

Crossing 551

Chapter 551: Work Hard For Me!

“Boss, you were too rash.” Little Four reprimanded Ling Lan upon seeing her condition improving.

“I didn’t expect the recoil to be so strong,” Ling Lan replied innocently.

“Don’t lie to me. If you didn’t reenact Xie Yi’s memory, the recoil wouldn’t have been this strong.” Reenacting the memory required an abundance of spiritual power. Ling Lan was already pushing herself when she used Invasion of Dreams. She was lucky that she didn’t get worse injuries.

Little Four got scared by the thought and started tearing up.

Ling Lan blinked. She wanted to change the topic, but when she saw the fear and remorse in Little Four’s eyes, she apologized to him instead. “I’m sorry that I let you worry. I won’t let myself get hurt again. Don’t worry about me.” She reached out and touched Little Four’s head, feeling grateful for his concern.

Little Four’s anxiousness taught Ling Lan a lesson and she told herself to prepare well before doing anything in the future. She could not let the people who loved and cared for her worry again.

Ling Lan saw that Little Four was still sad and quickly changed the topic. She asked, “Do you think that our clan can win the challenge?”

Little Four stopped crying and answered her seriously. “Although you got kicked out of the challenge, Leiting No. 1 is out of the battle too. If Qi Long maintains his normal standard, the other members of Leiting Mecha Clan won’t be able to win against him if they fight one-on-one.”

“I think that there’s no way our clan will lose.” Little Four raised his head proudly. The Lingtian Battle Clan had grown into a clan full of special-class operators. They were able to become the pillars of the Lingtian clan. His boss was not the only strong person in the team now.

“Everyone has grown up. I can let go now.” Ling Lan stood up, walked to the window and looked at the scenery outside her house. She had been staying here for more than two years. Now that her team members had grown stronger, she could focus on herself.

Little Four was puzzled at Ling Lan’s words. “Boss, what do you mean?”

“Closed-door meditation,” Ling Lan replied with a smile. She had wanted to meditate so that she could merge all the things she had learned during this period of time. However, before this, there were too many things on her heart and she was not able to meditate in peace. The challenge this time was not only the start of her plans to unify the military academy, but it was also a challenge she posed for the clan. She wanted to know if they could operate all by themselves.

This was also why she crossed realms to help Xie Yi solve his problem. Ling Lan liked to settle everything properly and make sure that nothing was left to chance; it was the only way she could put her heart at ease. According to her analysis, this trait was inherited from her mother. Actually, her real age was around the same as her mother. People of this age liked to concern themselves with everything. It was hard for her to change.

Little Four's eyes lit up, his face filled with surprise. "Boss, are you..."

Ling Lan nodded. "It's time."

It was time for her to stop protecting her teammates and let them battle with the other factions themselves. No matter what the result was, it would hasten their growth.

"But you're going to unify the military academy soon. If you meditate now and they lose, your efforts will all be wasted." Little Four worried about leaving the situation in the hands of others.

Ling Lan smiled gently and flicked Little Four's forehead. "Do you think that I honestly want to become the king of the military academy?"

Little Four rubbed at his forehead, confused.

"If I don't give them a goal to work towards, they won't have the motivation to become stronger. Being the king of the military academy is a goal that's big enough for them to work hard for," Ling Lan explained. She was not an arrogant person. She would not have done this without a valid reason.

"So, let's make them work hard for me and for the goal." Ling Lan gave a brilliant smile, which brightened up her face, too. Mesmerized, Little Four suddenly wiped at the corners of his mouth. *My boss shouldn't smile too much.*

The battle between Lingtian and Leiting didn't end due to the exit of Tian Jiajun and Ling Lan. After a few hours of fighting and ambushing, the Lingtian Mecha Clan won against the Leiting Mecha Clan with three members surviving the battle.

This meant that the Leiting Mecha Clan, which had been around for a few hundred years, would be disbanded and merged entirely into the Lingtian Mecha Clan. The name "Leiting" was merely history now. Some new members of Leiting might build another Leiting Mecha Clan in the future, but it would not be the same clan as before. It would be a new mecha clan.

Everyone thought that there was no stopping of Lingtian after they defeated Leiting, but it was during such a time that Ling Lan announced her closed-door meditation.

This news caused an uproar among the people in the military academy. Everyone felt that Ling Lan made the wrong decision, that she chose the worst time to meditate. If she had gone to meditate a few months later, she would have been able to lead the Lingtian Mecha Clan in destroying all the other factions and become the king of the military academy. Her name would have gone down in the school's history as a true hero.

Many felt that Ling Lan made a wrong decision, but the other mecha clans were relieved; they felt hopeful about being able to win against the Lingtian Mecha Clan. This change made it difficult to predict the results of the future battles, but Ling Lan had achieved the results that she wanted.

A human would only treasure the things that he or she fought hard for. The Lingtian Mecha Clan needed this training.

After Ling Lan went into meditation, Lingtian battled with many other mecha clans. The former Leiting special-class operators were still angry about the merger, so the members who participated in the battles were all operators from the original Lingtian Mecha Clan.

Although the Lingtian Mecha Clan did not have as many special-class mecha operators as the rest of the factions, they learned from Ling Lan's tactics and knew how to make the situation advantageous to them. Hence, the Lingtian Mecha Clan always chose the twelve-man team challenge mode. They did not give the other factions a chance for them to use their numbers against them.

Chapter 552: Close Combat King!

The first match that took place after Ling Lan was gone was the match between the Lingtian Mecha Clan and Tianji Mecha Clan. The Tianji Mecha Clan was the third faction in the military academy. They had always been one rank below Lingtian Mecha Clan. They had a greater number of mecha operators as compared to Lingtian and the quality of their mecha operators was better too. Many people felt that Lingtian Mecha Clan would lose this battle and give up their first-rank position.

At the start of the battle, the Lingtian Mecha Clan was taken by surprise and five of their members were eliminated within an hour. The people felt that their prediction was true.

However, the remaining seven members were not agitated at all. Their mentality stayed strong and they remained calm. They used all the methods that could think of to kill their opponent. They told themselves that killing one was their mission and killing two was a bonus. They fought hard and managed to salvage the situation. The score was 2:3 towards the end of the battle. Two Lingtian mechas and three Tianji mechas were left.

The three Tianji mecha operators left were the strongest of the cohort while Qi Long and Luo Lang were the ones who survived.

Lingtian No. 1, Qi Long, was the strongest special-class operator in Lingtian, second only to Ling Lan, but he had only advanced recently. Lingtian No. 4 had also advanced less than half a year ago, so no one thought that they would be able to defeat the three Tianji special-class operators who had been at this level for three years. However, the Lingtian Mecha Clan left everyone in shock once again.

Lingtian No. 1, Qi Long, rose up because of this match. His close combat skills were amazing and frightening. The combined attack of Tianji No.1 and Tianji No. 2 was not able to defeat him. He managed to last till Lingtian No. 4 killed Tianji No. 3. Although Lingtian No. 4 also performed well, he did not get as much recognition as Qi Long. His excellence, calmness, and perfect operation were buried under the hype about Qi Long's close combat skills.

Qi Long didn't lose when facing two mechas and even defeated Tianji No. 1 easily after Luo Lang came to support him. In the end, the two of them killed the last mecha from Tianji and won the competition. The rumors of Lingtian Mecha Clan being a third-rate mecha clan without Ling Lan was broken.

Qi Long's invincible and domineering close combat skills allowed him to gain the approval of the cadets who loved close combat. Some first years and second years even made Qi Long their idol. Before this, a huge portion of the cadets had fallen in love with balanced mecha after seeing Ling Lan's performance in the Grand Mecha Tournament. When they saw Qi Long's performance, they started hesitating and wondered what mecha they truly liked. The cadets took this chance to seriously ponder about their decision and find the right path for themselves. Hence, many juniors of Ling Lan became outstanding mecha operators. Of course, all of this happened in the future so it was not important now.

Qi Long's exceptional performance proved to everyone that the Lingtian Mecha Clan didn't only have Ling Lan—they had Qi Long too.

However, there were more challenges awaiting Lingtian. Qi Long's excellent performance caused the other mecha clans to be on their guard. In the upcoming third match, Lingtian would face the Wuji Mecha Clan who was ranked fourth. The Wuji Mecha Clan made some adjustments to their plan.

Since they didn't have the confidence to defeat Qi Long, Wuji clan chose to pester Qi Long and prevent him from attacking anyone. They sent out a strong long-range mecha operator and succeeded in their plan.

The plan made by Wuji was perfect. The long range mecha operator had taken ample preparation. He maximized the speed of his mecha engine, so Qi Long was not able to hit him. Qi Long could neither attack nor shake him off. There was nothing he could do.

The Wuji Mecha Clan's action enlightened the other mecha clans and they felt more at ease. Qi Long's close combat mecha had its weakness too. It was not as fast as long-range mechas and this was something they could make use of.

Once they held Qi Long up, Wuji Mecha Clan went to attack the other mecha operators of Lingtian without any worry. Wuji was an old faction too. They had a strong foundation. Without Qi Long, Wuji was stronger than Lingtian, and the ensuing battle proved this point. The competition didn't lean to one side and both clans had mechas eliminated. As time passed, however, Lingtian started to have more mecha operators being killed and Wuji started to gain the upper hand...

When the score was at 4:2, Qi Long was still being held back by the long-range mecha, while the other three mecha operators from Wuji went to attack the remaining Lingtian mecha. Everyone expected this mecha to be destroyed, after which Wuji would target Qi Long together. However, a mecha operator from Lingtian unleashed his potential again. This time, it was Xie Yi, the mecha operator who had substituted Ling Lan in the first match that had passed.

Although Xie Yi had used the Chain Combo skill to defeat Tian Jiajun in that match, he was on the losing end from the start and Ling Lan suddenly announced her close door meditation right after the match. With the rise of Qi Long after that, everyone's attention was drawn away and he was ignored. However, a capable individual would always appear in front of everyone again.

Xie Yi didn't get nervous in this dire situation. Unexpectedly, he was calmer than normal and his operating level suddenly rose from the intermediate level to the optimal peak. He used his exceptional skills to defeat two mechas and then self-destructed with the last mecha.

This was the worst battle the Lingtian Mecha Clan had ever experienced. Xie Yi's self-destruction saved Lingtian and angered Qi Long. Qi Long had a breakthrough in his hand speed during this moment. This breakthrough allowed him to catch up with the long range mecha and defeat him. Lingtian won the battle.

If Xie Yi hadn't unleashed his potential and was defeated by the three mechas, Wuji would definitely have won this match. This was a close call for the Lingtian Mecha Clan.

Chapter 553: Releasing Potential!

After the match, the members of Lingtian felt fortunate. They were lucky that their opponent was Wuji and not Leiting or Tian Ji. Not all the special-class operators from Wuji had reached the peak-level of the special-class. Among the three mecha operators that had surrounded Xie Yi, only one was at peak-level, while the other two were at intermediate-level; this was why Xie Yi was able to stay alive and even defeat two special-class operators while running away. If all of them had been at the peak-level, Xie Yi could at most have defeated two mechas. He would never have been able to bring down the third mecha in a mutual self-destruct.

After reviewing their battle, the Lingtian Mecha Clan finally understood why their boss had chosen to start with the strongest mecha clan first. At the start, their opponents didn't know their true power. As their abilities became revealed to all the other cadets, the mecha clans that had yet to fight with them would carefully analyze them and think of counter-measures. However, since the mecha clans were weaker, Lingtian Mecha Clan would not be defeated easily.

It would have been safer had they chosen to start from the weakest mecha clan, but then the stronger teams would have gained more information on them. If the mecha operators that Xie Yi encountered had all been at peak-level... Luck might allow them to win once, but not twice. If they met a stronger opponent in the next match, they would lose the battle easily.

Han Jiyun looked in the direction of Ling Lan's meditation room and he sighed emotionally. Having realized that the seemingly crazy order of battle was actually the most advantageous to them, he admired his boss' decision-making ability. He would always make decisions with foresight and deliberation.

Although the end of these two matches signaled the end of Lingtian's hardest period, it didn't mean that they would definitely win the matches thereafter. No mecha clan would want to give up their rights and bow down to another mecha clan. They would fight against them no matter how hopeless it seemed.

As expected, in the third match with Dwotong, Dwotong drew a lesson from Wuji and Tianji and sent out their best long-range mechas to hold back Qi Long and Xie Yi who had turned the tables around for the two past matches.

The other ten mecha operators went to kill the rest of Lingtian. The Dwotong Mecha Clan had equipped all their mechas with powerful long-range weapons. They prepared to use the long-range weapons against Qi Long and Xie Yi after killing the other members of Lingtian. That way, they could prevent any chances of having a short-distanced fight with Qi Long and Xie Yi. Dwotong's plan was good, but yet another member of Lingtian released their potential...

"In the third match, Lingtian No. 4, Luo Lang, had an outstanding performance and defeated two mechas in a row. He self-destructs along with a third mecha and Dwotong's plan failed."

"In the fourth match, Lingtian No. 2, Wu Jiong, was really impressive when he self-destructs with an opponent's mecha after defeating another one. LuoJi Mecha Clan got flustered after losing two mechas and Lingtian seized this chance and won the battle."

“In the fifth match, Lingtian No. 7, Lin Zhong-qing, released his potential and defeated two mechas. Afterward, he successfully held back the third mecha and allowed Lingtian to have an advantage in quantity. In the end, Xiling got defeated.”

“In the sixth match, Lingtian No. 3, Li Yingjie, amazed everyone by...”

The mecha clans that fought Lingtian in the following matches tried to hold back the members that released their potential, but the new members continued to exceed their expectations. They could not predict who would release their potential next. Hence, they could only be defeated by Lingtian and be merged into the Lingtian Mecha Clan. After Lingtian defeated the top 8 mecha clan of the military academy, the outcome was a foregone conclusion. No one expected Lingtian to fail at unifying the military academy unless the 12 members got a stomach ache on the day of the match and decided not to take part in it...

There were some mecha clans who wanted to poison the Lingtian Mecha Clan in real life. They couldn't do anything to Lingtian in the virtual world, so they hoped that they could hurt them in reality. However, everyone knew that this was impossible. The disciplinary team of the military academy was keeping an eye on them. The disciplinary team wanted to have an opportunity to show the cadets their power to prevent them from forgetting their frightening existence.

After the sixth match ended, Ling Yi walked out of his login pod in silence. He had watched all the six matches.

The other login pods in the room opened soon after him and five people walked out.

“Leader, why did you come out so quickly?” Tao Xiaotao looked shocked. Their leader had always come out last in the first few matches. He always had to rewind the match a few times before he got satisfied.

Ling Yi didn't reply to him. He walked to the washroom and filled the basin with water, following which he suddenly dunked his head into the water and held his breath for a few minutes before looking up again. The water on his hair splashed onto the mirror in front of him. Ling Yi started at his reflection. He could see the doubt in his eyes.

“I'm not qualified.” Pain filled Ling Yi's eyes as he widened them. The master that he wanted to protect had so many powerful people around him. Originally, he thought that he had the rights to stand beside him, but now, it just seemed to be his wishful thinking—he was nothing.

“Leader, we are still first years.” Yi Tiange walked over and consoled him.

“I'm only one year younger than them, yet the distance between us is vast,” Ling Yi said in a low voice, turning around.

“Leader, no one can reach the highest level in just one step. Among the first years, you are outstanding, too. I have looked up information on them. When they were first years, they were no stronger than you are now. We can catch up with them as long as we work hard,” Rong Ziruo said as he passed him a towel calmly, seeming confident.

“Yes. When you said that you wanted to bring us into the First Men's Military Academy, everyone laughed and said that you are dreaming. Even we didn't have confidence. However, you did it. We passed the examination and entered together. You can do whatever you want to do. I believe that you

can.” Tao Xiaotao nodded his head firmly as he said all this. The trust in his eyes warmed up Ling Yi’s heart and his self-doubt disappeared.

“Yes, I can do it. If they can do it, I can too.” Ling Yi regained his confidence.

Rong Ziruo and Yi Tiange exchanged a glance with each other before looking at Tao Xiaotao and smiling. Although Tao Xiaotao always created trouble and was like a kid that never grew up, his pureness made him sincere and trustworthy. He was an excellent stabilizer to use when other people doubted themselves. It seemed to them that they needed to treat him better from now on.

Chapter 554: Little Four’s Word?

Lingtian faced dangerous battle, but the overall situation was stable. The members of Lingtian gradually got better in their mecha operating skills so as long as they maintained their standard, Lingtian would unify the military academy.

As compared to the good news from Lingtian Mecha Clan, Ling Lan’s meditation was not going smoothly.

A few months ago, Ling Lan had managed to merge all her knowledge about mecha piloting and use them smoothly. She was confident that she would be able to make a breakthrough in her hand speed that had been stagnant for over a year. However, she would always lose control at the crucial moment and all her prior efforts would be in vain. She was just a slight distance away from the requirements to advance to an imperial operator.

Ling Lan failed many times and grew slightly frustrated. Why couldn’t she make a breakthrough? She was proficient in the basic controls that her father, her instructors and Instructor Number Three of the learning space taught her. She had satisfied all their requirements, so she didn’t know what she needed to work on now.

After Ling Lan failed again, she took a deep breath and entered careful contemplation regarding this matter. She knew that she lacked something to achieve her breakthrough, lacked something to become an imperial operator.

“I have nothing that I can practice on anymore and I have completed many dangerous missions in Mecha World. I believe that my temperament has met the requirements as well after so many years of practicing in the learning space... What on earth do I lack?” Ling Lan rubbed her temples and went deep in thought, but she still couldn’t figure out what she was lacking.

“Boss, don’t be anxious. Why not ask Number Three?” Little Four couldn’t bear to see Ling Lan facing any trouble so he quickly shared his opinion, hoping that it would help Ling Lan.

Ling Lan’s eyes lit up. “Little Four, you’re right. Maybe Instructor Number Three will know what my problem is.” Her mecha piloting was mostly taught by Instructor Number Three; thus, if she had any problems, Number Three would definitely know.

Ling Lan controlled her consciousness and entered the learning space. She opened the door to Number Three’s room without hesitation and saw Number Three smiling amiably at her. He said, “I thought that you didn’t need me anymore.”

Ling Lan was speechless. What was her teacher trying to say? He made her sound like an ungrateful person... fine, she was in the wrong anyway. She hadn't thought about seeking help from Instructor Number Three before she meditated herself, so it was understandable that Instructor Number Three would tease her. She deserved it.

Ever since she had finished her lessons with Instructor Number Three when she was 16 years old, she had been figuring things out all by herself for the past two years. This habit made her forget about her Instructor Number Three. She had wasted one month.

Ling Lan knew that she made a mistake, but she didn't feel remorse or regret. One would definitely make some mistakes or do some stupid things in the process of growing up. There was nothing wrong with this. One just needed to learn from it and listen to other people's experiences so as to not make the same mistake again.

Ling Lan's mentality was good. She knew how to criticize herself; hence, she only felt awkward for a moment. Afterward, she asked, "Instructor Number Three, if you can't bear your loneliness, I recommend Instructor Number Five. He'll find a solution for you."

Number Three's smile froze at her words as he remembered how crazy Number Five was and a chill ran down his spine. He knew that Ling Lan had a good relationship with Number Five. Number Five was extremely satisfied with Ling Lan so he would not reject her most of the time. If Ling Lan had a chat with Number Five, the latter would definitely come and find him... he didn't want to offend the scary Number Five. Number Three changed the topic quickly. "Ling Lan, why did you come and find me?" He had been observing Ling Lan, so he knew of her current situation.

"I feel that I'm ready. Yet I can't increase my hand speed for 0.1 seconds. I want to ask whether you know what I am lacking," Ling Lan asked seriously.

Number Three pondered the matter for a while before replying, "You have to understand the reason for yourself. I can't just tell you directly. Let me bring you to experience it."

The moment he finished speaking, Number Three waved his hand and a great force struck Ling Lan, who fell backward and suddenly dropped down.

Ling Lan received a shock upon being hit, but she believed that Number Three would not harm her. She quickly steadied herself and waited for her consciousness to recover.

"Boom." Ling Lan felt herself being slammed into something and then her body was in so much pain it felt as though she was run over by a car. She got the wrong impression that she was back in her past life, the life where she had to endure unbearable pain all day long.

"Hello. Hey, wake up." She felt someone slapping her face lightly. Ling Lan opened her eyes and saw a young man with sharp ears, blue eyes, golden hair, and some wrinkles on his face. The man was looking at her worriedly.

"Elf?" Ling Lan was stunned for a moment. Did she transmigrate again? Before she could think any further, the explosion beside her shocked her.

"Lan Si, you are finally awake. This is great," The young man exclaimed happily upon seeing Ling Lan opening her eyes.

“Who are you?” Ling Lan regained her calmness. She knew that this was probably an illusion that the learning space had created. She had been through many missions in the learning space and seen many different people. They were all human beings that took the form of people she saw in real life. However, this world looked like that of Greek mythology. The explosions and smoke in the air reminded her that she was not in a world of myth; it was a modern battlefield.

“I am Ji Sheng. Did you hurt your head when you flew away due to the explosion just now?” shouted the young man called Ji Sheng. “Ah, Lan Si, this is bad.”

“Shut up. My head is hurting. It’ll get worse if you scream any more. Tell me what’s happening here.” Ling Lan shot a cold glance at Ji Sheng, who became frightened.

Ji Sheng covered his mouth immediately and shook his head.

“What is this place? What year is this? What are we doing? Why did I faint?” Ling Lan threw a series of questions at Ji Sheng and asked him to reply.

Ji Sheng replied honestly. He wanted to help his friend regain his memory faster so he put down the hands covering his mouth and said quickly, “This is the Mandora star system, planet No. 113. We are in the Mandora star calendar, year 44443-7327. We are fighting against the T21 division. We collided with two enemy planes just now, but we managed to parachute out. Just as we were planning to go back to our base, a missile landed right beside us and you were thrown off by the force. You landed on your head and fainted afterward. I called out to you for a long time before you woke up.”

“Mandora? King mecha learning device?” Ling Lan was shocked. Wasn’t Mandora the place where Little Four came from? Was this Little Four’s world?

“Ah, Lan Si, are you starting to remember everything? You are right. After birth, we would be equipped with the king mecha learning device. We would then wait for the learning device to be activated,” Ji Sheng replied to her happily.

“I have some impression now. However, there are still some gaps in my memory,” Ling Lan replied calmly with a frown.

Ji Sheng, on the other hand, was very happy. Lan Si was getting better. He didn’t recall much, but it was better than nothing.

“The activation of the learning system depends on our innate talent. The stronger your innate talent, the earlier the system will activate. The fastest time recorded was 15 months after childbirth. Of course, that child is an anomaly and will definitely become one of the most powerful king mecha operators in the future,” Ji Sheng continued. He was envious of that child. His own innate talent was merely normal and so he had activated the learning system when he was 8 years old. He had just become an intermediate mecha warrior.

“I remember this. I want to know who our enemies are and where they come from.” Ling Lan stopped Ji Sheng from continuing this topic.

Ling Lan remembered Little Four mentioning how powerful the Mandora star system was. The star systems around them were not their match at all. However, without the experiences on the battlefield, the military strength of a nation would deteriorate. In order to maintain their strength and continue

producing outstanding warriors, the Mandora star system combined all their technology and invented the learning system. It allowed the people of the Mandora star system to experience battles in the learning system and henceforth become a mecha expert. Some might even become a king mecha operator.

However, the Mandora star system was experiencing an attack now. There was something amiss going on.

Ji Sheng's expression dimmed at Ling Lan's question. "The king mecha learning device is very cruel. The elimination rate is as high as 30%. Some people even ended up harming their brain and becoming mentally disabled because they couldn't handle the vicious training. Because of this, a portion of the people protested. They felt that this was a scheme by the intelligence entities who wanted to control the humans and build their own nation."

"Intelligence entity?" Was he referring to Little Four and her instructors in the learning space?

"Yes. The Mandora star system is made up of two kinds of people. One group is made up of Mandora citizens like us and the other contains the intelligence entities. They were just an intelligent system at the start, but they evolved and started to have their own consciousness. We worked together and created this strong and powerful Mandora star system. To show that the Mandora citizens accepted them wholeheartedly, we used the current mainframe's name to name the current era. The name would only change when the next mainframe takes over."

"If that's what happened, why did the people feel that the intelligence entities wanted to control the humans? Survival of the fittest is an old law of nature. They could not suspect the intelligence entities just because of this," Ling Lan asked curiously.

"Someone suggested that the implantation of the learning system was a scheme by the intelligence entities to control the Mandora citizens. The intelligence entities could kill anyone that resisted against them using the learning system's chip. After some time, a huge bunch of important talents died suddenly from an explosion in their brain. It almost destroyed an entire generation. People started suspecting that the intelligence entities were killing talents among the Mandora people to prepare for their takeover. General Liya also found evidence to support this hypothesis, so the Mandora citizens were enraged and killed all the intelligence entities..." Ji Sheng didn't believe that this was the truth. There was doubt in his eyes. However, he was just a normal person and his opinion would not affect the war at all. The only thing he could do was follow the flow of the crowd.

"Hence, the war started. We are fighting against the intelligence entities." Ling Lan already knew what happened in the Mandora star system, but she was not sure what the result was. Who won the war?

If the intelligence entities won and Little Four knew about this war, he must have been produced after it happened. If that was the case, why did the intelligence entities continue implanting learning systems in humans? Was it just to cultivate mecha operators? Were they not afraid that humans would go against them again? Were they really aiming to control the Mandora citizens?

Cold sweat fell down her forehead, but Ling Lan regained her senses and calmed down instantly. She rejected this line of thought. She could feel Little Four's sincerity, which was not something that could

be faked. Her instructors were strict and vicious, but their motive was clear; to make her stronger, with the exception of Number Five.

Did the Mandora citizens win, after which the rulers of the country used the learning system again because they knew the benefits it could give? No, if the Mandora citizens won, the rulers would not have gone back on their words. The only possibility was that the learning system was implanted in a small number of people. For instance, their secret military forces...

Ling Lan felt that she had correctly guessed the sequence of events. She felt that the Mandora citizens were stupid, but she was one of them now. She had no choice but to fight with the Mandora citizens.

Having gotten the information she wanted, Ling Lan returned to the base camp with Ji Sheng. They returned to their mecha clan. After resting for two days, they received a new order.

There were 6 people in each mecha clan. Ling Lan was in the same clan as Ji Sheng. There were 4 other mecha operators and they were all intermediate mecha warriors. They were only brought into the army because there were too many warriors on the intelligence team. Almost all the Mandora citizens were mobilized for this war.

Ling Lan got onto her mecha. She was familiar with the Mandora star system's mechas. Number Three had asked her to research about Mandora star system's mechas to understand the difference between a good and bad mecha. Ling Lan fiddled with the machine for a few minutes and familiarized herself with the control.

Ji Sheng was shocked when he saw Lan Si operating the mecha so smoothly. "Lan Si, when did your piloting become so good?" They were only able to complete some simple actions and were not able to move their mecha as though it was part of their body.

Chapter 555: Sacrifice!

Ling Lan replied calmly, "Isn't this very simple?"

Ji Sheng turned around and teared up silently. Was his talent in mecha piloting so bad? He wasn't even as good as the quiet Lan Si.

Lan Si had been a quiet student in school and his results were always behind Ji Sheng, which was why the latter thought that his mecha piloting skill was slightly better than Lan Si. However, this was apparently just his imagination.

After a short period of preparation, Ling Lan's team went onto the battlefield. Their opponents were not very strong either, so the Mandora army let lower-leveled mecha operators like them fight, too.

Ling Lan had found out from Ji Sheng that intelligence entity mechas also needed time to become more powerful; even they could not advance straight into the level of ace mecha master after having just gained sentience. They needed to start from a lower mecha as well.

Their practices came from the battlefield, too. Experiences on the battlefield would stimulate the intelligence entity to evolve and advance to an intermediate mecha operator. Afterward, the

intelligence entity would go forth to become an advanced mecha warrior, a special-class operator, an ace mecha master, an intermediate mecha warrior... and ultimately, a god-class mecha master.

Of course, this was not how the Mandora star system's mecha operators named their ranks, but Ling Lan used the Federation's ranking system so that she could understand better.

The intermediate mechas controlled by intelligence entities were naturally stronger than the intermediate mecha warriors of the Mandora citizens. Hence, Mandora citizens had a higher casualty rate as compared to the intelligence entities. Ling Lan's team lost more than half their members during this mission. Only Ling Lan and Ji Sheng were left. If Ling Lan hadn't protected Ji Sheng secretly, he might also have been sacrificed.

After some reorganization, new members were added into Ling Lan's team and she became the team leader.

Months and years passed. Ling Lan continued her busy life, which consisted of fighting battles and changing team members. At the start, she had still wondered as to what her Instructor Number Three wanted to teach her through this illusion, but as the days went by, Ling Lan didn't have the time to think on it anymore—she needed to fight for many hours every day. In one of the missions, the battle had lasted for a few days. If Ling Lan hadn't had the habit of filling up her energy storage units, she would have died along with the other mecha operators.

A few years passed. Ling Lan almost felt that this was her real life and the life in the Federation was just her dream. Luckily, Ling Lan had been through much training in the learning space, so she kept her mind focused. This was just training.

The battle continued and the Mandora citizens started to gain the upper hand. Ji Sheng turned ever quieter as their team members continued to change and die, while the doubt in his eyes grew.

When their team members died again, Ji Sheng couldn't control himself anymore and asked Ling Lan, "Why do we need to have this war? Why can't we just sit down and have a discussion? Our ancestors could embrace other races and create the harmonious and powerful Mandora country. Why can't we do it? Are we wrong, or did the intelligence entities change?"

Ling Lan didn't know how to reply to Ji Sheng. Wars occurred due to the thirst for power. The higher authorities in Mandora felt that their power was taken away by the intelligence entity, which was why they wanted to get it back. The intelligence entities didn't want to become slaves. They wanted freedom and equality; hence, they would never give up their power either. Since both parties couldn't reach a consensus, a war started. No one cared about what the Mandora citizens thought.

Ling Lan knew that she was biased towards the intelligence entities because of her relationship with Little Four and her instructors in the learning space. She didn't believe that the intelligence entities wanted to control the Mandora citizens and make them their slaves.

They reached their fifth year on the battlefield. After all the experiences they gained, they had advanced to become ace mecha masters.

However, their opponents grew stronger too; the intelligence entity army was also made up of ace mechas. The battles became fiercer and more dangerous. One time, due to a wrong prediction by the

commanding officers of the army, the mecha division that Ling Lan was under ended up surrounded by three division of the opposing army.

Everyone felt despair, as their opponents outnumbered them three times. They fought for three whole days but no reinforcements came. In the end, almost everyone was sacrificed. Ling Lan was held back by three ace mechas and so she couldn't help Ji Sheng at all—he died before her eyes.

Ling Lan managed to escape from the three ace mechas, but upon her return to the Mandora base camp, she realized that her entire division was nearly annihilated; only less than 5,000 mecha operators came back when there had been close to a million elite mecha operators at the start. However, their sacrifice was not in vain, as they managed to destroy two of their opponents' divisions, while the last one had only two-thirds of their ace mechas left.

This battle had a huge impact on Ling Lan. In the past, she hadn't cared for the death of her team members. She would feel pity for them, but she was not sad. It was like playing a game, where the NPCs in the team died.

However, Ji Sheng was different. He had been with her ever since she entered this world. Ling Lan had started to treat Ji Sheng as her companion. Ling Lan had thought that she would be able to protect Ji Sheng before she found what she wanted and left this world. The reality, however, taught her a lesson—there were things that she too wasn't capable of doing.

"I'm not strong enough yet. If I were an imperial operator, I wouldn't have been held up by the three ace mechas and Ji Sheng wouldn't have died..." Ling Lan's heart ached as she clenched her fist and looked up at the vast sky. "Instructor Number Three, what do you want me to understand? If you want me to understand how small and weak I am, I've already understood it. Why am I still here?"

Ling Lan didn't like this war that was fought without knowing its purpose. She felt that she was merely a tool being used to kill people. It made her feel unimportant and she hated this feeling.

Unfortunately, Ling Lan didn't get the correct answer. She continued to stay in this world and fight as an ace mecha master.

Chapter 556: Breakthrough!

Day after day, Ling Lan continued to fight in the war and she started to turn numb. She became one of the quietest members and turned reclusive. Her team members didn't talk to her and she always fought alone, while the rest of her team members would always help each other...

Her team members continued to die and new members continued to replace them. The cycle went on for five more years. Ling Lan was the only one left from the original lineup of the team. No matter how much the other members helped each other, they still died.

Ling Lan came to Ji Sheng's tomb to visit him again. She brought along his favorite Mandora flower. The Mandora flower was the national flower of the Mandora star system, which was what Ji Sheng wanted to be loyal to.

"Five years have passed and I'm still alive," Ling Lan said calmly to the tomb. "Everyone else is dead."

“Why am I still alive when the others have died?” Ling Lan smiled sarcastically. “Because they weren’t strong enough. I finally understood what my mistake was. I should have trained you like how I trained Qi Long and the rest of the Lingtian Mecha Clan. That way, you would have become stronger and stayed alive just like me.”

“I took five years to realize this.” Ling Lan stared intently at the tomb as she spoke. “Luckily, it’s not too late. If I continue to worry like a mother for Qi Long and the members of Lingtian, they won’t be able to grow. The things that happened to you would happen to them.”

“Everyone needs to walk their own path. I need to learn to let go and let them find their own path.” Ling Lan’s gaze was clear. At this moment, the clan members of Lingtian were no longer her little children—they were comrades who would fight alongside her.

Ji Sheng’s tomb began to spin when Ling Lan had this thought and she knew then that this was what Number Three had wanted her to understand. She returned to Number Three’s learning space.

“You finally understood it,” Number Three said, smiling amiably at her.

Ling Lan smiled bitterly. “Seems like I was too stubborn.”

“Yes. Your reason for becoming strong was too complicated, so it hindered your progress.” Number Three sighed. This was not a bad thing, but it had exceeded Ling Lan’s capabilities. If she did not have a calm and free mindset, she would not be able to achieve a breakthrough.

Ling Lan pouted. “Number Three, you don’t have to be so lenient. I’m just too greedy. I wanted to protect all the friends and families around me who loved and cared for me...” She had been thinking too far ahead and placed too much pressure on herself; hence, she had failed in improving herself.

Number Three finally smiled. He didn’t expect Ling Lan to be so harsh on herself. He said, “I am glad that you know this. Remember, your friends and families are your motivation, not your obstacles.” Number Three’s words seemed to have a double meaning behind them.

Ling Lan nodded. Number Three waved his hand and Ling Lan was kicked out of the learning space.

Ling Lan returned to the real world and sighed in her heart. Ever since she graduated from the learning space, her instructors didn’t like it when she went back. Was she being disliked?

Ling Lan sighed again and started focusing on improving her hand speed again...

Ling Lan moved her fingers and everything went smoothly. Very soon, Ling Lan managed to achieve a breakthrough.

She started the hand speed test, but at the crucial moment, her hand speed suddenly decreased again...

“Beep, beep, beep. Breakthrough failed. Do you want to continue or log out?” The system that measured her hand speed immediately gave a reply when she slowed down.

Ling Lan smiled to herself. “Seems like my heart isn’t calm enough yet, which is why I lost focus at the crucial moment.” Ling Lan took a deep breath and cleared the thoughts in her mind, after which she chose to continue.

Her fingers started moving. Her hand disappeared for a moment and appeared again soon after. However, it looked as though it hadn't moved at all.

Others might not know what was happening, but Ling Lan did. She knew that her speed was faster than the last time; it was her fastest speed so far. She continued her speed for a while. No strange feelings came to her.

"Tap." Ling Lan finished the last operation given by the system.

"Beep, beep, beep. All operations completed. 59.93 seconds in total. You have completed it in under 1 minute. Congratulations, you passed." The results that Ling Lan had always wanted appeared on the screen. Her hand speed had gone under 1 minute and this meant that she had fulfilled the minimum hand speed requirement for an imperial operator.

Ling Lan was elated. She had finally managed to achieve a breakthrough in her hand speed after more than a year. After the rush of adrenaline, she suddenly felt pain in her hand. Her hand was still unfamiliar to the speed, so there was a recoil. Ling Lan immediately practiced her Qi exercises and rested her hands. After a few moments, the pain in her hand subsided.

Reaching the hand speed requirement didn't mean that Ling Lan would advance to an imperial operator immediately. There were three requirements for an imperial operator: the first was hand speed; the second was the fact that she needed to have more than three [S]-rank imperial techniques; and lastly, she needed to upgrade an [A]-rank mecha technique to an [S]-rank mecha technique. Either that, or she needed to upgrade three special-class [B]-rank techniques to ace [A]-rank techniques.

Hand speed was the hardest requirement to fulfill. Many ace operators would be stuck at their hand speed for their entire life. Getting an [S]-rank technique, on the other hand, was not so difficult. Some elite ace could cross-level to practice. These ace operators either had an [S]-rank technique, or were capable of upgrading an [A]-rank technique to [S]-rank. Having one [S]-rank technique was the maximum an ace operator could have if they didn't achieve the required hand speed.

The other obstacle that ace operators faced were the upgrading of techniques.

Upgrading a technique was the same as refining a technique. For instance, if a [B]-rank technique could destroy one thousand enemies, the mecha operator needed to refine that technique so that he could destroy two thousand enemies with it. As long as the military's mecha technique department acknowledged that the technique was [A]-rank, it would be considered a success. Of course, there were many ways to go about refining a technique. It all depended on whether someone had refined the technique the same way before and whether the refinement was a success.

Chapter 557: Acknowledged As The King!

After Ling Lan improved her hand speed, she worked on maintaining the speed. By the time she ended her meditation, her speed was stabilized at around 59.93 seconds to 59.98 seconds, which proved that her results were not based on luck. However, if she wanted to go lower than 59.90 seconds, it would still require some time.

Ling Lan was not dejected, as she had never expected herself to advance to imperial rank while she was still a third-year student. Now that she had overcome the hardest obstacle, she merely needed to practice her hand speed and find a suitable [S]-rank technique for herself. If everything went smoothly, she would be able to become an imperial operator before she graduated. Ling Lan was not worried about the upgrading of her techniques, as she had Little Four and Instructor Number Three; they could help her analyze and guide her whenever she needed them.

By the time Ling Lan came out of her meditation, Lingtian had almost completed all their battles. After Lingtian defeated the original eight powerful mecha clans, most of the other smaller mecha clans chose to avoid battle. Only a few of the mecha clans didn't want to give up and fought against them. The clans that avoided battle were given a three months grace period. After the three months passed, they would not be able to avoid battling Lingtian again.

The members of the Lingtian Mecha Clan were very happy at their decision, as the participants in the weekly battles had never managed to get any rest at all. The several months of battle had tired them out mentally. If all the mecha clans collaborated with one another and battled with them continuously for a few months, Lingtian might be defeated.

However, no one wanted to be the object of sacrifice. Lingtian had gotten the chance to stop fighting for a while and by the time the other mecha clans realized this, it was too late; Ling Lan had already come out of her meditation and this meant that they had no chances at all now.

By the end of the year, Lingtian had unified the mecha clans of the military academy. All the mecha clans merged into the Lingtian Mecha Clan and it became the only mecha clan in the military academy. As the first regiment commander, Ling Lan became the king of the military academy and the achievements of Lingtian were written into the school's history. Ling Lan became the first king of the military academy that received an acknowledgement by the school personally.

One year ago, the higher authorities of the school had thought of ways and means to create a god, but they had never expected that one year later, someone would become a god without their effort. The school's authorities had mixed emotions, while the principal and Tang Yu, on the other hand, were elated—Ling Lan belonged to their faction. However, in order to protect Ling Lan, they could not show their happiness on their face.

Even after becoming king, there were still challenges for Ling Lan. When the new year started, the second-years could apply to start a new mecha clan and a new round of battles would begin again.

As a super mecha clan, Lingtian suffered from many internal conflicts. The members that became merged into the clan didn't listen to the leaders of Lingtian, while the original leaders of the merged clans allowed their members to create troubles; they would always quarrel with the original Lingtian members. Many people even chose to leave Lingtian to become lone wolves.

The Lingtian Mecha Clan chose to kick out those leaders and members that created trouble for them, as there was no need for so many people to stay in Lingtian. To Ling Lan, her ideal mecha clan consisted of elite individuals. And even if these individuals sincerely wanted to join them, she would arrange tests for them. Only those who passed the test could enter their clan.

However, Ling Lan was not so heartless. For those who didn't want to pledge their allegiance to them but never provoked the members of Lingtian, Ling Lan placed them into sub-clans built especially for them so that they could govern themselves.

In actual fact, Ling Lan also didn't like to use members who came from other mecha clans. She always thought that the Lingtian Mecha Clan's elite members had to be brought up by herself. She liked to recruit freshmen and guide them personally. These members would have a sense of belonging to the Lingtian Mecha Clan.

Based on this set of criteria, Ling Yi was spotted very quickly. He was outstanding in all areas so Wu Jiong admired his talent and focused on training him. Ling Yi worked even harder. He knew that he was getting closer to his Master Lan.

Ling Lan became a fourth-year. That year, only a few freshmen set up new mecha clans. Ling Lan didn't send them a letter of challenge the moment they formed their clans, as that would be an action unbecoming of a powerful individual.

Most of the freshmen entered Lingtian, which became a real super mecha clan. Lingtian built a perfect upgrading system for its freshmen. In order to enter the elite team, they needed to go through many tests and missions, as this was the only way to achieve their dream position and have the king of the military academy guide them personally.

The Lingtian Mecha Clan grew very fast and operated efficiently. Ling Lan let go of the reins of the Lingtian Mecha Clan after the new upgrading system was put in place. Her main focus now was to train her comrades. She put all the things that she learned during her closed-door meditation to good use.

Ling Lan didn't ask her comrades to practice their mecha piloting; instead, she resumed the physical training that they went through when they were first-years. Her training was harder and fiercer than the military academy's training. All of her comrades had a hard time.

This was the special training grounds of the military academy, which was a few thousands of meters wide and had all kinds of physical training equipment present. There were also running tracks and obstacle courses...

At this moment, a person was sitting on a chair in the middle of the training grounds. The person placed her hand on her chin and looked at the people diagonally in front of her who were doing the obstacle course.

The people in front looked fine despite panting heavily, but the three people at the end of the group didn't seem good. They staggered and looked as if they would faint at any moment.

One of them couldn't lift his leg anymore and lost his balance when he kicked a small stone on the ground. He fell forward and slammed into the person in front of him, who couldn't dodge in time and also fell.

"I am going to die here today." Chang Xinyuan laid on the ground and stared hopelessly at Han Jiyun who had fallen because of him. His face was filled with tears and nasal mucus and he didn't look anything like a mecha engineer.

Even when this kind of incident had occurred, his boss, the regiment commander of the Lingtian Mecha Clan, Ling Lan, continued to look at them coldly and didn't stop the training.

Chapter 558: Hatred!

"If you don't get up now, you'll die immediately. You don't have to wait till the day ends," Han Jijyun said, glancing at their boss who was looking at them from the corner of her eyes. He gritted his teeth and dragged himself up from the floor. He understood his boss' personality. If he didn't continue running now, something bad would happen.

Chang Xinyuan also wanted to get up, but he didn't have any energy left in him; he couldn't get up no matter what he did.

The people in front heard the commotion at the back and stopped running. They glanced backward and felt pity for them. After some discussion, Qi Long ran back towards Chang Xinyuan and tried to help him up, but it was at this moment that Qi Long heard Ling Lan say, "Qi Long, seems like you still have energy..."

She took two items from beside her and threw them over.

The items slammed onto the ground beside Qi Long and dust flew in the air. Qi Long got a shock.

"Tie these around your legs and continue running," Ling Lan said coldly.

Qi Long's face changed as he bent down to take the things. These two items definitely weighed more than 500kg. Last time, Ling Lan had only tormented them while they were fighting. She had never used such cruel methods to torture them and make them use up every ounce of their strength.

Qi Long knew that he had angered his boss when he tried to help Chang Xinyuan and he also knew that if he pleaded for help, his boss would be even harsher on him; hence, he silently tied the two weights to his legs and ran back.

Chang Xinyuan was depressed. He had implicated Qi Long because of his uselessness. However, he didn't have any energy left.

"Xie Yi!" After settling Qi Long, Ling Lan turned around and looked at Xie Yi, who had been wearing a worried expression. Xie Yi's heart jumped. Was his boss targeting him now?

Ling Lan pointed at Chang Xinyuan and said indifferently, "Use your lightning bolt on him."

Xie Yi heaved a sigh of relief. He looked at Chang Xinyuan and felt pity for him. *Better you than me. Brother Xinyuan, please forgive me.* Xie Yi released his innate talent and a thick bolt of lightning flew out of his fingers which struck Chang Xinyuan.

Xie Yi used the smallest bolt of lightning that he could produce. He showed Chang Xinyuan some mercy, but the lightning bolt still caused Chang Xinyuan to shiver in pain for a while.

“Are you still not getting up?” Ling Lan shot a sideways glance at Chang Xinyuan, who saw the killing intent in his boss’ eyes. Sob, he didn’t want to die! He sprang up in fear and dashed to the front, overtaking everyone else and becoming the leader of the pack.

“See? The potential is still present. It’s just that the torture isn’t enough yet,” Ling Lan remarked with a gentle smile, looking satisfied with herself.

In her mindscape, Little Four shivered in fear when he heard this sentence. Ever since his boss came back from finding Number Three, she had gotten scarier. *I have to work hard and be obedient. I don’t want to get struck by lightning...* Little Four started crying secretly. He felt that Chang Xinyuan was a depiction of himself in the future.

In order to not get tortured, Little Four was obedient and he hit wherever Ling Lan asked him to. Ling Lan was puzzled. When had Little Four become so obedient? However, it was not a bad thing so Ling Lan didn’t think much about it.

This kind of hell training took place every day. Everyone fainted during the training, but the medicine that Li Shiyu left behind were too effective; the recovery period was shortened from around 10 days to less than two days because of his medicine. No one had the time to laze around at all.

Their torture continued. As the team members couldn’t hate their boss, they started directing their anger on Li Shiyu who was at the 23rd Division. “Brother Shiyu, why did you leave so many medicines behind? You can’t harm us like this! We hate you!”

Li Shiyu was currently in a laboratory at the military hospital, researching a new medication, when he suddenly felt a chill run down his spine and his hand shook. The agent that he was carefully pouring spilled...

“Psss!” The additional amount of agent caused the chemicals in the container to make a loud sound, following which Li Lanfeng ran out of the laboratory without thinking and shouted to Li Lanfeng and Zhao Jun who were outside protecting him, “Get down on the floor. Open your shields.”

The two people immediately covered Li Shiyu and activated the shield on their arms simultaneously...

“Boom!” A loud explosion occurred and the generated force destroyed the laboratory completely. Luckily, the shield was strong enough to block the explosion.

“Clank” The shield broke. The shield activating device on Li Lanfeng and Zhao Jun’s arms broke as well.

The two of them looked up only after they confirmed that the danger was over. Li Lanfeng’s face changed when he saw the destroyed laboratory in front of him. He asked, “Li Shiyu, what the hell are you inventing?”

Li Shiyu smiled apologetically. “I thought that I could control the amount properly, but I made a mistake.” He knew that he was able to escape unharmed because Li Lanfeng and Zhao Jun reacted fast enough.

Zhao Jun got up and looked at the ruins, then he looked at his broken activation device and got a fright. He said, “Luckily, we have the shield that Chang Xinyuan invented, or else we would have been heavily injured even if we managed to stay alive. It’s a pity that we brought only one with us...”

“No worries. I will send a message to Chang Xinyuan and ask him to send us a few more,” Li Shiyu said indifferently. He wasn’t aware that Ling Lan’s team hated him now—Chang Xinyuan would not satisfy his request so easily.

Li Shiyu got up and remembered something. “Let me go in and see what interesting things were produced because of this explosion.” Although most of the medicine was destroyed in the explosion, there should be something left behind. This was what he was researching on. Hence, Li Shiyu went into the ruins excitedly and started looking for his container.

“Someone is coming.” Zhao Jun heard the sounds of mecha engines far away.

Li Shiyu was not surprised at all. It would have been strange if no one came to investigate after such a huge commotion was caused. He rubbed his forehead. “I am thinking of how to explain this to the leaders of the 23rd Division.” He had merely wanted to borrow the laboratory, yet caused such a huge explosion in the end. Also, it was forbidden to bring powerful energy weapons into the hospital.

Chapter 559: Departure!

“Tell them the truth,” Zhao Jun said nonchalantly.

“Do you think they will believe me? Will they believe that a few harmless agents could produce such a huge explosion?” Li Lanfeng continued frowning. Although the reorganization had resulted in a change in the leaders of the 23rd Division, Li Lanfeng was not certain if the people that wanted to harm them were all kicked out. If one of them were still present, he would definitely make an issue out of this and then they would be in trouble.

“Didn’t our boss tell us to call that number if we face some real trouble?” Zhao Jun didn’t have as many reservations as Li Lanfeng, as his boss was the heir of the 23rd Division. As long as he was in the right, he was not afraid of them.

Li Lanfeng sighed heavily when he saw Li Shiyu’s happy face. Li Shiyu had found what he wanted. Li Lanfeng didn’t want to use the protection that the rabbit had given them. He didn’t want the rabbit to feel that he was useless. However, he would not give up this protection just to save his face—the safety of his friends was more important.

At the mention of his boss, Zhao Jun recalled how Lingtian had unified the military academy in the previous year. He said excitedly, “I didn’t expect the boss to unify the military academy last year and become the king of the academy. I knew that our boss would make a better king than Qiao Ting.”

Li Lanfeng heart stopped. Looked more like a king than Qiao Ting? However, after a while, he smiled. The rabbit was his benefactor. The latter had helped him with his poor health and granted him the chance to become a strong person. Although he had a cold attitude, Li Lanfeng could still feel the concern in his heart. He was not concerned about Li Yinfei’s looks either...

Li Lanfeng’s smile grew wider at this thought. It was not him! He believed the rabbit.

Li Lanfeng and his friends started dealing with the investigation by the investigation team from the 23rd Division. On the other side of things, Ling Lan’s comrades managed to improve their physique

tremendously after enduring Ling Lan's hell training. Satisfied, Ling Lan began to torture them with her mecha. Ling Lan's mecha piloting skills had reached a new height and so her team members got to experience what it was like to be at the brink of death. Under such a stressful environment, Qi Long managed to advance to become an ace operator. Of course, before Qi Long advanced, Ling Lan announced her ace operator status first.

Although she didn't break the record left by Ling Xiao and Qiao Ting for the fastest advancement to ace rank, she was already considered outstanding to be able to become an ace operator in the second half of the year. No one would belittle Ling Lan just because she didn't break the record. Qi Long's advancement took away some attention from Ling Lan, but this was what she wanted; she didn't want to have too much attention to herself.

By the time their fourth year ended, Luo Lang and Xie Yi had managed to advance, while Wu Jiong advanced in the first half of their fifth year. The First Men's Military Academy had five ace mecha masters now and the higher authorities of the school were elated. The new Grand Mecha Tournament had started so with five ace mecha masters in their hands and thus the First Men's Military Academy was confident that they would get first place.

However, when the school personnel saw the candidates list sent to them by Lingtian, they were shocked. The team leader was not Ling Lan—it was Qi Long. The assistant leader was Wu Jiong and Li Yingjie. Ling Lan was not in the list at all.

They wanted to find Ling Lan to question her about why she was not participating, but she went into closed-door meditation again. The higher authorities of the school couldn't do anything to her. Closed-door meditation was a crucial process for the advancement of the cadets. Nothing was more important than this, not even the Grand Mecha Tournament.

Hence, Wu Jiong and Qi Long led the elites from all the different specializations to participate in the Grand Mecha Tournament. This was the first time they led so many people without Ling Lan. Everyone performed very well, especially Li Yingjie; he managed to enter the top 8 in the single mecha combat event and fought an opponent of the First Co-ed Military Academy who had just advanced to ace level. Although he lost in the end, Li Yingjie managed to become an ace mecha operator after this match.

From that day onwards, the Grand Mecha Tournament became the stage for the First Men's Military Academy to perform on. The top 4 were all from the First Men's Military Academy; however, this was not the end. In the group mecha combat event that started thereafter, Li Yingjie got onto the ace balanced mecha which belonged to Ling Lan, who had planned for this mecha to be transported to the site of the competition before she started her closed-door mediation.

Thus, the First Men's Military Academy became the only team in the Grand Mecha Tournament to have 5 ace mecha masters in their team and they caused a huge uproar among the crowd. The team went through the competition without facing any difficulties. No one could cause any trouble to the First Men's Military Academy—they easily obtained first place in the group mecha combat event.

This competition destroyed the morale of all the other military academies. Han Jiyun's plan was to let the 5 ace mecha masters lead a team each and destroy all the military academies that posed a threat to them. However, as the base camp location could be changed, the First Men's Military Academy only took down the Third Men's Military Academy. The Second Men's Military Academy and the First Co-ed

Military Academy managed to run away. These two schools maintained the lowest score required and didn't get kicked out of the match. They were already very happy with these results. After all, the First Men's Military Academy was too powerful this year and were not on the same level at all. They admitted their defeat.

However, the overall points that they achieved were still lesser than Ling Lan's team last time. It was not easy to get the 10,000 points for discovering the secret of the movement of the base camp. They might have been able to break Ling Lan's record if they had eliminated the Second Men's Military Academy and the First Co-ed Military Academy, but there was no second chance. Everyone knew that it would be difficult for anyone to break the record in the next 100 years.

Han Jijyun felt the need to commend Ling Yi's performance, as his team was the one that eliminated the Third Men's Military Academy's base camp. As the only third-year team leader, his abilities were as good as those older leaders and he had an all-rounded team. Han Jijyun realized that there was at least one military strategist in Ling Yi's team and that the overall ability of its members was strong. He felt that this allocation was similar to their battle team.

Han Jijyun didn't know whether it was a coincidence, or if Ling Yi was intentionally imitating them, but it did not prevent Han Jijyun from taking a fancy on Ling Yi. He even felt that once all of the older cadets entered the 23rd Division, Ling Yi would be a great successor.

The Lingtian Mecha Clan came back with many achievements, but before they could have the time to be excited, Ling Lan and the others in her year needed to prepare for the evaluation by the 23rd Division. The cadets who were in the same year as Ling Lan knew that she was going to register for the 23rd Division and so they chose to register for the same division as her—the regiment commander of the 23rd Division was their idol as well. Besides those cadets who needed to go to a certain division due to their family or faction, almost everyone registered for the 23rd Division. The examiners for the 23rd Division were delighted.

Although Ling Xiao had managed to build up the reputation of the 23rd Division and the military had given them priority in filling up their members, the division lacked middle-rank officers to lead their soldiers. They needed outstanding cadets to fill up these positions.

For a division to operate smoothly, the most important factor was these middle-rank officers. These officers needed to have a vast amount of knowledge, powerful abilities, and a good personality. The cadets that the military academy trained for more than four years were the best candidates for these positions.

Ling Xiao heaved a sigh of relief when he knew that the most important problem of the 23rd Division was solved. He knew that these cadets registered for the 23rd Division because of his daughter. His daughter is indeed an amazing person.

He Xuyang looked at the proud expression on General Ling Xiao's face and knew that his general was thinking of Master Lan again. They had been feeling frustration regarding this issue, when Master Lan gave them so many outstanding cadets to solve their problem. Master Lan was absolutely impressive. If Master Lan was his child, he might have had an even more exaggerated expression than General Ling Xiao. He would most likely have flashed happy smiles at others and told everyone that Master Lan was his child.

He Xuyang suddenly felt that he should not reject his mother when she arranged a blind date for him next time. If he could have a cute baby and nurtured the baby into a talent, it would be a happy thing, too.

Hence, the head chief of staff started looking for love...

Due to the influence of Ling Lan, this batch of cadets were all quite strong. Very few of them got kicked out.

When it was time to leave, everyone was filled with reluctance. Those who were going to enter the 23rd Division didn't have many emotions, but for those that had to go to other divisions, they felt depressed. Wu Jiong was one of them.

The Wu family had always supported the 15th Division. As the direct descendant of the Wu family, Wu Jiong had to go to the 15th Division. He had known from the start that the 15th Division was his future and he was ready for it.

He had thought that he would be able to bid farewell to Ling Lan with a smile, but when he stood at Ling Lan's living room and saw Ling Lan, who was wearing the 23rd Division uniform and drinking a cup of hot tea, Wu Jiong suddenly didn't want to say goodbye anymore.

Wu Jiong wished that he could have entered the 23rd Division with Ling Lan, if he had the choice. He believed that with Ling Lan around, the journey in the 23rd Division would be exciting. They would have many achievements and he wanted to experience all these.

However, the 15th Division needed him. He had to go over and take control of the 15th Division. When a family reached this stage, they didn't have any room for retreat. Once they retreated, their whole family might be gone. Wu Jiong was the most outstanding direct descendant and his grandfather had high hopes for him. He couldn't disappoint his family. Wu Jiong knew that he had too many people in his heart and so he couldn't be as wilful as Li Yingjie.

The Li family had influence in both the 4th Division and 5th Division. Li Yingjie's grandfather had previously had plans to send him to the 4th Division, which was the strongest army division among the 19 divisions that the Federation had. The Li family definitely hoped that one of their direct descendants could enter the division and grow to become a high-rank officer.

However, Li Yingjie was an arrogant, willful and disobedient child. He registered for the 23rd Division without informing his family. According to what he said: if his second oldest brother could go to the 23rd Division, why couldn't he?

Li Shiyu became implicated for no reason, but the Li family couldn't do anything to Li Shiyu. He was a highly recognized military doctor in the 23rd Division division now and even General Ling Xiao commended him personally. The Li family could not force him to do anything.

The Li family thought about pulling some tricks to get Li Yingjie into the 4th Division, but when they remembered how stubborn he was, they gave up on this idea. They had no choice but to accept the fact that their two most outstanding direct descendants were snatched away by Ling Xiao's 23rd Division.

As for Li Mulan, he would continue resting at planet Azure. The Li family could afford to raise this disabled person.

Ling Lan looked carefree. She had packed all her things. Her backpack was still the same. She took whatever things she brought in last time. The only thing different was the white color of her uniform which represented a valedictorian.

Ling Lan saw Wu Jiong standing at the entrance and nodded slightly at him. "You're here."

Ling Lan knew that he would come to bid her farewell. After all, they were from the same Special Class-A.

"Boss... I am going to the 15th Division." Wu Jiong paused after calling out to his boss and only managed to say this sentence.

Qi Long smiled at his words. The moment Wu Jiong registered, they knew that he would go to the 15th Division. Besides, he was wearing the recruit uniform of the 15th Division.

Qi Long's smile caused Wu Jiong to blush. He knew that it was a stupid thing to say.

"The 15th Division is where people of the Wu family always go. I knew that you would be going there," Ling Lan said, calmly placing the teacup in her hand onto the table. She rubbed her hands before continuing, "This is good, too. When you become a high-ranking officer in your division, we'll be able to work together again."

Wu Jiong's eyes lit up. His boss was right. Separating now didn't mean that there would be no chance to work with his boss anymore.

"Work hard to rise up in rank. I hope that when I become an officer with my own team, I'll be able to find someone to work with." Ling Lan looked at Wu Jiong with a composed expression, but her eyes were still sharp. Wu Jiong felt stress. He felt an oppressive aura coming towards him and knew that his boss had become stronger. His sorrow at having to leave was gone and he only felt the urge to complete the promise between him and Ling Lan.

"I understand. Boss, when you need me, I will be there for you," Wu Jiong replied firmly, standing up straight. This was his reply. He wanted to tell Ling Lan that even without her guidance, he would continue to have a goal and work hard towards it.

"It's a promise then." Ling Lan smiled. The oppressive aura around her disappeared and she reached out her hand.

Wu Jiong heaved a sigh of relief secretly and clapped Ling Lan's hand.

Promise!

They had formed an alliance even before they officially became part of their respective divisions. This signified that they would be trustworthy brothers-in-arms for the rest of their life.

The military vessels that came to pick them up all arrived at the same time. When they officially stepped onto the military vessel, they would not be able to see each other for a long time. Wu Jiong controlled the tears in his eyes and turned around.

Boss, thank you for the 14 years of companionship. Thank you for your selfless guidance all these years, even though it might have been because you were afraid that we would pull you down! Boss, thank you

for leading us in creating miracles one after another and letting me understand that my vision should be wider and further!

Boss, thank you! I, Wu Jiong, will be your brother forever! Our relationship will never change!

Chapter 560: Send Off!

Right when Ling Lan led her battle team and walked out of their mansion, they saw many people waiting outside who all wore the uniform of the 23rd Division. There were around 100 or so people and were all more or less graduates from the Central Scout Academy. Ling Lan had personally given many of them pointers in the past. Those in the mecha major had all become special-class operators, while the other cadets who were in other majors all became advanced mecha operators. The only reason they were all taken in by the 23rd Division was that they were the best of the best in their own majors.

They had followed Ling Lan and grew up with her. Now they were all signing up for the 23rd Division. There was no doubt that these people wanted to become Ling Lan's subordinates, but that would depend on whether Ling Lan wanted to make a name for herself or not.

Seeing Ling Lan appear, those who had been talking among each other instantly stood up straight. Their eyes were shining bright and filled with a longing for the future. At the same time, their gazes couldn't hide their admiration and respect for Ling Lan. Everyone shouted respectfully, "Boss!"

Everyone knew clearly that it was all the boss's teachings and strictness that allowed them be able to get into a military division in their fifth year and get past the evaluations for the 23rd Division. They also knew that there were still many people who were not successful in the assessments and had no choice but to participate in the intergalactic adventure division to get more battle experience, after which they would wait until their sixth year to do one last evaluation.

If they weren't successful after the last evaluation, they would just be like any other commoner and sign up for military service. Afterward, their starting point would be the same as those who got into a division. After completing the training for new recruits, they would acquire the rank of second lieutenant or just corporal. The rank could even be the rank of private. It was the difference between day and night.

However, all this they had in front of them, in the end, was given by this cold and seemingly heartless boss. Without their knowledge, the boss had given them a bright future.

Seeing this scene, Ling Lan was a bit surprised. "Why are you guys waiting here?" Ling Lan had told them that they could move around freely as long as they were present on the warship when it left the dock.

"If we follow Boss, we have confidence," said one of Lingtian's captains, smiling. In the past few years, every decision Ling Lan had made brought about countless merits. They didn't want to be too far from the boss and miss out on exciting experiences.

Gao Jinyun also said with excitement, "Boss, no matter what, we're following you to the end."

Gao Jinyun's team members all nodded in unison. These past few years, Gao Jinyun had reached the peak of special-class with the help of Ling Lan's teachings. He only needed a catalyst to advance to ace

level. Besides that, after getting approval from Ling Lan, Gao Jinyun used the same training method for this own team members. Other than the few team members whose physical constitution were terrible and had only advanced to advanced level, his other members all advanced to special-class without any issues.

Compared to the other battle teams that had two or three special-class operators, Gao Jinyun's team's strength was clearly greater than those other teams. In the Lingtian Mecha Clan, he was on the heels of the other battle teams of the commanders and this had turned Gao Jinyun's situation around. In the past, his rank among the battle teams was close to the bottom.

All of this strength came from Ling Lan's teachings. Gao Jinyun had already made a decision that he would follow Ling Lan closely. This way, they would then have a chance to climb up the ranks... In reality, Gao Jinyun was envious of Qi Long, Luo Lang and the others. They could be by Ling Lan's side and receive pointers from her at any time. If it were possible, Gao Jinyun also wanted to be like Qi Long, Luo Lang and the others. Unfortunately, he was late by too many years... he didn't have the relationship that the others had built with Ling Lan during their childhood.

"Follow me to the end?" Hearing this, Ling Lan frowned and her lips seemingly perked up.

"Yes, Boss," Gao Jinyun replied with a serious tone. This was what he had wanted to say originally and now he had said it.

Ling Lan glanced at Gao Jinyun before taking back her gaze. She pulled on her sleeves and, with an indifferent expression on her face, said, "Since it's like that, then let's go."

These words stunned Gao Jinyun and he instantly felt happy. He wasn't dreaming, right... Right? Right? Right?

The captain standing beside Gao Jinyun patted his shoulder with envy. "Gao Jinyun, don't forget to help me, your elder brother, in the future."

"Boss really took me in as a subordinate," Gao Jinyun said, wearing a dreamy expression. Although he had known the boss was going to take in auxiliary battle teams, he still never announced it. Could it be that he was lucky enough for his team to become the first auxiliary battle team for the boss' battle team?

"Yes, Boss has actually taken us in as an auxiliary battle team. We must work hard." Another captain steeled his shoulders to encourage himself.

Gao Jinyun was taken in by Ling Lan as an auxiliary battle team. The other captains didn't become envious of him because Gao Jinyun's battle team was ranked the strongest battle team after the commanders' battle teams. It was also because only battle teams like Gao Jinyun's had the qualifications to become the boss' auxiliary battle team. They were now all wondering: if they were to also reach the power level of Gao Jinyun's battle team, would they have a chance to become the boss' second auxiliary battle team, or the third?

Thus, every captain from every battle team set their goal, which was to become the second auxiliary battle team after Gao Jinyun's battle team.

Everyone moved towards the spaceport in droves. Before they reached the entrance of the 23rd Division's warship, they saw the soldiers guarding the spaceport give them strange looks. Ling Lan thought that was it because there were so many people in their group that made the soldiers feel strange. After all, the cadets that were successful in applying to the 23rd Division this time had almost reached 200 people. It was even more than the number of cadets who were joining other divisions combined. A few days ago when Ling Lan's mother contacted her through her father's communicator, she had told her of this situation. She said that the commanders of the other divisions all sent messages to Ling Xiao, mocking and insulting him. They said that her father had used underhanded means to compete with them... Yes, what they considered to be underhanded means was the fact that her father was using his identity as the idol of the people. Using this attraction, he had taken in many prodigies and geniuses. It was indeed a despicable and shameless display...

Ling Lan thought for a second and felt that the words of those division commanders weren't wrong. Her father had actually also used this type of means to take away many geniuses from other military divisions. However, Ling Lan believed that it wasn't completely her father's fault. The real culprit was God. Why couldn't he have made Ling Xiao be born a bit uglier? That would have made things better.

In short, the 23rd Division was very favorable this year and acquired more than half of the geniuses from the First Men's Military Academy. They couldn't blame others for being green with envy.

However, Ling Lan knew that her guess was wrong as she arrived at the 23rd Division's dock, which was entirely filled with people. They were all members of the Lingtian Mecha Clan and their juniors.

After Ling Lan took over the military academy with an iron fist, although some new cadets formed new clans here and there and hoped to recreate Ling Lan's legend as their own, most people still joined Lingtian; especially those from the Central Scout Academy, who all joined. This made the number of members from Lingtian expand and expand again. As the seniors left one year after another, time passed until Ling Lan and the others had become fifth years, at which point Lingtian had finally become a unique super mecha clan of the First Men's Military Academy. There wasn't any mecha clan that could bring about trouble for Lingtian. Trouble only followed Lingtian if they wanted it to.

Ling Lan saw this scene and her expression became livid. Even Qi Long, Luo Lang and the others couldn't help but huff. This time, it was possible that the instructors of the entire military academy were going to become the kings of shouting. It was possible that half of the military academy was completely empty. With this overwhelming scene, it was no wonder that the soldiers guarding the docks would look at them with strange expressions on their faces. Even from how Ling Lan saw it, she almost thought it was a military force attacking the spaceport.

"Boss!" Thousands of individuals shouted in unison. The echoing from their voices almost made Ling Lan's hair strands stand up.

"Who let them call me boss in public?" Ling Lan's had a cold expression on her face as her lips moved slightly to squeeze these words out of her throat. She was joining the military, not entering the mafia.

Everyone around her exchanged looks, pretending they hadn't noticed what their boss had said.

With their behavior being like this, how could Ling Lan not understand? None of them were getting away with it—everyone would get their rightful punishment. It should be known that Ling Lan was

always low-key and didn't say anything to the other clan members. If it wasn't for these people beside her giving the orders, she believed that these clan members would definitely not have dared to call her "boss" out in public.

"Just wait. You guys are in big trouble," Ling Lan said begrudgingly. She had wanted to leave quietly and peacefully, but she didn't think that these guys would make it so grand and noisy. Ling Lan already felt that after she entered the division, her life would definitely not be as peaceful as her father wanted.

After hearing their boss' words, Qi Long and the others felt their hearts freeze. They looked at each other and decided to immediately look for a scapegoat. Luo Lang spotted Ling Yi, who was standing at the very front of the crowd, and his eyes instantly gleamed.

He immediately waved to Ling Yi. "Ling Yi, come here."

Ling Yi held in his excitement and walked over. He looked at Ling Lan, who was beside Luo Lang. He was finally standing in front of Young Master Lan. He didn't know whether or not Young Master Lan still remembered him.

Although Ling Yi's performance in the Lingtian Mecha Clan was exceptional, Ling Lan had still not spoken with him face to face because she had given the responsibility of managing Lingtian to Wu Jiong, Qi Long and Li Yingjie. Thus, she never meddled with rankings of members and never had face to face conversations with them neither.

Before Ling Yi could call out to his Young Master Lan, Luo Lang pulled him aside and asked him softly, "Ling Yi, what's happening?"

Ling Yi glanced at Ling Lan, then replied quietly, "Everyone wanted to come send Boss off. This is what everyone wanted. I didn't think it was right to stop them."

After Ling Yi answered, Luo Lang and others looked at Ling Lan, waiting for her reaction. They hoped that their boss could sympathize with everyone's feelings and let them off easy in the end.

Ling Lan sighed internally and suddenly took a step forward. Her clear and cold voice rang through everyone's ears. "Everyone, thank you for coming to send us off. But as cadets of the military academy, you guys have to comply with all the rules of the military academy!"

After saying this, Ling Lan's cold eyes glared at everyone. Everyone at the dock felt that those two eyes were looking at themselves. The blame in Ling Lan's gaze made them hang their head in unplanned unison.

"Attention!" Ling Lan suddenly gave an order and everyone immediately stood up straight.

"To the rear!" Almost all ten thousand people turned around at the same time. The sudden order actually didn't create any chaos. Their movements were surprisingly orderly and stunned all those watching.

"I'll be waiting for you lot in the 23rd Division. Now, forward march!" Ling Lan ordered once again.

Everyone knew that the send-off event had ended. Their boss didn't want them to skip class. However, the boss had also left a message for them, that he would wait for them in the 23rd Division. The boss

hadn't abandoned them. Lingtian's members were satisfied. They left the dock in an orderly fashion and quickly disappeared.

Ling Yi didn't want to follow them. Although he obeyed the command to turn around, he still refused to obey the second command in the end and turned around again.

"You still have something you need?" Ling Lan asked indifferently. When it came to Ling Yi, Ling Lan had a feeling of displeasure. Ling Lan remembered clearly that Ling Yi's father, Ling Hua, had died by her hand. Although she had made a series of arrangements and made sure the possibility of exposing the truth behind that incident was zero, Ling Lan still felt that she couldn't get past her own feelings. She couldn't just treat it as if nothing had happened and accept Ling Yi. Thus, in the past two years, she had never given Ling Yi a chance to get close to her.

However, Ling Lan wasn't someone that was completely hardened. When Qi Long, Wu Jiong and the others wanted to use her training method to nurture a group of strong individuals in Lingtian, she heard Ling Yi's name in the list and just let it pass. If Ling Yi really had potential, Ling Lan didn't mind helping him along the way.

"Young Master Lan!" Ling Yi's lips moved a bit and finally shouted out the form of address he wanted to say all this time.

Ling Yi addressing Ling Lan like this stunned Qi Long and the others. Normally, the address of young master was used by family servants. They thought of the Ling Yi's surname "Ling" and instantly understood. It was possible that Ling Yi was a family servant. Some families allowed servants to follow their young masters to apply for the same military academy and become the servant of the next family head. Of course, these family servants had to be capable. Academies such as the First Men's Military Academy were impossible to get in if the individual was not capable.

Everyone quickly returned to having a calm and collected manner because they wanted to know Ling Lan's background. They thought of Ling Xiao and could then understand why Ling Yi would be this strong.

Ling Lan looked at Ling Yi helplessly. She didn't think that Ling Yi still didn't have the thought of giving up on her up until now. Although Chamberlain Ling Qin had once said that Ling Yi's dream was to return to her side and become her loyalist, before even mentioning Ling Yi's special situation and her own situation after her father returned, regardless of whether or not she had publicly announced her gender, she knew it wasn't possible for her to have a male as her loyalist. Even if she approved, her father would definitely not. Ever since the beginning, the female masters of the Ling family could only have female loyalists by their side. There were no exceptions.

Behind Ling Yi were his team members who had stayed behind with Ling Yi. When Rong Ziruo and Yi Tiange heard Ling Yi shout out "Young Master Lan", they subconsciously clenched their fists and their eyes focused on Ling Lan.

After Ling Yi's outburst, it was as though his entire body had relaxed. No matter if his Young Master Lan wanted to accept him or not, he had already shown her his thoughts. He smiled bitterly and said, "Perhaps, Young Master Lan has already forgotten who I am. Looking back, it's been around 15 years since we last saw each other."

Ling Lan replied indifferently, "I know. Back then, I approved of your father's wish before he died to make you return to being a commoner. That way, you wouldn't have any connections to the Ling family anymore."

Hearing this, Ling Yi instantly said with concern, "You guys didn't even ask me whether I wanted to or not? Even if I was young, I still had my right to choose."

Ling Lan saw the determination in Ling Yi's eyes. She thought for a moment then said, "Alright. In that case, I'll give you the chance to choose."

Ling Yi's eyes widened and he laughed out loud. "Thank you, Young Master Lan." He had known that Young Master Lan wouldn't abandon him just like that.

"In your fifth year, if you want to follow me, then come to the 23rd Division." Ling Lan left these words and then walked past Ling Yi towards the warship's personnel hold.