

Crossing 531

Chapter 531: Promise!

“No!

“I don’t want that to happen!

“I don’t want Boss to get injured!

“I don’t want Boss to die!”

As Qi Long angrily screamed inside his mind, he formed a claw with his right hand and swiped downwards—he was ruthlessly reaching for the Qi Long that was attempting to attack Boss.

Maybe Qi Long’s will was too strong, as the energy that was originally holding him back had been broken through by him. He instantly arrived in front of Ling Lan, grabbed the other Qi Long’s neck and instantly pummeled him to the ground.

“I won’t allow anyone to hurt Boss. I won’t allow it even if it’s myself.” Qi Long raised his left fist and ruthlessly threw it towards the Qi Long who had a look of ignorance on his face.

Qi Long used all of his energy to hit himself. The image of the memory was like a mirror; because of Qi Long’s punch, it shattered into countless pieces and scattered everywhere.

Qi Long raised his head. His face with bloody red tears was easily seen. There was determination in his eyes, the kind that would enable one to do anything for someone without regret.

“I, Qi Long, promise that I will become Boss’ shield. If anyone wants to harm Boss, they’ll have to get over my dead body first!

“I, Qi Long, will fight for Boss to the bitter end with no regrets!”

Qi Long’s determined voice echoed through his vast mindspace. When he spoke, the mindspace had memorized the promise he made. This meant that if Qi Long was to go against his promise, he wouldn’t have any chances of advancement. His soul will be tormented day and night. In the end, he would become a crazy demon and would never have a moment of peace.

“For this, I need to become even stronger. Strong to the point of being able to help Boss take on all of his enemies.”

Qi Long had never found a reason that made it necessary for him to become stronger, but now he had one. It wasn’t for himself. Instead, it was for the boss who had treated him sincerely.

In the arena, Qi Long crying had already made everyone in the audience become very surprised. When Qi Long’s tears became blood, everyone was shaken. The entire training dojo became silent.

Ling Lan, who was in the observation room, had instantly stood up when Qi Long’s blood red tears had come out from his eyes. She could no longer continue to be calm.

“Why is this happening?” Han Jijyun’s tears silently fell from his eyes. He instantly held his chest. Qi Long’s blood red tears also made Han Jijyun feel his emotions. Han Jijyun felt like his heart was in a blender.

Right at that moment, a strong aura suddenly erupted in the arena. The overwhelming aura instantly made the edges of the arena have a transparent light barrier appear.

Ling Lan instantly calmed down. Her eyes showed a hint of joy. The light barrier was even brighter than the previous one. Did this mean that Qi Long had successfully advanced into the late stage of Qi-Jin?

Everyone was surprised and moving about when the light barrier appeared again. At that moment, someone shouted, “Look, in the arena!” Everyone set their focus onto the arena.

Qi Long’s eyes had stopped bleeding, and his dark and empty eyes had closed. Other than this, there wasn’t anything out of the ordinary. However, looking at Ling Yi, who was standing in front of Qi Long, they knew that at that moment, Qi Long wasn’t a pushover.

It turned out that at that moment, Ling Yi’s body was trembling. He bent his back forwards and actually couldn’t stand up straight. His face had a grimace as he bit his lip as though he was resisting some sort of terrifying pressure.

This pressure was no longer the immature aura that Qi Long had before. Ling Yi had used all of his body’s energy this time and could only make sure he wasn’t pinned into the ground. He had no extra energy to counterattack.

“It’s an aura!” The audience and the members all understood. Hadn’t the boss used the same move that year when he fought with Huo Zhenyu, the strongest individual in terms of physical skills in the military academy?

They excitedly looked towards Qi Long, who had closed his eyes once again. It turned out that Commander Qi Long’s supposed mid-stage of Qi-Jin was a lie. Instead, his Qi-Jin was higher by two stages than the mid-stage, the Refinement stage. From what they knew, there wasn’t anyone from the other mecha clans who had reached the late of Qi-Jin. Now their Lingtian Mecha Clan, other than Boss, had another strong individual who had reached the late stage of Qi-Jin. This was definitely enough to roll over the other mecha clans.

Ling Lan silently activated her own aura and carefully felt Qi Long’s current condition. Her lips perked up. She didn’t expect that being pushed to the verge of death this time had not only acted as a catalyst for Qi Long to break through the barrier to his advancement, but even also managed to advance two stages above his original one. He had instantly entered the late stage of Qi-Jin, close to the peak stage. He only needed one more step to enter into the very peak stage, Great Perfection.

“Qi Long, in terms of physical skills, as expected, you are the best.”

Ling Lan was overjoyed. The stronger Qi Long’s potential, the more likely he would survive the fighting in the battlefield. There were still two years left before they had to join a military division., and entering a division would mean that they were not far from a battlefield.

Ling Lan felt she was hard pressed for time. This was also why she was so ruthless in making these arrangements.

Ling Yi slowly raised his head. Just this small motion was painful for him to manage. He looked at Qi Long in front of him, who was not moving. Ling Yi was oddly surprised. He didn't expect that his opponent would be this strong. Without even moving a finger, he could make it so he couldn't stand up straight. He knew that this person was Young Master Lan's battle team's vice-captain...

"Qi Long: Mid-stage of Qi-Jin. Luo Lang: Beginner stage of Qi-Jin. Xie Yi: Beginner stage of Qi-Jin. Lin Zhong-qing: Peak of Refinement stage. Han Jijyun: Advanced level of Refinement stage..." Inside Ling Yi's mind, the detailed information he had gathered on Young Master Lan's battle team members rapidly flashed through his mind.

"Qi Long, mid-stages of Qi-Jin... Heh, lies, all lies. Late stage of Qi-Jin. Even fifth-years may not reach that state. Qi Long did it in three years. It's funny that I thought my current capabilities were already qualified to stand beside Young Master Lan. Now that I think about it, I really was too arrogant.

"I think the physical skills of the others are also not as the information says. Maybe all of them have reached Qi-Jin. Those supposedly at the beginner stage of Qi-Jin may have already reached the mid-stage or advanced stage," Ling Yi thought bitterly to himself.

Ling Yi's guess wasn't wrong. His information was based on the time when Qi Long and the others were in their first year at the academy. Now that two years had gone by, how could they not have undergone even a little bit of improvement? Even if Qi Long and the others were lazy and didn't want to train, with a ruthless boss like Ling Lan by their side, they wouldn't have gotten the chance to simply stop at where they were in terms of power.

Ling Yi was actually using his will of not admitting defeat to endure through all of this. In reality, he had reached his limit long before this point in time. Qi Long seemed to have sensed this and slowly restrained his aura, making it disappear completely in the end.

The light barrier around the edges of the arena vanished once again, following which Qi Long opened his eyes and calmly said, "Thank you for the fight."

Having successfully broken through to the peak of late stages of Qi-Jin, the current Qi Long was no longer the Qi Long who was exhausted all of his energy. Now he possessed strong and abundant Qi-Jin at his disposal. At that moment, even if all of the applicants were to come up to challenge him at the same time, he wouldn't be afraid of them.

"Thank you, Commander Qi Long, for being merciful." Ling Yi finally stood up after the pressure he was under disappeared. He knew that he wasn't made a fool of because Qi Long was being merciful. If the latter hadn't slowly restrained his aura but instead instantly made his aura disappear, Ling Yi would definitely not have been able to get used to it and would have fallen straight towards the ground.

Ling Yi couldn't accept his opponent's good will. However, to ignore it would be shameless. Thus, he thanked Qi Long personally.

Qi Long nodded at Ling Yi. His behavior drew Qi Long's admiration. Qi Long decided that Ling Yi would be the first choice to accept into the mecha clan.

Afterwards, Ling Yi turned around and walked off the arena. Every step he took was difficult, but he didn't show it on his expression. He was a proud individual, especially at that moment when he didn't

know where Young Master Lan was watching this evaluation from. As Young Master Lan's loyalist, he couldn't lose his master's dignity.

Ling Yi finally walked off the arena. He walked beside his comrades. Yi Tiange comforted him and said, "Captain, your performance was great. It's just that..." But before he could finish, Ling Yi was already falling over.

Rong Ziruo and Yan Wuyou reacted quickly; they supported their captain, one from the left and one from the right, to make sure he didn't fall over.

"He's totally exhausted. It's alright, it's only temporary unconsciousness." Yan Wuyou held onto to Ling Yi as he felt his pulse and informed the other members of Ling Yi's condition so that they wouldn't worry.

"Who would've known that Commander Qi Long would advance during battle? Our captain's efforts were all for naught," Yi Tiange remarked sympathetically.

Rong Ziruo turned around and looked at Qi Long, who was looking over at them from the arena. That straight stance and calm expression of his didn't need any explanations. It was as though he were a king looking down at his subjects.

"Commander Qi Long is really strong!" Rong Ziruo mumbled. He began to think about how strong Ling Lan would have to be to have become the captain of Commander Qi Long.

"Now, probably no one will challenge Commander Qi Long," Yi Tiange said. Smart individuals wouldn't choose such a strong and unbeatable examiner.

As expected, after three minutes, another freshman finally chose their opponent for their evaluation. This time, they chose a different captain from Lingtian...

Ling Yi opened his eyes and discovered he was lying in a bed. He instantly jumped up.

His movements surprised Rong Ziruo, who had been sitting beside him while looking through the information in his communicator. He asked with concern, "Captain, how do you feel?"

Seeing Rong Ziruo and also seeing that he was in his own room, Ling Yi was relieved. He laid himself back into the bed and asked, "How long did I sleep for?"

"18 hours. I have already called in sick for you and informed the instructor," Rong Ziruo replied.

Ling Yi was silent for a few seconds before finally asking the question he was most concerned about. "Lingtian. How were the results of the evaluation?"

"Although we all lost, we all passed." Hearing his question, Rong Ziruo instantly smiled.

Ling Yi raised his head, his eyes showing a hint of joy. "All of us passed?"

"Yeah, everyone passed. They even let us keep our battle team. As long as we pass the mainframe's battle team evaluation and become a real battle team, we'll then be able to officially register. However, the treatment that we'll get will only start from the lowest rank, the fifth level. Advancement will be based on our contributions," Rong Ziruo explained with a bit of regret.

"I see." Ling Yi felt that there wasn't anything wrong with all this. He looked at Rong Ziruo and the expression on his face showed slight signs of struggle. He then asked, "Did Young Master Lan come out in the end?"

Rong Ziruo shook his head and said, "No, it was Commander Wu Jiong who came out to announce the list of names. However, this is normal. From the information that we received, the person responsible for managing Lingtian Mecha Clan's work has always been Commander Wu Jiong. The commanders Qi Long and Li Yingjie are the helpers. Commander Ling Lan never meddles with anything."

"Never?"

Ling Yi talked to himself. He clenched his fists and his eyes showed a hint of determination. Whatever the case, he had already successfully joined the mecha clan that Young Master Lan had created. He was now slowly getting closer to his Young Master Lan. His strength wasn't enough at this moment. However, there would be a day when he would catch up to those in Young Master Lan's battle team. Then he will become a real loyalist of Young Master Lan and give him all of his loyalty.

Chapter 532: Live Longer Than Others!

After the Lingtian Mecha Clan took in those freshmen members with great potential, their numbers had reached the standard of a medium sized mecha clan. At this point, the Lingtian Mecha Clan was no longer the small mecha clan they were in the past. Adding on the glory and prestige they had earned in the last year, along with Ling Lan's outstanding display of operating skills on her long-range mecha that shocked the other mecha operators... all of this had allowed Lingtian to finally possess their very first battle force with considerable power and their very own culture.

However, a new year meant a new beginning. Not a single mecha clan was satisfied with their current results, as they all wanted to improve—a battle for power would soon begin.

All the mecha clans were waiting for someone to challenge Lingtian first. In these dark times, all of the Lingtian Mecha Clan was silent.

Inside a physical training dojo, the third-year special mecha piloting class cadets, who were training, were currently huddled together beside two mechas and watching them as they were fighting.

"Ding, ding, ding. The betting has now begun. All those who wants to bet on Instructor Tang Yu defeating Boss within a certain number of hits should come find me to bet." A cool and clear voice rang out loudly in the dojo, drawing everyone's attention to the speaker.

"Xie Yi, this time I won't lose to you." Someone saw the individual who was shouting and shouted back.

Xie Yi smiled and replied, "Sure, I've already prepared everyone's credits from before. Just waiting for you guys to win it back."

Xie Yi's words made these people who had always lost to him feel better instantly, and they all went over to him in preparation to place their bets for the next round.

Seeing this, Lin Zhong-qing's lips showed a hint of a smile. Luo Lang saw this and poked him lightly, saying, "Heh heh, are we going to have another huge sum of reserve funds?"

Lin Zhong-qing said sternly, "Luo Lang, how could this bet be 100% winnable? You should talk to Xie Yi and stop him. Otherwise, if Boss finds out, he will definitely rip off a layer of Xie Yi's skin."

Luo Lang looked at Lin Zhong-qing with determination as he replied, "In that case, why don't you go talk to him?"

Lin Zhong-qing glanced at Luo Lang with a half-smile. "Everyone in the team knows that aside from Boss, Xie Yi listens to you the most."

Luo Lang proudly raised his head at that. "That's because Xie Yi and I are good friends. We know each other very well."

"Yes, yes, yes, you guys are close friends, and that's why the person to talk to Xie Yi should be you, his close friend, right?" Lin Zhong-qing retorted.

Luo Lang was instantly speechless. Just a brief moment of carelessness and he had gotten himself caught up in the betting as well. However, ever since the other personalities of Luo Lang had been taken down by Ling Lan and they decided to serve the original as the master, the original's IQ wasn't as low as before. Thus, he quickly thought of one point and said, "Okay, Lin Zhong-qing, I was almost tangled up in there by you. Boss definitely knows that Xie Yi made a betting pool. In the past, we even used this to replenish the funds for the logistics division of our team."

"It's different from before now. In the past, everyone didn't know about Boss' capabilities, which was why Xie Yi could win. Now, though, everything about Boss that he himself revealed is known to everyone," Lin Zhong-qing explained.

Luo Lang felt that his words sounded logical and he couldn't help but begin to worry for Xie Yi. He was prepared to talk to Xie Yi after the current bets. If he really did lose, Xie Yi would meet a terrible end.

At that moment, everyone had already placed their bets. Xie Yi looked at the details of the wagers and couldn't help but shake his head as he said, "Aren't you guys underestimating my boss too much? No one actually bet that he'd be able to endure more than 300 rounds. Who wants to bet for more than 300 rounds? I'll triple the return."

Although Xie Yi raised the rate of the bet by quite a lot, there was still no one betting for it. This was because everyone remembered that in the previous month, Ling Lan could only endure 187 rounds with Instructor Tang Yu. No matter how monstrous Ling Lan was, it was impossible for him to suddenly improve to the point where he could endure for 300 rounds after only a month's interval.

Very nearly everyone had wagered that Ling Lan would be able to endure for around 200 rounds, while there was only one person who wagered that Ling Lan would be able to endure 250 rounds...

Xie Yi regrettably began preparing to close shop, but it was right then that he heard someone shout, "I'll wager on it." Xie Yi's smile instantly froze. When he raised his head, however, his smile had already returned to normal. He asked with a huge smile on his face, "Gao Jinyun, how many credits do you want to bet?"

Gao Jinyun's sudden shout had also surprised the team members beside him. They didn't make a sound as they trusted him, however, and waited for Gao Jinyun to reply instead.

Gao Jinyun only hesitated for a fleeting second before he became completely determined, after which he firmly said, "I'll bet 30,000 credits." This was the entire sum of his personal credits. He was very confident in Boss Ling Lan, just like the rest of her team. Since Xie Yi had made such a remark, it had to mean that Boss Ling Lan had the capability to endure for 300 rounds.

However, Gao Jinyun was not in a battle team that was directly under Ling Lan, after all, and didn't know of her real potential. The reason he could bet this much was because he trusted his own eyes and instincts.

"Captain, isn't that a bit too much?" Gao Jinyun's vice-captain wore an expression of concern as he asked this question.

Gao Jinyun quietly explained, "I'm only doing this for myself. The credits used will be my own personal credits. I won't use the team's credits."

The logistics team member responsible for handling the credits disagreed upon hearing his words. "No way. You are our captain, and your decision is our decision. The 30,000 credits will come from the team funds."

Gao Jinyun was surprisingly determined this time. "You guys don't have to convince me. I trust Boss, and that's why I'm willing to bet. This is my own thoughts, though. It has nothing to do with you guys."

Gao Jinyun usually listened to the opinions of his team members; however, once he made a decision, there would be no changing it. The members of Gao Jinyun's team watched as he gave his 30,000 credits to Xie Yi.

Gao Jinyun's vice-captain and other team members quietly discussed this matter for a few seconds. When Gao Jinyun turned around, they all said, "Gao Jinyun's team will wager 30,000 credits as a group that Boss Ling Lan will be able to endure for 300 rounds." Since their captain trusted Boss Ling Lan, then being his team members, they had to follow in his footsteps. Even if they lost, they had to use their actions to support the captain.

Although Xie Yi was full of smiles and had a face of full confidence, he was actually crying inside. The bets that he had made today had ended up all for naught, as the money that he would make would most likely not be enough to pay Gao Jinyun's team. These guys were f**king insane.

It turned out that the only reason Xie Yi thought of setting up bets was that before Boss and Instructor Tang Yu began their fight, he had asked the former on how many rounds he would be able to endure. Ling Lan's answer was more than 300 rounds, and this was also why Xie Yi had asked whether there was anyone who was going to bet on 300 rounds or more. At that moment, Xie Yi was hating himself for having such a big mouth. Even if he did set the bet, why did he have to say that he would pay triple to the winner?

Bystanders couldn't see the pain in Xie Yi heart, but all the members of Ling Lan's battle team saw through his facade.

Lin Zhong-qing sighed quietly. As expected, sinners would eventually have to pay for their sins; Xie Yi was going to be in trouble this time.

On the side, Luo Lang was already considering whether he should open his small bank to help Xie Yi fill the lack of cash after the bets were completed.

Qi Long, who was focused on the battle the entire time, had discovered the activity on Xie Yi's end at that moment. He frowned and asked, "Did Xie Yi get into trouble this time?" Ever since Qi Long had formed his aura after his physical skills advanced to the peak late-stage of Qi-Jin, a tough presence would emanate from his entire body. Even if he looked like a nice person, he still gave off the tough feeling of a strong individual. This made others not dare to underestimate him.

Of course, this was also because Qi Long didn't have complete control of his aura. If he really could control it completely, Qi Long would still be the same as before and would not make people become cautious of him when they were around him.

Han Jiyun held in his laughter and nodded, replying, "Gao Jinyun's team has put in him in a bad spot this time."

"Gao Jinyun... he respects Boss very much." Qi Long had a very good impression of him. Every time they met, Qi Long felt that Gao Jinyun was similar to himself.

"Yeah, he also trusts Boss very much." Han Jiyun's impression of Gao Jinyun was similarly very good. How could he bet so much if he didn't fully trust Boss, putting down 60,000 credits?

Of course, Ling Lan's team didn't care about that amount of credits. The credits they had acquired during their time in the scout academy was compounded through investments made by Boss—the sum had already reached the 100 million range. It could be said that in the military academy, out of all the battle teams, only their team didn't have to worry about the logistics aspect of their team.

Later on, Boss was focused on advancing and didn't have time to deal with the credits. Thus, he transferred more than 100 million credits to Lin Zhong-qing. It was at that time that they learned that Lin Zhong-qing had another terrifying talent—doing business. Lin Zhong-qing's eye for investments wasn't as accurate as Boss, but he wasn't too far behind. The 100 million credits that they had from back then had accumulated into 300 million. This number was already excluding their expenses in the past two years.

However, no matter how many credits the battle team had, Lin Zhong-qing was just as frugal as Boss. The team members had to put in an application every time they needed to use credits and had to go through many steps. If the estimated expense was not carefully calculated or was more than 500 credits, the application would always be sent back. The team members resented all of this. However, it was Lin Zhong-qing's unwavering front that made the others learn how to calculate and estimate, not wasting even a little bit.

Qi Long and Han Jiyun were only talking casually. They also know that even if Xie Yi lost those credits, it wouldn't hurt him at all.

"Our battle team is already a five-star team. If we want to advance, we need to have secondary battle teams. Gao Jinyun's battle team..." Qi Long frowned as he fell into deep thought. Although taking in secondary battle teams wouldn't be as harsh as taking in new team members, loyalty was something that couldn't be of similar importance to new team members; they had to unconditionally listen to the head team's orders. Qi Long and the others were all looking at the battle teams in the Lingtian Mecha

Clan. Currently, only Gao Jinyun's team had managed to catch their eyes, but it was just that taking in secondary battle teams was a very important matter. They were still just looking.

"We'll see!" Han Jijyun raised his chin and pointed towards the arena. "Since our captain isn't even in a rush, then we don't need to rush either." They were responsible for providing the list of choices, but the final decision would be made by their boss, Ling Lan.

Hearing this, Qi Long replied with a smile, "You're right!"

In the arena, Ling Lan was operating a special-class mecha, while Tang Yu was operating an ace mecha. Although they appeared to be in the midst of a fierce and terrifying mecha battle, in reality, the two of them were very relaxed.

"Ling Lan, how many rounds do you plan on getting to this time?" Despite launching a seemingly ruthless attack, Tang Yu asked this with a smile.

"300 rounds, or maybe more. I'll see," Ling Lan replied calmly as she raised her right hand and used her beam saber to easily intercept Tang Yu's attack.

At their level, if it wasn't a battle to the death, it was possible for them to trade blows up to 10,000 times. Even if Ling Lan's operating skills were of a special-class operator, her actual skill level of being an ace operator made it so that Instructor Tang Yu couldn't actually defeat her that easily.

"If it wasn't to protect you, I would have truly liked to immediately publicize the news of you advancing to ace operator." Tang Yu blocked and intercepted Ling Lan's attack. Using this block, he performed a side kick.

Ling Lan operated her mecha to dodge. At the same time as she attacked with her beam saber, she said, "No rush. I'm preparing to officially advance in the second half of my fourth year." Even if she got into the 23rd Division and with her father protecting her, Ling Lan still wanted to get in with her own strength. She wanted her father's subordinates to know that she was no prince that entered through a backdoor.

"Looks like you already have it all thought out," Tang Yu remarked with amazement. She was able to restrain herself from the temptation of gaining instant success. Every step that Ling Lan took was firm.

"I have to save some face for Senior Qiao Ting," replied Ling Lan. Qiao Ting had advanced at the very beginning of his fourth year, and it was because of this that he was viewed as the second Ling Xiao and received the admiration of everyone else.

"You want to use Qiao Ting as an excuse, don't you? Out of all the cadets that I've taught, you're the craftiest," Tang Yu said wholeheartedly. "However, it's possible that you'll be the one to live the longest." In reality, it wasn't that he hadn't taught any star pupils. It was just that the more talented the cadet, the more arrogant they were. They didn't want to give in and this led to them dying young, leaving Tang Yu heartbroken.

"My goal isn't to acquire boundless glory. Instead, it's to live longer than the others!" Ling Lan declared without hesitation. This was her hope for the future and she was working hard towards this goal.

“To live longer?” Tang Yu was stunned for a second. Afterwards, as though he had thought it through, he said, “That’s true. In the end, it’s all about living longer than everyone else.”

Tang Yu’s expression was slightly saddened. He suddenly realized that the lessons he had taught to his pupils from before could have been all wrong. Perhaps it was better that he taught his pupils how to survive more easily on the battlefield. The sure-kill techniques used in battle were actually compiled by those who still lived after each and every battle. As long as his pupils survived, they would naturally come to an understanding and would not need him to use his time to teach them how to kill others.

However, there was obviously no life-or-death battles in the academy. Even if he taught them more, how could he make his pupil understand the secrets of those sure-kill techniques? They, as instructors, had led them down the wrong path...

Tang Yu had a feeling that when he taught cadets in the future, he would put the main focus on how to survive in a battlefield. This would greatly increase the survival rate of his pupils.

After many years, he had proof and he sent his research to the military’s headquarters. After the people at headquarters carried out further research on this subject, they discovered that this was indeed the case in terms of survival rate of the cadets; thus, they decided that they would conduct an academy-wide experiment in the First Men’s Military Academy. In the classes for real battles, the lesson content changed from the training of sure-kill techniques to instructing cadets about survival techniques upon entering a battlefield.

After accumulating more than 10 years of data, they discovered that the change was very effective, and thus they put it through to every academy in the Federation. The result was that the mortality rate of the Federation’s veterans decreased compared to the other countries. This made the Federation’s military strength increase once again and also brought a true 100 years of peace to the Federation’s borders. And all of this came about from Ling Lan’s one statement of wanting to live longer than everyone else!

Tang Yu would later reveal this truth on his deathbed, following which Ling Lan, who was already legendary, would once again experience a rise in fame—she would gain the respect and gratitude of every soldier in the country.

Chapter 533: The Dangerous Xie Yi!

Just like that, Ling Lan and Tang Yu fought for more than 300 rounds. At that point, Ling Lan revealed a weak point, which allowed Instructor Tang Yu to land a hit and defeat her. This result made all the people who were watching cry in agony; all of them had almost lost all of their credits. However, as the dealer, Xie Yi also had a bitter expression on his face, and this was because he had to pay Gao Jinyun and his battle team 180,000 credits. This had made him instantly lose all the credits he had accumulated in the past few years and return to his original poor self.

In Gao Jinyun’s battle team, the vice-captain couldn’t control his feelings of excitement. He grabbed Gao Jinyun’s right arm and shook it violently, asking, “Captain, Captain, I’m not dreaming, am I? We... we really won.”

As Gao Jinyun was shaken about by his vice-captain, he had a stupid smile on his face as if he was in a dream. When he placed his bet in the beginning, he had only done so to support Boss. He didn't actually want to win any money, but he didn't expect that his trust in Boss would actually help him win such a huge sum. This time, with his principal amount, plus the interest earned, he suddenly had 120,000 credits. No, wait—if he counted his team's betting amount, then that would be 240,000 credits. Even after taking away the principal amount of 60,000, it was still 180,000 credits...

Gao Jinyun's 30,000 credits were accumulated from when he was a child. It should be said that he had taken out all that he owned and bet it on Boss Ling Lan.

All the members in Gao Jinyun's battle team were from commoner families; they didn't have any family backgrounds like the other battle teams. Similarly, their team taking out 30,000 credits to bet on Ling Lan wasn't an easy feat. At that time, the entire team's credits only amounted to a bit more than 30,000. The only reason they had been willing to take out 30,000 credits was that they trusted their own captain. Now, they had gotten their return for their trust in him. This made the team's logistics funds increase to more than 100,000. It was enough for their small team to change their equipment and weapons.

Moving away from Gao Jinyun and his team's excitement, Ling Lan walked out of her mecha's cockpit. Before she landed on the ground, Qi Long and Han Jijyun had already walked over to her.

"Boss, thanks for your hard work."

Ling Lan glanced at the crowd that was gathered on the side. She frowned slightly as she said, "Xie lost." If he had won, the crowd would definitely have scattered.

"Gao Jinyun and his team bet that Boss could endure for 300 rounds and put down 60,000 credits," Qi Long said with a laugh.

Ling Lan was surprised. "Xie actually dared to do that?" She remembered telling Xie Yi that she would go over 300 rounds this time. Did Xie Yi not listen to her? It seemed that he had indeed been reckless this time around. It was time to beat him up.

Ling Lan saw that Han Jijyun had an odd expression on his face. She uncontrollably thought of something and asked, "Is there another reason?"

Han Jijyun nodded. He sternly told Ling Lan about how Xie Yi dug a hole for himself. Hearing this, Ling Lan glanced towards Xie Yi with a half-smile.

Xie Yi, who was transferring the credits to Gao Jinyun's battle team, suddenly felt a cold, sharp glare come his way. His entire body felt chilly, as though his blood was frozen. He didn't even need to turn around to know whose glare it was. He knew he was in trouble; Boss was definitely not going to let him off easy this time.

Xie Yi thought back to the time when he set up his first betting pool...

It happened back in their first year in the military academy. Xie Yi, Qi Long and the others had returned to their own house just like they did every day. Once they entered through door, they could see that their boss was sitting on the sofa in the living room, using his communicator to look through some data.

After Qi Long and the others greeted Boss, they all went back to their own respective rooms and cleaned themselves. Xie Yi's movements were very fast. When he finished showering, he discovered that Qi Long and the others hadn't finished yet. There was only Boss still sitting on the sofa, concentrated on the information on the virtual screen.

Xie Yi suddenly had a thought and walked towards the sofa that was facing Boss directly and sat down. Boss' aura was too strong; he didn't dare to sit beside him.

After sitting down, Xie Yi fell into several seconds of contemplation before opening his mouth and asking, "Boss, tomorrow is our class's physical skills battles. The list of names has already been announced. The battle that the most freshmen members are paying close attention to is the one between Qi Long and Commander Wu Jiong. Everyone wants to know who is stronger."

Ling Lan didn't raise her head. She replied nonchalantly, "Perhaps everyone else doesn't have any idea, but those who came from the Central Scout Academy should definitely know the answer."

Xie Yi smiled. "That's true. Everyone knows that Qi Long is a bit stronger. It's just that everyone wants to know how many hits Qi Long would need to defeat Commander Wu Jiong."

"If he gave his all, he would probably win within 50 rounds. If he restrained himself, he probably would need around 80 rounds." Ling Lan had raised her head and thought about it for a second before giving an answer.

"Boss, can you tell me just how many it'll be?" Xie Yi wasn't satisfied with the approximation of the data the Boss had given him.

Xie Yi's words prompted a stern look from Ling Lan, which made the former hang his head out of a lack of confidence.

Ling Lan turned off her communicator as she looked Xie Yi straight in the eye and said, "Okay, tell me what you think."

Xie Yi knew that his thoughts had already been seen through by his boss. He didn't hide it anymore and told her everything. "Boss, I was thinking that our team's logistics funds are running low. Every time we want to buy some necessities, Lin Zhong-qing has to think it over many times and make careful calculations. That's why I thought of an idea that could add some funds to the logistics division of our team.

"Now that we're training our physical skills, there could be some competitions. Everyone also seems to be bored and likely to do some betting on the side. I want to make use of this point..." Xie Yi looked at Ling Lan carefully and discovered that her expression didn't show that she was annoyed. Xie Yi instantly felt better.

The fingers of Ling Lan's right hand were slowly drumming against the armrest of the sofa. She closed her eyes and began to think on whether this plan was plausible or not.

Seeing her like this, Xie Yi affirmed his decision and told everything he had thought to Boss. He hoped that Boss would support him. "Boss, I won't create random bets. I won't open a pool for opponents that I'm unsure about. The only ones that I'll open would be the ones that I know about. I plan on using our battle team as the main focus."

“Betting is something that I don’t really like. There are too many uncertain factors involved. You won’t ever know whether you’ll win or lose until the end.” Ling Lan opened her eyes and a cold gleam flashed through them for a second, which instantly snuffed out the courage that Xie Yi had built up just now.

“Unless you can guarantee that you will definitely win!” Ling Lan finished with a sharp look on her face, staring at Xie Yi.

Xie Yi’s expression showed that he was struggling. It was just as Ling Lan had said. Where could he bet to guarantee a win? However, Xie also knew that if he couldn’t guarantee it, Boss would definitely not agree to him starting the bets.

However, Xie Yi really didn’t want to give up on this chance. As the last member to join the team, Xie Yi still didn’t feel fully confident. Although Qi Long and the others had clearly told him that Boss Ling Lan had already accepted him as a member, he had still yet to hear those words from Ling Lan herself. Xie Yi was in a rush, hoping to get a chance to perform and contribute to the team.

Thus, Xie Yi was excited upon discovering that he had a way to help them resolve the pressure of the logistics funds. He didn’t want to give up. Having already made up his mind, he immediately nodded and promised, “Yes, I promise that I will win.”

“If you lose?” Ling Lan wasn’t going to just let Xie Yi off like that.

Xie Yi bit his lip and replied, “I will be willing to be punished by you, Boss.”

Hearing all this, Ling Lan went into deep thought once again. This made Xie Yi feel perturbed. He didn’t know whether Boss would approve of his idea in the end.

Finally, Ling Lan gave an answer. “I’ll allow it just this time. I hope you can do what you promised.”

Xie Yi excitedly jumped up and instantly bowed down to show his gratitude. “Thank you, Boss, for your trust in me.”

Ling Lan waved her hand. Xie Yi held in his excitement inside and left the living room, making his way back to his own room. He was full of energy as he began to plan for the betting pool tomorrow. He told himself that he had to be careful to make sure he didn’t suffer a setback due to a small careless mistake.

Suffering a serious setback from a careless mistake! Xie Yi remembered his feelings from the past and regretted it strangely. In the past two years, the bets that he had set up had all gone smoothly. With the help of his comrades, he had never lost once. All of this made his confidence inflate without limit and made him lose the caution he had in the beginning.

The bitter result that he had today, after careful thinking, was completely brought about by him digging his own grave... Xie Yi began to worry. Would the good impression that he tried so hard to make in front of Boss be reverted back to the beginning because of this problem?

While Xie Yi was worrying about his well-being, Han Jiyun asked Ling Lan the question he had kept inside him for the past 2 years after he told her the dumb thing that Xie Yi had done. “Boss, I don’t understand why you would have agreed to Xie Yi holding betting pools in the very beginning. This... is clearly not morally right.”

Seeing Han Jijyun's frown, Ling Lan sighed. Han Jijyun was good in everything, except that he was a bit over the top. It was no wonder, though, because he was a descendant from a big family. These descendants were either quality soldier-like ruffians or exemplary soldiers. Han Jijyun was the latter. He was not very accepting of any act that were against the regulations. To have been able to endure it for so long, he had indeed made Xie Yi his comrade. That was why he was so understanding of Xie.

"For those people came from elite families, they don't really have that many limitations. We can't treat them like army personnel," Ling Lan replied calmly. "Also, two years ago, there was an issue with Xie Yi's emotions."

Han Jijyun was surprised. He actually didn't know about this. "What happened?"

"He couldn't find his own value in the team. Although he wanted to be the diplomat for the team, the cadets who came from the Central Scout Academy, including Wu Jiong, Li Yingjie and the others, actually still liked to communicate with Qi Long. Xie Yi's position was indeed very awkward, to begin with," continued Ling Lan in a sharp tone. She informed Han Jijyun of the situation Xie Yi was in at the very beginning.

Han Jijyun thought back to the past and discovered that it was indeed like that. His face showed guilt as he said, "I'm sorry, Boss. I actually missed this detail." He was the strategist of the team and yet he hadn't discovered that a team member's mental stability was not in check. He had forsaken his position on this part.

"At the time, we had just entered the military academy and didn't have a firm place to stand yet. Then we were challenged by Leiting Mecha Clan into an arena battle. Everyone's focus was on that arena battle, so missing that detail was inevitable. You don't need to feel guilty." Ling Lan elaborated and made Han Jijyun feel a bit better.

"Although Xie Yi did find his own value back then, it still wasn't very appropriate in my eyes. However, at the time, it indeed made Xie Yi push past his shaken mentality. This was the most important part. Thus, I agreed with him." Ling Lan spoke out the reason why she had agreed to Xie Yi's suggestion in the very beginning.

"Furthermore, the funds of the team's logistics division did really get replenished. This was a good thing. Jijyun, I think that as long as everyone is willing and doesn't cheat, rob or trick each other, there's no good or bad on how the funds are gathered." Ling Lan didn't really care about betting. She cared about was whether it was worth it or not.

"Take what I should take. As long as I have a clear conscience?!" Han Jijyun felt like he had understood.

Ling Lan didn't say anymore. Some things needed Han Jijyun to think about them himself. No one could help him.

Qi Long had been listening to their conversation the entire time. Seeing that Han Jijyun had gone into deep thought, he asked, "Boss, are you preparing to put Xie Yi in his place?"

Ling Lan raised her eyebrow as though she was asking why Qi Long had such a thought.

"Xie Yi's problem. Boss, don't tell me you haven't noticed," said Qi Long with a smile on his face.

“So you also know.” Ling Lan’s eyes showed a hint of approval.

“My innate talent is Animal Instinct. When I activate my talent, my Animal Instinct tells me that Xie Yi is very dangerous.” Qi Long’s expression suddenly became very serious.

Their words surprised Han Jijyun. He had a face of confusion as he asked, “Boss, Qi Long, what are you guys talking about? What problem does Xie Yi have? Didn’t Boss say that his shaken mentality was resolved?”

Ling Lan looked at Qi Long. This was clearly giving Qi Long the cue to explain to his close friend.

Qi Long rubbed his nose. He could only bitterly explain to his comrade, “You also know that my innate talent, Animal Instinct, can help me sense hidden dangers. Two years ago, although Xie Yi’s mentality was shaken, I didn’t sense any danger from him... but as time went on, even though Xie Yi’s mentality issue was resolved, whenever I activated my innate talent, I could sense the immense pressure he was giving me. This pressure was becoming larger and larger.”

Qi Long looked towards Ling Lan and continued, “It’s just like how Boss usually gives me a sense of intense pressure, but I can still endure it. Once I activate my innate talent, though, Boss’ presence seems so terrifying to the point where if he wanted to me to die, I would die.” After saying all this, Qi Long actually shivered.

Han Jijyun finally understood. “So you’re saying that when you activate your innate talent, the feeling that Xie Yi gives you is very strong and threatens you right?”

Qi Long nodded. Han Jijyun exclaimed with surprise, “Could it be that he has hidden potential?” After saying this, Han Jijyun’s expression showed a hint of sorrow. After all, his so-called comrade had lied to him, which gave him the feeling of being betrayed.

Qi Long didn’t answer. He looked towards Ling Lan because he didn’t know how to say it.

Seeing this, Ling Lan shook her head and said, “No, it’s not Xie Yi’s power. There were a few times when I unintentionally sensed Xie Yi suppressing it.”

Ling Lan’s answer not only shocked Han Jijyun, but also even Qi Long. It was probably because Qi Long hadn’t even thought of this detail.

“Then what is it exactly?” Qi Long asked.

Ling Lan glanced at Xie, who was in the crowd, before looking at Luo Lang who was beside him, and then she began to speak with a certain degree of confidence. “I suspect that it is a second personality, just like Luo Lang’s Alter Ego innate talent.”

“Doesn’t Xie Yi have the Lightning Bolt innate talent? How could he have a second innate talent?” Qi Long asked in surprise. The people of the Federation could only awaken one innate talent—there was no one who could awaken a second.

“I didn’t say it’s an innate talent. It is only similar to Luo Lang’s innate talent. I suspect this has something to do with Xie Yi’s family’s bloodline. Xie Yi doesn’t seem to be surprised by it. He even has a way of holding down that power.

“My guess is that this is some type of split personality... The power it has is extremely overwhelming. It has destructive properties and is probably Xie Yi’s hidden personality,” Ling Lan explained without hesitation.

Chapter 534: Lingtian’s Letter of Challenge!

“Dark character?” Qi Long and Jijyun exchanged glances with one another; they were both puzzled.

“Yes. Xie Yi’s two personalities aren’t like Luo Lang’s Alter Ego. Luo Lang’s Alter Ego has primary identity and secondary identities. No matter how powerful the secondary identities are, they will be controlled by the primary identity. For Luo Lang, however, there’s no difference in status between his personalities. The more powerful one will gain control of the physical body,” Ling Lan explained indifferently.

“Then the Xie Yi who always appears before us is the primary personality.” Han Jijyun understood.

“It might not be. It’s just my own opinion. After all, we don’t know what the suppressed personality is like. It might be even better,” Ling Lan replied irresponsibly.

Han Jijyun sent a sullen glance at his boss. No matter how he looked at it, the bright and optimistic Xie Yi should be the main personality. Also, his boss and Qi Long had both said that the suppressed personality had a brutal and destructive personality. These were obviously the characteristics of a dark character. Why was his boss trying to make it complicated?

A hint of fighting spirit appeared in Qi Long’s eyes. “Boss, shall I attack?”

His boss had previously told him that a crisis was a catalyst. The worst way to deal with a power that you couldn’t control was to suppress it, while the best way was to let it explode. Once it fully exploded, one would be able to find a chance of survival. In the past, the boss had used this method against Luo Lang and released all his other personalities, and this enabled Luo Lang to gain control of his Alter Ego.

Unexpectedly, though, Ling Lan rejected Qi Long’s proposal. “No need.”

“Are you planning to do it yourself?” Qi Long asked curiously. If his boss did it himself, the chance of success would be higher.

“He’s very afraid of me.” Ling Lan shook her head in response. “I can’t force him out.”

Ling Lan’s words made Qi Long puzzled. His boss meant that it was useless for himself to do anything, so why didn’t he let him do it? Did he have other plans? Qi Long started thinking about it carefully.

Han Jijyun had his head lowered, also in in deep thought.

Ling Lan didn’t say anything. They needed to understand some things themselves. If she told them everything, they would never grow.

Very soon, Han Jijyun came back to his senses. Ling Lan didn’t give them a lot of information so he could faintly make out something. Although he hadn’t understood entirely, he wasn’t in a hurry. Since he didn’t understand it at present, he might as well put it to one side. Who knew—perhaps he would be struck by sudden inspiration.

It was then that he remembered something else; his boss had given him a mission this morning.

“Boss, I have asked Regiment Commander Wu. Currently, in our mecha clan, including our battle clan, we have a total of 21 people who managed to become special-class operators.” There was a hint of pride on Han Jijyun’s face. They were all third-years, so the fact that they were able to become special-class operators so quickly proved their ultimate talent in mecha piloting.

Ling Lan nodded at his words. “That’s enough.”

Han Jijyun had a sudden thought. His eyes lit up as he asked, “Boss, are you preparing to act?”

“What am I preparing for?” Ling Lan asked in return with raised eyebrows.

Han Jijyun could not contain his excitement anymore; his face turned red from his feverish emotions. After scanning his surroundings and confirming that no one was looking at them, he whispered, “Uniting the factions in the military academy and becoming the ultimate king?”

Han Jijyun’s words cause a glint to appear in Qi Long’s eyes, too. He remembered his boss’ firm and arrogant declaration when they were first years. He looked at Ling Lan with anticipation and waited for the boss to give a confirmation.

“A situation will take its course regardless of our wishes! Even if we don’t want to attack them, they won’t let us go. In that case, why not we make a move first?” Ling Lan said coldly. The air around her suddenly turned frosty as she emanated a hint of killing intent. Han Jijyun almost became frozen by the atmosphere, and even Qi Long felt a heavy weight pressing down upon him.

The greater his capabilities became, the more he understood how scary his boss was. Last time, their capabilities had been too far apart so he was not certain about how powerful his boss was. Qi Long had never asked Ling Lan before, but he was certain that his boss was definitely in the Domain stage.

Without a doubt, the fact that his boss was in the Domain stage had broken the record of Federation again. However, he also knew that if his boss didn’t say anything, he had his reasons. Hence, he kept this secret to himself and didn’t tell anyone; including his best buddy, Han Jijyun.

In the Leiting Mecha Clan headquarters, Lin Zhidong sat in the regiment commander’s office as he settled the matters in the Leiting Mecha Clan. Ever since Qiao Ting had gone to the Third Division, he finally managed to get his dream position as the clan’s regiment commander and become the person with the highest authority in Leiting. He had finally managed to experience what it was like to hold he in the position of the highest authority.

“Beep beep beep!” The A.I. on the office desk beeped. Lin Zhidong asked happily, “What is the matter?”

“Regiment Commander, the Lingtian Mecha Clan has sent us a letter of challenge.” His deputy’s voice came from the A.I..

“Letter of challenge?” Lin Zhidong almost fell from his chair upon hearing this news. He quickly grabbed onto the table and took a deep breath before saying, “Come in.” What was Lingtian doing? Leiting hadn’t sent them a letter of challenge, so why were they sending one over instead? Also, they were already the first faction. What was the point of challenging Leiting?

The deputy entered the regiment commander’s office and passed a paper card to Lin Zhidong.

Lin Zhidong opened the card to take a look, and he saw a nicely written sentence on the card.

Letter of Challenge

Target of Challenge: Leiting Mecha Clan!

Challenger: Lingtian Mecha Clan!

Time: Star calendar 4746.5.20

Regards,

Ling Lan

“It really is a letter of challenge...” As Lin Zhidong gazed at the letter of challenge in his hands, astounded, he had a sudden thought and realized the intention of the other party.

Lin Zhidong was furious—he slammed the table and gritted his teeth as he uttered, “Ling Lan, your appetite is too big! You actually intend on trying to have us merge with you.”

In the First Men’s Military Academy, there were rules with regards to sending out letters of challenge. If a faction in a lower position challenged a faction in a higher position and won, they would exchange their positions. If they lost, they would have to pay for the sending out the challenge. There were no other consequences. This was the most common form of challenge that made up 90% of the mecha challenges in the school.

But there was another kind, which was rarer; a faction in a higher position challenging a faction in a lower position. The purpose of this kind of challenge was to merge the two factions. In other words, if the faction in the higher position won, the one in the lower position would have to merge with the other side without any retaliation. If the lower position faction won, they would swap position with the other faction.

These rules apply to all mecha challenge competitions. All the factions had to follow the rules strictly. An example would be the time when Qiao Ting challenged Lingtian. He had planned on merging Lingtian with his faction but in the end, Lingtian was more powerful than him and Leiting had to give up their position as the first faction.

Of course, there were other non-mecha challenge competitions in the military academy. For example, during first year when they just formed the New Cadet Regiment, they were asked to battle it out with their physical skills. These challenges were mostly based on bets and once both parties accepted the terms, it would be done. There were no rules that said they had to accept such challenges.

Lin Zhidong’s words allowed his deputy to understand the situation as well. He looked at the letter of challenge that was thrown to the floor by the angry Lin Zhidong. Lingtian was trying to get them to merge with them? Were they being delusional? A small mecha clan that was just founded was trying to touch the most powerful mecha clan that had been around for a few hundred years?

The deputy had forgotten that their position of number one faction had been taken away by Lingtian one year ago.

At this moment, the rest of all the other mecha clans had received a letter of challenge from Lingtian at around the same time. This signified that Lingtian was preparing to unite the military academy. However, no one was optimistic about Lingtian. All the mecha clans thought that Lingtian was being whimsical and daydreaming... numerous mecha clans were planning to drag Lingtian down from the position of number one and let them understand how stupid it was for them to underestimate all the mecha clans of the military academy.

Ling Lan's actions caused Lingtian to become the thorn in the side for the entire First Men's Military Academy; they couldn't wait to destroy her. A few number of small clans had harbored good feelings towards Lingtian, as they felt that Lingtian would understand their hardships since they all came from a similar background and that they would protect them. However, this letter of challenge broke all their hopes and their attitude changed immediately—they couldn't wait for Lingtian to stumble and made a fool of herself.

While all these people were scolding them, Lingtian was intensely preparing for their first battle. Their first target was not the small and weak clans; it was the biggest and most powerful clan, the Leiting Mecha Clan.

Ling Lan arranged it this way because she hoped that they would be able to strike the more powerful clans while they were still unprepared and take them down instantly. After they managed to take down all these old and powerful factions, they would be able to intimidate the other smaller factions and win without even having to fight. Ling Lan didn't plan to let Lingtian take on all the battles one by one. They didn't have the strong foundation that the old factions had, and neither did they have a larger number of mecha operators.

"The challenge mode is out." The next day, before Leiting could catch a breath, the challenge mode was sent to Lin Zhidong by the mainframe.

"Twelve-man team mode!" Lin Zhidong's heart dropped at this piece of news. With this number of people, they would not be able to showcase their strength. Leiting lacked a powerful mecha master like Qiao Ting, who was capable of winning against everyone with his techniques. The twelve-man team mode put them at a disadvantage.

Leiting immediately held a meeting for clan members at captain level and above. In the meeting, Lin Zhidong asked, "We need to send out twelve of our most powerful mecha masters. But the most important question is: who has the confidence of being able to defeat Ling Lan?"

The meeting room fell into a dead silence. During last year's Grand Mecha Tournament, Ling Lan's amazing long-range operation, as well as his personal-name technique that was confirmed after the tournament, had made them feel hopeless.

"Do we have no one that can defeat Ling Lan now that Regiment Commander Qiao Ting has left?" Lin Zhidong asked angrily.

"Even Regiment Commander Qiao Ting lost to Lingtian too," someone refuted softly.

"That's because my big brother fell into their scheme. Otherwise, how could he have lost to such a young brat? Regiment Commander Lin, don't worry and leave that brat to me." An unruly youth stood up and shouted with an angry face.

Lin Zhidong looked at this situation and felt speechless. Qiao Lin was Qiao Ting's younger brother. Compared to his talented elder brother, however, this Qiao Lin was utterly wasting his good physique and good talent; he was already a third year, yet he had only just achieved advanced mecha warrior level. When Qiao Ting was at his age, he was already invincible in the special-class operator level. If it was not for Qiao Ting, he would not have let this stupid person hold a captain position.

Chapter 535: Reorganization!

Qiao Lin utterly lacked self-awareness so his words were disregarded by Lin Zhidong as well as the other captains. When he saw the rest of the people ignoring him and continuing their discussion, Qiao Lin's face turned from red to green and he sat down angrily. He felt deeply embarrassed by this cold treatment. He thought that these people had no conscience at all; once his brother left, they just ignored him.

Disregarding Qiao Lin's feelings, the administrators of Leiting had a long discussion before deciding to let one of their strongest special-class mecha operators be responsible for stalling Ling Lan.

Leiting's leaders all felt that since Lingtian was just a mecha clan that had been founded a little over a year ago, even if they managed to get 12 special-class operators, most of them would be greenhorns. This would give them a chance. As long as they stopped the strongest special-class operator in Lingtian, the rest of their 11 special-class operators would destroy the rest of Lingtian's members. After that, they would gather together and defeat Ling Lan by surrounding her. That way, they would be able to regain the title of number one faction.

Lingtian and Leiting's upcoming second battle caused an uproar in the entire school; it drew the attention of everyone. The Leiting mecha clan was the strongest opponent capable of preventing Lingtian from taking over the military academy. Regardless of how small a mecha clan was, they were not willing to merge with another mecha clan.

The instructors and administrators of the military academy also paid plenty of attention to this battle. Of course, after their god-creation plan failed, they didn't dare to take any small actions anymore. In addition, they had hard feelings towards Ling Lan, the person who had prevented their plan from happening. Although Ling Lan's actions aligned with their thoughts, they didn't want a newbie like her to complete this plan; it would make them feel like they had lost to her again. They had wanted to make her a stepping stone the last time.

Ling Lan didn't give Leiting much time to prepare. Her decision was the same as the one made by Qiao Ting, which was to finish the battle in the fastest possible time. Hence, their special-class operator battle would be held three days later.

The night before the battle, Ling Lan finished her training mission as per normal and then logged in to Mecha World. She made last-minute changes to the mecha that she was going to operate tomorrow.

Ling Lan's mecha was a modified ace mecha that Chang Xinyuan had created for her. After a year's worth of meticulous effort, the mecha looked exactly the same as a normal special-class mecha. It was different from one year ago where it looked more like an ace mecha except for its color. However, modified mecha were normally special so no one had held any suspicions back then.

Now, though, no one would be able to tell that this was a modified mecha from its external appearance. It looked the same as the mecha of all her other team members and thus it would be difficult to spot a difference among the rest.

Ling Lan checked all the energy levels on her mecha, as well as its weapons and equipment. She only felt at ease after confirming that everything was normal, after which she prepared to log off and call it a day. Before she could leave, however, a request for long-range conversation popped up on the mecha screen. The person sending the request was [Self-Defined Destiny].

The corners of Ling Lan's mouth went up slightly. Ever since Li Lanfeng and his friends came out of their army division's recruit training camp, he would log in to Mecha World every week and report to her their performance for the week. For the entire year, no matter what happened, he never missed his report. This gave Ling Lan the illusion that those three had never left her at all. They had merely gone to another training ground to train.

Today was the day Li Lanfeng was supposed to give her his report. Ling Lan pressed the connect button and a handsome young man wearing half a mask and a Federation mecha operator uniform appeared on the screen.

"Leopard, didn't you say that you needed to carry out a mission this week?" Ling Lan asked curiously. This was why she had been planning to log out without waiting for Li Lanfeng. In their conversation last week, Li Lanfeng had told Ling Lan that the three of them had received an escort mission.

"That escort mission was very easy and the journey was really smooth too. No one wanted to stay outside so we all hurried our way back to the base," Li Lanfeng answered casually.

Ling Lan nodded her head and said, "It's good that you all are fine." Although Li Lanfeng made it sound simple, Ling Lan knew that for a mission to require an ace operator, an ace disguiser, and a special-class operator cum ace military doctor to directly participate, it could not be anything easy. It was definitely not as simple as how Li Lanfeng put it, but since he didn't say anything, he had to have been warned by the military to not disclose anything. Ling Lan would not make a mistake like causing difficulty for Li Lanfeng.

Seeing how Ling Lan didn't pursue the topic any further, Li Lanfeng heaved a sigh of relief. There was nothing holding him back now. He remembered something Li Shiyu told him and asked with concern, "I heard Shiyu saying that one of his juniors in the military medical field told him today that you're having a mecha battle with Leiting tomorrow. Rabbit, are you confident?"

Li Lanfeng was very clear on what Ling Lan's motive was; she had long wanted to unite the military academy since a year ago and had always been preparing for this day.

"If everything goes as I expect, there shouldn't be a problem," Ling Lan replied calmly. Even if she didn't have total confidence, it was too late already—Ling Lan had to act as though she had everything in control. If she didn't even believe in herself, how could she let the members of Lingtian believe in her?

"I'll be waiting for your good news then." Li Lanfeng stared intently at Ling Lan's cold face. He had only left Ling Lan for less than a year, yet he could clearly feel how important she was in his heart. Many times, when he felt like he couldn't persevere anymore, Ling Lan's cold and clear eyes would motivate him and make his heart stronger.

According to the words of their temporary team leader, Li Lanfeng was the hardest person to predict among the three of them; whenever he felt that the latter had shown all his potential already, he would display even more possibilities. Their temporary team leader initially didn't have a good opinion of Li Lanfeng because of his weak body, but as time went by, he started to admire Li Lanfeng more and more. He really wanted to take in Li Lanfeng as an official team member. Even after coming to know that he already had a battle clan, he still constantly urged him to jump ships. Li Lanfeng always had a headache because of him.

Ling Lan nodded her head and chatted with Li Lanfeng for a while longer before saying goodbye. They left Mecha World.

Ling Lan opened the login pod to the virtual world and then frowned. She remembered that moments before, Li Lanfeng's right hand hadn't moved at all beside his body; he had only performed some simple actions with his left hand. "Leopard's right hand seemed injured. I wonder if it's serious. Since Li Shiyu could enter Mecha World, he should be fine. The only one that didn't appear is Zhao Jun... looks like Zhao Jun is hurt."

Ling Lan made a prompt decision and made a call. She entered a series of numbers that she remembered clearly but never dialed easily.

Ring, ring. Before the communicator could ring for the fourth time, someone picked it up. "Hold on a moment." A gentle voice came from the communicator, following which she heard the voice saying, "Pause the meeting!" The sound of chairs starting to be dragged around could be heard, as well as of other people replying to the voice in an organized and loud voice. "Yes, General!"

Ling Xiao quickly came out of the meeting he was in and entered the resting room at the side. He confirmed that there was no one around him before smiling happily and asking, "Lan'er, how come you are free to contact me today?"

"Father, I have a certain matter to bother you with this time," Ling Lan replied.

"Oh? What matter?" Ling Xiao was extremely elated. At the same time, he was curious about the difficulty his daughter met. His dear daughter had a truly independent personality due to his failure of being a good father. He really wanted to be a good father now, but hardly any opportunities were given to him.

"I want to know about the current situation of my team members; Li Lanfeng, Zhao Jun, and Li Shiyu. They underwent the evaluation a year ago and entered the 23rd Division." Ling Lan told him of her request.

Ling Xiao immediately retracted his smile. "Why? Did the men of the 23rd Division bully them?" He began to suddenly emanate an invisible, baleful aura. Although Ling Xiao always appeared gentle and amiable in front of all others, he was nevertheless an individual who had returned from the battlefield; how could he be as harmless as he looked?

"If they were bullied by those old folks, they would be useless. I wouldn't have looked for you because of that," Ling Lan stated coldly. "They said that they were given an escort mission this week and returned three days later. However, I realized that in this mission, two of them were injured while one

was heavily injured. Their group consists of an ace operator, a spurious ace and a special-class operator cum ace military doctor...”

As Ling Lan described the situation, Ling Xiao’s expression became serious. Once these talented cadets from the military academy came over, they would be placed under the nurturing program of the military. The military would not give them any missions in their first year and would let them undergo cruel recruit training so that they could get used to life in the military. From their second year onwards, they would be given some patrol and guard missions which involved no risk. Only on their third year would they be given hunt and escort missions to get them used to see blood. Once they managed to pass their first three years, they would be asked to participate in large-scale operations to chase down and suppress bandits—that was when they would get first-hand experience of the cruel massacres between humans. On their fifth year, the division would send them out onto the real battlefield, and that was when life-or-death battles would take place.

Based on what Ling Lan said, her team members were at most in their second year. Even if there was an escort mission, it was not their turn to take it. Also, for such a powerful mecha operator to be hurt so badly, it would not have been a simple escort mission; it was impossible for there to be nothing going on.

“I know. I will investigate this matter. Don’t worry.” Ling Xiao’s eyes were cold. Although he didn’t know who was behind this, he was clear that there was someone envious of these talented cadets, which was why this had happened...

“I’ll leave it to you,” Ling Lan said.

Ling Xiao hung up the call with Ling Lan and walked back into the meeting room with murder in his eyes. It was time to teach those people from the 23rd Division a lesson. Otherwise, they would think that he, Ling Xiao, was a very nice person to bully.

Chapter 536: Father And Son?

Because of Ling Lan’s words, the 23rd Division underwent a strict reorganization. The people that had tried to harm the foundation of the 23rd Division were expelled, while those that had tried to harm their brother-in-arms were sent to military court.

In an instant, the atmosphere in the 23rd Division grew much better. The military soldiers who truly loved the 23rd Division became more loyal to the division as well as to Ling Xiao.

The timely reorganization also saved Li Lanfeng and company, and they immediately heaved a sigh of relief. They knew that someone on top had been targeting them, but they weren’t able to do much despite being on their guard; they had ended up being targeted eventually. For instance, the escort mission that had seemed very safe on the surface was actually filled with danger. If they hadn’t had the capabilities, Zhao Jun would not have been the only one to be seriously injured. All three of them, including their temporary team, would have been stranded to become food for star-level brutal beasts.

Of course, this did not mean that the 23rd Division was completely free of all outsiders. Ling Xiao knew that he couldn’t be too extreme. As long as those people didn’t hurt the 23rd Division’s foundation and

their brothers-in-arms, whether it be spies from other divisions or soldiers with their own agenda, Ling Xiao would let them stay and not touch them.

He needed to know how to compromise adequately in his position. If he truly took control of the 23rd Division like it were his own army, someone from the Federation would start to grow worried. As for him, he might become an eyesore in the military headquarters.

But if that was all, he would not be scared. After all, the military would always be guarded against their generals and god-class operators even as they gave them important roles and tasks. He didn't mind being guarded against more. However, he had two soft spots now: Lan Luofeng and Ling Lan. They were his dearest treasures and he didn't want them to be hurt in any way. That was why he had to lower his head and make some compromises.

As the 23rd Division was vigorously undergoing a reorganization, Ling Lan welcomed the next day peacefully.

In the afternoon, the entire military academy was empty; there was almost no one in the school. All the students were either in the mecha combat hall or watching the live broadcast of the upcoming mecha competition with their friends. Some had gone back to their accommodations and prepared to enter Mecha World so that they could experience the battle first-hand.

The administrators of the military academy hadn't freed a day this time for everyone to watch the battle. However, since this battle would affect the future progression of power in the school, most of the students, whether they had a mecha clan or not, took leave on the day to watch this future-determining ultimate battle.

As the number of people taking leave increased, the instructors decided to take leave too. There were not many people for them to teach that day and they were keenly interested in this match as well.

The instructors wanted to know if Ling Lan was able to take over the First Men's Military Academy. If he succeeded, it would be a first in the history of the First Men's Military Academy and they would be a witness of the event.

Similar to the other mecha tournaments, a VIP room in the military academy grew lively again as instructors and administrators appeared inside to watch the ultimate mecha battle; the room was filled up within a minute.

The moment Tang Yu entered the room, he saw numerous faces familiar and unfamiliar. They were all sitting with people they were close to and were in the middle of a furious discussion. They spoke about their opinions as well as the different possibilities of this match.

Tang Yu immediately spotted the principal; he was sitting right in front of the big screen, smiling as he sat there. For some reason, no one sat beside the principal even though many people went over to greet him.

Tang Yu smiled and walked over. He greeted the principal. "Principal, hello. Long time no see." Counting the time, he had not seen this mister for almost eight months.

The principal saw Tang Yu and his polite smile immediately became sincere. He patted the sofa beside him and said, "Come, come. Tang Yu, sit beside me. Tell me about the details of the competition later."

The principal's words caused jealousy and envy amidst the people who didn't leave. Tang Yu didn't act polite with the principal and immediately replied, "No problem!" He sat on the sofa that the principal indicated immediately after he finished his sentence. Even without raising his head, he could feel the intense glares shooting at him.

Tang Yu didn't care at all. Ever since he watched the battle between Lingtian and Leiting with the principal last year and they discovered Ling Lan's secret together, he had formed an alliance with him. This year, he had gained the title of the trusted subordinate of the principal so he was used to this treatment. By now, he was indifferent towards them.

Tang Yu sat down and started chatting with the principal. The time of the competition came closer and closer. Everyone in the VIP room had sat down and no one was walking around anymore. They patiently waited for the competition to start.

The principal leaned towards Tang Yu when he saw no one interrupting them and whispered, "Tang Yu, do you think that Lingtian has a chance of winning this time?"

Tang Yu replied in a low voice, "Principal, as long as Ling Lan maintains his standard, there should be no qualms about the result." Even he himself didn't have the confidence to win against Ling Lan. Hence, in this situation where Leiting didn't have a successor to Qiao Ting, Tang Yu felt that Ling Lan would not lose even if she decided to take a small nap.

Of course, Ling Lan would not make such a low-level mistake... as compared to Qiao Ting, Ling Lan was colder and more vicious. He couldn't think of a way in which Leiting would be able to defeat Ling Lan—the latter had almost no weak points. If they wanted to reenact the self-destruct plan Ling Lan had carried out the last time, they would be knocked down before they could even come near. There was no way they could harm her.

"Principal, Ling Lan's talent in mecha operation is the greatest I have seen in my life. It is the only one I have seen too," Tang Yu exclaimed.

During the one year that he spent teaching Ling Lan, he managed to learn many things. Although they had a teacher and student relationship, they were more like friends that understood each other and had the same position and status.

Tang Yu hadn't expected to make a breakthrough in his hand speed, which had been stagnant for a very long period of time, in the year he spent fighting against Ling Lan. This little breakthrough had made him elated. He had been stuck at elite ace status for over ten years. As he grew older, the chances of him advancing to the imperial level grew smaller. Tang Yu had given up a few years ago but luck just came to him so suddenly...

The principal's smile deepened as he listened to Tang Yu's words. He asked purposely, "How is he as compared to Ling Xiao?"

Tang Yu's heart dropped and there was an awkward expression on his face. His words just now had been ambiguous and might have given others the impression that even the god-class operator, General Ling Xiao, couldn't be compared to Ling Lan. Tang Yu knew that Ling Xiao was the principal's old friend.

He quickly tried to salvage the situation. "General Ling Xiao is an exception, exception."

The principal merely waved his hands and said, "Don't act polite in front of me. I am asking this sincerely. If he really has a greater talent than Ling Xiao, Ling Xiao would be elated to know it too." Then something occurred to the principal and he started laughing happily.

Tang Yu was stunned for a moment, following which something flashed across his mind: Ling Lan, Ling Xiao. They had the same surname. Are they father and son? Oh, no, no way. He had to be thinking too much. Tang Yu quickly denied this thought of his.

The descendants of a god-class operator would be truly normal people for the next few hundred years. This law had never been broken, so he had to have been thinking too much just now. Was he part of the Ling family then? Tang Yu thought of another possibility, but he denied it after a while too. Tang Yu remembered that 19 years ago when, General Ling Xiao was "sacrificed", his relatives attempted to take over the general's achievements, which had caused the general's family to become enraged and break all ties with the Ling family.

If there was indeed a prodigy in the Ling family, General Ling Xiao, no matter how big his heart was, would not be elated. Tang Yu felt that his thoughts made sense.

When he saw the confused expression on Tang Yu, the principal felt satisfied. He remembered how shocked he was when he found out that Ling Lan was Ling Xiao's son and saw his perfect operation skills. He had even called Ling Xiao to ask him if Ling Lan was really his son or if he picked him up from somewhere. But that was when the principal realized how scary Ling Xiao was when he went crazy... the principal shivered and felt lucky that he had only called him instead of going to ask in person. Otherwise, he might not have been able to sit here and watch the competition in one piece. This showed how much Ling Xiao treasured Ling Lan.

Commentary: Sulky Ling Xiao bit his little handkerchief and felt wronged. "I was suspected of being infertile. Shouldn't I be angry? Shouldn't I..."

The principal swept the image of Ling Xiao's eerie-looking face out of his mind and gave Tang Yu a reminder out of kindness. "Tang Yu, don't let theories bind your thoughts."

Tang Yu looked up in astonishment. He opened his mouth and finally managed to squeeze out a sentence. "He, is he really, the father?" The sentence was not long, but the principal understood what Tang Yu wanted to say. He gave the latter a firm nod.

Tang Yu's body shook in excitement and his face turned red. Out of all the people over here, he respected General Ling Xiao the most. He didn't expect himself to have the honor of teaching General Ling Xiao's son. Moreover, his son was such a talented young man, too.

Tang Yu calmed down after being excited for a while, following which he looked at the principal curiously. He truly wanted to ask the principal: why was Ling Xiao's son able to break the law of nature?

Tang Yu and the principal didn't know that Ling Lan was a female and not a male. The research carried out by the Federation was only based on male descendants... so they shouldn't bring up this law on this weirdo Ling Lan.

The principal shook his head. "I am not sure either. Maybe a mutation occurred. However, it is a good thing." The principal smiled. They were on the same side as Ling Xiao, as it was a good thing that he had such a talented son. It was better than having a normal son, right?

Tang Yu agreed with the principal's words. This was a good thing, so why should he probe further?

At this moment, someone in the VIP room shouted, "The competition is starting."

Chapter 537: Chameleon System!

The two of them turned their heads to look at the big screen, on which countless big and tall trees appeared. This was the hardest map in the competition—the forest map.

"The best map to sneak attack and be sneak attacked." The corners of Tang Yu's mouth lifted up to form a smile. "Ling Lan's luck is not bad. He managed to get a map that suits her the most."

The principal immediately asked out of curiosity, "Why is it so?"

"Although Lingtian's special-class operators only advanced not long ago and have much less experience as compared to those in Leiting, Ling Lan always liked to torture them. He would assassinate them despite having the ability to overpower them in a normal fight." Tang Yu recalled the "one versus many" battle that he had previously witnessed and gave a silent laugh.

At the time, everyone had thought that the powerful and mighty Ling Lan, who always meant what he said, would fight them face to face. Hence, they had all gathered together and prepared to attack her together too. Unexpectedly, though, Ling Lan went into hiding and assassinated them using all kinds of methods when they were not prepared for it. Ling Lan's strange assassination methods made everyone go crazy... in the end, Ling Lan won easily. The people who fought with Ling Lan came out of their cockpits with pale faces. They didn't manage to regain their senses for the entire day.

Tang Yu also knew that this kind of battle didn't happen only once. The Lingtian Battle Clan was already used to Ling Lan's torture, so if Leiting wanted to ambush and assassinate them on this map, it would be really hard. The members of Lingtian had learned some techniques from Ling Lan and they were able to perform assassinations on their own as well... Tang Yu felt that Leiting would be the ones getting tortured, not Lingtian.

The principal's eyes lit up. "If what you say is true, this map is really advantageous for Lingtian. I anticipate the performance of those punks." Because of Ling Lan, the principal and Tang Yu supported Lingtian. Hence, Leiting was given up unknowingly.

At this moment, in the forest map, the mechas from the two clans appeared in different positions. When they entered the map, they would be transported to a location automatically. The name of the team was labeled in front of the mechas and then a series of numbers followed.

The people in the battle would not know who was in the mecha; only the audience would know. Both sides had to predict the person in the mecha by analyzing their strength and techniques. This tested the student's adaptive ability as well as their knowledge of their opponent.

“This time, the team leader of Lingtian is their captain, Ling Lan, and the team leader of Leiting is their most powerful special-class operator called Tian Jiajun. He is the dux of the fifth-years, but his hand speed has been stuck for a year. He has not found the opportunity to make a breakthrough, so he is not yet capable of advancing to ace operator. However, you cannot deny that he is one of the strongest among the special-class operators.” At this moment, an instructor was introducing the teams to the person beside him in the VIP room. He sounded a little sad.

Tang Yu knew who this instructor was; he was called Qiao Yi. He was also an ace instructor and was taking the second-years this year. Tian Jiajun was his student from the last semester and was one of his prided pupils.

The person beside the instructor knew of the relationship between Tian Jiajun and Qiao Yi. He immediately consoled him, “It is just a matter of time. He will advance to ace operator in the future. Also, remaining as a special-class operator will allow him to gain a stronger foundation. Once he becomes an ace operator, he will be able to rise up the ranks quickly. Many people who managed to become imperial operators got stuck at special-class operator status for a long time too.”

Qiao Yi nodded his head and gave a smile in response. Although his student was currently not as good as Qiao Ting, who was brought up by Tang Yu, this did not mean that his student would still be of a lower status than them in the future. Once Qiao Yi had this thought, he couldn’t help himself and turned his head to look at Tang Yu.

Tang Yu nodded his head politely at him and Qiao Yi returned the greeting with a smile. Afterward, they shifted their gazes away in a natural manner, but the principal still noticed the hidden rivalry going on between them.

“Seems like Qiao Yi wants to win against you once,” the principal said with a smile.

Tang Yu sighed lightly. “I don’t mind if he wins once, but his luck is too bad.” And how could it not be bad? After Qiao Ting left, he had accepted an even more capable individual, Ling Lan, as his student. He himself didn’t have the confidence to win against her, so which person in this military academy could?

The principal was in total agreement. He said, “Yes, his luck is really bad.” Otherwise, why would his students not be as talented as Tang Yu’s?

However, the rivalry between Tang Yu and Qiao Yi did not gain anyone else’s attention; everyone was focused on the screen in front of them.

“They are moving!” Compared to the hesitation of their opponents, the other clan moved with great swiftness; they began moving as soon as they entered the map. These individuals were from Lingtian.

“There’s no pattern to Lingtian’s movements at all,” someone shouted in surprise.

The Lingtian Mecha Clan had a piece of equipment that could allow them to see the location of their team members. This information was revealed last year in the battle against Qiao Ting mecha clan and had become an open secret. Everyone thought that Lingtian would gather together first, or form teams of three with the mechas closest to them just like what they did last year. This was what Leiting was most afraid of.

“They are fighting their own battle. Lingtian has given up on formation tactics.” The instructors with sharp eyes immediately understood Lingtian’s intention.

“Why are they giving up on formation tactics? Wouldn’t it give them more of an advantage?” The instructors were flabbergasted at Lingtian’s actions. From their perspective, Lingtian had made a stupid decision. They had given up their advantage and opted to fight with their weakness, which was the same as seeking their own death.

“Ah, Leiting is moving too.” Just as the instructors and administrators were feeling angry and disappointed at Lingtian’s actions, Leiting started moving.

“Ah, look, the direction that the Leiting is heading to... are three locations closest to Lingtian. Their destinations are the same.” Very soon, everyone realized the secret behind Leiting’s movements.

“Leiting has the member locating device too. Seems like after losing last year, they have covered up their blindspots. Leiting has prepared sufficiently for this battle.” Many of the instructors were starting to place their bets on Leiting.

“Strange, where are Lingtian’s mechas?” Everyone’s attention had been attracted by Leiting just then. When they looked back at Lingtian’s mechas, they realized that they couldn’t find some of them anymore.

“They are over there, hiding.” Someone looked back just in time to see where Lingtian’s mechas had gone to. He personally saw a mecha changing its color surreptitiously as it hid among a pile of leaves and branches at a stone hill; it started to merge with its surroundings.

“Chameleon system!” Everyone turned serious. Both teams had made ample preparations for this battle. Leiting had managed to obtain the member locating device, while Lingtian had gotten themselves chameleon systems which were known as the ultimate weapon for assassination.

The chameleon system was a top-class disguise system, which could only be used by special-class mecha and above. It was known as the ultimate weapon for assassination because the system could enable a mecha to integrate into its surroundings. A top-class chameleon system could even grant perfect camouflaging ability.

In order to see through the chameleon system, another top-class system was required—the hawkeye system. However, this system was unable to 100% see through the chameleon system. The chameleon system was almost invincible. No radar scanning would reveal the location of an opponent once they used the chameleon system; it had the ability to bluff radar scanning systems as well.

Of course, special-class mechas could only be equipped with the lowest-level chameleon system, but it was enough to fool one’s opponents if they didn’t have a hawkeye system.

Qiao Yi immediately frowned at this new information. “How did Lingtian obtain this system?”

Although such top-class systems were not restricted and sealed away by the military in Mecha World, that did not mean it was easy to ahold of them. The lucky ones could obtain the lowest-level chameleon system upon achieving the status of ace mecha master, yet all of Lingtian’s mechas were equipped with this system. He could almost believe that Mecha World was opened by Lingtian themselves—otherwise,

how would they have been able to obtain so many top-class systems and equip them on these low-level special-class mechas?

In reality, Qiao Yi's thoughts were nearly correct. With the king of Mecha World, Little Four, beside Ling Lan, it could be said that the virtual world was indeed opened by them. However, Ling Lan hadn't asked Little Four to open a backdoor. She had merely asked him to give her the mission that would allow her to obtain the chameleon systems. Afterward, Ling Lan had prompted all the special-class operators in the clan to go and carry out the insanely terrifying mission.

The task involved was a one-man mission. If a person wanted to obtain the chameleon system, he or she needed to pass the mission with his or her own ability; there was no easy way out. All the members of Lingtian had had no choice but to do it. They used their deaths to learn and gain the experiences needed to succeed. They didn't know how many times they had died because all the ways they had died in were different. They died every day, died until they went crazy, died until they wanted to vomit. However, after they calmed down, they wiped their lips and continued to die.

Not all of them had had the psychological endurance to handle such despair; almost half of the members weren't able to handle the sensation of death and started to go crazy. They became unable to differentiate reality from the virtual world and were forced out of there before they truly went crazy by Ling Lan, who had been observing them.

Luckily, Li Shiyu had already invented medication that could cure mental illnesses. Under his treatment, these people went back to being normal. A portion of them had still wanted to continue the mission, but Ling Lan had rejected them directly. She told them that before they reached ace mecha, they were not allowed to do this mission. Otherwise, if they developed any mental illness again, it would really interfere with their minds and affect their future advancements.

The people that failed heeded their captain's advice, as they knew that he would not lie to them. If this was what he said, this was what he meant. There were all smart people and knew what they should do.

In the end, their hard work paid off. 9 members of the clan managed to pass the mission. 5 of them were from Ling Lan's team, while the others were Wu Jiong, Li Yingjie, Wu Jiong's assistant team leader Ye Xu, and one of Lingtian Mecha Clan's leader Gao Jinyun.

Chapter 538: Selfishness?

Although Qiao Yi felt that Lingtian being in possession of the chameleon system would increase the difficulty for Leiting, he still believed that they had higher odds of winning. The reason he was mistaken, however, was that Ling Lan had kept herself too well hidden; from his impression of her, no matter how strong Ling Lan was, she couldn't be stronger than his own pupil, Tian Jiajun.

"It's okay. Not every one of Lingtian's members has the chameleon system. I saw that there were still three mechas going through the forest that haven't camouflaged yet." The instructors that were watching the battle finally managed to breathe a sigh of relief. After so many years, the number of cadets that these instructors had once nurtured were countless. There were finally some pupils that they were proud of. However, it was only these pupils who were able to get their hands on the chameleon system before graduation.

In the past, they could explain why the mission was perverted in nature. If the chameleon system became like corn in a field, like a piece of standard equipment for Lingtian, the instructors would definitely feel terrible about it. They might all become furious to the point of spitting blood.

“Oh yeah, did you guys see which one of the mechas belongs to Lingtian’s commander, Ling Lan?” asked an instructor who was very interested in Ling Lan. He had originally thought the mecha operated by the commander would be different from the others. He remembered that one year ago, Ling Lan had operated a modified special-class mecha that was different from standard special-class mechas. This time, however, Lingtian’s 12 mechas were roughly the same in appearance; he couldn’t figure out who was who.

“Not sure.”

“I can’t make it out which mecha it is.” The others around him also didn’t know the answer and shook their heads at his question.

“Look at the serial numbers. Number one should be the commander’s mecha,” one person reminded everyone.

“I found it. Coordinates: (xx, xx). The mecha that is currently moving is Lingtian No. 1.” One person had already found the mecha that had Lingtian No. 1 shown on its serial number.

Everyone’s focus was on Lingtian No. 1. They saw the mecha fly quickly and move forward with finesse. Its movements were smooth and graceful. Many of the spectators praised the operator piloting Lingtian No. 1. “As expected of a mecha clan commander. This kind of piloting has already reached the level of a fully experienced pilot.”

Seeing this, the principal asked, “Tang Yu, No. 1 is Ling Lan, isn’t it?”

Tang Yu closely observed the movements of Lingtian No. 1, but three seconds later he shook his head and replied, “That’s probably not Ling Lan.”

The principal asked in surprise, “How can you tell that No.1 isn’t Ling Lan?”

Tang Yu smiled slightly. “The movements of the mecha are too elegant.”

“Doesn’t elegance show that the pilot has good operating skills?” the principal continued to ask confusedly.

“Yes, it indeed does show that the pilot has good operating skills, but it’s not limited to just that.” After saying this, Tang Yu couldn’t help but smile before continuing. “In fact, a cadet that is able to perform to this level can be considered to be quite outstanding already. Unfortunately, after having seen Ling Lan’s operating skills, I actually don’t think this cadet’s skills are very good.”

“Ling Lan’s operating skills have already reached that high of a level?”

“Simple and one with nature!” Tang Yu’s words shook the principal. This was the foundation for advancing to imperial level. Had Ling Lan already progressed so far?

“There is no longer the pursuit for elegance in Ling Lan’s operating techniques; instead, it has become simpler,” Tang Yu stated proudly. Thinking back to the past, Tang Yu’s dazzling operating skills had

begun to evolve into the simpler and more precise realm only after countless life-or-death battles. He began to understand it then, but Ling Lan had managed to gradually learn about it in the military academy. How monstrous was this type of mecha operating talent? It was as though there weren't any barriers for Ling Lan, as though he could easily find the correct direction to evolve in.

"His movements won't give you the impression of beauty or elegance. Instead, they will appear normal and uninteresting. However, each motion is even faster, stronger and more accurate while simultaneously not wasting any time," explained Tang Yu. "If no one pays attention to those movements, they would be overlooked. Only if you focus on observing operating skills would you be able to discover this secret. I'm very confident when it comes to Ling Lan. All the other cadets that I have taught might die on the battlefield, but I believe that only Ling Lan would be able to come back alive, even if he were put in a bad situation."

At that moment, the principal was still focused on his statement that Ling Lan's operating skills were simple and in tune with nature. He quietly asked, "Tang Yu, tell me honestly. Can Ling Lan advance to imperial level before his fifth year?" If the First Men's Military Academy had a cadet that advanced to imperial level, which of the other schools would dare to meddle with the title of number one military academy? Thinking up to this point, the principal became jittery and excited.

"Not possible!" Tang Yu answered with confidence.

The principal was so disappointed that it was as though he had a bucket of ice water poured over him. He looked towards Tang Yu and discovered that his expression was stern. Surprised, the principal calmed himself down and said, "Sorry, Tang Yu. I got greedy." He had promised to protect Ling Lan, yet after finding out that Ling Lan was capable of advancing to imperial level, his greed took over his common sense and almost made him do something stupid.

"You are concerning yourself with too much. Ling Lan will advance to ace level in his fifth year and that's as far as he can go," Tang Yu said meaningfully.

The principal smiled with regret and didn't keep on going around in circles on the subject. He suggested, "Since you said Lingtian No.1 isn't Ling Lan, then let's see who is actually who."

The audience could search up the detailed list of the battle team members for both sides. The principal inputted Lingtian No.1 in his communicator and it displayed a list of simple details regarding Lingtian No.1.

"Lingtian No.1—Name: Xie Yi; Background: Descendant of an elite family; Age: 19; Physical Skills: Qi-Jin beginning level; Mecha Piloting: Special-class; Advancement Evaluation from Advanced to Special-class: Outstanding!"

"Xie Yi? I never heard of this name before. Tang Yu, do you know about him? Who knew Lingtian had this kind of expert in their clan." The principal wondered with marvel.

For most students, those who had good physical skills were weaker in terms of talent in mecha piloting. If their mecha piloting talent was good, they wouldn't focus on physical skills. Usually, those who had high levels in physical skills had lower levels in mecha piloting compared to others and vice versa. However, the information of Xie Yi that was on display, whether it be his physical skills or mecha piloting, showed that he had already reached the highest level for his age. He had truly managed to

improve both at the same time. The only reason the principal marveled at Xie Yi was that only after reaching this level would an individual understand that those capable of becoming top mecha operating experts also had similarly strong physical skills.

For example, the Federation's 12 god-class mecha operators; their physical skills had reached the level of Domain. It could be seen that the two skills complemented each other. If an operator only focused on mecha operating and neglected their physical skills, they would have no chance of reaching the highest level of mecha operating in the end.

"Xie Yi is a member of Ling Lan's battle team. Currently, he is given the role of right-wing vice-captain. His mecha operating skills are ranked among the top 50 in the entire military academy." Tang Yu gave the principal some details about Xie Yi.

"He's still in his third year, isn't he? He's definitely a genius if he managed to get into the top 50 in only his third year. Who's his mecha instructor? Why didn't you take him as your pupil back then?" The principal's face was full of regret. Another genius had been held up by their circumstances.

Tang Yu couldn't help but roll his eyes. He could only take 5 students in one semester. His very own pupil, Lin Zhong-qing, was taken in through a backdoor because he enjoyed teaching geniuses. Afterward, he discovered that everyone in Ling Lan's battle team all had great potential. He also wanted to take them as his pupils.

However, the rules of the military academy weren't that easy to override. Since they already had instructors, no matter how much Tang Yu loved teaching geniuses, he wouldn't be able to break the rules and be their instructor. If that was to happen, the entire military academy would be in a mess. Not only would the other instructors have disagreements with him, but it would also make all the cadets in the military academy become discontent. They would think this—since Tang Yu could give pointers to cadets taught by other instructors, then why couldn't he give some pointers to them as well?

"Don't worry, Mr. Principal, his instructor is Luo Jinan. He is also an outstanding ace operator and is extremely attentive to Xie Yi. He has mentioned many times that Xie Yi is his most prized pupil and that he wouldn't hold him back." Even if Instructor Luo's teaching were not good, there was still Ling Lan looking out for Xie Yi. Tang Yu knew clearly that Ling Lan always held small training sessions for her teammates. Otherwise, could the instructors really have raised such outstanding cadets with their capabilities alone? Even Tang Yu himself didn't feel confident about that.

"So, someone as outstanding as him can only be the right-wing vice-captain? Does that punk Ling Lan have selfish motives?" Every battle team had their confidants and they would be usually given positions that didn't reflect their real potential due to the relationships and feelings between everyone. The principal was worried that Ling Lan was giving out positions based on her emotions.

Tang Yu's lip trembled for a second. Just Xie Yi alone had excited the principal this much. If he came to know that the rest of Ling Lan's battle team was entirely composed of monstrous individuals, perhaps the principal would be so excited that his heart wouldn't be able to take it and instantly faint.

He was very much inclined to see principal's reaction after telling him the truth. Tang Yu smiled slyly as he began, "Ling Lan's battle team's vanguard is called Qi Long. His physical skills level has reached the late stages of Qi-Jin in the beginning tier. His mecha operating level is special-class. Yes, he advanced in

his second year, earlier than Xie Yi by 8 months or so. And the left-wing vice-captain, Luo Lang, possesses a physical skills level in the mid-stages of Qi-Jin in the higher tier. His mecha operating level is special-class and he also advanced during his second year, earlier than Xie Yi by around 4 months.

“There’s also my star pupil, Lin Zhong-qing. His physical skills are at the beginner stage of Qi-Jin mid-tier. The time he took to advance was only later than Xie Yi by one day. However, because of that one day gap, he could only get a position as a backup guard,” Tang Yu explained regrettably. “Even their battle team’s strategist has similarly reached the beginner stage of Qi-Jin lower-tier. His mecha operating level is similarly special class. Of course, his time of advancement was later than Xie Yi by two months. However, even though it was that late, he still managed to advance into special-class in his third year. His talent in piloting isn’t too far off from the others.”

The principal took in a deep breath. Where had Ling Lan found these insanely strong individuals? Each one of them had the potential to become the valedictorian.

However, these details wouldn’t be the only things he would be stunned by; Tang Yu’s following words rendered the principal completely dumbfounded.

“These are the members that remain in the military academy. I previously mentioned that Xie Yi only managed to become the right-wing vice-captain at this stage. In the past, he wasn’t even qualified because Ling Lan had three other members. They are now sixth-year cadets and have already joined the 23rd Division for their one-year internship. One of them advanced into an ace operator in their fifth year. He had the position as the main vanguard of the battle team at the time. Another one also advanced to ace level in his fifth year, but he couldn’t fight for a long time, so he was given the title of Spurious Ace. At that time, he had the position of the left-wing captain of the battle team!”

The principal couldn’t control himself and his jaws dropped in shock—Tang Yu finally saw the expression he wanted to see. He was satisfied but afraid that the principal might take revenge on him; thus, he contained himself and tried his best to keep a serious face, following which he tossed out one last strike. “Oh, right. Mr. Principal, do you remember the Flying Dragon medals that the military gave us last year to give out to the fifth-year military medicine major valedictorians in hopes of having them join the Flying Dragon Special Forces?”

Chapter 539: Bait?

The principal nodded. His face showed a hint of regret as he said, “I wasn’t in the military academy at the time. By the time I learned about it, it was already too late for me to get back to the academy.” With an expression of sadness, he continued, “The Flying Dragon Special Forces is a battle team that every cadet dreams of getting into. However, even a single Flying Dragon medal is rarely given out every decade. The medal represents the acknowledgement of the country that the awardee is the top in their field and possesses the most potential for growth. It is also what every student dreams about. The medal not only represents glory and status, but at the same time, it also means that you will instantly become a member of the Flying Dragon Special Forces. There would be no need for the cadets to go through a series of harsh evaluations and eliminations.”

After saying all this, the principal couldn't help but hold onto his chest. "Such a rare chance. That punk. Li Shiyu, was it? He actually gave up on this chance. Every time I think about it, my heart aches." He recalled another Flying Dragon medal that could have been awarded many years ago—that punk Ling Xiao was also the same. The man hadn't even notified him and refused on his own accord.

"Actually, I really admire Li Shiyu. He wouldn't leave his comrades behind for a better future," Tang Yu said with admiration. Even if it were he himself who was faced with the invitation into the Flying Dragon Special Forces, the honor and glory that the Flying Dragon medal had to offer would have been enough to lure him in. However, Li Shiyu had actually outright refused the invitation given by the military's representative and hadn't hesitated even one bit. Tang Yu still remembered the stunned and disbelieving expression on the representative's face; perhaps the man had never imagined someone would reject their offer.

"I think that the First Men's Military Academy will become the Flying Dragon Special Forces' nightmare in the future," said Tang Yu with a laugh. The only two people who had ever rejected the invitation from the Flying Dragon Special Forces were both from the First Men's Military Academy.

The principal smiled bitterly at his words. "It's possible that the military will no longer invite the First Men's Military Academy for a chance to participate in the future evaluations to enter the Flying Dragon Special Forces."

Those folks all held grudges. After Ling Xiao's rejection, the First Men's Military Academy still had outstanding students in the following years. However, the military was angered to the point of being willing to choose average cadets from other military academies, not giving a chance to the cadets from the First Men's Military Academy to participate in the evaluations. Later on, the Federation finally managed to find another top cadet that made the military give up on their pride and offer that a cadet a Flying Dragon medal. Unfortunately, at that time, their graciousness was met with the cold shoulder from the First Men's Military Academy once again... Thinking up to this point, the principal felt even worse. It was possible that there was no hope for their military academy to receive an invitation to any evaluations for the Flying Dragon Special Forces in the future.

"Although the chance that slipped away is indeed very unfortunate, I still think our students don't really care about it," Tang Yu said positively.

"What do you mean by that?" the principal asked confusedly.

"There's General Ling Xiao! The 23rd Division is where our cadets want to go nowadays." The Flying Dragon Special Forces was indeed a great place to go and all their members were also indeed the top in their fields. However, all of this couldn't compare to General Ling Xiao, whom everyone looked up to. Ling Xiao's growth was like a legend and had created records one after the other. He had pressured the Flying Dragon Special Forces to the extent where they had to take a few steps back. This also made the Flying Dragon Special Forces unable to become a dream that Ling Xiao's generation chased after.

"That's true. Not even I understand what kind of godly existence that punk Ling Xiao is." The principal was very much in agreement with Tang Yu.

Tang Yu's words made the principal's mood instantly change for the better. Along with his improved mood, his logical thinking became clearer as well; he had now remembered some things that he had

previously forgotten. He asked with surprise in his tone, “Tang Yu, do you mean that that Li Shiyu has joined a battle team? I remember he was in the medicinal research major. Aren’t those guys neutral and never join battle teams?”

Even if the cadets of that major joined battle teams for different reasons, they would only sign temporary contracts. After entering a division, they would go their own separate ways. The principal had always believed that Li Shiyu was free to choose what he had wanted, but he couldn’t understand why Li Shiyu would reject the invitation from the Flying Dragon Special Forces. It should be known that once he entered the Flying Dragon Special Forces, Li Shiyu would be nurtured by the country using all of their resources. With such a promising road ahead, even those who were lazy and dumb could become a top expert in the field of medicine in the Federation after years of this type of nurturing.

“That’s what everyone says, but there are always outliers—Li Shiyu is one of them. In his fourth year, he joined Ling Lan’s battle team and became the battle team’s doctor.”

Tang Yu’s words stunned the already dumbfounded principal. If Ling Lan was with them, it was possible that the principal would hold onto her shoulders and yell at her, “Sh*t, did your small battle team really need to get the valedictorian of the military medicine major as your team doctor? Don’t you know that this is a big waste and a huge crime?”

The principal took a deep breath and finally calmed himself down. He reluctantly rubbed his forehead and sighed as he said, “Tell me, do you think this Ling Lan is trying to create his own private Flying Dragon Special Forces?” The members that she had taken in all made him envious. Besides, what she had done by taking the ace military doctor that the Flying Dragon Special Forces had approved of was even more so like taking prey away from a predator.

Tang Yu thought deeply for a moment then said, “That’s very possible.” Based on Ling Lan’s requirements of only taking in top tier geniuses into her team, it was definitely possible that she was trying to form a team that was of similar strength to the Flying Dragon Special Forces that the Federation had created. However, this also showed that Ling Lan’s luck was insane; otherwise, how could she have so many monstrous individuals beside her?

While the principal and Tang Yu were having this conversation, the mecha that Xie Yi was operating, as well as a mecha from Leiting, had almost simultaneously discovered one another. The audience instantly focused their attention and stared at the big screen. The distance between the two mechas was getting closer and closer...

“Found one mecha from Lingtian, serial number: Lingtian No.1!” This mecha’s serial number was Leiting No.9. When both sides were at the distance of being able to determine the other’s serial number, this operator finally found the mecha that their captain had ordered him to search for when they split up at the beginning of the battle.

“Captain, we’ve discovered Lingtian No.1. Mecha Type: Balanced Mecha. Coordinates: (xx,xx).” The team member had decisively pressed down on the button to connect him to his captain.

“Alright, try your best to keep him busy.” His captain’s cold voice rang from the other side of the communicator. The operator received the order and decisively took out his beam saber from his back and flew towards the opponent. He still remembered the captain telling him that although the opponent

was piloting a balanced mecha, his long-range abilities were stronger. Thus, he wanted to get as close as possible to the opponent captain and try his best to engage in close combat.

“Look, Lingtian No.1 is being surrounded by Leiting mechas hundreds of yards from its location.” After Lingtian No.1 was discovered, the spectators saw that 4 mechas were all closing in on Lingtian No.1’s location.

“Looks like Leiting wants to capture the king first and take care of Lingtian’s captain.” Leiting’s goal was very clear, but those who knew the truth of the situation all frowned. Wasn’t this falling into Lingtian’s trap?

“Even if they don’t take out Lingtian’s captain, with four people surrounding him, this Lingtian No.1 won’t be able to fight them. Taking out one opponent first is also good.” There were still many people who favored Leiting. Compared to Lingtian, who were fighting by themselves, Leiting’s members were now clearly in three-man groups. Once they successfully created a team, things wouldn’t be that easy for Lingtian even if they attempted assassinations.

However, they couldn’t deny that the battle against Lingtian No.1 was an important one. If Lingtian No.1 successfully escaped the encirclement, he would have drawn away four opponents, taking away pressure from his other teammates. If his teammates successfully took care of a few opponents, then the advantage would be Lingtian’s side. If Lingtian No.1 couldn’t endure the battle and was instantly knocked out of the competition, Leiting’s newly formed team would be able to find their next target. This way, the advantage would tilt to Leiting’s side.

Right now, however, the battle had not been decided yet. Both sides had their opportunities.

“They’re here!” An audience member immediately shouted in excitement upon seeing Lingtian No.1 and Leiting No.9 finally enter the range for long-range fire.

Almost simultaneously, Lingtian No.1 and Leiting No.9 instantly aimed at each other and pulled their triggers; both beam guns shot out a beam of light towards their respective targets.

“Lingtian No.1 was a bit faster.” Tang Yu’s eyes were keen and immediately saw the difference between the two.

“This punk’s long-range attack is strong, huh? He’s piloting a balanced mecha. Now that I look, it should be a long-range and close combat type, isn’t it?” the principal asked curiously.

Tang Yu nodded, but then shook his head afterward. The principal was confused and asked, “What do you mean?”

Tang Yu smiled bitterly. “I can only tell you that Lingtian No.1’s long-range skills are strong, but as to whether he is capable of close combat or not, that I’m not sure.” He didn’t even know what the Lingtian members, who were taught by their own captain, had up their sleeves. It was also because Tang Yu himself didn’t know whether Ling Lan’s expertise lay in long range or close combat. Or was he an expert in both fields?

In the past year, Ling Lan had already played around with all five of the ace mechas in the military academy. Tang Yu had fought against her countless times but still couldn’t find out what Ling Lan was best at. He felt that everything was around the same level. However, Tang Yu believed that that wasn’t

true. He thought that Ling Lan definitely had something that she was much more of an expert in; it was just that she never showed it.

While they were talking, Lingtian No.1 and Leiting No.9 had already shot at each other many times. At that moment, Leiting No.9 was clearly being pressured by Lingtian No.1. He was dodging left and right, trying to get close to his opponent. Following every step he took, however, one sharp beam of light would come towards him, making him step back to evade.

“Lingtian No.1’s long-range abilities are strong. If we didn’t know who he was, we might also have thought that Lingtian No.1 was that Ling Lan, who is also good at long range,” one instructor murmured upon seeing this scene. He didn’t expect Lingtian to have had another long-range expert other than Ling Lan. This individual that was called Xie Yi was about the same in terms of long-range abilities compared to their commander.

Right after he spoke, on the big screen, Lingtian No.1 suddenly changed his shooting motions; he was seen lifting up his mecha’s right arm. Following that motion, his mecha’s left hand held the bottom of his long-range beam sniper rifle as its barrel was aimed at Leiting No.9, who was moving at a rapid speed at that moment. Lingtian No.1 was also following Leiting No.9’s movement patterns and changing his shooting stance to aim more accurately.

“This is Ling Lan’s rifle technique—Select-Fire!” The audience all cried out in surprise. Everyone remembered what that stance signified; it was a standard posture for a fixed-point shot. In last year’s Grand Mecha Tournament, Ling Lan had used this technique during the sports event and had it acknowledged by the Federation’s headquarters. They named this attack Ling Lan’s rifle technique—Select-Fire!

However, this rifle technique couldn’t be used by just anyone; only those who could accurately hit their opponent would be considered to have completed this rifle technique. Everyone held in their breaths, waiting for Lingtian No.1’s attack. Was it going to just be an imitation, or was it going to be an exciting Select-Fire shot like the one Ling Lan previously performed?

“Bang!” A powerful beam of light shot out of the rifle barrel.

“Boom!” Leiting No.9’s mecha suddenly exploded. Perhaps it was too fast, or perhaps Ling Lan’s rifle technique had made the opponent panic. No matter what the reason was, in the end, the opponent wasn’t able to dodge this shot.

“It hit?”

“It really hit!” This meant that Ling Lan’s rifle technique wasn’t her own and was one that could possibly be learned by everyone. This undoubtedly made everyone who was interested in Ling Lan’s rifle technique burn up with passion. As long as they worked hard, one day, they could also grasp this long-range sure-kill technique.

Xie Yi put down his beam rifle, wearing an alarmed expression as he cried out, “What, it worked?” In order to make sure he was in character, he had daringly attempted to use Select-Fire despite that his success rate with his boss’ technique was only 10%; he hadn’t expected his luck to be good enough that it would actually succeed on the first try.

“This way, no one will suspect that Lingtian No.1 isn’t Ling Lan.” Everyone who was watching Xie Yi’s performance all knew that Lingtian’s plan was to let Xie Yi pretend to be Ling Lan and attract Leiting’s attention to protect the real Ling Lan.

“What’s the reason behind Lingtian doing something like this?” one spectator asked those around him, not understanding the situation.

“Baiting! Using Lingtian No.1 as bait and drawing in Leiting’s members one by one.” One instructor pointed at the virtual image on the optical supercomputer. He clicked around Lingtian No.1 multiple times and said, “Here, here, here—and here. Lingtian’s members have hidden at these locations. This place is a trap. If Leiting’s members move past these points and don’t have their guard up... then it will be one body for each assassination.

“In the end, even if some of them get away and are successful in containing Lingtian No.1, Lingtian won’t care. After all, Lingtian No.1 is merely bait and isn’t Lingtian’s real leader. Even if he is defeated and eliminated, it won’t affect Lingtian’s morale that much. No matter how you look at it, if they manage to take out many members of Leiting and only lose Lingtian No.1, it would be well worth the trade of one for many.”

Hearing this instructor’s explanation, those who didn’t understand now understood and they couldn’t help but take in a heavy breath. There were people that also said, “Lingtian’s really ruthless. They are actually willing to let an outstanding member be bait. However, this bait was very successful. They won’t have to worry about Leiting not biting.”

At that moment, the Leiting members who did not know the situation moved towards the coordinates that their captain had given them, while the observing instructors all shook in their heads in silence. Before even mentioning piloting capabilities, Leiting had already lost to Lingtian in terms of strategy alone.

Upon hearing the instructors beside him marvel at the situation, Qiao Yi’s face became pale and his expression turned slightly anxious. He hoped that his own disciples could look past Lingtian’s trap and not be so easily fooled.

In contrast to the instructors who didn’t really know about Ling Lan’s capabilities, Tang Yu didn’t agree with what the rest thought; he didn’t believe that Lingtian’s plan was to have Lingtian No.1 act as bait. Tang Yu believed that even if all 12 members of Leiting were to go up against Ling Lan together, as long as she was careful, they wouldn’t have any chance of defeating her. Therefore, who was more suitable and safer than Ling Lan to be the bait?

“This punk Ling Lan has always been a remarkable one. What is he planning?” Tang Yu went into deep thought.

Chapter 540: Ambush?

One member from Leiting had been eliminated. They didn’t panic after receiving news of this, however; they knew that Ling Lan was the strongest in Lingtian. It was normal that their team members would not

be able to fight him and natural that they would lose one or two of their members. Leiting had already known what was going to happen before they got to Xie Yi's location.

At that moment, a Leiting mecha was quickly flying past a rocky mountain formation towards Lingtian No.1's location. This pilot didn't know that a mecha was lying in wait just on top of the rocks.

"Who's the guy with the balls to actually walk over my head?" Qi Long looked up at the mecha that flew over him, following which he speedily shifted the beam gun on his mecha's right hand to lock on to the opponent. He naturally didn't forget to check the opponent's data and information beforehand.

"Beep, beep. Information received. ID: Leiting No.1!" The optical supercomputer responsibly relayed the information that it had searched and found.

"Leiting No.1?" Qi Long instantly became excited. He hadn't expected that he would finally have a huge fish take the bait after he had laid there for so long.

"Qi Long, let him pass." Right at that moment, Ling Lan's cold and sharp voice rang in the team commlink channel.

"Ah? Ugh... roger." Qi Long was immediately dumbfounded at hearing Ling Lan's words right when he was about to make a move; however, even if Qi Long didn't understand Ling Lan's orders, he would still follow them. He ceased locking on to the enemy and watched as Leiting No.1 flew out of his line of sight.

"Boss, I really want to fight that Leiting No.1," Qi Long said regrettably. After all, Leiting No.1 was the strongest individual in Leiting. Before the battle had begun, Qi Long actually hoped that he could fight with Leiting No.1. Unfortunately, his boss had other plans and didn't give him that opportunity.

"It wouldn't be meaningful if you fought him, but Xie Yi needs the experience," explained Ling Lan.

Qi Long's expression showed that he understood, "So, Boss, you mean that we're going to use this chance to let Leiting No.1 help us detonate the dark energy being held back by Xie Yi?"

"Yes. Because of the opponent, Xie Yi's guard won't be too strong. Once he has thoughts of becoming stronger or winning, there'll be an opportunity for that dark energy to seep out." Ling Lan didn't know what condition Xie Yi would end up in if he were controlled by the dark energy and she was very interested in knowing the outcome.

Not everyone was lucky like Leiting No.1, deliberately given a pass. Ling Lan's target had always been Leiting No.1. As for the others, she didn't meddle with her team members' decisions. The same situation was playing out at a different corner of the map.

When a few of Leiting's mechas passed by the hidden mechas of Lingtian that were using the chameleon system, the latter group bared their vicious fangs as one and made a move on these rapidly advancing opponents who did not have their guard up at all.

Bang! The sounds of explosions resulting from beams projectiles making their mark on mechas rang through the silent forest, which instantly alerted everyone around the area. One Leiting mecha's cockpit was instantly hit—he was eliminated without the chance to even say a word.

Unfortunately, the map was too large; the movements and sounds that had occurred at this location were not known to the others in different locations. The members of Leiting could only see that they

had lost one member once again on the corner of their mecha's screen, but they could not figure out how that teammate was defeated. Thus, the second member from Leiting followed in his teammate's footsteps and was also hit while he wasn't paying attention.

Still, not every member from Lingtian was that lucky and not every member from Leiting was that unlucky. When a third mecha from Leiting moved past one of Lingtian's ambush points, its operator instinctively sensed the presence of danger when he was about to be attacked; he had actually managed to avoid suffering a fatal blow by coincidence. The beam shot had hit his thigh and he luckily got away.

"How unfortunate!" Luo Lang said depressedly, having missed his shot. Nevertheless, he didn't move and waited patiently for the next opportunity to come by.

"Enemies! Where exactly are they?" The Leiting member who had gotten away was having cold sweats. He turned his mecha's radar up to maximum range, but it showed no reaction at all as though that beam shot had just been an illusion.

It was quiet all around him, but at that moment, the silence made the Leiting member feel that he was grave danger. He took a deep breath and calmed himself, following which he decisively connected to his captain's commlink channel. "Captain, I was just attacked by Lingtian, but my radar can't find any traces of the attacker."

Tian Jiajun's expression changed at these words and the first thing he thought of was the chameleon system. Although this system was considered to be a piece of high-end equipment in the Mecha World and was hard to obtain, that didn't mean that it was impossible to acquire. He believed that the members of Lingtian had already gotten their hands on this system, but he just didn't know how many of them were actually equipped with it.

"I hope that there are only one or two mechas from Lingtian that has this perverted system. Otherwise, our circumstances in this competition will be disadvantageous." Tian Jiajun's expression became grave.

"Activate your reserve thermal radar. The instant the opponent uses their beam energy supply, the radar will be able to find them," Tian Jiajun ordered immediately. Although they didn't have the hawkeye system, special-class mechas could only be equipped with low-level chameleon systems; the thermal radar would still be able to find some heat signatures. It was only that these signatures would disappear within moments and detection of them was also dependent on whether his team members would be able to control the thermal radar well.

"Also, be wary of cold weapon ambushes by the opponents." Thermal radars could only detect beam gun energy signals. If the opponents used cold weapons to ambush them, then the radar would be useless.

After receiving Tian Jiajun's orders, the members of Leiting all began to be on guard for Lingtian's ambushes. As expected, the next time they came under beam fire by Lingtian, they were able to find the location of the heat source using their thermal radars. Those who reacted quickly simultaneously dodged the beam shots and pounced towards the location that the thermal radar had marked.

Of course, this portion of Leiting members had luck on their side. The Lingtian members who ambushed them only had beam gunners and no cold weapon users, as expected. Surprise attacks using cold weapons would make it hard for Leiting to defend, however, and they lost another team member from

this type of ambush. For Leiting, the situation suddenly went from bad to worse. They had 12 people in the beginning, but were down to only 8 within fleeting moments of time. They had almost lost close to half their numbers.

Of course, Ling Lan didn't pay much attention to the Lingtian members who were ambushing or fighting the Leiting members. In truth, Ling Lan didn't waste too much time thinking about this challenge match compared to the one a year ago. Leiting no longer had a strong ace mecha master like Qiao Ting and Ling Lan believed that her team members wouldn't lose to their opponents. She knew very well that whether a mecha clan had a chance for long-term development was not based on how strong the commander was, but instead based on whether or not the clan itself had reliable strength.

Therefore, if Lingtian wanted to develop and become stronger, its members had to mature more quickly. They had to become a clan in the military academy that would not be easily defeated, and only then would Lingtian be able to continue developing in the future.

In the area of the challenge match, while Lingtian was preying on Leiting, the latter was also preying on the former's members. Three mechas from Lingtian had their locations exposed. Other than Xie Yi, who had his orders to pretend to be Ling Lan and draw the enemy's fire, the other two members could only be exposed in front of Leiting's members because they hadn't finished the mission for the chameleon system. This led to the Leiting members, who had already gathered up, mercilessly moving towards them to form an encirclement.

Although the chameleon system was very powerful when it came to camouflaging ability, the system would be as good as useless once the user's movements became exposed. Since the first assassination attempt by Lingtian was evaded by the opponent, they would no longer have the advantage they had in the beginning. If Lingtian wanted to defeat their opponent, they would have to rely on their own strength.

Two sides fighting each other would naturally result in one person winning and one losing. Many members of Lingtian were defeated at the end of fierce fighting against the members of Leiting. Afterwards, smoke filled the air as battles took place everywhere on the map. The numbers of both sides were slowly dwindling, and those who were able to stay alive until the end would definitely be the strongest out of both teams.

Tang Yu looked around and discovered that Ling Lan wasn't amidst the Lingtian members who had appeared in front of everyone. He frowned and suspected that perhaps Ling Lan wasn't even going to make a move. Was the only reason he had joined this match was to act as insurance to make sure Lingtian didn't lose?

Due to Ling Lan's arrangements, Tian Jiajun flew his mecha smoothly all the way towards Xie Yi's location.

Xie Yi saw Leiting No.1 coming towards him and he instantly grew excited, as Ling Lan had told him before the match that his mission was to keep Leiting No.1 busy and hold him back. Before his teammates could completely wipe out the rest of the members from Leiting, he had to keep Leiting No.1 occupied.

Tian Jiajun's goal was the same as Xie Yi's; the mission he had received was to first make sure Lingtian No.1 was held up. As for the others, he would act accordingly as the situation required him to.

The eyes of these two individuals met up, but they didn't stop to say anything and instead drew out their weapons to engage in battle. Both of them were piloting balanced mechas, which were good for both ranged and close quarters combat. Therefore, once they entered the range for long-range attacks, both of them raised the beam gun in their hand in unplanned unison and attacked their opponent.

Tian Jiajun had been stuck at special-class operator level for more than one year and only needed a catalyst to advance to become an ace operator. His piloting skills were naturally not like Xie Yi's, who had just advanced to special-class operator. After Xie Yi probed his opponent in the first few exchanges, he reigned in the impulse of wanting to defeat his opponent and began to carefully try to keep him busy instead.

At that moment, Xie Yi was performing just like normal. Ling Lan had been watching Xie Yi all this time and upon seeing that his performance was very normal, she knew that Tian Jiajun wasn't giving Xie Yi enough pressure.

"Leiting No.1's desire to win isn't very high, it seems." Ling Lan had discovered that Tian Jiajun's way of fighting was cautious, even a bit restrained. Could it be that he didn't dare to make a careless move due to thinking Lingtian No.1 was her?

She had to think of something to make Leiting No.1 become desperate.

Ling Lan fell into brief thought before connecting to Qi Long's commlink channel. "Qi Long, pretend to be losing and lure your opponent to the coordinates (xx, xx)."

Hearing this, Qi Long knew that his boss had some sort of plan. He didn't ask any questions and responded with a "roger".

Qi Long was secretly overjoyed. In order to avoid being bored after his fight, he had wanted to battle with his opponent for a longer period of time. Thus, he had concealed a portion of his strength and fought on even grounds with his opponent. If he had started with full strength from the start and pressured his opponent, it would have been difficult for him to feign that he was losing.

Qi Long continued to trade several more blows with his opponent before he pretended to show weakness and then drew back his cold weapon, following which he turned around and desperately flew towards the coordinates Ling Lan had indicated.

Seeing the opportunity to take down his opponent, the Leiting member naturally wouldn't let it pass by; he immediately piloted his mecha to follow Qi Long. Seeing this, Qi Long was relieved. He fought back for moments at a time, before running for another moment, then rinse and repeat. As this continued, they finally arrived at that location that Ling Lan had given him.