she already had a lower mecha and since she had a record at Suncreed City, which allowed her to transport directly to the city, Ling Lan suggested they meet up there.

Unexpectedly, this suggestion made the few of them whoop in glee. Qi Long in particular was laughing uproariously as he said, "It's like I said, who else could ... be but Boss?" Though Qi Long mumbled through part of his sentence, Ling Lan could tell without even thinking about it that Qi Long was most definitely talking about the rabbit mecha.

"What? Is something wrong with Suncreed City?" asked Ling Lan curiously.

"It's like this. Suncreed City is the capital of the strong. Only those mecha operators who have managed to break through Suncreed Passage from the various newbie towns have the right to enter Suncreed City ..." explained Han Jijyun, "Each newbie town has 4 passages, each leading to a different city. Three of the passages have a lower difficulty level — as long as one takes things step by step, one will be able to enter each of the various cities. But the final passage of every town will lead to Suncreed City. Suncreed City is very unique in the mecha world. It can only be accessed by breaking through the passages in the newbie towns. Those who entered the other cities from the other passages have no way of getting to Suncreed City from those other cities."

"So, any mecha operator who can get into Suncreed City is exceptionally strong. Suncreed City is also the mecha holy land in all the mecha operators' minds. Not only are there many missions there, it holds all kinds of weapons and equipment, as well as houses all the temples where the various occupations need to go to advance to special-class. Like for us mecha operators, to advance to special-class operator from advanced mecha warrior, we need to be evaluated at Suncreed City," added Luo Lang.

"So that's how it is ... but that passage to Suncreed City really wasn't that hard. As long as one learns how to operate mecha properly, anyone can pass," said Ling Lan airily.

"How is it that simple? Even an advanced mecha warrior may not be able to pass through! Thinking back, our group was wiped out three times on that road before passing by sheer luck," said Qi Long with an expression of remembered fear. It was clear to see how challenging that passage to Suncreed City had been for them.

"Even if the passage to Suncreed City is a little difficult, if you can't get past it yourself, just hire an expert to help and the matter is solved." Ling Lan did not believe that everyone in Suncreed City had all really fought their way through — like that [No Mecha Unrepaired], hadn't he been escorted to the city by her?

"Which expert would be willing to bring along a burden when trying to break through the passage? The more people there are, the more savage beasts there will be to match the numbers, and they will also be stronger as well. Besides that, only people who have never beaten Suncreed Passage before can attempt it. People like us who have already gone through it have no way of entering the passage again."

Han Jijyun recounted the restrictions of the Suncreed City Passage. This was also why life-skills players typically could not get into Suncreed City unless they joined an organisation, faction, family, or

something along those lines which could arrange things and expend great effort so that some of the more talented life-skills players could be brought into Suncreed City to develop.

Hearing all this, Ling Lan could not help but sigh that she had lost out. If she had known earlier that going to Suncreed City was such a difficult hurdle, she would not have been so hesitant to accept [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s weapon, Regretless.

Very quickly, the six of them had gathered at Suncreed City. Seeing the five silver-blue humanoid mecha before her with their elegant forms, Ling Lan once again looked at her own dark and slightly bulky mecha body, and was instantly troubled ... this scene was absolutely just like an ugly duckling running into a group of swans.

Meanwhile, this scene indeed made some advanced mecha warriors or special-class mecha operators look askance at the group. However, they just assumed that the lower mecha must have been brought to the city by these advanced mecha warriors. This lower mecha was so enviably fortunate, just like that intermediate mecha a couple days back.

“These few days that I’ve been immersed in the mecha world, has anything happened outside?” This was the first thing Ling Lan asked when she met Qi Long and the others. For some reason, she was feeling rather unsettled, feeling as if something was about to happen.

“Indeed, the situation outside has not been quite right these past couple days.” In contrast to the brash and forthright Qi Long, the meticulous Han Jijyun had indeed noticed something off.

“What’s it about?” asked Ling Lan with a frown.

“According to Wu Jiong, someone bullied a person in our new cadet regiment yesterday. Li Yingjie naturally couldn’t let that pass, and so led some people to strike back. But when that person left, he warned Li Yingjie to watch himself. His attitude was extremely arrogant — I had already suspected it could be someone from a particular faction at that moment,” said Han Jijyun.

“Scouting? Or perhaps provocation? Did you manage to find out which faction the other belongs to?” Ling Lan’s expression became focused.

“Wu Jiong later found out that the other seems to have some connection to the Leiting Mecha Clan. That person is an underling of someone within the Leiting Mecha Clan. Right now, I don’t know whether this is Leiting’s idea or whether that person is acting on his own.” That said, Han Jijyun’s brow furrowed slightly as well. They had not secured their foothold in the military academy yet, and were already going up against the number one faction’s Leiting Mecha Clan ⁵ ... this was undoubtedly extremely disadvantageous for them.

“Leiting? Thunder King?” Ling Lan recalled [No Mecha Unrepaired]'s words and sighed, “Even if this was not Leiting’s idea, they will not let this chance go by. I’m afraid that this time, the Thunder King is about to make a move.” Slaughter a chicken to strike fear into the monkeys — their new cadet regiment was just too perfect for the role of the chicken.

Chapter 240: Leiting’s Intentions?

“It shouldn’t be. The Thunder King is in Closed Door Meditation right now, preparing to advance to ace operator — he should not have the spare time to bother with this sort of trivial thing,” Xie Yi suddenly cut in to say.

News of the Thunder King’s Closed Door Meditation to advance to ace operator was pretty much known throughout the whole First Men’s Military Academy. Even they as new students had also heard a thing or two about it. After all, such a super talent emerging from the military academy — the news was worthy of being widely promoted.

A thought stirred in Ling Lan’s mind at those words. She said hurriedly, “Wait, let me think. This may be an opportunity for us to develop.”

Ling Lan’s words made the group’s eyes light up. They suppressed the excitement in their hearts, afraid that they would disturb Ling Lan’s train of thought if they spoke up.

Mind you, the new cadet regiment seemed to be doing well right now, without being especially pressured by the other factions. But in reality, those factions were like a sword hanging above their heads — they were constantly under threat. Because they could not know when those factions would decide to make a move to apply pressure on them, to force them to have no choice but to join those factions in the end.

The students of the Central Scout Academy had always been a bunch of extremely talented students, hence they were all extremely prideful. They were unwilling to go against their personal wishes due to external pressure — this was why they had so quickly reached a consensus to establish the new cadet regiment.

Initially, the Central Scout Academy faction which Zhang Jing-an represented would have been a great haven for them. Unfortunately, the grade that Zhang Jing-an represented was the one who had been defeated by them back then in the grand armed melee. Thus, the new cadets did not want to let someone who had once fallen by their hands to lead them now. At the heart of it, they did not think much of Zhang Jing-an — this was also one of the reasons why Zhang Jing-an had failed to convince anyone to join his faction.

Of course, Ling Lan’s existence was another reason why they were unwilling to join Zhang Jing-an’s faction. If Ling Lan had not been around, many of them would have at least temporarily joined Zhang Jing-an’s faction for security due to the pressure. However, Ling Lan had come to the First Men’s Military Academy. In the new cadets’ eyes, Ling Lan who had led them to victory in the grand armed melee, and who had successfully snatched the administrative rights of the spaceship, was undoubtedly much more worthy of their trust. This was also one of the reasons why the new cadet regiment was established so successfully.

“Jijyun, tell me, the other side being so open with their provocation, without even trying to hide which faction they came from ... is it really only to make an example out of us?” Ling Lan began to suspect the other’s motives.

Typically, in order to achieve greater deterrent effect, one side would create a moral high ground for themselves, pushing the responsibility of instigating the conflict to their opponent. In the end, they

would further prove their superiority with a one-sided victory — at that moment, riding on the wave of that success, they would find it much easier to attract some exceptional new cadets into their ranks ...

However, Leiting had acted in a rather impatient manner this time. They were obviously trying to incite the anger of the new cadets as quickly as they could — their methods crude and rough. Even if they won in the end, Leiting would still incur the bad reputation of picking on the weak and bullying the freshmen. This may end up making the other uninvolved new cadets grow worried, afraid that they would be bullied as well, and would instead negatively affect Leiting's efforts in recruitment. It just did not make sense no matter how Ling Lan thought about it.

"If not, then for what reason? Could it be that they simply want to beat us into submission to make us join them?" Jijyun could not think of any other explanation. "Although we have more people, it is still far from the numbers of all the new cadets. Every year, the military academy takes in up to 7000 new cadets."

Something abruptly occurred to Ling Lan at Han Jijyun's words. She suddenly asked seriously, "What if, they knew the assessment results of us new cadets?"

The results of the new cadets' assessments would be recorded in the students' respective files, and these results would affect the mentorship and material resources the military academy would invest into the cultivation of the individual students. In fact, it was already being reflected in reality now. Their group of students had all been placed into the best classes of their respective specializations, having access to the best teachers as well as the best material resources in their studies and training.

For example, in Ling Lan's Mecha Piloting Class-A, not only were the various instructional teachers all the most outstanding in that field, even the teachers in charge of the practicum portion were all mecha operators of ace level and above. Not only that, when it came to the distribution of the real-world training mecha, the students would often be given one of the best mecha the school had to offer. Of course, how good of a mecha would still depend on how well they performed in their virtual mecha training practices.

At these words, Han Jijyun seemed to think of something, and his expression shifted slightly, "The other side has our new cadet assessment results? There's a hacker ..." The military academy had a specialised hacker training class, so it was extremely believable that there would be hackers within the various factions.

"Won't the military academy have put up proper defences?" Knowing well that there were hackers among the students, Han Jijyun would be somewhat dissatisfied with the protective measures of the school if they so easily allowed others to access the information of the new cadets.

"Perhaps, this is also a test the military academy has set for the hacker students." In contrast, Ling Lan did not find it strange — defences were built to be broken; the only difference was in whether others succeeded in breaking through or not.

Ling Lan's words enlightened Han Jijyun; this was a distinct possibility. In order to spur a hacker into putting their all into cracking a defence, there must be sufficient incentive, and the assessment details of the new cadets were undoubtedly a most attractive prize. After all, even if the hackers themselves were

unconcerned, the organisations they belonged to would want it, which gave the hackers no choice but to comply.

“From the looks of things, Boss Lan, your suspicions should be correct. They are not trying to make an example out of us ... their real objective is in fact *us*. This fight, it looks like we cannot avoid it.” Ling Lan’s deduction made Han Jijyun realise the truth of the situation, and he could not help but begin to worry.

“Leiting is determined to get us. That’s why even though the Thunder King is in Closed Door Meditation and thus lacking a leader, they still want to make us join them by force as soon as possible. They are afraid the other organisations will also find out about this news and intervene.” Ling Lan had basically figured out Leiting’s entire purpose by now, “From the looks of it, our assessment results are still unknown to the other factions ...”

Right then, Ling Lan instructed Little Four within the mindscape to go to the military academy mainframe and take a look, to see if someone had already broken through its defences to steal their data.

Very swiftly, Little Four returned with an answer. There was indeed someone who had succeeded in accessing the database to download a document with their info. Additionally, that person had left behind a defensive layer of their own. Currently, there were several other hackers working on cracking that defensive layer — based on their progress, they would probably only succeed a week from now and get their information.

Since Ling Lan now knew about this, she naturally let Little Four put extra security around their information. She did not wish for their data to once again be obtained by others. The more people who knew, the more danger the new cadet regiment would be in. This was because they were like infants holding onto treasure chests — without sufficient strength to protect the wealth that belonged to them, their final outcome could only be to watch as others stronger than them came and took it away ...

Receiving Ling Lan’s orders, Little Four scampered over to handle it. Of course, he patted his puffed up little chest and guaranteed that, in this world, no one would be able to steal the data from under his protection, aside from those in the military academy who had the right to view the data.

“Still, no matter why Leiting is doing this, their challenge towards us this time is not entirely a bad thing for us.” After resolving this latent problem, Ling Lan let out an internal sigh of relief. Now, she need only focus on handling Leiting. Even if Leiting was the top faction in the school, as long as it was just one faction, the pressure was much reduced.

An idea flashed through Han Jijyun’s mind, and he hurried to agree, “That’s right, this clash is indeed not a bad thing for us.”

Qi Long’s head felt like it was waterlogged from all the subtext embedded in the conversation between his boss and his sworn brother. He could not help but open his mouth to ask, “What in the world are you two talking about? What good thing bad thing?”

In an uncommon turn of events, Han Jijyun did not answer Qi Long’s question, instead continuing to say to Ling Lan, “Due to the uncertainty of the situation, the other factions in the military academy are likely waiting to see the results of Leiting’s advance on us.”

“If we are unable to fend off Leiting’s attack, even if we do not want to go to Leiting, it is unavoidable for us to end up joining some other faction. The final outcome of our new cadet regiment would definitely be to split up and be separately absorbed into the other factions,” Ling Lan calmly laid out the final outcome of their new cadet regiment, “However, if we can survive this advance, even though we’ll be pitted against Leiting, as long as our assessment results are not found out by the other factions, they will not risk fighting against Leiting and angering the Thunder King to intervene. After all, we aren’t the only new cadets. They would be perfectly happy to see us at odds with Leiting, each at the other’s neck, giving Leiting no mind to bother with the other new cadets, so they would have better luck in their own recruitment.”

“Going up against Leiting, although we might very likely lose terribly, it is also an opportunity for us. Leiting can become our opponent, but they will also become our protective talisman.” Han Jijyun then added, worried, “But, how can we ensure our data isn’t obtained by the other factions?”

“On this matter, don’t worry. I will handle it,” replied Ling Lan decisively. Only then did Han Jijyun remember that their Boss Lan was most likely an unfathomable hacker — this had already been proven on the spaceship. A smile instantly broke out on his face.

At this time, the others had also figured things out. Xie Yi asked, “Does this mean that, even though things look bad for us, the situation is actually not as terrible as it would seem on the outside?”

Ling Lan shook her head, “Well, we can’t say that. At most, the chances of winning and losing are half and half.”

That said, Ling Lan turned her head to look at Han Jijyun and instructed, “Jijyun, go and contact the regiment commanders of the new cadet regiment ¹. Ask them to gather at our villa. Since we have decided, we need to let them know.”

“Yes! Boss,” replied Han Jijyun. However, he was still a little concerned as he asked, “What if this makes them cower?” This was not like during the grand armed melee — Leiting’s strength and numbers really exceeded theirs by too much. Furthermore, they had just arrived at the academy, and had not yet properly established their foothold. It was a legitimate concern that many of the new cadets would be plagued with doubt and fear.

“Just tell them first. If they don’t want to be involved, let them withdraw,” said Ling Lan dispassionately, “I have never expected them to make any moves anyway.”

Han Jijyun was visibly taken aback by these words, and then his eyes lit up. “Boss, are you saying ...”

Ling Lan did not respond, but Han Jijyun too did not expect Ling Lan to answer, because he already had a vague answer in his heart.

Meanwhile, at this moment, in the living quarters of the military academy of a particular year, quite a few people were glaring angrily at the person in the head seat. From among them, a young man with a hard expression yelled angrily in interrogation, “Lin Zhidong ², what the hell do you think you’re doing? If Regiment Commander Qiao finds out about these things you did, you can just wait for the regiment commander to skin you alive!”