

Chapter 291 Regaining consciousness

Although the sparrow was large in size, its meat was not enough for 30 people to share.

Jiang Wu had originally brought along 28 students with her, but now that three of them had left, only 25 remained.

Including Wang Fugui, Wang Dalong, Yan Liuyuan, Li Xiaoyu, and Ren Xiaosu, how could the sparrow be enough for all of them? While Xiaoyu cooked the sparrow, she counted their supplies. Then she sighed and said, "I'm afraid that our dried food will only last us another two days."

Yan Liuyuan pursed his lips. If Ren Xiaosu were conscious right now, would they have to worry about such problems?

At this moment, someone whispered, "I saw them..."

That person who spoke was a student. Yan Liuyuan froze for a moment before asking, "Who did you see?"

"Our classmates." Wang Yuchi said gloomily, "They must have seen us too, but they're probably too scared to come over."

Yan Liuyuan finally realized they were talking about the three female students who had left them behind.

Yan Liuyuan turned around and looked at Jiang Wu. However, he found her sitting in a daze next to Ren Xiaosu and not saying anything.

"Ms. Jiang?" Yan Liuyuan called out.

Jiang Wu smiled bitterly and said, "I don't blame them, let them be."

It seemed like Jiang Wu never thought about getting those three female students to come back either. Yan Liuyuan saw Jiang Wu clenching her fists so tightly that her fingernails dug into her palms until she was nearly bleeding. Suddenly, Jiang Wu said, "Can I give them my share of the dried food? I don't mind going hungry instead."

Yan Liuyuan had a realization at this moment. Even though he was reluctant, this was probably the reason why his brother was willing to save Jiang Wu, wasn't it? If Ren Xiaosu were awake, what would he do?

"Alright then." Yan Liuyuan said with a sigh, "But, Ms. Jiang, you don't have to go hungry. Since you've made the decision, everyone in the group will bear this together."

With that, Yan Liuyuan had a male student take a small bag of dried food over to their female classmates. The male student stuffed the bag into a female classmate's hands and walked off without saying a word to them.

The three girls sat on the ground-hugging their knees and wailed. Yan Liuyuan turned his head back and didn't look at them anymore.

Right now, no one blamed them for what they did. When facing the threat of the Experimentals in these wastelands, and with Ren Xiaosu unconscious, it was only natural for them to make that decision at that time.

Although everyone was very upset, those female students did not exactly do any wrong. What was more important in this world than their own lives?

But even though they understood why they did that, it was impossible to accept them back into the group.

"Just leave them be," Yan Liuyuan said calmly.

Those female students had made their choice, and there was nothing that they could do about it. Furthermore, the group was in a rather bad state themselves and could face the Li Consortium's threat again at any moment. So it was better for the two groups to go their separate ways.

At this moment, Xiaoyu reminded, "Since there are so many escapees here, could there be a doctor among them? If there is one, we could get them to check on Xiaosu and see how his condition is."

Yan Liuyuan jolted upright. "That's right!"

Then Yan Liuyuan walked into the group of escapees with a dagger and shouted, "Is anyone here a doctor? Step forward now! You'll be given a bun to eat after treating my brother!"

Immediately, several people in the group of escapees raised their hands. That was mainly because it was too tempting when they heard they would be given a bun to eat!

Having food in the wilderness was as precious as having gold. As this was just the beginning of their escape, it could even be possible to use a bun in exchange for a beautiful woman in two more days.

Yan Liuyuan swept his gaze over them and said in a cold voice, "Don't claim to be one if you're not. If I find out that someone is impersonating a doctor and causes a delay in the treatment of my brother's injury, don't blame me for hurting you."

Several people immediately put down their hands. After all, they could still remember how Yan Liuyuan had just killed a person. Who would dare to go against him after the director of the Logistics Division had died by his hands a short while ago?

Yan Liuyuan asked, "What kind of medicine do you practice?"

A middle-aged man with a pair of gold-rimmed glasses walked forward and said, "I'm from the stronghold's orthopedic hospital. I've noticed your brother's condition earlier. He should have fractures."

Yan Liuyuan was stunned. "Quickly come and attend to my brother then."

Yan Liuyuan was amused when the middle-aged man remained standing there. Only when he stuffed a wrinkled bun into the doctor's hands did the doctor start moving again.

The doctor went to Ren Xiaosu and squatted next to him. Yan Liuyuan asked, "If it's just fractured, why is my brother still unconscious?"

The doctor briefly checked Ren Xiaosu with his fingers. Then he said, "He has too many fractures. Did he receive a strong impact to his body?"

"Take a look at the wounds first," Yan Liuyuan said.

After a while, the doctor said, "I can estimate more than ten areas where he has fractures, and some of them are even comminuted fractures. Having received such a huge impact, it must have affected his brain as well. Therefore, he won't be coming around anytime soon."

"Then can you set his bones first?" Yan Liuyuan said.

The doctor shook his head. "I can only correct the fracture-dislocation at the joints of the limbs. As for the other affected parts, I need professional auxiliary equipment to deal with it and might even have to drive steel nails into the bones to ensure that he recovers. But even so, he definitely won't be able to recover fully. I'm afraid that his quality of life will be compromised compared to other people."

The doctor was trying to be as euphemistic as he could. To put it bluntly, he was not confident of perfectly fixing Ren Xiaosu's condition. Moreover, how was he supposed to set his bones when he was showing signs of comminuted fractures? He did not even have access to any X-rays right now, but even if he did, he still wouldn't be able to fix Ren Xiaosu.

Yan Liuyuan's expression turned dark. Was Ren Xiaosu going to end up disabled? He refused to believe it! He wasn't going to accept that!

At this moment, Xiaoyu asked with a frown, "Is his brain going to be OK? Will he suffer from amnesia?"

The doctor explained, "Although I'm not a neurologist, I've not come across too many cases of amnesia in such situations. So we don't have to consider the possibility of that for the time being. But if his broken bones do not get set soon, it will likely lead to necrosis. When that happens, it will be impossible to save him. Or at least, it will be impossible here in this wilderness."

Yan Liuyuan stayed silent. To be honest, he would rather that Ren Xiaosu forget about some people and some events.

He knew that Ren Xiaosu placed a lot of importance on friendship. Otherwise, he would not have accepted Chen Wudi into the group or gone to save Li Qingzheng. As such, Yan Liuyuan wondered how sad Ren Xiaosu would be when he woke up.

If Ren Xiaosu came around and realized that Chen Wudi was no longer around, what would be his reaction? In that case, Yan Liuyuan would rather Ren Xiaosu suffer from amnesia.

Suddenly, a weak voice spoke up. "Have him leave. I don't need anyone to treat my injuries."

Yan Liuyuan turned around in surprise and found that Ren Xiaosu had opened his eyes. However, there was a deep fatigue in his eyes.

“Bro, why don’t you let the doctor set your bones?” Yan Liuyuan whispered.

“No, I can do it myself.” Ren Xiaosu forced a smile with some difficulty. He tried to look around and realized that even moving his neck was difficult. But then he froze. “Where’s Wudi? Have y’all seen Wudi?”

Chapter 292 Self-treatment and setting of bones

Everyone around him fell silent. They did not know how to explain it to Ren Xiaosu, nor did they even want to explain it to him. They only hoped that he could be kept in the dark forever.

Wang Fugui said, “Senior Apprentice Brother said that he has something to attend to and had to leave for a while...”

Ren Xiaosu looked at Wang Fugui in a daze. He was not an idiot, or rather, he was a little smarter than most people. There was no need to say anything else. He could guess the truth.

So when Wang Fugui said this, Ren Xiaosu, who was lying down, started tearing up. “How did he depart?”

After Yan Liuyuan got the doctor to leave, he sat down beside Ren Xiaosu and said, “When Big Brother Wudi departed, he totally drubbed those demons and monsters all around him. He trampled over a million of them with clouds of rainbow blooming in the sky. A bright light shone down upon him from the sky like it was opening the heavenly gates for him. I guessed that someone from the Heavens must have come to pick him up.”

Ren Xiaosu did not say anything, and everyone around him fell silent again.

However, Yan Liuyuan realized that Ren Xiaosu was trembling all over, and even his face was turning red. Yan Liuyuan pulled up Ren Xiaosu’s pants and sleeves and saw that the blood vessels in his legs and arms had turned silver.

Yan Liuyuan also had the nanomachines, so he knew what was going on. Ren Xiaosu was forcibly using the nanomachines to straighten his bones without any use of anesthetics.

There were always people who would describe their pain to be down to the bone, but that was mostly an exaggeration on their part.

However, it would not be an exaggeration to describe Ren Xiaosu’s pain to be deep within his bones at this moment.

His bones had been shattered to pieces and were stuck within his flesh. He needed to use the nanomachines to constantly remove the fragments of bones and reattach them onto his broken bones.

It was just like completing a jigsaw puzzle. Sometimes, the fragments would have to be removed and reattached again if they were fitted back wrong.

With that kind of pain, Ren Xiaosu fainted right after he finished fixing an arm.

After a while, Ren Xiaosu woke up again. After coming to, he continued to use the nanomachines to set his bones without any complaints.

Next to him, Yan Liuyuan was sobbing so hard he could not speak properly. "Bro, why don't you rest for a bit? I beg of you, please stop for a while."

However, Ren Xiaosu clenched his teeth and did not say anything.

He could not stop now. He had to set his bones as quickly as possible, then fix them securely with the nanomachines so that he would not have any complications in the future

It was simply too dangerous in these wastelands. If he became disabled, how was he going to face unknown danger?

After falling in and out of consciousness for an umpteen number of times, Yan Liuyuan suddenly understood that Ren Xiaosu was using the physical pain to suppress his mental anguish. The anguish was like getting stabbed in the heart by someone, and there was a sense of emptiness within.

When Wang Fugui and Li Qingzheng realized what Ren Xiaosu was doing, they were shocked. If they did not witness it with their own eyes, they would find it very difficult to believe that someone could actually bear the pain of fixing their own bones.

Normal people would probably cry out in pain even if they were slashed just once. Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu was performing countless cuts on his own body. Only by doing so could he retrieve the fragments of bones stuck within his flesh.

It wasn't until Ren Xiaosu had finally repaired all his broken bones and secured them with the nanomachines that he fell asleep groggily. His clothes were completely drenched with sweat.

Xiaoyu dried her tears while wiping off his sweat at the same time. Yan Liuyuan suddenly said, "When my brother did not know how to hunt in the past, we would just eat some wild vegetables."

The others were stunned. They did not know why Yan Liuyuan was saying this.

Yan Liuyuan continued, "No one taught him which type of wild vegetables were inedible and which were edible. Some wild vegetables can taste super bitter, while some are slightly poisonous. How do you think he knows which type can be eaten? He left the edible ones for me after tasting them himself. Uncle Fugui is right about my brother being hardy. If he weren't, he would've already been poisoned to death in the wilderness."

For the moment, the escapees decided to stay put at the campsite and wait for the Li Consortium to come rescue them, because they felt they were no longer in any danger. They firmly believed the Li Consortium would come to save them since they were legal residents of the stronghold, after all.

During the day, Yan Liuyuan took a short nap. There were no stronghold residents who dared to approach them again during the day.

Furthermore, the refugees who escaped from Stronghold 108's town noticed a sense of familiarity for Yan Liuyuan. It was the same ferocity they used to have while trying to earn a living in the wilderness.

In the evening, Yan Liuyuan stayed by Ren Xiaosu's side without stepping away once. In the past, he used to keep watch for them during the night, and he still did the same now.

In the middle of the night, everyone was jolted awake by a scream. They looked in the direction of the sound and saw Yan Liuyuan's hands covered in blood as he stood next to Ren Xiaosu. Meanwhile, two adults were lying at his feet, and one of them looked like he was barely clinging to life.

Yan Liuyuan grabbed the man by his hair and lifted him. He calmly sliced his neck with the dagger and said, "This is the outcome you'll suffer if you try to sneak up on us again. If you want to find food, go and look for it yourselves in the wilderness!"

Previously, Ren Xiaosu and Yan Liuyuan wondered why Yan Liuyuan's physical strength did not seem to have increased much even though he was also a supernatural being.

Based on the progression of other supernatural beings who had awakened their powers for some time, their physical fitness should be much better than the average adult's. But Yan Liuyuan was different. It was as though his identity as a supernatural being was not real since he could not even withstand the simple backlash of his power.

But now, Ren Xiaosu had helped him mitigate his shortcomings with the nanomachines.

The stronghold residents looked at Yan Liuyuan in fear when they realized the child was about to go crazy. He would not hesitate to kill as long as someone might pose a threat to the unconscious young man next to him. Moreover, they could feel Yan Liuyuan's deep-seated hatred for them.

Someone who was standing very far away whispered, "When the troops return, let's report all their evil deeds. Severe punishments will await them!"

"That's right, the Li Consortium's troops should be here soon!"

But even as they said these words, they felt a little unsure. Why wasn't the Li Consortium's troops here yet even though a day had already passed?

Even if there was a war going on at the front line of Mt. Qingsheng, there should still be some troops at the strongholds in the rear. So why didn't anyone come?

But at this moment, the lights from some vehicles in the north could vaguely be seen approaching. All the escapees got excited at the sight. "The Li Consortium's troops have finally arrived!"

“We’re saved!”

However, as the convoy approached, they did not look like they were going to stop even after the soldiers saw the escapees. The long convoy of vehicles just continued heading straight for the south!

By the time the rearmost infantry units passed by, someone finally stopped one of the soldiers and shouted, “Sir, where are you heading? Please help us!”

“Please save us! Give us some food!”

Chapter 293 The Yang Consortium’s refugee camp

The soldier sneered, “Save you? Then who will come and save us? The front line at Mt. Qingsheng in the north has already fallen. The Yang Consortium’s armored brigade and infantry division will arrive soon. We’re retreating to Mt. Guangying at the rear!”

“Then what about us? There’s someone here who has committed a crime...” someone choked out

But at this moment, an officer of the Li Consortium’s troops shouted, “Raise your guns and keep your guard up. Have you all forgotten what you should be doing just because we’ve been defeated in a battle? Ensure that no spies have sneaked into their group and forbid them from getting near us!”

The sound of guns being cocked rang out. The Li Consortium’s troops pointed their weapons at the escapees and forced them to retreat by shouting at them.

The escapees could never imagine the Li Consortium troops they had been waiting for the entire day would treat them like this!

They said anxiously, “You can’t treat the legal residents of the stronghold like this. I’m going to lodge a complaint against you!”

But when the Li Consortium troops heard this, someone laughed and said, “A complaint? Who are you going to complain to? We’ll see about that if you manage to survive!”

Then the Li Consortium’s troops continued to retreat. Some of the escapees tried to chase after them, but they heard a gunshot ring out. The Li Consortium’s troops had fired a bullet at their feet to warn them not to move!

Some of the escapees broke down on the spot. When the stronghold collapsed, their fundamental values in life had been impacted once. Now came another severe blow to them when the rescuers they had been expecting abandoned them.

Yan Liuyuan and his group had a different thought from the rest of the escapees. At this moment, Yan Liuyuan was actually more worried that the Li Consortium’s troops would take them away. The last thing he wanted was to have any contact with the Li Consortium’s troops.

After all, Ren Xiaosu’s current identity was somewhat awkward.

In the evening, Ren Xiaosu regained consciousness again eight hours after the Li Consortium's troops had left.

This time, there was a calmness in his eyes. "Let's head to the mountains. We should not stay here any longer."

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu had a vague idea of retreating into the forested mountains. Of course, it was also because of the Seeds that he had the confidence to bring everyone to live in the forested mountains.

The Seeds would be enough for him to establish a simple land in the wilderness where they could live in peace and quietness.

The only bad thing was that it would require a 100 days for his injured muscles and bones to heal. Even though Ren Xiaosu possessed a physical fitness that was totally different from normal people, it would probably still take him several weeks to recover.

But suddenly, the unique sound of armored vehicles driving in the forested mountains came from the north. As the armored vehicles moved across the snowy ground, their tracks would flip over pieces of soil to expose the black layer of earth below.

Ren Xiaosu just laid there and could not move. He frowned and said with a sigh, "Too late."

It was all because he had been in a coma for too long. It had delayed their best opportunity to get away.

They saw the Yang Consortium's armored brigade and infantry division quickly arriving. The escapees forced themselves to calm down and said, "The Yang Consortium will not do anything to us since we're just civilians. We didn't even participate in the war."

Someone said, "That's right, the war was initiated by the Li Consortium and had nothing to do with us. Even if the Yang Consortium occupies Stronghold 108, we're still the legal residents of Stronghold 108."

When the Yang Consortium's troops arrived, an officer in an armored vehicle frowned as he looked at the escapees. He signaled for the soldiers to stop. "These people should be from Stronghold 108. Keep your guard up in case they attack our troops! Send out two reinforced companies and seize all of their weapons!"

As the officer jumped down from the armored vehicle, two of the Yang Consortium's reinforced companies rushed into the crowd. Upon meeting resistance from the escapees, they would fire off warning shots or use their rifle butts to knock them over.

"Are you all escapees from Stronghold 108?" The officer clearly knew what had happened to Stronghold 108, so he understood what was going on when he saw them.

One of the escapees replied, "Yes, we're the residents of Stronghold 108. Sir, we will submit to the Yang Consortium's orders unconditionally and support the Yang Consortium wholeheartedly in the occupation of Stronghold 108. But, sir, can you help us eliminate the threats in Stronghold 108 so that we can return to our homes?"

The escapees immediately switched their allegiance without any struggle. Deep down, they did not have any sense of belonging to any organization, so they just listened to whoever was in charge.

However, the officer did not appreciate it. "Return to Stronghold 108? Who knows if there are spies hidden among you people? What if you all make trouble at the rear while we're battling at Mt. Guangying?"

Then the officer told the deputy commander next to him, "Have the two reinforced companies stay behind here. Let these escapees build a refugee camp here. Keep a close eye on them."

Every organization required people. With people, there would be productivity. Who else would mine or be responsible for ensuring production in the factories? Therefore, people were also considered a type of resource to the organizations. So of course they would not kill them indiscriminately.

But before the war ended, none of these people would be able to leave the refugee camp.

The Li Consortium's troops had already been defeated at the front line of Mt. Qingsheng by the Yang Consortium. They had also lost to the Qing Consortium at the front lines of Mt. Shuanglong, Mt. Tantou, and Mt. Fengyi in the east. With the Li Consortium completely defeated, they could only retreat to the farthest south point to defend their last bit of territory by relying on their natural defenses.

The three organizations would still have to fight a fierce battle at that place.

The Yang Consortium's troops continued advancing south while the two reinforced companies armed with loaded guns remained behind to supervise the construction of a refugee camp.

The reinforced companies' commander said, "I'll be assigning everyone the work you'll need to perform every day and the workload you'll need to complete. If you can't meet the quotas, don't blame me for being harsh with

you."

To build a refugee camp, they first had to chop down the trees in the area. Then they would use the harvested wood and tools supplied by the reinforced troops to construct some barracks. The two reinforced companies happened to be from the engineering battalion that was specially tasked to build roads for the armored troops.

But now the engineering battalion would not have much work to do since most of the road ahead was flat terrain. So they were able to split off two reinforced companies to remain behind here.

The Yang Consortium's troops were extremely efficient. It only took them an hour to count the number of escapees and assign tasks to every one of them.

But Yan Liuyuan realized that even the wounded were assigned tasks to perform, and they would have to complete their share of the workload as well.

Ren Xiaosu had not recovered from his injuries yet and would still fall unconscious from time to time. How could he meet his quota in his state? If he had recovered from his injuries, they could have forced

their way out of the refugee camp. With Ren Xiaosu's armor, these normal soldiers couldn't have stopped him. However, there were no "what ifs" to speak of in their situation.

"What should we do now?" Wang Fugui looked at Ren Xiaosu, who had passed out again.

"We can only hide here for now." Yan Liuyuan said, "Fortunately, we aren't wanted by the Yang Consortium."

"But we have six injured people." Wang Fugui said, "We won't be able to complete all the work assigned to us."

Yan Liuyuan frowned as he walked up to the reinforced troops' commander and said politely, "Sir, do you know Yang Xiaojin?"

The reinforced troops' commander barked at him, "Don't try to slack off by pulling some random connection. I don't know the person you mentioned. Hurry up and get to work! And those friends of yours who are lying on the ground, no slacking!"

Yan Liuyuan stared at him coldly, but he did not argue with him. Then he said, "Are we allowed to help them complete their workload?"

The commander said, "Of course you can! Why not? As long as you can complete it!"

Chapter 294 Liuyuan has matured

Yan Liuyuan stood there quietly. They currently had six people who were wounded, so it would be an extremely terrifying amount of work if he had to complete it for the six of them all by himself.

When the reinforced troops assigned the tasks to everyone, they would definitely set it after accounting for the maximum workload a person could perform. That would mean it was already not going to be easy to complete one's own task, so how could they possibly complete the tasks for the others as well?

At this moment, Wang Fugui and Li Qingzheng came over to him and said, "Don't worry, we'll share the burden with you. Let's work together to overcome this difficult situation."

The three other male students who were not injured also stood up. "There's us as well."

Even the female students raised their hands. "We can share some of the workload too."

The injured Wang Yuchi also stood up while struggling. "I've almost recovered from my injuries, so I can start working as well."

Yan Liuyuan smiled. "Sit down. I don't want you to end up becoming disabled. You don't have to make it sound so noble. It's only a bit of work, that's all."

Yan Liuyuan felt rather warm inside. The people around him had gone through the test of time and were comrades who would go through thick and thin for each other. They had built a foundation of trust.

Looking at the other escapees around them, they did not even have anyone they could mutually depend on.

In the past, Yan Liuyuan and Ren Xiaosu had always been on their own. But now, Yan Liuyuan felt a sense of unity.

Xiaoyu took a handful of mud and smeared it onto the faces of the female students and Jiang Wu. “In this wilderness, we have to guard against others who might be eyeing us since Xiaosu isn’t around. All of you have such beautiful and fair skin, so there will definitely be some people with dirty thoughts. Find an empty spot later to change clothes. Put on some loose-fitting clothes so that you won’t have to show your figures.”

The female students were caught in a dilemma. Wouldn’t smearing mud on their faces make them look really ugly? But the female students who’d survived until now were not stupid either, so they let Xiaoyu apply the mud on them.

After being smeared with mud, they all looked at each other and giggled upon realizing that they looked equally ugly.

Then Xiaoyu said, “Remember to carry a rock in your pockets. If someone is truly up to no good, you can hit them with it. Remember to hit them on the back of their head one inch below the eyebrows. If you use enough strength, you can even kill them. That’s what Xiaosu taught me.”

This was the philosophy of survival that Xiaoyu had learned from Ren Xiaosu. They would lay low and only kill if they could not keep a low profile anymore.

Building a refugee camp was no small task. The process involved tamping the ground, excavating the earth, cutting down trees, and building the barracks. All of these processes required plenty of manpower to complete.

If a group of well-trained troops built the refugee camp, they could probably finish it in just a few days.

But it was clear that the reinforced troops were only planning on supervising the escapees and did not intend to build it themselves.

When they found someone slacking off, they would even mercilessly hit them with the butt of their rifles. An old man was hit in the waist by a soldier until he couldn’t stand anymore.

Some of the Stronghold 108 residents who wanted to protest ended up getting beaten to the ground by the soldiers as soon as they tried.

All of the escapees were performing their tasks in a trance. They realized that when war broke out, their fates would change.

In a war, no one was unaffected.

In reality, the Yang Consortium had another purpose for building the refugee camp. They wanted the escapees to expend all of their energy in the process of building it so they would be too exhausted to cause any trouble.

This was their usual way of dealing with their veterans. When a batch of veterans were close to retiring, the officers would have them plant trees to prevent them from causing trouble.

They would have to dig countless planting holes for trees and then cover them again every day until they worked themselves to the bone. Afterwards, no one had the energy to make trouble.

Yan Liuyuan and his group were assigned to carry logs. Their daily task was to transport ten wooden logs each. Two people had to carry a log that was as thick as a thigh.

The logs were extremely dense and heavy, especially for Yan Liuyuan who was a little short. Whenever the log tilted down on his side, it felt like most of the log's weight was pressing down on him.

At first, they thought it would not be a big deal to carry ten logs every day. But when they actually started carrying them, they discovered the logs were way heavier than they imagined.

Fortunately, Yan Liuyuan could use the nanomachines. He concentrated them at his shoulders, arms, and legs, which made it easier for him.

Not only did he have to carry ten logs, but he also had to complete the task for Ren Xiaosu and the wounded members. Gradually, the nanomachines started running out of power. The area around his shoulders was hurting from abrasions, and blisters also formed on his hands.

Other people could take a short break after transporting a log back, but Yan Liuyuan's group could not. The Yang Consortium's troops had created a register in which the refugees had to write their names on whenever they carried a log back. Only by doing so could they avoid getting punished, and there were no shortcuts around it.

Moreover, these troops did not care if they were men, women, the elderly, or children. Everyone was assigned the same heavy workload and would get beaten up if they failed to meet their quota.

Yan Liuyuan once told Ren Xiaosu that he hated the strongholds, the organizations, and the stronghold residents.

He even told Ren Xiaosu that if Yang Xiaojin did not come and look for them, they should not go to Stronghold 88.

When Yang Xiaojin had come to Stronghold 108, Yan Liuyuan felt a little happy on the inside. He always felt that Yang Xiaojin was different from the others who came from the strongholds.

Furthermore, Yan Liuyuan hoped that the Yang Consortium that Yang Xiaojin was from would be different from the others and not treat human lives lightly.

But it turned out the organizations in this world were all the same. There was essentially no difference between them.

The only difference was Yang Xiaojin.

In the afternoon, Xiaoyu and the girls were exhausted after completing their workload. However, Yan Liuyuan, Wang Fugui, and the other guys still had to continue carrying logs.

Poor Wang Fugui, who was already an old man, felt like half his life had been taken away after working all day.

Xiaoyu and the girls took a short break before standing up to help Yan Liuyuan and the men with their remaining workload. However, Yan Liuyuan persuaded them to go back since the girls were more limited in physical strength.

When Yan Liuyuan came back again in the evening, Xiaoyu said anxiously, "Liuyuan, get some rest! You don't look too good!"

Yan Liuyuan's face was pale, and his lips had turned slightly purple.

Yan Liuyuan put the log down. Xiaoyu quickly pulled aside his clothes at the shoulder and saw it was badly bruised.

Xiaoyu said softly with heartache, "Why didn't you make use of the nanomachines to help?"

"They're dead," Yan Liuyuan said with a sigh. He would have liked to use them too, but the workload for an entire day was simply too much. Other people only had to carry ten logs, but he, Wang Fugui, and the rest of the guys had to carry more than 20 logs daily.

"Go back and get some rest." Xiaoyu said, "How many more logs do you have left to transport? Let me carry them instead."

Yan Liuyuan tugged on Xiaoyu's arm and said with a smile, "It's fine, I can still endure it. Comparing my minor injuries to my brother's injuries, it's no big deal at all."

Chapter 295 Yan Liuyuan's Curse Manipulation power

Today, Yan Liuyuan realized that physical pain could really mask mental anguish. He began to wonder just how distressed Ren Xiaosu was if he needed the pain of his broken bones to suppress his sadness.

Nearby, some refugees who had just finished their work were laughing at Yan Liuyuan. These refugees had thought that Yan Liuyuan's group was very tough, but look at the state they were in now.

When faced with the Yang Consortium's troops, didn't they still have to work all the same? And with injured people among them, they even had to perform a greater workload than normal.

Yan Liuyuan looked at a middle-aged man who was gloating at their misfortune. He said to Xiaoyu, "How I wish I had my brother's power so I could kill these people."

Xiaoyu wiped the sweat off his forehead and smiled. "When I disliked someone in the past, I cursed them to suffer a horrible death in my mind. Sometimes, I would even imagine several ways for them to die. Some would fall to their deaths while walking and others would get torn to pieces by wolves. It blows off a lot of steam just thinking about it. Maybe you can try that as well?"

Yan Liuyuan forced a smile and said, "Alright, I'll try it."

Right at this moment, the middle-aged man stood up to go relieve himself. However, before he could even take two steps, he slipped on some packed snow and fell forwards. The middle-aged man lost his balance and flailed his arms in the air helplessly. If he had just fallen down, he would have been fine. But to his dismay, he noticed a small rock in front of him. The moment he fell down, his head hit a protruding rock that made him bleed profusely!

Yan Liuyuan was stunned. It wasn't like he hadn't cursed others before, but just that he never did it so specifically in the past.

But this time, he had cursed the middle-aged man to fall and hit his head on a rock just as Xiaoyu had told him to. As a result, the middle-aged man really fell and hit his head on a rock!

However, Yan Liuyuan did not curse him to die. After a while, the middle-aged man slowly got up and swore, "Fuck, how did I slip?!"

Yan Liuyuan did not say anything and just went back to carrying the logs. Xiaoyu didn't say anything either and went back to caring for Ren Xiaosu.

Both of them guessed what the problem was. Xiaoyu had figured out a while ago that Yan Liuyuan might also be a supernatural being. But since he and Ren Xiaosu never spoke about it explicitly, she never asked either.

Whenever Ren Xiaosu went away for a long time, Yan Liuyuan would always get a high fever. Xiaoyu suspected it was too much of a coincidence. And now the accident that befell this middle-aged man confirmed some of Xiaoyu's thoughts.

But what she did not know was that even Yan Liuyuan himself was very surprised. How could there be such a coincidence?

That couldn't be right. It wasn't a coincidence at all!

So his power did not only allow him to make wishes to increase Ren Xiaosu's luck, but he could also use it to curse others and kill them!

The power in itself could be used in two different ways. It was just that he had never used it to curse others specifically before, so he didn't realize it. But now he discovered another way to use his superpower.

Yan Liuyuan stepped onto some packed snow at this moment as well. However, he lost his balance and fell forwards.

In that instant, Yan Liuyuan felt that something was not right. He quickly activated the recently charged nanomachines in his body to change the direction of his fall with the tip of his toes and landed in the snowy ground on the side.

Yan Liuyuan was a little shaken. He realized with shock that there was also a backlash when cursing others!

If he didn't have the nanomachines Ren Xiaosu gave to him, he would probably have gotten badly injured as well.

This power was too strange. It could even cause him to suffer a similar backlash after cursing others!

Eh? Yan Liuyuan looked over at the spot where he was supposed to have fallen down and saw there were no rocks there.

When he was falling over, he thought he would end up with the same fate as that middle-aged man. However, it seemed to him that the backlash was not exactly the same but a reduced effect of the curse.

The difference was that the middle-aged man had rocks in front of him when he fell while Yan Liuyuan did not. The danger of the situation was greatly reduced as a result.

Although cursing people had its backlash, the result seemed to be rather acceptable to him. Furthermore, Ren Xiaosu had already helped him mitigate his shortcomings, so his capacity to take risks was higher than the average person's.

For example, he could curse someone to get shot in the third rib by a stray bullet from the southwest. If he was prepared, he could easily use the nanomachines to shield himself in advance.

Of course, it would take too much effort to kill someone like that. But it was practically undiscoverable if he did it that way!

When someone died in an accident, who could possibly link it to him? Who would believe that even curses could kill in this day and age?

Yan Liuyuan was unlike other supernatural beings in that he was not blessed with a strong physique. It was as though the world had chained his power to prevent him from using it recklessly. But the nanomachines Ren Xiaosu gave him helped him change his fate.

Yan Liuyuan suddenly realized that his power might have even more uses than he knew. It was just that he hadn't discovered them yet.

At night, Yan Liuyuan came back to Ren Xiaosu's side exhausted. Ren Xiaosu, who had come around once again, asked, "Are you tired?"

Yan Liuyuan smiled. "No."

Ren Xiaosu could see blood seeping out of Yan Liuyuan's clothes at his shoulders, so he said, "I have three wireless chargers here that I took from the Li Consortium, but I don't know how much longer they

can be used for. It would be too conspicuous if you carry it around with you, so starting tomorrow, come back here when your nanomachines die and charge them before going outside. It should be enough to last you a few days.”

These devices were picked up from the front line at Position 313. At that time, the tent that Lin Qi and the other nanosoldiers were in had been blown up and only these three were still in working condition.

Ren Xiaosu raised his hand with difficulty and handed Xiaoyu two vials of black medicine. “Apply this on those of us who are wounded, and their injuries will heal very quickly.”

Everyone was sitting next to the campfire and breathing in the cold air. The injuries on their shoulders and hands would hurt the moment they touched them, but no one seemed to know what to do about it.

Now that Ren Xiaosu had come around, he helped them solve their biggest problem.

Everyone was hoping Ren Xiaosu would get better quickly. Without him in the group, it was really difficult for them to get by.

Yan Liuyuan whispered to Ren Xiaosu, “Bro, I’ve discovered my new power. I can manipulate curses.”

A wish and a curse were two sides of the same coin. One of them could be used to bless others while the other could be used to bring mishap unto others, and these two powers were embodied within Yan Liuyuan. Ren Xiaosu frowned and said, “Explain it in detail.”

“When I’m trying to curse others, I have to think of it quite specifically in my mind. For example, I have to describe how certain factors create a certain outcome, and they have to be logical as well.” Yan Liuyuan said, “The logic has to be clear enough for it to work.”

Ren Xiaosu gave it some thought and said, “Then try this. Curse me to cough after choking on some potatoes.

Yan Liuyuan was taken aback. “But we don’t have any potatoes.”

Ren Xiaosu said, “Just try it.”

Yan Liuyuan closed his eyes and cursed Ren Xiaosu. Then someone a distance away exclaimed, “Someone dug up a lot of potatoes! I think they might have stumbled onto a potato field!”

Yan Liuyuan looked at Ren Xiaosu in shock. “It can even be used like that?”

“What are you waiting for? Go dig up some potatoes!” Ren Xiaosu urged.

Chapter 296 Willpower

In the evening, all of the refugees gathered around the campfire and waited for the potatoes to be roasted. The smell of roasted potatoes was emanating from the fire. When the Yang Consortium’s

troops saw this, they said in surprise, “These people are pretty lucky. How did they manage to stumble upon a patch of potatoes?”

Only Yan Liuyuan and Ren Xiaosu knew this was probably due to Yan Liuyuan’s Luck and Curse Manipulation power. As for the specific principles behind it, neither of them knew anything

Other people’s powers were much more concrete to speak of. For example, Ren Xiaosu could see the palace in his mind and could even take the Seeds, the black medicine, the black saber, and the Explosive Poker cards out of it.

Xu Xianchu’s power was also very concrete in that he could summon a physical shadow clone. Even Luo Xinyu’s power allowed her to open up a visible Shadow Door.

Only Yan Liuyuan’s power was something that could not be seen or touched. If it weren’t for the many times they had tested it, they wouldn’t even know what exactly his power could do. Furthermore, this power could not be used on himself, and that made it extremely strange.

Therefore, this power could only be slowly studied. But even the direction to try to understand it from was difficult to identify.

But now, Ren Xiaosu had used a reverse method of this Curse Manipulation to help them find a potato field. It essentially solved their problem of having something to eat.

For the past two days, Xiaoyu and the rest had to try to eat as little as possible because their food supply was not going to last them much longer.

But after Ren Xiaosu regained consciousness, all of them could have something to eat again, and it was even a lot of food!

Yan Liuyuan was feeding Ren Xiaosu and saying, “Bro, try to get better soon. Without you around, we’re all a mess.”

Ren Xiaosu checked on how much his bones had healed, then thought for a moment before saying, “I’ll need another 20 to 30 days to recover.”

Most people would have to wait at least 90 days for their bones to heal, but Ren Xiaosu, whose physical fitness was three times that of the average person, seemed to also be able to heal three times as fast.

Yan Liuyuan heaved a sigh of relief. They would only have to endure for another twenty days or so at this refugee camp before they could leave.

Then Yan Liuyuan said, “Bro, it doesn’t seem like the Yang Consortium is any different from the other organizations at all. Their soldiers also treat human life really lightly, so I doubt the residents in their strongholds are any better than those at the Li Consortium.”

“There’s good and bad people everywhere.” Ren Xiaosu said with a sigh, “Just take a look at these refugees here. Lots of them don’t have any hate for us and have resigned themselves to the hardship we’re facing.”

“I still don’t like the strongholds,” Yan Liuyuan muttered.

“Actually, what you dislike are not the stronghold residents,” Ren Xiaosu said calmly, “but the rules that exist within the strongholds. The organizations have placed everyone inside that cage and then used their rules to restrain the people living in it. You yearn for freedom, so of course you wouldn’t like living under such rules.”

Yan Liuyuan grunted. Ren Xiaosu laughed and said, “Well, I dislike it too.”

Yan Liuyuan’s eyes lit up. “Then after your injuries heal, we won’t have to go to the Yang Consortium’s stronghold?”

The roads leading to the north had been won by the Yang Consortium’s forces. However, Ren Xiaosu’s group did not have the proper IDs that would allow them to travel there. Surely they could not say to the Yang Consortium’s troops that they had the head spy of the Qing Consortium with them and that they wanted to travel to the Yang Consortium’s stronghold to have a look, right?

That wouldn’t convince anyone!

Ren Xiaosu was silent for a moment. “Let’s wait until my injuries get better before deciding on that.”

He ate some potato just as a cold wind started blowing. That cold air flowed into Ren Xiaosu’s mouth and made him choke for a long while on a piece of potato that got stuck in his throat before he finally swallowed.

Ren Xiaosu was amused. “I guess that was your Curse Manipulation, right?”

Yan Liuyuan chowed down on a potato and choked on it as well. But he was fine after drinking some water.

Be it a wish or a curse, the backlash would always be slightly less adverse than the original. That was probably a concession given to the user. However, the power had to be used carefully as the backlash could not be controlled.

But in any case, Ren Xiaosu was still very happy. That was because the stronger his and Yan Liuyuan’s powers were, the less rocky their future paths would be.

At night, Yan Liuyuan continued testing out his powers by the campfire. From time to time, there would be people either shouting or slipping and falling down at the campsite Yan Liuyuan suffered quite a bit from the backlash as well. The curses were made on those who had come to ask them for food, though the curses themselves were insignificant. As such, there was nothing to fear about the backlash.

Gradually, Yan Liuyuan became familiar with his newfound power.

He stayed by Ren Xiaosu’s side and said, “Everyone has suffered a lot today to complete the workload required due to our injured members. I feel that the others in the group can be trusted.”

“Mhm,” Ren Xiaosu acknowledged softly as though he had thought of something.

Yan Liuyuan suddenly sensed that Ren Xiaosu's heart was still aching. However, Ren Xiaosu seemed to be hiding the pain deep down inside him.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu called over the other students and asked, "Y'all've been training for a day now. Has your control over the nanomachines improved yet?"

The students were taken aback by the question. They then attempted to manipulate their nanomachines before Wang Yuchi said, "It seems to be responding a tad faster now, but if we don't get a good feeling for it and try it out a few more times, the difference can't really be detected."

Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "You've only trained for a day. This is something that will require a lot of time and effort to improve."

Hu Shuo had said there were actually a lot of the Li Consortium's regular troops who had a synchronization rate above 80%. For the average person, the rate was slightly lower.

This made Ren Xiaosu realize that the synchronization rate might not be set in stone for everyone and could still change. How else could there be such a special phenomenon within a specific group of people? So what was the difference between the regular troops and other people?

Regular soldiers would have received systematic training within the military. They were not only trained in military duties but also physical exercise. Soldiers dying during cross-country training was also not unheard of. Although the culture within the Li Consortium's army had been declining over the past two years, their training standards did not drop.

The reason for the decline in culture was due to the military expanding too fast, with too many family members of the Li Consortium entering the ranks without getting properly trained.

So Ren Xiaosu wondered if the synchronization rate had anything to do with the physical exercise that was conducted in the military.

Of course, it could also be due to one's willpower.

For example, a lot of high-intensity training would depend on a person having enough mental strength to get through it. So after such training, the regular soldier's willpower would also become stronger. That in turn would determine whether their synchronization rates were high.

Be it their physical fitness or their willpower, Ren Xiaosu felt that these students would definitely be able to increase their synchronization rates through hard work. That included Li Qingzheng, Wang Dalong, and Wang Fugui as well.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly thought of something Yang Xiaojin once said to him. "When a disaster comes, mental strength becomes the highest caliber of weapon humanity has in the face of danger."

Chapter 297 Family

Manipulating the nanomachines with a delay was a very frustrating experience. Sometimes, even when the brain's thoughts were clearly ahead, the nanomachines would still have a moment's delay before they reacted to the commands.

The hands would not listen to the head, and that made Wang Yuchi and the other students feel like they were mentally impaired.

If they could control the nanomachines better, they would probably be of great help to the group. But in reality, they were powerless.

So when Ren Xiaosu told them that physical exercise could help increase their synchronization rates, the students who were not injured started taking the initiative to do more work, while those who were injured thought of ways to train themselves. For example, those who had leg injuries would train their upper limbs, while those whose arms were injured would train their abdominals. If a person really wanted to succeed, they would think of a thousand ways to achieve it.

Yan Liuyuan was initially under a lot of pressure due to the workload he had to complete. Even with Wang Fugui and Li Qingzheng helping out, they were but normal people. As such, there was a limit to how much of the burden they could share.

But now, when the students heard what Ren Xiaosu said, they all started thinking of ways to break past their limits in the hope that they could help the group out in the future.

Their group had been through a lot of ups and downs together. Those who remained with the group despite all the calamities could be considered precious team members. They all knew exactly how difficult it was to survive in these wastelands.

But outsiders would think this group of people were on steroids or something.

Ren Xiaosu had constantly been waiting for a chance to leave this place. The first opportunity he was hoping for was for the wolves to show up. However, it had already been several days, and with the refugee camp almost completed, the wolves still did not appear.

At this time, Ren Xiaosu suddenly remembered something. Wasn't it about time for the female wolves to give birth?

Back when they were at the outpost, many of the female wolves became pregnant. A wolf's gestation period was 63 days, and counting the days, that seemed to be around now.

Thus, it would be most logical for the wolf pack to hide away while they waited for their pack to grow stronger and bigger. They would have to raise the cubs to become the main force of the pack.

At such times, it wouldn't be possible for the wolf pack to still be wandering around. The Wolf King would even start stocking up on food for them in case any accidents happened while hunting

What a pity! If the wolf pack were here, these two reinforced companies of the Yang Consortium would definitely not be a match for them.

As such, Ren Xiaosu's group could only wait for him to fully recover.

The fences around the refugee camp were nearly complete and were a full two meters high. The perimeter of the refugee camp even had wooden watchtowers erected and fitted with searchlights too.

Soldiers from the Yang Consortium's reinforced troops were patrolling around the campsite. There were also troops working in shifts who stood guard near the construction site. All of them were equipped with live ammo in case anyone tried to escape. These soldiers were also acting as supervisors to the refugees and were responsible for teaching them how to build the barracks with lumber.

The two reinforced companies were rotating shifts, so those who were off-duty could head back to their own tents to play cards. But those who were on active duty were never lackadaisical. They were not going to give anyone a chance to escape.

If Ren Xiaosu and company were planning on leaving this place, they would have to first consider how to get through the blockade set up by these two reinforced companies.

During this period, Wang Fugui would take the opportunity to get close to the reinforced troops by sending things to them during his evening rest hours. He sent over many gifts, with things like watches, jewelry, and so on. This eagerness suited his refugee image very well.

When the troops were playing cards and chatting, he would be there to serve them drinks. But even though he showed so much sincerity, the reinforced troops still ordered him around as they liked and even hurled insults at him. But Old Wang did not get angry and kept a smile on his face.

When it was time to eat, the Yang Consortium soldiers would not even head out to pack their meals and let Wang Fugui run their errands for them. After eating, Wang Fugui would still have to wash their crockery for them. He couldn't get any more lowly than that.

While the reinforced troops were playing cards at night, Wang Fugui brought over several cups of hot water for them. As a result, one of the soldiers who was not paying attention took an immediate sip and scalded his tongue.

He flew into a rage on the spot and pushed Wang Fugui over. "Shouldn't you at least remind me that the water is hot?"

Wang Fugui let him pour the water over him before jumping back on his feet. He smiled and said, "It was my fault. I'll go and pour you some warm water right away."

Gradually, Wang Fugui turned into the representative of the refugees in the eyes of the reinforced troops. Whatever instructions they had for the refugees would be relayed through him.

When the first barrack in the refugee camp was completed, Wang Fugui immediately arranged for Ren Xiaosu and the others to move in first. The reinforced troops did not say anything even though they knew about it. This was the outcome that Wang Fugui had been striving for.

Although the barrack was pretty badly constructed, it was not easy to have a place where they could take shelter from the winter weather. Since their group had so many wounded, they definitely had to think of ways to move in here.

After the reinforced troops left, some of the escapees stood outside the barrack and started scolding, "Does it feel good to be at the beck and call of the Yang Consortium's people? What gives you the right to move into the barracks first? We all finished building it together!"

But then Yan Liuyuan rushed out of the building. He kicked the person who had been speaking and stomped on him, making him cradle his stomach and cry out in pain.

How could anyone put up a resistance against Yan Liuyuan who was equipped with the nanomachines? Yan Liuyuan was holding a dagger in his hand and looking around coldly like he could kill someone at any moment.

Xiaoyu stood behind him at the barrack door and pointed at the crowd while scolding them, "If anyone dares to make up stories about Old Wang behind his back again, don't blame us for not being polite. We'll make sure you die for it!"

All of a sudden, the escapees remembered that this group of people were really ruthless and cold-blooded!

While resting at night, Ren Xiaosu called Wang Fugui over and said to him, "Old Wang, you don't have to do this. It's fine even if we have to sleep outside in the wilderness. You don't have to put yourself down like that."

Ren Xiaosu had already spoken to Wang Fugui about this several times. However, no one could stop him.

At night, Wang Fugui would agree not to do so anymore, but he would still go to the Yang Consortium's soldiers again the next day and subserviently pour drinks for them.

Ren Xiaosu clearly sensed that Wang Fugui was suffering on the inside, but Wang Fugui did not complain once about it.

Wang Fugui smiled cheerfully and said, "It's fine, this is what I'm good at."

Ren Xiaosu sighed and said, "It's not a matter of you being good at it or not. Although we have been through a lot of hardship together, we don't need anyone sacrificing their dignity like that."

Wang Fugui said calmly, "In order to escape, all of you ended up getting hurt so badly. Back when we were fleeing, even the students were willing to step forward with grenades to fight the Experimentals. But I treasure my life too much since I can't die as I still have Dalong to take care of. So then, what can I do? In our group, I'm the only one who can do the things I did. Xiaosu, you don't have to feel bad about it, I'm only doing what I have to. I can't do the things that y'all did for the group. So in turn, let me do what y'all can't do."

There was silence in the barrack. Everyone suddenly had the same thought at the same time. They were all thinking this was a family.

Chapter 298 A unique way of using curses

Construction work at the campsite still went on. Yan Liuyuan and the others who had been carrying logs during the day returned to the barracks exhausted again.

After several of the students that went to work returned, the first thing they did was to check how well they could control the nanomachines. As a matter of fact, physical exercise could really raise their synchronization rate. It might not be possible to see it after one or two days of exercise, but now that a week had passed, the difference was much more obvious.

And in just a week, their bodies had gotten much stronger as well.

Yan Liuyuan said while lying in the barracks, "Bro, although physical exercise can help us raise our synchronization rates, there's simply too much work for us to perform. It won't be good if we break down from fatigue either, so please help us think of a solution. The potatoes from the field ran out yesterday. Meanwhile, the grains the Yang Consortium have provided are only enough to cook a very thin porridge. If we don't have enough food, it's gonna be really dangerous for us.

The rations at the refugee camp were provided by the Yang Consortium. But how kind could the Yang Consortium be? It was enough that they allowed everyone here to cook their own porridge.

Fortunately, they had discovered a potato field a while ago, or the majority of the escapees would have already died of hunger.

But now, the potato field had also been fully harvested, as there were several thousand people in this refugee camp. All it took was two days for them to clear out an entire potato field. Many of the escapees started starving again yesterday.

Ren Xiaosu gave it some thought and said, "When you get to the construction site tomorrow, curse Li Qingzheng to get hit in the face by squirrel shit."

Yan Liuyuan was taken aback. "Bro, what's the point?"

"Then follow the squirrel and empty its nest out. I believe that will be enough for us to eat for a while." Ren Xiaosu patiently guided Yan Liuyuan on how to phrase his curses. "Remember, this curse of yours will definitely have backlash, so there will be two squirrels. You can empty the nest of two squirrels."

Yan Liuyuan went out to the site to work the next day feeling skeptical. But after he made the curse, a squirrel really shat onto Li Qingzheng's head two hours later.

Then another squirrel's feces dropped down towards Yan Liuyuan, but he managed to dodge it.

Li Qingzheng swore at the tree trunk while Yan Liuyuan activated his nanomachines and chased after the squirrels.

When he located the two squirrels' nests, he knew they wouldn't have it too difficult for the next two days. Squirrels stored a large amount of food for winter.

In the wilderness, plants and animals were all evolving. Gifts from nature often surpassed what humans were capable of imagining. With luck, one could even find peanuts that grew as long as two adult fingers.

Yan Liuyuan even wanted to catch the squirrel as well, but it got away as he was too inexperienced at hunting.

He took his jacket off and bundled up the dry fruit and carried it back to the construction site.

A woman immediately came over and said, "Handsome young man, can you share some of it with me? Let me have some to eat and I'll do whatever you want me to." She leaned towards Yan Liuyuan as she spoke.

However, Yan Liuyuan avoided her advances. Yan Liuyuan said coldly, "You'll do whatever I want?"

The woman smiled. "Of course!"

"Alright then," Yan Liuyuan said. "Go and carry the wooden logs for us. When you carry them back to the campsite, register it under Wang Yuchi's name. After that, you can come back here to collect the peanuts."

The woman was confused.

At this moment, Yan Liuyuan said loudly, "Whoever helps us carry one log can collect five large peanuts from me! There's limited stocks, so first come, first served!"

This was the plan Ren Xiaosu thought up for them. Since the workload was too great, they should let others do the work for them.

At times like this, the escapees would do anything just to have something to eat.

In this wilderness, whoever had food could do as they pleased.

But Ren Xiaosu specifically instructed that they were only allowed to reduce their workloads and could not take the opportunity to slack off. It might be possible that all of them would need to depend on the nanomachines in the future, so increasing their synchronization rates was a very important task.

As a result, Yan Liuyuan strictly implemented Ren Xiaosu's orders. Xiaoyu was smiling from nearby. "You two brothers still have the best solutions."

Ever since Ren Xiaosu regained consciousness, everyone's lives got better again. This was probably why a head of the family needed to exist.

Meanwhile, Yan Liuyuan had helped Ren Xiaosu endure through the most difficult days when he was unconscious.

Only under great pressure would there be growth.

Some people came over to Yan Liuyuan and tried to pull a fast one on him for some peanuts. But for a person as clever as Yan Liuyuan, how could he possibly get tricked so easily?

Some people came over and tried to snatch the peanuts from Yan Liuyuan only to find out that although Yan Liuyuan looked rather young, he could get extremely ruthless, and no one could beat him!

Anyone who tried to steal his food would be left lying on the ground for a long time. These people probably had the Yang Consortium's troops to thank for their supervision. Otherwise, they would probably have died.

Every night, Yan Liuyuan would go back to seek advice from Ren Xiaosu on how to curse his teammates the following day.

Ren Xiaosu also patiently guided him. "Just curse Li Qingzheng to trip over some radish leaves while walking."

"You can curse Li Qingzheng to get hit on the head by wild dates falling from trees while peeing."

"Curse Li Qingzheng to..."

In any case, nobody lacked food to eat since Ren Xiaosu regained consciousness.

Moreover, their heavy workload problem was also dealt with. The laborious work they did had now become a way for them to train their bodies. They no longer needed to toil away to complete their quota.

However, while the girls did not have to work as hard anymore, the students insisted on not reducing their work. They felt they might be able to increase their willpower by pushing themselves to a certain extent.

The refugee campsite was being constructed very fast. Several dozen barracks would get built in the matter of a day, and it was also during this process that the escapees started forming cliques.

After all, were several dozen barracks enough for all of them to live in? There were still many more of them who could not be housed.

Ren Xiaosu's group had kicked off the practice of calling dibs on moving into the barracks. After the first barrack was completed, the rest of the barracks that were finished would go to those who were more ruthless and had more power.

The reinforced troops would watch from the sidelines as two groups of escapees started fighting. They would even start betting among themselves on which side would end up getting the barracks.

For a while, these reinforced troops found a new source of entertainment.

After all, if the escapees started fighting among themselves, they wouldn't have the energy to cause any more trouble, and that was something the Yang Consortium's soldiers felt was good.

Yan Liuyuan said to Ren Xiaosu, "The escapees are now split between several groups of people. One group consists of those who are more ruthless, so they managed to gain a foothold rather quickly and the other escapees are all afraid of them. Another group consists of those who were former officials in the stronghold. Many of the escapees think that as long as they support them, they'll stand to gain something once the Li Consortium comes back into power. The last group is made up of normal refugees who are just honest people sticking together for their own safety."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "There's no need to be afraid of them, but don't go around picking on them either."

Yan Liuyuan mumbled quietly, "They're all from the stronghold, so why can't we pick on... Alright, alright, I'll keep that in mind."

Chapter 299 The might of poker!

Yan Liuyuan's Curse Manipulation had somehow been turned into a unique production method by Ren Xiaosu. That caused Yan Liuyuan to subconsciously get the idea that he had to arrange for some food to be found whenever he wanted to curse the other refugees.

Under these circumstances where everyone else was unaware of what was really going on, Li Qingzheng had suddenly become their group's mascot.

Regarding Yan Liuyuan's power, Ren Xiaosu decided that it was still better to keep it from everyone for now, because this power was simply too strange. Even he couldn't understand it.

Sometimes, such abstract powers would make people even more fearful. So Ren Xiaosu reminded Yan Liuyuan to keep it a secret. This matter would only be known to Yan Liuyuan, Ren Xiaosu, and Xiaoyu.

As such, Li Qingzheng was rather puzzled. Could he really be the legendary lucky charm of the group? How else could he always end up getting associated with finding food after suffering from some bad luck events?

Logically speaking, if a supernatural being discovered they could manipulate curses, they would definitely use it offensively.

Even Yan Liuyuan thought so, as that was only logical. However, he had underestimated Ren Xiaosu's way of thinking...

When he returned to the barracks after work at night, a leader of the refugees came around to look for Yan Liuyuan and said, "You're very good at finding food. Have you considered joining us?"

Yan Liuyuan became unhappy right there and then. "You're the fucking one who's good at finding food!"

What he had was clearly a terrifying power to manipulate curses, alright? So how did it suddenly turn into a wilderness survival skill instead?

That leader of the refugees choked in shock. If it were any of the stronghold's escapees, they would definitely choose to avoid Yan Liuyuan. However, the refugees were different. They had been fighting

for survival all their lives, so they could feel that Yan Liuyuan was one of them when they saw him and were not really afraid to approach him. In fact, this leader of the refugees was famous for his ruthlessness back in town.

The refugee leader smiled and said, "I am Cao Junpeng, so you can call me Brother Cao. In times like these, we have to stick together in order to survive. You have so many women in your group, and you're even saddled with wounded as well, so how long do you expect you can keep going on for? Surely they're not going to rely on you alone to get through everything, right?"

To outsiders, Ren Xiaosu's group seemed to be relying on Yan Liuyuan for support. This was because Yan Liuyuan was the one handling all the dirty work that required him to be ruthless.

However, Yan Liuyuan sneered and said, "Brother Cao? Do you think you're worthy of me calling you that? There's only one person in this world who is fit to be my brother."

Cao Junpeng said calmly, "You're talking about that crippled brother of yours? He might have been very strong in the past, but I heard from the doctor that there are several places where his bones are fractured. Do you still expect him to stand up in the future? Even if he does, he will still be a good-for-nothing in life. Listen to me, you can't be impulsive in a world like this. You will get dragged down by him."

Then Cao Junpeng jumped five or six steps back when he saw Yan Liuyuan pull out a dagger from his sleeve.

Yan Liuyuan calmly said, "Bastard, how can you be so ignorant? You don't look like a good person anyway. Don't think that just because the refugees look up to you it means that you're really some important person!"

Yan Liuyuan hated hearing others badmouth Ren Xiaosu the most in his life. In his mind, he had already sentenced Cao Junpeng to death. Ren Xiaosu was inside the barracks all this while, so he could definitely hear what Cao Junpeng said. So how could Yan Liuyuan allow others to speak badly of Ren Xiaosu like that?

Everyone knew that Ren Xiaosu was Yan Liuyuan's brother. The doctor who had treated Ren Xiaosu was a gossip, so the other refugees were probably aware that Ren Xiaosu was going to be crippled.

But only Ren Xiaosu and the others knew who the actual person in charge of their group was. Would Ren Xiaosu become disabled? Of course not!

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu said from inside the barracks, "Liuyuan, how can you speak to others like that? Apologize."

Yan Liuyuan smiled at Cao Junpeng and said, "Sorry, I shouldn't have said that you don't look like a good person. You look pretty good."

But just as he finished saying that, he heard Ren Xiaosu say, "I told you to apologize; I didn't ask you to lie."

"Oh." Yan Liuyuan said, "I was mistaken."

Cao Junpeng sneered. "How many of you are there? Do you really think we won't dare to touch you? You're already behaving so disrespectfully at such a young age. We'll see each other on the construction site tomorrow. After you're dead, let's see what happens to your brother. And those girls in your group?

They'll probably lead a life worse than death when the time comes!"

Although the troops did not intervene with fights that took place at the campsite, killing people was prohibited. If anyone killed someone, they would be severely beaten up and have their workload doubled as a punishment. But there was no such rule at the construction site!

When Yan Liuyuan returned to the barracks, Ren Xiaosu said, "Don't worry, I'll handle it."

Yan Liuyuan was taken aback for a moment. He knew the other party's threatening words had crossed Ren Xiaosu's bottom line. If it were the past, Cao Junpeng would have died on the spot. But how was Ren Xiaosu going to solve this matter?

Ren Xiaosu moved his hands and feet to loosen up a little. Although it had only been less than ten days, his fractured bones had already started healing. While he could not exercise vigorously yet, he could just barely walk with assistance from the nanomachines.

Ren Xiaosu said, "When I cause some chaos later tonight, we'll find an opportunity to leave this place. Liuyuan, keep an eye on the situation outside."

Yan Liuyuan's eyes lit up. "Sure!"

During the night, Cao Junpeng and the others were plotting something. A few refugees were seated together and playing Fight the Landlord with playing cards handed down to them by the reinforced troops. It was unknown how long the reinforced troops had been using the cards as they were in a very tattered state.

But to the refugees, it was good enough that they could play cards during such times.

If they wanted to form an alliance within the refugee camp, they had to first have a good relationship with the Yang Consortium's soldiers. Otherwise, it would be considered an unlawful assembly and they would be punished for causing trouble. A few days ago, Cao Junpeng had caught two pheasants and sent them to the reinforced troops as a tribute. That was why he was allowed to form his own group, while the playing cards were also given to him at that time. It was like he was bestowed a gift by them.

Cao Junpeng said, "When we get to the construction site tomorrow, we'll drag that kid into the forest and kill him while the soldiers aren't paying attention. Remember, cover his mouth and don't let him call for help. Wang Fugui is on very good terms with the soldiers too, so we don't want any trouble."

"Isn't that Wang Fugui just a lackey who serves tea to the soldiers? What's there to be afraid of?" A man shouted out loudly, "One 'three'!"

Only three people could play at once, so the rest of the followers sat around to watch and listen to them. The inside of the barracks was filled with the stench of feet.

"One 'four.'" Cao Junpeng drew a card and played it onto the table.

But at this moment, a hand suddenly reached in from the side and threw out four "threes" onto the table.

Cao Junpeng immediately cursed. "I only played a four, but you actually played four 'threes'?! Do you even know how to play? Huh? And didn't three already get played? So where did these four 'threes' come from? You're freaking cheating!"

"Eh, something's not right. I wasn't the one who played these cards," someone said.

Cao Junpeng looked around and asked, "Who threw out these four 'threes'?"

But at this moment, the four "threes" on the table suddenly turned brighter and hotter as well!

With a loud boom, the newly built wooden barracks had its ceiling blown sky high. It was like they were chicken casserole baking in a pot. No one could get away from the explosion!

When Ren Xiaosu heard the voices outside, he suddenly said to Wang Fugui and the others around him, "Get ready to run!"

Chapter 300 We were only playing Fight the Landlord!

According to Ren Xiaosu's plan, he would create some chaos on the refugees' side while they took the opportunity to escape.

After all, it was no longer safe to stay at this place. Ren Xiaosu had already planned on leaving the moment he could start walking again.

They could not head north now since they did not have any status. With the roads to the north full of the Yang Consortium's troops, they would not be able to pass through the checkpoints for sure. They couldn't head east either as the Experimentals were still there. It was even more impossible to go south. That place had now become the main battlefield for the Yang Consortium, Li Consortium, and Qing Consortium!

After the Yang Consortium and Qing Consortium successfully broke through the first layer of defense, they immediately joined forces and closed down on the south. That left the Li Consortium in a sorry state.

Therefore, they could only head west where there was a mountain range that stretched for hundreds of kilometers. It was said that very few people could pass through it, and no one knew what was in there.

But that was the only direction left for Ren Xiaosu and company to take. At least, they should be able to rely on the power of the Brambles and survive there for a few years.

But when the sound of the explosion rang out, the Yang Consortium's troops arrived at the scene too quickly. The two reinforced companies seemed to have already prepared a contingency plan for such situations. The perimeter spotlights instantly lit up around the entire camp, and the soldiers that were patrolling immediately placed the campsite under strict lockdown.

Ren Xiaosu stood at the door and frowned. The Yang Consortium's military standard was much better than he had imagined. It was no wonder they could win against the Li Consortium head-on in battle.

It looked like the Yang Consortium had been preparing for this war for a long time.

At this moment, the Yang Consortium's officers arrived at the site of the explosion. Ren Xiaosu quietly observed from the periphery while the other refugees stood far away and did not dare to get close. It had been very peaceful at the campsite, so who could have expected such an accident to suddenly occur?

However, what surprised Ren Xiaosu was that not all of the people in their barracks had died. There was still one person who was lying on the ground gasping and shouting for help!

It seemed that the power of the four "threes" was still somewhat limited. Ren Xiaosu sighed. However, he was not worried about anyone linking him to the incident just because there was a fortunate survivor who might be able to offer some clues.

The combination of the Shadow Door and Explosive Poker cards was simply a super stealthy explosive weapon. Within a radius of a kilometer, he could cause an explosion to whoever or whatever he disliked.

The precision of which the Shadow Door could be controlled had been reduced to a distance of less than a meter by Ren Xiaosu, so there was practically no margin of error anymore.

Counting all the powers that he had now, the combination of his shadow clone and the City Crusher would allow him to execute head-on attacks. The Shadow Door and the Explosive Poker cards were useful for carrying out long-distance sneak attacks. Then there was the technique of stabbing people in the back too. On the whole, there were no obvious shortcomings.

A Yang Consortium officer stood next to the survivor and asked, "Why was there an explosion? Were you all secretly hiding weapons from us? Out with it, are you all enemy spies?"

The power of the explosion just now was comparable to two hand grenades. Although the explosion did not sound like it, it could mean that it was some other explosive weapon.

Since this was wartime, the Yang Consortium soldiers linked the incident to foreign spies, although they did not understand why the bomb would explode.

The survivor shouted, claiming innocence, "Sir, we're not spies. I was just watching them play Fight the Landlord just now. But suddenly, someone played a 'bomb' made of four 'threes' and it ended up exploding."

The survivor felt like something was not right with the officer's expression. The officer got so angry he laughed. "You're saying you were watching the others play Fight the Landlord, and then a 'quad three' bomb was played and it ended up exploding?"

The survivor nodded frantically. "Yes, yes, yes! That's exactly what happened. In fact, someone already played a three earlier, so I don't know where the four 'threes' came from...."

"Would you like to tell me all the cards that were played?" the officer said expressionlessly.

"I can't remember..."

"Hah!" The officer said with a dark expression, "Do you think I'm easy to bluff? Drag him away and interrogate him through the night. Find out if he still has accomplices in the camp! As for all of the other refugees, get them to lay where the sentries can see them and have them start doing push-ups!"

Ren Xiaosu listened to everything from the sidelines. He knew what the survivor had said sounded absurd, but it was truly what happened.

"Bro," Yan Liuyuan said, "what should we do?"

"If there's no chance, we'll just have to wait for one. You should also make observations of the terrain around the construction site these next few days." Ren Xiaosu said, "There might be an opportunity if we go through there."

The construction site was in the wilderness. If it were only Ren Xiaosu and Yan Liuyuan, they would have fled long ago. But many more others were in the group, with over 30 of them in total. If they were to escape together, the size of their group would be too noticeable, while the girls and the wounded might also get caught at any moment.

Yan Liuyuan thought for a moment and said, "The chances of escaping through the construction site are slim as well. That is, unless you fully recover; then we can kill our way out with everyone."

"That will be our last resort," Ren Xiaosu said. Ren Xiaosu then went back to the barracks and continued lying down pretending to be injured. Well, it wasn't actually pretending since he was really injured.

Although they couldn't get a chance to escape this time, it was still good that they got rid of a latent problem. After all, those refugees were wild in nature and had developed an aggressiveness brought on by the wilderness, so there was really a chance they could threaten the people around Ren Xiaosu.

Then that survivor was taken away by the Yang Consortium's soldiers to see the reinforced companies' commander. The survivor suddenly shouted, "Sir, I suspect that it was Yan Liuyuan and the others who did it. Our boss got into an argument with him earlier tonight and was thinking of killing them at the construction site tomorrow, but we allowed them to gain the upper hand in the end. That must be what happened."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned for a moment in the barracks. That guy was not stupid since he managed to guess the truth. Oh, that shouldn't be it. It must have been his fear kicking in that caused him to

senselessly start accusing others, while Ren Xiaosu and company were indeed the prime suspects for this matter.

The Yang Consortium's officer looked suspiciously at Yan Liuyuan and the others. When he saw Wang Fugui, he froze and said, "So you all did it?"

Wang Fugui quickly faked a smile and said, "Sir, he's slandering us. We didn't even leave the building. You can ask those around us. We're so far away from their barracks, so if it was us who did it, we would've been seen moving around there."

The officer looked around and said, "Did anyone see them near the explosion? Be honest and you'll be rewarded. You won't have to perform hard labor in the future!"

However, the offer was met with the sound of silence all around, although someone did say that they only saw Wang Fugui and the others coming out of their barracks when the explosion happened.

Wang Fugui was someone the soldiers were familiar with. No matter how cold they were, they would still trust a person they knew. Furthermore, others also testified for him, so Wang Fugui's credibility greatly increased.

The officer sneered at the survivor. "I don't care how many lies you're telling right now. There'll be plenty of ways to make you tell the truth later!"

The survivor was almost in tears. All he had done was to watch others play Fight the Landlord!

However, after the officer brought the survivor back, he gave the matter a bit more thought and instructed, "Keep a closer eye on Wang Fugui and his group. Inform me immediately if there's anything suspicious."