

Crossing 351

Chapter 351: Mission Reward!

The commander suppressed the roiling blood and qi in his chest and took in a deep breath before commanding once more, "Shift to low gear immediately." He still remembered that the ship was running low on power — it wouldn't do to exhaust all their power. Although they had already come out to the starry skies, temporarily escaping the Swift Dragon base, the commander knew that in outer space, the Swift Dragon fleet still had several ships on duty patrolling the area. If they happened to bump into those ships by chance, as a ship without power, they would definitely be at the other's mercy. Having gone through so much trouble to escape from the Swift Dragon base, he did not want to die here now and be stranded back at the Swift Dragon base again.

The team member responsible for shifting gears immediately pulled the speed control back to low gear. The starship's power had already fallen to 70% at present — if they had been a minute slower in charging through the atmospheric layer, they would most likely have been dragged by gravity back to the Swift Dragon base due to running out of power. Just entertaining the possibility sent chills down everyone's spines.

Shifting to low gear, the starship began to slowly cruise through the starry skies, accumulating power as it went along. They needed to store up 100% power as soon as they could, and then leave this place at high speed. As the commander waited for the power to accumulate, he could not help but pray that their luck would hold out so they would not bump into any of the patrol ships of the Swift Dragon base. Of course, he also hoped that the ships on the ground would not ascend so quickly; otherwise, up against the dozens of warships of the Swift Dragon fleet, they would have no chance at all of escaping.

It should be said that the luck of the commander's group was decent. Before they were at full power again, they were not discovered by any of the Swift Dragon patrol ships. About 10 minutes later, the starship was back at 100%, and then it flew rapidly towards the central district.

Twenty minutes later, the Swift Dragon fleet successfully rose into the air. Thirty military vessels of various sizes made up the Swift Dragon fleet. The fleet began to search for clues to the whereabouts of the hijacked starship. Unfortunately, they found nothing useful. This frustrated the fleet's captain — as long as a ship had been through the area, it would definitely leave some trace of energy behind, but there was nothing of the sort in this planetary sector. It was as if the starship that had lifted into the air thirty minutes ago had never existed.

With no clues, the Swift Dragon fleet could only resort to the crude method of searching in the general direction of the central district. This slowed them down significantly, allowing the starship moving in high gear to pull further away from them.

The primary hero who had obscured their tracks from the Swift Dragon fleet was Little Four. Without requiring any instruction from Ling Lan, Little Four had scrambled the locations the starship had passed through. In other words, it would be impossible for the devices on the warships to track their flight path.

This was part of Little Four's abilities. He could render advanced high-tech equipment useless or mess up their readings. Of course, he could only affect the Swift Dragon fleet's devices so thoroughly because

Ling Lan's group was currently in the virtual world. If this were in the real world, Little Four might not be able to achieve such a godly effect.

With Little Four helping from the shadows, the starship would detect the enemy's presence before it could encounter any patrol ships of the Swift Dragon fleet. Thus, the commander had enough time to employ evasion measures to avoid the enemy's detection. The commander was rather baffled — why would the radar scanner on this ship be better than those of the other ships in the same fleet? — but unable to find an answer, he could only ascribe it to their luck being better in the end. Their radar had just functioned at its maximum capacity right whenever they needed it to.

In this manner, the entire journey was fraught with tension but there was no actual danger. The starship finally left the Nebula district and entered the next planetary sector. Although they had yet to arrive at the central district, this still proved that they had successfully escaped the pursuit of the Swift Dragon fleet. The Swift Dragon fleet did not have the authorisation to enter another planetary sector.

However, it was similarly very dangerous for them. After all, the warship they had appropriated to bring them here was also a ship belonging to the Swift Dragon base. Still, those Federation soldiers in the main control room specially sent here by the mainframe had a special way of contacting the mainframe. The moment they were out of the Nebula Boundary, which was no longer under the mainframe's control, they were able to make contact with the mainframe.

After receiving news, the mainframe arranged for them to enter the central district via a special flight route, green-lighted the whole way through to bring them straight into the district. If not for this approved special flight route, as they continued flying forwards, they would have been mercilessly shot down if they were detected by any patrolling fleet. The Federation soldiers naturally would not do such a stupid thing.

Finally, the starship safely arrived at the central district, landing in one of the planet's cities at the outermost region of the central district. As long as they touched down here, they would be able to log out of the virtual world and report directly to military headquarters about the situation at the Swift Dragon base. Perhaps out of their urgency to report, the soldiers disembarked and left in a hurry without carefully inspecting the insides of the ship.

Ling Lan's group took the chance to slip out from the starship. They were dressed in the standard combat uniform of the Federation, disguised as NPCs. Under Little Four's guidance, they evaded all the surveillance systems of the spaceport, silently left to the military spaceport, and returned to the city.

The moment they entered the city, it was back to a world of mecha. This made Ling Lan feel that they had truly returned to Mecha World ... Ling Lan's team of nine swiftly changed into their individual mecha and joined the bustling crowd of mecha. Ling Lan and the others pretended to sightsee in the city, and then they drifted naturally over to a transportation array. Selecting the city they wanted, they left the area. They did not leave any trace to show they had ever been to this city, because all of their figures along the way had been wiped off the surveillance systems by Little Four.

They finally arrived at Grandsweep City and Ling Lan retrieved the document from [No Mecha Unrepaired]. Although she had her own copy, things that should be covered up should still be properly covered up. Getting to the city lord's manor of Grandsweep City took a little time, and upon arriving there, they once again sought out the city lord.

The city lord of Grandsweep City thought that Ling Lan was here to plead with him to revoke the SSS-rank mission. Besides that, he already had a bad impression of Ling Lan from the start, so his attitude was extremely cold and unfriendly.

Ling Lan was not someone who liked to make nice with people. In the learning space, everything the instructors taught was all based on true strength. Therefore, she too did not waste time with any nonsense, directly shoving the document in her hands to the city lord. Er ... that attitude really could not be called respectful ...

This behaviour of Ling Lan's was obviously rather impolite in the city lord's eyes. His brow furrowed, but before he could speak, he felt an alert being transmitted from his hand — he was holding a key item which marked the completion of the SSS-rank mission. The city lord's expression shifted and he read intently through the document in his hands. Only when he was done did he lift his head to look at Ling Lan again. There was shock in his gaze, as well as some unconcealable excitement.

This expression of the city lord's finally vented the frustration Ling Lan had carried all this time. It looked like what her instructors had said was right. As long as you had enough strength, even those people who looked down on you at first would still change their opinion of you in the end. And when your strength was far greater than the other's, you would not need to go curry favour, for others would come running to curry favour with you.

The city lord of Grandsweep City pushed down the complex jumble of emotions in his heart and quickly submitted this document up to the Mecha World mainframe. After receiving confirmation that there was no mistake, the initially austere expression of the city lord's instantly cleared up to become cheerful and affable, and he said, "[Lingtian First-String], you are truly a hero among youths. You've performed well. You are the first in Mecha World history to complete an SSS-rank mission. I am proud of you ..."

As expected, the city lord's originally disdainful expression had changed; his entire persona was much more enthusiastic and friendly now. Seeing this, Ling Lan's lips tilted up at the corners. Even though her expression was as stoic as ever, she still patiently listened and waited for the city lord to finish his spiel.

The reason why Ling Lan applied patience to finish listening to the city lord was out of consideration for what had happened before. When she had come to accept the mission previously, she had only received the ultra-rare SSS-rank mission that only appeared once every hundred years because she had not gotten along well with the city lord of Grandsweep City. Ling Lan suspected that the difficulty of the mission and the mission rewards were very likely to be somewhat related to the impression the issuer of the mission had of her. Of course, Ling Lan believed that under the mainframe's monitoring, the main rewards would not be skimped. Still, there was sure to be some additional optional rewards that might be held back if the other was in a bad mood. If that happened, Ling Lan would be really depressed. Mind you, this SSS-rank mission had really been treacherous, almost costing them their lives to complete. Any bit of extra reward would be great.

Finally, the city lord of Grandsweep City finished his lengthy speech of encouragement, and only then did Ling Lan calmly reply, "Many thanks, City Lord. May I trouble you to bestow our final rewards?"

Seeing Ling Lan's calm composure in the face of praise, the city lord was filled with even more joy and fondness for Ling Lan. His impression of Ling Lan had truly taken a 180-degree turn — he completely forgot how he had made things difficult for Ling Lan back then, beginning to think of himself as Ling

Lan's sponsor. He had already discerned how extraordinary the other was from the start, which was why he had given him this SSS-rank mission. This outcome proved that he had judged astutely to identify this hero among the masses! The city lord was internally smug ...

Since this was a talent he had discovered and cultivated, how could he let the other suffer any indignity? The city lord of Grandsweep City had taken Ling Lan in as one of his own, so he decided he would give the other a great advantage. After contemplating for a moment, he announced the final reward.

Reward 1: One clan-formation certificate. Bring this certificate to the city hall to register and your battle clan will be successfully formed. Due to perfect completion of the SSS-rank mission, the battle clan shall be instantly upgraded to five stars from the initial zero stars. Starless battle clan: 6-12 clan members; 1-star battle clan, 6-18 members; 2-star: 6-24 members; 3-star: 6-30 members; 4-star: 6-38 members; 5-star: 6-50 members.

Reward 2: Due to perfect completion of the SSS-rank mission, 1 Hero's Heart Emblem (level 1) is awarded. This emblem needs to be activated by the clan leader. Once activated, the combat power of the entire clan will be increased by 10% for a duration of 10 minutes. Cooldown period: 7 days!

Reward 3: Every member of the clan can redeem a mecha above special-class and below ace-class for free. Condition: The clan member must meet the requirements to pilot the mecha to be redeemed. Time limit: Unlimited!

Reward 4: Ability to accept any mission in Mecha World (all level restrictions voided); penalty for failure cut by half!

Reward 5: Select any 10 mecha accessories or weapons from the warehouse of the city lord of Grandsweep City, as well as 10 super energy blocks, 10 mecha modification materials, and 10 other associated materials ...

Reward 6: Freely choose any of the unclaimed lands within Grandsweep City to become the battle clan's main camp, which will be instantly upgraded to a 1-star camp. Twenty NPC guards gifted as a bonus, along with 4 defensive laser cannons.

Reward 7: One challenge exemption token. Allows user's clan to be exempted from being challenged by other battle clans for one year in Mecha World ...

At one glance, Ling Lan could tell that the first four rewards must have been awarded by the mainframe. They were truly generous. Meanwhile, the final three rewards should be personal rewards given by the city lord of Grandsweep City. It looked like her patience earlier had paid off.

Ling Lan was not moved much right now by some of the other things the city lord had gifted them; she was all but drooling over those 10 super energy blocks. Don't blame Ling Lan for being shallow — it was just that the mission this time had completely wiped out all of the energy blocks the team had accumulated. Without these energy blocks, it could be foreseen that all the members of the team would be kept wildly busy trying to earn more energy blocks in the upcoming days. If not, they would not even be able to start their mecha.

Just one mission was enough to render Ling Lan's team this poor! At this thought, Ling Lan's heart wept!

Chapter 352: Operation Kill the Fledgling!

In a vast hidden chamber, on three large screens as large as the walls they were affixed to, nine stern-faced old men dressed in military attire were gathered. The atmosphere seemed rather tense.

“Sixteen years and after spending uncountable manpower and resources, the final outcome is a crushing defeat. Not only that, we, Caesar, have lost over 30 top-class hackers all at once, as well as 6 top-class spectres,” said a grim-looking general on the screen with a document in his hands, tone displeased.

“I can only say that the Huaxians are just too sly, secretly sending over so many spectres, ruining our project-T in one fell swoop. Meanwhile, as our men were caught unprepared, they were almost utterly annihilated. If we hadn’t had another hidden team lurking there, we might not have learned of what had transpired there even now.” A general with a kindly appearance on the screen could only smile bitterly and say.

“According to information from above, Huaxia 1 did not escape unscathed. One of their top-class spectres ranked in the top ten was sacrificed in this campaign ...” another cold-faced general interjected.

“But our Caesar lost four top-class spectres ...” the expression of a general on a different screen instantly turned dark at these words, “One Huaxian spectre is not at all enough to compensate.”

“Yes, and there are still those 30 top-class hackers to account for. This campaign has almost gouged us deeply. The next time there is a virtual war, it would be very easy for us to fall into a passive position. We can’t just forget this grievance,” said a general from the side in agreement.

“We must make the Huaxians pay!” hollered a general at the outermost edge, face flushed with anger.

“We must make the Huaxians pay!” Another general on the same screen agreed.

“We must make the Huaxians pay!” Very soon, all of the generals were in accord.

In the centre screen, the oldest general who had been silent all this while plucked the pipe he had been smoking from where it was perched on the corner of his lips, and finally said, “It’s about time for those allies of ours who want to share a piece of the pie to contribute something now. We must give the smug and complacent Huaxia a bloody lesson.”

“According to the latest news from the intelligence bureau, a prodigy mecha operator has appeared in Huaxia’s First Men’s Military Academy. Some time ago, he managed to advance to ace operator status at just 19 years of age. He’s lauded as the second coming of Ling Xiao ...” At this time, a general shared the latest news he had obtained with the others.

“Ling Xiao!” When the present generals heard Ling Xiao’s name, their gazes instantly became dark. Several were even gnashing their teeth as they muttered Ling Xiao’s name repeatedly. It was clear to see that these generals were extremely fearful of Ling Xiao.

“We can’t let Huaxia have another Ling Xiao, otherwise our Caesar will truly be down against Huaxia by a head.” A general finally voiced the hidden thoughts of all the generals there.

Ling Xiao was the youngest operator to ever advance to god-class, and then he had also obtained the most well-balanced IN god-class mecha which was considered the most powerful IN mecha by all the

nations. From then on, anyone who understood the intricacies of IN god-class mecha knew that the strongest person in the human world in future would definitely be Ling Xiao without a doubt. This was also the major reason why they had conspired with other nations sixteen years ago to eliminate Ling Xiao. They could not allow Ling Xiao to grow further and become the strongest in the world. Caesar, which considered itself the strongest nation, just could not allow the strongest person to belong to another nation. That would be an absolute disgrace to them.

Unfortunately, all the effort and manipulation they invested had still been unable to eliminate Ling Xiao. Now, it would no longer be as easy to harm Ling Xiao as it had been at the start. The day Ling Xiao would become the strongest was within sight — despite their reluctance, they could only accept this fact. Still, one Ling Xiao was already the limit of their tolerance. The title of ‘second Ling Xiao’ had undoubtedly triggered the neuroses of the Caesarians ...

“Since Huaxia has destroyed so many of our high-end talents, we must destroy their future hope!” The oldest general in the centre screen gripped his pipe, a ruthless smile appearing on his face. “The First Men’s Military Academy of Huaxia ... Hmph, did the Huaxians really think they could conceal him away so perfectly?”

The old general’s words made the eyes of all the other generals light up. Unified in their decision, the nine great generals very quickly formulated their revenge plot. They called this action plan — Operation Kill the Fledgling!

Right then, the Huaxia Federation was unaware that danger was about to befall the First Men’s Military Academy which they had always taken so much pains to keep concealed and secreted away. Military headquarters knew the Swift Dragon base had been occupied by an unidentified faction, and that there were even many spectres there. In order to ensure the stability of the virtual world, Huaxia had dispatched a fleet along with as many as ten spectres, with three of those being spectres ranked in the top ten. With the commander who had escaped from the Swift Dragon base leading them, they had hurried towards the Swift Dragon base.

But during this period of coming and going, the Caesarians lurking in the Swift Dragon base had managed to retreat. Only after finding the surviving adjutant did they learn that this group of people had come from the Caesar Empire. The Huaxia Federation was livid. They raised a serious protest to Caesar, but the Caesar Empire denied all allegations, brushing it all off as slander. They had never sent any hackers or spectres to invade the virtual world of the Huaxia Federation.

The two nations began to quibble on the diplomatic front — and while the attention of everyone in the Huaxia Federation was focused on the diplomatic byplay between the two nations, several countries had begun to move surreptitiously.

All the turmoil occurring on the diplomatic front did not affect the enlistment assessments of the First Men’s Military Academy. After a week of tests, the assessment at the military academy was nearing its conclusion. Each of the various great army divisions was making their final candidate choices. The number of people taken in by each division was not much — in order to obtain the best and most suitable talented cadets for their divisions, the assessors had no choice but to consider their options again and again.

Ling Xiao's 23rd Division assessment team finally came to a consensus and passed a final shortlist of names to Ling Xiao. Ling Xiao browsed through the list casually, and then said, "That'll do."

"General, don't you want to think on it a little more?" The adjutant by his side finally could not hold back from asking.

Ling Xiao cast a puzzled glance at him and then asked with a smile, "Adjutant Qiao, what do you think? It's okay, we can study this together."

Ling Xiao was not that type of strict general — constantly smiling and affable, his subordinates always felt as if greeted by a spring breeze while with him. Even as they idolised him, they were not afraid to speak their minds.

Adjutant Qiao daringly flipped to one of the pages of the list and pointed out several names. He reminded softly, "These few people, not too long ago with Young Master Lan ..." Ling Xiao peered at him with a half-smile, causing adjutant Qiao to turn red and quickly change his form of address, "With Ling Lan ... they had gone up against each other in a wagered arena fight. They were defeated by Ling Lan's group. One of the members of their clan had initially applied for enlistment with our division, but ended up missing the assessment this time due to severe bodily injury. According to Major Qin Feng who assessed them, he inadvertently overheard them discussing their intentions to take revenge against Ling Lan."

Ever since knowing that Young Master Lan was the general's son, these assessment team members who had come here with the general had long taken the effort to learn all they could about everything that had happened since Young Master Lan had entered the school. When they found out that the first year New Cadet Regiment led by Young Master Lan had defeated the higher grade Leiting Mecha Clan, which was also the number one faction in the military academy, in a wagered fight, they could not help but be proud. As expected of the son of their god-class operator General Ling Xiao — already so strong at such a young age.

Ling Lan had been fully accepted by them — this made their hearts lean infinitely towards Ling Lan's side. Even if Huo Zhenyu and his group were indeed some rare talents, the very idea that those boys were planning to retaliate against Ling Lan several years later made the men rather unhappy. If not for their ethics as soldiers preventing them from being biased and abusing their power, they would have long swept those boys out from the list.

In the end, they still included them in the final shortlist, but they still felt disgruntled about it. This was also one of the reasons why Adjutant Qiao had brought the issue up with General Ling Xiao.

At these words, Ling Xiao could not help but laugh, "Isn't this great?"

Ling Xiao's words left Adjutant Qiao speechless, unsure what his general meant by them.

"I'm still afraid that when Ling Lan joins my division later on, you uncles will take care of him too much. Without any challenge or competition, he might become slack," mused Ling Xiao, "With these people around, it'll make things a little more difficult for him. A greenhouse cannot foster strong sprouts 2."

After saying this, Ling Xiao glanced at the adjutant with a half-smile and added, "In our 23rd Division, there is no such thing as privilege or status. No matter who they are, everyone has to start from the

beginning and go through all the necessary tests and trials. No one is exempt. If these people truly have the skills, then cultivation should be given as appropriate. Don't manipulate things in any way. If in future, Ling Lan is really bullied by them, that would just prove that he isn't strong enough. What right does he have to say anything if he loses?"

Adjutant Qiao was startled by the knowing look in Ling Xiao's eyes; it was as if he had been seen through. His back was instantly coated in cold sweat, and he could only console himself desperately by telling himself that he was overthinking things. Hearing what Ling Xiao said, he quickly nodded repeatedly in agreement, no longer daring to say more.

After obtaining Ling Xiao's final approval, Adjutant Qiao swiftly departed from Ling Xiao's living quarters to hand the list over to the military academy. Tomorrow, this name list would be announced along with the name lists of all the other divisions on the official web page of the First Men's Military Academy. This also marked the end of their assessment tasks here. After one rest day, they would leave the First Men's Military Academy.

Ling Xiao watched indifferently as the adjutant left, a trace of coldness in his eyes. When he turned to return to his room to rest, he found his official bodyguard, Lin Zhengnan, staring at him with a serious look on his youthful face. His gaze was filled with rage and disapproval. At the sight of him, Ling Xiao could not help but quirk a brow and ask, "Lil' Lin, you have something to say?"

"Adjutant Qiao's behaviour earlier was obviously fishy. Why do you still trust him this much, General?" Being able to become Ling Xiao's personal bodyguard was his luck and fortune. Since he was small, he had always idolised Ling Xiao, wanting to become Ling Xiao's left or right arm, his most trusted subordinate.

Many times, Lin Zhengnan could tell that Adjutant Qiao's actions were obviously intended to mislead Ling Xiao, trying to get Ling Xiao to do something disreputable, such as abusing his power for personal reasons. Young as he was, he could no longer refrain from speaking up and asking the general he revered like a god about the matter ...

Chapter 353: A Father's Responsibility!

Ling Xiao could not help but laugh at Lin Zhengnan's words. He did not respond until he passed by Lin Zhengnan on his way to his room. Reaching out a hand to ruffle the other's hair, his tone was fond but resigned as he said, "Brat, you're oversimplifying the issue ..."

The young were truly hot-blooded and saw things in black and white. But in the field, how could things be that simple? In the past, he too had not wanted to compromise and go with the flow, but the outcome of that was a whole 16-year separation from his family. At this thought, Ling Xiao's brow furrowed slightly ... but if they still believed he was the same Ling Xiao as before, then they would be mistaken!

Behind him, Lin Zhengnan touched his own hair in stunned amazement. He never expected his beloved and revered sir general to actually rub his head so affectionately. Excited, he looked respectfully at the figure of Ling Xiao in the distance; he did not notice that passing cold glint in Ling Xiao's eyes.

Outside the room, a hidden guard concealed in the shadows saw the interaction between Ling Xiao and Lin Zhengnan, and a trace of envy flashed through his eyes. He too was an admirer of Ling Xiao 1 . As for Lin Zhengnan's idiotic behaviour, the hidden guard could only sigh internally though he was also happy for Lin Zhengnan. Only General Ling Xiao would have the good temperament needed to accommodate Lin Zhengnan's brash and blunt character. If it had been any of the other generals, Lin Zhengnan would definitely have been mercilessly kicked aside, because he was sure to cause trouble someday.

After returning to his room, Ling Xiao sat alone quietly on his sofa. His mind, however, was busy recalling the things his daughter had told him two days ago, as well as that confession document she had secretly sent to him. Every time he thought of these things, his heart would clench with fear. If anything had happened, he would have lost his daughter completely.

Back when he had first heard that Ling Lan had received an SSS-rank mission, he had only been astonished at his daughter's horrible luck. Unwilling to see the defeated expression of his daughter after failing, and also because he wanted to increase his daughter's chances of success, he had gifted his only transferrable imperial mecha to Ling Lan, just in case.

If he had known earlier that the Swift Dragon base had been successfully infiltrated by people from the Caesar Empire, he would definitely have stopped his daughter from going on that godd*mn mission. Fortunately, there had still been an investigation team sent by the Federation military travelling along with them, and the team not only had top-class hackers but also several top-class spectres. They succeeded in drawing the attention of the Caesarians, so his daughter had managed to take advantage of that.

It had to be said that his daughter's luck at accepting missions was really terrible, but her luck in recruiting talent was off the charts. She had actually managed to recruit a spectre hiding in the civilian world and a top-class hacker (Ling Lan had told a small lie here) — and on top of that, her entire team was basically made up of advanced mecha warriors, and so possessed decent combat power. Under such dire circumstances, they had still managed to complete the mission successfully. They had obtained detailed information on the enemy, and had even managed to help the Federation investigation team from the shadows to wipe out all the Caesarian spectres. After that, they had also successfully snuck into the escape ship to return with the Federation soldiers.

When Ling Lan had told him these things, Ling Xiao was actually extremely proud, but he was also filled with fear. If anything had gone wrong at all, the result would have been utter annihilation. Even Ling Xiao could not help but admire the sheer audacity of his daughter.

Still, the outcome of the entire adventure was perfect, and the rewards they received upon its completion was also substantial. For his daughter's battle clan to leap up in one shot from starless to 5-star, it could be said to have 'ascended the skies with one step'. This rank within Mecha World was absolutely enough to place them within the top 100 battle clans.

Of course, Ling Lan's battle clan was currently no match for those battle clans at the topmost level. After all, those battle clans were all clans of old beasts that had been established for several decades already. Ling Xiao's battle clan used to be one of them, but now, unfortunately, those clan members of his from back then had all either died in battle or had left the Federation. Ling Xiao's battle clan now merely had the empty title of battle clan; it was no longer a true battle clan.

After finding out about all this, Ling Xiao had asked Ling Lan to utterly bury this incident at the bottom of her mind and tell no one. This was not only for Ling Lan's protection but also to protect that civilian hacker and spectre that had slipped past the military's radar.

At the same time, this incident made Ling Xiao realise that his daughter's ability to attract trouble was several magnitudes greater than his own. Back when he had done this clan-formation mission, he had at most caused a great furore in an enemy nation's territory, hacking up some ace operators and calling it a day. In contrast, his daughter had actually directly obliterated a whole batch of the Caesar Empire's top-class hackers and spectres ... the Caesar Empire must really be feeling the pain of their losses this time.

It looks like he'll have to become even stronger, or else he may really be unable to protect this powerful daughter of his who seems capable of even provoking the heavens! At this thought, Ling Xiao could not help but smile. So this was the duty of being a father — it was troubling but also so sweet and blissful that he welcomed it willingly.

Over these past two days, Ling Xiao had seemed to be idling about doing nothing, appearing unbelievably casual and at ease, but he had in fact begun secretly investigating the movements of the Caesar Empire with the secret forces of the Ling family. At the same time, he had also ordered the 23rd Division to closely monitor the movements of the various army divisions of Caesar. Unfortunately, nothing useful had come out of all this over the last two days. This made Ling Xiao feel rather uneasy. Understanding how the Caesar Empire operated, he knew that the other party absolutely would not take this affront quietly and let it go. They would definitely come for their revenge ...

Even though Ling Lan had told him that her team's involvement had not been exposed during the fight with Caesar, Ling Xiao was still worried that the powerful intelligence bureau of the Caesar Empire would still be able to dig up information on his daughter ...

"Leaving tomorrow? If only we were staying for a couple more days." Ling Xiao suddenly felt that he did not have enough time. If he had a few more days here, he could perhaps be able to create some defences. At this thought, he could not help but sigh silently. "I hope I'm just worrying for nothing."

The night passed without a word. Early the next day, all of the students of the military academy were eagerly refreshing the official forums of the First Men's Military Academy. They wanted to get first-hand information on the results of the division assessments ...

Even the freshmen were included in this frenzy because for the top three of each division's recruits, the video of their assessments would be publicised. This could perhaps give them juniors some experience. Though they knew that this was likely just their own wishful thinking — every year's assessment was not the same — the juniors of the lower years still held onto that sense of 'what if' and would go watch these assessment videos.

"Congratulations, Boss Huo!" Qiao Ting, who had already managed to get onto the official forums, sent a congratulatory message to Huo Zhenyu at first notice. Although he was rather surprised by the other's choice of enlisting with the 23rd Division and not the 1st Division as the other had previously determined, Boss Huo had still become the top recruit of the 23rd Division. As expected of their Leitong's previous regiment commander.

“Many thanks, Junior Qiao.” Huo Zhenyu was also extremely happy with his results. At the same time, he saw that the others of his battle clan had also succeeded in getting into the 23rd Division. This meant that aside from the injured Nie Feng-ming who was still in recovery, every other member was in. By next year, once Nie Feng-ming succeeded in enlisting as well, their entire battle clan would be complete.

“It’s just that we’ve lost the arena fight against the New Cadet Regiment, so in future, Junior Qiao will have to clean up the mess.” After some thought, Huo Zhenyu added, “Beware of the regiment commander of the New Cadet Regiment, Ling Lan. He is really very strong.”

“I believe that, when it comes to mecha combat, I will not lose to anyone,” responded Qiao Ting solemnly. He knew Boss Huo was speaking out of good intentions, worried about the future clash between Leiting and the New Cadet Regiment. Therefore, he too answered Boss Huo seriously, telling the other that he had nothing to worry about.

Huo Zhenyu was silent for a moment before answering, “Junior Qiao, it’s good that you are confident.” He had no way of telling Qiao Ting that the feeling Ling Lan gave him was one of unfathomable depth. In the end, all he wanted to say was reduced to just this — even as he acknowledged Qiao Ting’s statement, he was trying to give himself some confidence.

Meanwhile, in Ling Lan’s villa, Qi Long and the others were also refreshing the forums. Of course, their attention was focused on the 23rd Division because that was their boss’s father’s division and was likely their future destination.

“Aaaaaaaah, I did not expect Uncle Ling to take in Huo Zhenyu’s gang ...” Qi Long was the first to see the results, instantly clicking onto the 23rd Division to see its final acceptance name list. Those few familiar names sent him howling uncontrollably.

As Ling Xiao was Boss Lan’s father, even though Ling Xiao’s actual age was much younger than their own fathers, they still chose to respectfully call him Uncle Ling. Lying on the sofa, reading the information on the various open and hidden factions within the Ling family her father had given to her, when Ling Lan heard the address of ‘Uncle Ling’, her stony, cold face could not help but spasm. Alright, just imagining it — her father’s young face really clashed with this title of ‘uncle’.

“What’s so surprising about that? Other than being no match for our Boss Lan, Huo Zhenyu’s physical skills are the best in the whole military academy.” Seeing these results, Han Jijun was not surprised.

“I just can’t figure out why he chose to enlist with the 23rd Division,” said Qi Long as he rubbed his head, baffled. From the gossip Xie Yi had gathered, Huo Zhenyu was an admirer of the First Marshal — he had long ago sworn to apply for enlistment with the 1st Division.

“Perhaps because the commander of the 23rd Division is Uncle Ling Xiao,” remarked Luo Lang, face filled with admiration. “In future, I too want to apply for the 23rd Division ...” That said, Luo Lang suddenly realised that his boss had not stated which division he would be applying to yet. So, he quickly asked his boss, “Boss, will you apply to the 23rd Division?”

Ling Lan turned off the virtual screen in her hands and said evenly, “Why wouldn’t I? It’s always good to have someone covering for you.”

Ling Lan knew well that even if she chose to apply for the other divisions, her father would definitely use his authority to override her choice and bring her to the 23rd Division anyway. As such, why should she go against her dad's wishes and waste the effort? Besides, she was not against going to the 23rd Division.

"Then it's settled. We'll all apply to the 23rd Division together," said Luo Lang excitedly. His words made all the companions by his side nod emphatically; they had long decided that they would follow Ling Lan. Moreover, Ling Xiao was already their idol to begin with — they were very willing to go to the 23rd Division.

Luo Lang's excitement had just peaked when his mood dipped. Frowning in worry, he wondered aloud, "Who knows how the three new members will choose?"

Chapter 354: Enemy Invasion?

"Li Lanfeng will definitely go to the 23rd Division. I've already spoken with him," answered Ling Lan immediately. "As for Li Shiyu, as long as Qi Long's issue isn't resolved, he doesn't have a choice."

The others could not help but spare a handful of compassionate tears for Li Shiyu at Ling Lan's words. Thus, the poor Li Shiyu had sold off his entire life to the Lingtian Battle Clan ... he had no more so-called freedom to speak of.

Hiding at one side, Qi Long secretly swiped away the cold sweat on his forehead, self-hypnotising himself inside, 'It's none of my business. All of this is Boss's idea ...' He still remembered that back when he had suffered that 'relapse', Boss had secretly injected him with a shot before it happened. There was absolutely something fishy about that shot.

"As for Chang Xinyuan, we can just ask him the next time we meet. Even if he is unwilling, there's still a few years' time for us to trick him into following us." Ling Lan stroked her chin, thinking about that mecha modification prodigy. Yup, she absolutely could not allow him to just slip away like that.

Trick? The moment Ling Lan said this, all of the other people in the villa acted similarly. They all lifted their heads to look up at the ceiling, pretending they had not heard anything. They were a proper battle clan, definitely not some human trafficking syndicate ... uh, although a few of the clan members were indeed tricked into joining, overall, those were still the minority, right ...? Everyone was justifying things to themselves, cautioning themselves that they absolutely could not be led astray by their boss.

Near the evening, Ling Lan walked out from the villa on her own. Qi Long and the others were still in their classes and had yet to return. Ling Lan had decided to go to the port to send her dad off so that he would not misunderstand things and mope again.

Ling Lan knew very well that Ling Xiao had come all this way in disguise to the military academy primarily because he was worried about her and so wanted to come see for himself how she was doing. Although Ling Lan felt that Ling Xiao's actions were unnecessary, she could not deny that she was deeply moved by it. She had profoundly experienced the bottomless love and acceptance Ling Xiao had for his daughter. Even though they had missed spending the first sixteen years of her life here together, Ling Xiao was currently investing so much more than Ling Lan in their relationship. It should be said that Ling Xiao was scoring passing marks in taking on his role as a father.

Spending these last few days together in the military academy had let Ling Lan gradually integrate her image of the Ling Xiao in the legacy space with this Ling Xiao in the real world. If Ling Lan had not been so used to having her slackface on by now, and if Ling Xiao's face had not looked so ridiculously young, perhaps Ling Lan would have already fulfilled Ling Xiao's wish by calling him 'daddy'. As for right now ...

Ling Xiao's assessment team was almost the final team to leave the First Men's Military Academy. There was quite a crowd that had come to send them off. Some were the upper-year cadets who had been enlisted into the 23rd Division, such as Huo Zhenyu and company, while there were also quite a number of lower-year cadets who admired the 23rd Division. These younger students had come over in between classes in hopes of making a stronger impression on the assessors.

While they knew that the assessors would be different every year, what if these officers happened to be the assessors again several years later ...? They were unwilling to back down even just for this miniscule bit of hope.

This was still the first time that Huo Zhenyu had seen the leader of the 23rd Division's team. During the assessment period, this leader had not appeared at any of the assessment fields. Even the inspection tasks had only been handled by him at the end of the day after all the assessments had ended. Since Huo Zhenyu had decided to go to the 23rd Division, he naturally wanted to know more about it. He wanted to know what kind of leader this major general was — perhaps he would be able to see some shadow of General Ling Xiao from the other.

Huo Zhenyu believed that a leader under General Ling Xiao must have something special about him.

The major general looked very young — even the large face mask which almost covered his entire face was unable to conceal this fact. He led his team to the special military port for the 23rd Division, but unlike the other assessment teams, he did not walk straight into the military vessel. Instead, he stood to one side, as if waiting for someone.

The other assessment team officers did not seem surprised by this. The major general had barely halted when they all spread out to stand in groups of two or three around him, where they then began chatting with one another. The mood was extremely casual and light-hearted.

Huo Zhenyu did not think much of it at first, but he soon noticed the intricacy behind the men's positions. Those officers may seem as if they were standing around randomly to chat, but that was not true. They had imperceptibly surrounded the major general, and the direction and angle of each person's position were different. It could be said that everything in the surroundings would fall into the eyes of at least one of the officers — not a single blind spot existed.

Huo Zhenyu was rendered speechless with astonishment. Who would have expected the leader of the 23rd Division to have such strong leadership skills? This scene had not occurred with any of the other assessment teams — even the leader of the teams might not be able to inspire such obedience from the proud and stubborn officers under their lead.

It could not be denied that even as Huo Zhenyu was astounded, he was secretly pleased. It was always better being able to join a united division rather than a divided army division which was prone to in-fighting.

Right at this time, Huo Zhenyu saw a very familiar figure strolling over. It was Ling Lan who had defeated him on the arena stage. Ling Lan bypassed the fence to walk straight towards the men of the 23rd Division. It looked like his target was that major general.

Huo Zhenyu was startled by this and he began to feel nervous for Ling Lan's sake. These officers of the 23rd Division may seem nice and friendly, but they were actually really hard to get along with. He had once tried to build some rapport with them but had failed miserably. The mocking gazes of those men had stopped Huo Zhenyu from seeking them out to talk again.

Huo Zhenyu thought that Ling Lan would be stopped by the surrounding officers before he could even get close to the major general, but unexpectedly, Ling Lan had just approached when the officer closest to him had smiled and given way to him. This scene made Huo Zhenyu's pupils contract. It went without saying that Ling Lan must know that major general.

As Huo Zhenyu had put his full focus on the assessment, he had not paid attention to the other things that had happened within the school. Thus, he was unaware that Ling Lan had led the New Cadet Regiment to form a welcoming committee for the assessment teams, or that Ling Lan had been singled out for admiration by the head of the 23rd Division during the welcoming ceremony ...

Huo Zhenyu's gaze dimmed slightly. Would the fact that Ling Lan knew the major general affect his future retaliation plan? However, Huo Zhenyu soon smiled, fighting spirit ablaze in his eyes. This was even better. If Ling Lan truly enlisted with the 23rd Division because of this, perhaps their revenge plot could be executed several years ahead of schedule.

"You've finally come! I thought you wouldn't even be willing to come see me off." Even though Ling Xiao's face was completely obscured by the large face mask, the humour in his eyes could not be concealed. It was clear to see that Ling Lan's arrival had pleased Ling Xiao's dragon heart greatly.

"Well, I forgot to ask you, Father, to pass on a message. Tell Mummy to not worry, I'm doing well here." Ling Lan reflexively scratched her nose, ignoring the hope in Ling Xiao's eyes, once again pretending not to see anything like an ostrich. Alright, just let her continue working at it!

Ling Xiao seemed to pick up on Ling Lan's embarrassment. He reached out a hand to tap Ling Lan lovingly on the forehead and said with a smile, "Got it. I'll pass on your message, my 'son'!" That said, Ling Xiao turned to leave and board his ship. Frankly, Ling Lan coming to send him off personally was already enough to satisfy him. As for calling him 'daddy', he was not impatient; there was still time. One day, he would let his daughter call him 'daddy' from the heart.

Ling Lan looked at Ling Xiao's stalwart back and then decisively fell into a cadet's salute, mouthing silently, "Daddy, bon voyage!" Although that cry of 'daddy' was not voiced, the love and respect she held in her heart for Ling Xiao could not be denied.

The assessment team of the 23rd Division very quickly followed their leader onto their ship, and the ship soon took off. Just like that, other than Qi Long and the other few knowing that Ling Xiao had visited the military academy, no one else had a clue that the national idol and god-class operator General Ling Xiao had even graced the First Men's Military Academy with his presence.

Only after Ling Lan saw the warship fly away from the port did she put down her hand and turn away from the port. On her way back, she saw Huo Zhenyu standing right across from her, staring at her with a serious expression.

“Senior Huo, what’s up?” asked Ling Lan lightly.

“Are you going to the 23rd Division in future?” asked Huo Zhenyu.

“Yes!” answered Ling Lan resolutely.

“Good. Four years later, I will wait for you at the 23rd Division. At that time, we shall fight to clear the grudge between us.” Huo Zhenyu’s eyes were filled with fighting spirit as he issued his challenge.

“Sounds good to me!” Ling Lan decisively clapped her hand against the other’s outstretched palm, indicating that she had accepted Huo Zhenyu’s challenge.

After striking palms, the two brushed by each other, leaving for their respective destinations without a backward glance. However, they both knew that they needed to begin preparing now for the battle four years from now.

Very soon, night descended. Ling Lan and the others finished dinner and then after another round of training, they each went off to rest.

At this time, the fleet of an unidentified faction had snuck into the skies of the planet they were on and were slowly making their silent way towards the planet ... even more frighteningly, heaven knows what method they used to interrupt the satellite surveillance of this plot of sky. Not a single person nor piece of equipment discovered their presence.

A patrol ship was conducting its routine patrol and inspection around this area and found nothing unusual. It was just about to send this news down to the mainframe below when it found that it could not send out any messages.

“That’s strange, why wasn’t there any signal five times in a row?” The operator in charge of message transmission had tried sending a message 5 times consecutively, but the optical supercomputer always ended each attempt with a notification of failure. This surprised the operator, causing him to shout out involuntarily. Although there had been times before when the message transmission would fail due to an unstable signal, it would typically only happen just once or twice and never more than three times. For this transmission to fail 5 times in a row was absolutely an abnormal occurrence.

The comms leader in charge of this area immediately came over to investigate. Sure enough, as the operator had said, there was no indicator of any signal at all being picked up by the device. He quickly said, “Which satellite are you connected to?”

“JX-12,” responded the operator instantly.

“Change to JX-07 for me,” ordered the team leader.

“Yes! Sir!” The operator immediately switched to contacting the satellite JX-07 but soon found that JX-07 was equally out of contact. “Sir, we can’t connect to JX-07.”

“Try the other satellites!” Cold sweat began to bead up on the team leader’s forehead; he had sensed that something was up.

The operator tried again and again to connect to the other major satellites in this section of space but found all his efforts futile. “Sir, it’s still not working.”

“Could it be that the ship’s communicator is broken?” asked the team leader.

“No, the results of the device’s self-check is normal 1 !” responded the operator immediately.

At these words, the team leader suddenly recalled a war of information that had taken place in the Federation 20 years ago. This kind of scenario had occurred then as well. His face changed drastically and he said, “Could this be an enemy invasion?”

Chapter 355: Ambush?

Just then, the surveillance radar operator announced with a shout, “Unidentified flying objects detected, number, preliminary estimation nineteen.”

This announcement caught the captain’s attention and he promptly ordered, “Get me visual, maximum magnification.”

The person manning the scanner screens, upon receiving the coordinates provided by the radar operator, began searching and quickly located the targets, and then began zooming in. Soon, an image appeared on the main screen in the control room. What first appeared as nineteen black dots expanded gradually until rough silhouettes could be discerned. Despite the low resolution, everyone could see that the outlines of these unknown flying objects belonged to warship-class vessels.

Civilian and military ships were vastly different and could be easily distinguished based on their outlines. At the sight that greeted them, everyone felt alarmed. These mysterious warships, where had they come from and why had they never received any warning of any warships approaching their sector?

“Send the signal, request ID,” the captain commanded through gritted teeth. He had a bad feeling about this, but hoped against hope that this fleet would turn out to be friendly.

“Alert ground control, report status,” the captain prepared for the worst, directing communications personnel to brief the ground-level defensive troops on the situation.

“Sir, we’ve lost contact with ground control, the satellites are all dead,” the communications team leader paled visibly as he informed his captain of the harsh reality of their situation.

Hearing this, the captain stood up fiercely and bellowed, “We must re-establish contact. This is definitely an enemy attack!” It was clear as day to the captain that this was undoubtedly an enemy offensive. Their only hope was to report this situation to the ground troops, otherwise ... the thought gave the captain chills, and he broke out in cold sweat.

If the enemy ambush succeeded, the First Men’s Military Academy, situated on planet Newline directly below, would be done for!

The signalman, having tried repeatedly to contact the other fleet to no avail, anxiously asked the captain, "Sir, the other side is not responding. Your orders?"

Acting on a flash of insight, the captain clenched his jaw and commanded, "Alter course immediately, turn ninety degrees, full speed ahead!"

On receiving the order, every last technical operator in the main control room leapt to action. The patrol ship executed a flawless 90-degree turn, tracing a beautiful path against the sea of stars, then sped away towards the west. The vice-captain, standing beside the captain, could not help but ask softly, "Captain, is this really for the best?" The crime punished most severely by the Federation military was that of fleeing without even putting up a fight. If the military found out, the captain would surely be court-martialled.

"There are 19 military vessels in the enemy fleet, engaging them head-on is suicidal. I cannot allow my subordinate brothers to die in vain. Besides, we have a more important mission, which is to make contact with the ground troops and warn them of the impending danger. To do all this, we must survive! Even if it means getting court-martialled, I will have no regrets." With determination in his eyes, the captain went on, "Vice-captain, if planet Newline is ambushed, all the instructors and students at the First Men's Military Academy will be doomed ..."

"No matter which faction the enemy is from, I fear their goal is to sever the Federation's production line of future soldiers. The faculty at the First Men's Military Academy is the cream of the Federation's crop, we absolutely cannot allow the enemy to succeed," said the captain in steely tones.

By now, the fleet of 19 warships had discovered the fleeing Federation patrol ship. The supercomputer of the leading warship outputted a warning message: "ONE PATROL SHIP IDENTIFIED AHEAD, TARGET LOCKED FOR PURSUIT. PLEASE ISSUE NEW ORDER – PURSUE/IGNORE?"

In response to this news, the fleet commander decisively ordered, "Ignore it, proceed according to plan." Did that patrol ship think running westward would ensure their safety? The fleet commander flashed an icy smirk, clearly contemptuous.

As if on cue, two more fleets of warships suddenly appeared from either side, one with nine ships and the other, thirteen. Despite the emergency change of course, the Federation patrol ship was headed straight for the 13-ship fleet.

"Curses! Fire the cannons!" Realizing they had already fallen into the enemy's trap, the captain knew they had no chance, but a savage fire burned in his eyes. "Even if we die, we're taking some of the bastards with us!" screamed the captain.

The patrol vessel finally fired its main cannon, the missile's brilliant, glimmering tail arcing across the starry skies in an instant, barrelling straight towards one of the warships. Faced with the patrol ship's surprise attack, the warship moved to avoid it. Wherever the missiles scratched the sides of the warship, the once-glowing beam shields suddenly darkened ...

With just one more shot, perhaps they really could have dealt the enemy a terrifying blow, but the patrol ship never got the opportunity to do so. The enemy fleet never gave them any chance; they were faced with the overwhelming cannon fire of the enemy salvo. With missiles blanketing the sky before them, even though the patrol ship tried desperately to dodge and weave with their beam shields turned

up to maximum power, they could not hope to win. BOOM! The patrol ship was blasted by multiple missiles. The ship blew apart in an instant, the ship and its crew swallowed by a sky-piercing, fiery explosion, like a fireworks display. The next moment, all that was left were debris in the emptiness of space.

“Reporting! One patrol ship destroyed in the east!” the fleet entering from the east wasted no time in reporting to the main fleet. Following that, the western fleet also reported that the patrol ship that had tried to flee had been destroyed by them. All told, they had destroyed two patrol ships.

The fleet commander received the two fleets’ reports and nodded in satisfaction. “The three patrol ships mentioned in our intelligence have all been destroyed, and the signals from the satellites in the area have also been silenced. It’s time we made our next move. On my orders, let Operation Kill the Fledgling officially begin!”

Following the commander’s order, the three fleets merged into one massive fleet. All the warships positioned themselves in the airspace above the First Men’s Military Academy on planet Newline and began opening their launch ports. Soon, innumerable black metallic spheres dropped speedily down towards the planet ...

“This technology granted by the Twilight Empire ain’t bad at all. We’re undetectable by radar, and on top of that, it’s the dead of night. I think by the time the anti-air ground troops realize it, our men will have landed. What happens next will be a test of the strength of our forces,” said the commander-in-chief, unable to suppress a gloating smirk as he watched the metallic spheres populate the skies above the First Men’s Military Academy like spring rain.

“Indeed, Commander, this time, we shall teach the Huaxians a bloody lesson!” haughtily replied the adjutant by the commander’s side, his eyes glinting with vengeance and bloodlust. The blood of the Caesar Empire must never be spilled in vain!

“Boss, wake up! Boss, wake up!” Ling Lan woke with a start but kept her eyes closed, maintaining the pretence of being in deep sleep while activating her spiritual power. Quickly probing the state of the room and finding everything normal, no threats present, only then did she ask mentally, “Little Four, what is it?”

“I just lost contact with every satellite around the planet all of a sudden. This is highly unusual,” Little Four hurriedly briefed Ling Lan of the situation.

“Can’t you just re-connect?” Ling Lan was shocked to hear this.

“I can’t reach them. I’ve already activated all the radars on the ground and all the monitoring equipment in the academy ... I haven’t found anything unusual yet, but something just feels off, like something bad is about to happen,” Little Four replied anxiously. “I learnt about a similar incident recorded in the academy mainframe’s database, this could be an attack on our communications system by an enemy nation ...”

“Blindfolding us to keep us in the dark about the situation in the outside world ... Could they be planning an ambush?” Ling Lan furrowed her brow, her mind flashing back to the events at the Swift Dragon base.

Could this have something to do with that? Could it be that she had made a mistake somewhere and the enemy had discovered them?

On hearing Ling Lan's words, Little Four's eyes lit up and, nodding away, he said, "Yup, yup, their objective is most likely to pull off an ambush!"

Ling Lan made a snap decision and instructed Little Four, "Little Four, immediately report any changes in the situation to me, especially anything transpiring in the skies. You haven't forgotten what happened six years ago, right?" Ling Lan couldn't help but recall the incident on planet Demonbeast, where the Twilight Empire had managed to pull off an airborne offensive.

Ling Lan thought so, because the First Men's Military Academy in its current location was closely monitored by the ground forces, which made it impossible for any enemy nation to successfully invade it with large armies. Instead, they had employed such extravagant tactics as to create a total transmission lockdown, showing that their ambush this time was no petty skirmish. Since a ground invasion was impossible, a direct approach from the air was very likely. This was precisely why Ling Lan had especially notified Little Four to observe the skies.

As soon as Ling Lan was done instructing Little Four, her eyes sprang open, and with a shove of her right hand, she leapt down from the bed. She rapidly put on the academy uniform, opened the door to her room, and in a few steps, she arrived at the room closest to hers.

Ling Lan did not choose to knock politely, instead kicking the door in with a ferocious stomp.

With a violent "BANG!" Ling Lan blew the doorway open, the door itself crashing into the room from the force of the kick.

A crack was heard as the door was smashed to smithereens by some force mid-flight, the aftershocks sending the splinters exploding outward.

The first thing Ling Lan saw was a fist, and then someone on the bed somersaulted to the floor. Qi Long, who was naked above the waist and wearing only a pair of boxers, had one hand against the ground, poised like a cheetah waiting for any opportunity to strike.

Ling Lan glanced coolly at the sculpted, powerful body of Qi Long and his rippling muscles, and suppressed her envy. She said emotionlessly, "Enemy invasion, prepare for combat!" Such a formidable physique would never be hers in this lifetime, thought Ling Lan regretfully.

The tension Qi Long felt upon his rude awakening had abated when he saw that his own boss was the one standing in the doorway, but at his boss's words, his heart started racing again. He stood up quickly and, retrieving the academy uniform hanging by the bed in one fluid motion, dressed rapidly before catching up to Ling Lan, asking anxiously, "Boss, what happened?"

Chapter 356: Tampering?

"I don't know. I'm only guessing that the military academy is probably being targeted for a large-scale enemy attack right now," said Ling Lan as they walked. Very soon they had come to the door of Luo Lang's room, and without even thinking about it, Ling Lan once again whipped out a savage kick to send the door flying open. However, the door opened to an empty room.

Just then, a person suddenly leapt out from the side, striking out ferociously at Ling Lan's face. Ling Lan calmly raised her right hand and caught the attacker's powerful fist with a palm.

"Boss, it's you!" Luo Lang saw that Boss Ling Lan was the one who had seized his fist and instantly let out a sigh of relief, crying out in joy. Apparently, the ruckus from Qi Long's room had startled the sleeping Luo Lang awake. He had thought that something was wrong and so had swiftly put on his clothes and hid behind the wall right by the door. When his door had been kicked open, he had then charged out to punch the intruder.

Ling Lan let go of Luo Lang's fist, and casting down a cold glance, she said, "Luo Lang, keep up!"

Luo Lang retracted his hand. Seeing the grim look on Ling Lan's face, he knew something had happened. Silently, he followed his boss, though he surreptitiously poked Qi Long beside him. Qi Long turned his head and mouthed silently, "Enemy invasion!"

Luo Lang's gaze turned cold. For his boss to be so concerned, this enemy invasion must be noteworthy. His thoughts ran along the same line Ling Lan's had, thinking of the events that had transpired at the Swift Dragon base. Could it be that the events there had caused them to be discovered?

However, looking at his boss's frigid expression, Luo Lang did not dare to ask any questions. Coming to the second floor, Ling Lan gave a signal to Qi Long and Luo Lang, motioning for them to split up and wake up Han Jijyun, Lin Zhong-qing, and Xie Yi respectively.

Very soon, everyone was awake. Fully dressed in their uniforms, they gathered at the living room downstairs. Ling Lan was seated primly on the sofa, deep in contemplation. Xie Yi and Lin Zhong-qing reflexively glanced at one another and saw the confusion in each other's eyes. They had only been woken up by Luo Lang and Qi Long without being told what was going on.

Han Jijyun walked down the stairs with a thoughtful expression. Coming to stand before Ling Lan, he waited for his boss to give him a definite answer.

"At present, our ground control has lost all contact with all the satellites in the space above this planet. It has been as long as 5 minutes." Ling Lan swept her gaze over everyone present and told them about the present situation.

Ling Lan's words gave everyone a shock, particularly Han Jijyun and Luo Lang. Aware of the importance of intelligence, they knew very well what this represented.

"It's an enemy invasion!" concluded Han Jijyun with conviction. Luo Lang nodded in agreement; he had come to the same conclusion as Han Jijyun. In contrast to Ling Lan's uncertain speculation, Han Jijyun and Luo Lang were obviously much more certain.

"My guess is the same. And I think the invasion will be coming from outer space." Ling Lan reflexively looked out at the starry sky outside the window. Wasn't the pitch darkness of the night sky a perfect setting for an air invasion?

Ling Lan's words caused everyone's expression to change. If things were really as Boss had said, then their First Men's Military Academy was in danger. Boiling over with anxiety, Xie Yi blurted, "Boss, then what should we do?"

"I have already taken control of the ground radar as well as all of the aerial monitoring equipment of the military academy. The moment I notice anything, I will sound the alarm of the entire academy," Ling Lan told her companions of her plans.

"Why not just sound the alarm now? This will make it easier for the ground forces to have time to put up their guard," asked Han Jijyun, puzzled.

"Unfortunately, there is nothing strange in the radar or the surveillance equipment. Without proof, their first response would be to suspect that the academy mainframe has been hacked. Then, they might put in all their effort to investigate this matter. The potential loss outweighs the potential gains; I don't want to have this backfire on us to the enemy's gain," Ling Lan shared her concerns.

If the ground forces turned all their attention internally as a result, Ling Lan would surely regret it endlessly. Initially aiming to disrupt an enemy's invasion but ending up creating an even better opportunity for the invasion instead, Ling Lan would not do such a stupid thing ...

"But losing contact with the satellites is a fact. As long as they learn of this, they should become wary." Han Jijyun could not understand why his boss was worrying like this. From his perspective, the matter was simple. As long as the ground forces knew that they had lost contact with the satellites for several minutes, they would certainly think of the possibility of an air invasion.

After listening to Han Jijyun's words, a bitter smile appeared on Ling Lan's lips. "What if, the equipment displays of all the ground devices connected to the satellites still show that everything is normal?" Only a fearsome existence such as Little Four could experience first-hand the truth that they had lost contact with the satellites; meanwhile, all the equipment were showing that everything was fine, and even the top-class hackers could sense nothing wrong. This was also why Ling Lan was forced to wait for something concrete to happen.

These words of Ling Lan finally caused the complexion of the composed Han Jijyun to change. "Boss, are you saying that there is no indication on the ground equipment about the loss of connection? But the fact is that we've already lost contact with the satellites?"

Ling Lan nodded and said, "Yes. Only hackers who have reached a certain level would be able to notice the problem." If Little Four had not loved to roam and wander about so much, he might have overlooked the problem as well ...

Han Jijyun's entire face turned grim. "Who would have expected the enemy to go to such expense to accomplish such a thing? Rumour has it that only imperial level hackers and above can do something like this ... although our military academy has cultivated many hackers, it has never once produced an imperial level one. Even in the entire Federation, the number of imperial hackers can be counted on one hand. It is to be expected that the ground forces will never notice that the satellites have been tampered with."

Tampered with? Han Jijyun's words caused Ling Lan's mind to jolt, an idea appearing in her mind's eye which would resolve their current passive situation. Ling Lan excitedly called out to Little Four, "Little Four, can you fabricate an image of the satellites transmitting?"

Ling Lan's words made Little Four roll his eyes and he said with a pout, "Boss, you're underestimating me too much. This kind of thing, I can do it even with my eyes closed." Was it necessary to ask him about such a simple thing? When would his boss have a little more faith in him?

"That's good ..." Little Four's words sent a bolt of glee through Ling Lan's heart. She began instructing Little Four on what he had to do. As Ling Lan elaborated, Little Four's gaze became brighter and brighter — in the end, he patted his chest and told Ling Lan to leave it all to him.

After accepting Ling Lan's arrangements, Little Four vanished. As if letting down a great burden, Ling Lan's mood became instantly much more relaxed. She thought about it for a bit and then said to Lin Zhong-qing, "Contact Li Lanfeng, Li Shiyu, and Chang Xinyuan immediately. Let the three of them gather here at our place right away."

After that, she told the others, "You all, immediately contact all the team leaders of the New Cadet Regiment. Tell them about this news!" At this point, Ling Lan suddenly got up from the sofa and walked over to the window to stare up at the endless night sky. After several seconds of silent contemplation, she said icily, "Tell them to gather all their team members, be on standby, and be prepared to fight!"

"Yes, Boss!" Everyone sprang into motion.

About five minutes later, the initially still and silent school suddenly rang with the ear-splitting screech of an enemy invasion alarm.

When Ling Lan heard the alarm rip through the night air, the corners of her lips tilted up despite herself. If the enemy truly thought they could easily consume this entire school, then just let them try ...

Qi Long and the others, who had been sitting to one side quietly, leapt up at the cacophony and asked, "Boss, has the enemy been sighted?"

Ling Lan composedly sat on the sofa, shook her head and said, "No!"

"Then this alarm ..." Qi Long was confused now. They had all heard the conversation between Boss and Han Jijyun — Boss had clearly said that he would only sound the alarm once the enemy had been sighted.

"I was indeed the one who sounded the alarm," replied Ling Lan calmly.

"Didn't you say that without any proof, the ground forces will not believe it?" asked Han Jijyun, bewildered, unsure why his boss had suddenly changed his mind.

"They can tamper with the displays, but we can also tamper with the displays." Ling Lan's lips pulled into a cold curve.

Ling Lan's reply made everyone's eyes light up; all of them knew what Ling Lan meant. Indeed, if the other side could make it so the satellite displays registered everything as normal, then they too could make it so that the satellite displays indicated some problem ... most people were just trapped by fixed ideas, believing that attack methods could only be used on an enemy. Sometimes, for the greater picture, these methods could also be applied to one's own side.

Han Jijyun cast a searching glance at the composed Boss Lan before him, his heart maxed out with admiration 1 . While they were still thinking within the box, Boss Lan had already thrown the box wide open — his every action was already beyond any fixed boundaries of thinking. Whether something was good or bad, he could take and use it, as long as the final outcome was advantageous to their side.

Other than that, there was one more thing. Han Jijyun had always thought Boss Lan was just a top-class hacker, but now it looked like he should already be at the level of imperial-class hacker ... as expected of their boss, still as unfathomable even when it came to other domains.

“Enemy invasion, enemy invasion, all ground troops are commanded to enter combat mode. All anti-air cannons on the ground to be aimed towards the sky. Prepare to fire ...” The commander of the ground forces had received the images sent by the satellites and had instantly broken out into cold sweat. He immediately ordered the ground forces to begin moving. The sudden appearance of countless starships in the images as well as those golden metallic eggs spewing from the ships proved that this was a fearsome aerial invasion. Thank god for the timely images sent by the satellites, otherwise they would have been finished over here.

“Reporting to the chief. There is no sign of any unidentified flying objects in the sky on the radars. Everything is normal.” Very soon, all the radar surveillance centres sent over the latest updates; they had not discovered anything wrong in the skies above. This situation bewildered the commander — what in the world was going on? Why didn’t the ground radars pick up anything as indicated by the images from the satellites? Where exactly was the problem?

“Chief, do you still remember the planet Demonbeast invasion incident in that top-secret military report 6 years ago?” The adjutant by the commander’s side found the situation equally puzzling, but his gaze suddenly lit up at this recollection and he quickly alerted the commander.

The commander came to a realisation and hurriedly ordered the staff officer beside him, “Quickly. Get me the information on the invasion of planet Demonbeast six years ago.”

Chapter 357: Arrangements!

It took only a few seconds for the information on the planet Demonbeast invasion to be displayed on the large screen of the command centre. When the commander saw that familiar egg-shaped object, he was instantly enlightened. Rage burned brightly in his heart and he cursed out loud, “Godd*mmmit, it’s those f*cking Twilightians again.”

“Chief, according to the data, the metal of the eggs can avoid radar detection ...” The adjutant managed to find the info he wanted with a quick skim of the data. It looked like he had remembered correctly — radars were useless against these egg-shaped metal objects.

“So that’s how it is. Issue the order — do not trust the radars, use infrared telescopes to search the skies.” The commander had also seen that piece of information. Slamming a palm down hard on the surface before him, he commanded angrily.

“Yes! Chief!” The officers below the commander acknowledged his order and passed on his instructions. While the anti-air ground cannoner troops were watching the skies intently, the team leaders of the New Cadet Regiment were leading all their team members to gather before Ling Lan’s villa.

Li Lanfeng, Li Shiyu, and Chang Xinyuan were the last to arrive as their accommodations were the furthest away from Ling Lan's villa. When they saw the crowd gathered in the little garden before the villa, even as they were astonished, they could feel the potential power behind Ling Lan.

As soon as they entered the living room, they saw twenty people either standing or sitting all around the room. When he saw these people, Li Lanfeng's gaze flickered subtly. He recognised all these people — the Wuji Mecha Clan had collected detailed information on the New Cadet Regiment previously. These people were all the team leaders in the New Cadet Regiment, and were likely to be the leaders of battle clans in the future. For now, they were all members of Ling Lan's New Cadet Regiment.

Ling Lan was currently seated on the sofa. Seeing Li Lanfeng and the other two arrive, she merely gave them a look signalling them to go find Qi Long. Li Lanfeng and the others knew that Ling Lan was in the middle of a discussion with these people, so they made no sound, silently moving to Qi Long's side.

Qi Long saw them coming and then told them about the situation. Li Lanfeng was shocked by the news — after receiving the text to come, he had been rushing over when he had suddenly heard the sound of sirens, so he knew something major must have happened, but he had never expected that things would be so serious.

However, Li Lanfeng quickly pushed the shock to the back of his mind. He focused his attention on Ling Lan, wanting to know what Ling Lan was discussing with the team leaders. After listening for a while, Li Lanfeng's expression became more and more grim. He did not expect the rabbit to be so daring, actually setting his sights on the mecha storehouse during such a dangerous moment.

"Clearly, the upcoming battle will be a mecha battlefield. We are personally too weak to stand against mecha. We have no way at all to resist, to protect ourselves. So, we need to obtain weapons equal to the enemy's," stated Ling Lan coldly.

"Boss Lan, it's not that we don't trust your judgment, but we have never used real mecha before, especially those members of the lower ranks. Some have only begun learning how to operate mecha in Mecha World. They will not be able to put up any fight at all." At this time, one team leader shared the real situation of the members below him. His words received the agreement of quite a number of the team leaders, because they too had a significant number of members like that under them.

"Is that so ...?" Ling Lan frowned at those words. Because all her team members could operate mecha, she had temporarily forgotten that not every team was as fearsome as her team 1. After some thought, Ling Lan said, "It's my mistake ... then let's do this instead. We'll split into two groups. Those who have confidence in their skills can come with me, while those who cannot operate mecha yet will form another team ..."

Here, Ling Lan paused. Very soon, she handed out a document to all the team leaders and pointed out a spot marked with a red star. "The other team will go to this location. It is the most secure anti-air stronghold of the military academy. Once they are inside, they will not have to worry about their safety any longer."

It was naturally Little Four who had found this safe anti-air base as well. Right after they had arrived at the school, Little Four had already mapped out every single nook and cranny of the campus, whether it was open or hidden away. The school had around thirty anti-air facilities, but only three were the best in

terms of sturdiness and safety. The one Ling Lan had marked out was the one closest to them out of the three.

Seeing this map, Wu Jiong was startled. He lifted his head to stare at Ling Lan, wondering — could it be that Boss Lan's hacker powers were already so strong that there was nowhere in this school which was barred to him? Coming from a military family, he knew very well that this map was definitely a confidential document. For Ling Lan to have gotten his hands on it within such a short time frame, he must have used some extraordinary means.

As if noticing the suspicion in Wu Jiong's eyes, Li Lanfeng, who had been closely observing the proceedings all this while, quickly spoke up, "This map was given to Boss Lan by me."

Li Lanfeng may have been too concerned about the rabbit and had not taken the time to reflect on the matter. Since these team leaders were all part of the New Cadet Regiment, they should already know a thing or two about the regiment commander Ling Lan's abilities. When he had spoken up, there had only been one thought in Li Lanfeng's mind, and that was that he must help the rabbit hide his secrets ...

Li Lanfeng's words made a trace of surprise flash across Ling Lan's eyes, but when she saw the worry contained in Li Lanfeng's eyes, she instantly understood why Li Lanfeng had said what he had said ...

The corners of Ling Lan's lips quirked up slightly, her heart suffused with pleasure. So it turned out that it felt pretty good to have someone worry for you. Basking in the enjoyment of this feeling, Ling Lan did not say anything to refute Li Lanfeng's statement. She leaned back on the sofa with a half-smile, waiting to see how Li Lanfeng would flesh out his lie.

Li Lanfeng's unexpected interjection made Wu Jiong turn his head to look at him in surprise. When he saw Li Lanfeng, his brow furrowed noticeably.

In contrast to Ling Lan and Qi Long who only focused on their own matters, Wu Jiong was clearly more like a true regiment commander. Over this period of time, he had completely grasped the information of the high-level people associated with the various major factions, and Li Lanfeng was one of them. Wu Jiong remembered very clearly that Li Lanfeng was the primary strategist of the Wuji Mecha Clan. Even though the Wuji Mecha Clan had taken in a new strategist this year, threatening his position within the faction, it could not be denied that the Wuji Mecha Clan's dominance over the Central Academy faction to stay in third place these past few years was definitely due to this person's strategies.

As a newborn faction, the other factions of the military academy were all rivals of the New Cadet Regiment. As such, this person should be someone on the opposing side, so why had he shown up here? With an expression filled with wariness, Wu Jiong asked coldly, "As the strategist of the academy's number three faction, the Wuji Mecha Clan, I'd like to know why you chose to hand this map to our regiment commander."

Wu Jiong had no doubts that this map had been submitted by Li Lanfeng. As the primary strategist of the Wuji Mecha Clan and a senior cadet who had hung around the academy for four years, it was still very possible for the other to obtain a top-secret map like this one.

Wu Jiong's questioning caused Li Lanfeng to instinctively shift back into his initial character role. With a slight smile on his face, he said, "Because I have already left the Wuji Mecha Clan and intend to join under Boss Lan's banner. And this map is my entrance submission. Boss Lan, isn't that so?" Li Lanfeng

cast his gaze at Ling Lan, a subtle sense of pleading in his eyes, as if hoping for Ling Lan to work with him here.

Seeing this, Ling Lan nodded slightly and said, "Yes, it is indeed as he said." As expected of a black-bellied fellow, lies coming so easily to his lips ... Ling Lan found that she really did not know Li Lanfeng. Still, Ling Lan believed that Li Lanfeng's sincerity in wanting to join her battle clan was indisputable, even while he remained unaware of her true identity. This was why Ling Lan still chose to believe in Li Lanfeng even after learning of his true identity.

Wu Jiong was sceptical over Li Lanfeng's words, because no matter how you looked at it, the bright future of the Wuji Mecha Clan as one of the top three factions in the school was obviously much more attractive than the uncertain fate of the New Cadet Regiment. An intelligent person typically would not abandon Wuji and choose the New Cadet Regiment, and Li Lanfeng was precisely one of those most intelligent people.

Wu Jiong was not satisfied with Li Lanfeng's explanation, but seeing how composed Ling Lan was, he put aside the suspicions he harboured in his heart. Wu Jiong believed that since Ling Lan dared to take in Li Lanfeng, he must have some plan in mind. Perhaps there was some deeper meaning behind all this — Wu Jiong did not want to ruin Boss Lan's great plan by doing anything unnecessary.

However, Wu Jiong still could not help making a slight threat, "I hope you manage to do what you say ... don't disappoint Boss Lan." Strategists or whatever are the worst — they are all a bunch of inscrutable people with bellies full of plots and schemes — Wu Jiong was rather leery of people like that.

In response to Wu Jiong's threat, Li Lanfeng retained his usual smile just as if he had heard nothing, as composed as ever. This discouraged Wu Jiong somewhat — as expected, the other was not someone easy to handle.

At this point, Ling Lan could tell that this matter had come to a close. Not having to explain the source of the map made things considerably easier for Ling Lan. With a stern expression, she ordered all the team leaders, "Tally up the numbers immediately. Five minutes later, I want to know the final name lists for both groups."

"Yes, Regiment Commander!" replied everyone respectfully.

Five minutes went by quickly and the name lists were submitted. At this time, ten or so kilometres away from the academy, a sudden loud roaring of artillery firing could be heard, the flash from the shots lighting up the initially dark night ...

Everyone in the living room, other than Ling Lan, instantly leapt towards the windows. Looking up into the sky above, they saw that countless metal eggs had appeared. This scene caused all their faces to change. Although they trusted Boss Lan's judgment, really seeing it was another matter. When the night sky had been cut by the flares of artillery fire, what came into sight was a sky full of metal eggs, shocking them all to the core ... war had truly descended upon them.

Ling Lan calmly scanned the two lists in her hands and then clapping her hands together, she said loudly, "Wu Jiong, Li Yingjie!"

Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie had been rendered dumbstruck by the scene in the sky; suddenly hearing Ling Lan shout out their names, they shivered and quickly replied, "Here!"

"You two, immediately lead the second team to the anti-air stronghold." Ling Lan handed the second name list to Wu Jiong.

Wu Jiong's gaze flickered but he did not reach out to take the list, as if somewhat hesitant to accept Ling Lan's orders. Ling Lan continued to say, "You both should know where the mecha storehouse is. We will wait for you two there. I cannot trust anyone else with this second group."

When Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie heard this, they were instantly filled with the feeling that it would be worth dying for someone who understood them. Wu Jiong nodded emphatically as he accepted the name list and replied, "Boss Lan, Yingjie and I will definitely make sure to escort them safely to the anti-air shelter."

Beside him, Li Yingjie also patted his chest in agreement that they would definitely complete the task given to them successfully.

Alright. This was the first time Li Yingjie, who liked strutting around causing trouble, had been entrusted with such an important task. In his excitement, his admiration for Boss Lan grew. Sure enough, Boss Lan was still the person who knew him best ... it actually felt so amazing to be trusted.

Chapter 358: This is Real Battle!

"Okay, then I'll leave everything to you both," said Ling Lan solemnly before turning to look at Chang Xinyuan to say, "Chang Xinyuan, you follow them!"

Chang Xinyuan's expression changed and he asked, "Why, Boss Lan?"

"This is a real battle. Your mecha control skills will not keep you alive on the battlefield." Ling Lan did not care about protecting Chang Xinyuan's feelings, bluntly telling him the reason for her order. This was not Mecha World, where Chang Xinyuan had his own modified mecha; all the mecha in the mecha storehouse would be standard mecha. Like Ling Lan had said, to survive the battlefield, they would need to rely on their own control skills and techniques.

Ling Lan's merciless words made Chang Xinyuan lower his head in shame. Ling Lan saw the dejected Chang Xinyuan and gave a mental sigh. It looked like she would not be able to set aside the role of spiritual life coach anytime soon. Thus, she said, "There will be many more opportunities to fight. Train your control skills up well after this so that, at that time, you will be able to move alongside us."

Ling Lan's words of reassurance did not make Chang Xinyuan feel much better. He clenched his fists tight with his head bowed, an uncontrollable sense of disappointment and rage in his heart. He was disappointed because he was being left behind again ... this was already the second time, and the reason for both times was the same — his mecha control skills were not up to par.

He knew that the support members of other battle clans typically would not go to the battlefield personally, using their talents to serve their battle clans from the rear instead. However, he did not want to become that type of support member. He wanted to be Lin Zhong-qing, or Li Shiyu, or Han Jijyun — they were all support members, but their combat prowess was formidable enough that he looked up to

them. The more time he spent with them, the more keenly he felt his incompetence. The modification innate talent he was so proud of had no place at all here ... yes, he was angry at his own helplessness. If he had just spent a little more effort in the past to train up his mecha control skills, perhaps he would not have had to be left behind now.

However, this was the last time. He absolutely would not allow Boss Lan to leave him behind for the third time! Chang Xinyuan made this solemn vow to himself. Then, he lifted his head decisively to look at his boss and say firmly, "I will no longer be the weak link, Boss Lan. I will do what I say."

Even Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie standing to one side could feel Chang Xinyuan's determination, and they found their admiration growing even more for Ling Lan's ability to attract talent. Those who Boss Lan took in, no matter how useless they were at first, would soon go through tremendous changes, and this was something they could not replicate.

Chang Xinyuan's words made Ling Lan's heart move. She nodded seriously and said, "I believe you!" Ling Lan was more than glad to see a team member want to become stronger.

Right after that, Ling Lan turned to look at Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie and said, "Take action immediately. If the enemy manages to land successfully and get into the school, you all really won't be able to move anywhere anymore." The dormitory district was equipped with a full defensive beam shield. Once it activated due to artillery fire, those within the district would not be able to get out anymore, unless this defensive shield was broken by external forces.

Ling Lan did not think highly of this defensive beam shield. In her eyes, this was a design failure, which forced the students inside to become turtles in a jar. The moment the defensive beam shield was shattered, those cadets made to remain within the dormitory district would be served up to the enemy on a platter. This was also why Ling Lan had asked the students of the New Cadet Regiment to relocate to the anti-air shelter.

"Yes, Boss Lan!" Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie knew that time was short. Without further delay, they immediately went outside with Chang Xinyuan and led the second group swiftly away from Ling Lan's villa, sprinting towards their destination.

Following the departure of group two, the New Cadet Regiment which originally stood at near 300 members suddenly lost about half their number. Only about a little more than 100 members remained, and most of them were ex-students of the Central Scout Academy. They had fought alongside Ling Lan during the grand armed melee, as well as hijacked a spaceship with her. Now, under Ling Lan's lead once more, they were about to break into the military academy's mecha storehouse and engage in real mecha battle much earlier than expected. Newborn calves are not afraid of tigers — they were not afraid to fight; thoughts of the upcoming battle made them immensely excited instead.

It should be known that only cadets with exceptional results would have the chance to board real mecha and battle with them in their third year at the academy. Otherwise, they would only be able to use real mecha in their fourth year. But now, under Ling Lan's lead, this moment was brought forward by two to three years. They were even heading straight into the actual combat stage! This once again reinforced the notion that if they followed Boss Lan, they would definitely have lots of thrills to sink their teeth into 1 and would be able to do some things they would never have dared to even dream of on their own ...

Ling Lan looked around at these unusually excited faces and was secretly rather worried. Being too excited was not a bad thing, but they could not lose their calm. In particular, all these people had followed her since the Central Scout Academy days. Every time she pushed to do something outrageous, these schoolmates would support her without any hesitation or regret. It could be said that without their support, the grand armed melee back then would never have been launched at all. And without their full cooperation, taking control of the spaceship would not have gone so smoothly.

This time, she had boldly chosen to break into the mecha storehouse. Although a part of it was indeed a matter of personal safety — in the face of an overwhelming horde of enemy mecha, only mecha could provide Ling Lan with a sense of safety — a larger part was because she truly wanted to give these schoolmates who trusted her an extra measure of protection and the ability to truly decide their own survival. This way, she hoped that after tonight, she would still be able to see these schoolmates tomorrow ...

Ling Lan's entire aura unfolded as her ice-cold gaze swept dispassionately over the gathered people. Everyone there felt the icy blade of her gaze scrape across their skin, a chill rising from within them, and their initially restless excitement instantly cooled down.

Seeing the clarity and level-headedness in everyone's eyes once again, only then did Ling Lan say slowly, "I repeat once more that this is a real battle, not a game. It is not the virtual Mecha World where you can revive again after dying. The enemy we are about to face are real enemies. They are experienced battle veterans, they are fearsome executioners. If we die, it will be true death. There is no second chance ... even so, will you all still follow me to the mecha storehouse and operate mecha to fight the enemy to the death?"

"Fight! Fight! Fight!" Ling Lan's words caused everyone's blood to boil. They seemed to have returned back to the time of the grand armed melee ... Ling Lan had asked something similar back then. That year, the same words shouted by the hundred thousand or so students of the 7th grade at the same time had seemed much more grand and impressive ...

"Then, I'll set the battle plan. Everyone, listen closely." Ling Lan once again circulated her spiritual power, funnelling her words forcefully into the spiritual well of these hundred or so students. "We will move and fight in small units. Remember, do not fight alone. Always keep in mind that while we fight for ourselves, we are also fighting for the comrades beside us. And one last thing. That is, we must come back alive!"

When Ling Lan roared out that final phrase, she used her strongest burst of spiritual power yet. She was about to lead her schoolmates in breaking into the mecha storehouse to fight with the enemy, all so that the students would live and become stronger — she did not want them to die here.

Ling Lan's words rallied the spirits of the cadets. The words 'come back alive' was imprinted deeply in their minds. At the same time, they glanced in unplanned unison at the companions by their sides and their initially somewhat uneasy hearts settled. At the sight of their friends, their agitation and uncertainty silently faded away. Boss Lan was right — they still had their comrades beside them; they were not fighting alone!

Just like that, Ling Lan led the hundred odd students away from the dormitory district in a rapid sprint towards the mecha storehouse about 10 kilometres away. In the meantime, far away in the opposite

direction of their route, the endless roar of artillery fire sounded, accompanied by the occasional burst of fire illuminating the night sky.

As the ground forces had been unable to locate their targets with the radars, they could only rely on manual infrared telescopes to search out the enemy. After waiting patiently for more than 10 minutes, those airborne visitors they had waited so long for finally appeared in the sights of their infrared telescopes ...

“Chief, there’s news! Countless unidentified objects have really appeared in the air above ...” The ground control headquarters, which had been waiting for news all this time, finally obtained the verification they needed.

“Son of a b*tch. Those f*ckers have finally come.” The commander brusquely tore off his cap and threw it onto the ground. He tugged on his sleeves and then bellowed, “All artillery units, prepare to fire. Once the enemy is within range, shoot without mercy!”

“Yes, Chief!” The commander’s words were very quickly transmitted by his subordinate officers. After some thought, the commander added, “Let the ground mecha forces prepare for battle. Those metal eggs must all contain mecha. Any mecha fortunate enough to survive and land are to be swiftly handled by the mecha teams.”

The commander’s orders were quickly passed on to the ground mecha troops. The mecha troops had long made preparations for battle. Receiving this order, they immediately dispersed with a column of troops making up each combat unit. Based on the information they had received from above, the metal eggs were raining down from all over, so no one would be able to tell which nook and cranny might have an enemy mecha which had landed successfully. Therefore, they had no choice but to spread out and search for those enemy mecha that had been lucky enough to evade the artillery fire.

Meanwhile, at this time, the starships in the skies had no idea that the secret invasion plan they had believed to be so flawless had been exposed by the presence of a miraculous intelligence entity. It had created some false information, allowing the ground forces to react in time and make the appropriate tactical arrangements ...

Finally, the metal eggs entered the range of the ground artillery. All of the cannons opened fire simultaneously, and the darkness of the night was suddenly ripped asunder by countless streaks of blazing fire as projectiles struck the first batch of metal eggs closest to the ground ...

After being struck by artillery fire, the metal eggs abruptly split open, dropping three or four mecha from within it ... some of the mecha still seemed fairly intact, but some had been instantly destroyed by the force of the artillery fire.

Although the metal eggs had the ability to hide from radars, there was a condition. The items loaded inside the eggs could not have any energy responses, otherwise this concealment ability would be disrupted. Thus, all of the mecha contained within the eggs were turned off. The operators inside had planned to only activate their mecha in the final 100 metres before they landed and break out of the egg’s shell then ... mecha which were stripped of their defences were fragile. If a vital point was hit, it too would not be able to withstand a single attack from a normal cannon.

“What is going on here? How did the ground forces learn about our sneak attack?” The situation below was very quickly grasped by the fleet in space. The commander-in-chief could not help but growl furiously when he saw the tragic scene occurring below.

Chapter 359: Requesting Backup!

“The situation is unclear right now. In any case, it’s already been confirmed that the ground forces below are prepared ... I’m afraid our ambush plan has been exposed.” The adjutant could not help but wipe the cold sweat from his forehead as he said to the commander-in-chief.

The commander-in-chief breathed deeply a few times before quashing the rage beating at the walls of his chest. He knew that anger would not help anything — since it was certain that their sneak attack had failed, then they could only proceed with brute force! Coming to a decision instantly, he ordered, “Notify the men below. Let all mecha activate in advance. Break the shells now and attack!”

His orders were transmitted to the metal eggs and those eggs which had yet to enter the range of the cannons suddenly burst open. From within them, activated mecha emerged to descend swiftly, zooming towards the ground.

“Godd*mmmit, these cannons can’t penetrate the beam shields of the mecha,” said a commanding officer, frustrated. He had observed this scene from a watchtower with an infrared telescope. Initially, he was hoping to destroy a few more of these metal eggs so that there would be fewer enemy mecha landing on the planet’s surface. The fewer the better, but now it looked like things would not be that easy. The enemy was very alert — seeing that their sneak attack had failed, they had immediately switched to a direct attack.

Following the appearance of the mecha, the initially silent radars suddenly began screeching. Countless dots representing the enemies’ mecha popped up all over the radar display. By this point, everyone now knew that those metal eggs must have some radar-shielding functions. It was lucky that the commander had been astute enough to see through the ruse and had told them to give up on the radars in favour of infrared telescopes instead. Although their search range would be limited by 7 to 8 times less, at least they had not been blind anymore and had been able to locate the invading enemy ...

The first few enemy mecha were already close to the ground. Just as they were rejoicing over their fortune in evading the cannonfire, they were struck in quick succession by several beam shots. A few unprepared enemy mecha died instantly, exploding. It turned out that the mecha columns waiting on the ground had all fired when they saw the enemy land, welcoming these enemy mecha with their beam guns.

Soon, the ground mecha forces and the enemy mecha descending from the skies began to fight. The flames of war very rapidly spread to the ground — when an errant missile fired by god-knows-who shot into the dormitory district of the First Men’s Military Academy, the already startled awake district was instantly enveloped by a localised beam shield ... those inside could not come out, while those outside could not go in either. Unless the administration of the academy decided to override and get the mainframe to turn it off or an external force destroyed the shield, the shield would stand. If the latter happened, it would pretty much spell the loss of the Federation. The final outcome would be the complete annihilation of all the students in the dormitory district ...

The commander of ground control saw the dazzling beam shield appearing suddenly behind the ground troops, and he could not help but be greatly annoyed. Wasn't this just setting up a clear target for the enemy? Telling them: quick, come attack this spot ... Which idiot had designed this procedure? Although it must have been out of good intentions 1, in the darkness of the night, set against such a chaotic and complicated attack situation, this was an absolutely foolish and reckless response.

Worried, the commander could not help but growl angrily at the officer beside him, "Godd*mmmit, let the frontline warriors hold off the offence! We must not let the enemy's attacks reach the dormitory district of the military academy ..."

The future seedlings of hope of the Federation were there. Any students who could enter the First Men's Military Academy were sure to be the top talents of the Federation. Every single one was an elite with great potential which they could not afford to lose.

Right then, Little Four was still trying to make contact with those out of reach satellites, but unfortunately, till now, he had had no luck at all. He could not find any bit of signal from the various major satellites; this made him feel rather discouraged. He understood that the moment he left the virtual world and had his signal jammed by the enemy, he would be worthless ...

Luckily, he had perfectly completed the task his boss had assigned to him. He had taken the images from the invasion of planet Demonbeast 6 years ago and modified them to fabricate an image of the attack tonight. Then, faking a satellite transmission, he had sent the images to the intelligence department of ground control, giving the ground troops enough time to prepare. Watching those enemies descending from the skies being caught off guard by the ground forces, Little Four was pumped up. At the same time, he found his admiration for his boss growing even further, even thinking for a moment that his boss was a god, being able to guess so accurately how the enemy was invading!

Frankly, Little Four was overthinking things. Ling Lan had only hoped for the ground forces to be prepared, and the invasion of planet Demonbeast 6 years ago just so happened to be an air invasion as well, which fit the situation tonight very well. Thus, Ling Lan had made an impromptu decision to borrow the images from then. In fact, Ling Lan had no idea who the invading enemy was tonight or how they were attacking. It should be said that Ling Lan's luck was extraordinary — the images she had asked Little Four to send just so happened to match the truth. This great stroke of luck deftly concealed any sign of her interference. In the post-war analysis later on, both the Federation and Caesar would come to the same conclusion, believing that Caesar's satellite shielding technology was not sufficiently advanced, thus allowing one of the satellites to capture and transmit the images of their sneak attack ... the difference, however, was that the Federation would be relieved and gleeful about this point, while Caesar would be frustrated that the flaw in their technology had appeared at such a critical moment.

Still, as the battle progressed, the enemy adjusted to the situation and the inherent uncertainty of battle began to reveal itself. The fighting soon spread across the ground, and massive numbers of casualties began to appear among the ground forces. Meanwhile, an endless stream of mecha continued to descend from above ... this made Little Four feel somewhat unsettled.

At a loss, Little Four could only run back to ask for his boss's opinion, taking the opportunity to update his boss on the current battle situation as well. Frankly, as they were moving, when Ling Lan had seen the dormitory district suddenly become a shining beacon, she had sensed that the situation might soon

become unfavourable for the Federation. Now, hearing Little Four's report, she knew that if the satellites continued to be sealed away so reinforcements could not be summoned in time, it would be very difficult for the ground forces to hold out for long on their own. Ling Lan was well aware of the power of a mecha. It was impossible to destroy even just a common lower mecha without suicidal-style attacks from a whole column of warriors 2 .

They needed to send out the news of the attack here as soon as possible. Ling Lan made a split decision to use the emergency helpline her father had given to her before he had left 3 . Ling Lan and Ling Xiao were all disciples of the Divine Command Sect. As a sect specialising in the cultivation of spiritual power, they naturally possessed a way to request for backup without the need for advanced high-tech signals.

Before Ling Xiao had departed from the academy, because he just could not push aside his worry, he had deposited a cord of his spiritual power within Ling Lan's mind. If Ling Lan found herself in any danger, she would only need to shake and detonate Ling Xiao's spiritual power. No matter how far away Ling Xiao was, he would be able to sense a disturbance in his spiritual power. Even though he would not be able to know the specific details, this strange occurrence would be enough to let Ling Xiao know that Ling Lan was in danger.

Ling Lan decisively shook and detonated Ling Xiao's cord of spiritual power. Her body jerked and her face turned pale. Detonating spiritual power stored within one's mind would deal a certain amount of damage to the bearer; this was also why Ling Xiao had emphasised that this method should only be used when she felt the situation was extremely dire ... the strange shift in Ling Lan's condition drew the attention of her companions. Qi Long asked quietly, "Boss, are you alright?"

"I'm fine. We should increase our pace. Time is running out," said Ling Lan calmly, forcibly suppressing the discomfort she felt in her spiritual power. After that, her speed picked up once more.

Seeing Ling Lan speed up like nothing was wrong, her companions let out a sigh of relief and relaxed. They sped up after Ling Lan. Only Li Lanfeng frowned as he stared at Ling Lan's still pale complexion, a trace of worry flashing across his eyes ...

Right then, on the military ship of the 23rd Division's assessment team, seated on the captain's seat, resting, Ling Xiao's eyes suddenly sprang open. He shot up in his seat, his initially mild and gentle aura turning cold in an instant. This caused the nonchalantly chatting officers by his side to fall silent instantly, turning to stare in bewilderment at this usually always mild-mannered sir general.

Ling Xiao had no mind to keep up appearances at this time, because he had sensed a sudden tug on his spiritual self. This meant that the spiritual deposit he had left in Ling Lan's mind had been hit and dispersed by someone.

"Contact the First Men's Military Academy immediately. Find out what's going on there ..." ordered Ling Xiao with an icy expression. Without a smile on his face, Ling Xiao actually looked a lot like Ling Lan — as expected of a father and a daughter.

"Contact established. The other party has responded that all is as usual," the operator responsible for external communications quickly replied.

Ling Xiao frowned when he heard this. If Ling Lan had detonated the spiritual power he had left in her mind, that must mean that some huge problem she could not handle on her own had cropped up where

she was ... he immediately tried to connect to Ling Lan's communicator but only received a busy signal in return.

A cold glint passed through Ling Xiao's eyes, and he attempted to contact the old principal of the First Men's Military Academy, but still, all he received was just a busy signal.

Ling Xiao's gaze had become extremely shadowed by this time. He lifted his head to order once more, "Submit a request to the other side. Tell them we will be arriving at planet Newline tomorrow and to please allow us safe passage."

The operator was taken aback, but he very quickly transmitted Ling Xiao's words over to the other side. A few seconds later, the other party responded and the operator immediately reported, "General, the other side answered that planet Newline is currently off-limits to all visitors. The ban will only be lifted three days later. They hope we will cooperate and change our flight plan or wait for the ban to lift."

"Something has really happened." By now, there was no longer any doubt in Ling Xiao's mind. His request had only been a probe — having just departed from planet Newline themselves, he naturally knew there was no so-called ban order for planet Newline.

"Activate a launch port immediately. I'm going to pilot over to planet Newline." Ling Xiao leapt to his feet and rushed anxiously toward the hold doors. His daughter's life was in danger — how could he just sit here as a father? He needed to get over there as soon as possible. The speed of a god-class mecha was 4 times faster than a warship, and when pushed to high gear, it could go up to as much as 7 times faster.

"General, that's too dangerous!" Hearing what Ling Xiao planned to do, Adjutant Qiao became flustered. He quickly rushed over as well to advise Ling Xiao against this plan of action.

Ling Xiao snapped his head around to glare fiercely at Adjutant Qiao, causing the other to cower instinctively. "This is an order!" Leaving these four words behind him, Ling Xiao vanished through the hold doors ...

"Domain ..." The highest ranked officer on the ship, a senior colonel, broke the shocked silence of the subdued crowd. Adjutant Qiao looked at the senior colonel and then looked at the rest of the crew, then, with a firm step, he once more chased after the general. As the adjutant to the general, he had to stop the general from taking this personal risk.

Chapter 360: The Mecha Storehouse!

Adjutant Qiao's departure made a subtle sneer tug at the corners of the senior colonel's lips, a trace of mockery flashing through his eyes. The general had already declared that this was an order, yet this Adjutant Qiao was being so obtuse — it looked like once they returned, Adjutant Qiao would probably be dismissed from service. The senior colonel walked over to the JMC's position and watched as the JMC carried out his guide duties and swiftly launched with the general inside. It drew a trail of stars across the starry skies as it flew off in the direction of planet Newline. In just a few seconds, they could no longer see any sign of its figure ...

On the screen, all that remained was the dejected Adjutant Qiao.

“Sir, what do we do now?” As the person holding the highest rank after the general, he was originally supposed to be the true leader of the assessment team, so the other officers naturally turned to him for direction.

“What to do? Of course we will follow the general to planet Newline. Also, send a report to the Federation mainframe about planet Newline being in danger,” ordered the senior colonel. They could not let the general fight solo; they needed the mainframe to deploy a strong fleet over to assist as soon as possible. Although the senior colonel had faith in the general, it was always good to play it a little safe.

The senior colonel’s words were greeted with enthusiastic agreement by the other officers. Thus, the military ship swiftly sent a report off to the Federation mainframe, changing directions at the same time to follow after Ling Xiao’s mecha, flying rapidly towards planet Newline ...

After rapid marching for more than 10 minutes, Ling Lan and her group of about 100 New Cadet Regiment members finally arrived at the exclusive mecha storehouse of the First Men’s Military Academy. The storehouse stored various mecha of different grades, to be used during the practical training of control skills of the cadets. Usually, these mecha would be sealed away in the storehouse and could not be easily accessed by the students.

“Boss, the storehouse doors have been broken open already. Someone has entered before us.” Moving ahead of the others, Qi Long had led several others from Ling Lan’s team to scout ahead. They were the first to make contact with the main doors of the mecha storehouse and had immediately noticed that the doors which should have been shut tight were actually unlatched and remained half-opened. Seeing this, Qi Long quickly ran back to where Ling Lan was to report this situation to her.

Ling Lan was taken aback by the news. Frowning, she thought, ‘Could it be that someone had decided to do the same thing I was planning to do?’

This speculation of Ling Lan’s was based on the fact that the mecha within the mecha storehouse were all trainee mecha for students and not proper battle mecha. The weapons equipped on these mecha were only the most basic types, which had a much lower damage output than true battle mecha. Generally, soldiers would not choose to use mecha from the academy storehouse to fight. Furthermore, all the academy instructors had their own personal mecha and so would not come to retrieve any mecha from here either. The only possible candidates remaining were the academy cadets.

Ling Lan could not help but become curious over the student who had come to the same conclusion she had. Who were they? If she could befriend them, Ling Lan would not mind getting to know the student whose mind had walked the same path as hers.

As she was unsure about the situation inside the storehouse and was afraid that their entry would cause the party before them to misunderstand, Ling Lan asked the team leaders to pass on the word — when they entered the storehouse, the team members were to maintain silence and make as little noise as possible.

The storehouse doors were shoved wider by a few of them, and then the New Cadet Regiment began to slip inside in an orderly manner. The moment they entered the storehouse, they saw countless tall and

formidable steel mecha standing before them. Everyone felt their heart rate pick up — they would soon be able to touch and use these great combat weapons.

Ling Lan glanced at the mecha right at the frontmost end of the storehouse and saw that they were all trainee mecha from the major three categories 1 . Besides the requisite cold weapon, trainee mecha were not equipped with any long-range firearm. Ling Lan decisively turned away from these mecha — trainee mecha were just going to be sitting ducks; using them on the battlefield was just asking to die. She motioned for the New Cadet Regiment members to follow her onwards.

Because she had investigated beforehand, Ling Lan was well aware what level the members of the New Cadet Regiment who followed her were at in terms of control skills in the virtual world. Those trainee mecha operators and lower mecha operators had already been removed by her; all who remained were intermediate mecha operators and above.

It wasn't that Ling Lan looked down on those lower level students, but the combat power of a lower mecha operator was just too weak in a real battle. The death rate for low-level mecha operators was as high as 80%. Even though the 20% who managed to survive were likely to become strong fighters in their own right, the key point was that they needed to survive first.

Ling Lan felt that unnecessary death should be avoided. It would be best to wait for these students' skills to advance further before letting them go out and fight. That way, more would survive and the future would be just as lovely.

Therefore, in order to ensure their safety, Ling Lan decisively removed those lower level mecha operators from her group, only keeping those members who were at the level of intermediate mecha operator and above. This was another reason why this New Cadet Regiment group had suddenly shrunk by over 200 people. Those mecha operators who were able to become intermediate mecha operators in such a short amount of time were all certain to be outstanding in terms of talent and heart. As long as these people were baptised by war, they were sure to grow even faster!

The mecha storehouse was pitch dark and silent. They could not see the figures of those who had entered before them. When the first person of their group stepped into the mecha storehouse, the sensor light turned on automatically. The initially dark mecha storehouse was instantly bathed in bright light.

Although this situation startled the mentally unprepared students, they remembered Boss Lan's instructions and did not utter any sounds of shock. After that, seeing how steady their schoolmates were, they very quickly regained their composure. In the vast mecha storehouse, only the orderly sound of the New Cadet Regiment's footsteps could be heard.

Ling Lan led the way at a clipped pace for about 3 minutes, skipping past all the lower mecha sections along the way, and soon, they had arrived at the intermediate mecha section. Finally seeing some mecha which had several more types of long-range and close-range weapons, Ling Lan halted in satisfaction.

"Schoolmates, those who have already achieved intermediate mecha warrior status in Mecha World, please choose a mecha you are familiar with." Glancing at the time on her communicator, she instructed, "Remember, you all only have ten minutes to get used to your mecha. Once time is up, you

all will be led out by your respective team leaders. Overall, we return to that same idea — keep your calm when you sight an enemy. Be mindful of teamwork; don't rush into the fray on your own. Also, work hard to return and see me again alive!"

"Yes, Regiment Commander!" Ling Lan's words reverberated in the silence of the storehouse, stoking the excitement of the near 80 students, causing them to shout loudly in response 2 .

With a wave of Ling Lan's right hand, these people swiftly boarded the mecha they aimed for respectively. Those mecha were the ones they were endlessly familiar with inside Mecha World. Of course, the mecha in Mecha World and the actual machines were sure to have some differences, but it was overall largely the same. Familiarising themselves with these mecha was not a very difficult thing — this was also why Ling Lan had only allocated them 10 minutes to adjust.

Of course, no one was dumb enough to go and select an unfamiliar mecha. Everyone understood that even if there were mecha much better than the one they piloted, they still could not choose it now. They would only be able to bring out the full capabilities of a mecha they were familiar with, and whether they could do so would be the key determining whether they lived or died on the battlefield.

Students who could make it into the Central Scout Academy were originally already an outstanding bunch, and among them, those who could even consider going into the First Men's Military Academy were the most exceptional of the group. They did not lack rationality or composure, so they knew what they should do.

Watching as these people began busying themselves adjusting to the real world mecha, Ling Lan nodded silently. She turned her head to look at the remaining students by her side. There were only 35 left. Other than her team's own 7 members, there were 28 other members. Twenty-one of these were the team leaders of the various teams in the New Cadet Regiment.

As expected of those capable of being team leaders, they were all the most exceptional of the lot. Of the 27 teams within the New Cadet Regiment, only 6 team leaders were not yet at this level. Meanwhile, of the remaining 7 advanced mecha operators, 4 were members of Wu Jiong's team, which included Ye Xu, while the other 3 were from Li Yingjie's team. Without question, Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's team members were obviously stronger than those of the other teams.

Ling Lan mentally acknowledged the strength of Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's teams, but unbeknownst to her, in the eyes of the members of those two teams, Ling Lan's team was strong beyond understanding.

When they saw the seven people following closely behind Ling Lan as they walked over together to the advanced mecha section, their expressions could not help but shift, a trace of shock and awe appearing in their eyes. They were naturally astounded by the fact that all of the members of Ling Lan's team had actually managed to achieve advanced mecha warrior status. (At present, they still did not know about the three new members of Ling Lan's team, and so thought that Ling Lan's team still only consisted of the original six 3 .) At the same time, they were utterly convinced — sure enough, Boss Ling Lan was Boss Ling Lan. Even the members under him were strong beyond reason. It made sense if you think about it. Boss Ling Lan was already so strong — if a team member was too weak, what right did he have to follow Ling Lan?

Just like that, Ling Lan led the 35 students into the advanced mecha section. Two more minutes passed and Ling Lan quickly urged the remaining members to board their selected mecha. The time this group had to adjust to the real mecha was only 8 minutes. As they wanted to meet up again with the members at the intermediate mecha section, they could only take 2 minutes out of their allocated adjustment time. That said, those who had advanced to advanced mecha operator at this age were all the extremely talented prodigies of mecha control. Eight minutes for them to familiarise themselves with real mecha was definitely no problem at all.

After settling all of this, Ling Lan ordered Little Four to contact Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie to tell them which section to come to. He sent the exact coordinates of their location in the storehouse to the two, preventing them from wasting time. After all, they too needed some time to adjust to the mecha — each extra second of adjustment time meant an increase in the chances of survival.

Fortunately, the direction of the anti-air shelter was roughly the same as the mecha storehouse, just at a slightly different angle. As Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie had left ahead of this party, they were not slowed down by much. Based off their reply, they had just arrived at the storehouse. At their speed, they should catch up within three minutes.

Ling Lan calculated for a moment — with Wu Jiong's and Li Yingjie's skills, the remaining 5 minutes' time was sufficient for them to adjust to real advanced mecha. At this thought, she relaxed and gave her team a heads up. She was planning to go to a secret room Little Four had discovered. That room was deeper into the storehouse, in the innermost area of the advanced mecha section. From the outside, it looked like they were already at the end of the section, but in truth, there was a whole new world behind that wall.