

Chapter 351 Dumbfounded!

Xu Jinyuan was absolutely reluctant to work, especially when it was something like digging for silt. It felt extremely degrading to him.

Seeing his companions that came with him to the settlement already starting to seriously work for the bullets, he was still hesitant and did not want to work.

Xu Jinyuan observed Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin in silence. After all, these two legendary supernatural beings were his top priority. As a low-level bandit who had just joined them, he thought it would be difficult to meet these two supernatural beings and interact with them. However, he was wrong.

Over the past few days, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin had been working together with everyone. No matter how dirty or tired they were, they never complained once.

Xu Jinyuan was a little puzzled by this. How could they possibly be supernatural beings? So these were the specialists from Stronghold 178? How could they be this humble?

However, his pained face served as a reminder that he could not afford to offend the two.

Xu Jinyuan asked Jin Lan quietly, "Brother Jin Lan, the two of them are just putting on an act, yet y'all still believe them? The big shots are just playing a child's game here, so how can you trust them?"

Jin Lan gave him a look of disdain and said, "Our two lords are not putting on an act. We're not idiots. If they were just pretending, couldn't we tell? As for you, you only know how to laze around and not work. You're not allowed to eat the corn that's given by our fellow villagers today!"

Xu Jinyuan was speechless. What the fuck was that!

Xu Jinyuan said unhappily, "You're a fucking bandit. What're you being so proud of when all you're doing is farming?!"

Jin Lan shot him a look and sneered, "It's not disgraceful if we work hard to fill our stomachs! But it's a disgrace if all you know is how to be a lazy bum!"

Xu Jinyuan thought it over seriously. "That does make sense..." 'Wait! Who the fuck are you calling a lazy bum!'

However, Xu Jinyuan had been observing Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin for a long time. He had been spending all his energy on observing them. In the end, he realized the two of them were not pretending. They could really take the suffering.

In fact, Xu Jinyuan was starting to believe the identities of Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin. It would be great if he could really be recruited by Stronghold 178 too, but somehow he felt it was a little unreal. Besides, his other brothers to the north were still waiting for his news. What should he choose?

The people who came here with a purpose would always be more difficult to convince than the others. That was because they already had an objective from the start.

At this moment, someone shouted, "I need a few people over here. Boss said that those who help build the houses will receive 15 bullets each!"

Xu Jinyuan saw the people around him running over in an instant. Jin Lan was roaring, "Don't anyone dare fight me!"

Xu Jinyuan followed right behind and muttered, "Has everyone gone fucking crazy?"

When they reached the refugee settlement, the black bricks were piled up off to one side. However, someone said, "But where are we gonna get mortar from?"

At first, everyone thought that building a brick house only required some beams, a roof, and bricks. However, they now remembered they had forgotten to make the cement mortar.

It was available in the stronghold, but they couldn't possibly go there and buy it, right?

Nearby, Ren Xiaosu said dumbfoundedly, "Do any of you have any experience in building a house?"

The refugees and bandits shook their heads. "We've never built a brick house before. We have been living in mud huts all our lives."

Ren Xiaosu asked loudly, "Does anyone know? There'll be a reward of 20 bullets if anyone does, so if you have the know-how, please don't keep quiet!"

Everyone looked at one another. Although they really wanted to earn those 20 bullets, they really did not know how to build houses.

Suddenly, Xu Jinyuan said, "A very gooey mixture^[1] of sticky rice mortar, lime, and hemp fibers can be used as an adhesive to fill the gaps between the bricks. It won't crack even after a decade or two."

Ren Xiaosu's eyes lit up. "What about the proportions? What's the ratio for each of the ingredients? Did you used to work in construction?"

"I used to build houses for the richer families in town. Y'all can source the materials first. I'll adjust the proportions later. It's not difficult to find them out here in the wastelands., Xu Jinyuan said aloofly. He was not doing this for the 20 bullets, but because he felt that these refugees were so stupid that they did not even know a simple thing like that.

Suddenly, Jin Lan walked over and thumped him on the chest. Xu Jinyuan was about to fly into a rage when Jin Lan smiled and said, "Great one, bro! Awesome!"

Ren Xiaosu led the applause. "C'mon, let's thank our brother here. What's your name?"

"Xu Jinyuan?"

“Alright, you’ll be the leader of the construction team of our settlement from now on!” Ren Xiaosu casually appointed him.

Xu Jinyuan’s mind was in a daze as he looked at the people around him who were giving him looks of approval. He suddenly recalled what Jin Lan had said to him: “It’s not disgraceful if we work hard to fill our stomachs.”

Ren Xiaosu went to get 20 bullets and handed them to Xu Jinyuan. “Well done, bro!”

Xu Jinyuan looked at the bullets. They felt rather heavy in his hand. When he saw the others looking at him in envy, he suddenly felt a tinge of the happiness Jin Lan and the others felt when they earned their bullets.

While they were building the houses, some of the refugees brought over sweet potatoes, corn, and other food to them. As their living conditions here were bad, potatoes, sweet potatoes, and corn were their staple foods.

A female refugee was praising Xu Jinyuan as she stuffed food into his arms, “I’ve watched you since the first day you arrived. At first glance, I could tell that you’re a learned person.”

Here, those who could build houses were considered learned.

Just as Xu Jinyuan was about to deny that he was a learned person, he was stopped by Ren Xiaosu, who said with a smile, “You’re a learned person if you can use your knowledge to help everyone. Knowledge should be used to change the world, and you’re changing the world right now.”

These bold claims lavished sky-high praise onto Xu Jinyuan.

When he didn’t do any work previously, all of the other bandits disliked and despised him. But after he displayed his abilities, these fucking bandits started to address him warmly as “Brother Xu” every day when they saw him.

Xu Jinyuan was unused to the huge difference in treatment.

Meanwhile, this gang of bandits was turning from a scattered bunch into a unified force.

They would come to share the same values and gain a mysterious thing called faith in the time they would be spending together. But of course, it was still quite far from that day.

Half a month quickly passed.

Xu Jinyuan was thinking as he chewed on the delicious corn cob in his hands. What was he here for? He had come here to gain the trust of this gang of bandits, to get a better understanding of their current situation, then get back their weapons, and plan with the other bandits in the north to destroy this entire settlement.

But what did he end up doing? He had been building houses every day!

Not only that, he had also dug for silt, helped the refugees sow seeds, and eaten their corn.

A female refugee had taken a liking to him and kept dragging him into her mud hut, but Xu Jinyuan used a great deal of effort to control himself.

As a notorious bandit from the north, how could he stay here just because of romance and corn?

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu shouted in the distance, "Come and help carry bricks. You can earn a bullet for every 30 bricks carried."

Xu Jinyuan counted his bullets and quickly finished eating the corn in his hands in three bites. "I'm coming. Brothers, don't fight me to carry those bricks! I've almost collected enough bullets!"

Chapter 352 Seeds of faith

With the bandits gathering here, the previously isolated refugee settlement suddenly became much livelier.

Although one of the bandits stole some dried corn on the cob from a refugee's house during this period, the refugee did not say anything when they discovered the theft. Instead, it was Ren Xiaosu who gave the guy a good beating and even confiscated his bullets.

That refugee had even asked Ren Xiaosu to be merciful, and this made the bandit who got beaten up extremely ashamed.

After that, such things never happened again.

On the other hand, some refugees were still bullying their fellow refugees. They would go to their houses and act like punks while mooching off on their food. In the end, when Jin Lan and the others could no longer bear to watch, they beat up those punks and dragged them off to the other bandits to reform them.

These punks might be capable of bullying the refugees, but going against the bandits was something none of them even dared to think of.

The brick houses were rapidly taking shape. The bandits were all full of strength and could work extremely fast as well.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Xu Jinyuan, who was supervising the construction of a house. Off to the side, a female refugee was looking at him lovingly. Ren Xiaosu turned around and asked Yang Xiaojin, "He's one of those that you said was problematic, right?"

"Mhm." Yang Xiaojin nodded. "But it seems like he no longer has any ulterior motives."

Yang Xiaojin had been wondering if this group of people would cause them any trouble and had been spying on them. At the time, she was wondering why Ren Xiaosu was not worried. In the end, she realized her worries had been unnecessary. She could see that Xu Jinyuan was now looking forward to trading for bullets every day.

This time, they managed to build 12 houses in one go. In this desolate wasteland, brick houses were once again rising up from the ground. When Ren Xiaosu saw all of this, he felt a swirl of emotions. The sturdy brick houses were a symbol of the continuation of human civilization.

The houses were about 28 square meters each. One single structure required around 1,900 bricks to build, and more than ten people could live in it.

Although there were still too few houses compared to the number of people they had, the second batch of bricks were already being fired. When they took them out in another two days, they could continue building the houses.

Jin Lan and Zhang Yiheng were bragging to the refugees yesterday, saying they were going to build houses for everyone to live in.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu asked him while laughing: "By the time y'all've collected enough bullets, do you still want to continue building houses?"

Embarrassed, Jin Lan said, "We can't just watch our fellow villagers continue living in those mud huts, can we? And there's so many children as well. It gets very damp in the shelters, and that isn't good for their health."

Zhang Yiheng added, "We can even build a school, a factory..."

Ren Xiaosu chuckled. "Why the hell would we build a factory? We don't even have the tech to run one!"

"What if we gain the tech in the future?" Zhang Yiheng mumbled.

Then Ren Xiaosu walked over to those brick houses that were just built. He told Jin Lan, "Count how many bullets everyone has."

It had been more than twenty days since the bandits started working, so a lot of them should have accumulated enough bullets by now. After counting for a long time, Jin Lan scratched his head and said, "Because some new brothers have just joined us, we shared our bullets evenly between them. So everyone still has two to three more bullets to go. We should have enough by tomorrow after one more day of making bricks."

It was the arrival of the new bandits that had delayed everyone's progress. Otherwise, they would have accumulated enough bullets through their additional work in carrying bricks, mixing clay, and sowing seeds.

Fortunately for them, no new bandits had joined recently, with their total number here controlled at around 400 people. Of course, there were also some bandits who'd escaped, but there were only a few of them.

Ren Xiaosu had mentioned to Yang Xiaojin that some of the bandit gangs to the north must have already started heading south. It couldn't have been more than ten days since new bandits came by to their settlement.

Therefore, they were very likely going to fight the gangs from the north to see who would be the victor.

It was at this moment that Yang Xiaojin recalled that they were actually here to exterminate the bandits.

But now was not the time to think about that. Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "You haven't included the bullets that are gonna be given out for building the houses today. I said before that everyone who helps build houses will get 15 bullets each. We keep our promises."

When he said that, Jin Lan and the others grew excited. After working so hard for more than twenty days, their efforts were finally paying off!

If Ren Xiaosu had returned to them their guns at the start, they would definitely not be this excited, because those guns were theirs to begin with, and they were even given by other forces for free.

But it was different now. Saving a 100 bullets and trading them for a gun was like an honor they earned. The reason they were so excited was not because of the gun, but because it meant they had earned the right to bear arms in this settlement.

This right felt worth a lot of money. In the past, they had never been so happy or proud even after robbing the passing merchants. That was because they had earned this right today through their sweat.

Ren Xiaosu had Jin Lan's people bring over all the firearms. "What do y'all plan to do when you receive your guns?"

Jin Lan said excitedly, "We'll go robbing, of course! There's hundreds of us now, and we're so united. We can absolutely dominate the entire south!"

Jin Lan was not bragging either. After all, some of the bandit gangs to the north were still very fearsome.

Ren Xiaosu was silent for a moment. He pointed to the refugees who were watching them from the sidelines and said, "Robbery? Are y'all gonna rob people like them?"

When the crowd of refugees heard this, they were stunned. Jin Lan hurriedly explained, "We aren't gonna rob y'all. Why would we rob you?"

"But there's still a lot of people just like them." Ren Xiaosu said, "They also have children and wives."

Xu Jinyuan wondered, "Then why would we carry guns?"

"To protect them," Ren Xiaosu said with a smile. He pointed at the female refugee who had been hooking up with Xu Jinyuan every day and said, "To protect Xiaocui, to protect the villagers, and to protect your families."

Xu Jinyuan stopped talking. Bashful, Xiaocui was making eyes at him.

Ren Xiaosu picked up a gun and handed it to Xu Jinyuan with both hands. "After you take this gun, we'll become comrades, brothers, and family."

Xu Jinyuan took the gun hesitantly. Next up were the visibly excited Jin Lan and Zhang Yiheng.

Holding the cold and unfeeling guns in their arms, it felt like they were hugging a treasure. Jin Lan said to the villagers, "Don't worry. With me around, no bandits will be able to snatch y'all away!"

Yang Xiaojin watched all of this quietly from the side. Looking at the youth who was like the main character on a stage, she thought about how she had once mentioned it would be very difficult to make this gang of bandits find faith, and how it would be good enough to just unite them. But to her surprise, after a little more than twenty days had passed, a herd mentality had silently formed. On top of that, a belief to "protect" had also silently been born.

There were no grand speeches of loyalty, and all Ren Xiaosu transmitted to the bandits was the belief to protect. Protect their own assets, protect their families, and protect their friends. Everything should be done from the perspective of guarding their own interests.

There was no need to uphold world peace. That had nothing to do with them.

But of course, be it the strength, will, or faith of this group, they were just tiny seeds that had been planted in them.

If they were to be separated from a strong individual such as Ren Xiaosu and let go of the rope that was holding them together, they would probably break down quickly and go back to leading their own lives. Or if they encountered a strong opponent now, it would also be enough to deal them a quick defeat.

But Yang Xiaojin felt that it was very impressive that Ren Xiaosu could plant these seeds.

Chapter 353 Family

Yang Xiaojin tilted her head and looked at Ren Xiaosu. For the past two days, she had been thinking about what kind of house she should build for herself here.

She couldn't squeeze in with the other bandits, right? Could they build a bigger one then? For example, they could have a kitchen and maybe a small front yard as well, and Ren Xiaosu could go into the wilderness to hunt some pigs and wild chickens to domesticate them. Perhaps they could even rear a cow or two.

Thinking of this, Yang Xiaojin was also starting to look forward to tomorrow when the new bricks were ready.

However, she reckoned she would have to wait a while longer for her house to be built. After all, not everyone in the settlement had a brick house. Since Ren Xiaosu wanted to set an example for the others, she didn't mind suffering with him.

However, she was curious as to what target Ren Xiaosu would set for them next to hold them together now that the guns had been issued.

Then she heard Ren Xiaosu say, "Starting tomorrow, we'll keep making bricks. For the next batch of bricks from the kiln, we'll build our defenses with them."

Jin Lan muttered, "And I thought we wouldn't have to work anymore."

Although Ren Xiaosu was working hard to change their thinking, old habits die hard. To Jin Lan and the others, they felt they should be going on a killing and pillaging spree if they had guns. Even if they were no longer keen on killing and pillaging, they shouldn't need to keep working.

Ren Xiaosu spoke up, "From tomorrow onwards, every 200 bullets earned will allow you to trade for a motorcycle."

Jin Lan, Zhang Yiheng, and the others looked at the brand-new motorcycles with a sparkle in their eyes. They had not touched the motorcycles since they arrived at this settlement.

All men loved things that exuded strength, and vehicles were one of those things. Be it a two-wheeled motorcycle or a four-wheeled car, the purring of the engines were just like a roar from their hearts. It was an enjoyable and pleasurable feeling.

Xu Jinyuan was a little hesitant. Should he also quickly get more work done so he could trade his bullets for a motorcycle? He was a skilled worker too, so he could definitely trade for one much faster than the others.

The next morning, Ren Xiaosu walked along the river after waking up. The spring floods would last for quite a while, and the hotter the weather, the wider the river would get.

By summer, the river that seemed to flow for forever would become a lifeline for humanity's survival as it stretched across the wastelands.

Ren Xiaosu continued walking straight towards the settlement. Today was the day the bricks would be taken out of the kiln. The bandits felt that the progress of using only one brick kiln to fire the bricks was a little slow, so they decided to construct a new and even bigger one.

Someone asked Jin Lan why they needed to make so many bricks. The houses would be finished sooner or later, and afterwards, would the brick kilns be of any use?

Jin Lan said mysteriously, "What if a Stronghold 179 suddenly gets built here?"

The question of why Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin had come here had been on the bandits' minds for a while now. After analyzing it for some time, everyone wondered if Stronghold 178 was planning to extend its influence inland. Wasn't this vast and empty valley a very good choice to start?

No consortiums had built a stronghold here because this unincorporated zone was just too sensitive an area. No one would agree to the construction of a stronghold here by any of the other factions.

But if a powerful organization like Stronghold 178 were to take action, the Yang Consortium, which was currently engaged in war, might not be able to stop them. Meanwhile, the Northern Waste's Zong

Consortium was no match for Stronghold 178. Although the location was not exactly ideal, the opportunity was!

Furthermore, if Stronghold 178 wanted to export their mine reserves inland, the valley was an unavoidable region that they needed to pass through!

When they thought of this, Jin Lan and the others felt like they understood what was going on.

Throughout this, everyone would greet each other warmly as “brothers” whenever they saw one another. It was as though they had really become family after Ren Xiaosu’s speech.

Some people really believed it, while others were still skeptical. But in light of the overall situation, those who did not believe it could not say much either.

At the moment, the bandits who came here with Xu Jinyuan were just watching in silence. They did not believe anything that was said.

Someone counted the days and estimated there wasn’t much time left until the window their leader had set for them. At the agreed time, they were to secretly head out into the wilderness tonight and report back to their leader about the attack plan. Afterwards, they would launch a surprise attack on the settlement the following night.

“Brother Xu, let’s prepare to leave.” Someone said to Xu Jinyuan, “Tonight...”

Xu Jinyuan gave him a look and said, “What are you talking about? How can I leave my family?”

The bandits under him were confused. ‘What fucking family! Are you fucking crazy?!’

At first, everyone thought Xu Jinyuan was just kidding. But when they got serious again, they realized Xu Jinyuan was absolutely not kidding!

Hurt, one of the bandits said, “Brother Xu, didn’t you say that you didn’t buy their antics out here?”

Xu Jinyuan sighed and said, “Will we come to a good end by being bandits? Have you heard of any bandits who get to enjoy their later years?”

Everyone carefully considered this and realized it was true.

Xu Jinyuan continued, “Y’all’ve interacted with Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin as well. Let’s ignore whether they might really be from Stronghold 178. What do you think of them when compared to our previous leader?”

“On strength, there’s supernatural beings on both sides,” the bandit analyzed. “But there’s two of them here.”

“On conduct, it’s way more comfortable here.” Someone said, “At our previous place, the atmosphere could get quite oppressive. Usually, we don’t even dare to sigh too loudly.”

Xu Jinyuan nodded. “What about here?”

“It’s just like being around family here. We can joke, we can work together...”

“So let’s not talk about anything else for now. Which side do y’all like better?” Xu Jinyuan said, “Do you really think that I’ve been taken in by them? No, it’s just that Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin have let me see a glimmer of hope.”

Xu Jinyuan looked at Jin Lan and Zhang Yiheng, who were moving bricks in the distance. Did these bandits choose to stay here because they were brainwashed? No, it was because they saw something called hope, so they willingly believed in the razzle-dazzle.

If this razzle-dazzle could bring everyone a good life in the future, then would it still be considered a lie?

Xu Jinyuan had lost much sleep over this before finally arriving at his decision.

“Then are we not gonna make a plan with the others to attack this settlement?” someone probed.

“Mhm.” Xu Jinyuan nodded. “I’ll find an opportunity to tell Boss about this later and warn him to be on guard against any sneak attacks.”

Someone asked, “But if he learns that we came here as spies, will he start shunning US?”

Xu Jinyuan was taken aback. He took a deep breath and said, “I believe that he won’t.”

Then Xu Jinyuan walked to where Ren Xiaosu was. He thought he could convince all his brothers to stay behind, but someone still ran away in secret. Before leaving, that bandit even said, “Although I also think this place is great, just look at how everyone else doesn’t even know how to use a gun. When the leader gets here, this place will be blown to dust overnight. I don’t wanna die!”

The others looked at one another, unable to come to a decision themselves.

When Xu Jinyuan walked up to Ren Xiaosu and was hesitating to speak, Ren Xiaosu turned his head to him and asked with a smile, “When are those bandits attacking

US?”

Chapter 354 Wang Congyang

“You already knew about it, didn’t you?” Xu Jinyuan said with mixed feelings. In deciding to tell Ren Xiaosu about this matter, he suffered from sleeplessness the entire night.

In fact, he was still worried that Ren Xiaosu would kill him on the spot when he found out the truth.

Although he had said to his brothers “I believe that he won’t,” he wasn’t actually sure.

But he realized at this moment that Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin had already known about the secret he was hiding.

Yang Xiaojin stood next to Ren Xiaosu and looked at Xu Jinyuan while saying, "You guys deliberately scratched away the logos on your motorcycles, didn't you? That wasn't exactly clever, was it?"

"But that's not enough to suggest anything," said Xu Jinyuan, pursing his lips.

"Ever since y'all arrived, there haven't been any bandits coming here from the north." Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Someone in the north must've already unified all the bandits at Mt. Daban, Mt. Tangwang, and Mt. Guan, right?"

Xu Jinyuan said stubbornly, "Just because of that?"

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "We were bluffing."

Xu Jinyuan was dumbfounded. They were bluffing?

"Actually, we've been watching you for some time." Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "But it's only now that we've fully confirmed your identity."

"Then how are you gonna punish me?" Xu Jinyuan said in a low voice.

The punishments dished out to bandit traitors had always been very cruel. They wouldn't show any mercy.

Xu Jinyuan knew that if it were any other bandit leader, this would probably mean the end for him. But deep down, he felt that Ren Xiaosu was different!

Ren Xiaosu suddenly put out a hand to him and said, "Welcome to the team."

Xu Jinyuan heaved a sigh of relief. The young man in front of him was indeed different from the other bandit leaders. He said briefly, "We originally agreed to meet tonight to come up with an attack plan for tomorrow night. But one of the eleven guys I brought here ran away, so my previous gang will definitely know that I've leaked their plans."

"So there's a possibility that they might attack in advance." Ren Xiaosu said, "How many bandits does the gang to the north have? How many of them will be joining the attack?"

"They originally had 1,200 people, but it should have increased recently." Xu Jinyuan said, "But not all of them will come here because they still have to fight with two other gangs in the north. If they all come here together, the other bandit gangs will definitely take advantage of the situation. According to the plan that we had, 600 bandits will be showing up here."

In response, even Ren Xiaosu, who was already mentally prepared, gasped. The bandits in the valley had even fucking joined forces? How did they end up with so many people?!

Although not all of them would turn up for the attack, 600 bandits could still theoretically crush their refugee settlement.

Of course, that was only in theory.

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, "Which organization is the leader of the northern bandits from?"

Xu Jinyuan was taken aback for a moment. "I think he used to be from the Qing Consortium, but he has nothing to do with them now. Someone said that he escaped from Stronghold 113 and knows Xu Xianchu of Stronghold 178 as well. However, I've never seen him contact Xu Xianchu before, so maybe he only met him a couple times? Eh, don't you know Master Xu too? Maybe you know him as well?"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. Their leader escaped from Stronghold 113 and even knew Xu Xianchu? Could this be someone he knew? "What's his name?"

"Wang Congyang!"

"Damn..." Ren Xiaosu was surprised. He was not the only one who knew this man. Yang Xiaojin knew him as well.

Yang Xiaojin thought back and said, "Was he that man who was supposed to go with us on the expedition to the Jing Mountains?"

"That's him." Ren Xiaosu sighed. Enemies were always bound to meet. If Xu Jinyuan hadn't mentioned the name, Ren Xiaosu would have forgotten about this person.

Wang Congyang was a junior officer in the private army of Stronghold 113, and he was similarly ostracized by the organization like Xu Xianchu was. Wang Congyang had, in fact, worked together with Xu Xianchu, but they weren't friends.

Wang Congyang never stopped pursuing Ren Xiaosu after Ren Xiaosu had killed his relative, and importantly, Wang Congyang was a meticulous person. Even though Ren Xiaosu was very good at acting like he wasn't the one who killed the man, he still got targeted by Wang Congyang.

After that, Yan Liuyuan told Ren Xiaosu that even after he had set off to the Jing Mountains, Wang Congyang still persisted and even led a team to try to arrest him. If it weren't for Zhang Jinglin, Yan Liuyuan and the others would probably have been put in danger.

The cause of this grudge was because Ren Xiaosu had killed someone. However, Ren Xiaosu did not have any regrets about doing it. Since he had already killed that man, so be it.

However, he never expected Wang Congyang would survive the collapse of Stronghold 113. Furthermore, he even fled north and became a bandit boss?

And he turned out to be a supernatural being too!

Yang Xiaojin asked, "How's his relationship with Xu Xianchu?"

"I remember Xu Xianchu saying that he didn't have any friends in Stronghold 113." Ren Xiaosu said, "That eliminates the possibility that he and Wang Congyang are friends. Old Xu wouldn't lie to me about that."

Xu Jinyuan looked at Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin's expressions and realized they really knew Xu Xianchu.

At the beginning, he thought Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin might have been lying.

"Have you seen him use his superpower before?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Nope." Xu Jinyuan shook his head. "When we were fighting the other bandits, he would usually just stand behind and not need to do anything."

"Mhm." Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, "No wonder y'all are so different from the other bandits. Wang Congyang used to be an army officer, so it's no surprise that he can manage a gang of bandits as well."

"Boss, what should we do?" Xu Jinyuan asked, "Should we take refuge in the valley until the dust settles?"

"Nah." Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "He's only one supernatural being. There's two of us here, so there's nothing to be afraid of."

Not only was he not afraid, but Ren Xiaosu even wanted to seek out Wang Congyang so he could replicate his power.

Remember, he still had a Perfect Skill Duplication Scroll in his hands. It was not worth learning from Yang Xiaojin since the conjured sniper rifle was only going to be useful in the hands of a Perfect Firearms Proficiency user. Even if he learned her power, he could only use it as an artillery weapon at most. So it would be great if Wang Congyang's superpower turned out to be quite useful.

Ren Xiaosu walked towards the brick kiln and shouted to Jin Lan, "Hurry up! Have some people push the bricks to the north side! Bandits are coming to attack us! Build the defenses! The enemy might arrive tonight!"

It might be a little too late to build the defenses now, but they had to win this battle no matter what!

Jin Lan and the others had been holding it in for a long time. When they heard they were going to fight, their eyes lit up. "Boss, how are we going to fight this battle?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "Fight however you like."

Yang Xiaojin grinned as she looked at Ren Xiaosu from behind. She felt this could be the most interesting stretch in the 18 years of her life.

Yang Xiaojin turned around and walked towards the wilderness. She did not need to stay here. A sniper was a lone wolf that transcended the confines of the wasteland. A lone wolf should do what a lone wolf did best.

The wasteland was vast and boundless. Yang Xiaojin walked into the distance, stepping on the desolate ground underfoot as the turbulent waters of the river flowed next to her.

She would have to kill a lot of people tonight, but this was the first time she was going to pull the trigger to protect someone.

What a night to look forward to!

Chapter 355 Thunder

When night fell, Jin Lan and the others hid behind the simple defensive fortifications, holding two buns of cornbread with them. The cornbread was made by the refugees to help them sate their hunger.

Ren Xiaosu had already informed them that the bandits from the north might not be coming tonight, but everyone should still be prepared for an attack nonetheless. For the first half of the night, half the group would sleep before taking over the watch for the rest of the night. If there were really signs of the enemy, everyone would have to respond quickly and get straight into battle.

When Ren Xiaosu was done giving them orders, he could not find Yang Xiaojin. "Have you all seen... ahem, have y'all seen your boss lady?"

"Nope," Jin Lan replied.

"I saw her heading into the wilderne Thunderss earlier," Xu Jinyuan answered.

Ren Xiaosu grunted in acknowledgment. It looked like Yang Xiaojin had already gone to familiarize herself with the terrain.

An outstanding sniper would never remain at only one vantage point on a real battlefield. If their position were discovered, they would have to leave that spot as quickly as possible. Otherwise, they would get shot dead by the approaching enemy. Hence, a sniper's combat role was a proactive one.

Fortunately, Xu Jinyuan said there were no snipers among the bandits to the north. This would greatly reduce the danger to Yang Xiaojin.

Moreover, Yang Xiaojin had her advantage as well.

Sniper rifles could be very heavy. If a sniper used a high-caliber rifle, the rifle would become a heavy burden while they were operating

Some sniper rifles could even weigh up to 20.9 kilograms. This was equivalent to carrying two bags of rice and running wildly in the wilderness. Even an adult man would find that difficult to bear.

But Yang Xiaojin was different. When she needed to retreat, she could just put away her sniper rifle and move around freely. Moreover, supernatural beings were physically stronger, and their movements were also swift.

A supernatural being who was also an elite sniper was definitely the most terrifying existence on a battlefield.

After eating two pieces of cornbread, Ren Xiaosu hunkered down behind the defensive fortifications and closed his eyes to get some rest. Honestly, he also thought it would be more suitable for him to fight out in the wilderness.

But before the bandits here experienced what a real battle was really like, they would still be just a mob. If there were no one to maintain their morale, more than half of these people would probably run away before the battle even began.

Jin Lan went up to Ren Xiaosu and asked softly, "Boss, if Boss Lady's superpower is to pull a sniper rifle out of thin air, what's yours?"

Until today, Ren Xiaosu had purely relied on brute strength to deal with them without resorting to using his superpowers. So Jin Lan and the others were all guessing what Ren Xiaosu's power was.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the bandits. "When those northern bandits arrive, you'll find out. Bring that box of grenades over and put it next to me."

The bandits around him were stunned. Weren't they just talking about superpowers? Why did he suddenly mention the grenades? Could his power be related to grenades?

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu said, "They're here! Prepare for battle! The enemy's coming from the northwest, not the north!"

Xu Jinyuan looked into the wilderness and then asked, "Boss, where are they?"

The wilderness in front of them was clearly pitch black, so where was the enemy supposed to be coming from? They did not know how Ren Xiaosu could have discovered them.

In fact, Ren Xiaosu had sent out his shadow clone earlier tonight. Since they did not have any scouts, Ren Xiaosu had to use it to act as one. Therefore, Ren Xiaosu knew they had arrived when his shadow clone encountered the enemy. However, he did not expose his shadow clone and waited for the enemy to get closer.

Then Xu Jinyuan watched Ren Xiaosu grab a grenade with his right hand and remove the pin before reaching his hand into a shadow.

The shadow was like a doorway that seemingly allowed him to put his hand into another dimension.

Jin Lan, Xu Jinyuan, and the others were watching this sight in a daze. They did not understand what Ren Xiaosu was doing.

The bandits in the distance were quietly advancing. In order to hide their movements, they even took a detour to change their route, then abandoned their motorcycles to advance on foot.

As they walked in the dark, the bandit farthest forward suddenly saw a hand extend out of thin air within the darkness and throw a grenade at his feet.

The bandit was stunned. By the time he realized what was going on, he only had time to shout, "Fuck!"

Right after, Xu Jinyuan and the others heard a grenade explode nearly a kilometer away.

Everyone looked at Ren Xiaosu in shock. What kind of power was that? Throwing a grenade remotely?!

They were not the only ones shocked; even their enemies were shocked! The gang of bandits who were advancing towards the settlement did not understand what was going on. They thought they might have stepped on a land mine!

But how could there be land mines in the valley?!

The farthest a grenadier could throw a grenade was only about a 100 meters or so. For example, the best record in the Yang Consortium's army for grenade tossing was only 102 meters.

Yet Ren Xiaosu had thrown a grenade from a kilometer away?

Surely an impenetrable fortress couldn't exist in the face of such power, right? But why did this power feel really strange?

At this moment, the enemy in the distance was still unsure of who was attacking them, and neither could they see where the attack had come from. There wasn't even an opponent they could fight back against.

Suddenly, the boom of a sniper rifle thundered through the sky. It was just like the rumbling of a large overcast cloud.

The sound of that high-caliber sniper rifle could even be heard from several kilometers away!

The grenade Ren Xiaosu threw had pointed Yang Xiaojin in the direction of the enemy, and the explosion gave her illumination!

Xu Jinyuan and the others understood that to be their boss lady making her move, but they still could not figure out where Yang Xiaojin was at this moment

Jin Lan and the others roared excitedly as everyone clutched their automatic rifles. However, after waiting for a long time, there were still no signs of their enemies charging.

In the minds of Jin Lan and the others, the battle should play out with them waiting for the enemy to arrive at their doorstep. When that happened, everyone would mow them down with their rifles like they were fire-breathing dragons, and there would be blood splattering everywhere.

After the enemy collapsed, Jin Lan could rally everyone to chase after them.

The fantasy alone was already beyond exciting!

In the end, the boom of the sniper rifle kept ringing out, and the grenades kept exploding. Meanwhile, they were like cheerleaders. After the battle had gone on for some time, they still did not see any signs of their enemies.

As Ren Xiaosu threw the grenades, he used his shadow clone to observe from the shadows. However, he found it a little strange that the number of bandits here did not seem quite right.

Weren't there supposed to be over 600 people? Why were there only about 200 or so of them?

'Shit!' Ren Xiaosu whisper-shouted to Zhang Yiheng, "Be careful of the northeast. The enemy might have split into two groups!"

Zhang Yiheng and the others immediately turned to look northeast. There were a series of gullies cutting across the middle of the valley over there. If the enemy came from that direction, they could hide in the gullies and advance on them, making it difficult to guard.

As Ren Xiaosu spoke, he sent his shadow clone into the battlefield. The shadow clone was rapidly taking lives in the darkness of the night with the black saber in hand. Ren Xiaosu had to quickly kill off the enemies in this direction, as the rest of them who were heading here from the other direction were probably going to arrive soon!

Chapter 356 Steam Locomotive

Wang Congyang was someone who was much more difficult to deal with than Ren Xiaosu had imagined

Back at the town, Ren Xiaosu had concealed almost every detail flawlessly, but Wang Congyang still latched hard onto him.

Ren Xiaosu and the others who had thought the northwest attack would be the main battlefield were now realizing they had anticipated it wrong.

When his shadow clone encountered these bandits, Ren Xiaosu immediately determined they had at least a few hundred people in the group. As such, he believed they were Wang Congyang's main force.

However, Wang Congyang was even more ruthless. He actually used these 200 people as cannon fodder to attract the firepower of the enemy. Wang Congyang clearly knew these 200 people would die here, but he did not care!

Ren Xiaosu thought to himself, 'No wonder that guy gained a foothold in the valley. Not only does he use his superpower, but he also has a cunning and vicious mind.'

At this moment, the firing of the sniper rifle suddenly stopped before the bandits in the northwest were all dead. Ren Xiaosu immediately understood that Yang Xiaojin had also noticed that something was amiss and was quickly shifting her position in search of a new commanding point for her firepower suppression.

Without needing to communicate in words, Yang Xiaojin believed Ren Xiaosu's shadow clone would finish off the remnants of the defeated bandits in the northwest.

Seeing that more than half of the 200 bandits in the northwest had already died, the remaining ones were so scared their hearts nearly exploded. This unknown shadow that had come out of nowhere could neither be driven away nor killed.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu knew that if Wang Congyang's main forces were really coming from a different direction, his village couldn't defeat them in a direct confrontation. Xu Jinyuan had said that Wang Congyang had heavy firepower on his side that included RPGs as well!

He had to think of another way! He had to avoid a direct confrontation at their settlement.

As for Jin Lan and the others, Ren Xiaosu could only bet on Yang Xiaojin arriving in time to support them.

Jin Lan looked northeast into the darkness and said, "There's a lot of gullies over there. If the enemies are hiding in them, I'm afraid that Boss Lady's sniper rifle won't be effective."

"Can they really be so familiar with the terrain?" Zhang Yiheng asked, "If they haven't been here before, they'll probably lose their way in the gullies, right?"

Xu Jinyuan sighed and said, "This is all my fault. I should've persuaded that brother to stay behind. He must have revealed our plans and informed the gang of bandits that we have a sniper. That's why their main forces purposely chose to approach from where the sniper can't spot them. Besides, he worked here for more than twenty days. He's surely familiarized himself with the area already. He always went out to explore the terrain at night."

Jin Lan was silent for a moment. "You weren't in the wrong either. We can only say that everyone makes their own choices, so there's no need to feel guilty over it. As the saying goes, 'while the general is on horseback, do as you wish.'"

"Haha." Next to him, Zhang Yiheng slotted bullets into a magazine. "Jin Lan, I didn't know you were a cultured person?"

Jin Lan said modestly, "I did attend a few years of school."

"We can't just rely on Boss Lady's sniping to hold them off. We're grown-ass men! We're holding guns in our hands, and we can kill our enemies too!" Zhang Yiheng said heroically, "Weren't you all disappointed that our enemies could not charge at us just now? We're going to be charging at them instead very soon! Don't be a coward when the time comes."

But right at this moment, metallic sounds clanged in the darkness.

The strange metallic sounds were like dagger-axes striking against each other, but it also sounded like someone was striking iron with a hammer.

This sound came abruptly, yet it sounded extremely powerful.

Suddenly, a fog started spreading. It felt like a gigantic creature was charging at them from the darkness.

Then, clickety-clacking could be heard. It grew louder in the nothingness and slowly increased in rhythm!

Right after that, a black steam locomotive sped through the fog, "shattering" it!

“Fuck!” Jin Lan roared angrily, “Where the hell did this train come from!”

The consortiums had trains as well, but they were limited to a very small number of places and were used for transporting minerals and supplies. It was not that the consortiums could not afford to build a railway system, but that earthquakes in the Northwest and Southwest happened far too frequently. As a result, it would be extremely expensive to maintain the system. Sometimes, newly built railroad tracks would get damaged by the next day.

How could anything even withstand earthquakes that could shatter two strongholds?

However, Jin Lan and the others did know of the existence of trains. Jin Lan had also seen blurry pictures of them before in the schoolbooks.

It was just that he could not figure out where this train had come from.

The metallic clanging was made by the train as it moved forward on a metal railroad track that materialized segment by segment below it. After the rails materialized, they would automatically pave themselves at the bottom of the black locomotive. As the train moved forward, the tracks behind would disappear while fresh tracks reappeared in front of it.

The train had three carriages attached to the forward engine. Jin Lan instinctively fired at the locomotive but could only send some sparks flying as the bullets hit the train!

“Dodge!” Jin Lan roared.

But the train kept charging at their simple fortifications in an attempt to completely crush their defenses.

Instead of the enemy showing up, they were greeted by a giant steel monster!

The train was zooming. Before Jin Lan and the others could dodge, the train had already crashed into a short brick wall. The brick walls crumbled into pieces like tofu.

This was the power of a supernatural being. In the era of the “Rise of Gods,” the power of supernatural beings was getting more and more powerful. Who knew what kind of shocking things could happen in the future!

As many of the bandits could not avoid it in time, they died from the impact of the cold and unfeeling train. After the train brushed past Jin Lan and the others who managed to escape unscathed, they could only watch helplessly as the steam locomotive crashed into the village where the refugees were located. Over there were the mud houses, the newly built brick houses, and also their fellow villagers who had cooked for them.

Jin Lan watched this happen in a daze. He saw the new houses turn into a heap of ruins before his very eyes while the refugees inside were pinned under the bricks.

But the steam locomotive that seemed to have come from Hell remained completely undamaged.

Gunshots rang out, but it wasn't Jin Lan and the others who had fired their weapons.

Under the cover of the steam locomotive, the bandits to the northeast finally broke out of the gullies and charged at Jin Lan's group!

One of Jin Lan's squad mates next to him was shot, and blood started flowing out of his wound.

It was over! Everything seemed to be finished! They had worked hard to make the bricks and build the houses, but they ended up being destroyed so easily by the enemy.

They had been greeting each other as brothers all these days, but their brothers ended up dying here by their sides.

Xu Jinyuan hid behind a heap of broken bricks and said in a daze, "Who saw Boss?"

They only just realized that Ren Xiaosu had disappeared at some point!

"Where's Boss

"Who saw where the boss went?"

Behind the trembling voices that were asking this, the loneliness that stemmed from the fear of being abandoned and left behind started spreading. "Did Boss abandon us and run away?"

Gunfire intensified. The enemy was getting closer and closer.

Some of the bandits started fleeing into the wilderness behind them.

Although everyone felt a sense of belonging to this place, no one would risk their lives for it.

That wonderful hope ultimately could not win against their survival instincts.

Although some of them left, there were also others who remained behind.

Zhang Yiheng suddenly spat out, "I don't believe that he would abandon us and run away. He's gotta have something more important to handle."

"Then what should we do?" one of the bandits asked.

"Fucking kill them!" Zhang Yiheng roared, "Aren't we also holding guns? They actually destroyed the houses that I put in so much effort to build! Fire at them! Let's get revenge for the houses and our brothers!"

Chapter 357 I've surrounded all of you

There were only two choices in despair. One was to die silently while the other was to find strength in silence.

If it were twenty days ago, Zhang Yiheng would probably have run away by now, and so would have Jin Lan. But they had changed by today.

Perhaps the change in them wasn't very big, but it was enough to make them willing to pick up their guns and fight for their survival.

Even Ren Xiaosu would probably not have expected this group of bandits to push themselves and counterattack in such a desperate situation!

When they started to fight back through their broken defensive line, the enemy immediately slowed and they started taking casualties.

Bullets on the battlefield did not discern between friend from foe. The intelligence of humans was vividly portrayed in war, and the appearance of firearms and explosives brought about a great transformation in the history of human warfare.

Zhang Yiheng hid behind collapsed bricks and fired at the enemy with his automatic rifle. This band of bandits who had no strategy in place were actually holding off the enemy.

However, someone was commanding the enemy forces from the rear. After a brief adjustment, they got used to the firing patterns employed by Zhang Yiheng's squad.

Some of them silently crawled on the ground and advanced. This way, they could reduce the chances of being hit by bullets. The others would continue to charge forward until Zhang Yiheng's group revealed themselves and fired at them. When they did that, the enemy bandits who were crawling on the ground would fire in short spurts to cover their fellow bandits.

Slowly, Zhang Yiheng and the others were getting suppressed by the enemy's tactics again.

Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin's training had only made them united and planted seeds of faith in their minds. The training was not a magical solution, so it could not make this group of bandits who did not even possess any military knowledge become braver.

They were being suppressed by the lack of experience. It was not something they could be trained on in a short time. Wang Congyang had fought many tough battles with his bandit gang, and they had even undergone short-term military training with him.

Zhang Yiheng panted and said, "We can't beat them. It looks like we're going to die here!"

"What should we do then?" Jin Lan suddenly laughed. It was clearly a hopeless situation, but he was still laughing. "Why don't we surrender?"

Zhang Yiheng spat, "If you wanna surrender, go ahead. No wonder there were only 20 bandits in your gang, and y'all were even leading such shitty lives! So it was because you're a leader with no balls!"

Jin Lan was infuriated. "I was only fucking kidding! Don't you fucking criticize me!"

Then Jin Lan got up and started attacking. The idiot managed to make the enemy retreat for a moment when he did that.

But no matter how hard they tried, they were still losing

“Hey, where did Boss and Boss Lady go?” Zhang Yiheng sighed and said, “If they don’t come back soon, we’re really gonna die here.”

At this moment, Yang Xiaojin’s slender figure was running at full speed in the wilderness. The gullies on the ground were no obstacle to her.

She was getting closer to the gunshots in the northeast. As she ran, she looked for gunfire that lit up the night in front of her.

Yang Xiaojin was panting heavily. Even she would have to try her best to adjust her breathing when she was running with all her might.

She could have had a more relaxed role on the battlefield, but she knew there wasn’t enough time.

Yang Xiaojin knew there were people waiting for her!

A second later, Yang Xiaojin stopped on a dime in front of a mound and conjured her sniper rifle. She took only an instant.

Deep breath.

She lowered her heart rate quickly and illogically against her body’s homeostatic responses. Following, her dynamic visual acuity seemingly froze time from her perspective.

At this moment, all the anger in her transformed into an arrow from the gods. Yang Xiaojin slowly exhaled the air in her lungs and pulled the trigger according to the rhythm of her breathing.

With a loud bang, the sound of the sniper rifle spread across the battlefield again.

The huge bullet traveled for nearly a 1,000 meters and arrived at the center of the battlefield after what felt like a long passage of time.

The bullet penetrated the chest of a bandit who was making an attack. However, it did not stop moving even after that. It continued through and penetrated a second bandit behind before disappearing into the night.

The thin gray fog that had first appeared when the steam locomotive arrived suddenly turned into a bloody mist. The sprays of blood that bloomed formed beautiful shapes in the air.

When Jin Lan and Zhang Yiheng heard the sound of the sniper rifle, their hearts skipped a beat. The long-awaited gunshots had finally returned!

They quietly poked their heads out and discovered that the enemy who had readjusted the rhythm of their attack was now getting torn apart one by one by the shots!

“Boss Lady is so brutal.” Jin Lan gasped in amazement. From their vantage point, they could see the enemies were sent flying one after another by the powerful force of the bullets.

The sprays of blood were like flowers blooming in the dark of night.

At this moment, Yang Xiaojin was lying prone on a mound. Only by doing so could she stabilize her body against the high frequency of her shots.

The formerly cap-wearing girl was not bothered by how dirty the ground was. She only cared if her bullets could reach the other side of the riverbank and bring death to the enemy.

This was what a sniper was. She would only feel safe when her body was in contact with the ground.

It was only at this moment that thoughts of being encaged by her clan connections and the mystery of her parents' death no longer lingered on her mind. In this moment, she was just a sniper.

A sniper who could dominate the wilderness battlefield!

Amid the rhythmic bangs of the sniper rifle, Zhang Yiheng acted like he was on steroids. "Everyone, attack them without mercy! Fucking kill them!"

Silent, Xu Jinyuan fired as he felt his blood boiling. He could even feel himself getting goosebumps as he listened to the sniper rifle consistently ring out.

This was a fight he had never experienced before. Xu Jinyuan never thought a small battle like this could be so exciting.

Only Jin Lan was asking doubtfully, "Boss Lady is here, but where's Boss? Why haven't we seen him yet?"

"I might not know where Boss is," Zhang Yiheng laughed maniacally while saying, "but I know that he definitely ain't gonna miss his chance to end this battle!"

Right then, gunshots suddenly rang out from behind enemy lines. Zhang Yiheng instantly reacted. "Boss is behind the enemy!"

"Holy fuck..." Jin Lan did not know what to say. He had thought Yang Xiaojin was very aggressive, but it turned out that Ren Xiao was even more ferocious than her. He actually ran to the rear of the enemy all by himself? Was he trying to cut off the enemy's retreat?

Xu Jinyuan was also a little confused. "Since Boss and Boss Lady are both so fierce, who do you think wears the pants at home?"

Someone scolded him with a chuckle, "Hey, we're fighting right now! Stop shooting the shit!"

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was rapidly approaching the back lines of the enemy from the flank. He was dashing in an arced path. Due to the angle of his approach, he was leaning close to the ground like he was a speeding motorcycle making a turn.

The shots fired by the enemy in their attempt to stop him only sent bullets into the dirt. Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu had already detoured and arrived at the rear of the enemy's formation!

“I’ve surrounded all of you!”

Chapter 358 Scene of the accident

Due to Ren Xiaosu’s appearance in the rear, the enemy had no choice but to divert a large number of their men to deal with him. That suddenly relieved the pressure on Jin Lan’s group, and it was something they could clearly feel.

However, while the enemy thought Ren Xiaosu would force his way into their formation, they were surprised by how Ren Xiaosu remained just outside of their effective attack radius throughout, even though he had rushed towards them aggressively. He was kiting them, pulling them in and then letting go.

Ren Xiaosu was not holding back. He had activated the nanomachines and was crazily cycling them in his body to prevent himself from getting shot. Even if he did get hit, he could immediately use the nanomachines to stop the bullet from causing further damage.

This was a very wise move. After all, Ren Xiaosu was just a normal human being, so how could he possibly hold up against a few hundred people shooting at him? If he even tried to get close to them, the enemies would quickly release a barrage of gunfire on him. Even a mosquito might get killed by the crossfire!

But the enemy was confused. Where did your initial bravery go? Didn’t you heroically declare you had all of us surrounded?

Fucking attack us then!

“He’s playing for time!” someone shouted.

“That’s right!” Someone said, “This kid has been distracting all this time so that we can’t concentrate on our attack at the front. But he’s not tryna get close. He’s only tryna attract our firepower in a bid to stall for time.”

“But what’s he waiting for?” a bandit wondered.

Right at this moment, a shadow suddenly appeared on the horizon a distance away. The shadow was able to leap over ten meters in a single bound. It was extremely terrifying!

The heavy and hurried footsteps were getting closer and closer. This was the reinforcement Ren Xiaosu had been trying to buy time for! It had come from afar!

When some of the bandits saw the shadow approaching, they fired at it. However, the shadow did not dodge or evade and took all of the gunfire head on!

“What is this thing?” One of the bandits exclaimed, “Why isn’t it afraid of bullets!”

“Oh shit, run!”

But it was too late to escape now!

The shadow that was just like a wild bull collided with the crowd in an instant. The powerful inertia struck the bandits like a cannonball, sending a row of them flying into the air like toys and dolls thrown by a truck in a crash.

The bandit who had been hit directly felt all his bones shattering before he was sent flying into the air uncontrollably.

The bandits were sent flying into the air one after another like they were trapezists of a circus. However, they were the worst trapezists ever in history.

The bandits no longer had the presence of mind to fire their weapons. When a strength that was strong enough to crush them appeared, these bandits plunged into panic!

The strange shadow's ability at slaughtering its enemy was too strong. They could not even fight back!

Away from the battlefield, Ren Xiaosu was controlling his shadow clone to charge recklessly through the crowd as he looked for Wang Congyang's presence.

Due to the shadow clone continuously getting shot, Ren Xiaosu was constantly enduring the pain that was passed on from his shadow clone to him.

He was sweating profusely from his head and on his back due to the pain he had to endure. Ren Xiaosu was still looking for Wang Congyang. To catch a thief, he first had to first catch the king!

Ren Xiaosu kept moving at high speeds. Stray bullets on the battlefield were flying around everywhere and were impossible to defend against. He had used the nanomachines to shield himself from the bullets twice already. When the bullets hit him, they only managed to scrape his skin; they could not penetrate past the defensive structure formed by the nanomachines.

But even after searching for a long time, he still could not see any signs of Wang Congyang!

Jin Lan, who was farthest in front on the battlefield, discovered that the enemy was beginning to panic. The enemies who were not being commanded had become flustered when a powerful force appeared behind them.

With Yang Xiaojin's suppressive fire covering them, Zhang Yiheng and the other bandits even dared to charge from behind the broken defensive line to launch a counterattack. And the bewildered enemies started to fall.

But even now, Ren Xiaosu still did not see Wang Congyang!

Ren Xiaosu was puzzled. Could it be that Wang Congyang wasn't here? That couldn't be right! The train that appeared out of nowhere was clearly Wang Congyang's doing!

Actually, when he first saw the steam locomotive, one of Ren Xiaosu's early doubts was answered. In the earlier days, there were always rumors spreading among the refugees in Stronghold 113's town that someone had seen a moving train materializing from nothingness out in the wilderness. That was the power of a supernatural being.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu was still very envious. This was the earliest rumor being talked about in town regarding supernatural beings. It went on for so long that Ren Xiaosu even got sick of hearing it. Many people said the refugee must have been feeling sick and was only seeing things in his trance.

That train never appeared a second time.

Ren Xiaosu used to wonder about whether there were other supernatural beings in Stronghold 113. But no one had ever seen them before.

Now that he thought about it, the train that appeared in the wilderness back then must have been Wang Congyang testing his power, right?

So the rumors were true. Judging by the time Wang Congyang first became a supernatural being, he was most likely one of the earliest people to do so!

All of a sudden, Ren Xiaosu realized Wang Congyang must have escaped when he saw that the situation was hopeless.

Ren Xiaosu looked towards the valley in the north, in the hopes that he might spot Wang Congyang fleeing through the gullies. The ravines would serve as Wang Congyang's shield.

Ren Xiaosu stopped searching for him here and started running north, trying his luck. If his judgment were right, he might still be in time to catch that guy!

After running for just two kilometers, Ren Xiaosu suddenly saw a figure crawling out of a gully in the distance. They were about a kilometer away from each other.

Ren Xiaosu confirmed that it was Wang Congyang and that he had indeed escaped ahead of time!

The bandit gang this person had painstakingly built was about to break apart, but none of that seemed worth mentioning to him. When he saw the shadow clone arriving, he abandoned all of his burdens and fled by himself.

That was because the moment Wang Congyang saw the shadow clone, he thought it was Xu Xianchu who had arrived!

In Wang Congyang's opinion, if three supernatural beings—Ren Xiaosu, Xu Xianchu, and Yang Xiaojin fought him alone, he would definitely lose!

The bandit who had escaped from Ren Xiaosu's place had told Wang Congyang that Ren Xiaosu was from Stronghold 178 and that he was also a good friend of Xu Xianchu.

At that time, Wang Congyang knew that even though the description was probably an exaggeration, Ren Xiaosu and Zhang Jinglin were actually on very good terms.

If Ren Xiaosu were really there to carry out a mission for Stronghold 178, then Wang Congyang probably couldn't gain a foothold in the valley.

Even if he did not go looking for Ren Xiaosu, Ren Xiaosu would come and look for him!

Wang Congyang was unable to figure out what exactly the truth was. All he wanted was to take advantage of the fact that Ren Xiaosu was not ready yet and try to kill him in order to eliminate any chance of future trouble!

But regardless of whether he succeeded or not, he would have to leave the valley and head to the Central Plains where it was a larger world!

Therefore, when Wang Congyang heard Ren Xiaosu's name get mentioned, he already had the thought to abandon the bandits under him. It would be impossible for him to bring them to the Central Plains with him, nor did he think they were worthy.

Ren Xiaosu pursued him from behind. He had thought he could catch up with Wang Congyang easily, but at this moment, the mysterious and strange black steam locomotive suddenly drove into the wilderness, completely ignoring the rugged valley as though it were driving on flat ground.

Chapter 359 Duplicating a superpower!

The steam locomotive headed straight for Wang Congyang. When it reached his side, Wang Congyang grabbed a metal handle on the steam locomotive. He stood outside on the edge of the carriage. Off they went towards the north.

Wang Congyang heaved a sigh of relief. But at this moment, he turned around and was surprised to see Ren Xiaosu running at full speed behind the train!

What the hell!

Why was there someone following him?!

When Wang Congyang was escaping, he did not notice that someone was following him. In fact, he did not think anyone would have noticed him.

But the moment he turned around and saw Ren Xiaosu, he frowned.

At this moment, the two of them were truly pitted against each other one-on-one in the true sense of the phrase. Wang Congyang wondered if he should control the train to turn around and kill Ren Xiaosu. As one of the earliest people to turn superhuman, his physical fitness would definitely be better than Ren Xiaosu's!

However, he gave up on the idea after careful consideration.

Although he was one of the earliest people to become a supernatural being, and his physical fitness was definitely one of the best as well, that did not mean that Ren Xiaosu would not be hiding killer moves.

Wang Congyang was unwilling to take this risk.

He held the train with one hand and calmly turned around to stare at Ren Xiaosu. It was as though he were trying to burn Ren Xiaosu's image into his mind.

A strong gust of wind was blowing past him, making his clothes flutter nonstop.

Wait a minute... Wang Congyang realized Ren Xiaosu seemed to be gaining on him...

He suddenly felt like something was amiss and hurriedly used all of his power to drive the steam locomotive faster in hopes of ditching Ren Xiaosu completely.

During this time, Wang Congyang had been leading a very unhappy life. He had become the bandit leader very quickly after arriving here, and that should have been quite good.

But before long, he came to realize that problems were deeply rooted here in the valley due to the influence of several organizations. So it seemed that even being a bandit was a really stressful job!

When he wanted to kill Ren Xiaosu, he ended up losing all the bandits under him after Ren Xiaosu joined forces with Xu Xianchu.

All he wanted now was to leave this place, yet Ren Xiaosu continued chasing after him like a vengeful spirit.

Wang Congyang took out his pistol and fired it at Ren Xiaosu. However, they were so far apart that Ren Xiaosu was not within his effective range.

But Wang Congyang felt a burst of joy when he realized Ren Xiaosu was gradually slowing. He was probably running out of stamina! Should he take advantage now that Ren Xiaosu was exhausted and kill him? Forget it, never mind! What if he was just faking it!

As expected, Wang Congyang decided to give up on killing him. When Ren Xiaosu saw that Wang Congyang did not take any action, he started chasing after him again.

The two of them were constantly jockeying. When Ren Xiaosu sped up, Wang Congyang clenched his teeth and went faster too.

Actually, Ren Xiaosu was already cursing Wang Congyang in his head. There was a limit to his stamina.

This steam locomotive was traveling at about the speed of a normal train, and its maximum speed was about 120 kilometers per hour.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu's current Strength and Dexterity were roughly three times that of an ordinary person's. His top speed was only slightly more than a 100 kilometers per hour.

But the stamina of humans was limited! That limit applied to Ren Xiaosu as well!

Ren Xiaosu kept trying to trick Wang Congyang to turn back, but that bastard was simply too smart and cautious. He wasn't taking the bait.

"Forget it, I'm not gonna chase anymore!"

Ren Xiaosu was panting heavily as he prepared to stop chasing. He had wanted to activate City Crusher to chase after Wang Congyang, but the problem was that it would only last for 30 seconds. And the nanomachines were no longer operating at full capacity. What if he caught up to him but got beaten up instead?

His shadow clone was still assisting Jin Lan and the others to kill their enemies at this moment. Without his shadow clone, who knew how many more people would die back there!

So Ren Xiaosu decided to give up the chase. There would still be many more chances in the future.

However, he suddenly remembered he still needed to do something!

Ren Xiaosu said to the palace in his mind, "Use the Perfect Skill Duplication Scroll!"

The voice from the palace answered, "Currently out of effective range."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "What's the effective range?"

"Five hundred meters."

Ren Xiaosu looked at the distance between him and Wang Congyang, then decisively activated City Crusher to chase after him. When Wang Congyang saw this, he nearly died of fright. How could Ren Xiaosu be so fast?!

But before he could think of a way to handle him, he saw Ren Xiaosu suddenly turn around and run off!

Wang Congyang got farther away as he rode on the steam locomotive. He still could not figure out what Ren Xiaosu was up to! Ren Xiaosu clearly had the strength to catch up to him, so why didn't he continue pursuing him?

But he couldn't possibly know that Ren Xiaosu only had a 30-second limit for his power. Why would he not quickly run away after the 30 seconds were up? Would he rather get beaten up?

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu heard the voice from the palace saying in his mind, "About to copy the target's master-level skill or superpower. If you do not have the corresponding advanced-level skill after copying a master-level skill, you will not be able to learn it."

"Randomly copied target's superpower 'Steam Locomotive.' Do you want to learn it?"

Ren Xiaosu was ecstatic. "Yes!"

Earlier on, Ren Xiaosu was worried he would end up copying some garbage skill, but he did not expect he would directly duplicate the opponent's superpower!

The sadness of his past skill duplication attempts had been swept away with this. That jumping rope skill, mahjong playing skill, deception skill, and so on, all of that bad luck seemed to have gone far away from him.

But in an instant, Ren Xiaosu was stunned. Could this be the result of Yan Liuyuan's wish for him? If that were really the case, Yan Liuyuan would probably have to suffer the backlash soon, right? But what was the backlash going to be? Would it be dangerous?

Thinking of this, Ren Xiaosu felt his joy retreating. He wanted to go back to check on Liuyuan.

Perhaps he could find an opportunity to bring Yan Liuyuan and the others out here into the wilderness? But he did not know when Qing Zhen would mount a rescue for Luo Lan. Surely it wouldn't be too long from now, right?

At this moment, Yan Liuyuan was sitting in the yard playing Fight the Landlord with Wang Fugui and the others. When he saw the lousy hand that he had been dealt, like missing a card to complete a straight and his high card being a king, he sank deep into thought.

It wasn't just this hand that was bad! He had been very unlucky throughout the night!

Seeing how Wang Fugui was winning every game, why did it seem like all of the luck had gone to Wang Fugui instead!

"He shouldn't have encountered anything particularly dangerous, right?" Yan Liuyuan muttered to himself.

"Ever since Bro's nanomachines enabled him to block bullets, I've haven't experienced any serious backlashes. But if the backlash is just me getting really bad hands, what sort of situation could Bro have encountered?"

Yan Liuyuan had a look at the poker cards in his hand again and exclaimed, "What the hell!"

Yan Liuyuan and Ren Xiaosu had yet to realize that their powers would complement each other. If not for Ren Xiaosu, Yan Liuyuan would be plagued by the backlash of making wishes. And without Yan Liuyuan, Ren Xiaosu would probably not have been able to successfully copy the Steam Locomotive either.

In the wilderness, Ren Xiaosu attempted to summon the strange train out. A black fog immediately appeared out of nothing as a black steam locomotive materialized out of thin air.

The clanking of steel was especially pleasing to the ears in the wilderness. With a chugging sound, black smoke billowed out from the chimney of the steam locomotive. However, Ren Xiaosu was suddenly stunned by what he saw.

He carefully counted the carriages behind the steam locomotive. Wang Congyang's steam locomotive only had four, so why did he have as many as sixteen?

Chapter 360 In a good mood today

When Ren Xiaosu returned to the battlefield, he saw the corpses of his enemies left behind in the uneven valley. Soon after Wang Congyang fled, the fearsome bandits from the north were routed.

Most of these bandits had already fled into the wilderness and gone missing. Meanwhile, Jin Lan and Zhang Yiheng were frantically thanking the shadow clone, "Master Xu, I didn't expect you to show up and help us out personally. Thank you so much!"

Ren Xiaosu's eyes kept twitching when he heard those thanks. He did not even gain a single gratitude token from it.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu wanted to lay all his cards on the table. That was not Xu Xianchu's shadow clone but his! But Ren Xiaosu eventually managed to hold back from doing so because he still had not thought of how to give Xu Xianchu an explanation yet.

Ren Xiaosu said to the shadow clone, "Old Xu, go back and report to Commander Zhang that we've defeated a large bandit gang here in the valley."

There used to be three large bandit gangs that were active in the valley, and now, one of them had been eliminated.

The bandits who had escaped might go on to join the other bandit gangs, but this battle here was a complete victory.

When Jin Lan heard that, he thought that Ren Xiaosu was getting Xu Xianchu to go back to report about their contributions.

However, Ren Xiaosu coughed and said, "I got Old Xu to return to Stronghold 178 to put in some good words for all of us. The commander might be happy when he hears what Old Xu has to say and immediately recruit y'all to join Stronghold 178, so you should know what to do now, shouldn't you?"

While Ren Xiaosu waited for everyone to thank him, he watched Jin Lan, Zhang Yiheng, and the others started bowing to the shadow at a 90-degree angle and saying, "Thank you, Master Xu!"

Ren Xiaosu was speechless. 'Are they fucking rebelling?!'

Yang Xiaojin walked over from the wilderness looking extremely exhausted. Tonight, she had made some significant contributions to the battle. If it weren't for her, Jin Lan and the others would be dead.

Yang Xiaojin looked at Ren Xiaosu and asked, "How many of our people were lost or injured?"

The excitement on Jin Lan's face immediately faded as he sighed and said, "More than a 100 of our brothers have died. The houses we just built have been destroyed, while our fellow villagers have also died and been injured."

"Let's treat our brothers' wounds first." Ren Xiaosu took out ten bottles of black medicine and handed them to Jin Lan. "Take the bullets out of their wounds first. This is a secret remedy passed down through my family. You can apply it directly to the wound. One bottle is enough for five to six uses. Just make sure it isn't drunk."

It might be gratifying to win the battle, but what about the aftermath? The dead could not be resurrected.

Zhang Yiheng stood in the devastated wasteland looking a little confused. The refugees in the distance were crying.

More than half of the settlement's mud houses had been toppled by the steam locomotive, while none of the brick houses remained standing. Even the ditches had given way and were now a total mess.

It would be great if even half of the crops they planted could end up germinating.

Zhang Yiheng slowly walked through the crowd. Some of his injured brothers were crying out in pain, while the ones who were OK stayed around to comfort them.

When he walked past a refugee, a child cried out at him, "It's all your fault! Those bandits came here because of all y'all!"

But before Zhang Yiheng could speak, the mother slapped her child. "Don't you run your mouth!"

The child's mother looked at Zhang Yiheng and said, "I know that y'all are good people, so I won't blame you!"

Zhang Yiheng was stunned and did not say anything

Ren Xiaosu called out to him, "You regretting it?"

Zhang Yiheng was stunned again, then suddenly said, "Actually, I don't feel that sad. After so many years, everyone knows what this world is really like. It's all too common to see people dying. Even when my father passed away, I didn't cry."

"Then what're you thinking about?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

Zhang Yiheng said calmly, "I'm just thinking, if we were stronger, could we have prevented this suffering?"

Ren Xiaosu looked at him seriously and said, "The houses that we built have all been destroyed."

Jin Lan, who was standing next to them, said, "We can still rebuild them even though they've been destroyed. I've checked, and the brick kiln is fine!"

"Even if something had happened to the brick kiln, we could still build another one, two, or even three of them!" Zhang Yiheng suddenly said in a determined tone.

Ren Xiaosu was looking at these bandits. Actually, there was nothing they were good at. Most of them did not even attend school and were illiterate. Even though they were bandits, they could not even hold a gun properly.

But when he attacked the enemy from their rear just now, the bandits here did not break down. Right now, they were still harboring hopes in the ruins of the settlement.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly realized these bandits were probably still useless as of now. But starting from today, their fate was really going to be changed.

On the same day, Jin Lan led everyone to carry the wounded back to the mud houses that were still intact. Some of the refugees also took the initiative to help take care of them.

At first, they thought that it would be very difficult for the wounded to survive. That was because bacteria these days had become very scary. If anyone received a wound, 90% of them would get infected even in the early spring when the weather was still very cold.

Ren Xiaosu's wound had been infected after he got nipped by the sparrow.

But they were shocked to discover the black medicine given by Ren Xiaosu was really effective. As soon as it was applied to the wounds of the injured, they claimed their injuries did not hurt anymore. Moreover, their wounds started healing the very next day. The medicine was extremely effective!

Everyone looked at Ren Xiaosu with more and more admiration.

It was even more so when Jin Lan and the others talked about Ren Xiaosu going behind enemy lines to draw fire to himself. Everyone's eyes were shimmering in admiration when they heard that.

To Jin Lan and everyone else, this was the respect Ren Xiaosu had earned through risking his life. They admired him in all sincerity.

With the refugees helping to take care of the wounded, Jin Lan and the others had time to make clay bricks again. They salvaged all the usable black bricks from the ruins and restarted the brick kiln.

Standing next to Ren Xiaosu, Yang Xiaojin asked him, "Do you feel these people have more enthusiasm now? Their eyes are all filled with hope."

"Yes, I can feel it." Ren Xiaosu said emotionally, "It's probably because there's no rebuilding without destruction. These people are undergoing a complete change and getting reborn."

"I'll be teaching them about firearms. Some of them should be suitable for sniper training. They're calm and can endure hardship," Yang Xiaojin said.

On this day, Jin Lan and the others would go looking for Yang Xiaojin on and off to ask her when they could start learning about guns and when she would select the candidates for sniper training.

The battle had made them see their shortcomings. But most importantly, the powerful fire suppression Yang Xiaojin had displayed during the battle was terrifying.

Although everyone knew that it was basically impossible for them to reach Yang Xiaojin's level, their current ambition was to become a sniper.

As for how Ren Xiaosu had surrounded all their enemies without fear, that was too far of a goal even for them. Jin Lan, Zhang Yiheng, and the others did not even dare to think about something like that.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "When the situation here has stabilized, I plan to make a trip back to the stronghold and see if I can bring Liuyuan and the others here."

Yang Xiaojin said with a smile, "You've decided that you want to settle down here?"

"Mhm." Ren Xiaosu nodded. He suddenly asked, "Have you decided yet?"

Yang Xiaojin was stunned for a moment. She slipped her hands into her pockets and walked off to the distance. "I'm in a good mood today."