

Wow 451

Chapter 451 Beast Compendium_2

In normal circumstances, a Mecha is like a tank loaded with countless heavy weapon modules. Just bomb it, and it's done.

"Boom, boom, boom!"

Missile batteries fell in swathes, the flamethrowers mercilessly scorched the earth.

"Da-da-da-da-da!"

The rotary heavy machine guns spewed fervent tongues of fire, turning everything within sight into smithereens.

Without interference from a similarly-leveled opponent, a war machine that doesn't need to watch for attacks and simply needs to unleash unbridled firepower becomes an invincible force on such a battlefield.

And it's not just one of them!

Without the restraint of high-end combat power, even the elite members of the Bug Race like the artillery bugs, mantis bugs, and sand bugs couldn't prevent the overall collapse.

The gun smoke turned the air a milky white. When no non-human creatures remained moving within sight on the battlefield, the heavily armored command vehicle, also made of octanium alloy, finally, drove slowly to the front line from the rear.

The sliding door opened, and a stream of officers filed out.

Stepping on the still slightly warm, charred ground, the commanding officer took off his cap, his gaze sweeping over the battlefield with a sigh. He saw the gruesome corpses of the Bug Race mixed with an equally significant number of human limbs and parts, pain evident in his eyes.

Humans are accustomed to sacrifice.

But one should never grow numb to it.

"Clean up the battlefield," he ordered softly with a wave of his hand, then turned his head toward a farther direction—

There, three blue-and-white Mechas stood tall. Beneath their feet lay the corpse of the beast that had brought a certain uncertainty to this assault.

"Bring back the main body tissues for the Scientific Research Institute."

"Yes, sir!"

The officer who relayed the command returned a moment later, his face slightly troubled. "General... there's a bit of trouble."

It was too big and too heavy.

Those assigned to the dissection were at a loss with the beast. To access the core parts of the beast's body wasn't impossible, but it required time.

The commanding officer didn't see it as a big deal and casually waved his fingers toward the three Mechas standing by the beast, "Let them help."

...

"Help with the dissection?" Bai E's eyes lit up. "There's no need for that hassle, I can do it myself."

In ancient times, excavators cooked dishes; now, Mechas perform dissections.

Every profession needs this kind of deep, specialized dedication.

Watching their captain, armed with an alloy battle blade, dissecting the monster's corpse cleanly and even sorting the parts methodically, and particularly the perfectly-shaped chitin bone armor shell from its back, that had the muscle stripped away.

The Mech Pilot teammates, who could only watch from the sidelines, nodded in their cockpits, an epiphany dawning on them.

"No wonder Bai E is the captain..."

"Impressive! Truly impressive!"

["Lucky Strike" energy +10.]

The battlefield was cleansed, gathering every spoils of war that could be taken. Finally, the post-battle cleanup could commence.

The soldiers with driving capabilities maneuvered the Multi-function Infantry Vehicles, using the flamethrowers mounted on them to meticulously scorch every inch of the ground.

Fire is the greatest nemesis of life, and just as deadly to alien lifeforms like the Bug Race.

All the disruptive inducers released by the bugs to transform the environment and expand their territory were completely eradicated by the purifying flames.

Simply eradicating the bugs out to expand their territory was not enough. The "environment" they created had to be destroyed as well to truly consider it a complete military success.

Of course, this process isn't difficult; it's just meticulous... and it takes time.

Even with the fear of a bug counterattack, this cleanup work still needed to be carried out thoroughly.

There was nothing left for the Mech fighting squad to do.

The few Mechas gathered together, the cockpit hatches opened, and the fresh air from above rushed into the somewhat stuffy cabins.

The cool breeze took away the heat from Rose's flushed cheeks.

"Captain!" A teammate, who had also opened his cockpit canopy, waved excitedly at Bai E, "You're freaking awesome, Captain!"

"Forget everything else; from now on, I only acknowledge you, Captain!"

Facing an unknown beast, even the higher-ups had advised them to fight conservatively, but the captain ignored it all and rushed in alone.

This kind of confidence in one's own strength was what they had all longed for.

"It's just that after we go back..." someone reminded.

Their team's voice chat permissions were not high, and the higher-ups could listen in on the entire conversation if they wanted to.

Only during these short breaks at high altitude could they speak a bit of private talk.

This battle, admittedly, was won decisively under the insistence of their captain.

Had it not been for the captain charging in alone, directly attacking the behemoth, once the three crimson behemoths arrived as reinforcements, slaying the artillery-type behemoth would have been even more challenging.

Given the terrifying firepower output of the enemy, their only option would have been to retreat.

But in the end, the captain's actions were against the wishes of the superiors.

Of course, losing would mean punishment, but even winning carried no rewards.

How exactly they would be dealt with would depend on the mood of the high-ranking bigwigs after they returned.

They had just recognized this captain, and they didn't want any unforeseen complications to arise.

"No worries." Bai E responded with a gentle smile, apparently not taking their concerns seriously.

What did he have to fear?

Yue Ying had said it, to act boldly, and she would have his back no matter what.

Besides, he wasn't without high-ranking support at the Military Department.

Carlos had never given up on him, and Hamilton seemed to have a good impression of him. Being backed by people in two of the most conflicting factions, not to mention that he was promoted by Marshal Weslin from the military district himself, it was unlikely he would slap his own face, right?

With backers up top, there was no cause for panic.

Not to mention, the rewards for the mission had been settled—

[Side Mission—Termination of the Behemoth, completed.]

[Mission Reward: Beast Compendium, issued.]

[Name: Thunder Beast

Features: ...

Recommended Countermeasures: ...]

Detailed information about the behemoth, or rather, the Thunder Beast, was meticulously recorded, even with a few more precise parameters and their potential fluctuations clearly marked.

For new species of the Bug Race that appeared, the Scientific Research Institute in the city needed to obtain the most accurate data as soon as possible.

As Rose and himself were the first and only mech pilots to combat the target, their opinions were of great significance to the Scientific Research Department's study on this behemoth. It was only reasonable that he provide some precise data.

With this information in hand, the Scientific Research Department would also have to speak up for him.

They were his people, what sanctions could they impose on him?

"Helen..." Bai E muttered softly.

When he had encountered "The Dominator" last time, it was this academician who arrived at the camp first. Her presence brought him many opportunities, and now he wondered if it would be her again this time.

The quiet evening breeze blew gently as the sparse number of Multi-function Infantry Vehicles meticulously plowed through every inch of the land.

As Bai E didn't dwell on these issues, naturally, the others remained silent.

Time drifted away softly until the voice of the mech commander came through the cockpit's loudspeaker.

"Rear squadron to the front, mech combat team to lead the way. Back to camp!"

Sitting on the edge of the cockpit enjoying the breeze, Bai E stood up abruptly and responded firmly, "Yes!"

...

The army, laden with ample spoils of war, made their way back to camp without encountering a single petty skirmish along the way.

As expected, once the scientific teams learned that the deployed army had once again encountered a new species of the Bug Race, the Scientific Research Institute sent people immediately.

"Dada dada dada~"

The familiar sound of high heels echoed crisply in the empty hallway outside the meeting room, "Bang!"

The door was flung open vigorously, and a slender figure in a white dress strode in.

A cool, sharp voice preceded her entrance, "New bugs again?"

As Helen walked into the room, her gaze instinctively swept over the entire meeting room, then quickly turned to the backdrop behind where Weslin stood.

However, just as her eyes reached the backdrop, Helen's expression faltered, her body stiffened slightly, and her gaze slowly returned, ultimately settling on the quiet, silent figure sitting in the corner of the meeting room...

Chapter 452 Naming

"He..."

"How could he be here?!"

That silent figure was the most memorable for Helen since her arrival at the military camp. Recently emerged from the cultivation pod, this new artificially-born soldier named Bai E had achieved accomplishments in a short time that other soldiers could hardly reach in a lifetime.

It was because of his outstanding performance that his resume had attracted Helen's attention the moment she arrived at the camp, causing her to observe him for a long period and even contemplate using him as the subject of an important experiment. However, she eventually abandoned this idea due to his lackluster talent in close combat.

After returning, she felt relieved that she hadn't impulsively chosen a "flawed product" or selected the warrior named Rose as a lower-level "substitute." The project required a substantial amount of resources, and the Senate was certainly not a place willing to bet on slim probabilities.

This plan could be postponed, but it absolutely could not fail!

So... why was he sitting here today, at this time?

In such a setting, the inevitable attendees were high-ranking officers from the camp or important frontline officers involved in the battle. How could an ordinary soldier sit in this position?

Although her dealings with the military were limited, Helen knew about the promotion system within the army—unless one had a city lord father, it was very hard for a normal naturally-born person to get promoted from a grassroots soldier to an important officer rank in just a few months' time.

Or... could this soldier's performance truly be so terrifying that it broke the regular system, forcing even the rigid military camp to acknowledge his merits?

Could it be that she had been wrong from the start?

This fleeting speculation, accompanied by a tinge of regret, arose in her mind, leaving Helen frozen in place with numerous thoughts flickering through her mind.

"Helen?" Helen?" The call, sounding as if from far away, brought Helen sharply back to reality.

Blinking lightly, Helen's consciousness snapped back, turning to look in the direction of the voice as if nothing had happened.

Weslin was looking at her with an ingratiating smile.

"Helen, I must trouble you once again. We have encountered two types of new giant creatures from the Bug Race in a recent battle. We have already properly preserved a sample of one of the creatures' tissue, just waiting for your receipt."

Helen gathered her thoughts, focusing on the more pressing and important issue at hand, "What about the battlefield video?"

"Right here."

Following Weslin's indication, the white screen behind him immediately displayed the footage captured by the battlefield drones of the giant creatures.

The opening shot was undeniably stunning—the Titan-class armed Mecha, the ultimate force of the military, was knocked down in an instant by a single shot, and the resulting explosion was large enough to cover a vast area.

Looking at the aftermath of the explosion, whether it was machinery or human bodies, the casualty rate within the range of the blast was as high as 95%.

Machinery could still be salvaged if hit in non-crucial parts, but a human body would be shattered upon impact, the power comparable to being shot by an Anti-Material Sniper Rifle.

More importantly, even though the blast spread far and wide, the range of the creatures' artillery fire was still densely packed.

The level of destruction far exceeded that of a previous entity known as "Dominators."

Domination was fierce, yet it was just about controlling others and oneself.

If several more of these newly emerged giants appeared and bombarded the battlegrounds before the war even started, what chance would humanity have left?

Even their prized Titan-class armed Mechas were no more than paper in front of them. The larger the battlefield where they were deployed, the greater the threat these giants posed.

In small-scale combat, Mechas could still rely on sheer strength to face the enemy directly, but in large-scale confrontations with endless seas of Bugs blocking the way, Mechas would find it hard to breach the nests for a decapitating strike.

Humanity could only be grateful that the Bugs had once again irrationally exposed their most powerful trump card on the least suitable battlefield.

If it were humans, they certainly would not reveal their absolute trump card so easily.

Nevertheless, once the presence of the new giants was reported, the Military Department instantly rated them as the most problematic strategic units from the Bug Race.

"We have named it the Thunder Beast..."

The video slowly played on, with Helen watching intently while Weslin quietly provided commentary by her side.

As the progress moved to the Mechas' forced break-through using decapitation tactics, Helen had no time to consider the differences in the Mecha squad's performance but was instead fully focused on the "Thunder Beast's" every action in response to the Mecha's assault.

With a blue and white Mecha making the final cut, and putting a bomb inside to explode and finish the job, the video finally came to an end.

Weslin combined the information prepared by the analysis department since returning to camp to present to Helen, "Based on our preliminary analysis, the Thunder Beast's main weapons are two types: one is the artillery attack composed of two projectile bodies, and the other is the attack form where the Symbiotic Gun on its forelimbs spits out a large amount of acid stored in the glands. One method is used for wide-area bombardment of distant battlefields, and the other is for defense when enemies approach. Besides this, the Thunder Beast does not carry many other symbiotic weapons or organs."

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Moreover, from our observations of the Thunder Beast's physique and posture, it does not seem... nor is it suited to carry more types of symbiotic weapons. It likely won't have too many variant functions. At present, we believe the best tactic to counter the Thunder Beast is to have our armed mechas engage in close-quarters combat, as the Thunder Beast lacks methods to deal with high-armored units up close."

"But can each of your mechas match the close-combat strength of that mecha?"

Helen pointed at the screen where the final image was frozen. The mecha holding a blade was facing away from the Thunder Beast as the massive corpse of the Bug Race slowly toppled over.

Although the video was brief, the performance of the other mechas on screen differed greatly from the one that killed the Thunder Beast, convincing Helen that it could be an instructor leading a training battle with students.

"This..."

Weslin had neither the time nor the inclination to attend to such matters; as a marshal overseeing the big picture, he did not need to worry about the combat capabilities of each individual in his command structure.

Not capable enough? Then train!

There are tens of thousands in the camp, millions in the entire city. If the camp lacks manpower, they can draft more troops. If that's still not enough, the artificial human production lines can mass-produce soldiers. They can be selected one by one to find the talent he needs.

It's not as if they need a unique existence like the "War God of the Empire." Ordinary geniuses are just a matter of probability.

...And so, at this moment, he too was at a loss for words in response to Helen's question.

But Helen was similarly unconcerned about these differences in individual combat capability. She just needed more relevant data.

"What about the other kind of beast?"

"Here."

The screen flashed, and the image flickered again.

The crimson beast, from its entrance run to the brief hold by the mecha squad until its retreat after the death of the Thunder Beast, was fully displayed in a brief timeframe, with scarce observable content.

"We tentatively name this beast the Ripper. Its normally concealed massive claws can easily tear through our armed mecha's strongest defenses. And its numbers..."

Are probably not small.

If the Thunder Beast is an absolute weapon for long-range bombardment, then the Ripper is the invincible king of close-combat.

A pair of claws easily tearing through an armed mecha's armor, in a matter of seconds, three Rippers completely shredded one and a half mechas, and if it weren't for the mecha squad captain promptly

coming to the rescue after dealing with the Thunder Beast, the half-destroyed mecha would also have faced inevitable ruin.

Even though the power of those claws may not appear as fearsome as the sheer cutting force of the "Dominant" that could slice clean through like a mirror, they are still among the top bioweapons of the Bug Race that humanity has encountered.

Coupled with a terrifying strength that could overwhelm a mecha in direct confrontation, and a full-body bone armor that renders all of the mecha's armed weaponry nearly useless against it, the threat posed by the Ripper is not far behind that of the Thunder Beast.

Not to mention that whenever Rippers appear, they do so in threes, hardly resembling a form of cherished military asset.

If on a future battlefield against the Bug Race, one were to see a large swarm of these creatures charging in formation...

The thought alone is enough to send chills down the spine of every officer.

In front of the people from their scientific research department, the Military Department's summaries tend to be conservative as can be expected.

Helen never expected to rely on them to classify newly emerged species of the Bug Race; she was simply pointing at the last frozen scene on the screen.

The blue and white captain's mecha was gazing into the distance at the direction of the retreat of the three crimson beasts, looking like an absolute War God protecting the entire army.

"Who is piloting this mecha?"

The Thunder Beast didn't have a long appearance, providing few chances to show itself.

Even though the battlefield drones followed the entire event, due to distance and pixel limitations, many details remained unclear.

The same goes for the Rippers, with the entire fight not lasting more than a minute. Except for the brief entanglement with the captain's mecha at the end, the combat was almost a one-sided crush when they faced the other mechas.

Perhaps only the Mech Pilot operating the captain's mecha could provide more details, which were inaccessible to others.

Helen didn't care about the differences in combat ability between individual soldiers, but she understood that to defeat one's enemy, a warrior first needs to know their enemy.

Direct confrontation and slaying of the Thunder Beast, and even engaging the Ripper on equal terms—the Mech Pilot, at this moment, held the greatest authority to speak.

"Captain Bai, it's your turn to answer Helen's questions now," Weslin said with a smile as he shifted the focus onto Bai E.

Seeing the warrior he personally promoted shine once again in this battle was indeed a feather in his cap.

"Yes! Marshal!" Bai E stood up straight, his face serious as he turned his head and nodded to Helen, "Academician Helen, please go ahead."

"..."

The focus returned to the corner where the warrior was standing, and the previously suppressed thoughts began to stir once again.

Helen squinted, "You've become a Mech Pilot? When did this happen?"

"Five days ago." That was the time he underwent assessment to become a regular Mech Pilot, a date Bai E would not forget.

Helen slightly tilted her head, "Marshal Weslin, if I remember correctly, the standard for your Mech Pilots' composition requires at least 14 points in physical fitness and reflex, 13 points in insight, right?"

The drivers of the Mecha were not a group of weaklings—they needed to have robust physiques and sufficient observational and reaction skills to ensure humanity's strongest weapons could be effectively utilized.

Even the reserve Mech Pilots in the Mech Armor Camp were elites, each having gone through several layers of selection and certain artificial enhancements to reach this point.

This was also a significant reason for their vehement rejection of artificially created people parachuting into their teams.

Upon hearing Helen's question, Weslin was momentarily taken aback, glancing at the adjutant who was on standby and seeing his cautious nod, then confidently replied, "Correct!"

Helen murmured softly, "These attribute requirements..."

This was much more astonishing than when she first met him.

Initially, one could attribute it to the potential of his awakened exotic genes not being fully released, leading to an explosive development at lower attributes. However, the current rapid enhancement across all attributes...

Not to mention breaking conventions to become the only artificially created person to join the regular Mech Pilot team, and even in this incredibly short training period, he became the captain of a combat squad surpassing all Mech Pilots of the Mech Armor Camp.

What exactly had he done in this period?

The thoughts that had been extinguished were stirring once again.

However, as this was related to her private plans, Helen knew the importance of protocol. After a brief inquiry, she went straight to the topic at hand, "Did you personally slay the Thunder Beast?"

"Yes."

"Besides what Marshal Weslin just described, do you have anything to add regarding the Thunder Beast?"

"Academician, the Marshal has not left anything out. In my observation, the Thunder Beast's attack methods are limited to those two forms—its structure prevents it from executing any other combat strategies. It's worth noting that a group of small-sized worker and bee insects constantly accompany the Thunder Beast. If we hadn't initiated a missile barrage on the Thunder Beast beforehand, our beheading operation would have faced much more resistance. Additionally, from what I observed, the Thunder Beast seems to absorb the biomatter of the smaller insect guards to heal its wounds. It's a war machine designed for strategic strikes within battle formations. If deployed in regimental strength, with our current capabilities, we would be absolutely unable to confront it, and it shouldn't appear on a battlefield of this level," Bai E explained.

Regarding the Thunder Beast, the Beast Compendium had described it quite clearly—it was not something rare!

Given enough biomatter, this kind of insect could be mass-produced by the Bug Race.

If they appeared in swarms, they represented a formidable force that, as Bai E currently understood, humanity was absolutely incapable of confronting!

Why would a sentient Bug Race easily reveal such a trump card?

Ever since Bai E first set foot on the Bug Race's battlefield, he remained doubtful about the Bug Race's true objectives. He could only subtly interweave his personal inquiries during such occasions to see if he could hint at anyone influential currently in the city.

"...It absorbs the biomatter of other insects to repair itself?" Helen murmured softly, a piece of information that had not appeared in the video nor in Weslin's summary.

After nodding to show she understood, Helen continued, "And what about the Ripper?"

"I think this name might not be quite appropriate," Bai E replied calmly, looking directly at Helen.

A name can predispose people's subconscious impressions—an appropriate designation is crucial.

"In my view, the responsibility of this crimson beast is more about protection... We should perhaps call it—the Guardian," Bai E suggested.

Chapter 454 The merits offset the demerits

The Thunderbeast had a clear field guide to help itself understand everything about it, whereas the giant red beast could only be judged based on one's own perception.

Unlike the Thunderbeast, which could be mass-produced simply by providing enough biomass, the giant red beast gave Bai E the impression of a special species that was difficult to manufacture in large numbers.

During his brief confrontation with the giant red beast, even while piloting a Mecha and fighting against it, Bai E hadn't discovered any way to kill or even defeat the opponent.

Before mastering the skills that could apply his own abilities that greatly amplified combat power to the Mecha, not even when manipulating what was known in the army as humanity's strongest war weapon, the armed Mecha, did Bai E have the slightest confidence in taking down an opponent one-on-one.

The exploding subtitles also confirmed this point, just like when he first encountered the Sovereign, upon seeing those three "Guardians," the subtitle he saw was nothing but "???"

The Thunderbeast could be considered a qualitative change brought about by a quantitative change; the only high-density material exhibited on its body was one of the two shells it fired—the high-concentration seed, and its slow movement and fragile lower limbs were extremely fatal weaknesses. In contrast, the giant red beast was entirely without weaknesses, a perfect creation.

If such a powerful beast could be casually created, Bai E couldn't think of anything on this planet that the Bug Race would need to fear.

What made Bai E firm in his belief was that commanding voice from the Bug Race's node network—an immense presence just as when the Sovereign had appeared last time.

Did that voice mean it was the conscious mind of the Sovereign? Or perhaps... a higher-tier Bug Race will capable of commanding the Sovereign?

The Bug Race had a clearly defined division of labor, with almost no-delay commands rapidly transmitting within the node network; the lower-tier bugs heeded the orders of the bug one rank above, and higher-tier bugs seldom commanded across levels, as this meant greater expenditure.

And how could an entity directly commanded by that immense will be just an ordinary mass-produced species?

The very act of the opponent's retreat implied they were unwilling to lose such a special being easily.

Lacking the kind of large-scale crowd control ability similar to that of the Sovereign, a lone giant beast falling into the human ranks, having resolved the common bug tide, would likewise face certain death.

Compared to the Thunderbeast, the "Guardians" were the more special entities.

In response to Bai E, who had put forward his own view, Helen's eyes narrowed slightly, and after a short period of scrutiny, she suddenly smiled, "Come with me."

Having said that, she then turned to look at Weslin, who had been following by her side, "Marshal, the matter's in your hands. I've understood and received the data you provided. I'll complete the following work on my own, to provide detailed information about the giant beasts to you as soon as possible."

"Come with me." Turning to lead the way, Bai E looked back at Weslin for approval.

Weslin casually waved his hand and used his mouth to gesture, "Go ahead, go ahead."

When an academic from the Scientific Research Institute needed people, everyone here could cooperate with the research, not to mention a small Mecha squad captain.

Once that formidable academic strode away, her high heels echoing "click-clack, click-clack," most military officers in the conference room seemed to breathe a sigh of relief.

"Phew~ That woman is pretty scary."

"Nonsense! To become an academic in a place like the Scientific Research Institute, she's seen no less bloodshed than us."

After a brief moment of relaxation, Weslin stood up again at the front.

He was well aware of the Scientific Research Institute's style of operation, so upon his return, he had immediately requested that everyone compile all the information about the new type of giant beast, even before they had the chance to summarize the performance of each department during the battle on the human side.

Reward the meritorious, punish the failing.

That was the essential method of leadership.

Rapping on the podium, Weslin slowly scanned the room with his eyes before opening his mouth to speak softly, "Begin..."

"Yes!" The overall commanding officer stood up, his voice steady, "Regarding this battle..."

...

The recounting of the battle was long and dull, filled with routine tactics and unremarkable casualty numbers, Weslin almost fell asleep listening.

Only when the commander's voice paused did Weslin suddenly realize he'd finished, "That's it... That's it... Does anyone else have anything to add?"

"Yes!" An officer seated not far from the commanding officer suddenly stood up, "The commanding officer missed a very important piece of information—during this battle, a soldier in a pivotal position made a grave mistake, almost causing a total defeat in this campaign. Why did the commander not mention it at all?"

The commanding officer remained expressionless, calmly replying, "An individual's performance is not largely related to the outcome of the entire battle; the battle will not succeed because one person excels, nor will it fail because one underperforms. The specific responsibilities within the military units are the concern of each unit's direct superior, and I will not waste everyone's time with it here."

"But what if the person leading the unit is our crucial Mecha squad—a sharp blade against the advanced Bug Race, yet nearly led us into the abyss!"

This immediately caused an uproar among the uninformed officers.

Disobeying orders on the battlefield, after all, is a severe taboo in the military.

Weslin's eyes narrowed, and his previously indifferent, peace-seeking mindset shifted subtly, "What exactly happened?"

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"Report to the Marshal!" The officer snapped his legs together and saluted sharply before he began his statement, "In this battle, Captain Bai E, leader of the mech combat squad, acted independently in the face of combat, disregarding military orders. He not only ignored his superior's commands but even twisted the orders to deceive his squad members, causing the overall tactical situation to fall into the most perilous state!"

"You're full of shit!" An irate officer immediately stood up, glaring furiously at the reporting officer, "What does the danger of the situation have to do with Bai E's independent action?! Without his daring move, we would've been embarrassingly defeated in this battle, and you wouldn't have the chance to spew your bullshit here!"

The officer making the statement stared back at the outraged officer, a strange look in his eyes, "Gladstone, if I'm not mistaken, he directly disobeyed your orders... Are you alright?"

"Am I alright? You're the one with the problem! Without Captain Bai's crucial intervention, how would we have killed those newly emerged beasts? When Helen spoke up earlier, where were you to answer? Tell me, who in the entire camp could take down the 'Thunderbeast' before the arrival of the 'Guardians'? With the Thunderbeast constantly bombarding us from long range, how were we supposed to win this battle? Find me another pair of mech pilots like him!"

He was hot-headed and lacked the big-picture perspective.

But what of it?

Initially, he indeed got carried away because his men didn't follow orders, but on the way back, after getting pointers from the commander-in-chief, he also saw clearly the key to the success or failure of the battle—

It was precisely because of Captain Bai's stellar performance that they managed to win this battle that should have been lost.

Having such men under his command, although a bit unruly, was so commendable! Should he let outsiders prattle on?

"..." The rebutted officer was at a loss for words and clung stubbornly to his point, "No matter what, disobeying orders on the battlefield is something he can't wash away."

"This is called making a tactical decision on the spot based on the situation!" Suddenly, a voice jumped out from a little farther away, "If you can take down a Thunderbeast on the front line, I will join your personal guard afterward, and I won't disobey any of your commands."

"Carlos!" The officer being argued against glared at the corner where the voice had come from, and finding that his gaze had no effect, turned towards another direction clearly allied with Carlos, "Hamilton, what do you think?"

As long as Carlos supported something, Hamilton would surely oppose it.

It was necessary to pull over a strong ally for himself...

Hamilton, looking like he was about to doze off, raised an eyebrow, "If I'm not mistaken, shouldn't the Mech Armor Camp be under my jurisdiction? If I haven't said anything, what business is it of an outsider like you?"

The challenged officer wasn't phased, knowing that was just Hamilton's character, being ungrateful and persistent, he pressed on, "Fine! Tell me, isn't this a grave military offense? He is, after all, the leader of an important mech combat squad; this is a matter for military court!"

Hamilton rolled his eyes, "Disobedience is a fault, but achieving a beheading is a merit. Faults should be punished, and merits rewarded. Later, I'll punish him by not allowing training in the morning, reward

him with an extra meal in the evening, then offset the merit against the fault, and the matter will be considered settled."

"..."

The officer was taken aback, what kind of punishment and reward was this?

His gaze swept over the room, noticing a silent "force" present, so he reached out to what seemed like a lifesaver.

"Dewa..."

"He fought well..."

"..."

Thus, the officer could only look towards the marshal who held enough authority to definitively characterize this incident, "Marshal Weslin..."

"Enough, enough..." Weslin couldn't stop yawning, having been woken up from bed late at night. Wasn't it hard enough to handle the folks from the Scientific Research Institute without losing more sleep?

"Just do as Hamilton said. He's one of his people, what's it to you?"

"He even publicly questioned the Tactical Department's naming of new species!"

"The final call on that will be made by the Science Department; what we say doesn't count." Weslin didn't seem to care, as the blow wasn't landing on him.

"But our commander-in-chief seems intent on concealing and protecting..."

"The merits and faults have been offset, what more is there to say... Yawn~"

"Smack!" The door closed after Helen left with Bai E was suddenly pushed open again, and Helen's assistant, wearing a white lab coat, hurried in, "The scholar has said, Captain Bai has made a great contribution this time! There is no fault."

"..."

Why is everyone against me?

Was it so wrong to want to reference the commander-in-chief?

The officer felt the room spinning, sensing the world's deep malice towards him.

"No!" the dazed officer found an opportunity.

The winds have changed, adjust the sails to face them.

"Yes, yes, yes! Great achievement! The commander-in-chief is deliberately suppressing it!"

"..."

Where are the people?

Off-kilter? Where are you going? Don't leave!

...

In a private room, Helen stared at the soldier in front of her, a cryptic smile playing at the corner of her mouth, "Do you think 'Guardians' are more important?"

"They are rarer by comparison, and in contrast, Thunder Beasts are more critical, as those are the adversaries our army needs to confront more directly. Guardians only appear to protect certain important units, and we shouldn't see them on a common battlefield," Bai E expressed some of his opinions more willingly in private to Helen. It was one of his few chances to make contact with the city's upper class without much risk.

"Then why did you encounter them?" Helen narrowed her eyes, wanting to hear what this soldier thought, "If Thunder Beasts aren't rare, why would there be Guardians protecting them?"

"Perhaps... they're just for us to see?" Bai E cautiously offered his viewpoint.

The last time he faced Helen, he had already shed the image of a completely rigid figure, and now it seemed a bit self-deceptive to continue pretending to be that.

Moreover, he genuinely wanted to know if humanity had any understanding of this.

Whether it was the Sandworms or the newly emerged Thunder Beasts and Guardians, Bai E always sensed more strange information from the Bugs' abnormal exposure behaviors.

Their exposure timings were too odd. It would have strategic value to appear on more decisive battlefields, but they always showed up in insignificant situations within human sight.

Is human reconnaissance omnipresent?

Then why was there no preparation for the existence of the "Overlord"?

Or perhaps this was information the Bugs deliberately revealed to humans.

"Think about it... what would we do?"

Helen casually flipped through the printed materials in her hands, musing, "Whether it's Thunder Beasts or Guardians, they could easily crush the armor of our current mechas. Osmium alloys are no longer sufficient for the highest intensity of combat nowadays; finding a way to stably produce more advanced hexadecimium alloys is crucial. If high-end Bugs all possess such defenses, then what about the Overlord? Our current weapons are inadequate to defeat the Bug Race."

The response is simple—escalate technologically.

'Is this what the Bugs want?'

A straightforward thought arose in his mind.

'What exactly are they trying to do?'

"We've had this speculation for a while..." Helen said, her eyelids lowered, "In fact, over the past many years, there have been more than one opportunity for the Bugs to completely overrun us, but they

always failed for various strange reasons. It's inconclusive whether it was a deliberate reprieve or a lack of ability, but the recent few times... the intent has become much clearer."

"So..."

"So, what else can we do?" Helen smiled somewhat helplessly, "Just because the Bugs want us to climb the tech ladder, we stop climbing?"

"..."

"That's why our research has always dismissed that possibility, it's enough to be aware of it in our minds. You... The spoils you brought back this time are very useful; I'm going to analyze them right away. Do you want to have a look?"

"Yes."

Of course, he wanted to look.

The detailed data from his own Beast Compendium hadn't been utilized yet.

There were too many people earlier, and he couldn't show it.

When alone, there's always a chance to demonstrate his worth.

And also... did Helen just mention hexadecimium alloys? That's the core technology needed for his own mecha modification plan!

Chapter 456 Missed it?

"Sure."

Bai E's request to participate in the research wasn't surprising. The warrior was equally interested in these technology-related studies—interest is also a type of talent, and undoubtedly, this warrior's talent was displayed in every aspect.

That was the reason he had initially caught her attention, unfortunately...

Temporarily gathering her thoughts, Helen focused on the matter at hand.

As Bai E's translucent jade-like fingertips lightly pressed on the silvery smooth surface of the panel, curtains on the vast wall in front of him unfurled to the sides, revealing the biological experiment chamber separated by transparent glass behind it.

The Thunder Beast that Bai E had killed with a bomb had many of its internal organs destroyed, but its sufficiently large body still allowed the military to extract plenty of fresh remaining tissues for research, more than enough, and now they were laid out before their eyes.

Helen controlled the mechanical arms behind the isolation window, examining the tissues provided by the military and sending them one by one to the inspection portal.

In the large room, only the faint buzzing sound of machinery could be heard for a moment...

The strength of muscles and bone armor far exceeded all species previously captured, and both forms of attack were very formidable. Among them, the acid spray and the artillery used in the bombardment, including one type, the Swelling Tick Bomb, could be patterned, but that seed-like bomb...

After examining for a while, a sac-like organ showing some abnormalities under the scanner came into Helen's view.

The sharp scalpel gently sliced through the layer of robust muscle that seemed to still be pulsating, revealing a multi-chambered sac-like organ completely to the eyes of Bai E and Helen.

And within each of those chambers lay the black "shells," the very "seeds" from the bombardment, quietly arrayed inside.

...

"Di~ Di~ Di~" The machine eventually emitted a beep, indicating the analysis was complete. Bai E was the first to hurry over, "How is it, how is it?"

"You're quite anxious..." Helen glancing at him, then turned her head to look at the display panel of the instrument.

The various precise indices meant nothing to Bai E who was in the dark, with only the paper data that eventually gathered at Helen's fingertips being the only items he could understand.

"Muscle strength... Bone strength and density... The structural composition of the seed..."

Murmuring softly, Helen put down the paper summary she held in her hands and leaned back half-sitting in the chair, somewhat vexed as she massaged her temple with her fair jade-like right hand.

"Can't figure it out..."

The meticulous composition and structure of each bone and muscle could be estimated roughly, but how they would perform when combined was difficult to judge.

The potential ranges given by the computer's analysis were so vast that it was almost as if no analysis had been done at all.

Just as with the secrets of the human body, they could never fully understand them, let alone comprehend the bodies of the Bug Race, an alien species.

In the past, they could finalize the ability value ranges of their opponents based on extensive combat experience, but this time the data provided was too scarce, and they could only offer a rough estimate to the Military Department based on a few images and partial verbal descriptions.

As for the power of the artillery strike, it was even more difficult to give a precise guess, and it was impossible to begin researching materials for protective measures.

Shaking her head, Helen tapped the keyboard.

Catching a glimpse of Bai E in the corner of her eye, she casually asked in a soft voice, "How did it feel when you faced off against the Thunder Beast?"

From the video, there wasn't much head-on confrontation between the two; most of it was Bai E and his companion's Mecha deftly avoiding the cumbersome beast while looking for weaknesses. Engaged in the fierce battle, his brain was nearly empty from the surging hormones, and most warriors couldn't give a detailed description of the combats they'd participated in, probably including Bai E.

Asking him might not yield much, so Helen just asked casually.

But to her surprise, Bai E responded immediately, "Yes!"

There was so much.

He wished he could spew all the information from the Beast Compendium at once, but for the sake of rationality, Bai E could only provide it through various scenarios, "I had a direct collision with its limb once, using about 80% of the Mecha's peak strength, but still slightly at a disadvantage, so I estimate the impact strength of a typical limb to be around 95%-97% of a Mecha arm at full operation. Additionally, regarding the damage from the Thunder Beast's bombardment..."

The sound of typing stopped unknowingly, and as Bai E blurted out his thoughts, he saw Helen staring at him in astonishment.

He had noticed her attention, but now he just feigned surprise and countered, "...Is there a problem, Academician?"

Helen asked incredulously, "You... noticed all that information?"

["Lucky Strike" energy charges +1.]

Bai E couldn't explain but just asked sternly, "...Isn't observing battlefield information something we must do?"

The facts were right there, and it was up to others to logically fill in the blanks with their own assumptions.

Very fitting.

"..." Clamping her lips, Helen discovered yet another advantage in this guy that she had overlooked before—

An astonishing sensitivity to data, even thoughtfully converting it into a domain she was familiar with.

"Tap tap tap tap tap~" Rapid keystrokes followed as Helen quickly recorded the chunk of data Bai E had just mentioned.

Chapter 457 Missed it?_2

These data may not be directly used as the final standard, but they can serve as a rough reference.

The conclusion of a new species of the Bug Race has not been reached that quickly; more multi-faceted calculations and experiments are needed.

"What about the 'Guardian' you mentioned? What did it feel like to fight with it?"

"Guardian?" Without the Beast Compendium, Bai E shook his head, "I only briefly sparred with one of them, and I can't be sure if it exerted its full strength, but even so, it was slightly more powerful than the mecha."

"Hmm..." Helen nodded lightly, feeling it was to be expected.

There is even less information on that crimson behemoth known as the 'Guardian,' with not a single organization having captured it. It is only known that in terms of attack and defense alone, the mecha's physical qualities are not a match for the 'Guardian.'

"..."

The room fell silent again, as Helen focused on the "seed" being scanned by several probes. Of course... next to it was the muscle tissue for cutting and analysis.

As the red and blue light swept over, the machinery gradually stopped rotating.

"How is it?"

"No results..." Helen's gaze swept across the screen, her eyebrows knitted tightly,

"But from the muscle chamber that secretes this substance, the 'seed' seems to be some kind of... calculus? Extracted, and then refined, layer upon layer, it solidifies to a sufficient standard before being ejected, ensuring enough lethality. However... it can't be dissected; we can't truly confirm its structural composition or the explosive power during a frontal impact."

"Is that tick-like bloating oil bomb its nemesis?"

"But that kind of nuclear-reaction-like chain reaction cannot be slowed down or controlled; we must use our methods to unlock this substance." Helen's fingertips lightly tapped the tabletop, "According to its performance in actual combat, the strength of this substance is even beyond octonary alloy, and it may provide some ideas for our development of sexdecenary alloy technology."

The need to develop new materials is urgent, as the two newly-emerged behemoths can easily penetrate humanity's strongest existing armor. Ordinary troops might still focus on offense rather than defense, trading lives with the enemy, but the most elite forces definitely need the most cutting-edge armaments.

Humanity's encounters with new things are always opportunities, with crises and chances coexisting.

The technology of the Bug Race is quite primitive, and the very things they use to attack humanity could one day become their own nemesis.

[You are participating in creating technology — sexdecenary alloy smelting technology, current creative progress 0.1%, upon complete participation you will receive: Technology — sexdecenary alloy smelting technology; Scientific Research experience +5000 points; Science points *3.]

"...Good!"

"What's good!"

Facing Helen's puzzled look, Bai E stated seriously, "Academician, I think your line of thinking makes a lot of sense!"

"..." With a light hook of her lips, Helen smiled helplessly and shook her head, "If just having an idea could lead to results, we would have conquered the world by now. Alright, go busy yourself if there's nothing else, researching these things isn't a matter of a moment; if there's any breakthrough progress, I will have someone notify you immediately... if you're still interested, that is."

"Yes!"

Definitely interested!

The future of my new mecha depends on you!

'Quite studious...'

Suppressing a smile, Helen shook her head and waved a hand without looking back, "Go on then, I need some quiet time."

With the hiss of the sealing doors, Helen buried herself in her work, engrossed.

Time passed second by second into the night, and after working at the desk for a long time, Helen stretched, realizing her brain felt somewhat stiff from prolonged high-speed operation. She shook her head with a light chuckle, stood up to move her body, and by doing so, to stir up her thoughts as well.

Concentrating on one thing for a long time is not always the best choice, as it's easy to get stuck in a mental rut, unable to find your way out. Occasionally shifting your thinking can be necessary.

With a somewhat distant look in her eyes while deep in thought, Helen finally pressed a button next to her.

Before long, her student and assistant opened the door and walked in, "Professor?"

"Bring me all the records of Bai E's career from his last departure until now."

"Yes!"

During the rest period, entertaining oneself by looking at this young man's path of promotion could indeed be enjoyable.

Let's see, how a fellow who was a mere grunt not so long ago managed to secure a foothold in the barracks in such a short time, and even become the first captain selected from the elite within the elite of the Mech Pilot Camp.

While many details about Bai E might be top secret for ordinary officers, in the face of Helen's supreme authority, there are no secrets.

The digital devil...

High-dimensional demons...

Three arrows breaking the orcs...

"Ss~"

Helen softly hissed in amazement, as if completely engrossed in the story, much like reading the biography of historic heroes.

At the ruins of the Internet server, she keenly extricated the true form of electronic demons and technically assisted the people from the information department in repairing the ancient device.

In what seemed to be an ordinary mission of rescuing and escorting refugees, encountering high-dimensional demons but relying on one's absolutely firm will to fight back and not only succeed but also save a group of refugees, thus supplying the city with a wave of individuals with Spiritual Energy talents.

As for the achievement of deterring orcs with three arrows on the way back to the city, it seemed to be the least noteworthy of all the achievements.

"Truly impressive..."

Helen had heard about these events; after all, they were significant enough to affect the entire city's course, yet she hadn't imagined that the key to all these pivotal moments was this very youth.

It's no wonder he had achieved such unprecedented merits and was immediately promoted out of the ordinary to the Mech Armored Corps, and even unprecedentedly elevated from an artificial person to a natural person's status.

Therefore, training step by step in the Mech Armored Corps in the following days and displaying strength to become the captain was only to be expected, right?

The dense record of achievements spoke of the legendary soldier's past, and Helen's eyes sparkled with admiration. The plan she had previously conceived quietly resurfaced in her mind.

Even though his close-combat strength was slightly lacking, his outstanding performance in other areas made it hardly seem a shortcoming.

Wait a second...

As her delicate fingers slowly turned the page, a line of clearly written text appeared before Helen's eyes.

[Request for injection of Gene Optimization Solution.]

[Request approved.]

[Test passed.]

[Injection successful, increase remarkable.]

"Injected?" Helen's fingertips trembled slightly, "Already injected?"

She knew nothing about the Gene Optimization Solution.

Though the Gene Optimization Solution was a product of their Scientific Research Institute, how many people in the whole city qualified for the injections daily?

Such procedural work should not necessitate the daily attention of an academician of her standing; anyone who met the criteria could apply for and receive the injections.

And for Bai E, who had achieved such feats, getting awarded a dose of the Gene Optimization Solution was only natural.

However... however, according to her current conception, to become a seed for the "Gene Prototype Project," one needed to be an absolutely "natural" human, one who hadn't undergone any genetic optimization.

The glimmers of hope that had just risen were once again dashed; the plan she had never revealed to anyone crumbled once more in her heart.

Helen's gaze went blank as she sat motionless in her seat, calming her somewhat agitated emotions.

"Missed it..."

She could hear her own voice.

What a pity...

After a long time, having readjusted her mindset, Helen focused again on the tablet in her hands, the story of Bai E's past flowing once more beneath her fingertips.

The first battle to capture the sand worms, the data of ten special squads were replaced, nearly resulting in their annihilation.

In the darkest moment, a signal emitter, covertly modified by Bai E himself, transmitted their location back to the base.

And before the reinforcements arrived, with bare fists, he smashed several waves of sand worms that attacked in unison.

With a human body, he staunchly repelled the Elite Insect Race!

"Crack!"

A soft shattering sound arose at her fingertips, the delicate glass screen showing a spiderweb of cracks spreading from the center due to the pressure of her touch.

What exactly had she missed?

Chapter 458 Establish Link

This battle was a complete victory, and even if we put aside the fact that Bai E violated military orders, his performance among the mech pilots can be said to have led the pack by a wide margin.

Furthermore, after a joint consultation among a group of military officers and scholars from the scientific research department, it was unanimously decided that Bai E's rash actions were more meritorious than faultful.

Then there's nothing more to say, the promises made beforehand must be fulfilled.

At the assembly on the following morning, the Mech Armored Corps' instructor's eyes swept pridefully over the team of regular mech pilots standing in a line before him—

Twelve in total, they were his pride.

Especially Bai E, the team leader at the front, who, under immense pressure, made a breakthrough assault and decapitated the newly emerged giant beast.

Confidence in his own strength and judgment of the battlefield situation are essential; how could such an outstanding warrior not be rewarded?

"Who performed the best among you in the battle yesterday?"

Even if it was a recognized fact, certain formalities must be observed to prevent anyone from feeling envious and speaking ill behind others' backs.

However, the uniform response took the instructor by surprise, "Captain!"

It was obvious that the regular mech pilots knew this part was coming and had even discussed their answer beforehand.

The instructor's gaze swept over those earnest and excited faces, a hint of a smile flashing in his eyes.

"Very good!"

It seemed that Captain Bai's display of strength and courage in actual combat truly impressed them, earning the complete respect of these proud individuals.

"Since it is everyone's unanimous decision, I won't waste any more words,"

the instructor said, turning to Bai E at the front of the line, his eyes brimming with amusement, "Bai E, according to the agreement we made before deployment, the group of mech pilots who performed the best in this campaign can each make any request of me. If I can't handle it, I'll apply to the commander; as long as it's within the capabilities of our entire Mech Armored Battalion, you can ask for anything."

"I wish to suspend training for the next several days and return to my original special squad,"

said Bai E.

"..." The instructor was taken aback, "If there's anything you're dissatisfied with, you can talk about it, there's no need... no need to go to such lengths!"

"..."

"..."

Bai E smiled helplessly, "Where is your mind going? I just think that continuing mech training is not very meaningful, so I want to go back to my previous unit to take on some tasks, just to keep in shape. That's all, no other meaning."

"Oh, I see..." the instructor exhaled a sigh of relief, "Then there's no problem."

As long as he doesn't leave, everything is negotiable.

Moreover, judging from his performance in this campaign, even if the instructor himself went into battle, he likely wouldn't be able to replicate Bai E's achievements.

Continuing his training indeed seemed pointless; mech pilot training is mostly about operating mechas and conventional physical training, which wasn't really useful for a warrior like Bai E who had real combat experience and was nearly at the peak of physical conditioning.

"Just be careful on your own." Warriors can hardly avoid danger, but a mech pilot like the one he'd painstakingly trained was one in ten thousand.

If it weren't for the promise given under the highest commanding officer of the Mech Armored Battalion, Hamilton, even if Bai E had performed extraordinary feats, he would never have been allowed to return to that dangerous life.

Or rather, the greater the achievements in mech combat, the less likely it was for him to be withdrawn from the Mech Armored Corps.

"Understood." Bai E pursed his lips and smiled, appearing incredibly obedient.

This also reassured the instructor, who hadn't witnessed Bai E's insubordination on the battlefield, and he turned his head to look at Rose, who stood straight beside Bai E.

This vigorous female warrior shone brightly and effortlessly became the center of attention wherever she stood; yet her combat prowess was among the strongest. If she were a natural person, she would have long become the star of their military zone.

"What about you?"

"Me?" Rose smiled brightly, "I want a badge that allows me to leave the camp at any time... just like him."

The instructor thought for a moment and agreed without hesitation, "Alright."

The requests both individuals made weren't excessive at all and could easily be met without going up to Hamilton's level.

For those who hold promise to enter the Mechanical Court, a bit of appeasement is necessary.

Bai E and Rose, their wishes fulfilled, looked at each other and shared a knowing smile.

After fulfilling the promises to Bai E and her, the instructor then turned to the remaining mech pilots, and the reserve mech pilots standing somewhat further behind them, "The performance of our first team captain of the Mech Combat Squad on the battlefield is there for all to see..."

As he spoke, real battlefield footage was also being played on the white screen behind him.

Facing what seemed like an endless swarm of bugs, a lone blue-and-white mecha charged ahead, forcefully advancing toward the despair-inducing giant beast. Through a dizzying dance of evasion and entanglement, he didn't give the beast a single opportunity to retaliate and utterly decimated it.

The fluidity displayed in his overall performance left not only the reserve mech pilots but even the regular ones envious.

"As long as you train hard, you too can reach this level one day and eradicate humanity's enemies on the battlefield! Become the pride of our entire military district!"

"...Now, continue with training!"

...

Bai E found the instructor, who was free after assigning training tasks to all the soldiers, "Instructor, there is something I need to discuss with you..."

Chapter 459 Establish Link_2

"You say."

"I was wondering if I could enter the mecha's cockpit even when not in training?"

"Hmm?"

Bai E's gaze was distant as if reminiscing, "On the battlefield this time, while operating the mecha, I constantly felt there was an invisible communication with the machine. If that true dialogue could be achieved, I think it would be a very wonderful thing. So, during my free time, I want to sit in it and search for that feeling from before."

He had about half of the required time left to establish a link with his own abilities and the mecha; relying solely on the limited training time each day was too little. If he could also spend his free time working on it, then one more day would suffice for Bai E to establish a real link.

Against the Thunder Beasts it was still manageable, but when facing the Guardians, Bai E felt the pinch.

Setting aside the limitations of existing technology, if his ability to control the mecha could improve further, the next time he faced the Guardians, would he be able to find... or rather, create an opportunity to inflict real damage on it?

If the Guardians were already this formidable, how absurdly powerful would that one and only Overlord of the Bug Race be?

If he couldn't bring down the Guardians, what would he use to end the reign of the Bug Race's battlefield sovereign?

To prevent any possible accidents, Bai E must ensure the completion of the link between himself and the mecha before he pilots it to the front lines next time.

Hearing Bai E's request, the instructor repeated with a surprised expression, "Communication?"

The word "communication" isn't commonly used when it comes to machinery.

Mecha's spirit!

This term immediately sprang to the instructor's mind.

Their Armor Battalion harbored a mysterious longing and faith for this mecha spirit, which only existed in legends.

Any chance to touch upon the mecha spirit would not be overlooked!

"Communication is good! Communicate well!" The instructor vigorously patted Bai E's shoulder, his excitement evident, "Feel free to communicate, I'll grant you access to the hangar. Your mecha is parked there when not in use; you can go communicate with it anytime!"

Bai E snapped to attention and saluted fiercely, "Thank you, sir!"

"Communication... communication is good... communication is good... hee hee~" The instructor murmured quietly to himself, repeating the words as he walked away, gradually disappearing into the distance.

Watching the instructor's retreating back, a smile formed on Bai E's lips.

Everything was within his expectations; he had researched the Armor Battalion's descriptions of the mecha spirit, and this talk was sure to make them suspect the involvement of the mecha spirit.

Although he wasn't certain if a true mecha spirit would be born after the link was established, who could be sure about such things as mecha spirits?

It wasn't just one or two who claimed to have felt something; not every person who sensed something could make their machine birth a mecha spirit.

With everything settled, Bai E walked towards the hangar.

Having decided not to train, his and Rose's mechas naturally remained in the hangar, untouched by anyone else.

In fact, as it was the first day back from the great battle, the regular mecha pilots had no live drills scheduled, so quite a few pristine mechas were parked inside the hangar.

Of course, there were also some figures wandering about...

Mecha servants.

These maintainers, who not only had immediate responsibility for rearming and caring for their mechas in battle but also conducted routine maintenance, were akin to specialized nannies or servants whose only reason to exist was to take good care of their "masters".

Bai E's solo arrival caught some curious glances, but the owners of those looks kept a restrained distance, not daring to approach easily.

With a nod of permission at the entrance, no one stopped or interrogated him on his way, and Bai E easily ascended his own mecha.

In fact, he hadn't lied to the instructor; with the link establishment time halfway there, he indeed could feel that ephemeral "sense of communication" while piloting the mecha.

It was like a faint whisper of a thought that, once he entered the cockpit and calmed his mind, would incessantly buzz in his ear like a mosquito.

Furthermore, as the countdown for the link establishment decreased, the voice gradually became clearer and no longer felt like a figment of his imagination.

Bai E entered the cockpit, chose a comfortable position... and blissfully fell asleep.

The brief burst of activity on the battlefield yesterday had drained him greatly, and the drive back in his mecha had left no time for rest, especially since he had to attend a meeting with the military commanders upon his return. The short rest of two to three hours between leaving Helen's and assembling this morning was nowhere near enough to recover his energy. If he didn't take the opportunity to get some good sleep now, when would he?

Anyway, the establishment of the link didn't necessitate active participation, as long as one was in the cockpit, anything goes.

[Linkage Remaining Countdown: 17 hours 21 minutes 43 seconds.]

[Linkage Remaining Countdown: 16 hours 59 minutes 59 seconds.]

[...15 hours...]

[...14 hours...]

[...8 hours...]

"What did you talk to the instructor about this morning? Why haven't I seen you all day?"

Bai E gobbled up the synthetic meal on his plate and stood up to dash out, "Secret."

Rose frowned, "Still a secret..."

Then, recalling something, she called out to Bai E's retreating figure, "When you have time, go see Minister Eric of the Information Department, he said he has something for you! Though he mentioned it's not urgent."

Without turning his head, Bai E just waved his hand back, "Got it..."

It was late, better to go tomorrow.

Only 8 hours were left before he could establish the link with his mecha, and waiting even a minute more was torture.

Besides the necessities of eating, drinking, and relieving himself, Bai E simply squatted in the cockpit.

[...7 hours...]

[...4 hours...]

[...1 hour...]

[...3 seconds.]

[...2 seconds.]

As if sensing something, Bai E, who hadn't set an alarm for himself, also awoke leisurely in the silent dim light.

At the same time, the countdown reached its final moment.

[...1 second.]

[Resonance Link Established.]

[Resonance Link: From now on, all of your personal will shall be transmitted to the mecha without any delay or distortion. Your personal strength will also flow inside the mecha as "mecha force," and it will allow you to use your own superpowers! Note: The transformation of strength into "mecha force" requires a certain preparation time, current delay effectiveness time: 3 seconds. (This delay will gradually decrease as the duration of the resonance link increases.)]

"Here it comes!"

With the establishment of the link, a surge of electrical signals seemed to leap instantaneously from Bai E's mind into the entirety of the mecha and flickered through the intricate circuitry in a flash.

A closer sense of unity quietly blossomed in his heart, and Bai E could feel his Spiritual Energy beginning to quietly surge.

The body of the mecha outside felt like another, larger shell of himself, and as long as he willed it, his own Spiritual Energy could immediately unveil, enveloping the larger body.

This was the prompt that had appeared after he had leveled up Light Weapons to level 4 and learned a skill tree...

He had mastered the ability to extend his own skills to the entire mecha for use, which meant... Aside from the Light Weapons skill—the Magic Blade, he could now directly use the mecha's body to execute a range of abilities including but not limited to Gun Fighting Skill, Power Shot, Absolute Defense, and Instant Kill Hundred Heads!

On the foundation of using the mecha's weapons, coupling these abilities that could greatly amplify damage, Bai E couldn't even imagine the power he might unleash.

Even if faced with those three crimson beasts again, Bai E wouldn't feel the despair of being unable to breach their defenses.

The only requirement was the tenfold increase in Spiritual Energy expenditure needed to extend his own skills throughout the entire mecha... It was yet another significant challenge to his reserves of Spiritual Energy.

But regardless, at least he had now acquired the ability to break through the limitations imposed by the mecha's material composition!

Chapter 460 Arrival

Early in the morning, Bai E yawned contentedly as he awoke in the cockpit.

As his consciousness returned, the cabin lights also softened in a timely manner.

The resonance link ability he had just established was limited and couldn't yet replace Bai E in substantial control operations, but lighting up the cabin according to his personal state was easily manageable.

Bai E glanced at the information on the panel—

[Resonance Link: ... Current delay effect time: 2.59 seconds. (This delay time will gradually decrease as the duration of the resonance link increases.)]

Pretty good...

The information department was bustling in the early morning, having finally become lively since the reboot of the internet.

"The Minister is inside."

"The Minister is over there."

Guided along the way, Bai E wasn't new to this place, as the staff coming and going mostly recognized this taciturn and handsome young man.

The instant his palm touched the door, Bai E keenly sensed some kind of Spiritual Energy stimulus.

He paused for a moment, easily overhearing what seemed like a conflict occurring inside the door—or rather, more of a one-sided accusation.

"It's been several days; haven't your people prepared yet?"

"...Or are you intentionally delaying the time?"

The pressure of Spiritual Energy weighed down on everyone present, such that even Bai E at the door could feel the daunting oppression.

Although the voice itself wasn't audible, the Spiritual Energy carried the meaning of the words, allowing Bai E to perceive their content.

Under the pressure of a third-tier Spiritual Energy user, even someone in a high position like Minister Eric dared not utter any insincere words but had to answer truthfully.

"To my superior, wanting to prepare more thoroughly is indeed one of our thoughts, but another is to wait for Team Leader Bai from the special action team."

"Him?" Pansen's eyebrows twisted, recalling the warrior who always appeared silent before him. "Is it necessary to delay our overall progress for one person?"

The legacy left by the electronic demon was still unknown, and every additional minute we waited, there was a minute's worth of variables. If it were to dissipate naturally or infiltrate the servers and cause irreversible damage, they would all be nailed to history's pillar of shame!

Moreover, the departing team included a third-tier Spiritual Energy user like himself. Although his main strength in Spiritual Energy wasn't geared towards combat, third-tier was third-tier, and rank trumped all.

With his presence, the mission was sure to succeed without fail. Even if they were to encounter the difficulties they faced on their last expedition, he could easily lead everyone to break through. What need was there to wait for an ordinary grunt?

"My lord..." Minister Eric couldn't look directly at the "giant" who loomed so large in his own eyes, instead, he spoke his mind with lowered gaze, "Team Leader Bai has experience leading us across the wilderness, and it was his leadership that last crushed the electronic demon as well. With him on board, our action will be even more foolproof."

Having experienced actions together, and given the fact that Bai E assembled a transmitter on his own to send information back to the base when signals were blocked by the Bug Race, Minister Eric held a nearly blind trust in the warrior who had performed countless miraculous feats.

It was as if any mission with him involved was guaranteed to encounter no problems at all.

Naturally, the wait couldn't be indefinite. If that team leader couldn't respond within the next two days, then he couldn't go against the will of the third-tier Spiritual Energy user. Moreover, the legacy of the electronic demon couldn't wait indefinitely...

"..." With a twist of his brows, Pansen, who was just about to speak, pursed his lips and prematurely turned towards the door.

The next moment, with a "creak," the door slowly opened.

A figure in a black uniform stepped lightly inside.

Observing this unexpected arrival, Pansen's eyes flashed with a strange glow.

His Spiritual Energy covered a large area around him, and though his surveillance outside was somewhat reduced by the materials of the house, it wasn't completely ineffective.

Yet, this figure seemed to bypass the blurred edge of detection around the house and appeared directly at the door.

However... he was uncertain whether it was a subconscious delusion due to not actively monitoring the surroundings.

In the world of Spiritual Energy, there are many ambiguous sensations, and it's not uncommon for observations to be inaccurate due to divided attention. He wasn't sure if it was just an accident.

His gaze steadily upon that familiar warrior, observing the other's plain and rigid face and the unresponsive Spiritual Energy enveloping him, Pansen concluded it was just a momentary lapse of attention.

After all... just a man-made warrior; how could he possess Spiritual Energy?

"My lord, I heard you were looking for me?" Bai E, who entered the room, immediately looked at Minister Eric and asked proactively.

"Ah~ Yes..." Minister Eric, not expecting Bai E's timely arrival, hesitated before responding, "It's about the matter I mentioned to you last time... Have you sorted things out in your military camp?"

"It's settled." Bai E smiled nonchalantly, "I'm here today to discuss this with you, the training there has concluded, and I can represent the team in undertaking this escort mission."