

It's Not Easy to Be a Man After Travelling to the Future

Chapter 6: A Shameless Person

Very quickly, a month had gone by, and it was time for the Federation to officially announce the inheritance.

During this month, Ling Lan did not do anything besides eat or sleep. Of course, Ling Lan's 'sleep' was actually a training trance.

That said, Ling Lan was much smarter about it now. She assigned Little Four the task of waking her up whenever it was time to eat — she had no intention of misjudging her training time again. She did not want to be dragged to the hospital for a check-up after all, and risk exposing her secret and the existence of Little Four only to become a lab rat.

Who is Little Four, you ask? Who else could it be but that little fellow who claimed to be a mecha learning device?

Two weeks ago, under its guidance, Ling Lan had managed to pull together a mental network after around ten days of experimentation. Using it, she had explored her mindscape and managed to find the main body of the learning device deep within it. She had then successfully unlocked the virtual learning space of the device. In the future, it would be much more convenient for her to meet the learning device — she would just have to will it, and her consciousness would be brought into the virtual learning space.

Ling Lan still remembered how she had almost spewed blood when she first saw Little Four's virtual body.

In truth, Little Four's appearance was very charming. It looked like a little boy of only three to four years old, with a bright and innocent smile on his face. In the words of modern-day slang, extremely 'moe' [1]. Ling Lan couldn't help but find it adorable.

The only problem was ... the little fellow had been too excited, and had flounced up to her completely naked, butt jiggling.

And so tragedy befell poor Little Four — he had been immediately scooped up and spanked soundly, until his white and bouncy little behind had been imprinted with the shape of Ling Lan's palms.

Dammit, why did he have to show her his dick? Although his dick was so small that it could almost be ignored ... but it was still a dick, wasn't it? How could he do that to a pure and innocent maiden like her?

Of course, although the spanking relieved Ling Lan's embarrassed anger, the little boy became angry in turn. In protest, he hid away in the depths of her mind and refused to come out again.

At first, Ling Lan did not take it to heart, but when the situation showed no signs of improving after two days, Ling Lan gave in.

She needed the little fellow to help wake her up after all. Resigned, Ling Lan patiently cajoled the little fellow out and promised to never resort to this sort of domestic violence ever again. Only then did the little boy return to his bouncy happy self.

The two started talking a bit more, and when Ling Lan asked how she should address him, the boy's response annoyed Ling Lan once again.

This little rascal actually wanted her to call him 'Master Four'? He didn't even have any body hair yet and he wanted this older sister to call him 'Master'?

Even though Ling Lan had promised to never again use domestic violence, she still had other tricks up her sleeve. Under the full force of her logical-illogical-rational-irrational arguments, the little fellow agreed without question to be called 'Little Four'.

Victory! Ling Lan was uncharacteristically proud of herself for this.

However, when she found out later why Little Four had first wanted her to call him Master Four, she found herself speechless.

Little Four explained that it had found that the title 'Master' was extremely popular in books, TV, and the internet back on Earth, and since his designation had so many fours, what else could he be called but 'Master Four'?

Ling Lan felt that she had been mistaken. She should never have tried to probe the motivations of a machine — doing so was an insult to her intelligence.

Once Ling Lan had managed to establish a connection with Little Four, she could freely access the virtual learning environment. Besides that, within this month, she had also picked up from the conversations between her mother and the chamberlain Ling Qin that her father of this world had died on the battlefield, which is why she had to inherit her father's military benefits by posing as a man.

Ling Lan couldn't help but sigh — it seemed that sexism existed everywhere. Gender equality had been a struggle back on Earth, and now, ten thousand years in the future,

when humanity had already expanded beyond the solar system, gender oppression was still thriving.

The current Ling Lan had no clue what the military benefits were referring to. Although she could get the eager Little Four to look it up for her, she ultimately decided to take things one step at a time. There was still much she didn't know about this era, and it was probably wiser to take her time growing up to slowly understand the world around her instead of taking a shortcut.

Ling Lan was a very patient and tolerant person. Otherwise, she wouldn't have been able to live over twenty years suffering the inhuman pain of her body breaking down. This tolerance of hers was definitely far above the average person.

Initially, she had been worried about the two-year time limit that Little Four had mentioned — however, after some research, Little Four found that the Qi exercises she had been doing were an extremely effective way to increase physical fitness. According to Little Four's estimations, even if she did nothing else but practice those exercises for just ten hours every day, she would still be able to easily resolve the danger she would have faced in two years time.

And so, now that she knew her life was not on a timer, Ling Lan did not intend to hurry through life. She was still very young and did not want to stand out as a genius. Taking things a step at a time would be the safest and surest way to live. Ling Lan understood very well, after all, that the tree that grows above the tree-line gets toppled by the wind [2].

Living freely was the most important thing!

Soon, it was time for the Federation to hand over the inheritance documents. On that day, Ling Lan could clearly sense the sorrow and distress emanating from her mother. Once the document was handed over, her father Ling Xiao's death would officially be announced to the public, and her mother would no longer be able to avoid the reality of his death.

Early that morning, Ling Lan sensed a disturbance in the typically peaceful household. However, since she was in the bedroom, she could not tell what was happening.

However, she was soon picked up by a servant and brought downstairs. As they moved down the stairway, Ling Lan could see the glorious lights hanging from the ceiling, their edges brushing the sides of several tall columns.

Yep, assessment complete. This was a grand and luxurious hall. Her family was indeed of the upper echelon.

Before Ling Lan could observe her fill, she had already been transferred into her mother's arms. Lan Luofeng's sombre mood improved considerably as she observed Ling Lan and her curious and roving eyes. Fortunately, Ling Xiao had left her this beautiful baby, giving her the strength to oppose those greedy wretches.

She grasped at her daughter's little hand, and calmly announced, "This is Ling Xiao's son Ling Lan! Only he shall inherit all that belongs to Ling Xiao."

At that moment, an old but strident voice spoke up, "We need to ensure that Major General Ling Xiao's sacrifice is not in vain. We are not denying Young Master Ling Lan's right to inherit, but only wish that the Ling family would choose the most outstanding child to inherit Major General Ling Xiao's premium military benefits, so that Major General Ling Xiao's unfinished duties can be taken up by the most suitable candidate."

Lan Luofeng turned a sharp gaze towards the old speaker. About seventy years old, he still stood proud and tall. He was the grand elder of the Ling branch family — Ling Suren, and even Ling Xiao had had to address him respectfully while he was still alive. He was also the one appointed by the branch family to protest Ling Lan's inheritance of Ling Xiao's possessions.

Ling Lan could feel Lan Luofeng's chest trembling as she tried to suppress her anger at Ling Suren's words.

Honestly, she had never met such a shameless person. Look at the way he spun words to justify taking away a child's right to inherit from his birth father — if his words were to be believed, what was the point of military men risking their lives to protect their country? When they died, did it mean that it was open season on their unprotected families?

Ling Lan pulled at her mother's fingers and gurgled.

Darn it. If only she were bigger, she would certainly spit upon that person's body to shame him for his shamelessness.

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[1] 'Moe' is a Japanese slang loanword that refers to feelings of strong affection mainly towards characters in anime, manga, and video games. Moe, however, has also gained usage to refer to feelings of affection towards any subject. (Directly taken from Wikipedia.) The usage here is referring to the utter adorableness of Little Four, which is capable of drawing out strong feelings of affection and fan-squeeing.

[2] The meaning of this is similar to the Japanese saying 'the nail that sticks out gets hammered down'— outstanding people become the common enemy. Since there is no real English equivalent I could find besides this Japanese borrowing, I decided to keep it

as close to the literal Mandarin saying as possible since I think the meaning still comes across pretty clear.

Chapter 7: Burning Bridges?

Ling Lan's actions soothed Lan Luofeng's heaving emotions. She knew that there were representatives from the federal government and the military present as well. She would not ruin Ling Lan's inheritance ceremony due to a rash moment of anger.

Suppressing her anger, Lan Luofeng asked coldly, "What are your intentions, Uncle Ren?"

Ling Suren's eyes narrowed, but he still revealed his plan in the end. "Among the children of the Ling family, age three and below, let us select the one with the best qualities and potential to inherit."

From birth to the age of three was the critical period for cultivation and moulding. After this time frame, the effects of cultivation would be greatly diminished, and cultivation would only become less and less effective with the passage of time.

Lan Luofeng scoffed, "Do you really think that any of the Ling family children would be able to hold a candle to Ling Xiao's own child? Let me remind you that Ling Xiao was an IN mecha operator." In the Federation, genetics decided everything. Very rarely did one see cases where a commoner would suddenly show extraordinary talent or physical qualities. The transmission of quality traits had to be gradually nurtured and built up from generation to generation.

"The Ling family managed to produce Ling Xiao — we can certainly produce another," said Ling Suren, his tone iron-clad with certainty. He could speak with such confidence because he already had a child with stats very similar to Ling Xiao within his grasp. This was why he was willing to go so far as to forgo civility to obtain Ling Xiao's military benefits. The Ling family must produce another Ling Xiao to maintain their foothold on the Planet of Doha.

Although the Federation currently touted the ideology of equality on the surface, in truth, there was a distinct social strata working behind the scenes which decided which planet you could live on.

The Planet of Doha was a premium planet, and was also the capital planet of the Federation. Those who lived on Doha were either high officials with both power and authority, military bigwigs, or those supremely wealthy noble families with long histories and great influence.

The Ling family was originally a small family who could only settle on a third-rate planet. However, they had managed to move to Doha due to the efforts of Ling Xiao's father, Ling Suzheng.

Ling Suzheng had been an ace pilot, but unfortunately did not manage to become an ultimate weapon of the nation — an IN mecha operator. Still, his abilities were such that no one below the level of an IN mecha operator could rival him. On the battlefield, he had managed to cut down many of the top enemy pilots, accumulating many battle honours in his lifetime. In the end, the military had decided to reward his exploits by allowing Ling Suzheng to bring his family to live on Doha, acknowledging his role as a new war hero.

To convince Ling Suzheng to bring the entire Ling family to Doha, and not just his own nuclear family, the Ling family head and elders of that time made a vow — the Ling family would view Ling Suzheng as the legitimate heir, and all the resources of the family would be his to command. On top of that, the position of family head would also be inherited by Ling Suzheng's descendants from then on.

On his end, Ling Suzheng had felt that he needed his family's support to establish himself on Doha, and so had agreed to move the entire Ling family.

This decision of Ling Suzheng's had brought endless trouble to Ling Xiao, and now had even opened the way for the side family to try and steal Ling Lan's inheritance. If Ling Suzheng only knew how he had invited wolves in with his kind gesture, he might be turning in his grave.

After living on Doha and enjoying its benefits for several decades, the Ling family had no intention of going back to how things were before. They knew very well that in twenty years, after focused cultivation from the country, if Ling Xiao's designated inheritor could not meet the minimum requirements set by the country, the Ling family would lose everything they had gained since coming to Doha. They would have to go back to being a middle-class family, no ... perhaps even be reduced to becoming a lower-class family. This would greatly affect the Ling family income, as well as limit the romantic connections and career paths of the younger generations of the Ling family. No, they would not allow it to happen.

Ling Suren did not give Lan Luofeng any chance to speak, but instead signalled for a woman who was carrying a one year old child to step forward. He pointed at the child and said, "This is the candidate that the Ling family has chosen. If Young Master Lan's body stats exceeds his, then we shall have no objection to Young Master Lan inheriting."

He turned to glance at the military representative. "I'm sure the military also wishes for the best talent for cultivation, and would not want to blindly take someone in based on blood."

The military representative just smiled slightly and said nothing, giving no indication of their stance one way or another.

Ling Suren had not expected outright vocal support from the military anyway; all he needed was this sort of ambiguous acceptance. He once again turned to Lan Luofeng, this time with a trace of self-satisfaction in his eyes.

Lan Luofeng smiled a small mocking smile. It looked like her decision to seal Ling Lan's assessment results was just another weakness to exploit from the perspective of the Ling family. Fortunately, chamberlain Ling Qin had predicted this move from them and had already made the appropriate arrangements.

"You dare to covet Ling Xiao's military privileges?" Lan Luofeng swept her gaze around the room. Among the visitors, there were quite a few bystanders enjoying the show, but there were also some who looked genuinely concerned for her. This trial was not without its benefits — she could finally discern the true colours of some of the people around her. "Although Major General Ling Xiao is dead, his orphaned child should not be allowed to be bullied by his own family clan. I'm sure that the military would have something to say about this?"

The military representative chose to ignore what Lan Luofeng was implying, saying with a smile, "Madam Ling, please be assured. Putting Major General Ling Xiao's military benefits aside, Ling Lan will not lose out on any benefits accorded to the children of martyrs. The military will not let a hero's child be bullied."

Although what the military representative had to say sounded pretty, the connotation was that the military benefits would go to the candidate that best suited the military's purposes.

Lan Luofeng glanced at the government official, but he merely smiled without adding a word to the discussion. It seemed like he was content to just observe the proceedings without interfering.

Oh, Ling Xiao, this is the military you dedicated your life to, the country you gave your life to protect — did you ever dream that they would betray your trust and abandon your flesh and blood for their own interests? Are you regretting your choice now in the afterlife?

Lan Luofeng could not suppress the contempt she felt any longer. She said, "So this is the government. So this is the military... I finally understand."

Perhaps sensing the deep mockery behind Lan Luofeng's words, the smiles on the two representatives' faces froze.

"If that's how it is, I, Lan Luofeng, would like a promise from the government and the military. Regardless of whether my child Ling Lan inherits his father Ling Xiao's military

privileges, he shall be emancipated from the Ling family, and shall no longer be connected to the Ling family in any way.”

The two representatives looked at each other, but it was the military representative who spoke up in the end. “What do you mean?”

Lan Luofeng smiled chillingly. “If Ling Lan inherits, all the other Ling family members must immediately leave Doha and go back to where they came from... If Ling Lan does not inherit, Ling Lan and I shall leave Doha instead. No matter what the outcome, the both of us shall no longer be part of the Ling family.”

For a long while, Lan Luofeng had already intended to settle things with the Ling family. If she could clear this forever with one stroke, her efforts in securing this situation would be well worth it.

Ling Suren’s face twisted in anger. “Lan Luofeng, have you gone mad?”

“Why, Uncle Ren, are you afraid? Afraid that the child you chose will not be able to beat Ling Lan?” Lan Luofeng was all smiles as she faced Ling Suren, one of her hands lightly covering Ling Lan’s tiny chubby fingers. This was probably what a mother’s strength referred to — Lan Luofeng had never felt as steady as she was now.

Ling Suren was speechless. Although he had been full of confidence just a while back, Lan Luofeng’s aggressive manner had shaken him, and doubt started to creep into his mind. He was afraid to take the risk.

As if sensing Ling Suren’s hesitation, another Ling family elder who was standing beside him whispered, “Beware a bluff.”

Hearing this, Ling Suren centred himself. That’s right, Lan Luofeng must be bluffing out of desperation. If Ling Lan’s body stats and potential were really that impressive, why would Lan Luofeng seal away the records? After all, the higher Ling Lan’s potential, the more secure his inheritance — a smart person would never seal away those records, but would instead shout it from the rooftops to drive away other challengers.

Chapter 8: Comparison of Assessments

The more Ling Suren thought about it, the surer he was of his suspicions. Gaining confidence, he sneered, saying, “Since Mrs. Ling Xiao has so decided, we, the Ling family, shall not force you both to stay. The whereabouts and future actions of Ling Lan shall be none of our business.”

“If Ling Lan inherits, the Ling family will have to move out of Doha within a months time — Uncle Ren, I hope you will not blame me for my ruthlessness when that happens?” Lan Luofeng raised a brow as her eyes flicked towards the two representatives,

reminding Ling Suren that both the government and the military would be witness to this agreement — there would be no way for the Ling family to renege on their word.

Facing such an aggressive Lan Luofeng, Ling Suren exploded in anger, “And if Ling Lan doesn’t inherit, can I also request that you both leave Doha within a month?”

Lan Luofeng smiled icily. “I wouldn’t ask this if I wasn’t willing to do it myself. Could it be that the Ling family is too afraid to take this risk? Are you even more cowardly than a woman like me? Of course, if you are willing to give up on the inheritance, I can be merciful and let you all continue to remain in Doha.”

Lan Luofeng’s offer served two purposes. One, by taking a step back, she could force Ling Suren to state his decision clearly, so the Ling family would have no way to feign ignorance later. Two, she also wanted to give the Ling family one last chance — if they could control their greed, they would still be able to remain in Doha for another twenty odd years, which Lan Luofeng believed would be more than enough time for them to cultivate an outstanding operator of their own and secure their position in Doha.

However, Lan Luofeng’s words only served to cement Ling Suren’s suspicions that this was just a desperate gambit on her part. Thus, without any reservations, he sneered coldly in response, “Since you are so stubborn, alright, the Ling family agrees to your terms. As you said, if Ling Lan inherits, the Ling family shall leave Doha. If the child we chose inherits, then Ling Lan will have to leave Doha. He shall never be able to enter Doha within his lifetime, and shall not be allowed to enter any military system of the nation.” These stipulations would utterly destroy any chance of Ling Lan gaining rank, and would prevent an adult Ling Lan from ever returning in the name of vengeance.

Hearing this, Lan Luofeng felt hatred grow within her heart. It had been foolish of her to feel sorry for them, to try and give them a way out. What the Ling family suggested was utterly ruthless — if Ling Lan had truly been a boy, the Ling family’s requests would have ruined his future, forcing him to toil away his life in the working class. The little mercy she had felt for them was now completely snuffed out, and her eyes were cold as she said, “Very well! As you wish.”

Lan Luofeng called for a servant to prepare an assessment device, but was stopped by Ling Suren. He turned to the military representative, “The military must have brought an assessment device over for this visit. If you please?”

Lan Luofeng let him do as he liked. She had no intention of tampering with the device to begin with, and even if she had, she would not be so foolish as to do it in front of the military representative.

The military representative did not refuse Ling Suren’s request. This fit in nicely with their goals after all. In terms of getting accurate data, the military’s assessment devices were naturally much more reliable than the ones available for public use.

In short order, a top-of-the-line assessment device had been brought in by military troops.

Meanwhile, in her mother's arms, Ling Lan was frantically going over the situation with Little Four.

"Will they be able to determine my gender? Or discover your existence?" asked Ling Lan anxiously. If either of those secrets were discovered, she would have to leave this place with her mother, and although she did not know what the outside world was like, the impression she got from Ling Suren and Lan Luofeng's conversation was that life outside could not compare to life here.

Moreover, although Ling Lan was not afraid of suffering, she felt that she should naturally inherit her father's premium military benefits as her father's child. Why should a wild child who sprang out of nowhere get to inherit what belonged to her by right?

That's right, Ling Lan was still thinking based on the logic she had developed on Earth ten thousand years ago. Inheritance by blood was clear-cut back then, so she really could not understand this current situation. As such, she refused to give up. She would definitely be the one to inherit Ling Xiao's premium military benefits.

Little Four's tone was full of disdain. "As if a device which has yet to develop artificial intelligence would be able to thwart me? Don't worry, even if it could assess gender, I can change the data to reflect that you are male."

Ling Lan was struck by Little Four's cocky tone. "Little Four, do you have the ability to change the assessment results as you like?"

Little Four became exceedingly smug. "Of course! When you were first assessed, if I hadn't covered for you, your spiritual power would have exploded that assessment device."

Exploded? Why did that word sound so ominous to Ling Lan? Before Ling Lan could ponder on it any further, she heard the military representative ask, "Who's first?"

Lan Luofeng tightened her arms around Ling Lan, face expressionless as she said, "Let the Ling family's child be tested first."

Ling Suren assumed that Lan Luofeng was just intending to delay the inevitable, and did not want to waste words arguing with her. He nodded and motioned for the woman by his side to place the child in her arms into the assessment device.

Soon, the child's results were presented:

Physical Fitness: [S] rank!

Spiritual Power: Tier-1!

Potential: [A+] rank!

Assessment overview: Excellent; heavy cultivation recommended.

Seeing these results, the military representative's entire bearing changed — this child was definitely worthy of heavy cultivation by the military. A child with [A+] rank potential had a certain chance of becoming an IN mecha operator, albeit a small one, but having any degree of probability was better than none.

Ling Suren was very satisfied with the military representative's reaction. As he had expected, this child was an undeniable lure for the military. However, he showed none of this satisfaction on his face but turned calmly to face Lan Luofeng and said, "Mrs. Ling Xiao, there is still time, if you take back your words now and surrender the inheritance, the Ling family shall raise Ling Lan with the utmost care."

Pretending to be a good Samaritan after going to all this trouble to rob a child of his inheritance? In his dreams!

Lan Luofeng said mockingly, "That won't be necessary. I just hope all of you will move speedily when leaving Doha."

So saying, she walked over to the assessment device and carefully placed Ling Lan inside it.

By this time, Ling Lan and Little Four had come to an agreement to maintain the original assessment results. At first, Little Four had still been a little worried that the other child's results might be better than Ling Lan's, and had struggled over how he could secretly increase Ling Lan's stats, but after seeing these results, Little Four was reassured.

Just like that, Ling Lan's sealed results were revealed.

Physical Fitness: [S] rank!

Spiritual Power: Tier-2!

Potential: [S] rank!

Assessment overview: Excellent; all out cultivation recommended.

In the end, Little Four had still not been able to resist tweaking the results a little. The original recommendation of 'focused' cultivation was upgraded to 'all out' cultivation. Little Four was extremely pleased with himself — take that! 'All out' was way better than 'heavy'!

In reality, even if Little Four had not changed anything, the results would still be the same. The moment these results were presented, the representatives from both the military and the government decided unanimously that Ling Xiao's premium military benefits would be inherited by Ling Lan.

The decisiveness of the two representatives was primarily due to the assessment of Ling Lan's potential. Although the other stats were also important, those stats could be improved later on, while potential was innate and had a direct correlation with a child's room for growth. Although the gap between an [A+] rank and an [S] rank seemed negligible, in the long run, the difference would reveal itself to be extremely significant — an [S] rank had a 5 to 10 percent higher chance of becoming an IN mecha operator.

Based on this point alone, Ling Lan truly deserved 'all out cultivation' from the military.

Lan Luofeng finally let out a sigh of relief. Although she had had confidence in Ling Lan, she still couldn't help but feel a little unsettled before the results were confirmed.

By this time, Ling Suren could not help but know that he had fallen into Lan Luofeng's trap. His face flushed with anger, and he sorely wished that he could slice Lan Luofeng up into little pieces. On the other hand, Lan Luofeng faced him fearlessly. The Ling family would never have the guts to make a move with the two official representatives here.

Lan Luofeng said shortly, "Ling Suren, you know the way out!" Since she had already decided to cut all ties with the Ling family, there was no point in forcing herself to make nice with them anymore.

"Hmph, let us go!" Seeing the disdain on most of the visitors' faces, Ling Suren knew that they had overstayed their welcome. There was no reason to linger, so he took his men and left.

Chapter 9: Gene Stimulating Agent!

Another five months went by, and like any other infant, the six-month old Ling Lan could finally flip over and had started her evolution into a crawling creature. Ling Lan felt that her tongue was still uncooperative though, only allowing her to utter lone syllables — even so, her mother Lan Luofeng was overjoyed. Compared to other children, Ling Lan was already very articulate, and Lan Luofeng felt as if she could almost understand what Ling Lan wanted to say.

Ling Lan was almost moved to tears — she could finally make it known to her mother when she needed to go to the restroom. During this time frame, despite her best efforts, she had had trouble communicating with her mother who was on a different wavelength, resulting in several unfortunate accidents ... causing her no end of embarrassment for having wet the bed again after twenty seven years of life.

Well alright, let's just put aside all those shameful matters that happened in the past six months. There were too many to mention, and Ling Lan did not want to think about them anymore. She had decided that she would wipe this period of life from her memories.

This day, the moment she woke up, Ling Lan felt something different in the air. Chamberlain Ling Qin's expression was tight, and her mom had dressed her with special care, helping her put on special underpants that would hide her secret from any angle.

Ling Lan felt that the underpants were really quite comfortable ... well, if she could ignore the two soft spherical pseudo-testicles inside.

Not long after, several strangers in British-military uniforms suddenly descended upon the Ling household.

Ling Lan observed the men in shock. She did not know if all soldiers who returned from war had the same imposing presence, but Ling Lan could keenly sense the honed edges hidden under those uniforms. This was most certainly a troop of combat-savvy, blood-soaked, veteran soldiers.

Ling Lan put on a blank face and pretended to play by herself, but she kept her ears wide open. She was extremely thankful that the family she was born into ten thousand years later was still Chinese, and that the language being spoken was still Mandarin. This allowed her to skip having to learn a new language and meant she could gather information from others' conversation even as a baby.

When the troops introduced themselves to her mother, Ling Lan finally understood. They were here to deliver the premium military benefits Ling Lan had inherited, and would continue to do so every six months from now on.

This was also the day that Ling Lan found out what the premium military benefits actually were. A large part of those benefits were gene stimulating agents which were used to raise potential and body stats.

There were four grades of gene stimulating agents available on the market, from grade-1 to grade-4. Grade-4 agents were the worst, while grade-1 agents were the best. This grading was based on the purity of the gene stimulating agent. Grade-4 stimulating agents had a purity of 30%, grade-3 had 45%, grade-2 60%, and grade-1 75%. The higher the purity of the stimulating agent, the less harm it did to the body — it would allow the user to absorb most of the agent, and hence receive a higher boost to his potential and body stats.

Therefore, the more agent a child's body could absorb, the better his development would be, building up the solid foundations necessary for potential IN mecha operators.

However, these gene stimulating agents were horrifyingly expensive. Let's put it this way — a commoner's hard-earned life savings may only be enough to afford one bottle of the lowest grade gene stimulating agent. To get an agent just one grade higher, the price would have to be multiplied by ten. As you can imagine, grade-1 gene stimulating agents could only be afforded by those with either great power or great wealth, while the rest of the common people could only look on in envy.

Of course, this didn't mean that there was no chance at all for commoners to receive better resources. Every newborn child could be assessed at a public assessment centre and receive one of six rankings from the assessment.

Those assessed as [F] rank would not receive any aid from the government. Until their bodies were unable to absorb any more agent, [D] rank babies could receive two bottles of grade-4 gene stimulating agent per year, [C] ranks could receive two bottles of grade-3 agent per year, and [B] ranks could receive two bottles of grade-2 agent per year.

Meanwhile, [A] rank babies had two options. They could accept two bottles of grade-1 agent per year and grow up freely, or enter the military and receive organised military training and receive an endless supply of grade-1 agent. However, with the latter choice, the child would have to spend his entire life serving the military.

[S] rank babies would be immediately taken away for specialised training by the military, but the possibility of that happening was extremely low. As mentioned previously, this formidable ranking very rarely appeared among commoner children — in a nutshell, genetics decided everything.

Meanwhile, someone like Ling Lan who inherited premium military benefits was entitled to the premium-grade gene stimulating agents kept for central military use. These agents were even purer than the agents available on the market, almost reaching 90% purity. This was the best the military could do at the moment, since research on agents had hit a plateau. True 90% purity was just out of reach, but no one had been able to make the final step.

This time around, the military had sent over a whole ten tubes of premium-grade agent. Because these ten tubes were worth cities, the military had no choice but to send out some of their ace mechas as an escort.

Very quickly, Ling Lan had been stripped down to her special underpants. One of the men who seemed like a military doctor took out a long syringe with a sharp needle from a box he was carrying, and then used it to draw out the gene stimulating agent from one of the tubes.

Ling Lan turned a blind eye to all of this. That was all she could do — which six-month old baby knew to be afraid? At this moment, Ling Lan was grateful for her experience with needles. During her past illness, she had been injected so many times every day

that she had become numb to the sight of needles, which was why she could face these injections so calmly now.

The syringe was rapidly plunged into her arm. The military doctor was very skilled — Ling Lan only felt a slight sting and an itch as the needle went in, very much like a mosquito bite.

The military doctor pushed the agent into Ling Lan's arm gradually, his demeanour stern as he observed Ling Lan's reactions. Some babies were incompatible with the agent, and there were also some babies who had been shown to have allergic reactions. In short, the greatest care must be taken when giving a baby their first shot of gene stimulating agent to avoid any accidents.

Before Ling Lan could sense any difference, Little Four had already rushed to the forefront of her mind without any warning.

"I sense something delicious! It's a taste I know well! No, that's not right, something's different ... yuck, what is this trash?! Why does it have impurities? This affects the taste too much!" Little Four was very unhappy. It felt that it had been tricked.

Hearing Little Four's voice, Ling Lan hurriedly closed her eyes. They say the eyes are the windows to the soul, right? She would live to regret it if anyone noticed anything strange from her eyes. Ling Lan said huffily, "Why did you come out?"

Little Four felt wronged. It had thought that the great thing in its memories had appeared, only to be presented with this knockoff. It said sadly, "I thought something great had appeared, but it's just a knockoff. There are so many impurities inside ... if left uncleaned, your body will be harmed."

Hearing that it was harmful, Ling Lan asked anxiously, "Little Four, can you clean it for me?"

Little Four perked up immediately at her words, and said smugly, "Of course I can, who do you think I am? I am the smartest king mecha learning device from the Mandora star system! I can help my contractor do many things, such as expel any harmful substances from the body."

Ling Lan chose to ignore Little Four's self-aggrandizement, asking in confusion, "If this thing is harmful to the body, then why do the people here want to inject it into babies?"

"This is actually a great thing which can improve your body stats and potential. It's just that the technology here seems to be unable to achieve 100% purity, which is why there are impurities remaining which will harm the body. However, even so, the benefits still outweigh the costs. The only thing is that this agent cannot be absorbed indefinitely, because once the impurities have accumulated in the body to a certain degree, the body will lose the ability to absorb any more agent," explained Little Four.

Ling Lan was relieved. As long as the outcome was good, and there was no danger to her health, she would still be able to accept it. Besides, Little Four had already promised to clear out those impurities.

Very quickly, the first tube of agent had been absorbed by Ling Lan, and the military doctor started injecting the second, and then the third ... by the time the military doctor picked up the eighth tube, his forehead was beaded with sweat, and his hands, which had remained steady so far, actually trembled a little.

Chapter 10: Absorb Everything!

The military doctor could not be faulted for losing his composure. Even the very rare [SS] rank babies could only absorb up to seven tubes of premium-grade agent. This time around, the military had brought over ten tubes merely as a show of respect toward Major General Ling Xiao's inheritor. The military had believed that no matter how outstanding Major General Ling Xiao's inheritor was, six tubes would have been more than enough, but Ling Lan just had to be an oddball who showed no signs of absorption satiation even at the eighth tube.

The eighth tube of agent was injected into Ling Lan, and the process was as smooth as ever. When a body started to become satiated, it could be felt in the injection process. If the process was unhindered, that meant that the body could still continue to absorb more agent; but if the process seemed impeded, this indicated that the body was nearing satiation. If the agent could no longer be injected, then it meant that the body was already satiated and could no longer absorb any additional agent.

Watching as Ling Lan successfully absorbed the eighth tube of agent, the military doctor's calm expression finally changed. With his back towards Lan Luofeng and Ling Qin, he threw a meaningful glance at his assistant beside him, signalling him to go contact their superiors.

The military doctor felt that he had done it subtly enough, but his actions had unfortunately still been captured by Ling Lan. Of course, the military doctor didn't think to worry about Ling Lan, for how much could a six-month old babe understand? What he didn't know was that an oddball such as Ling Lan existed in the world, an oddball who could think like an adult from birth.

Seeing the military doctor's actions, Ling Lan knew that something wasn't right. Afraid that her absorption rate may be a little overboard, Ling Lan hurriedly asked Little Four, "Little Four, something doesn't seem right. It looks like we may be absorbing too much agent ... why don't we stop here?"

Having had a taste of the agent, Little Four was unwilling to just stop. He reassured Ling Lan, "Don't worry! Didn't they bring over ten tubes? Since they brought so many, they

must have expected that you would be able to absorb that much..." Little Four felt that his logic was impeccable.

Ling Lan was still doubtful. "Are you sure? What if they just wanted to be prepared? Maybe only demonic babies can absorb that much. We have just started out, it wouldn't hurt to keep a lower profile." Ling Lan assumed correctly, but what she didn't know was that unfortunately, even if they stopped now, it was already too late.

Little Four was still unwilling to just give up. This agent was good stuff! It would help get rid of the hidden danger threatening his host. So after some thought, he decided to focus on the present and think about the other things later, and said, "I will arrange some cover-up during the tenth tube and make it look like your body is getting satiated, so even if your absorption rate is a little out of the ordinary, it still shouldn't arouse any suspicion. At the most, you'll only get a little more attention as you grow up, and we can pull back the rate gradually in future so that the impact of this first time is lessened."

Before Ling Lan could argue, Little Four continued, "You should know, absorbing these ten tubes of agent will not only greatly multiply the efficiency of your training, but will also eliminate your hidden trouble once and for all, so you will never have to worry about your spiritual power overwhelming your physical body ever again."

"Huh? Didn't you say that my Qi exercises would resolve the issue in two years anyway? What are you hiding from me?" Ling Lan finally sensed that Little Four was not telling her the full story.

Little Four froze, realizing that it had slipped up, and finally admitted, "What I meant was that if your spiritual power does not increase, your problems would be solved in two years. But you must understand, even if you don't train it, your spiritual power will still increase as you grow older."

Ling Lan was exasperated. "How could you not tell me this? Don't you know how dangerous this is?"

Little Four looked up towards the heavens and mused with an innocent look on its face, "I didn't tell you? It must have slipped my mind ..."

Ling Lan sorely wished that she could grab the little rascal and give him a good spanking. Sadly, she had already promised never to use domestic violence, so she could only put away her twitching palms. Suspiciously, she wondered — had the little rascal foreseen this day, and so had made her promise from the start to avoid violence?

She took several deep breaths to calm herself down before asking, "Tell me honestly, in these six months, how much has my spiritual power grown?" Even if she were to die, Ling Lan wanted to know how she died, so she wouldn't end up as a befuddled ghost.

“Actually, it’s only grown this much...” Little Four indicated with his short and stubby fingers how truly little Ling Lan’s spiritual power had grown.

“Since it’s only that much, does that mean there is no danger?” Ling Lan asked with a sneer, now holding very little faith in the deceitful little rascal.

Little Four wilted and said uneasily, “If it weren’t for the agents this time, you would have fallen greatly ill in two years’ time. However, as long as you continued your Qi exercises, I estimated that you would have completely recovered after three more years of practice. But now that we have this agent, all the hidden problems are solved, so there will no longer be any trouble.” Having said that, he grinned cheekily, satisfaction plainly written on its face. It did not seem to be concerned about how badly things could have gone if they hadn’t received the agent.

Seeing this, Ling Lan gave up in resignation. If she tried to argue seriously with the little rascal she would just drive herself mad. Still, she gave a stern warning to Little Four — no matter what happened from now on, he must tell her everything. She wanted no more of these half-truths.

Little Four was quick to agree, but whether he would really live up to his word Ling Lan couldn’t tell.

Honestly, Ling Lan felt that something was off with Little Four — even though he claimed to be her contracted long-term companion, she did not have the authority to access the learning space’s study programmes on her own. That is, if Little Four did not allow it, she would not be able to open the mental doors that represented those courses in her mindscape.

If Ling Lan were someone else, she might have fretted over this, or may even suspect the learning device of having ulterior motives. However, Ling Lan was very tolerant. If she couldn’t open it, then she couldn’t open it. There was no need to push. It was nice enough to have someone to shoot the breeze with when she was bored.

At heart, Ling Lan did not have any ambitions to lord over other people. All she wanted to do was live — safely, freely, and painlessly.

In short order, the assistant had returned from giving his report. He nodded lightly at the military doctor, indicating that he should continue with the injections.

Having received approval from the superiors, the military doctor continued injecting without worry. He had honestly been taken aback by Ling Lan’s insane absorption rate, but had also been troubled over how he could account for the excess injections used to his superiors.

Finally, at the tenth tube, the military doctor finally felt more and more resistance as he continued to push the plunger. In the end, he could no longer inject any more agent when there were only a few drops left in the barrel.

Only then did the military doctor pull out the needle, secretly dabbing away the sweat on his forehead. Luckily this child had been satisfied with this tenth shot, letting them complete their mission successfully. A child who could absorb ten tubes of agent was not unheard of, but it was definitely very uncommon.

The military people did not linger, leaving after a brisk farewell, leaving behind a bewildered Lan Luofeng and a slightly knowing Ling Qin.

Ling Lan's gaze tracked the soldiers as they left, and she finally relaxed. And then, she registered a heavy weight in her bladder ... she was dismayed. She hadn't even had much milk to drink since her mum knew that she would be given agent to absorb, so why did she have the uncontrollable urge to pee?

As if sensing Ling Lan's distress, Little Four said sheepishly, "I was afraid the military people would notice, so I didn't dare to expel the impurities through your sweat glands, but instead directed them to your bladder ..."

In other words, with all the impurities gathered there, it would be even more surprising if she didn't need to pee.

Ling Lan didn't even have the chance to yell for her mother before she tragically wet the bed once again ...

"Little Four, you're dead meat!" wailed Ling Lan.

God dammit! It had taken so long for her to regain some sense of dignity, and appeal to others as a lovable and angelic baby. But those joyous days had barely begun before they were ruined by this inconsiderate Little Four.

Ling Lan was saddened once again. Especially when she heard her mum smack her bum lightly, teasing her for wetting the bed again, she felt the world around her grow dim in despair.