

Crossing 431

Chapter 431: Goading Qiao Ting!

Thunder King Qiao Ting had been having a hard time lately. Even though he knew that he would certainly receive some flak after his defeat at the hands of Lingtian, he had not expected the impact of the defeat to be so significant. He was so affected by it that he could hardly bear it.

Those vice regiment commanders of Leiting who had been so reverent to him before were now flippant and disrespectful, blatantly and subtly conveying their wish for him to abdicate his position on his own. Even those major battle clan leaders he had personally cultivated had also begun to be disobedient behind his back. In the eyes of the regular members, Qiao Ting had even perceived some discontent and distrust.

Was losing such an unsalvageable catastrophe? Qiao Ting was a proud person — since Leiting could no longer abide him, he simply resigned from his post as the regiment commander of Leiting. If not for the fact that he still wanted to represent Leiting to fight against Lingtian again next year and wash away this debt of shame personally, he definitely would have quit completely and left Leiting ...

However, Qiao Ting did not expect that things did not end with his resignation from the post of regiment commander. Very soon, a rumour spread across the campus, saying that while he had been the regiment commander of Leiting, not only had he oppressed the talented juniors in his faction, keeping them from being able to shine, he had also abused his authority to practise nepotism. The rumours also said that he was very high-handed, completely suppressing all views which opposed his own, causing the Leiting Mecha Clan to be constantly filled with anger and resentment.

Under the purposeful instigation to spread the rumours, Qiao Ting's reputation continued to fall. Now, every time Qiao Ting stepped outside, he could feel the scornful gazes of the people around him, many of which were also tinged with schadenfreude.

Qiao Ting was not a stupid person. After some quick investigation, he found out that this was the handiwork of the current regiment commander of Leiting. Qiao Ting did not feel much anger, only some disappointment. In order to completely supplant him, the other had actually employed such an underhanded method. How could someone like this lead Leiting to greater heights? Thinking about that cold regiment commander of Lingtian's with his outstanding abilities, Qiao Ting began to fear for Leiting's future.

At the thought of Ling Lan, Qiao Ting's feelings were extremely complicated. Not only because of his defeat at Ling Lan's hands, but also because of Ling Lan's ability to subdue her subordinates. Ling Lan's actions and behaviour were actually very much like his own, domineering to the extreme — and yet, his own subordinates were only loyal and obedient on the surface, having their own private schemes and plots in secret, while those other regiment commanders of Lingtian were serving under Ling Lan wholeheartedly. Regardless of any mistakes Ling Lan may commit, or however great the losses those mistakes may cause to Lingtian, Qiao Ting believed that those regiment commanders would only blame themselves for their shortcomings and not harbour any resentment towards Ling Lan.

Was this the difference between a king who had created his own kingdom and a king who was only defending the kingdom his predecessors had handed down? Truth be told, Qiao Ting was very envious of Ling Lan. He envied how the other could make decisions so wilfully, never ever being checked by anyone. In contrast, even at his most glorious hour, he still had to bend and compromise for the sake of the larger picture. If possible, Qiao Ting too wanted to be like Ling Lan and be a king who had forged his own kingdom, with everything within his control.

Qiao Ting did not know that although Ling Lan was the first regiment commander of Lingtian, Ling Lan had always been a free-rein general who had left everything in the faction to be handled by the other three regiment commanders. This attitude of absolute trust was also the main reason why Wu Jiong, Li Yingjie, and the others were so loyal in their support of Ling Lan ... since you trust me so, I will return it a hundredfold.

Despite the rumours circulating around the campus, Qiao Ting carried on as usual. When his mecha group training was over, he led his battle clan to the canteen for food. As soon as he entered the canteen, as other times before this, the noisy canteen abruptly fell silent before bursting into susurrations of whispered discussions. Many people began hissing into another's ear — the heat of the rumours around Qiao Ting had not dissipated yet.

With his sensitive hearing, Qiao Ting naturally could not avoid hearing some of those rumours about him. However, having already heard much prior to this, he was now immensely calm. Expressionless, he strode into the large canteen, found an empty table, and sat down.

"Boss Qiao, let me bloody go teach them a lesson." One of the members of Qiao Ting's battle clan was not as calm. Face filled with indignation, his fists were clenched in anger as he asked if he could go educate those juniors who did not know how to respect their seniors. Knowing Boss Qiao well, they knew that a majority of the rumours flying around were false.

"What's there to teach? This world, has always been a world where the winners reign. Since I've lost, it's normal to be laughed at," replied Qiao Ting calmly. In the past, he had always been arrogant and domineering, but because he was standing at the peak, even if there were those who disliked him, they would keep it concealed and not show it outright. But now, he was a tiger who had tumbled down from his mountain — it was perfectly normal for those people who were dissatisfied with him to take the opportunity to stomp on him a few times. If he became angry at all the people who did so, he would not be able to continue living properly. Qiao Ting smiled self-deprecatingly. These three months had smoothed out some of his sharp edges; he now knew how to reconcile things with himself.

"So what? Boss Qiao, you're still the strongest mecha operator in the academy!" Prevented from venting his frustration on those students, the team member could only sit down huffily as he grumbled.

Qiao Ting did not say anything. So what if he was the strongest mecha operator in the academy? Everyone could only see his current sorry state now — when would they even think about the strength he possessed? It was funny to think about: an ace operator like him actually being laughed at and mocked by these weaklings who were not even special-class operators themselves. However, it did not matter anymore. As long as he could endure past the Mecha Grand Tournament, the enlistment for army divisions would open up. When his battle clan passed the assessment, they would be able to leave the military academy, and then everything here would no longer have anything to do with them.

Perhaps because the gazes of everyone were just too irritating, Qiao Ting's battle clan had no interest in lingering. After scarfing down their lunch, they prepared to leave the canteen. The group had just reached the door when a large group of people streamed in. The one at the head of the group was a cold-faced youth in a white uniform. It was Ling Lan shrouded in cold air.

How Ling Lan became the dux of her specialization for the second-years was actually quite a funny story. As she had been absent from all the physical conditioning courses in her first year, Ling Lan was actually not qualified to become the dux. In the end, Qi Long, who had the best grades, was chosen to be the dux, but Qi Long immediately went to meet the instructor and declined the position. This was because he did not think he could beat his boss. After the first-ranked Qi Long rejected becoming the dux, the instructors had no choice but to offer the position to Wu Jiong, Li Yingjie, and the rest, in order of their ranking. Unfortunately, Wu Jiong and the rest also refused to become the dux ...

In the end, all of the top-ranking students had refused the position, because all of these students were members of the Lingtian Mecha Clan. If their own boss did not become the dux, how would they dare to take the position?

This caused the instructors of the second-year Mecha Piloting specialization to be teased by the other instructors, laughing at how no one was willing to be the dux of the second-year Mecha Piloting specialization. This annoyed the instructors of the Mecha Piloting specialization, and so they made a shocking decision. They threw the treasured position of dux to Ling Lan who had no achievements to her name. Since all those students believed that Ling Lan was deserving of the dux position, as instructors, who were they to refuse?

In this manner, Ling Lan became the only student to become dux without any actual results, once again making history. Even though this was history that Ling Lan had had no intentions of making.

When Qiao Ting saw Ling Lan, his footsteps paused. The two of them drew closer, and just as they were about to brush by each other, Ling Lan suddenly halted, and Qiao Ting reflexively stopped as well.

The two of them faced each other. This unusual scene caused the entire canteen to fall still and silent. Everyone had their eyes pinned on the doorway, unsure what would occur between Ling Lan and Qiao Ting ...

"Senior Qiao, how have you been recently?" Ling Lan was the first to speak.

Qiao Ting smiled coldly, asking, "Why? Are you here to laugh at me as well?" Senior Qiao? It looks like the other already knew he was no longer the regiment commander of Leiting.

"What is there to laugh about, Senior Qiao?" asked Ling Lan with a raised brow as if completely clueless as to what Qiao Ting was alluding to.

Qiao Ting did not reply, but his expression turned even colder. He was the hot topic all over the academy right now — it was unbelievable that Ling Lan truly did not know anything about the rumours.

"It's so rare for our academy to produce an ace operator. I really don't know what there is about you, Senior Qiao, for others to laugh about," said Ling Lan casually, completely ignoring the stony expression on Qiao Ting's face.

Ling Lan's words made Qiao Ting's gaze narrow. He peered intently at Ling Lan's eyes, trying to discern the true meaning behind Ling Lan's words. Unfortunately, Ling Lan's eyes were clear and untroubled, extremely calm — there was no hint of anything untoward within them.

Since he could not tell what Ling Lan was plotting, and because Qiao Ting did not want to play around with Ling Lan, he asked directly, "You specially stopped here not simply just to chat like this with me, right? Speak, what do you want?"

Ling Lan did not bother with courtesies either; she stated her purpose outright, "Senior Qiao, I would like to collaborate with you."

"Collaborate?" Qiao Ting was both stunned and amused. "You think that we can still work together?" Having pulled him down from his pedestal in the clouds and ground him into the mud, causing him to lose all face ... this person actually dared to suggest a collaboration? Did he, Qiao Ting, look like an idiot?

"Why not?" asked Ling Lan brusquely.

"You tell me, would I help a person who has made me lose everything? Do I look like a fool?" asked Qiao Ting, livid.

"Help me? Senior Qiao, you think too highly of yourself." Ling Lan's countenance turned dark, and the temperature in the canteen instantly dropped by several degrees, causing everyone to shiver.

"If it's not helping you, are you saying that it would be helping myself?" said Qiao Ting with a sneer. Unlike the others, the cold air emanating from Ling Lan did not affect Qiao Ting at all.

"Exactly so!" said Ling Lan bluntly.

Qiao Ting's eyes narrowed into slits, a dangerous breath of aura rising up from him. These absurd words of Ling Lan had indeed enraged Qiao Ting.

"If we become the champions of the Mecha Grand Tournament, it will definitely be very beneficial to your development in the army. Senior Qiao, shouldn't you consider collaborating this once?" Ling Lan was not at all afraid of Qiao Ting's rage; she calmly stated her stance.

As soon as these words were out, all those who caught what they had said could not help but inhale sharply. They looked towards Qiao Ting, waiting for his answer. If it were them, they would not be able to resist this temptation ...

Taken aback, Qiao Ting was silent for several seconds as if pondering the deeper meaning behind Ling Lan's move. Not long after, he asked, "Why me?"

Ling Lan responded evenly, "I do not want to continue being the perpetual number two. Since this is a matter concerning everyone in the academy, why should Lingtian shoulder the entire thankless burden ourselves?"

Ling Lan's words rendered Qiao Ting briefly speechless, but Ling Lan had not expected to receive an immediate answer from Qiao Ting anyway. She said, "There's still five days' time. I hope that you can give me a good answer in the end." Done speaking, Ling Lan moved to pass Qiao Ting.

At this moment, Qiao Ting suddenly asked, "If I don't accept?"

Ling Lan swung her head around and her gaze pierced right through Qiao Ting, making his heart clench.

“Could it be that after losing once, Senior Qiao has lost his ambition and drive? Or perhaps, you’re afraid that you will lose in the Mecha Grand Tournament as well and lose face in the outside world too?” A trace of disdain pulled on the corners of Ling Lan’s lips as she said this pointedly.

Qiao Ting’s eyes narrowed again at these words, rage blazing in his eyes. It looked like Ling Lan’s words had aggravated him.

“Me? Afraid of losing? Ling Lan, are you looking down on me?” Qiao Ting bit out word by word. From his tightly clenched fists, it was clear to see that he was indeed furious.

“In that case, it’s settled!” Ling Lan’s brows lifted up as she replied with a half-smile. And with that, she led the Lingtian members into the canteen.

The members by Qiao Ting’s side waited till Ling Lan’s group had moved further away before saying ecstatically, “Boss Qiao, that’s awesome! This is a great chance. If we can become the champions of the Mecha Grand Tournament, when we return, there definitely won’t be anyone who would continue nattering on about us. Even when we enter an army division, this result would gain us the attention of the upper ranks of the military.”

Qiao Ting smiled wryly and shook his head without responding verbally to the member who had spoken.

That member’s expression changed. “Boss Qiao, can it be that you’re planning to refuse?” But this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!

Qiao Ting sighed and said, “No, I’m just frustrated that I fell for Ling Lan’s goading. That punk ...” Unconsciously, he had let the other grasp the initiative, and he himself had jumped into the trap accidentally.

At Qiao Ting’s words, the member thought back on the earlier conversation and came to a realisation.

Qiao Ting turned his head to look at that dazzling cold youth — he believed that for as long as the other was around in the academy, the position of number one faction would never fall to another. Leiting was likely to have difficult days ahead of them in the future.

After Ling Lan’s group left Qiao Ting, they immediately walked upstairs and entered a private room. Li Lanfeng, Zhao Jun, and the rest were already waiting there. After Ling Lan had taken her seat, Li Lanfeng said with a smile, “Congratulations on obtaining Thunder King Qiao Ting.”

Ling Lan glanced at Li Lanfeng, and her penetrating gaze almost wiped the smile from Li Lanfeng’s face. Li Lanfeng’s smile dimmed as he asked, “Did I say something wrong?”

“Hn. Don’t smile if you don’t feel like smiling.” Ling Lan frowned slightly. “Too fake.” Why was Li Lanfeng acting like this? Recalling that Li Lanfeng had mentioned hating the Thunder King before this, Ling Lan consoled him by saying, “Leopard, Qiao Ting is just working with us. After the collaboration ends, we will still be rivals. We will never be friends.”

At these words, Li Lanfeng instantly broke out into a true smile. Ling Lan sighed softly — this was how Li Lanfeng should be, like the normal Li Lanfeng. It looked like Li Lanfeng really hated the Thunder King — who knew what had transpired between them in the past ... Ling Lan decided to let Little Four investigate the matter.

“Why did you choose to goad him?” Regaining his usual composure, Li Lanfeng piped up to ask. Earlier, due to this goading tactic, Qiao Ting’s depressed mood had lifted considerably. Once Qiao Ting bucked up, he would definitely grow rapidly — for them who could only be his opponents, Qiao Ting’s accelerated growth was extremely disadvantageous.

“With a rival like this, won’t it be very interesting?” Ling Lan’s eyes glittered. “Besides, I think, for an exceptional ace operator like the Thunder King to grow up as soon as possible, it should not be a headache for us, but for our enemy nations!”

Li Lanfeng jerked and cold sweat beaded on his forehead. His eyes were shadowed and hard to read. In the end, he sighed and said softly, “Rabbit, I was wrong.”

Even if the Thunder King could be that destined king of his, how could he plot and scheme to destroy the other just because of that?

“Rabbit, train me hard! I want to become strong!” Li Lanfeng’s eyes blazed with fighting spirit. The corners of Ling Lan’s lips curled upwards. The way he was right now was just like the leopard of old ...

Chapter 432: Two Girls!

Planet Qiming was a third-rate planet with very limited resources. Originally, planet Qiming was not called planet Qiming, but planet Bizarre. This was because the weather changes on the planet were extremely hard to predict. The changes were bizarre and would come on suddenly without warning — one might even experience all four seasons in a single day. However, this type of bizarre weather conditions had caused the natives living here to have extremely sturdy bodies. Through scientific research, specialists had discovered that the bizarre climate of planet Qiming contained a strange type of magnetic field. This magnetic field had subtly enhanced the physiques of the people living here.

This discovery made many of the physical skills experts of the Federation very curious. They all came over to experience it for themselves and after living in the area for a time, they found that it was indeed somewhat effective. Especially when one was stuck at a bottleneck, under the influence of the magnetic field, they could better sense the possibility of a breakthrough. When this hypothesis was proven, a significant number of physical skills masters who had encountered bottlenecks would specially make a trip there and stay for a period of time to look for the catalyst to break through. Over the past few decades, there had indeed been quite a number of physical skills masters who had broken through their bottlenecks this way. In their great joy, all these physical skills masters spoke up to say that this was their place of enlightenment ... over time, this planet became known as planet ‘enlightenment’, hence planet Qiming 1 .

However, due to its changeable weather and scarce resources, other than those physical skills masters searching for a catalyst to break through, no one else was drawn to planet Qiming; thus, planet Qiming had always been very quiet. That said, this silence would be shattered every three years because the All-

Federation Military Academy Grand Mecha Tournament was held on planet Qiming, and this year was the year when the 279th All-Federation Military Academy Grand Mecha Tournament would be hosted.

A month or so ago, almost everyone in the Federation was busy over one thing — fighting to obtain a viewing ticket for the Mecha Grand Tournament. There were too many monks and very little porridge 2 — if one was just a tad late, they would only be able to watch the live broadcast from their own homes. No one who had the means wanted to miss this opportunity to view the future of the Federation with their own eyes, and this caused the price of the limited few viewing tickets in the black market to rise again and again, even setting a new record. The tickets for this year's event were so highly sought after because the cadet who was known as the second Ling Xiao was very likely to appear ... everyone wanted to get a personal glimpse of the future god-class operator as he grew.

As the time to the tournament drew ever closer, planet Qiming became increasingly livelier as well. The area around the stadium where the tournament would be held had already been turned into a lively marketplace by now. There were specialties from various planets on sale — the merchants were very clever and planned to use the Mecha Grand Tournament to earn a hefty sum.

One day away from the start of the tournament, the participating students from all of the military academies were basically already on planet Qiming. At 12 midnight today, the spaceport of planet Qiming would officially be closed. In the following two weeks' time, unless it was a military operation coming from the highest command, the spaceport would not open up for any spacecrafts. This was in order to protect the students participating in the tournament. After all, this tournament would gather all of the most outstanding cadets of the Federation in one place — the Federation could not afford to lose them.

In the enclosed accommodation area of the participating students, two girls came to the registration hall. One was delicate and graceful, while the other was handsome and robust. One intense, one fragile, their temperaments were distinctly different yet the two fit surprisingly well together.

These two girls with distinctly different temperaments that somehow enhanced each other's radiance instantly attracted the attention of the students from some academy currently registering in the hall ...

"Oh wow, I never expected to see such superb goods at the Mecha Grand Tournament." A frivolous-looking young man's eyes lit up at the sight of the delicate young girl, his greed completely unconcealed. "She's even 30% prettier than the school beauty of the art institute next door."

"By the looks of their uniforms, they should be students from the Federal Co-ed Military Academy." A friend by that person's side seemed to know the uniforms of the various military academies very well, instantly able to guess which academy the two girls were from.

"Co-ed Military?" The frivolous youth rubbed his jaw contemplatively and said, "Other than our three major men's military academies, only the Co-ed Military Academy is worth watching ... Ah Li, go and find out who the primary force for the Co-ed Military Academy is this time. It would be best if you could obtain detailed information on him ... perhaps, we'll have the chance to sample the women of the Co-ed Military Academy." After saying that, the frivolous youth sniggered creepily — he had managed to get his way more than once using this kind of ploy.

The two girls saw the students from some military academy busy with their registrations, and the delicate girl shyly tugged on the arm of the handsome girl beside her, asking her wordlessly to wait.

The handsome girl could not help but roll her eyes at this, but nevertheless, she obediently stopped walking and waited for those people to leave the hall. Only after that did the handsome girl pull the delicate girl by the hand up to the registration area and say to the staff there, "Big Brother, can we trouble you with something?"

The two girls were truly too dazzling; the staff member had also noticed them earlier. Seeing the handsome girl talk to him, his face was instantly flushed with pleasure as he said, "What is it? As long as it's something I can help you both with, just ask."

The handsome girl nudged the delicate girl, indicating for her to speak. The delicate girl's face turned red instantly and she lowered her head. Her bashful demeanour showed that she had absolutely no intentions of speaking. The handsome girl could only sigh helplessly — she was trying hard to cultivate her good friend's interpersonal skills, but unfortunately, after more than a year, she still was not seeing any results. Resigned, she had to speak on their behalf. "Big Brother, I would like to know if the First Men's Military Academy has come."

The staff member shook his head in response. "No."

"No? Big Brother, are you sure you aren't mistaken? Do you want to check your records again before answering?" The handsome girl was very disappointed at his reply. Doggedly, she continued to ask, and her brusque attitude made the delicate girl's face turn even redder. The delicate girl pulled hard on her handsome friend's arm, trying to remind her friend to keep calm. At the same time, she did not forget to smile apologetically at the staff member.

The handsome girl's interrogation had initially made the staff member a little angry, but when he saw the delicate girl's smile, his heart melted. He could not help but explain, "I have been keeping a close eye out for the First Men's Military Academy, because the rumoured second Ling Xiao is from that academy, so I would not have remembered wrongly. But, you don't have to worry. There are still 8 hours before the spaceport closes. The participating students from the First Men's Military Academy are probably still on their way, and they should make it in time."

"Thank you!" The delicate girl flashed a grateful smile and thanked the staff member sweetly. This put the staff member in an even better mood and after some thought, he suggested, "Why don't you all leave a message? When I meet the First Men's Military Academy later, I'll pass on your message."

The handsome girl immediately nodded in approval and said, "Tell them that Luo Chao and Han Xuya are here, and for them to come find us quickly." If their communicators had not been disabled as soon as they entered planet Qiming, preventing them from contacting the outside world, they would not have had to resort to such a stupid method to look for Boss Lan and the others.

The staff member smiled and said, "Got it. Why don't you all leave a note too?"

Han Xuya and Luo Chao shared a smile and, in the end, Luo Chao was the one who bashfully picked up a paper and pen to leave a note. Only after that did they say goodbye to the staff member and went off to wait patiently for Boss Lan's group to arrive.

Chapter 433: The First Men's Military Academy!

Night had descended, and the staff members at the registration hall who had been bustling around all afternoon could finally relax. The spaceport was about to close; almost all of the participating schools had already arrived ...

That staff member who had promised to pass on a message for Luo Chao and Han Xuya picked up the paper note in the drawer of the counter, his expression troubled.

"Big Brother Xu, why haven't you gone to eat?" It was already time for them to eat, so they were preparing to leave the hall. The one called Brother Xu sighed and said, "You all go ahead. Let me stay here alone."

That person saw the note in Brother Xu's hand and winked at him, saying, "So it's all because of the obligation those beauties entrusted to you, Big Brother Xu!" He did not forget to knock shoulders with Brother Xu after saying this.

Big Brother Xu shoved the other, annoyed, and said, "Don't talk nonsense. Just go away and eat."

Seeing the other grinning cheekily as he packed up his things to leave with the crowd, Big Brother Xu thought for a moment and said, "Help me buy a takeaway meal." Since he had made a promise, he would fulfil it.

"Got it, got it. I won't bother you from carrying out the duty a beauty has requested of you." That person waved and said nonchalantly.

Big Brother Xu smiled helplessly — even though the beauties were part of the reason, it was still mostly because he did not want to break a promise.

Soon, the hall had become silent and only Big Brother Xu was left sitting in the working area. He opened his communicator and began to browse through the relevant information on the year's Mecha Grand Tournament.

"So it turns out that other than Qiao Ting from the First Men's Military Academy, the Second and Third Men's Academies are not willing to just roll over either. They've actually sent out sixth-years who have also achieved ace operator level ... looks like this tournament will be a clash among tigers and dragons 1

"Even the Federal Co-ed Military Academy those two girls are from has a pretty good team leader. Lin Xiao 2 ... I remember him. Eh? Not even indicating his mecha level. The last tournament, he had participated as well. Back then, as a third-year, he was already a special-class operator. Now that he's a sixth-year, he can't have stopped at special-class operator, right?" Big Brother Xu's eyes were pensive. He still remembered Lin Xiao, mostly because this name sounded so similar to that of his idol Ling Xiao's. It had made an impression on him.

“The tournament this year will be really interesting. These academies ... in order to suppress the First Men’s Military Academy, they have actually sent out sixth-year students. It’s been many years since sixth-years have appeared in this tournament. I had almost forgotten that military academies are run on a six-year system,” muttered Big Brother Xu to himself.

“Which academies have sent sixth-years, Big Brother? Can you tell me about them?” Suddenly, a voice rang out by Big Brother Xu’s ear. Brother Xu’s heart clenched in fright and he snapped his head up, only to see a large head before his eyes. It was pillowed on the registration counter, staring at him with curious eyes.

Brother Xu calmed himself and only then noticed that two people had abruptly appeared out of mid-air in the hall. One of them was the handsome youth before him, staring at him curiously, while the other had his back to him and was looking at the door as if waiting for something.

“Hey, Big Brother, I’m asking you. Which schools have sent sixth-years? Tell me quickly please,” The handsome youth flashed a wide grin, so sunny that it could not be refused.

Big Brother Xu said, “It’s the Second and Third Men’s Academies, and also the Federal Co-ed Military Academy.” As soon as he said it, Big Brother Xu was rather annoyed at himself. How could he have just blurted this information out just like that? With a wary gaze, he asked carefully, “Who are you? Why are you here?”

That youth once again flashed a hearty smile and replied, “Sorry to disturb you, Big Brother. I’m called Xie Yi, and I’m from the First Men’s Military Academy.” He stood upright and when he saw Big Brother Xu’s attention flit to the person behind him, he raised his right hand and pointed with his thumb at the youth there and said, “That fellow is called Luo Lang. Big Brother, you can just ignore him. Whenever my boss isn’t around, that punk is always such a tight-lipped gourd.”

Subsequently, he asked, “Big Brother, how should I address you?”

The youth’s sunny and open smile, as well as his respectful attitude, set a good impression in Big Brother Xu’s mind. Big Brother Xu returned a smile of his own and said, “I’m called Song Yanxu. You can just call me Big Brother Xu.”

“Okay, Big Brother Xu.” Xie Yi was not shy, immediately adopting the new form of address.

“You all are from the First Men’s Military Academy. Have you all registered?” asked Song Yanxu as he turned on the optical supercomputer.

“The First Men’s Military Academy? So you’re here!” Before Xie Yi could reply, Song Yanxu suddenly exclaimed. He had just realised that the people before him were from the First Men’s Military Academy.

Song Yanxu quickly took out the paper note he had been entrusted with previously and passed it to Xie Yi, saying, “In the afternoon, two girls were here looking for you guys from the First Men’s Military Academy. They even left a note. Take a look and see if you know them.”

Puzzled, Xie Yi accepted the note and when he opened it, he cried out in surprise, “Ah, it’s from little sisters Luo Chao and Han Xuya!”

He had barely finished speaking when the note in his hand was whisked away by a slender hand. After he took the note, Luo Lang swiftly skimmed through the message and he could hardly contain the shock he felt inside, "They are actually participating in the Mecha Grand Tournament too ..."

Reflecting back on when he had contacted Luo Chao a while back, she had indeed seemed very timid and evasive, extremely strange. Back then, Luo Lang had assumed that his little sister was just shy, but now things made sense — his little sister must have been trying to hide this from them to give them a surprise. Hehe, after being apart from him for more than a year, she had become rather audacious, actually daring to fool even him ...

Luo Lang was annoyed. Setting aside the note in his hands, he stepped forwards into the light and pushed Xie Yi to one side to speak to Song Yanxu who still had his head bowed as he worked. "Big Brother Xu, did they leave any other messages?"

Song Yanxu raised his head at the question and when he saw that familiar face, he perked up and said happily, "You've come at the perfect time! The people from the First Men's Military Academy are already here. I have just handed over your note to them." He pointed at Xie Yi and added, "He's from the First Men's Military Academy. You can ask him about it."

When Xie Yi heard this, he instantly burst out laughing. Meanwhile, Luo Lang was apoplectic, his entire face turning bright red. Aaaaargh, he was a man, a man, a man, A MAN!

Xie Yi's laughter startled Song Yanxu, and when he saw that the familiar face before him was not sporting a bashful smile but fuming rage, he felt that something was not right. And then, when he saw that the other's uniform was exactly the same as Xie Yi standing beside him ...

"You ... you ... you're male?" Song Yanxu pointed at Luo Lang in shock, his face a picture of disbelief.

Xie Yi slung an arm over Luo Lang's neck and explained with a smile, "Yes, he is my brother, also a student of the First Men's Military Academy, called Luo Lang. The one you saw, Luo Chao, is this fellow's twin sister, yo."

Only then did Song Yanxu believe it. He could not help but say under his breath, "How eerie. How could he look exactly like his younger sister? Not at all like a man?"

Although Song Yanxu had been speaking extremely softly, who was Luo Lang? Of course he heard everything loud and clear. His eyebrows rose sharply, but just as he was about to explode in anger, Xie Yi, who had also heard what Song Yanxu had said, quickly stepped in to stop him. "Boss will be here soon. Don't cause trouble."

Only then did Luo Lang rein in his anger. He hated most when others said he looked like a girl — if not because he did not want to cause trouble for his boss, he definitely would have challenged the other to a duel.

Sure enough, not too long later, footsteps could be heard coming from outside the hall. The noise suggested that the number of people was considerable.

The one in the lead was a dashing youth dressed in a white military uniform. His almond eyes were sharp and penetrating — he was definitely someone who did exactly as he said. Song Yanxu knew that only duxes had the right to wear this colour. Moreover, the bearing of this person and the reverence the

others around treated him with all marked this person as the primary force of the First Men's Military Academy.

Song Yanxu stood up and asked loudly, "From the First Men's Military Academy? Please come and register."

At his words, the white-clothed youth led his entourage right towards him. Xie Yi smiled at the sight and brought Luo Lang with him to retreat to one side, giving way to the other.

"Excuse me, how should I address you?" asked Song Yanxu respectfully.

"Qiao Ting!" replied the young man crisply. Immediately after, he drew a nameplate out of his pocket and handed it to Song Yanxu.

Song Yanxu accepted the nameplate and scanned it with the optical supercomputer, and the computer instantly registered the information in the nameplate. As expected, this youth was the rumoured second Ling Xiao, Qiao Ting. His mecha level was ace, and he was also the primary power candidate of the First Men's Military Academy.

After Qiao Ting was done registering, Song Yanxu handed him a room card. This would be the place Qiao Ting would be resting at for the next half a month. This also meant that Qiao Ting was done with his registration procedures. Those following behind Qiao Ting immediately took out their respective nameplates and handed them to Song Yanxu for registration as well. This was a necessary procedure — if they did not register, they would lose the right to participate in the Mecha Grand Tournament.

There were 20 people who had come along with Qiao Ting. As Song Yanxu was the only one left to handle their registrations, he was so busy that his head was spinning, and his forehead was soon dripping with sweat. After much effort, these people were finally all done registering. Only then did he remember that the two who had first arrived still had not registered yet. He was just about to call them over when he saw Qiao Ting pass by those two ...

Xie Yi and Luo Lang did not behave respectfully like the others; instead, their expressions were carefree and relaxed. Xie Yi even greeted the other casually, "Senior Qiao, hello~"

Song Yanxu could only stare blankly at the sight. The primary force of an academy was the strongest person in said academy, and he would be used to the respectful behaviour of those following him. Xie Yi and Luo Lang's rather casual and irreverent demeanours surprised Song Yanxu, and so he swallowed his words to call them over, planning to let the situation play out a little further.

Qiao Ting's steps halted when he heard the greeting. He turned his head to look at Xie Yi and Luo Lang, but he did not seem at all angry at their demeanours, nor did he ignore them. Instead, he actually took the initiative to say, "Your boss is right behind me. He'll be here soon ..."

Your boss? Could it be that the First Men's Military Academy had sent two factions this time? And these two factions did not get along with each other? Song Yanxu was curious now. Even those not from the academy itself knew the rules of the First Men's Military Academy. Every Mecha Grand Tournament, the ones sent to represent would inevitably be the mecha clan which had earned the title of number one faction within the academy.

“Thanks, Senior Qiao!” Xie Yi thanked Qiao Ting with a smile. Qiao Ting was about to say something more when he noticed a large batch of First Academy students coming up behind him. So he stopped and merely nodded to Xie Yi before saying, “We’ll head off first.”

Done speaking, Qiao Ting led his group out of the hall, while Xie Yi and Luo Lang turned to place their attention on the people who had just walked into the hall. They were the battle teams from Tianji and Wuji. The battle teams each took up one side of the hall — the two sides stood very far apart, so it was clear at a glance that the group was made up of two different parties.

Chapter 434: Very Ugly, Very Scary?

This time, Tianji and Wuji had 12 member slots each. As per Boss Lan’s request, they had brought the strongest 12 special-class operators from their respective mecha clans. The regiment commanders of both mecha clans arrived before Song Yanxu at the same time, one on the right, one on the left, neither willing to give way to the other.

Song Yanxu surreptitiously wiped away the sweat beading up on his forehead. He glanced to the left and then to the right, before asking cautiously, “Which of you shall come first?”

Han Yu coolly glanced sideways at Tianji’s regiment commander, Mu Shaoyu, who looked back at him just as coolly. Fiery sparks flew between the two, but neither made a move to answer Song Yanxu’s question. For a moment, the hall became extremely still and silent.

The silent confrontation between the two made the cold sweat spring out even faster from Song Yanxu’s forehead. He could not help but curse internally, ‘Hells, what is this bunch of First Men’s Military Academy students planning to do? Are they going to fight? Why don’t they show any intention of working together?’

Song Yanxu believed that the First Men’s Military Academy definitely would not be able to accomplish any good results under these circumstances. He silently blamed the primary force Qiao Ting for not leading his team well, for not resolving these conflicts in his team in time and allowing this issue to worsen.

The situation in the hall was deteriorating, and just as the two seemed about to blow, Xie Yi, who had been watching coldly from the side-lines, suddenly spoke up to say, “How about we let Regiment Commander Mu go first?” He could not bear to see Song Yanxu become dehydrated from sweating too much due to the stress of being stuck between the two regiment commanders. Besides, Song Yanxu had been kind enough to pass on a message for Luo Lang and Han Xuya, so he should give him a hand no matter what.

Mu Shaoyu and Han Yu both turned to look at Xie Yi at the same time, trying to figure out the deeper meaning behind Xie Yi’s words. Xie Yi only smiled and shrugged, looking for all the world as if he was just trying to be helpful. Han Yu was greatly frustrated, but he merely sniffed coldly and turned his head away, no longer holding Mu Shaoyu’s gaze. This was an indirect acquiescence of Xie Yi’s suggestion.

Seeing this, Mu Shaoyu stepped forwards matter-of-factly. Even though Tianji had lost to Lingtian, it was still originally the number two faction after all. How could he allow Wuji, whose ranking was behind Tianji, to be a step before him? No matter what, the dignity of Tianji had to be maintained.

After Tianji had registered, Mu Shaoyu nodded at Xie Yi in thanks for helping him out and also in acknowledgement of the favour. He then side-eyed Han Yu once more before leading his group away from the hall. When Han Yu finally finished registering with the rest of the Wuji group, he glared at Xie Yi and harrumphed coldly, a sign that he would remember this slight. Only then did he haughtily lead the Wuji group away from the hall.

“What kind of people are they ...” said Luo Lang, mouth thin, very displeased by Han Yu’s attitude towards Xie Yi.

“It’s fine. With Boss around, he won’t be able to pull anything,” replied Xie Yi with a grin. He did not mind Han Yu’s attitude at all, especially for the duration of this Mecha Grand Tournament.

Mind you, even though the public leader of the First Men’s Military Academy team was Qiao Ting, in reality, the true leader was Ling Lan. Although Han Yu had qualified to become a representative here at the Mecha Grand Tournament, whether or not he actually got to represent the First Academy in battle still depended on whether Boss allowed it or not. With the decision-making power in the hands of his boss, as long as Han Yu wasn’t retarded, he definitely would not cause trouble for Xie Yi during this period of time; therefore, Xie Yi was very calm.

“I really cannot understand why Boss decided to give some spots to those mecha clans below ...” Luo Lang had been puzzled by this all this while — the honour and glory obviously belonged to their Lingtian.

“Think about it. How many special-class operators have we brought this time?” Xie Yi cackled. “We’ve pretty much brought the whole pot. I’m really looking forward to that final battle royal involving all the academies. If they knew that their opponents are almost all special-class operators and top-class experts from the various specializations, I wonder what their expressions would be like ...”

Luo Lang imagined that scene and a smile pulled at the corners of his lips. “That should be fun!” This smile instantly caused his entire being to dazzle brightly, and Xie Yi reflexively turned to look elsewhere ... hells, why was this punk so beautiful when he smiled? He was fast unable to hold on.

Right then, another large group of people entered through the doorway again. One of those in the group was extremely familiar to Xie Yi. He instantly let out a sigh of relief and rushed forward to greet the other, calling out, “Senior Zhang, you all have come. That was pretty quick.” He was saved! He finally had a proper reason to distance himself from Luo Lang and rescue his heart which was on the brink of an accident.

The one who had just arrived was the previous regiment commander of Dwotong, Zhang Jing-an. He was leading a battle team from his own faction as well as those other participating students from the other minor factions. Although there were not that many people from each faction — with some only having one or two — when taken in total, they had slightly greater numbers than the two teams which had come before them, making up approximately thirty people.

Zhang Jing-an saw Xie Yi coming up to greet him and he cast a reflexive glance around the currently empty hall, then said somewhat pointedly, “They’ve all left?”

Xie Yi smiled, nodded and said, “Yes, those from Leiting and Wuji have already finished registering and went off to their own accommodations to rest.”

Hearing this, Zhang Jing-an turned to say to the regiment commanders of the other factions, "Let's quickly handle our registrations too then. Regiment Commander Ling's group will be coming soon. Let's not hold up the line."

The regiment commanders nodded and quickly led their men over to the counter to register.

Only then did Zhang Jing-an turn to say to Xie Yi, "This time, thanks to Regiment Commander Ling's faith in me, he gave me an additional eight slots, but unfortunately my faction cannot compare to Leiting, Tianji and Wuji ... some of the members are a bit lacklustre ..."

Xie Yi smiled and said, "Senior Zhang is worrying too much. Our Boss Lan has said that there is no need for the strongest, just the most suitable. Senior Zhang's battle clan is one of the teams with the best teamwork in our academy. Our Boss Lan trusts in you all."

Zhang Jing-an smiled at those words and could not help but sigh in admiration. "Rascal. You're really good with words, and strong too. No wonder your regiment commander let you be the one to greet and handle us."

Xie Yi hurriedly said in a humble manner, "That is just Boss Lan being trusting. I'm not that amazing."

Xie Yi's attitude of being immune to all flattery made Zhang Jing-an shake his head, silently admiring of how Ling Lan had been able to excavate so many talented people.

This group of people led by Zhang Jing-an all had pretty good rapport with one another; everyone got along rather well. Song Yanxu sighed softly at this, finally feeling like this was a true team. Those in the last batch of people had almost given him the impression that they were two teams with different affiliations which hated each other.

While Song Yanxu was busy processing all the registrations, his colleagues came back from their meal. When they saw so many people in the hall, they knew that a new military academy must have arrived, so they quickly rushed forwards to help with the registering.

With the reinforcement of 10 more staff, the staff very quickly completed everyone's registration. Right at that moment, 40 more people surged in from the doorway. The one in the lead was also a youth dressed in a white uniform. The moment he stepped into the hall, the temperature instantly dropped, and the initially noisy hall became silent immediately.

Song Yanxu suddenly felt a chill surround his body and could not stop himself from shivering.

Xie Yi and Luo Lang had been leaning on a wall, waiting all this time for the crowd to finish their registration. When they saw the new arrivals, their eyes instantly lit up and they rushed out to stand before the cold-faced youth and called out respectfully, "Boss!"

The cold youth nodded at Luo Lang and Xie Yi, and then turned to look at Zhang Jing-an to ask him calmly, "Senior Zhang, your registrations are done?"

Zhang Jing-an quickly replied, "Yes, Junior Ling, we are all done." Zhang Jing-an's reply instantly shook the people in the hall from their stupor. They hurriedly made way, allowing Ling Lan and the people she brought here to move forwards and register with the staff members.

Ling Lan's arrival made the regiment commanders from the mecha clans of various sizes feel the pressure of a mountain upon them; thus, they all quickly bid farewell to Ling Lan and led their team members in a swift departure from the hall.

Ling Lan saw Zhang Jing-an and friends running out of the hall like demons were chasing after them, and found herself extremely speechless. She turned her head to ask Wu Jiong, "Am I very ugly? Very scary?" Even though this lady always has a cold face, this lady's genes are absolutely top of the line. Both daddy Ling Xiao and mummy Lan Luofeng were super good-looking and elegant ... did those boys have to run away in such fear as if they had just seen a ghost?

Wu Jiong threw a quick glance at Ling Lan and then immediately lowered his eyes. Boss Lan should have pretty good looks, right ...? Wu Jiong actually could not imagine what Ling Lan truly looked like. Only Ling Lan's penetrating gaze remained in his memory, as well as that silent penetrating chill ... seriously, who would dare to study Boss Lan's looks so closely? One look was enough to make a person retreat three feet.

Sensing Boss Lan's cold and penetrating gaze sweep sharply pass his face, Wu Jiong tolerated the chill which seemed to slice him right to the bone. With effort, he gathered his thoughts to reply, "How can that be? Boss Lan is handsome and majestic, unparalleled in your dominance ..."

Why was the cold intent in Boss Lan's eyes growing thicker? He had clearly only said good things ... Wu Jiong could not know that all the things he had said were indeed good things when used to describe boys, but when used to describe girls, those words were actually rather horrible.

Wu Jiong felt that he really might not have a chance to participate in the Mecha Grand Tournament if things went on like this — just as he was about to be killed on the spot, Qi Long spoke up and rescued him. "Boss, your force of presence is too strong. When you stand beside people, they feel really pressured, like a mountain is pressing down on them. Normal people can't take it."

When Ling Lan heard this, the cold air around her dissipated a little. Wu Jiong cleverly started nodding his head in agreement. "Yes, Boss Lan, those able to stand firmly by your side must already have physical skills at our level."

Ling Lan's brow furrowed — just as Instructor Number One in the learning space had said, her force of presence was becoming stronger and stronger, even already at the critical point. Sometimes, there were even signs of her losing control over it. But, even after such a long time, she still had not been able to find the catalyst to merge her force of presence with her own body. This made her wary of displaying her physical skills, afraid that she may lose control and end up doing something she would regret greatly.

Coming to terms with the answer, Ling Lan gave up on pressing Wu Jiong any further. Standing behind her, Li Lanfeng's gaze shimmered — he had not forgotten that smile so lovely that it could fell cities and nations. However, this was his secret — he would not share it with others.

Ling Lan's arrival made Song Yanxu and all the other staff members there rally their spirits; they focused on registering all the people who had come along with Ling Lan. It was only after sending Ling Lan off that they breathed a sigh of relief. Some of them even slumped over in their seats, their limbs limp and

powerless. Only then did Song Yanxu realise that he had actually forgotten to speak more with Xie Yi and Luo Lang; he did not even know when they had finished their registration procedures ...

“Ling Lan eh? That person’s force of presence is really strong, even stronger than that of their primary force Qiao Ting. It would’ve been hard to breathe even for someone standing far away to one side.” Song Yanxu looked down at Ling Lan’s information recorded on the optical supercomputer and muttered to himself, “Only a special-class operator?” His tone was full of doubt.

Chapter 435: Provocation!

At this time, in the accommodation area assigned to the Second Men’s Military Academy, a boy rushed into the living quarters of his regiment commander. This boy was Ah Li, who had been attracted by Luo Chao and Han Xuya, and who had also been dispatched by his regiment commander to scout for information.

“Regiment Commander, I’ve found it. The leader of the First Co-ed Military Academy 1 this time is Lin Xiao.” When he saw his regiment commander, Ah Li immediately reported the news he had gathered.

Speaking of his regiment commander ... in their Second Men’s Military Academy, he was a famous figure. He was the tacitly acknowledged number one in their academy, the one who had successfully advanced to ace operator in his fifth year — Jiang Shaoyu. By all accounts, for his regiment commander to have advanced to ace operator at such an age was also outstanding, belonging to the ranks of the cream of the crop. Unfortunately, he was outshined by Qiao Ting of the First Men’s Military Academy by a head — who let the other manage to advance in his fourth year? That allowed Qiao Ting to recreate Ling Xiao’s record of advancing to ace operator level as a fourth-year cadet, making the people of the Federation call him the second Ling Xiao. In this way, Qiao Ting had completely stolen the thunder of his regiment commander 2 .

This time, Jiang Shaoyu had been willing to lead the representative team into battle partly because he wanted to take the chance to defeat Qiao Ting. Jiang Shaoyu wanted to use the truth to tell the other that, even if Qiao Ting had been lucky enough to advance to ace level in his fourth year, he would never be the number one of the military academies.

“Lin Xiao, what a familiar name.” Hearing this name, Jiang Shaoyu, who had been half-reclining on the sofa, sat up straight. He opened his communicator and began to search for information on Lin Xiao, and only afterwards did he say with a tone of realisation, “So it’s him. In the last tournament, he also joined the Mecha Grand Tournament. It’s unexpected that he would join again this time and become the team leader to boot.”

Jiang Shaoyu chuckled coldly. Lin Xiao was just like him; they were both sixth-year students. In the last tournament, when they had still been third-years, the First Co-ed Military Academy had made an exception for Lin Xiao due to his extraordinary mecha piloting talent, allowing him to represent the school in the tournament. Meanwhile, although Jiang Shaoyu’s piloting talent had been no weaker than the other’s, he had not earned the right to participate due to the intense competition in his military academy. He was still rather sore over the fact.

” Three years ago, he was already a special-class operator 3 . Now that these three years have passed, if his talent is truly as strong as they say, he should already be an ace operator ...” Jiang Shaoyu may be jealous and resentful of Lin Xiao, but this did not affect his judgment. “It looks like this Lin Xiao will also be a formidable opponent in our way to the top this time. We must pay some special attention to him.”

“Noted, Regiment Commander. I will keep an eye on it,” replied Ah Li immediately. His mecha piloting skills were average, but he was very skilled in collecting intel. The regiment commander had deliberately wasted a member slot to bring him along, just so he could utilise this specialty of his. He naturally could not let his regiment commander down.

Jiang Shaoyu trusted in Ah Li’s abilities; thus, he put the matter of Lin Xiao to one side and then glanced meaningfully at Ah Li. Ah Li immediately picked up on what his regiment commander wanted and quickly reported what his regiment commander was most eager to know. “Those two girls from before ... the strong and handsome one is called Han Xuya, a second-year Mecha Piloting student. The sweet and delicate one is called Luo Chao, a second-year Starship Navigation student.”

“Why are second-years being allowed to participate in the Mecha Grand Tournament now?” Jiang Shaoyu rubbed his jaw in confusion. Mind you, with the exception of truly outstanding students, those who earned the right to participate in the Mecha Grand Tournament were typically almost all students in their fourth year and above.

Ah Li had gathered his intel well — he immediately explained, “That Luo Chao is extremely outstanding. The competition she will be participating in is the Starship Navigation contest. As for Han Xuya, I heard that Luo Chao had personally sought out Lin Xiao to ask for a member slot for her ...”

Ah Li thought about the gossip he had inadvertently overheard — it appeared that there was a lot of internal disagreement as well over the participation rights of these two girls. Even in casual conversation, the members of their academy had not forgotten to grumble about it.

“Ah Li, say, do you think Lin Xiao is also interested in that Luo Chao, which is why he did this?” A lewd smile appeared on Jiang Shaoyu’s lips. He had the feeling that Lin Xiao must definitely be like him in having an ulterior motive towards Luo Chao.

Ah Li thought about that delicate and beautiful face of Luo Chao’s which inspired care and affection, and he said somewhat uncertainly, “Perhaps.”

“Right, have you found out why they were at the registration area?” Jiang Shaoyu moved on to ask.

Ah Li said regretfully, “I couldn’t find out anything on that. The staff members of the registration hall are very tight-lipped. They wouldn’t tell me anything no matter what I tried.” Ah Li could not know that the staff at the registration hall were definitely not as professional as he imagined — the key reason why he did not succeed was that he was not a beautiful girl, so he did not have that instant-kill effect that Luo Chao had ...

“Continue to observe their actions closely. If they go out, remember to notify me.” Jiang Shaoyu was not disappointed in these results. He gave the instruction for Ah Li to continue following the two before sending Ah Li away.

The next day, which was also the final day before the Mecha Grand Tournament would begin, the marketplace around the tournament area entered its first peak in activity. The entire place was bustling and hectic — there were people everywhere one looked. Even a few cadets who would be participating in the tournament could not help but be curious and take some time out of their busy schedules to browse the market, planning to try and find a bauble or two.

Meanwhile, after Luo Lang and the rest were done registering that night, Luo Lang had gone with Qi Long and Han Jijyun to look for his sister at the First Co-ed Military Academy area and told the two girls where they were staying and their room numbers. Therefore, early this morning, Luo Chao and Han Xuya, who had long wanted to go browse the marketplace, had come to the living area of the First Men's Military Academy, planning to seek Boss Lan and the other boys out to be their escorts 4 .

The arrival of the two pretty sisters in the First Men's Military Academy area which was filled with only boys naturally caused a commotion. However, when the boys heard Han Xuya say that they were here to find Boss Lan, the ardour of the First Men's Military Academy students was instantly extinguished. They did not have the guts or the confidence to try and steal Boss Lan's women, unless they had strength at the level of Qiao Ting ...

Implicated for no reason, Qiao Ting wanted to state that he had no interest at all in younger sisters — the one he liked was the Federation's goddess of healing, Li Yinfei. As such, he definitely would not ever clash with Boss Lan over this.

Frankly, the shy little Luo Chao had not wanted to come find Boss Lan directly — she felt that this was way too stressful. However, Han Xuya believed that if Luo Chao continued to be shy like this, she definitely would not be able to break through to that thousand-year-old iceberg Boss Lan. For the sake of her sworn sister's happiness, Han Xuya ultimately decided to ignore Luo Chao's wishes and dragged Luo Chao by her little hand right up to the door of Boss Lan's room.

"Xu ... Xuya, are ... are we really ... going to knock on the door?" Luo Chao was already so frightened that she could not speak properly. Even though she liked Boss Lan, when faced with that cold face of Boss Lan's, she still could not help being timid! Aaaaaah!

"Luo Chao, do you not want to become Boss Lan's girlfriend? If you continue to hold back like this, Boss Lan will one day be snatched away by someone else," said Han Xuya in frustration.

"Who will ... snatch?" Han Xuya's words made Luo Chao's small face turn white. Helplessly, facing her fingers, she retorted weakly, "Boss Lan is attending the First Men's Military Academy. There are no girls."

Han Xuya scoffed and flicked her communicator open with a snapping sound. A virtual screen appeared on her communicator and, on the screen, a seductive and enchanting woman was displayed, so beautiful that it dazzled the senses. Luo Chao looked at the picture and said somewhat incomprehendingly, "Xuya, why are you showing me this picture?"

"Li Yinfei, the Federation's soul songstress, also the Federation's goddess of healing. Last year, she performed at the First Men's Military Academy, and she has also announced before that her future husband must be a king among men." Han Xuya quirked an eyebrow at Luo Chao and said with a smirk, "You think Boss Lan cannot become a king in the future?"

Luo Chao's lips trembled and her face paled even further, no longer sporting any trace of colour. Han Xuya felt rather sorry at the sight, but thinking about Luo Chao's personality, if she did not force Luo Chao this time, Luo Chao definitely would not take the initiative to step forwards. For the sake of her good friend's future happiness, she needed to harden her heart and give Luo Chao a good hard shove.

"If you still don't take the initiative, by the time Boss Lan becomes a king in future, do you think you can still beat Li Yinfei? That's a national goddess! According to my cousin brother, Boss Lan has a liking for Li Yinfei!" Han Xuya dealt another heavy blow, shattering that final bit of assurance Luo Chao was harbouring.

Although Luo Chao's face was as white as paper, her initially unsteady gaze suddenly became steady. She was silent for several seconds, and then she finally made up her mind and said softly, "I ... I won't hold back anymore."

Only then did Han Xuya close the virtual screen, satisfied. With a jerk of her chin, she motioned for Luo Chao to go knock on the door.

Right then, Luo Chao and Han Xuya did not know that while they had been talking outside the door, someone had coincidentally come to look for Ling Lan as well. When he was about to turn the corner into the corridor, he had heard the voices of the two girls before he had made the turn. He had instinctively shrunk back to hide behind the wall and in doing so had overheard their conversation.

"Rabbit likes Li Yinfei? How can that be?" Li Lanfeng's face was a picture of disbelief as he tried to digest this piece of information he had just heard. He had spent so much time together with Ling Lan, but he had never heard Ling Lan even mention Li Yinfei's name.

Who were these two girls? Luo Chao? Xuya? From their conversation, Li Lanfeng quickly deduced their identities. They should be Luo Lang's sister, Luo Chao, and Han Jijyun's younger cousin sister, Han Xuya. And when Han Xuya said that she had gotten this news from her cousin brother, she must have meant Han Jijyun. Could it be that the rabbit had told Han Jijyun about this?

At the thought, Li Lanfeng felt extremely lost and bitter. So he still could not compare to those little companions who had grown up alongside the rabbit — that's why the rabbit would rather tell Han Jijyun and the rest but not him ... Li Lanfeng could not help but split hairs 5, his heart growing colder and colder, his mind turning dark and blank as he felt as if he was being abandoned by his rabbit ...

"Ding dong, ding dong!" Ling Lan, who was currently practising her Qi exercises on the balcony, heard the doorbell ring. She walked into her room, pulled her uniform from its hangar and put it on, and only then did she walk to the door and open it.

Ling Lan was dressed in a sharp pressed white uniform — the moment she appeared before Luo Chao and Han Xuya, the two girls felt an invisible wave of pressure pressing down on them. Even the bold and audacious Han Xuya could not help but shudder, feeling her legs grow a little weak. She silently gulped, trying to give herself courage.

Luo Chao was in an even worse state. Her initially pale little face was now flushed a brilliant red and looked as if it would catch fire in the next moment. Han Xuya was both surprised and resigned at Luo Chao's state. She was surprised that Luo Chao was not at all afraid of Ling Lan, but she was also resigned

to see that as soon as Luo Chao saw Boss Lan, Luo Chao's soul had been completely sucked away, leaving her only capable of blushing.

Chapter 436: Shopping!

Ling Lan was surprised to see who was outside her door. She asked, "How did you all come here?" She leaned slightly to one side, motioning for the two girls to come in.

Han Xuya saw that Luo Chao was completely immobile now, so she decisively grabbed Luo Chao's hand and pulled her into the room.

Only then did Ling Lan close the door, turn around, and ask, "What would you all like to drink?"

Ling Lan was very happy to see Luo Chao and Han Xuya again. She actually really wanted to have several good girl friends to gossip with and talk about feelings and so on ... though looking at the current circumstances, this wish was impossible to realize.

Face red, Luo Chao stuttered, "A-anything is f-fine, Boss Lan."

However, Han Xuya did not stand on ceremony. "I want to drink Aimuro juice." Aimuro was an extremely rare and precious fruit, and so the juice extracted from it was also extremely expensive. Hence, Han Xuya was normally reluctant to drink it, but she had no need to be polite with Boss Lan here; after all, Boss Lan was the second generation of a top-level military family in the Federation — the amount of pocket money he had must be staggering ...

At this notion, Han Xuya felt resentment stir in her heart. Why were Boss Lan's parents so willing to give him so much credits, while her parents were so calculative? Every time she went to them to ask for some pocket money, they would even ask her for a full accounting of her expenses. Her heart ached just thinking about it.

Han Xuya came to the profound realisation that, sure enough, other people's parents were always the best.

Just as Han Xuya believed, Ling Lan did not care at all about that amount of credits. Leaving aside the credits her parents gave to her, her omnipotent Little Four could already help her earn countless credits in a never-ending supply — no matter how she spent, the credits never ran out.

In this way, under Luo Chao's reticent shyness and Han Xuya's decisive help when she could not take her friend's timidity anymore, Ling Lan finally figured out why the two girls had come looking for her. She considered how she really had nothing much to do today anyway, and so agreed to go shopping with them.

They had yet to leave the house, however, when Ling Lan's doorbell rang again. Ling Lan opened the door to see Li Lanfeng standing there, and she asked curiously, "Leopard, what's up?"

Li Lanfeng glanced into the room and saw the two girls sitting on the sofa in the rabbit's room. Li Lanfeng had not forgotten what they had said earlier, about how Luo Chao really liked the rabbit. He wondered if she had already confessed. It was rather unexpected that his rabbit was younger than him by three years, and yet the peach blossoms were already blooming everywhere in his vicinity ¹. This left

an astringent taste in Li Lanfeng's heart — even he himself did not have a girlfriend yet; this was a little disgraceful ...

“You have guests?” Li Lanfeng tried hard to tamp down on the rising sourness in his heart and pretended as if he had just caught sight of the girls, his face filled with surprise.

“Yes, my two sisters. We're going to go shop at the marketplace,” said Ling Lan breezily.

Li Lanfeng's expression turned pleased at those words. “What a coincidence. I too was about to ask you to go shopping together. Why don't we all go together?”

Ling Lan considered it and agreed. She felt that she might be too busy to handle both girls — it would be safer with Li Lanfeng coming along as well. Ling Lan did not forget that Luo Chao's outstanding beauty was just like Luo Lang's, capable of causing trouble on the scale of Helen of Troy.

By the time Ling Lan and company departed, however, the group was no longer just the four of them because they had bumped into Qi Long as they were leaving. When this fellow Qi Long heard that Boss was going shopping, he was instantly ecstatic. He very quickly summoned a large group of people, so in the end, it became a trip involving the entire Lingtian Battle Clan. The twelve members rushed towards the marketplace in high spirits.

Meanwhile, on the Second Men's Military Academy's end, after receiving news that Luo Chao and Han Xuya were going shopping with a group of people from the First Men's Military Academy, Jiang Shaoyu also led his own battle clan out after them ...

As they had much more people now, Lingtian split into two groups. Luo Chao and Han Xuya were with Ling Lan, Li Lanfeng, Luo Lang, and Zhao Jun ², while Qi Long's group included Han Jijyun, Lin Zhong-qing, Xie Yi, Chang Xinyuan, and Li Shiyu.

Compared to Luo Chao's group which was planning to shop around aimlessly, Qi Long's group was much more purposeful. As the team's specialised researchers, Li Shiyu and Chang Xinyuan would instantly buy anything which would be beneficial to their research, while the head logistician Lin Zhong-qing would not forget to gather useful resources for his battle clan. Luckily, Ling Lan was prepared for this. Before the two groups went their separate ways, she transferred a large bulk of credits to Lin Zhong-qing. That figure was enough to make even Lin Zhong-qing, who managed the finances of the Lingtian Battle Clan, to tremble, feeling as if he would be flattened by the sheer weight of all those credits. It was clear to see how large this sum of credits was.

As Ling Lan's team browsed the stalls, compared to the impatience that gradually surfaced on Luo Lang's and Zhao Jun's faces, Ling Lan and Li Lanfeng were much more composed. They sat in a rest area, patiently waiting for Luo Chao and Han Xuya to finish trying out clothes.

When Luo Lang could take it no longer, he stared across the street with stars in his eyes. There was a mecha equipment store there and he really wanted to go take a look.

“Boss, I'll be going over there to take a look. I'll be right back,” Luo Lang finally spoke up to say. He no longer wanted to accompany his younger sister while she shopped for clothes.

Zhao Jun's eyes lit up at his words and he quickly joined in to say, "I'll go too."

Ling Lan waved nonchalantly. "Go!" And then, Zhao Jun and Luo Lang could be seen running over to the store like they were being chased by demons.

Ling Lan found it rather funny and turned to ask Li Lanfeng sitting beside her, "Leopard, is accompanying girls to buy clothes such an unbearable thing?" Although Ling Lan did not have the chance to personally try on these pretty outfits before her eyes, she was happy just looking at them. That was why she did not find waiting for the girls tiring at all and was instead happy to do so.

Li Lanfeng seemed to be in a bit of a bad mood. He said lowly, "If you value the girl, then no matter how you accompany her, you will feel happy ... Rabbit, that ... girl inside, do you value her a lot?"

Ling Lan smiled and replied, "They are my dear little sisters. How can I not value them?"

Are they really just little sisters? If they were just little sisters to Ling Lan, then why couldn't Luo Lang endure it? And Luo Lang was even Luo Chao's actual biological brother ... Li Lanfeng cast a searching look at Ling Lan, trying to judge the truth of Ling Lan's words. Truth be told, Li Lanfeng did not really wish to see Ling Lan have a girlfriend right now. He just had the feeling that the friendship between Ling Lan and himself was still a distance away from his ideal; thus, Li Lanfeng did not want for a girlfriend to pop up and influence Ling Lan right at this critical period.

In the fitting room, blushing, Luo Chao was holding onto a gauzy dress Ling Lan had chosen for her, completely zoned out. Seeing this, Han Xuya nudged her helplessly and said, "Don't just stand there. Change quickly and go out to dazzle the hell out of Boss Lan."

Han Xuya's words made Luo Chao's face turn even redder, but she was at least aware again now to begin changing her clothes. As she changed, Luo Chao suddenly turned to ask Han Xuya, "That Big Brother Li ... doesn't he seem to dislike me?"

Taken aback, Han Xuya asked urgently, "Did you sense something?"

Luo Chao frowned as if trying to recall something. "Every time I try to talk to Boss Lan, he always interrupts and changes the topic. He seems to have something against me."

Han Xuya's expression turned serious as she began thinking back on everything that had happened along the way here. She found that it was really as Luo Chao had said — whether intentionally or not, that person called Li Lanfeng had been subtly trying to exclude them from their conversations. If Luo Chao had not brought it up, Han Xuya might not even have noticed.

However, that Li Lanfeng had been constantly smiling, and when he spoke to them, his tone had always been gentle and polite. He had not shown any sign of disliking them — could it be that they were just being overly sensitive? Han Xuya voiced this possibility and Luo Chao bit her own lip, unable to tell for sure. They could only decide to continue observing the situation.

Very soon, they were done changing and they walked out of the fitting room. The customers browsing the racks in the store saw a seductive witch and an ethereal fairy step out, and their eyes lit up instantly.

Han Xuya pulled the bashful Luo Chao right up to Ling Lan and then asked directly, “Boss Lan, are we pretty?”

Truly, humans were visual animals — even though Ling Lan was a girl like them, she was still stunned by the beauty of Han Xuya and Luo Chao. She nodded and praised, “Not bad, the clothes suit you both very well.”

Luo Chao’s face was extremely red, but she could not conceal her joy at these words. Her lips curved up into a small smile.

Li Lanfeng also smiled and said, “Yes, these two little sisters are really great beauties. They look lovely no matter what they wear.” The sincere praise made Luo Chao and Han Xuya feel rather ashamed — it looked like they had misunderstood this Big Brother Li.

Just as Luo Chao and Han Xuya were preparing to change back to their own clothes and pay for their selections, a great commotion suddenly broke out from the store across the street. Quite a few customers ran out from that store in a panic. When Ling Lan saw this, her expression changed. She had not forgotten that Luo Lang and Zhao Jun had gone over to that store.

“Leopard, you stay here and protect Luo Chao and Han Xuya. I’ll go over there to check things out.” Ling Lan was decisive. She summarily entrusted Luo Chao and Han Xuya to Li Lanfeng, and then with a quick dash, she had disappeared from the store.

“Where is Boss Lan going?” Han Xuya saw Ling Lan disappear before their eyes and quickly turned to ask Li Lanfeng.

“He has gone to the other side to take a look. Go pay for your things first. We’ll talk more later,” instructed Li Lanfeng. The smile that had been on his face had disappeared and there was a trace of grimness in his expression. Just now, he had sensed some displacement in the air coming from the other side — it looked like a fight had broken out there and the physical skills levels of the people involved were not low. He wondered if it could be Luo Lang and Zhao Jun.

After leaving the women’s clothing store, Luo Lang and Zhao Jun had run straight for the mecha equipment store. As this market was a temporary one, its layout was rather chaotic. You might have just passed a small eatery, only to find a weapons store next door selling guns and ammunition. For instance, this mecha equipment store they just entered was surrounded by either clothing stores or jewellery stores, which were all somewhat incongruous with a mecha equipment store.

The items in the equipment store were varied and comprehensive. There were energy packs, medical packs, weaponry bags, and even quite a lot of precious materials from various planets. These materials could be used to modify mecha and could also be used to forge weapons; as such, there were quite a number of cadets inside this store.

As the Mecha Grand Tournament used real mecha³, everyone wanted to find equipment that could strengthen their mecha’s combat power before the tournament began. This was also why equipment stores were the prime target for cadets to visit.

Luo Lang looked at a cold weapon in the store in surprise. The weapon actually looked extremely similar to Regretless which Boss Lan used inside Mecha World. The long, narrow, and thin pitch-black blade raised concerns about whether the 7-metre sword would hold up in battle.

“This sword, it’s so familiar!” Following Luo Lang’s line of sight, Zhao Jun also caught sight of the sword and, like Luo Lang, he was also extremely surprised.

Luo Lang could not stop himself from walking to stand right below the giant sword to try and see what material was used to forge it. He found that the material was not one he knew.

A shop helper standing to one side saw how interested Luo Lang was in the giant sword, and so he approached him to introduce it, saying, “This sword is called Firmament⁴. It is made from a newly discovered material. Don’t look down on it for its long and narrow blade as it is actually very sturdy. And this Firmament has a special characteristic — the blade has a certain degree of flexibility.”

Chapter 437: Harassment!

“Flexibility?” Luo Lang was even more surprised by this new fact. He knew that his boss’s Regretless also possessed a certain degree of flexibility.

“Yes. If you are interested, sir, you can open up the protective cover and test it out personally,” suggested the shop assistant.

Luo Lang nodded and the shop assistant turned off the protective cover. Under the prompting of the shop assistant, Luo Lang pressed down on the body of the sword and sure enough, the sword bent a little under the force of his fingers. When he stopped pressing down, the blade bounced back to normal.

“It’s a good weapon. How much for this Firmament?” Luo Lang’s first thought was that this sword was very suitable for his boss and so he inquired about it.

“Because its material is rare and precious, it is several times more expensive than normal cold weapons.” The shop assistant displayed the price of Firmament to Luo Lang, and Luo Lang’s complexion changed. This was not just a matter of ‘several times’ ... that price — even if he added up everything he owned, he still would not be able to buy the hilt of the sword.

Resigned, Luo Lang said, “Hold onto this sword for me for now. Wait for a moment and I’ll bring someone over to take a look. If he’s satisfied with it, we’ll buy it.”

The shop assistant smiled and replied, “Alright.” This kind of situation was not uncommon — many interested customers were defeated in the end by this astronomical price, but many of them would still leave this request behind. Unfortunately, none of them had ever returned to purchase the sword.

“What does the beauty want? Perhaps I can be of assistance.” Right at this moment, a voice rang out from behind Luo Lang.

Luo Lang instantly frowned. He turned his head and saw a young man with a rather flirty expression on his face smiling at him. It was the team leader of the team from the Second Men’s Military Academy, Jiang Shaoyu.

Luo Lang's brow furrowed, a trace of anger passing swiftly through his eyes. If Boss had not cautioned him not to cause trouble, he definitely would have taught the other a lesson then and there. Luo Lang could tell from the other's actions that this was definitely yet another person who had taken a liking to his looks.

Luo Lang glared scathingly at Jiang Shaoyu and made a move to leave, planning to bring Boss over to buy Firmament. He was just passing by Jiang Shaoyu when Jiang Shaoyu actually reached out his right hand all of a sudden to try and grab Luo Lang's right wrist.

With a slide step, Luo Lang evaded the other's lecherous hand 1 , glared at him, and said, "What are you trying to do?"

Zhao Jun had also figured out that the other did not have any good intentions. He took a brisk step forwards to stand beside Luo Lang, glaring coldly at Jiang Shaoyu. Zhao Jun's move was a signal for the boys behind Jiang Shaoyu to come closer as well, and they quickly surrounded Luo Lang and Zhao Jun.

"What? You want a fight?" Zhao Jun was furious and looked like he was going to charge forwards and brawl if things deteriorated any further. This was perfectly in line with his burly and irritable public image.

A mocking smirk hung on Jiang Shaoyu's lips. This kind of muscle-headed, simple-minded person was nothing to worry about. He sent a glance at the team member beside him who immediately understood what he wanted. That team member led six people to push closer towards Zhao Jun, attempting to separate Zhao Jun from Luo Lang.

Seeing this, Zhao Jun did not hesitate to meet them, and in the back and forth of battle, he was unwittingly drawn away from Luo Lang's side.

Luo Lang was extremely surprised that Zhao Jun had been successfully drawn away. Even though Zhao Jun had not joined Lingtian for more than half a year, Luo Lang, who trained with him very often, knew that this fellow was not that simple. If you really took him for a brawny hot-tempered simpleton, you would definitely die cluelessly by the other's hand ... that fellow was really very black-bellied.

Sure enough, when Luo Lang glanced at Zhao Jun, he caught a quick surreptitious look in return from the latter. With that, Luo Lang knew that the fellow had to be plotting something and so did not bother worrying about him any further.

Having gotten rid of the person in his way, Jiang Shaoyu was in a good mood. He consoled Luo Lang with a bright smile, saying, "Little beauty, don't be mad. Your big brother here just wants to be friends with you 2 ."

Jiang Shaoyu's sudden politeness was definitely not because he had suddenly had a fit of conscience and was planning to let Luo Lang go. Rather, compared to that delicate and bashful look of Luo Chao's, Luo Lang's face was currently flushed red from anger and his eyes were blazing as well, making him shine radiantly. Luo Lang looked just like a proud blooming red rose, stealing Jiang Shaoyu's breath away.

His heart was beating wildly — even a veteran playboy like him could not resist that soul-stealing allure of Luo Lang's, and he found himself drunk on it. Though he had initially only had plans to fool around

with the other, for the first time, he had the desire to chain the other within his embrace forever. He wished for this dazzling woman before him to only bloom before him.

“Be friends?” The corners of Luo Lang’s lips turned up slightly, a trace of killing intent seeping out from his narrowed eyes. Luo Lang most hated people whose hearts turned ugly due to his face.

“Yes, as long as you give this elder brother a chance, I will definitely satisfy you.” Perhaps Jiang Shaoyu had been mesmerized by Luo Lang’s appearance, for he actually did not notice Luo Lang’s swelling rage that was about to blow or his uncontrollable killing intent. He even spoke up once more to tease the other, his words somewhat unclean and lewd. Done speaking, he fearlessly stepped forwards and reached out his right hand again, trying to touch Luo Lang’s pert face to sample the other’s soft tofu.

“How dare you!” Pushed beyond the boundaries of tolerance, Luo Lang finally acted. His right fist shot out at Jiang Shaoyu’s face, charged with the strength of the peak level of early stage Qi-Jin.

Jiang Shaoyu was the number one of the Second Men’s Military Academy, after all, so he was able to react instantly to Luo Lang’s sudden outburst. His lecherous right hand changed directions midway to meet Luo Lang’s angry fist.

A loud ‘boom’ rang out! Two powerful hidden forces clashed head to head. Due to the powerful concussive force generated by the clash, the surrounding people found themselves unable to keep their footing. Those people surrounding Zhao Jun were forced by the pressure of these two hidden forces to take several steps back, distancing themselves from Luo Lang and Jiang Shaoyu. Meanwhile, when he felt the powerful concussive force, Zhao Jun’s eyes flickered. Then, he pretended like he too was unable to bear the force and stumbled back several steps along with Jiang Shaoyu’s men.

Luo Lang and Jiang Shaoyu forcefully exchanged blows, and the two of them wavered simultaneously, though their feet remained planted firmly on the ground. Luo Lang’s brow furrowed — he had not expected this person before him to have equally strong physical skills as himself, and the other may perhaps even be a little better. It should be known that he had been the one to initiate the attack while the other had only reacted hastily to block it, yet the outcome was a draw ... this made Luo Lang cautious; he could not flip his boat in the gutter once again. Last year, he had fallen for another’s schemes and that experience had been lesson enough for Luo Lang.

“Qi-Jin stage?!” Jiang Shaoyu’s smile had faded as well. He could never have imagined that a girl he had inadvertently taken a shine to would have such strong physical skills, completely inconsistent with her soft and gentle appearance.

“Aren’t you the same?” Luo Lang smiled grimly but did not continue to attack. Instead, he swept a swift glance around the store to see whether the opponent still had any hidden tricks lying in wait.

Right then, there were not many people in the store anymore. Luo Lang and Jiang Shaoyu’s exchange and the resulting concussive wave had shown that the people in the store that these two were definitely masters at Qi-Jin stage. In order to avoid being injured in the crossfire, the customers in the store had all run out. Other than those people who had come with Jiang Shaoyu, those who still dared to remain behind were all those who were very confident in themselves, masters in their own right. As for the staff of the store, they had long hidden themselves away from the fight.

The reason why no one had stepped up to discourage the fighting was that all the merchandise of the store were already being protected by protective covers. Unless the combatants hit a cover directly, the shockwaves alone would not damage the items.

“How interesting. Who would have guessed that the girl I fancy would actually turn out to be a Qi-Jin master.” Jiang Shaoyu licked his lips in excitement, growing ever more interested in Luo Lang. Thinking about it, he had never fooled around with a Qi-Jin stage woman before ... the more he thought about the prospect, the more excited he became.

“Girl?” Luo Lang was stunned for a moment, but he was soon so angry that his pert face was bright red. He had initially thought the other was bent and had only been attracted by his face — he had not expected that the other had completely mistaken him for a girl. Wasn’t this just another way of saying that he, Luo Lang, was like a girl? It was definitely an insult to him.

Livid, the momentum of Luo Lang’s peak early stage Qi-Jin was finally unleashed in its full glory. Being the closest to him, Jiang Shaoyu’s face could not help but change. He had never expected Luo Lang’s force of presence to be this strong ...

Jiang Shaoyu’s gaze flickered and then he suddenly shouted, “All together now!” And then, he was the first to leap at Luo Lang. When he attacked this time, not only was Jiang Shaoyu using his full strength, he was also being extremely ruthless. He needed to take this girl away with him before the law enforcement team of the marketplace arrived on the scene; otherwise, he would need to wait for another chance to obtain the other. And now that the other had already suffered this encounter, she would probably stay cloistered within her school’s accommodation area until the end of the tournament. In the accommodation areas, surveillance was very tight, so it would be impossible for him to act.

Of course, he was not afraid of being too harsh in his attack and harming the other too much — a Qi-Jin stage master had extremely high endurance and resilience. At the same time, their recovery ability was also extremely robust, and with the addition of current technology, as long as the other still had a breath left within them, it would be possible to save them.

Perhaps Jiang Shaoyu’s members had constantly been involved in this sort of shenanigans, for when Jiang Shaoyu gave the order, none of them hesitated at all. Even those who had been keeping Zhao Jun busy turned to leap at Luo Lang as well, planning to strike him down and cart him away.

“Bam, bam, bam!” Those men leaping towards Luo Lang were suddenly smacked onto the ground. Those close by turned around to look and found that Zhao Jun, whom they had neglected, was standing over the men. He had efficiently struck them down within the span of several seconds.

Jiang Shaoyu and Luo Lang once again engaged in battle. This time, the two of them were unable to retain their footing. Both of them stumbled back several steps, though Luo Lang had to retreat three steps more than Jiang Shaoyu. This proved that Jiang Shaoyu was stronger than Luo Lang.

“Early stage advanced level Qi-Jin.” Luo Lang swallowed, trying to calm the roiling qi and blood in his chest. He stared at the other darkly — the opponent was several realms higher than himself; he was completely suppressed by the other.

Jiang Shaoyu did not respond but instead looked towards Zhao Jun, who was not too far from them, with a shadowed expression. "Qi-Jin? I did not expect your companion to be this strong. He seems a little bit stronger than you." His members were basically all at the peak of Refinement, just one step away from entering Qi-Jin. For him to defeat them so readily, Zhao Jun had to be at Qi-Jin stage, and the ease with which he did so made Jiang Shaoyu reckon that he must already be at the middle stages of Qi-Jin. The only question was which minor ranking he was at.

At these words, Luo Lang answered proudly, "As my teammate, being strong is a must."

Jiang Shaoyu's heart sank. The other's assured demeanour showed that she was not lying. He did not expect this hulking fellow beside Luo Chao 3 to not be her escort but a teammate from the same battle clan. From this, it could be predicted that her other teammates would definitely be not much weaker either. If her teammates managed to rush over here in time ...

Chapter 438: Peerless Prodigy!

Jiang Shaoyu's eyes narrowed and he ran through some quick calculations mentally. Should he just give up now? But when he looked at that proud and lovely appearance of Luo Lang, his heart itched something fierce. He could not bear to just give up on such a delectable girl. Perhaps hoping for some lucky break, he instantly came to a decision. He shouted to the members still standing, "Number 3!"

This cry startled Zhao Jun and Luo Lang, but before they could figure out what Jiang Shaoyu meant when he called out this number, they saw Jiang Shaoyu's group whip out spherical objects from the bags at their waists.

As soon as Luo Lang and Zhao Jun saw this, they knew that something was not right. These things were sure to be bad for them. The two shared a glance and then leapt in silent rapport towards the respective opponents they had targeted, trying to stop them from carrying out their next move.

Despite how quickly Zhao Jun and Luo Lang reacted, they were still not faster than their opponents. Before the two could reach them, their opponents flicked the item in their hands and a column of green smoke was sent straight at them from the spherical objects. Zhao Jun and Luo Lang did not have time to dodge and plunged head first into the smoke.

The two of them smelled a light fragrance and, in the next second, their heads began to swim.

A soporific? Shocked, the two of them decisively moved to bite down on the tips of their tongues, thinking to use the sharp pain to chase away their dizziness. They soon found that it was useless, however, because they had already lost their strength. Their entire body felt weak, so weak that they could not even move their jaw to bite down.

"Crap!" The two of them were extremely frustrated at this moment; they did not expect that they would still fall for the opponents' scheme. Just now, they had still been too careless.

"Grab them both." Jiang Shaoyu saw the two of them finally succumb and fall over, and his lips pulled up into a satisfied smile as he gave orders to his men.

“Yes, Leader!” The team members immediately moved forwards to do as their leader had said when a white light suddenly flashed across their eyes. After that, they felt themselves being struck by a massive force and were sent flying back uncontrollably to crash heavily to the ground.

Some of the weaker members instantly spewed blood from their mouths, their entire bodies slumped on the ground, unable to stand up for that moment.

Jiang Shaoyu’s eyes narrowed and the smug smile on his face stiffened. A white-clothed youth was currently already standing right in front of Zhao Jun and Luo Lang. His face was cold and emotionless, and when his placid gaze swept over to look at Jiang Shaoyu, Jiang Shaoyu actually felt a chill creeping over his heart. Due to his arrival, the temperature of the entire mecha equipment store instantly dropped several degrees and those people still within the store could not help but shiver.

“You ... are planning to take my people?” The other spoke. His cold voice, cold gaze, and cold expression seemed calm, but Jiang Shaoyu could still sense the turbulent storm underneath the calm surface. An unprecedented sense of pressure descended in the ensuing silence.

Jiang Shaoyu was able to become the number one in the Second Men’s Military Academy and the leader for the representative team of his school to this Mecha Grand Tournament because he was a steady and determined person. Although Ling Lan’s unexpected appearance had caused him to waver, he had soon regained his composure and had begun to study this new opponent, trying to figure out his stats and considering how he should handle him.

White was an uncommon colour for uniforms among the military academies of the Federation, and the other’s uniform was very well made, so it definitely would not be some ordinary uniform ... a notion sparked through Jiang Shaoyu’s mind. He had thought of the First Men’s Military Academy. A dux would be chosen from every year of students from every specialization and white was the exclusive colour for the uniforms of those duxes. Jiang Shaoyu combined this knowledge with the information he had received, about how Luo Chao had gone shopping with the First Men’s Military Academy ...

Jiang Shaoyu could pretty much guarantee at this point that this austere youth was most likely a student from the First Men’s Military Academy. However, this person did not look at all familiar, so he could not be the well-known Qiao Ting. Could he be the dux of some other specialization?

This speculation calmed Jiang Shaoyu considerably. Even though he kept feeling as if he had overlooked something, he still had a lot of confidence in himself. He definitely would not allow someone to interfere and make him lose face, so he said with a sneer, “This is a matter between myself and the First Co-ed Military Academy. Are you, a dux from the First Men’s Military Academy, also going to try and be a hero and meddle in this matter?”

If Qiao Ting was the one who had stepped in, he might perhaps have given Qiao Ting some face. But as for this punk who had come from god knows where ... did he think that he could swagger around as he liked just because he was a dux from the First Academy? Hmph, he was thinking too highly of himself and looking down on others too much!

“The First Co-ed Military Academy?” Ling Lan’s eyes narrowed, and the temperature around her dropped several more degrees. She smiled coldly and said, “I did not know myself — when had my team members entered the Co-ed Military Academy?” After bullying her people, the other actually dared to

fabricate lies and find unreasonable excuses? Even though the First Men's Military Academy had been suppressed by the Second Men's Military Academy for seven consecutive tournaments, this did not mean that they from the First Men's Military Academy were pushovers!

By this time, Ling Lan had also been able to determine which school the opponents were from based on their uniforms. The other side was behaving in such an arrogant and audacious manner, likely in large part due to their academy's results for the past seven tournaments. Their heads were swollen beyond belief.

Hearing what Ling Lan said, Jiang Shaoyu sneered back just as coldly and pointed at Luo Lang, saying, "This sweet and delicate little beauty ... is also from your First Men's Military Academy? I never knew that men's academies were taking in females now."

Only then did Ling Lan understand what this commotion was all about. She threw a glance at that troublesome face of Luo Lang and sighed mentally. No wonder he had been mistaken for a girl. This fellow had unexpectedly grown to look more and more like a girl as the years added up — he was so enchanting that it was hard to distinguish whether he was male or female ... no, to be accurate, the more one looked at him, the more one would think he was a girl.

Ling Lan felt deeply hurt by this. Say, why had no one ever mistaken her for a girl? Er ... well, these words were slightly skewed. She was a girl to begin with, so the question should be — why the hell did everyone just accept that she was a boy? She could be considered quite lovely, right? Ling Lan had the utmost confidence in the genes of both her parents ...

"D*mmmit, who's a girl now?" Right then, Luo Lang and Zhao Jun who had been slumped on the ground suddenly stood up. Luo Lang cursed darkly and then turned his head to complain piteously to Ling Lan, "Boss, you didn't have to be so harsh in giving us the antidote."

He gritted his teeth and bore the pain as he plucked a miniature syringe from his neck. Apparently, while Ling Lan had been rushing forwards to prevent their capture, she had not forgotten to shoot out two miniature antidote syringes to clear the drugs from the system of the two boys on the ground.

Likewise, Zhao Jun deftly plucked the syringe from his neck. At this moment, his expression was stony — he felt very humiliated that he had actually been caught by the opponent's scheme, and in front of his own clan leader to boot!

Ling Lan could not bear to look directly at that pitiful look of Luo Lang's — she turned her head away and said coldly, "If you have any objections, you can go discuss them with our clan doctor personally."

Ling Lan's words made Luo Lang's pitiful expression vanish instantly, and his face even looked a little twisted. The present Senior Li Shiyu was no longer that nice guy senior who had first joined the battle clan. Under constant exposure to his boss, Li Shiyu had already been stained absolutely black and had become corrupted. He, who had originally only known to focus on creating good medicine of healing, had now also begun to manufacture poisonous agents. Luo Lang recalled how he had been tormented savagely with agents once when he had offended Senior Li Shiyu by accident, and he could not stop his body from trembling ... he absolutely would not go and seek out Senior Li Shiyu!

Luo Lang abruptly turned his head to stare at Jiang Shaoyu. Since he did not dare to argue with Boss, then he would need to find some other place to vent his emotions. This person who had mistaken him

for a girl was definitely a very good option for a punching bag — he turned fully to face Jiang Shaoyu and asked fiercely, “Actually saying this lord is a girl, hells, which part of this lord looks like a girl, huh?!”

At his words, an answer surfaced unbidden in Ling Lan’s and Zhao Jun’s hearts. ‘Other than that extra bit you have below, everything else is like a girl.’ Luckily, Luo Lang could not know what his boss and teammate were thinking, otherwise he would definitely ... challenge Zhao Jun to a duel. Boss was naturally excluded — Luo Lang did not want to die just yet.

Luo Lang’s furious demeanour made a trace of wondrous appreciation pass through Jiang Shaoyu’s eyes, but Luo Lang’s words quickly snuffed that appreciation out. He had finally found what was off about the situation. Only now did he notice that the uniform Luo Lang was wearing was certainly not the uniform of the First Co-ed Military Academy. Although it was different in colour from the uniform on Ling Lan’s body, it was in the exact same style. This meant that this beautiful and eye-catching girl before his eyes was in fact a boy, a student of the First Men’s Military Academy.

Even though Jiang Shaoyu had noticed the problem, he still could not believe it. After all, this person before him looked exactly like the Luo Chao he had seen yesterday at the registration hall. Doggedly, he asked, “Are you not the second-year student from the First Co-ed Military Academy, Luo Chao from the Starship Navigation specialization?”

The moment he said this, the three of Ling Lan’s group finally understood what all this had been about. So this person had mistaken Luo Lang for Luo Chao, leading to this mess.

“Hells, you actually dare to lust after my little sister? You’re asking for it!” When Luo Lang learned that the other’s intended target was his precious little sister instead of him, he was instantly consumed with rage. Without thinking, he threw a punch at Jiang Shaoyu.

Right then, Luo Lang’s only thought was to beat this scum before him to death. Compared to being mistaken for a girl, this matter drove him crazy even more. How could he allow the little sister he kept cradled in the palm of his hands to be coveted in such a lewd way by an outsider?! In Luo Lang’s mind, the only one who could give Luo Chao happiness was his boss.

Jiang Shaoyu saw the other’s angry fist coming right at him and without thinking, he met it with a punch of his own. There was a ‘bam’, and the two of them were sent stumbling back again respectively once more. Luo Lang’s anger-infused attack actually did not benefit Jiang Shaoyu any, but similarly, Luo Lang had not gained the upper hand either in the attack. Their exchange ended in a draw.

Zhao Jun’s feet shifted slightly, but Ling Lan suddenly stretched out an arm to stop him. She said softly, “You go finish off those small fry. Leave him to Luo Lang.”

Zhao Jun nodded. He had initially been planning to help Luo Lang out a bit as, after all, the opponent was two ranks higher than Luo Lang — he was definitely no match for the opponent in a one-on-one fight. However, since the clan leader seemed to have a plan, Zhao Jun gave up on his original intention. He believed that with the clan leader as backing, Luo Lang would definitely be fine.

Setting aside his concern for Luo Lang, Zhao Jun turned to leap at the team members of Jiang Shaoyu. Zhao Jun had not forgotten how he and Luo Lang had been cornered by underhanded means earlier. This grudge had to be avenged.

Seeing Zhao Jun leap at them like a ferocious tiger, the remaining seven people glanced at each other and then, gritting their teeth, they surged up to meet him. Despite knowing the opponent was formidable, since their team leader had not said they could leave, as members of his team, they could only bite the bullet and push forwards.

On Zhao Jun's end, due to his strength exceeding the opponents by such a significant margin, he was handling all the attacks coming at him with ease despite being besieged from all sides by the other party. If not for the fact that these people worked well together, forcing Zhao Jun to look harder to find any openings, Zhao Jun would probably have brought these people down a long time ago.

Ling Lan saw that Zhao Jun was doing fine on his own, so she turned her full attention onto Luo Lang's fight. Right then, Luo Lang had already traded several blows with Jiang Shaoyu. Although Luo Lang's rage was off the charts, the gap between him and his opponent's physical skills stage was still slowly pushing Luo Lang into a disadvantageous position, and the situation was becoming increasingly unfavourable for him.

Ling Lan was not anxious, however, because Luo Lang still had an ace in the hole. As soon as he activated his innate talent, Luo Lang's strength would increase exponentially. The battle would only be truly decided then.

Sure enough, after Luo Lang and Jiang Shaoyu exchanged a few more blows, Jiang Shaoyu felt that victory was within his grasp. But then, he suddenly felt his heart skip a beat as a powerful sense of danger swept over him. Jiang Shaoyu reacted swiftly — he decisively discarded the advantageous situation at hand and slid back, instantly pulling several metres away from Luo Lang.

With a loud 'boom', Luo Lang's fists slammed into the ground. The ground caved in, creating a deep pit of about a metre wide. Not only that, with the pit as the centre point, a spider web of cracks spread outwards across the ground. This obviously massive display of strength not only caused Jiang Shaoyu's complexion to pale in shock, but even the face of the store owner was white as a sheet. He now realised that his store may very well be destroyed at the hands of these two people.

The store owner's reaction was caught unerringly by Ling Lan. Her body shook minutely and the hems of her crisp uniform suddenly swayed a little despite there being no wind. Those people still inside the store immediately felt the surrounding temperature plunge to freezing point. They all began circulating their internal energy, and only then did they manage to banish the chill from their bodies.

Among them was a middle-aged man who had been observing things from the side-lines. His eyes suddenly narrowed as a trace of shock coursed through them, his gaze fixed on Ling Lan who currently had her back to them.

Jiang Shaoyu's expression was currently extremely grim. The Luo Lang before him was already completely different from how he was before. His initially lively pretty face had lost all colour now and seemed frozen in ice. His entire being radiated cold air, not much different from the white-clothed youth standing not too far behind him. What scared Jiang Shaoyu even more was the palpable sense of danger coiled around this practically emotionless Luo Lang.

"So he has finally activated his innate talent. I did not expect Luo Lang to choose this personality." Ling Lan had thought that Luo Lang would use the Savage personality which had the highest combat strength

— although the Transcendent Cold personality was also a decent choice, it would not be enough to raise Luo Lang's strength up to the level of his opponent. If Luo Lang wanted to defeat the other, he would have to pay a price.

Jiang Shaoyu felt Luo Lang's force of presence grow stronger and stronger until it was almost equal to his own. The sudden increase in the other's realm confused and frightened him; he could not tell how far his opponent could raise his realm. Still, though he was hesitant to gamble, he finally could not hold back anymore and attacked.

Seeing Jiang Shaoyu's attack coming at him, Luo Lang merely peered at him calmly before raising a fist and punching it out fiercely to meet the attack.

The two boys' fists once again collided and were held frozen like a tableau for several seconds, and then the two boys were sent hurtling backwards in opposite directions. Strangely enough, after flying back several metres, they seemed to be caught by something, losing all momentum to fall directly to the ground.

When the middle-aged man saw this, the shock in his eyes was unmistakable, and his mouth twitched uncontrollably. Although he did not speak, and the people beside him could not know what he had wanted to say, the middle-aged man was well aware that he had been about to say 'Domain'. Only a Domain ability could seal Qi-Jin capable of affecting the store within a specified range.

There were not many Domain masters in the Federation — what shocked him so much was the apparent youth of this young man before his eyes. Judging from the youth's appearance, he was definitely not yet 20 years old, and the record for the youngest person in the Federation to have broken through to Domain was a 23-year-old. And now, the reality before him was telling him that this record had once again been broken. Another peerless prodigy had appeared in the Federation.

Chapter 439: Satisfied?

The moment Jiang Shaoyu landed, his expression changed subtly. While he had been in the air earlier, he had felt a barrier intercept his flight. Although that barrier was extremely gentle and had not harmed him, there was no doubt that a master had stepped in then. For the person responsible to have changed this area into a cage without him noticing, they were most certain to be a Domain-level master.

Jiang Shaoyu swept a cautious gaze around the equipment store. When his eyes landed on Ling Lan standing not too far from them, he directly looked past her, putting his focus on those people hiding in the corner. A stern-faced middle-aged man with glittering eyes caught his eye — at his level, he actually could not tell what level the other was at. Could it be him?

Right then, Jiang Shaoyu was no longer as confident and composed as before. He did not know which side this Domain master was on, so his heart began to beat erratically.

At this time, he suddenly saw that middle-aged man turn his gaze to the white-clothed youth standing not far from them, and his lips moved as if he was saying something to the other. Jiang Shaoyu's heart clenched in fright. He could almost confirm from this that the middle-aged man should be on the other's

side. If he really hurt the beautiful youth before him by accident, he could imagine that things would not end well for him.

Having secured his position as number one in the Second Men's Military Academy, Jiang Shaoyu was not a simple-minded person. He came to a quick resolution. When he saw his opponent prepare to attack, he immediately blocked with his hand and shouted, "I admit defeat."

Unfortunately, his opponent was Luo Lang under the control of the Transcendent Cold personality. This Luo Lang was not someone who would make any half-hearted efforts. Since he had already clashed with the opponent, how could he rest without determining who was the winner once and for all?

Jiang Shaoyu saw that the other's footsteps did not even pause at his words and his heart sank. He felt that he had truly been too impulsive this time. Before obtaining a full picture of the First Men's Military Academy, he had recklessly challenged them upfront. Sure enough, lust truly clouded the mind ... for the first time, Jiang Shaoyu felt remorseful — he had truly brought a knife down upon his head due to his desires.

Resigned, Jiang Shaoyu once again traded a move with Luo Lang. This time, as he had been forced to react hastily, he was sent reeling back a few more steps than Luo Lang; he only stopped when he bumped into the boundary Ling Lan had set.

Ling Lan, who had been observing the fight coolly all this while, suddenly raised her eyebrows, and her gaze carried some deeper contemplation when she looked at Jiang Shaoyu. Just now, her Domain had been attacked, but unfortunately, the strength of the attacker was too weak in comparison to her own and had been unable to break her Domain.

Apparently, Jiang Shaoyu had only looked like he had been forced back so many steps by Luo Lang's Qi-Jin. In reality, he did not have to retreat that far. Luo Lang's activation of the Transcendent Cold personality may have made up the difference between their realms, but with regards to reserves of internal energy, Luo Lang was still weaker; thus, even though Jiang Shaoyu had lost the initiative, Luo Lang still would not have been able to suppress Jiang Shaoyu to this extent.

Jiang Shaoyu's performance was completely so he could use Luo Lang's attack as cover to try and escape from the Domain. When he had been about to bump into the barrier, long prepared, he had circulated his Qi-Jin and slammed it into the barrier. Unfortunately, the barrier was much more solid than he had expected — his Qi-Jin attack had not even caused a ripple in the barrier. His Qi-Jin had been absorbed completely in an instant and he had been blocked, still within the barrier.

By now, Jiang Shaoyu knew that even if he took the initiative to admit defeat, neither Luo Lang before him nor the Domain master helping Luo Lang from the shadows would let him go. Terrified, a savage gleam entered Jiang Shaoyu's eyes. Since the opponent was unwilling to let him go, then he would exact some price from them at all costs.

In renewed ruthlessness, Jiang Shaoyu no longer drew back. He unleashed his full force of presence, putting his all into the battle with Luo Lang.

As expected, at full power, Jiang Shaoyu immediately recaptured the flow of the fight, overpowering Luo Lang. However, as time went by, the situation seemed to be slowly tilting back towards Luo Lang. For the Transcendent Cold personality, the weaker his position, the harder he fought back — meanwhile,

unable to take down his opponent after so long, Jiang Shaoyu was finally starting to show signs of impatience ...

There was a loud 'bang'! The two boys clashed once more, but this time, the two boys did not separate instantly like the previous few times. They remained with their hands touching, standing motionless.

However, those with keen eyes could see clearly that, this time, Luo Lang had not used a fist but a palm. His left palm was clasping Jiang Shaoyu's fist, and this was one of the reasons why the two of them had not sprung apart like before.

A trickle of blood suddenly flowed down from the corner of the immobile Luo Lang's lips. In order to hold the other in place, Luo Lang had received the full brunt of the opponent's Qi-Jin and so had inevitably incurred some internal damage.

Jiang Shaoyu's face changed abruptly as the injured Luo Lang did not seem to feel the pain of his body — his palm holding Jiang Shaoyu's fist captive was still strong and steady. Luo Lang's suddenly raised his long prepared right hand, and a fierce fist was sent hurtling towards Jiang Shaoyu's face. Jiang Shaoyu seemed to catch the sound of the fist cutting through the air. He knew that if he was hit by this punch, he would definitely be struck unconscious.

Jiang Shaoyu was caught by Luo Lang so he could not dodge. He could only fight back with force — his left hand clenched into a fist and he threw it out decisively.

Fist met fist and the forces behind them grappled with each other for several seconds. Having had time to prepare, Luo Lang had used his full strength in his punch, while Jiang Shaoyu had countered hastily and so could only manage to use 70% of his power in his own punch ...

The outcome had been decided the moment Luo Lang decided to receive some damage to engineer this scenario. The two fighters were suddenly thrown apart, flying backwards. There was more blood trickling down from Luo Lang's lips now, but Jiang Shaoyu could not control the roiling copper scent in his chest — he spewed a mouthful of blood in mid-air before crashing heavily onto the ground to slide several metres, only stopping when he reached the barrier.

Luo Lang's condition was not much better than Jiang Shaoyu's. After landing, he staggered back several steps and then, no longer able to stay upright, he collapsed to sit heavily on the floor.

Seeing this, Ling Lan knew the outcome had been decided, so she dismissed her Domain. Jiang Shaoyu, who had been half leaning against the barrier, suddenly felt the barrier disappear from his back. His body fell backwards beyond his control, and he quickly put his hands out to prop himself up, narrowly avoiding smashing into the ground again.

Luo Lang wiped away the traces of blood from his lips as he struggled to his feet. Then, he slowly walked over to stand before Jiang Shaoyu and said coldly, "Remember, I'm called Luo Lang. Don't even think about touching my little sister. If there's a next time, I'll kill you."

When Luo Lang said this, his eyes were all too calm and still, an extreme form of indifference within them. This gaze chilled Jiang Shaoyu's heart — he clenched his fists tightly as he stared steadily at Luo Lang without saying a word. As the number one of the Second Men's Military Academy, he had his pride. He would not permit himself to yield.

Luo Lang did not care about Jiang Shaoyu's attitude; he had merely said what he did to convey his determination. As for whether the other was willing to listen, that was not part of his considerations. And so, as soon as Luo Lang's words faded, his expression had begun to change. His eyes, which had been emotionless and as calm as water, suddenly became lively again, and the cold air surrounding his body disappeared instantly. He had become his usual self again.

Luo Lang slowly made his way back to Ling Lan's side. Ling Lan greeted him with a raised brow and asked lightly, "Satisfied?"

Chapter 440: A Special Guest Arrives!

Luo Lang smiled, abnormally beautiful, causing many of those lingering in the equipment store to be instantly stunned at the sight. He nodded and said, "Satisfied, Boss." There was nothing more satisfying than being able to personally handle a person who had been eyeing him and his sister with lustful intent.

"That's good." Only then did Ling Lan turn her head to say to Zhao Jun, who had long beaten the other members of Jiang Shaoyu's team unconscious, "Let's go."

Zhao Jun shook out his arms, his face regretful as he said, "That really wasn't much of a fight. Next time, Luo Lang, let's trade?"

"Next time?" Luo Lang's face darkened instantly. D*mmmit, did this fellow still want him to be accosted and hit on again?

Seeing Luo Lang's stormy expression, Zhao Jun knew he had said the wrong thing. He quickly added, "What I'm saying is, next time we fight against injustice, let me fight with the stronger ones first." That said, Zhao Jun once again emphasized his words to express his pure and unsullied heart, "That's fighting against injustice, you hear!"

Luo Lang huffed coolly — although he was not too happy with Zhao Jun's explanation, he still decided to let it go. Zhao Jun surreptitiously wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, rejoicing over his luck in overcoming this hurdle. This punk Luo Lang was great in every way ... but he was just too sensitive when it came to this point. As long as something touched on this hot button even just a little, he would go berserk.

Ling Lan was just about to lead Zhao Jun and Luo Lang away from the equipment store when a few more people walked through the door. In the lead was Li Lanfeng, and there were two beautiful girls trailing behind him.

Luo Chao quietly peeked out from behind Li Lanfeng and when she saw Ling Lan, her face instantly flushed bright red. This left Ling Lan rather speechless — it had already been so many years ... when would this little lass Luo Chao learn not to blush?

Luo Chao did not know about Ling Lan's dismay — as soon as she had set eyes on Ling Lan, her heart had begun pounding and her face had begun to burn. In order to let her heart feel a little better, Luo Chao did not dare to look at Ling Lan anymore. She could only turn her gaze away, and when she saw Jiang Shaoyu half-lying immobile on the ground, she asked her brother in confusion, "Big Brother, who's that? What has happened?"

Luo Lang immediately blocked Luo Chao's view and said with an expression of disgust, "Just some scum. Don't bother about him. Let's go."

Luo Chao's soft and sweet voice made the pensive Jiang Shaoyu raise his head sharply. He saw Luo Chao, with that face which was identical to Luo Lang's, and his heart was instantly overcome with chagrin. Even though those two had identical faces, their temperaments were distinctly different and were extremely easy to tell apart. Why had he been so blinded with lust and desire that he had not been able to see the difference? Why had he been so sure that the person he saw was Luo Chao and had made a move so hastily? If he had only been a little calmer, perhaps he would not have ended up in such a sorry state.

Luo Lang was about to drag his sister away with him, but he had only taken two steps when he suddenly recalled that he still had something to tell his boss. He quickly called out to Ling Lan to stop her, "Boss, wait."

Ling Lan turned her head to look calmly at Luo Lang and waited for him to explain.

Luo Lang dashed over to Firmament's side and beckoned Ling Lan over with a wave, wanting her to come over and take a look.

The moment Ling Lan walked over, she was instantly stunned. She had not expected that there would be a sword in the real world with the exact same form as Regretless which Chang Xinyuan had forged in Mecha World. All that was unclear was whether this sword only resembled Regretless in form, or whether it was similar even in terms of creation materials and composition.

Luo Lang was very swift — seeing that his boss was indeed interested in Firmament, he quickly called over a shop assistant hiding at a corner and asked him to open the protective cover so his boss could examine the item.

From the earlier battle, the shop assistant already knew that this youth who was as pretty as a flower was a Qi-Jin master. How would he dare to hesitate? He quickly ran over and opened the protective covering.

Ling Lan reached out her hand to touch Firmament, and she could feel the softness and flexibility of its body. Next, she also looked at the information booklet beside it and learned that this Firmament actually had characteristics extremely similar to those of Regretless in Mecha World. She was overjoyed at this discovery — it should be known that she was already used to using Regretless; if she could obtain a cold weapon like Regretless in the real world, even if she encountered an elite ace, Ling Lan would have the confidence to fight it out.

As for the steep price of Firmament, Ling Lan was not at all concerned. She might perhaps lack other things, but credits was certainly not one of those things. Who asked her to have the incredible cheat code Little Four to help her manage her finances? Over these past ten years or so, that account which Little Four had specially set up for her now contained an astronomical amount of wealth. Furthermore, her parents would transfer a humongous amount of credits to her every year. Just those credits given by her parents alone would be enough for her to purchase this Firmament.

Ling Lan paid without any fuss and then she asked the equipment store to deliver Firmament to the mecha storehouse specially set aside for the First Men's Military Academy. The staff member there in

charge of maintenance and commissioning would help her to install Firmament onto her mecha; she did not have to worry any further about this.

Only after settling all of this did Ling Lan lead Luo Lang and the others away from the equipment store. After they left, Jiang Shaoyu could finally breathe a sigh of relief as he slowly climbed up from the ground. He did not show any expression of rage or hatred, merely calmly waking up those members of his who were unconscious and then leading them awkwardly away from the equipment store.

Jiang Shaoyu did not forget that that Domain master was still inside the equipment store staring coldly at him. He was afraid that if he revealed any bit of resentment, the other would be angered and destroy him completely.

After leaving the equipment store far behind him, Jiang Shaoyu finally could no longer feel any eyes on him. Only then did he truly relax. He turned his head to glance back at the equipment store and a trace of killing intent flashed across his eyes. This grudge would definitely be avenged. In that final battle royale ... if anyone was accidentally killed in the chaos, no one could be blamed.

The middle-aged man waited for everyone to leave before departing from the equipment store as well. Beside him, his friend saw him looking contemplatively in the direction Jiang Shaoyu had left in and he could not help but ask curiously, "You ... are interested in those people?"

"They're all Qi-Jin stage students. How can I not be interested? Who knows how many surprises they will be able to give me in the physical skills competition this time," answered the middle-aged man seriously. If that person participated, perhaps the entire Federation would be shaken.

"Haha, I had forgotten that you're the physical skills referee for this year's tournament. So, how is it? Are you now interested to take in a disciple?" asked his friend with a laugh.

"Take in a disciple? I'm afraid I'm not qualified ..." muttered the middle-aged man to himself. His voice had been too soft for his friend to hear clearly and so that friend asked, "Elder Brother Qian, what did you say?"

"Nothing. Perhaps you should watch this Mecha Grand Tournament well. You might be greatly surprised," said the middle-aged man to his friend seriously. Right then, the middle-aged man did not know that this Mecha Grand Tournament would indeed shock and surprise everyone, but just not in the way he was imagining ...

In the depths of the night, Ling Lan was diligently browsing through the files that Little Four had found for her on all the participants from the various military academies. After a long while, she tapped on one of the virtual images and said, "Perhaps, this will be a good thing. It's about time they learned how to stand on their own."

Meanwhile, the spaceport, which had already been closed for a day, suddenly received a military signal code requesting entrance to the spaceport. The staff immediately checked the code and found that the encrypted code contained a permit to enter the port. Without any further delay, the staff immediately opened the passageway to allow the military vessel to fly into the spaceport.

On his screen, the staff member responsible for monitoring the docking of the military vessel could clearly see a totem of a phoenix wreathed in flames emblazoned on the head of the ship. And beside the totem, two Arabic numerals were printed boldly — 23. He instantly leapt to his feet in excitement, almost sending his chair crashing to the ground, startling the people around him in the process.

Before those people could ask him what was going on, he had already begun shouting loudly, “General Ling Xiao ... it’s General Ling Xiao’s vessel!”

His cry sent everyone in the control room into a tizzy; quite a few people even fell off their seats. They quickly cut all their video feeds to the military vessel, and when they saw that totem that was so familiar it could not be more familiar, as well as that number ‘23’ which represented the number of the army division, they all could not help but scream uncontrollably¹.

The ruckus in the control room also startled the supervisor of the spaceport. When he learned that General Ling Xiao’s vessel had already landed inside the spaceport, this supervisor was similarly so overwhelmed by emotion that he did not know what to do, almost slapping himself to convince himself that this was not a dream. Fortunately, he managed to retain his last bit of rationality and immediately led his deputy to rush towards the spaceport navigation area, intending on personally welcoming General Ling Xiao.

In order to ensure the safety of all the honoured guests of the Mecha Grand Tournament, the Department of National Security had not given planet Qiming the detailed name list of all the attending guests; instead, they had only provided them with a special safe passage passcode signal source to verify if a guest was legitimate. The staff on planet Qiming were not able to guess who the guests were from these coded signals and so they could only wait patiently until the guests arrived to be enlightened.

In fact, on this day, the planet Qiming spaceport had already received quite a number of distinguished guests. Of the twenty-three standing army divisions of the Federation, although many commanders had not come to attend, the divisions had at least sent their vice commanders or one of the subcommanders in their division. There had also been several extremely famous imperial operators who had arrived, and even the vice president of the Federation had long arrived three days ago. It could be said that these staff members were already used to the shock of it all and were not as excitable as before.

But all of this was completely useless when it came to Ling Xiao. Ling Xiao was not only the only division commander in attendance thus far, with the highest status, he was also the national idol Ling Xiao, the immortal battle god. He could be said to be the spiritual support of the entire Huaxia Federation, which was why the staff of the spaceport had completely lost control due to Ling Xiao’s arrival.

The supervisor of the spaceport rushed at soonest notice to the navigation area and waited for General Ling Xiao to disembark from the military vessel. The first to come out were six senior colonels. Their eyes were shining with an intense light — even though they had reined in their force of presence, the people waiting below to welcome them could still feel an invisible pressure pressing down on them. After they came down, they spread out to cover six directions, subtly blocking off all the people waiting in the navigation area.

The supervisor knew that these six people were certain to be General Ling Xiao’s personal guards — since they had already come out, this meant that General Ling Xiao would soon appear. At this thought, the supervisor’s heart began to pound.

However, the next person to come out from the ship slightly disappointed the supervisor because it was a major general. He stood at the door of the ship, looked down to survey the situation for a bit and found everything normal, before turning back into the ship.

Soon, another figure appeared at the ship's door. The supervisor fixed his gaze on the person and saw that it was General Ling Xiao this time. General Ling Xiao was dressed in a sharp-pressed general's uniform, and there was a warm and gentle smile on his handsome face, welcoming to others like a spring breeze. The supervisor's pounding heart instantly calmed down considerably at the sight of this smile.

Everyone was waiting for General Ling Xiao to come down from the ship when General Ling Xiao suddenly turned around and reached out his left hand at the same time to hold onto another person's right hand. A slender and graceful figure slowly appeared at the door — she had a noble and elegant air, her beautiful face adorned with a soft smile as she stared with deep affection at the man standing beside her. The two of them looked extremely young, as if time had not left much of a mark on them. The handsome man and the lovely woman were like a jade couple ².

Everyone knew that this had to be General Ling Xiao's wife, Lan Luofeng. The true love between General Ling Xiao and his wife was something every girl in the Federation dreamed of.