

### Chapter 211 Investigation Division

They barely managed to turn a goat into cured meat with all the salt available at the outpost. Li Qingzheng was a little excited as he seemed to have discovered a new business opportunity.

“It’s almost the Lunar New Year, right? Every household, including the refugees, will want to enjoy themselves for a few days. Since we get our meat for nothing, we can keep selling them in town as long as the Wolf King continues sending their game to us,” Li Qingzheng said. Thinking of this, Li Qingzheng seemed to already be dreaming of becoming an esquire in town.

Ren Xiaosu looked at him as he rubbed the salt onto the meat. “Wouldn’t the Li Consortium’s forces do something if you try that?”

“I’ll sell them secretly,” Li Qingzheng said with a chuckle.

Ren Xiaosu asked, “Are you familiar with any of the shops?”

“No.” Li Qingzheng said, “But since meat is quite scarce, I think it should be easy to sell.”

Ren Xiaosu sighed, “Have you ever eaten meat during the Lunar New Year before? Everyone just makes do with some lard in their cooking and considers that a New Year celebration. The meat will only be valuable if you can sell them in the stronghold. I’ll introduce you to a friend of mine. He’s called Wang Fugui, and it won’t be difficult to get to know some people in the stronghold with his skills.”

Li Qingzheng’s eyes lit up. “Really?”

He also knew what Ren Xiaosu said was true. All of a sudden, this outpost had become a wholesale market for meat. However, the town’s purchasing power was too low for them to make much of a profit, and they might not be able to sell the meat off easily unless he was willing to reduce the price. Therefore, it was extremely important to have a qualified distributor.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu still needed to stay undercover in this outpost and wait for more opportunities to get more nanomachines... so he needed Li Qingzheng to front the dealings.

By acting as the intermediary between Li Qingzheng and Wang Fugui, he could travel frequently between the outpost and town. Moreover, they would also be able to rake in the majority of the profits.

Old Wang was still quite capable in this aspect.

But at this moment, Li Qingzheng felt a little puzzled. “Aren’t you a student from the stronghold? How did you know about life in town?”

Ren Xiaosu glanced at him and said, “I’m a refugee too.”

When it came to the day for the supplies to be delivered, Li Qingzheng instructed everyone to hide the cured meat and everything else in case the ruffians delivering the supplies got any ideas. “We must hide everything. If not, those bastards will for sure seize a lot of the meat when they see them.”

The truck carrying the goods and supplies came up via the mountain road. But they only unloaded a bag of rice and a bag of noodles without giving them any salt. Li Qingzheng was stunned. He asked, "What about the salt?"

"You're already very fortunate to have rice and noodles." The two soldiers said as they smoked their cigarettes, "Hurry up and sign for it. Otherwise, you won't even get rice and noodles."

"You should at least give us some salt," Li Qingzheng said after hesitating for a moment.

"Do you want it or not? If you don't, we'll bring it back with us," said one of the soldiers delivering the supplies.

Li Qingzheng said through his teeth, "Yes, I want it!"

"You're still so picky, huh? Do you know how many refugees don't even get to eat?!" After he said that, they got back into the truck and left. Li Qingzheng did not dare say anything else in front of them.

After the truck left, he cursed out loud, "Those bastards must have embezzled our provisions for themselves. Are they trying to force us to dig for wild vegetables in the mountains to pair with rice and noodles?"

When they opened up the bags of rice and noodles, they were shocked to discover that sand had been mixed into them!

"They are not treating us as people!" someone said indignantly.

Ren Xiaosu sighed to the students, "This is the world that y'all have never come into contact with before."

Just after the resupply truck departed, another military transport truck drove up from the bottom of the mountain. Everyone watched quietly as they waited for the vehicle to arrive without knowing what they were here for.

When they saw a platoon with loaded guns getting out of the truck, everyone realized this was probably the combat troops of the Li Consortium. Li Qingzheng calmed himself down and put on a placating smile. "Sirs, may I know the purpose of you coming to our outpost?"

The officer in charge sneered, "Did anyone come by to inspect the outpost a few days ago?"

When Ren Xiaosu heard this, he was thrilled. He had been waiting for the past few days for these people to come and investigate the incident, and they had finally arrived!

At first, he wondered if he could bait a few more people who had these nanomachines to come to the outpost through this incident. But he never expected that they were not stupid either as they sent over a full-strength platoon. Of course, this was reasonable. After all, two elite members of the organization had mysteriously gone missing, so they would definitely have to take extra precautions. Ren Xiaosu felt that this officer would probably be carrying nanomachines as well, but he could not possibly take such a big risk as attacking them now.

Li Qingzheng explained, "Yes, they've been here. The two of them were very young officers, but they just stayed for ten minutes before leaving."

"Is that so?" The officer paced around the front of the outpost when he suddenly asked, "I can smell the scent of blood. Did a battle break out here?"

Everyone was stunned as they did not expect this guy to have such a keen nose. After all, several days had passed since they had skinned and cut up the meat. The scent of blood should have already dissipated from around here.

Immediately, all the soldiers behind the officer cocked their weapons and pointed them at Ren Xiaosu and the others. Li Qingzheng quickly put on a placating smile and said, "We hunted some game with our guns, and we haven't had the time to take the cured meat we preserved out to dry."

Then Li Qingzheng hurriedly went to open the kitchen door and revealed the cured meat on the kitchen stove.

The officer raised his eyebrows and said, "It's no wonder there's the gamey smell of goat in the air." Then the officer said, "Search the outpost."

Five soldiers stayed behind while the rest swarmed into the houses to conduct a search. Ren Xiaosu and the others did not dare move.

After a while, the soldiers trickled back to report, "We found nothing out of the ordinary."

The officer said coldly, "It's just a routine inspection. Please do not mind, my fellow colleagues."

Actually, he did not feel that anything was off with this outpost. Hunting was also common at several of the other outposts, except they did not have as abundant a harvest as here.

He was mainly concerned with finding the vehicle, corpses, and belongings of the two officers. After all, it would not be easy to hide the vehicle after killing them. If anyone coveted the belongings of the two missing officers, they would surely leave behind some clues.

As he had not found any signs of a battle taking place or an abandoned vehicle on the road, he had already lowered his guard.

Based on the two officers' patrol route and schedule, they should have been in the vicinity of these few outposts located nearby when something happened to them. However, the officer in charge of the search did not find anything unusual here.

While he questioned the outpost's soldiers one by one, someone would make detailed notes next to him. During the questioning, he did not even notice any unusual behavior from anyone.

After questioning for a long time, he found that the people here were either obedient students who had escaped from a disaster or former refugees and hooligans. They did not even have enough sets of uniforms and weapons, so how could they possibly kill two elite soldiers?

The officer said coldly, "Let's head to the next outpost." He decided to have a look nearby at the other outposts first. Ren Xiaosu felt a little sorry when he saw this great harvest of nanomachines leaving.

However, he knew the investigation would not end so easily. They would definitely come back with a more rigorous investigation, especially when the two people who had died were... the family members of the organization.

But as the military transport truck started driving down the mountain, everyone saw some wolves lurking in the forest. It seemed like the wolves were planning on following the truck.

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. Were the wolves planning to kill the Li Consortium's combat troops?

### **Chapter 212 Attacking an outpost**

Ever since the wolves arrived at this mountain, they had not clashed with humans. Without the threat of humans in the wilderness, the resources of the natural world were able to grow abundantly. As such, the wolves did not lack any food here.

So, for a time, Ren Xiaosu thought the wolves were nonviolent and peace-loving animals.

But at this moment, he remembered the reason he managed to acquire the first gun in his life some time ago was because the wolves had attacked the factory outside town, as well as Stronghold 113's private troops.

Ren Xiaosu had already known there was a long-standing feud between the wolves and Stronghold 113's private troops. But he never expected the wolves would actually seek to attack the Li Consortium's combat troops as well.

It seemed like the soldiers in the truck driving slowly down the mountain did not realize danger was approaching. Even though Li Qingzheng and the others saw the wolves, none of them dared to act rashly. On one hand, they were worried the wolves would wipe out everyone at their outpost. But on the other hand, since the Lord of Wolves of Mount Kun had not said anything yet, they did not know what to do either.

Li Qingzheng said, "It's none of our business and there's nothing much we can do about it anyway, so let's just pretend that we never saw anything."

Seeing that the wolves did not seem to be interested in their outpost, Li Qingzheng decided to bury his head in the sand. The soldiers of the Li Consortium had never treated them nicely before anyway, so why care about their lives?

Li Qingzheng sent everyone back into their houses. "Stop watching. This pack of wolves might be just coming out for a stroll?"

Then Li Qingzheng went back to his house first and shivered in fear while holding his automatic rifle close to him. With so many wolves out there, it would be too easy for them to wipe out the outpost.

He suddenly felt that it couldn't be more stimulating than to have been deployed to this outpost. They could eat meat with their meals every day, yet had to live in constant fear as well. Who knew when it would be before the wolves came to attack them and carry them away in their mouths?

Ren Xiaosu also pretended to be afraid as he walked back to his house. But taking a sweeping glance, he realized there were not as many wolves as he had thought. It looked like only a portion of them were roaming around now.

Back in the house, Ren Xiaosu said to Chen Wudi, "Wudi, watch over everyone for me. Don't let anyone into the house before I get back. If anything unexpected happens, just say that I have diarrhea and needed to go to the toilet."

As a result of their smaller group of ten, one-third of the entire platoon at the outpost were their people. Therefore, all of them had been grouped together when they were assigned their living quarters. This was also what Ren Xiaosu fought for at the beginning, because it would be more convenient for him to go out on his own with this arrangement, and it would only work if he was surrounded by people he could trust.

The students were already used to this since their class monitor was always able to take care of himself anyway. Although Li Qingzheng kept proclaiming himself the Lord of Wolves of Mount Kun, Ren Xiaosu was actually the true Lord of Wolves to them.

Ren Xiaosu jumped out the window and ran all the way to the foot of the mountain. He did not have a specific purpose and just wanted to see how things would turn out. Along the way, he would also try to get his hands on some nanomachines.

In a world like this, Ren Xiaosu was interested in anything that could enhance his strength further. Who cared if they were superstitions?

After acquiring some nanomachines, Ren Xiaosu could not help but summon them for testing while performing his sentry duty alone atop the mountain. In the process, Ren Xiaosu discovered that even if he did not let the nanomachines enter his body to strengthen his muscles and skeletal structure, they were still powerful enough to be used as an external suit of armor. Perhaps he could really achieve a state of invulnerability when this suit of armor covered his entire body.

What were the things that supernatural beings were most afraid of at the start? It was not the threat of other supernatural beings, but the individual firearms currently in the possession of human civilization! No matter how powerful supernatural beings were, they would still die after getting shot a few times.

The soldiers in the military transport truck were chatting happily as the truck made its way down the mountain. Since the officer was not sitting with them in the back, they started talking without restraint.

"I'll be returning to the stronghold next week for my shift off of leave. I wonder if the mistress I keep misses me yet," a soldier laughed as he leaned against the wall of the compartment. Although life as a private army soldier was very miserable, the Li Consortium's combat troops had always been treated very well.

The Li Consortium's combat troops lived in the stronghold while they were not on duty. When the members of the Public Order Division and private troops saw them, they would always detour around them.

However, discipline within the organization had always been upheld very strictly, and they were forbidden from disturbing others.

"Debauchery is forbidden in the military. You should be careful not to let anyone know about her," one of the soldiers reminded him.

"What's there to be afraid of?" The soldier said disdainfully, "Even the Li Consortium's officers themselves don't refrain from doing that, so as if they would care about such things."

In any organization, the higher-ups would set the example for their subordinates to follow. If the higher-ups were religious, the subordinates would also have to be religious. Even if they did not believe in it, they would have to pretend like they did.

If the higher-ups behaved themselves, the subordinates would also conduct themselves with restraint.

With a large number of the Li Consortium's residents conscripted into the army, an extravagant and impetuous air had spread through the ranks of the Li Consortium's combat troops over the past two years.

Ultimately, the Li Consortium had expanded its strength too quickly as the foundation was not yet properly established.

As the group chatted, they did not notice the approaching danger.

However, the wolves did not choose to attack immediately as they just followed the truck quietly in the wilderness. Only Ren Xiaosu knew that wolves were one of the most patient species among the animals in the wilderness.

As the wolves followed the Li Consortium's combat troops, Ren Xiaosu tracked the wolves. They kept moving slowly for dozens of kilometers until the Li Consortium's platoon arrived at the next outpost.

At this moment, the wolves suddenly launched an attack as fast as lightning just as the military transport truck entered the outpost!

Ren Xiaosu silently observed from a distance as the Li Consortium's combat troops responded rapidly. In a mere three seconds, they had already formed an effective defensive formation. The entire outpost was filled with loud gunshots while the private troops at the outpost were dumbfounded. They had no inkling of what was going on!

This time, Ren Xiaosu was watching the entire attack by the wolves as an onlooker. During the shootout, some of the wolves acted as the advance party to draw the opponent's firepower onto them while making high-speed movements to avoid getting shot. Simultaneously, some of the other wolves had circled around and arrived at the rear of the Li Consortium's combat troops while everyone was distracted.

During this time, the Wolf King discovered Ren Xiaosu's presence on multiple occasions. But it did not seem bothered by him as it continued its hunt. Under normal circumstances, the wolves would give up hunting as a precaution upon encountering any external interference.

The Li Consortium's combat troops were only here because they had to investigate the disappearance of the two officers and had not expected such a fierce battle to break out. Although they were very combat oriented, the wolves had an overwhelming advantage over them in terms of strength and numbers.

Furthermore, Ren Xiaosu was not surprised to see that the wolves were able to quickly recover after getting shot. Their physical fitness was simply too good

### **Chapter 213 Acquiring even more nanomachines**

This battle started and ended in a flash. When the wolves that had gone to the rear of the Li Consortium's platoon started their attack, the tight defensive formation began to crumble.

The remaining officer was still dodging the attacks with great speed and agility, but he wasn't going to last for much longer. When Ren Xiaosu saw the officer's blood vessels that were glowing silver from the use of nanomachines starting to dim, he knew that the nanomachines were running out of power.

All of a sudden, the Wolf King bit into the officer's waist from behind. Right after, it swung its head violently and sent the officer flying like a ragdoll.

Even for a wild animal as strong as the Wolf King, it still resorted to sneak attacks as a tactical priority. There was no fairness to speak of in any battles in this world. The result was the only thing that mattered.

Ren Xiaosu could not help but call out, "Hey... I have something to say, but I'm not sure if it's appropriate!"

The Wolf King was a little puzzled as it turned around and looked at him. Ren Xiaosu pointed to another wolf who now had the officer dangling from its mouth and took out a vial of black medicine. "Let's trade."

With a look from the Wolf King, that wolf immediately placed the officer in its mouth down. That officer still had a few breaths left as the injuries he suffered were not lethal. However, he was already on the verge of death.

When he saw Ren Xiaosu, he was shocked. He did not expect this young man to appear here, nor did he expect Ren Xiaosu to be making deals with the wolves!

Ren Xiaosu wondered if he had betrayed humanity by making deals with these killer wolves.

After slaughtering the entire outpost, the wolves reorganized themselves on the spot. They picked up the corpses from the ground with their mouths and prepared to head back into the mountains.

The wolves did not stay around any longer. Ren Xiaosu saw the white fur on several wolves stained red with blood, and it seemed like they urgently needed to go back to deal with their injuries.

After the wolves left, Ren Xiaosu squatted down beside the officer. “Gonna ask you something. How do you usually recharge the nanomachines?”

Ren Xiaosu had already operated the nanomachines multiple times. But in the process of operating them, Ren Xiaosu realized the energy source of the nanomachines was completely dependent on the bioenergy of the human body.

However, the disadvantage was that the nanomachines needed to be “recharged” in the body for a very long time after each usage. However, the subsequent usage duration would not last for long.

So Ren Xiaosu felt that the Li Consortium’s nanomachines still had some flaws after he gained a better understanding of them. If they could not solve the energy source issue, these nanomachines would likely be of little value when encountering a high-intensity fight on a real battlefield.

Of course, Ren Xiaosu speculated that there had to be other methods within the inner circle of the Li Consortium’s forces to quickly recharge these nanomachines.

Wait! Right now, it seemed like Qing Zhen was the one who had researched the most on the subject of energy. After all, nuclear power was one of the most efficient energy sources in the world.

The officer paled, but he remained tight-lipped. Ren Xiaosu said, “Look, your injury isn’t fatal. Who knows you might still be saved if you answer my question?”

“If you let me go back, do you think you can survive?” The officer clenched his teeth and sneered, “Would you dare let me go?”

Ren Xiaosu said, “Goading doesn’t work on me.” He realized this Li Consortium officer was quite unyielding and very different from the private troops he knew. Ren Xiaosu said, “It’s too slow to use bioenergy to recharge the nanomachines. Y’all should have some sort of special charging method, right? How else could you sustain yourselves in high-intensity battles?”

The officer closed his eyes and refused to say anything “You were probably running out of power by the end of the battle, right?” Ren Xiaosu said slowly, “You were only able to fight for about ten minutes or so, but how could there be such quick battles on the real battlefield?”

At this moment, the soldier opened his eyes in surprise and said, “Why are you so interested in the nanomachines? And you even know so much? You’re just an ordinary soldier in the private army!”

At this moment, he realized that something was off. He even suspected that Ren Xiaosu had nanomachines in him. Wait a minute, they had indeed lost some nanomachines, and it was that very batch of nanomachines that the two missing officers were carrying that they were currently investigating!

But how could this be? Regardless of whether this young man in front of him could kill two elite soldiers with nanomachines in them, even if he could, their nanomachines would have to be sent back to



headquarters for unlocking before they could be paired once again! Hence, the young man in front of him could not possibly use the nanomachines even if he had acquired them!

But why? Why did he keep thinking something was wrong? He was really hoping to report this back to the General Staff[1], but he did not have the chance to do so!

“Don’t expect me to breach confidentiality,” the officer struggled to say.

Ren Xiaosu sighed. “Forget it, I’ll respect you as a brave person.”

He realized he still could not underestimate the combat troops of the organizations. It wasn’t only the Qing Consortium’s combat troops that were powerful, but every organization in the world had to rely on them as well.

Without a strong military, those organizations would not be able to tower over these wastelands.

After Ren Xiaosu waited for the officer to take his last breath, he quietly watched as the silvery liquid in the officer’s body started seeping out through his skin. He was pretty familiar with this process and waited patiently for the palace to restore the batch of nanomachines to their factory settings and execute a series of other operations.

The harvest was not exactly a lot this time. After all, it was only one person carrying the nanomachines, so the amount only equated to half of what he had acquired previously.

The gauntlet still remained a gauntlet without much change to it. However, Ren Xiaosu was not in too much of a hurry now. After all, there still had to be a lot more officers with nanomachines within the ranks of the Li Consortium’s combat troops he could slowly farm.

Ren Xiaosu got an idea. Since he could reset the nanomachines with the help of the palace, did that mean he could share some of them with the students if he had excess nanomachines in the future?

Chen Wudi would certainly not require these machines. To be honest, Ren Xiaosu could not figure out exactly how strong Chen Wudi was. If he really fought him at his full strength, it was difficult to say if he could even defeat his disciple.

However, Ren Xiaosu wasn’t too bothered by this. After all, the master in Journey to the West was also no match for his disciple. When he thought of this, he felt much better.

Ren Xiaosu manipulated the shadow clone to carry the officer’s corpse and was ready to sink it into the lake as well. After all, he could not just leave the corpse lying in the wilderness. There wouldn’t be a way to explain why the wolves chose to take everyone away except for the officer.

Furthermore, if those who came to investigate the incident discovered that the nanomachines in this officer’s body had disappeared, that would pose a humongous problem for him.

No matter what, Ren Xiaosu was not willing to risk the Li Consortium finding out that he could restore the nanomachines to their factory settings. Otherwise, they would surely hunt him to the ends of the Earth.

An hour later, Ren Xiaosu was a little worried as he stood by the small lake in the mountain. Seeing that the lake itself was not that large, would the water level get higher if he started dumping more things into it in the future?

It was late at night after he finished disposing of the corpse. But instead of rushing back to the outpost, Ren Xiaosu headed into the mountains.

As there was no howling from the mountains tonight, Ren Xiaosu wanted to check on the wolves to see if they had suffered any serious injuries.

### **Chapter 214 Chen Wudi's adaptability**

After several days of the Wolf King's fornication, Ren Xiaosu suspected their community would expand even more after the next two months.

When the wolves went out hunting today, he realized that their numbers were much lower than usual. Perhaps it was all female wolves that were missing.

Based on the known gestation period, it would take about 63 days for a female wolf to give birth after getting pregnant, which was a duration that was too fast for humans. Furthermore, no one knew if there were any changes to this natural cycle after the evolution of these wolves.

He followed the tracks left behind by the wolves into the mountains. Ren Xiaosu deduced that the wolf den should not be located too far away from the outpost since the howling he heard the other night sounded like it had come from nearby.

But before Ren Xiaosu could walk far, the Wolf King suddenly appeared at the end of the mountain path and blocked his way.

Ren Xiaosu somehow felt that the Wolf King had also come out to look for him.

When he heard the Wolf King letting out a whimper, Ren Xiaosu pondered it for a moment. "Are you looking for me to help you treat the wounds of your packmates?"

Animals in the wild were extremely cautious when they were hunting. That was because they could easily die from an infection caused by a small wound. Even the most powerful species would find it difficult to survive a bacterial infection. It had been proven that bacteria was one of the toughest living organisms in the world.

Even after the world went through repeated cycles of destruction and rebirth, some types of bacteria still managed to survive each time.

When Ren Xiaosu finished asking, the Wolf King actually nodded in response.

Ren Xiaosu took out the black medicine and said, "This medicine can treat wounds. I know that some of your packmates have gotten injured, but I can help you treat their wounds."

The puzzled expression on the Wolf King seemed to be suggesting, “This thing can even be used to treat wounds?!”

Earlier, Ren Xiaosu was thinking that humans could just use their fingers to apply the medicine on their wounds, but what about wolves? Wolves usually treated their wounds by licking them. So if the wolves relied on their tongues to apply the black medicine, wouldn't there be trouble?

The Wolf King seemed to hesitate for a moment. Then it turned around and led Ren Xiaosu into the mountains.

When Ren Xiaosu arrived at a valley downwind, he saw dozens of wolf cubs rolling around on the grass. They were not afraid of him as they had seen him when he was escaping. Though now the number of wolf cubs had increased by quite a bit. It looked like the wolves had not been idle either along the journey.

Of course, Ren Xiaosu understood. After all, the wolves had such a readily available source of food, and they couldn't read books, play cards, or do any other recreational activities.

When the wolves saw that Ren Xiaosu was here, they slowly made way for him. Ren Xiaosu was terrified as he walked through the wolf pack, but he endured his fear as he continued moving forward.

He was a daredevil. If it were someone else, they wouldn't have ventured so deep into a wolf den. It was not without reason that he could live such a comfortable life in town by relying on hunting.

As Ren Xiaosu walked further in, he saw seven wolves lying on the ground and gasping for their lives. The scent of blood filled the air around them.

Although the bullets that passed through their muscles were not enough to cause them fatal injuries, the long-term pain and bleeding would slowly drag them into the abyss.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the Wolf King beside him and said, “I have to remove the bullets from their wounds first. It will definitely be very painful, so I'll need you to tell them not to bite me...”

The Wolf King swung its head in the direction of the wounded as though to say, “Hurry up!”

Ren Xiaosu crouched down next to a wounded male wolf and took out a pair of pliers from his storage space. He didn't have the luxury to worry about sterilization in this moment. In any case, the wolves would not understand what sterilization was.

Honestly, this was his first time attempting something like this. As Ren Xiaosu used the pliers to probe the wound, he kept an eye on that wolf next to him in case it reacted to the pain and tried to bite him.

But Ren Xiaosu was surprised that the wolf did not make a single sound even though it was rolling its eyes in pain.

“What a brave wolf.” Ren Xiaosu felt a little emotional when he saw this. He located the position of the bullet with the pliers. He found the bullet in a much shallower position than he thought it would be. This meant the muscle density of these wolves was even greater than he had imagined. Ren Xiaosu threw the

bullet he removed from the wound at a nearby rock, and it landed with a clink. All that was left was just to apply some black medicine to the wound.

The moment Ren Xiaosu applied the black medicine to the wound, he noticed the wolf whose muscles were trembling from pain start to relax slowly.

At this moment, the way the Wolf King was looking at the black medicine in Ren Xiaosu's hands changed!

After Ren Xiaosu finished treating the seven wolves, he was sweating profusely. He had also overcome his fear of wolves. Ren Xiaosu wiped his sweat away and remarked, "Remember to send us more meat after they've recovered from these injuries. We're planning to sell some of it in the stronghold and make some money so that we can enjoy the Lunar New Year. It's also time to buy some new clothes for Big Sister Xiaoyu and Liuyuan..."

Next to Ren Xiaosu, the Wolf King listened quietly without interrupting as both human and wolf walked out of the wolf den.

Ren Xiaosu had never imagined that one day, he would pass through a wolf's den at will, especially as he regarded wolves as enemies some months ago.

"Alright, you don't have to see me out," Ren Xiaosu said as he walked outside. "Remember not to let them eat any spicy food, onions, ginger, garlic—"

Ren Xiaosu suddenly stopped mid-sentence. He stared into the snowy landscape of the wilderness and lamented being too professional. Like the wolves would eat spicy food!

He had barely been a doctor for more than a few days, yet he thought he really was one now...

Back at the town outside of Stronghold 113, he was the only doctor in the entire town. That somehow made it sound like he was the "hope of the entire village." But as he kept performing his physician duties, he somehow turned into a vet.

"But the wounded wolves should eat as little goat meat as possible. You have to listen to a doctor's advice, OK?" Ren Xiaosu then took a deep breath while looking at the Wolf King and said, "Remember to send over more of those pheasants that have green tail feathers. Those are much more delicious than goat meat. They're delicious!"

The Wolf King was getting disinterested in what this chatterbox was saying. It turned around and padded back to the wolf den.

While on the way back, Ren Xiaosu thought that living such a life was actually quite nice. At least it was much better than receiving cold looks from residents inside the stronghold.

But when Ren Xiaosu almost reached the outpost, he suddenly heard something at the outpost that sounded off. At this time, everyone should be asleep, so why was such a strong campfire still burning?

When he went over to have a look, he saw everyone sitting around the campfire and barbecuing some meat. An old man with gray hair stood out among the crowd.

When the old man saw Ren Xiaosu coming back, he said with a smile, "You're Ren Xiaosu, aren't you? They told me that you were suffering from diarrhea. It looks like you were taking a really long time to clear your stomach, eh?"

Ren Xiaosu's instructions to Chen Wudi earlier was to improvise if an unexpected situation arose. He could deal with it by saying that Ren Xiaosu had diarrhea or something and try his best not to say anything conflicting.

From the looks of it, Chen Wudi was quite adaptable at making up excuses. Ren Xiaosu called Chen Wudi over and asked him, "How long have I had the runs?"

Chen Wudi counted on his fingers. "Six hours."

Ren Xiaosu was dumbfounded and did not know how to carry on the conversation. He asked Chen Wudi again, "And who is that?"

Chen Wudi thought for a moment before saying, "He's the Earth Deity[1]!"

Ren Xiaosu felt he was very stupid to have asked Chen Wudi such a serious question...

At this moment, Li Qingzheng hurried over to get Ren Xiaosu to sit down when he saw him still standing there. At the same time, Li Qingzheng whispered, "He's from the Li Consortium and is also here to investigate the disappearance of the two officers. We didn't mention that we saw wolves during the day, so don't bring it up."

Ren Xiaosu raised his eyebrows slightly. An old man dared to come here by himself to investigate the case?

### **Chapter 215 A new member for the outpost**

When Ren Xiaosu learned the old man was here to investigate the disappearance of the Li Consortium's officers, he immediately went on full alert. However, he did not show it outwardly.

When Ren Xiaosu sat down beside the campfire, a student next to him handed him a roasted chicken drumstick.

The old man smiled at Ren Xiaosu as he ate. "Young people these days don't pay much attention to their health. When you all get to my age, you'll realize that having a good appetite is a blessing."

"You're right." Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. It was definitely not logical for him to have the runs for six hours. He had been mentally praising Chen Wudi for being so adaptable, but thinking about it now, it looked like he had overestimated him.

If Chen Wudi said he had the runs for six hours, it meant the old man had already been here for six hours.

However, this old man did not even ask him where he had gone. He just went with diarrhea as the reason like he did not intend to delve any deeper into his disappearance from the outpost.

Ren Xiaosu did not believe that someone in charge of investigating a case could overlook such a simple, common sense problem. He felt that he was just playing the fool and feigning ignorance.

“Since you’re here to investigate the case, have you found any clues yet?” Ren Xiaosu said nonchalantly.

“Although I’m here for the investigations, what do those missing people of the Li Consortium have anything to do with me?” The old man smiled and said, “I’m already so old, yet they still made me come out to work in such bad weather. How can they do something like that?”

Ren Xiaosu scrutinized him and asked, “May I ask how old are you?”

“I’m 73 this year.” The old man said with a smile, “I haven’t had the chance to introduce myself yet. Hello, everyone, my name is Hu Shuo[1].”

Everyone looked at each other as this name sounded really strange. However, Ren Xiaosu was more concerned that his surname was not Li.

In this region, Ren Xiaosu paid extra attention to anyone with the surname of Li. Up until now, nearly everyone Ren Xiaosu met with the surname Li were the middle and higher-ranking officers of the organization’s military. The only exception was Li Qingzheng, who was the Lord of Wolves of Mount Kun.

“Why did you take on the case then?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“I didn’t plan on accepting it either,” Hu Shuo said with a smile while scratching his head with his pinky finger. “But the Li Consortium gave the order that I would not get my pay if I didn’t investigate this case, so I had no choice but to come here to handle it. But I didn’t expect that I would get to eat so much exotic meat at your outpost. It’s really my lucky day!”

Ren Xiaosu felt this matter was unlikely to be as simple as the old man had explained. For a 73-year-old man to come all the way here, how could he be a normal person? There had to be a reason for why the Li Consortium would send him over to investigate after something had happened here.

But at this moment, Hu Shuo stood up and dusted off his pants. “Alright, I’ve had my fill.”

Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked, “How many outposts have you visited today?”

Hu Shuo chuckled, “Only yours.”

Ren Xiaosu felt the old man might already have a clue about the situation. That was why he came here directly. In an instant, Ren Xiaosu was even contemplating whether he should quickly chase him away from here.

But Hu Shuo suddenly said, “Well... which house can I stay in?”

Everyone was stumped by this question. Ren Xiaosu was still wondering if he should chase the old man away, but little did he expect that the old man was already planning on living here.

Li Qingzheng, who was beside him, gave a placating smile. "We'll get a house cleaned up for you immediately."

There were seven one-story houses in the outpost, and one of them was originally used as a storage space, although it was quite empty. Since Hu Shuo now intended to stay the night, Li Qingzheng, as the platoon commander, was willing to strike up a relationship with this old man he suspected of being a big shot.

Most of the refugees had the instinctive thought that they could make their lives easier by rubbing elbows with the big shots in the stronghold. They blindly believed in this kind of relationship.

However, this left Ren Xiaosu in a tight spot. He decided to observe the situation for the time being until he could be sure of the old man's motives. It would not be too late to decide what to do then.

Ren Xiaosu felt that Hu Shuo had already found some evidence, but he could not understand why he would dare to remain behind.

But something that surprised Ren Xiaosu even more happened. Hu Shuo was not only going to stay here for one night. He did not intend to leave... at all!

The next morning, the Wolf King sent a lot of pheasants over as promised. The pheasants were all stacked up at the entrance of the outpost.

But this strange sight did not arouse Hu Shuo's suspicions. He just praised this location as a really good place to eat meat and acted as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

Ren Xiaosu examined the old man's expression closely. Everyone clearly knew this was an abnormal situation, but Hu Shuo did not even ask about it and just practiced tai chi at the entrance of the outpost. After that, he would have Li Qingzheng and the others prepare meals as he still wanted to eat meat.

Thus, everyone started barbecuing meat early in the morning until Ren Xiaosu felt like his whole body was full of the smoky smell of barbecue.

"Why didn't you ask where we got all this game from?" Ren Xiaosu asked as they ate the meat.

Hu Shuo chuckled and said, "Why should I care about where the food came from as long as there's something to eat? Surely it wasn't brought here by wolves, right?"

Ren Xiaosu was temporarily rendered speechless. He was getting more and more confused by Hu Shuo's intentions.

On the morning of the third day, Hu Shuo still continued to practice tai chi after waking up. After that, he would get everyone to prepare meals. However, it was slightly different today. Another truck drove up the mountain, but the soldiers who came this time were a little different. They actually brought along

bedding, a teapot, and some other daily necessities. Then they even cleaned up the house a second time for Hu Shuo.

Ren Xiaosu was shocked to discover that Hu Shuo seemed to be planning on living here for an extended period.

While the soldiers were cleaning the house, Ren Xiaosu carefully watched to see if Hu Shuo gave any strange instructions to the soldiers, like hinting at them to come and encircle the outpost with a larger force or something similar. However, he did not do anything like that.

When the soldiers reported about some matters to Hu Shuo, they also did not purposely avoid doing so in the presence of Ren Xiaosu and the others. What the soldiers reported on was also related to Ren Xiaosu: An outpost on another hill had been attacked by wolves. Traces of wolf blood and fur were found there. The military was paying close attention to this matter and was planning on sending troops to eliminate the wolves in the mountains.

Ren Xiaosu observed Hu Shuo's reaction, but Hu Shuo just laughed and said, "The wolves have nothing to do with our case, so let's not interfere."

Right from the beginning, the old man seemed not to have linked the pheasants at the entrance of the outpost to the wolves.

But Ren Xiaosu knew he was just playing dumb.

At this moment, Li Qingzheng whispered to Ren Xiaosu, "The officer who sent over this old man's things is a senior colonel!"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. How highly ranked would a person have to be in the Li Consortium to order a senior colonel around like that?

After that, no one came to the outpost again. Hu Shuo ended up staying there for the entire week. For some reason, Ren Xiaosu suddenly felt he might even be planning to spend the Lunar New Year together with them.

### **Chapter 216 The teacher of the outpost**

It was getting closer and closer to the Lunar New Year. Hu Shuo would practice tai chi and enjoy his barbecue at the outpost every day as there wasn't really anything else he could do here.

Normally, a person in their seventies should have difficulties eating barbecue due to their aging teeth. However, the old man seemed to find everything delicious, and nothing could hinder him from eating.

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "So aren't you going back home?"

During this period, the Wolf King sent over additional game to them on more than a few occasions. However, Hu Shuo did not ask about it and only cared about eating.

Hu Shuo answered, "Since I don't have any children, there's no point in going home. I'm much happier living here."



“You don’t have any children?” Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. Did Hu Shuo remain single all his life or was he infertile?

However, Hu Shuo watched the campfire in front of him as he said, “I had a daughter. In my earlier years, I left her in someone’s care without anyone knowing so she wouldn’t be at risk. But to my surprise, she still got into trouble in the end. It was already too late by the time I learned of it. All I have left now is a grandson who doesn’t want to live with me.”

Ren Xiaosu did not expect this answer from him. However, the old man did not mention his son-in-law whatsoever and what kind of trouble his daughter got into. But it would be inappropriate for everyone to ask for too much detail.

“Are you planning on spending the Lunar New Year here?” Ren Xiaosu next asked.

Hu Shuo thought for a moment and answered, “It’s not like I can’t, but since you all are inviting me to stay, I can only accept your hospitality.”

Ren Xiaosu was dumbfounded. ‘Who’s inviting you?’

Ren Xiaosu had been guarding against the old man every day since the start in case he called upon his soldiers to wipe out the entire outpost after discovering some evidence. However, nothing happened even after such a long time had passed.

Was he really here to investigate the case? No, it felt more like he was here on vacation!

And he was even freeloading with no intention of paying at all!

If they were to sell this exotic meat in the stronghold, it would surely fetch a high price for them.

In fact, even though the big shots in the stronghold had access to a supply of meat, they were more interested in exotic meats. Whoever had the chance to taste exotic meat would definitely be able to show off to their friends.

Ren Xiaosu got the feeling that this old man who claimed to be here to investigate the case was starting to look rather suspicious.

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, “The Li Consortium has sent you to investigate the case, but you haven’t even conducted any investigations. Won’t the Li Consortium be unhappy with you?”

“At my age, it’s not like they care about me anymore,” Hu Shuo said matter-of-factly. “Moreover, the younger generation of the Li Consortium are all brats. It wouldn’t make a difference if any of them went missing.”

Ren Xiaosu was speechless. He did not know how he should assess this old man.

Slowly, everyone started getting used to the fact that there was an additional person at the outpost. In addition, they slowly realized Hu Shuo did not have any airs to him and was extremely easy to get along with.

A few days later, Hu Shuo suddenly expressed his embarrassment at being a freeloader and that he could help out with some work.

The moment he said that, nobody would dare to allow him to do so. He was too old. What if something happened to him after they made him perform some menial work like splitting logs or doing the dishes? Who could they approach to clear the air with if that happened?

But Ren Xiaosu thought that since Hu Shuo held a very high position within the Li Consortium, he should also be very rich. "It's definitely not suitable for you to perform menial work, so why don't you just pay?"

Li Qingzheng was startled when he heard Ren Xiaosu say this. He did not expect Ren Xiaosu to actually ask for money from Hu Shuo.

Hu Shuo gave it some thought and said, "Aren't there eight of you who are students? I've been seeing you all studying by yourselves every day, so why don't I become your teacher instead? That way, I won't be considered a freeloader anymore."

Hah! Ren Xiaosu realized the old man was just reluctant to pay up!

After Li Qingzheng, Ren Xiaosu, and the others held a discussion, they deemed this as giving Hu Shuo something to do. Although, Ren Xiaosu wanted to see just how well he could teach.

Ren Xiaosu had been rather melancholic recently. He knew it wouldn't do for the students to keep studying by themselves. Whenever they encountered problems, no one could help them resolve their queries. Sometimes, the students would ask him questions. But as the class monitor, he was totally clueless.

The students were also a little curious regarding that. "Monitor, didn't you score 560 points during finals? Why does it seem like you don't know anything?"

Ren Xiaosu did not know how to answer them when faced with the question.

But since Hu Shuo had taken the initiative to be the teacher here, Ren Xiaosu was glad to see it happen. However, he said, "It's not eight students, it's nine. I'm a student as well, and I want to be in the class too."

It was Hu Shuo who was stunned this time. "You're a student?"

When Hu Shuo was chatting with everyone, no one mentioned anything about this. Although the students kept addressing Ren Xiaosu as their class monitor(1), Hu Shuo thought they were actually calling him platoon commander. Moreover, Ren Xiaosu did not look like a student either.

He thought for a while and said with a smile, "Sure, I'll teach the nine of you then."

Hu Shuo was a person who did things in a crisp and efficient manner. On the very same day, he held a lecture for Ren Xiaosu and the eight male students. This way, everyone could finally be busy. Ren Xiaosu also came to realize that Hu Shuo seemed rather fond of being a teacher.

During the break, the students would discuss in private. "Mr. Hu is able to make his lessons easy to understand and further expand our knowledge. He's much better at teaching than the previous math, physics, and chem teachers."

"That's right, I didn't expect Grandpa to be so knowledgeable," Wang Yuchi said.

In fact, Ren Xiaosu also realized the examples brought up by Hu Shuo during the lectures were extremely easy to understand, and he could also talk endlessly without even looking at the textbooks.

The knowledge he imparted always revolved around the key points in the textbooks, but he was able to bring it to a further level.

However, Ren Xiaosu still had some difficulties in understanding the lessons as his foundation was missing. He would have to ponder over the things taught in class for a long time while the other students understood immediately.

At the end of the lesson, Hu Shuo said to the students, "You can ask me in private if there's anything you still don't understand. In times like this, it's not easy to encounter such studious students like you. It's a pity that you can't attend university in the Li Consortium's stronghold and further your studies."

As the other students could understand what was taught during the lesson, they had no more questions after class ended. As it was evening by the time class was dismissed, Hu Shuo was about to gather everyone for a barbecue party.

But before Hu Shuo could walk out of the house, he was stopped by Ren Xiaosu. Although the others did not have any questions, he had plenty of questions to ask.

Hu Shuo looked at Ren Xiaosu amiably and said, "As the ancients said, 'If you know, recognize that you know. If you don't know, recognize that you don't know.' Your attitude of seeking knowledge is very courageous. It's really admirable!"

But when Ren Xiaosu got started with his questions, the exchange went on until nearly midnight. Hu Shuo could see everyone else eating barbecue outside while he was busy clearing Ren Xiaosu's doubts to the point of feeling thirsty. He did not even have a chance to take a sip of water.

Finally, he could not help but say, "Look, Ren Xiaosu, why don't I pay for the food instead? I'll continue to teach the other students, but as for you, you should do some self-study first to catch up on the progress--"

“No!” Ren Xiaosu firmly said.

### **Chapter 217 Reunited with Liuyuan**

At this moment, Hu Shuo felt a little wistful. There was an old saying that went, “hoist with one’s own petard,” and Ren Xiaosu turned out to be an especially heavy petard. 1

Hu Shuo couldn’t help but ask, “You were able to lead quite a comfortable life even with your limited knowledge, so why do you still hunger for more knowledge? Are you aiming to qualify for the university in the stronghold?”

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment before answering, “I’m not planning to get into the university. I just want to understand the truth of the world.”

Hu Shuo was stunned by this answer. He went deep into thought before saying with a sigh, “You can still come and ask me anytime in the future if there’s something you don’t understand.”

Hu Shuo’s previous daily routine was to wake up at 6 AM to practice tai chi until 7 AM before eating breakfast. Then he would bask in the sun, chat, eat lunch, eat dinner, and finally go to bed at night.

Now, he would still wake up at 6 AM to practice tai chi until 7 AM before eating breakfast. But then he would start class, eat lunch, resume teaching again, and get so annoyed with Ren Xiaosu that it made him lose his appetite for dinner and be unable to fall asleep at night.

Throughout this, Ren Xiaosu kept wondering why on earth this old man came to their outpost.

During this period, a group of combat troops from the consortium came to the outpost to investigate the wolf attack on the other outpost. They wanted to ask if any suspicious activities were seen around the vicinity but were sent away the moment they stepped into the outpost.

It seemed like the officers all knew who Hu Shuo was, so they just left the place without further questioning. It didn’t look like they found it strange that he was living here.

This surprised Ren Xiaosu a little. Who on earth was this old man?!

However, he made a trip to the mountains that very night to inform the Wolf King that the wolf pack would need to go even deeper into the hinterlands of the mountain to settle down. That was because the Li Consortium would probably send troops to eliminate them.

During his stay, Ren Xiaosu thought of asking Hu Shuo where Stronghold 88 was located since he felt Hu Shuo would definitely know. However, he was worried that if he asked Hu Shuo, Hu Shuo would think he was colluding with the enemy based on the current relationship between the Li Consortium and the Yang Consortium.

Although they had been getting along rather well, Ren Xiaosu felt his relationship with Hu Shuo had still not reached the stage where they could trust each other.

Seeing that the Lunar New Year was approaching, Li Qingzheng pulled Ren Xiaosu aside and whispered, "We've run out of salt, so we have to make a trip to town. We'll also need to purchase some New Year supplies as well."

People at the other outposts were so poor they did not have enough to eat, and the supplies delivered to them were starting to lessen as well. Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu and the others at this outpost were all looking energetic and in high spirits. They had even gotten sick of having meat every day and wanted to get some vegetables in their diet for a change.

There was a small plot of land behind the outpost where they could grow vegetables. But if they wanted to grow vegetables in this weather, they would have to build a canvas shed to house the vegetables. However, they did not have any canvas to build the shed with.

So Li Qingzheng had a discussion with Ren Xiaosu about making a trip to town.

This was what Ren Xiaosu thought as well. He had been waiting for this day for a long time.

Before leaving, Ren Xiaosu ordered Chen Wudi to not let Hu Shuo leave the outpost. If he left the outpost, Chen Wudi would have to follow him and find out what he was up to.

When Hu Shuo heard Ren Xiaosu and Li Qingzheng were going back to town today and might have to stay there for a night, he was nearly moved to tears.

Honestly speaking, it was not easy for Hu Shuo to be moved at his age. After all, he had been through so much in life, so what kinds of situations had he not seen before?

But today, he really felt a lingering sense of emotion. Hu Shuo said to Ren Xiaosu, "Purchase a lot of New Year supplies. There's no rush to come back too soon."

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu found it a little surprising that everyone had gotten used to having this strange old man living at the outpost, and even Hu Shuo himself seemed like he had gotten used to it too.

How did all of these changes happen...

It would take more than three hours to drive from the outpost to town. The distance was neither near nor far. The factory nearby was still operating late into the night as the vast and sophisticated war machine that was the Li Consortium ran at full gear, though no one knew where its chariots of war were headed.

Throughout the journey, Ren Xiaosu and Li Qingzheng saw supply trucks frequently driving between the stronghold and the factories, all bustling with activity.

Although the vehicle broke down once during the journey, Li Qingzheng was really good at fixing vehicles. He simply lifted the hood and tinkered around for a while before the run-down military transport truck was running smoothly again.

Ren Xiaosu had been separated from Yan Liuyuan and the others for more than a fortnight. Right now, he just wanted to quickly find Yan Liuyuan, Wang Fugui, and the others in town and get an update on their recent situation to see if they had encountered any difficulties.

Li Qingzheng was even more excited. It was as though he was an exiled prisoner who was finally returning to a prosperous city. He kept mumbling during the journey, saying he would definitely look for his old flame for a rendezvous in town tonight after they sold off the meat.

When they arrived in town, Ren Xiaosu saw some refugees heading home after buying some pork rind and fatty meat from a butcher's shop. When he saw some children receiving some cheap sweets from the adults, he could feel the air of festivity approaching.

Even the people who could barely survive by working hard every day in these wastelands would still try their best to get some new clothes, buy a handful of sweets, and make some delicious dumplings for their children during the holiday.

Although the world had been destroyed before, it did not mean that people in the wastelands did not have a right to be happy.

Humans were always the best at finding joy amid hardship among all living things as they were a tough and tenacious species.

The people who had predicted that humans would descend into a completely cold and cruel world after the apocalypse did not actually understand humanity at all.

Of course, it was still unsafe in town at night. There would always be people who wanted to get something without putting in the effort for it, but this was not something that was contradictory to happiness.

When they arrived at the entrance of the town, Ren Xiaosu saw Yan Liuyuan crouching there with a blank stare. He quickly leaned out of the window and called out to him, "Liuyuan! Why are you crouching there?!"

When Yan Liuyuan saw Ren Xiaosu, his eyes lit up. "Bro, you're finally back. Haha, when a magpie flew into the yard this morning, I had a feeling<sup>[1]</sup> that you would definitely come back to town. That's why I was waiting for you here."

However, Ren Xiaosu felt that probably wasn't the truth. To hell with the magpie—as if there were really such coincidences in the world like that!

Yan Liuyuan must have been waiting here every day since he left for the outpost, so that was probably why there was such a "coincidence" today.

Ren Xiaosu opened the door and pulled Yan Liuyuan up into the passenger seat. As the passenger seat in the truck was very wide, it wouldn't be an issue for three people to fit in it.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Where are y'all living now?"

Yan Liuyuan beamed and said, "We bought two brick townhouses near the gate of the stronghold, so we're currently living there. Uncle Fugui also reopened his grocery store. He said that he's already found some business contacts in the stronghold and has also struck up a good relationship with the town's administrators."

"Old Wang is so talented." Ren Xiaosu was really glad to hear that and his praise was sincere. No matter where Wang Fugui went, he could always strike up good interpersonal relationships and bring great convenience to their lives.

[1] A Chinese saying goes: When the magpie arrives, good fortune will follow. It is regarded as a happy messenger.

### **Chapter 218 Yan Liuyuan**

Li Qingzheng was a little puzzled as he drove the truck towards town based on the directions given by Yan Liuyuan. How could this group of refugees from another town gain a foothold in this town so quickly? They managed to buy a brick townhouse nearest to the stronghold gate? 1

And they even bought two of them!

But he remembered when Wang Fugui bribed him, he was offered a 100 antibiotics and several watches in one go. These things were still in Li Qingzheng's bag, and he had not sold them for cash yet. How could a normal person possibly afford to fork out such a large sum of money as bribery?

Li Qingzheng was thinking that since he and Ren Xiaosu were now friends, and that they were also leading a legitimately good life at the outpost, maybe he should return the bribes he collected from them back to Ren Xiaosu? However, Li Qingzheng still felt a little reluctant upon realizing he would have to give up such a large sum of money at once....

Along the way, a woman saw Yan Liuyuan through the truck's window and said cheerfully, "Liuyuan, is that boy next to you your brother that you've always been talking about? You haven't waited in vain by crouching at the entrance of town for so many days. He's finally back. Here are three eggs for you. You can cook them for your brother when you get back home this evening."

Yan Liuyuan accepted the eggs with a smile. However, he handed one egg back to her and only kept two of them. "Yes, this is my brother, but the one driving is not, so there's no need to give him an egg." Li Qingzheng was speechless. "Am I not a person? Why am I the only one who doesn't get an egg!"

Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "You seem to be quite popular in this town."

In truth, Yan Liuyuan was especially popular with the women when they were living back in the town of Stronghold 113. Now that his face was always clean, he looked handsome and smart. It became natural that he would become a friend of the women.

Yan Liuyuan smiled and said, "I've asked around with the townspeople and found out a lot of information lately. After getting here, Uncle Fugui has done a lot of small favors for many people and gained a foothold in town. That's why we are quite popular around here. Of course, there are still many ungrateful people around as well."

The “small favors” were things like helping others repair their furniture, giving away snacks and sweets, and paying a slightly higher price when receiving goods. Wang Fugui did all of those in moderation and never went beyond doing small favors.

In Wang Fugui’s opinion, doing big favors would not only make it hard to make friends, but it would also offend people easily. Furthermore, it was pointless to do big favors for others. If he were really in danger, most would not return the favor. Instead, they would more likely kick him while he was down.

Wang Fugui was only doing so for the sake of getting things easily accomplished in town and was not expecting anyone to give him any assistance when he got into trouble. It was better to rely on oneself than on others... no, it was better to rely on Ren Xiaosu than on others.

When Ren Xiaosu heard that Yan Liuyuan had gathered a lot of information, he asked curiously, “What have you found out?”

Currently, there were military camps stationed all around the area not far outside of town as different troops continually rotated shifts between themselves.

Yan Liuyuan said, “I heard that the Li Consortium’s combat troops that went to Stronghold 109 to eliminate the Experimentals had failed in their mission. The initial batch of troops has been recalled and at least half of them had died.”

“How did you know about that?” Ren Xiaosu frowned.

“The soldiers stationed near town can’t help themselves from seeking thrills, and those single women were also happy to have a soldier from the organization as their backer.” Yan Liuyuan said, “They would sometimes share with their women these matters and said that their assault went very smoothly at the beginning. However, they were immediately defeated once the Experimentals dragged it out into urban warfare. Furthermore, the forward operating base was destroyed by the Experimentals. Now they plan to continue sending troops over there and resort to using heavy weapons in battle. Even if they destroy the stronghold, they have to eliminate the Experimentals.”

This outcome was quite in line with Ren Xiaosu’s prediction. When he saw the combat troops deployed to Stronghold 109 in a hurry had not brought any heavy weapons with them. It seemed like they wanted to keep the buildings in the stronghold as intact as possible so they could avoid spending too much on rebuilding.

But if they engaged something like the Experimentals in urban warfare, it would be as good as digging their own graves. Their speed and strength, several times that of the average person, gave them a huge advantage when fighting in built-up areas. Unless the organization fought against the Experimentals with troops consisting of supernatural beings, using automatic rifles at close range would not be effective. It resulted in the combat troops made up of normal humans suffering a devastating defeat.

But now that the Li Consortium was extremely determined to eliminate the Experimentals, Ren Xiaosu felt those creatures were likely going to face a tough battle soon. As a human, Ren Xiaosu certainly hoped the Li Consortium could wipe out a tumor like the Experimentals.



No matter how evil a person was, they would still have some humanity in them. The Experimentals had none left.

“There’s something else.” Yan Liuyuan said, “When the school in town learned of Ms. Jiang’s identity, they wanted to ask her to be a substitute teacher at the school. However, she rejected the offer because she said that as the only supernatural being at home, she had to take care of the family.”

“Mhm.” Ren Xiaosu nodded. From this point alone, it seemed Jiang Wu was still worthy of their trust. “Any other news?”

Yan Liuyuan thought for a moment and said, “Oh yes, it seems like there are also members of the Pyro Company lurking around here. Although I don’t know where they are, there’s usually leaflets scattered around town overnight. They’re the same ones we saw in Stronghold 109.”

The Pyro Company? Ren Xiaosu frowned. They could not get into too much detail as Li Qingzheng was around.

But he had witnessed the Pyro Company’s behavior before, and if they knew there was a supernatural being nearby, they would definitely spare no effort in catching them.

However, he wasn’t too afraid of that. After all, he felt the Pyro Company was really quite weak after crossing swords with them... but it would be dangerous if Jiang Wu exposed her identity.

“Here we are,” Yan Liuyuan shouted cheerfully while pointing at two stone courtyards. “This is the place.”

When the truck came to a stop, Yan Liuyuan jumped out and rushed off. “Big Sister Xiaoyu, Ms. Jiang, look who’s back.”

With this shout from Yan Liuyuan, everyone came rushing out into the courtyard, including Xiaoyu, Jiang Wu, and the female students before Ren Xiaosu could even get out of the truck.

Li Qingzheng stared at the sight of this. He felt that Ren Xiaosu was a blessed man and a role model for other men!

Ren Xiaosu said to Wang Fugui with a smile, “We brought some game down from the mountains. They’re loaded in the back of the truck. Calculate the prices and settle the bill with Platoon Commander Li. A portion of it is free as I brought it as a gift to y’all for the New Year.”

Wang Fugui and the others froze for a moment. As expected of Ren Xiaosu. Although he was now a sentry at a faraway outpost, he still managed to bring back meat for them on his return.

Wang Fugui smiled and said, “It happens that there are many troops stationed nearby and they have a shortage of meat as well. I can definitely sell this meat for a good price.” Wang Fugui then walked to the back of the military transport truck and looked inside. When he saw everything, he was stunned.

“There’s this much meat?”

Ren Xiaosu handed him a list. "These are the items that we need. Help us get them, as well as salt, seasonings, and clothes!"

"OK, you can count on me. Go inside and rest up." Wang Fugui said with a smile, "You don't have to personally worry yourself over such things."

Li Qingzheng, who was beside them, was watching the entire conversation. He had thought that Wang Fugui was the backbone of this group. But now it seemed like everyone was under the command of Ren Xiaosu.

How old was this young man? Why would a shrewd businessman like Wang Fugui even listen to him?

### **Chapter 219 Li Shentan's gift**

When they entered the courtyard, Xiaoyu circled Ren Xiaosu and took a careful look at him. She had wanted to say things like "Ren Xiaosu, you've gotten thinner." But when she looked at him, she realized he seemed to have put on some weight instead.

She pulled Ren Xiaosu aside and said, "I've made a lot of delicious food for y'all and new clothes for everyone for the New Year as well. It's getting cold these days, so y'all should switch to heavy quilts. There's no need to worry about us. We don't lack anything here..."

Ren Xiaosu smiled as he followed her and did not say anything in response. Actually, Xiaoyu was the most soft-spoken person in the group and did not usually have much of a presence in the family. However, it would be less warm at home if she wasn't around.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Did anything happen at home recently? Anyone give you any trouble?"

Now that Ren Xiaosu was back, he thought that if Yan Liuyuan and the others had encountered any trouble, he would handle it for them before leaving again.

"There isn't too much trouble. It's currently very chaotic in town, and the organization's soldiers are keeping a watchful eye on the surroundings. So it's usually only Old Wang who heads out to handle any matters. The rest of us don't go out at all," Xiaoyu explained. "We can also prevent any bad guys from getting ideas about us this way."

"Mhm, I suppose that's the only way now." Ren Xiaosu realized Xiaoyu and the rest of the group were still quite cautious. He also told the female students around him, "Y'all should learn from Big Sister Xiaoyu. Equip yourselves in the next few days with a knife each so that y'all can defend yourselves. If anyone harasses you, just stab them with the knife."

A female student hesitated before saying, "But we're girls..."

Ren Xiaosu had to give this some thought before saying, "I'll get Old Wang to paint the knives pink for y'all then."

The female students were taken aback for a bit before breaking out into laughter. They said, "Alright, Monitor!"

But at this moment, someone knocked on the door. Xiaoyu muttered, "Who could be knocking on our door at this time?"

But when she went to open the door, she heard a sonorous male voice say from outside, "Hello, I'm looking for Ren Xiaosu."

Ren Xiaosu immediately turned his head to the door. Only a handful of people would know to find him here at this time. Furthermore... this person's voice sounded extremely familiar!

It was Li Shentan!

Li Shentan was smartly dressed in the Li Consortium's military uniform as he stood at the door. Ren Xiaosu hesitated, so Li Shentan smiled first and said, "What's up? Am I not welcome here?"

"Please come in." Ren Xiaosu signaled to Xiaoyu, who was blocking the door, to let him in. Following which, he whispered to the others, "Everyone, go inside the house."

Everyone noticed that something was wrong and knew this was an uninvited guest. Fortunately, Old Wang and Li Qingzheng were still outside tallying the goods. Otherwise, it would be difficult for Ren Xiaosu to come up with an excuse to send Li Qingzheng away.

Li Shentan walked into the courtyard and looked around his surroundings curiously. Then he sat on the stone bench in the courtyard and said, "What a warm and homey place this is."

Ren Xiaosu looked at his uniform and asked, "How did you learn I'm here?"

"Ah!" It was as though Li Shentan recalled something at this moment. "I hypnotized the residents in the surrounding area so they would inform me when they saw an unfamiliar young man entering the courtyard here."

Li Shentan did not avoid the topic of hypnosis when he spoke. Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Don't you think it's inappropriate to do something like that?"

"Superpowers are meant to be used." Li Shentan said with a smile, "It's not like I hindered their day-to-day lives anyway."

Wearing the military uniform, Li Shentan looked just like a handsome, young, and promising boy next door. However, others would definitely not be able to imagine the disaster he had wrought upon Stronghold 109.

"Then what are you looking for me for?" Ren Xiaosu gave him a look.

At this moment, Xiaoyu came out of the house and placed a pot of tea and two cups on the stone table. Li Shentan smiled and said graciously, "Thank you, Big Sister Xiaoyu."

"I'm warning you. Don't you dare hypnotize the people around me," Ren Xiaosu said in an unfriendly manner.

"I won't." Li Shentan held up a teacup and said with a smile, "We're friends, after all. How can I possibly hypnotize my friend's friends?"

He gently held the teacup and warmed his hands. As steam wafted up from the teacup, the scene in the courtyard was exceptionally harmonious and peaceful.

"I heard you were sent to a faraway outpost, so how have you been lately?" Li Shentan said with a smile. His tone sounded like he really was an old friend of Ren Xiaosu.

Ren Xiaosu said nonchalantly, "Not too bad, I guess."

But in the next moment, Li Shentan said, "I heard two nanosoldiers went missing out there, and they were even the family members of the Li Consortium. When I checked the list of that outpost later and saw your name on it, I knew you must've been the one behind it."

Ren Xiaosu frowned but did not answer him. There was no need for any explanation between intelligent people, and no evidence was necessary to prove their suspicion either. Ren Xiaosu only wanted to know now what Li Shentan was planning.

Then Li Shentan continued, "When we parted ways at Stronghold 109, I thought we would only get to see each other again in another few years. I didn't expect to meet you again so soon. I also heard a neighboring outpost near yours was attacked by the wolves and another nanosoldier went missing. I thought that might have been done by you. I have control over humans while you can control wolves. It seems like we were really fated to meet after all."

Ren Xiaosu was amused. "Why don't you just state your purpose? There's no need to beat around the bush."

He knew there was no point in defending himself. There was nothing wrong with Li Shentan's reconstruction of events. If the Li Consortium found out there was an extremely dangerous supernatural being over there, they would probably focus their attention on him immediately.

For example, Hu Shuo had probably discovered something about him.

But now Li Shentan turned serious. "You're probably still a little misunderstood. I actually came here today to catch up with an old friend. After all, I've got too few friends to go around."

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "Why do you always think that I'm your friend?"

Li Shentan smiled and said, "Because I always feel a sense of endearment whenever I see you."

"Alright then," Ren Xiaosu changed the subject and asked, "Why are you dressed in military attire?"

“I’m an active serviceman of the Li Consortium now.” Li Shentan appraised his military uniform. “Does it look fitting? Our 4th Brigade will be heading to the front line of Stronghold 109 tomorrow. There are still many Experimentals active over there.”

Ren Xiaosu thought the Experimentals were doomed after the Li Consortium decided on using heavy weapons against them. However, Li Shentan’s appearance had put huge uncertainty on this battle. Ren Xiaosu could already sense that the Li Consortium’s combat troops heading to Stronghold 109 this time would probably perish.

Right from the beginning, Li Shentan had never intended to target any particular stronghold. He sought to destroy the entire Li Consortium. Even if he were to perish with everyone, he would not hesitate to do it.

Ren Xiaosu gave a mental sigh. There really was nothing wrong with the Li Consortium’s previous decision to send this guy to a psychiatric hospital. Comparing Chen Wudi to him, Chen Wudi was just like a normal person.

Li Shentan stood up and walked to the door. “It’s time to say goodbye now. After this farewell, I’m afraid it will be a really long time before I see you again. Please take care of yourself. The people in this neighborhood who harbor dirty thoughts on the ladies living here will commit suicide after you leave town tomorrow. You won’t need to worry about that. Please consider it a small gift from me and accept it kindly.”

### **Chapter 220 Encountering the Pyro Company again!**

Ren Xiaosu was a little surprised by this gift of Li Shentan’s. When he previously asked Xiaoyu whether they had any trouble, she said no. But he knew well that she must have been lying to him. How could there be no one in town getting any ideas on a house with over a dozen women in it?

This was also the reason why Ren Xiaosu was worried about Jiang Wu exposing her identity as a supernatural being. If someone started getting ideas about them, it was very likely that Jiang Wu would be forced to use her superpower. It would be a major crisis if she attracted the attention of the Pyro Company.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Li Shentan. “I’m grateful for your gift.”

Li Shentan dismissed it with a smile. “You don’t have to be so polite. There’s one more thing, though. The Li Consortium is planning to send their elite nanosoldiers to eliminate the wolves. They’re also considering it a training exercise using the wolves as opponents. You should have your wolf buddies lie low. Some of the nanosoldiers can be... really strong.”

Ren Xiaosu was startled. He could collect more nanomachines!

Suddenly, Li Shentan was unsure of if he had seen a look of anticipation in Ren Xiaosu’s eyes.

“Do you know where the Pyro Company’s members around here are hiding?” Ren Xiaosu switched the topic.

Li Shentan said, "They just left this afternoon, but I don't know where they were heading. Maybe they went off somewhere to try their luck at catching supernatural beings? Don't worry, they don't know about you." He then walked out the door.

This demon was about to head for the front lines with the Li Consortium's combat troops. Ren Xiaosu suddenly felt that if there were more people like Li Shentan in this world, war really might not be too far off.

There was always a state of balance between the organizations as everyone slowly plundered resources to strengthen themselves. This was a process of gaining power as part of a larger group. But if a crack suddenly appeared in one organization, the others would definitely be more than happy to get a greater share of the spoils, right?

After Li Shentan left, Xiaoyu came out of the house and said in curiosity, "That's Li Shentan, right? I saw him at the shop back in Stronghold 109."

"Mhm." Ren Xiaosu frowned as he thought about something else. He suddenly said, "I might have to go back now. I feel like there's a hidden meaning to Li Shentan's words."

Initially, Ren Xiaosu had planned to stay in town for the night. After all, they hadn't seen each other in a long time, and many things still needed to be discussed. But when he asked for news of the Pyro Company, Li Shentan told him that they had left that afternoon. This made Ren Xiaosu a little uneasy.

Yan Liuyuan asked in a stunned manner next to him, "You're leaving already?"

"Yes," Ren Xiaosu sighed. "Since there's still a month before the Lunar New Year, I'll definitely have a chance to come back again. Or... I can take y'all to the outpost to celebrate the New Year?"

"Really?" Yan Liuyuan's eyes lit up as he wanted to have a look at what the place Ren Xiaosu went to be a sentry looked like.

With that, Ren Xiaosu went outside. By this time, Wang Fugui and Li Qingzheng were just about wrapped up with handing over the money and goods to each other. Looking at their expressions, they both seemed happy with the deal.

"Lord of Wolves, we have to leave now. Something urgent came up, so we have to go back immediately," Ren Xiaosu said to Li Qingzheng.

Li Qingzheng wondered, "We have to leave now? Aren't we gonna stay a little longer? I still haven't-"

"We have to go now," Ren Xiaosu said in a serious tone.

Li Qingzheng thought for a moment and said, "Alright then, let's head back now."

When Li Qingzheng and Ren Xiaosu got into the truck, Wang Fugui said, "Xiaosu, you must take care of yourself. The whole family is depending on you now, so nothing must happen to you."

“Don’t worry.” Ren Xiaosu said in a low voice, “Nothing has happened to me even after two strongholds were destroyed. I’m hardy.”

Wang Fugui said with a smile, “That’s true. As long as you’re here, our days will definitely get better and better.”

After that exchange, Li Qingzheng started the truck and drove out of town.

There were two grocery stores near the gate. One of them belonged to a woman, and the other was recently opened by Wang Fugui. Ever since Wang Fugui arrived, business at the grocery store next door plummeted and caused the neighbor to despise him.

While Wang Fugui was seeing Ren Xiaosu off, the fat woman next door leaned against the doorframe of her shop and munched on sunflower seeds while looking at Wang Fugui scornfully. After Ren Xiaosu left, she suddenly shouted at Old Wang, “Why? Is that one of your family members?”

Wang Fugui smiled and said, “That’s our boss! He’s the greatest!”

The woman spat out the sunflower seed hull at the entrance of her shop with disdain. “What’s the big deal about a crappy soldier from the private army?”

In the eyes of the town’s refugees, the private troops were no longer worth much in the present day. It was still the organization’s own soldiers who were more powerful. It wasn’t only this woman who thought this way. Some people also used to believe there was an influential man in Wang Fugui’s family backing him. But now they were a little disappointed when they found out he was just a private soldier.

Wang Fugui just smiled without saying a word. They were from two different worlds, and it was impossible to speak with someone who had limited experience.

As Li Qingzheng drove on the road, he did not ask Ren Xiaosu why he wanted to return to the outpost so urgently. Ren Xiaosu also discovered at this moment that Li Qingzheng might have realized something based on his attitude.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Li Qingzheng and said, “You—”

“I don’t know anything,” interrupted Li Qingzheng.

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. Thinking back to the time the wolves attacked the military transport truck, Li Qingzheng took the initiative to get everyone to go back into their houses. At that time, Li Qingzheng might have realized something.

He heard Li Qingzheng say, “When I was still a child, my father took me to a fortune teller in town. When he said that my entire life would be a tough one, my father almost beat him up. But he also added that I had one chance to turn things around in this life.”

“What was the chance?” Ren Xiaosu asked curiously.

“He said I would meet my benefactor at the age of 29, and I turned 29 on the day I met you.”

Ren Xiaosu sighed. “Superstitions can be really harmful.”

The journey back only took three hours since Li Qingzheng drove a little faster as Ren Xiaosu said it was urgent. When they arrived at the beginning of the mountain road leading to the outpost, Ren Xiaosu noticed some tire tracks on the ground. His face turned to one of alarm. “Hurry up! Trespassers have gone up!”

This dirt road was the only path to the outpost. The snow had just melted and the ground had become muddy. If a vehicle drove on it, its tires would definitely leave marks on the ground. This sight set off alarm bells in Ren Xiaosu’s head.

Based on what Li Shentan had said, the Pyro Company was only coming out to try their luck. Perhaps they thought the disappearance of the two officers might have something to do with a supernatural being when they learned about it. So they came to the nearby outpost to see if they could find any supernatural beings hiding here.

The truck drove all the way up to the outpost. But when Ren Xiaosu, who was initially extremely anxious, was greeted by the sight of the open space in front of the outpost, he froze.

He saw Hu Shuo sitting in a relaxed position next to the campfire and eating barbecue with the others. Five strangers knelt next in a row to them with injuries covering their bodies. One of them was even coughing up blood as he knelt there.

The moment Hu Shuo saw Ren Xiaosu, his expression shifted. “Why are you back so soon?!”