

Chapter 391 The copper bell

After repeatedly confirming with Zhang Xiaoman through the radio, Zhou Yinglong finally believed that they had really taken Mt. Guan.

The Forward Strike Battalion's original plan was to first deploy the Razor Sharp Company to attack the bandits at Mt. Dingyuan, which they felt was easier to take. After that, the Razor Sharp Company would move to attack the stronger forces at Mt. Guan together with Second Company.

But in the end, Mt. Guan was taken not long after the Razor Sharp Company set out.

Zhang Xiaoman asked on the radio, "Battalion Commander, does this count as our credit?"

"Yes, yes, yes," Zhou Yinglong replied. "What are the Razor Sharp Company's casualties? If there's too many casualties, take a short rest and wait for reinforcements."

"We didn't suffer any casualties." Even as Zhang Xiaoman said that, he was finding it hard to believe. As such, he did not bother hiding the truth. "There were only about a 100 bandits on Mt. Guan, and they were all killed single-handedly by Ren Xiaosu. I'm shocked by it, let alone you. We had only planned for him to pin down the bandits on Mt. Guan. But in the end, he pinned them down so hard that all of them died."

Then Zhang Xiaoman even heard Zhou Yinglong take a deep breath through the radio before shouting, "What the!"

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was wiping the blood off his body by a stream behind Mt. Guan. After that, he changed back into the Razor Sharp Company's combat uniform.

Jiao Xiaochen and the others watched Ren Xiaosu as they collected the ammunition and supplies a short distance away. "Did y'all see that? He's acting like it's no big deal after killing over a 100 people. He's a little too calm, ain't he?"

"I wonder what he did before coming to Fortress 178...."

"I heard he was also a refugee. He was even a student of Commander Zhang's and well-known as ruthless in town. That's what Old Xu told me."

Ren Xiaosu stood at the edge of the stream after changing back into the uniform of the Razor Sharp Company. This was just the beginning of his revenge. He still had a lot more battles to fight.

Zhang Xiaoman finished reporting to Zhou Yinglong. He asked Jiao Xiaochen, "Count everything we collected."

"We've collected two 12.7 mm caliber HMGS that came with wheeled mounts and gun shields, 31 ammo boxes, and two mortars," Jiao Xiaochen reported. "There's also a lot of rifles, but those are useless to us."

Having more guns wasn't necessarily better. They would still need people to carry them to be effective. So the rifles were not much different from scrap metal to them.

"Take the mortars and rounds, dismantle the wheel mounts and gun shields from the HMGs before taking them, and grab the HMG ammo too." Zhang Xiaoman said, "The gun shields of the machine guns are more useful in the plains. It's not convenient for us to bring them while on the march. Wait, something's wrong. Weren't there any grenades there?"

Jiao Xiaochen shook his head. "No, we didn't find a single grenade."

"Were those bandits so poor they couldn't even afford grenades?" Zhang Xiaoman wondered.

It was not that the bandits on Mt. Guan were poor, but that Ren Xiaosu had already stuffed seven full boxes of grenades into his storage space before heading down the mountain.

Before he obtained any Explosive Poker cards that were at least "sixes," Ren Xiaosu felt he could use the grenades as a replacement. As for how powerful a "quad-six" bomb was, he couldn't gauge that yet.

Zhang Xiaoman looked at the pile of firearms with shimmering eyes. Even the Razor Sharp Company was only equipped with the standard weaponry whenever they headed out for battle. They did not usually get issued with so much firepower. So they had to depend on their own abilities to get whatever they could from the battlefield.

Jiao Xiaochen shouldered a machine gun. "This thing's mine!"

As he finished speaking, Ren Xiaosu grabbed the machine gun out of Jiao Xiaochen's hands. Jiao Xiaochen was stunned for a moment. Then he heard Ren Xiaosu say, "Platoon Commander, let me carry it for you."

Jiao Xiaochen was moved to tears. He was such a competent soldier and had such great esprit de corps. Just what kind of an angelic teammate was he!

"Thank you, Ren Xiaosu," Jiao Xiaochen said.

"Gratitude received from Jiao Xiaochen, +1!"

Ren Xiaosu realized it was rather easy to gain gratitude tokens at Fortress 178.

Now that his quest was almost complete, he thought he maybe should continue gaining more gratitude tokens even after the quest.

"Captain," Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhang Xiaoman and asked, "what do we do next?"

"We'll besiege Mt. Dingyuan." Zhang Xiaoman replied, "The Forward Strike Battalion and Engineering Battalion are about to reach our north. They're going to establish an FOB there, so we can't have the bandits in the rear go and make trouble for them."

“Is the FOB essential?” Ren Xiaosu asked. He was not doubting him but just humbly asking, “What’s the use of an FOB?”

Ren Xiaosu’s impression was that a forward operating base was just a place where one could eat.

Zhang Xiaoman patiently explained, “By using the FOB, it can greatly reduce the time the troops spend traveling from the rear to the front lines. It can also extend supply lines to a place closer to the enemy’s location. For example, an armored brigade must resupply at an FOB before venturing further into the depths of the battlefield.”

Ren Xiaosu nodded to show he understood. “Then how are we attacking Mt. Dingyuan?”

“Commander Zhou said we don’t have to do a head-on attack, so we only need to blockade them on Mt. Dingyuan.” Zhang Xiaoman said, “Now that Mt. Guan has been taken, the plan has changed. As such, our mission is no longer considered too difficult, so we should try to keep our casualties to a minimum. After the FOB is built, there’ll be new troops coming to provide us with fire support. Then it’ll be much easier to capture our target.”

That same night, everyone took a short rest atop Mt. Guan. While the soldiers took off their shoes and sat by the campfire, Ren Xiaosu walked away quietly.

Zhang Xiaoman looked at the solitary Ren Xiaosu, who was standing near the edge of the cliff. He suddenly said to the other soldiers, “Looks like he’s got something on his mind.”

“Captain, it’s cuz our feet stink.”

Zhang Xiaoman joked, “Don’t you think he’s weighed down by something?”

“A little.”

Zhang Xiaoman turned around and looked at Ren Xiaosu’s back. He had a feeling that Ren Xiaosu had been through much more than they imagined. He went up to Ren Xiaosu with some piping hot vegetable soup. “Here, eat your fill.”

“Mhm, thank you, Captain,” Ren Xiaosu said.

However, Zhang Xiaoman did not walk away after handing the soup to him. Instead, he asked, “I heard you recently arrived at Fortress 178. Why have you chosen to come to such a poor place?”

Ren Xiaosu gave Zhang Xiaoman a look. “I didn’t plan on coming here, but there’s something important that I have to do, and I also share some common goals with Fortress 178.”

“Oh, I see.” Zhang Xiaoman nodded.

“Captain, why did you join the Fortress 178 army?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“I was born in Fortress 178.” Zhang Xiaoman said with a smile, “The first thing the young men in the fortress do when they turn 16 is to get a physical to see if they can qualify as soldiers. Some people even attempt suicide after failing the test due to flat feet.”

“Why?” Ren Xiaosu asked in surprise.

Zhang Xiaoman looked to the northwest like he could see Fortress 178. Then he replied with a smile, “So they can get a chance to prove they’re brave warriors when the copper bell in the center of the fortress tolls.”

Chapter 392 Zhang Xiaoman’s dream

All the soldiers of Fortress 178 felt an unparalleled sense of belonging to the ancient fortress, but Ren Xiaosu was still very curious. “The interior consortiums never told their residents about your efforts and achievements before, so the residents don’t even know who’s keeping the peace for them. Even so, y’all are still willing to continue guarding it?”

“Whether they know or not, that’s their problem.” Zhang Xiaoman smiled and said, “But guarding this place is our business.”

As they were now carrying more ammunition and supplies, the weight on each person’s back was almost as heavy as half their own weight.

Although everyone was complaining that they were really tired, no one was willing to throw away the ammunition because they depended on it for survival on the battlefield.

Using Zhang Xiaoman’s own words, when the war arrived, they could only trust the guns in their hands, the bullets in the magazines, and their comrades in the trenches.

Therefore, the Razor Sharp Company despised cowards, as cowards in a company would get their comrades killed.

“I heard that when Commander Zhang joined the Razor Sharp Company as a medic, he was not even willing to fire a gun.” Zhang Xiaoman said with a smile as he struggled to march forward, “At that time, the Razor Sharp Company’s warriors all despised him, yet he did not argue once. But in a battle, he ended up saving the lives of hundreds of wounded soldiers. Not only did he save his own company’s comrades, but comrades from other companies were saved as well. That was how he earned their respect in the end. Before that, everyone thought he was just a coward.”

These gruff men of Fortress 178 were not at all afraid to discuss Zhang Jinglin, and Zhang Jinglin did not seem to mind it either.

Zhang Xiaoman said, “When I saw your thin and weak frame initially, I thought you wouldn’t be good at fighting. However, I never expected you to be so fearsome.”

Curious, Ren Xiaosu asked, “Were you also there when Mr. Zhang was in the Razor Sharp Company?”

“Fat chance! I was still playing in the mud back then.” Zhang Xiaoman smiled and said, “That was all in the older generation’s time.”

“The older generation?” Ren Xiaosu asked, “Who’s from the older generation in Fortress 178?”

Zhang Xiaoman thought back and replied, "There's no point mentioning them since most of them are dead."

"That tragic, huh?" Ren Xiaosu was startled. "What happened?"

"16 years ago, there was a war so terrible 90% of our original army perished in it. The remaining survivors said it was a war they barely escaped alive from, with the fortress almost getting destroyed too." Zhang Xiaoman said, "Do you know why Fortress 178 used to accept refugees? On one hand, everyone was a refugee to begin with, while others were exiled criminals from the Central Plains. So no one disliked one another since they all had the same status. On the other hand... it was because no others were willing to come to this poor place except for refugees. Fortress 178 needed those people to defend the place."

Ren Xiaosu said in surprise, "There were even exiles from the Central Plains in Fortress 178?"

"Yes." Zhang Xiaoman said with a smile, "My neighbor's one of them, but I haven't seen anyone from the Central Plains get exiled to the fortress in over ten years. I heard they've started exiling them to Stronghold 176 in the north instead. And north of Stronghold 176 is the Steppe."

"Is Stronghold 176 very far away from where we are now?"

"Yes."

Then Ren Xiaosu asked, "Do you have any other thoughts or wishes other than waiting for the bell to sound?"

"Yeah," Zhang Xiaoman laughed and said, "I want to be a brigade commander just like my father!"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "Your father was a brigade commander?"

Zhang Xiaoman paused for a moment before saying, "What I mean is, my father's dream was to be a brigade commander as well."

Ren Xiaosu was surprised.

The journey from Mt. Guan to Mt. Dingyuan was quite short. Before they had gone far, Jiao Xiaochen, who was in charge of leading the formation, suddenly raised his palm. All of the soldiers in the rear immediately took a knee and raised their guns in full alert.

Zhang Xiaoman stooped low and ran to the front of the formation. He whispered, "What's the matter?"

"We discovered signs of the enemy. I think it's a hidden lookout post," Jiao Xiaochen said.

Zhang Xiaoman picked up his binoculars and looked ahead. He was surprised to see smoke coming out of the gully several hundred meters ahead. "I think someone might be smoking. The smoke produced

from cooking does not look like that at all. These fucking bandits even have guards to keep a lookout on the foot of the mountain, how professional! Too bad the guards on duty are idiots.”

The bandits under the Zong Consortium’s control were truly different from other bandits, but all in all, they were still bandits.

“What do we do?” Jiao Xiaochen asked, “Should we kill them?”

“Mhm, we’ll keep marching in the gully towards them. Fu Rao, Lin Ping’an, see if you two can get to the road over there and kill them quietly without your guns. I don’t want to cause a commotion,” Zhang Xiaoman said.

These two were the most outstanding soldiers in the Razor Sharp Company and were experts at infiltration and knife fighting

However, Fu Rao whispered, “Captain, Ren Xiaosu has already gone ahead....”

As those words trailed off, Zhang Xiaoman’s head started to hurt. Having such a fearsome person in the company was also a very frustrating experience. He said, “Let’s wait here quietly!”

Zhang Xiaoman was most worried that Ren Xiaosu would cause too much of a commotion. However, it was dead silent ahead of them. After several minutes, Ren Xiaosu returned with two people in his hands. They were not dead, just unconscious.

Ren Xiaosu threw the two men on the ground. “We can ask them about their deployment on the mountain. Who knows, maybe we can use our mortars to take out their MG positions. Bandits aren’t really tight-lipped, and the two of them should know quite a lot about the operations.”

Zhang Xiaoman was taken aback. Most of the time when sneaking past an enemy’s defensive line, it was quite difficult to capture them alive. That was because they had to prevent the enemy from struggling, firing warning shots, or shouting to warn others. So the only action taken would be to kill on sight.

But with the appearance of Ren Xiaosu, he made the impossible possible.

However, Zhang Xiaoman said in a serious tone, “Xiaosu, I know you’re very capable, but you still have to listen to orders during an op. You have to wait for my command, understand? I’m purposely putting on airs as the company commander, but troops have to obey their commanding officer and execute their orders to a tee in a battle.”

Ren Xiaosu pondered this. “Understood, I’m sorry.”

“You don’t need to apologize. You don’t have experience serving as a soldier of Fortress 178, nor did you go through any training before getting deployed to the battlefield. So long as you have a modest attitude, we’ll teach you whatever we can during battles.”

Ren Xiaosu nodded. “OK, I won’t act without permission in the future.”

While Zhang Xiaoman got someone to slap the two bandits on the ground to wake them, Fu Rao and Lin Ping'an held daggers to their necks and said, "We'll remove our hands, but if you dare shout, you're dead."

The two bandits nodded frantically. Zhang Xiaoman took out a battle map and two pencils, then said, "I'll give both of you a chance. If you can help us draw the defensive deployment map of Mt. Dingyuan, I'll spare your lives."

Fu Rao and Lin Ping'an removed their palms from the bandits' mouths. However, the two bandits asked, "What's a defensive deployment map?"

"Just indicate the positions of the heavy machine guns and mortars on the mountain, then tell me how many people are guarding those positions." Zhang Xiaoman said coldly, "We're from Fortress 178. If you cooperate with us, we'll let you go, understand?"

The two bandits were stunned. "You're from Fortress 178? Sure, we'll cooperate!"

Ren Xiaosu was stunned when he saw this. It was like the bandits were not worried Zhang Xiaoman would go back on his words after he mentioned the name of Fortress 178.

Chapter 393 Sudden appearance on the battlefield

But what surprised Ren Xiaosu even more was that he had thought the two bandits would have tricks up their sleeves. However, they actually pointed out some of the wrong details on the map.

Drawing a map was a rather technical skill as it required surveying instruments. You could not confirm how high and wide a location was by just using your eyesight.

Although Fortress 178 had attempted to map out the mountain hideouts as detailed as possible, their work was all carried out in secret. As some areas could only be measured visually, deviations on the map were guaranteed.

The two bandits took the pencils and drew some circles on the map, with a small circle indicating that it was a heavy machine gun position. The two of them said, "But the heavy machine gun positions often get switched around. A lot of equipment on the mountain are also covered with tarps. We don't know what's under them either, so y'all must be careful."

"Y'all can't get to the top because the path leading up the mountain has been cut off by trees." A bandit pointed at a route on the map and said, "It seems that our boss was ordered to defend Mt. Dingyuan, so he shipped in a bunch of supplies in advance. He said that as long as we can defend the place for three months, everyone would be rewarded."

Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked, "Are there any regulars on the mountain?"

The two bandits shook their heads. "No, but there's some very powerful folks mixed in with the bandits. They definitely weren't bandits in the valley before."

"How many of them are there?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"About a 100. There's more than 900 bandits in total on Mt. Dingyuan," one of the bandits said.

Ren Xiaosu nodded and did not say anything else. An entire formation of the Zong Consortium's regular troops was among those who had intercepted his group, so he had to get to the bottom of it. If the Zong Consortium's regular troops were here on Mt. Dingyuan, he would have to be careful of them.

"Is there no other way up?" Zhang Xiaoman frowned and asked, "Did they say why y'all had to defend Mt. Dingyuan?"

"No, how could we know something like that?" One of the bandits said, "So can we leave now?"

Zhang Xiaoman hesitated for a moment before waving them off. "Scram, head west and don't let me see you two again."

"Ah, alright." The two bandits got up and started to run, but before they even covered two steps, they turned around and asked, "Sir, do you have any cigs?"

Zhang Xiaoman said impatiently, "Our cigs don't contain the stuff you add into yours."

"That's fine," the two bandits said.

Zhang Xiaoman had Jiao Xiaochen throw two packs of cigarettes to them. "Get lost."

Ren Xiaosu asked, "We're letting them go just like that?"

"Fortress 178 never breaks a promise. Don't worry, the bandits in the valley are all sensible. They won't turn around once they're told to head west," Zhang Xiaoman said nonchalantly.

Ren Xiaosu watched as the two bandits disappeared after passing criss-crossing gullies in the west. If it were him, he would not have spared their lives.

But he could not say what Zhang Xiaoman did was wrong. Fortress 178 had its own way of survival, after all.

"The bandits on Mt. Dingyuan have already sealed off the mountain path. Strange, why did they seal off the path? What's the point of keeping guard for three months?" Zhang Xiaoman wondered.

"That'll save us a lot of trouble if we just keep guard at the foot of the mountain. They won't be heading down the mountain anyway," Jiao Xiaochen said.

"No." Zhang Xiaoman said, "There must be something fishy about their decision to defend this place. War is not just about a rigid execution of orders. We'll only be successful if we can make the enemy uncomfortable. Why don't we take Mt. Dingyuan by ourselves?"

Yesterday, Battalion Commander Zhou had ordered them to only lay siege on the bandits at Mt. Dingyuan after they had taken Mt. Guan. But from the looks of it, it seemed they would still have to attack Mt. Dingyuan after all.

“But it’s a good thing that we already know about the locations of their HMGs, so we can reduce our casualties by pointing our mortars directly at the enemy’s emplacements and destroying them. We must immediately force an attack. Otherwise, when their MG positions change, all the information we just obtained will become outdated,” Zhang Xiaoman said.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked, “Didn’t you say that we should listen to orders in battle? The order was for us to lay siege on the enemies from the foot of the mountain.”

Zhang Xiaoman explained patiently, “What I want to teach you now is how to be adaptable during battle.”

Zhang Xiaoman looked at Ren Xiaosu while pondering what he had just said. He suddenly felt that he should not have taught him that.

Jiao Xiaochen said, “Are we going to launch an attack tonight then?”

“Mhm.” Zhang Xiaoman nodded and said, “If only there were other smaller paths leading up the mountain. We could’ve sent someone to covertly infiltrate their lair. But this is the only route we have to the top of Mt. Dingyuan. We can only fight our way up even if it’s gonna be really difficult. Radioman, contact Commander Zhou and report the situation to him!”

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu said, “I can climb up the back of Mt. Dingyuan and sneak attack them first, then coordinate further action with y’all.”

The entire Razor Sharp Company was stunned when they heard that. “How’re you gonna climb up that 80-degree slope at the back of the mountain?”

“I have my ways.” Ren Xiaosu said, “Just give me two packs of TNT.”

The Razor Sharp Company was still well-equipped with ammunition. However, TNT was generally used to blow up bunkers and artillery positions, so no one understood what Ren Xiaosu was planning to do with them.

Zhang Xiaoman clenched his teeth and said, “Take care of yourself!”

Zhang Xiaoman suddenly felt that it was amazing to have such a fearsome person in the company who would always volunteer for the most dangerous tasks. It had never been easier to fight a war now that they had a person like him with such excellent combat skills.

In his opinion, it did not matter if Ren Xiaosu was qualified to be the commander of Fortress 178 or not. But at least having a character like Ren Xiaosu on the battlefield was really nice.

Zhang Xiaoman said to Ren Xiaosu, “Regardless of whether the others support you or not, our Razor Sharp Company will support you. Ain’t that so, everyone?”

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. “What do you mean by supporting me?”

He somehow felt like he missed out on something very important.

At 9 PM, Zhang Xiaoman handed the TNT and a rope over to Ren Xiaosu for him to carry on his back. "When you're climbing up the back of the mountain, you must be extremely careful. If you feel like you can't get up there, don't force it."

Ren Xiaosu nodded. "Don't worry. When y'all hear the TNT go off on the mountain in six hours, immediately start the attack on Mt. Dingyuan and destroy their HMG positions first. I'll be supporting y'all from up there."

Through the military case studies of previous wars, Zhang Xiaoman and the others had learned that paratroopers would usually get paradropped onto the battlefield for them to open a path for the rest of the forces to enter. In this way, they could effectively avoid the enemy's interdiction.

They were destined to not have things like paratroopers in this era, but that would not stop a fearsome person from climbing a 700-meter-tall and 80-degree-steep cliff with his bare hands.

Besides, could a normal paratrooper have a combat strength as powerful as Ren Xiaosu's?

Watching as Ren Xiaosu faded into the distance, Jiao Xiaochen suddenly said, "We must start our attack as soon as we hear the noise. I feel that if we don't act quickly enough, he'll wipe out all of the enemy forces before we get there."

When they attacked Mt. Guan, everyone was worried that Ren Xiaosu would die on the mountain. But this time, they were afraid he would kill the bandits too quickly.

However, Zhang Xiaoman shook his head and said, "It'll be harder to take Mt. Dingyuan than Mt. Guan since the bandit numbers are several times higher. According to Ren Xiaosu, the main fighting forces on Mt. Guan died in a previous battle, leaving only remnants of the original bandit group there. We still need to launch an attack on the mountain a-sap, though, so we can ensure Ren Xiaosu's safety. It's the responsibility of the entire Razor Sharp Company to fight the battle. We can't let him face the pressure all by himself."

"Starting now, we'll begin implementing noise and light discipline. There will be no smoking, no talking, and no using of flashlights. Everything must be done in silence!" Zhang Xiaoman was thinking about something as he looked at the silhouette of Mt. Dingyuan in the distance.

Chapter 394 A spy in the bandit lair

Although Mt. Dingyuan was not tall, its terrain was extremely dangerous. The back of the mountain was not scalable at all with its 700-meter-steep cliff. If they wanted to storm the mountain, there was only one way to go.

Even Ren Xiaosu couldn't scale to the top with his own bare hands. However, he had his shadow clone with him.

It was not that he was a daredevil for trying to attack from the rear by himself, but that he did not really wish to reveal his shadow clone in front of Zhang Xiaoman and the others.

If Zhang Xiaoman and the others knew he had a shadow clone similar to Old Xu's, a lot of things would probably come to light. This was something Ren Xiaosu had still not figured out how to explain to Xu Xianchu.

How should he explain things to Old Xu when the time came? Maybe he could just deny any knowledge of the black cauldron's origins and convince him not to think too much into it.

At this moment, the shadow clone was climbing up the face of the mountain while carrying Ren Xiaosu on its back. One of the greatest advantages of the shadow clone was that it would not get tired at all.

If Ren Xiaosu tried to climb the mountain on his own, he might not have any strength left to fight even if he could reach the top.

His current fitness was only a little more than three times that of normal people's, so he was still not that tough. But it was different for the shadow clone.

If every supernatural beings' control of their superpowers were dependent on their "mental strength," then Ren Xiaosu had never really experienced the limit of his willpower before, and neither did he know what his limits were.

The shadow clone used the two black sabers as anchors as it climbed up the cliff. The black saber was so sharp it could pierce into the cliff easily, but the only thing was that the sabers had to be thrust in laterally. Otherwise, if the saber penetrated into the mountain blade down, the weight of the shadow clone and Ren Xiaosu would cause the black sabers to cut through the stone face like tofu.

Ren Xiaosu had discussed with Zhang Xiaoman's group to take action six hours after he started scaling the mountain. But in reality, he was a little ahead of time after moving much faster than he had predicted.

When Ren Xiaosu poked his head up on the top of the cliff, he saw a campfire burning in the distance in an open space of the bandit lair on Mt. Dingyuan. Some people were sitting next to the campfire holding guns while keeping a lookout. But no one was keeping watch on the back of the mountain. It looked like the bandits never expected anyone to be so brave to actually scale the face of the mountain.

Ren Xiaosu did not put away his shadow clone but manipulated it to do a quick survey of the surrounding terrain. Meanwhile, he moved quietly in the shadows.

As there were about 900 bandits on Mt. Dingyuan, Ren Xiaosu could not possibly attack them head on. If he still had his full set of armor, he could've easily taken Mt. Dingyuan by himself without the help of Zhang Xiaoman and the others.

But unfortunately, 80% of his nanomachines were destroyed in that battle. And now, he only had enough to barely protect his vitals.

He wondered if he would encounter the Yang Consortium's nanosoldiers in the future. However, Ren Xiaosu did not really want to lay a finger on the Yang Consortium's people. It would be quite good if some of the Li Consortium's 1,500 nanosoldiers who attacked Stronghold 88 had survived.

Of course, Ren Xiaosu was aware that this was just a passing thought. He knew that neither the Yang Consortium nor the Li Consortium's nanosoldiers would come north.

The shadow clone had already crept into one of the barracks and slit the necks of two sleeping bandits with its black saber.

Everything was carried out quietly. There were only 12 people in a room in the barracks of the bandit lair, and it only took 20 seconds for the shadow clone to kill everyone in the room.

However, Ren Xiaosu knew he could not use this method too many times since accidents would definitely happen.

All of a sudden, he heard someone speaking in a low voice. After searching for some time, he still could not locate where the sound was coming from. Finally, Ren Xiaosu's gaze settled at a latrine.

It was a pit latrine surrounded by a brick wall with only a broken wooden door covering the front, and the metallic hook for locking the wooden door seemed broken as well. The person in the outhouse even had to stretch his arm out and hold the wooden door to prevent it from opening.

It looked like someone inside was watching the outside through a small hole in the door. If any bandit walked over, this person would see them through the hole.

But it was different for Ren Xiaosu since he had arrived from the back of the mountain.

Ren Xiaosu quietly walked up to the outhouse and listened in on the person inside who was whispering, "Boss, I really can't stay on Mt. Dingyuan any longer. They've even sealed the path. Someone said Mt. Guan was taken by Fortress 178. The Zong Consortium has hidden two 52 caliber/155 mm howitzers with a firing range of more than 50 kilometers on this mountain. This weapon was phased out of the Zong Consortium's arsenal and placed here at the bandit lair after they calculated the target's strike location. I'm guessing they'll use it to launch a surprise attack on Fortress 178's FOB."

The person inside continued, "Boss, if the Zong Consortium uses the howitzers, I'm afraid Fortress 178 will raze Mt. Dingyuan to the ground. If I continue to stay here, wouldn't I have to die along with them?! OK, OK, thank you, Boss. I'll head down the mountain tonight. Do you think we should inform Fortress 178 about the situation on Mt. Dingyuan?"

"Alright, I'll make a trip to their military base and inform them. We can't let the Zong Consortium do whatever they want! We have to prevent them from ruining our battle plans in the South!"

Ren Xiaosu was listening to everything from the outside. It sounded like the "bandit spy" inside the outhouse was contacting someone with a remote communications device and reporting about the situation at Mt. Dingyuan.

The two bandits had said there were some secret supplies transported up the mountain covered with tarps and that no one knew what they were. Those were probably the howitzers the spy was referring to, right?

An effective firing range of more than 50 kilometers could really be called terrifying. Ren Xiaosu remembered Zhang Xiaoman said the forward operating base to the north was only about 40 kilometers from Mt. Dingyuan, and that it was the most suitable place to establish a forward operating base.

The Zong Consortium wasn't stupid. They were planning on dealing a severe blow to Fortress 178 with the two howitzers that had been phased out of their arsenal. Although these two howitzers might not be that significant, they could still throw Fortress 178's plan into disarray and intimidate their military.

Based on Zhou Yinglong's plan, the forward operating base would be in deep trouble if the Razor Sharp Company only surrounded Mt. Dingyuan.

Was Zhou Yinglong prepared for this? Ren Xiaosu was unsure.

However, this person in the outhouse should be from the Qing Consortium, right? There were only the Qing Consortium and the Yang Consortium left in the South. The Qing Consortium was probably the only organization that could send someone here to Mt. Dingyuan to act as a bandit for such a prolonged period.

At this moment, when the shadow clone broke into another room in the barracks, some bandits were actually still awake. When they saw it, they shouted so loudly that all the bandits on Mt. Dingyuan were jolted

awake!

The person in the outhouse whispered, "Boss, I can't talk anymore. It sounds like there's a situation on the mountain!"

While he was still speaking, Ren Xiaosu reached out and pulled open the outhouse door. But he had not expected the person in the outhouse to still be holding onto the door. With one pull, Ren Xiaosu dragged the spy out of the outhouse before he could even pull his pants up...

"Who the fuck!?" That person shouted as he laid on the ground with his butt bare. He was already preparing to pick a fight with Ren Xiaosu without pulling up his pants!

Ren Xiaosu pointed a pistol at the spy. "You're from the Qing Consortium?"

The spy was not stupid. Looking down the barrel of the gun, he turned obedient. He heard the shouting in the distance, then looked at Ren Xiaosu's Razor Sharp Company fatigues. "You're from Fortress 178?"

For some reason, Ren Xiaosu felt like the spy seemed to be relieved. But before Ren Xiaosu could do anything, the spy smashed the palm-sized communication device in his hand onto the ground with the gun still pointed at his head!

Chapter 395 Blessed be the good man

The soldiers of the Qing Consortium were all headstrong. Even though a gun was pointed at the spy's head, he decisively destroyed the communications device without any fear of death. Ren Xiaosu said, "Don't worry! Are you Luo Lan's guy?"

"Who is Luo Lan?" The spy froze. "Sir, what're you talking about? Why can't I understand anything you're saying?"

Ren Xiaosu did not reveal his name. "Pull up your pants first."

"Oh, right." The spy hurriedly pulled up his pants. He had not even managed to wipe his butt before getting dragged out of the outhouse.

"How many others from the Qing Consortium are here on Mt. Dingyuan?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

The spy said with a wry smile, "Sir, I really don't understand what you're getting at. If you're planning on attacking Mt. Dingyuan, I can show you the way."

Ren Xiaosu lifted the spy over the edge of the cliff. "If you don't tell me the truth, I'll drop you."

When the spy realized Ren Xiaosu could lift him up with one hand, he closed his eyes while hanging over the edge and muttered, "Brothers, I'll be leaving first then."

Ren Xiaosu was so angry he almost laughed. He put the spy back on the ground. "That'll do. I'm actually a friend of Fatty Luo's. I'll let you go now. This place isn't safe anymore. But don't take the main path, or you're gonna die."

At this moment, the spy was still unwilling to come clean. Seeing that Ren Xiaosu had loosened his grip, the spy turned and ran away. But after running for 50 meters without being fired at, he turned back around to Ren Xiaosu and said, "Blessed be the good man!"

After saying that, he continued running into the shadows. But even then, he still did not reveal his identity.

But when Ren Xiaosu heard the words "blessed be the good man," he somehow felt that it was not just a simple thank you.

Ren Xiaosu shook his head for a bit before walking over to the bandit lair. Since he had already guessed the spy was from the Qing Consortium, he would definitely not kill him. After all, he might still have to depend on Luo Lan and Qing Zhen to help him find his family after taking his revenge.

Moreover, he thought of Luo Lan as his friend.

At this moment, the entire bandit lair was in chaos. Although Ren Xiaosu did not venture into the battlefield, he felt like the bullets were hitting him.

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu felt an enormous pain when a bullet hit the shadow clone in its forehead. Getting hit by a bullet there hurt much more than getting hit at other parts of his shadow clone's body. For

some reason, Ren Xiaosu got a feeling that he couldn't allow the shadow clone to be hit between the brows. That could spell big trouble for him!

Most supernatural beings were still in the midst of figuring out their powers, and Ren Xiaosu was no exception.

As they learned more, everyone would gradually discover their powers had some weaknesses rather than being omnipotent.

Ren Xiaosu took off a pack of TNT from his back and lit the fuse. Then he used the Shadow Door and threw the TNT outside a row of barracks. At this moment, someone was shooting at his shadow clone through a window in the barracks.

With a loud explosion, the entire row of brick barracks collapsed and buried the bandits alive.

However, there were a total of seven rows of these barracks. But Ren Xiaosu was not expecting the battle would end by just throwing one block of TNT at the enemy. This was just the signal he was sending to the Razor Sharp Company at the foot of the mountain!

As soon as the TNT went off, the Razor Sharp Company began to bombard the pre-identified heavy machine gun positions with their mortars from the foot of the mountain!

Zhang Xiaoman was leaning against a trench wall and eating hardtack from his field rations. As his mouth was a little dry, he was about to drink some water when the TNT exploded on the mountain.

Zhang Xiaoman yelled at Jiao Xiaochen, "Fire the mortars! Quickly, fire the mortars!"

Hardtack crumbs sprayed out of his mouth onto Jiao Xiaochen's face, but Jiao Xiaochen couldn't care less and just wiped his face as he shouted the command, "Ready the mortar barrage. Three, two, one! Fire!"

Thump, thump, thump. The mortar rounds flew towards the mountain trailing smoke behind them. After that, their temporary positions were entirely filled with the smell of gunpowder.

Zhang Xiaoman inspected his weapon again and said, "2nd, 3rd, and 4th Platoons will charge forward with me. Radiomen, contact Battalion HQ. 1st Platoon will stay here and continue providing artillery support! Fire all the mortar rounds we collected!"

Now was not the time for them to worry about how much each mortar shell cost. The fiercer the artillery support, the fewer casualties they would suffer. Moreover, they would resupply ammunition once they took Mt. Dingyuan.

Other soldiers often carefully rationed the ammunition they could use in battle, but the Razor Sharp Company was different. They were the types who would spend money as they wished and use whatever ammunition they had. If they ran out, they would simply ask for more from Zhou Yinglong without shame. If he refused to give them any, they would throw tantrums back at the battalion headquarters. These people were capable of doing whatever it took to get more supplies.

The Razor Sharp Company's objective was to overcome difficulties, not be frugal while fighting a war.

So once the battle began, Zhang Xiaoman assigned a platoon to fire the shells they had collected from Mt. Guan like it didn't cost a thing.

But when they proceeded up the mountain, Zhang Xiaoman realized the opposing forces he was initially expecting seemed to have disappeared entirely.

After the mountain path was sealed, this route should have been heavily guarded by the bandits. However, there was no trace of anyone as they made their way up the mountain.

When they passed by the first heavy machine gun position, Zhang Xiaoman was relieved to see that it was exactly where it was marked on the map. This meant their plan was proceeding smoothly.

At this moment, intense gunfire suddenly came from the mountain again. Zhang Xiaoman had his men go prone and crawl all the way into a ditch on the side.

But when they got into the ditch, everyone realized the gunshots were not aimed at them.

"What the fuck's happening on the mountaintop?" Zhang Xiaoman was bewildered. "Everyone, charge forward with me! Ren Xiaosu's in grave danger!"

But as they charged towards the final machine gun position, Zhang Xiaoman felt from afar that something was wrong. The bandits had switched the location of this heavy machine gun position. It was not positioned on the right side of the path like it was labeled on the map, but on the left!

"This MG wasn't destroyed in our mortar attack," Zhang Xiaoman said, finding it a little pitiful. "2nd Platoon Commander Wang Boren, charge your platoon forward and take out that MG!"

How could things always be smooth sailing in war? It would, of course, be wonderful if they could always take out all of their enemy's emplacements. But if the mortars could not take them all out, they would have to get it done by sacrificing some lives!

At this moment, people were bound to die. But still, they would die for a worthy cause!

The 2nd Platoon's commander, Wang Boren, looked up at the machine gun position and estimated it to be about 300 meters away from them. He said firmly to the soldiers of 2nd Platoon, "Ma Dewei, we'll provide cover fire for you to gain another 220 meters. Can you throw a grenade at that MG position?"

The grenadier, Ma Dewei, hesitated for a moment. "That's gonna be difficult. It's definitely in range, but I'm afraid that I won't be accurate."

"You have to make it happen no matter what. You only have three grenades to pull it off. If you don't throw it accurately, all of us will have to die with you." Wang Boren roared, "Charge!"

Then everyone in 2nd Platoon got out of the ditch and charged up the mountain. Meanwhile, Zhang Xiaoman and the others had already set up their heavy machine guns and got ready to provide covering fire for 2nd Platoon.

But at this moment, an explosion boomed at the final heavy machine gun position. All of the sandbags and the people inside were blown into the air!

Zhang Xiaoman's eyes lit up. "That's TNT! It's Ren Xiaosu! He blew up the HMG position for us. Brothers, charge!"

Chapter 396 How can we know if we don't try?

Initially, Zhang Xiaoman objected to Ren Xiaosu being assigned to his company. He even wanted to discuss with Zhou Yinglong to see if he could transfer him away.

But as of now, Zhang Xiaoman was more than likely to hug Zhou Yinglong and give him a peck on the cheek. Assigning Ren Xiaosu to his company was even better than Zhou Yinglong issuing ten heavy machine guns to them!

Everyone in the army who had fought in a battle before would know how difficult it was to destroy a heavy machine gun position. They truly represented the idea of a "meat grinder" and was an ultimate weapon that could be wielded on the main battlefield.

But now that they had Ren Xiaosu, the heavy machine guns could be destroyed with the TNT. No one knew how he did that.

Zhang Xiaoman and the others still did not know what Ren Xiaosu's superpower was. It was quite mysterious.

But everyone had their secrets, so there was no need to delve deeper.

When Zhang Xiaoman and his men finally charged up the mountain, they did not see Ren Xiaosu anywhere nearby. Meanwhile, the bandits up on the mountain were not concentrating their firepower in their direction, but away from them.

"Something's weird." Zhang Xiaoman wondered, "Why does it feel like Ren Xiaosu did not come up here by himself? This feels more like another company scaled the back of the mountain to attack this place."

Many of the bandits' barracks had already collapsed, and bodies were strewn all over the place. However, they did not die from gunshot wounds but stab wounds!

A soldier was shocked when he passed by the corpses. "Did Ren Xiaosu get into close combat with them?"

At this moment, the bandits on Mt. Dingyuan were engaged in battle with a mysterious shadow. But halfway through the battle, the shadow suddenly slipped behind a barracks and disappeared.

The shadow was extremely fearsome and had killed many of the bandits at the beginning. But for some reason, the shadow started acting less aggressively as it used its quick movements to keep the enemy at bay. It never stayed in one place for too long.

But when they were searching for the shadow, gunshots suddenly rang out behind them. Some bandits turned around in shock and saw that the Razor Sharp Company had already set up three heavy machine guns at a distance of several hundred meters away behind them. They started shooting at them mercilessly!

At the same time, Zhang Xiaoman led 2nd Platoon to outflank the bandits. They attempted to trap all the bandits in the open area and make them targets of the heavy machine guns.

Some bandits reacted quickly and immediately hid behind the ruins of the barracks to launch a counterattack. But just as they were about to shoot, they suddenly saw a hand stretch out of a shadow next to them and throw a grenade over.

With a loud explosion, the bandits who had just taken cover behind the ruins were blown sky-high. Meanwhile, Zhang Xiaoman finished organizing a simple defensive formation on the flanks.

Zhang Xiaoman had never experienced such a smooth battle before, as though all the hidden threats had been nipped in the bud by someone. It felt like a god's hand was helping them on the battlefield and greenlighting everything for this surprise attack they had launched.

However, more than a 100 of the bandits in this group had obviously received formal military training before. They retreated slowly all the way back while constantly maintaining an orderly formation.

Ren Xiaosu was observing this group of people from the shadows. These 100-odd people were probably the Zong Consortium's regular troops hiding among the bandits.

Moreover, the 20-odd soldiers manning the last heavy machine gun position were also more cautious than the bandits. They were probably also a part of the Zong Consortium.

The Zong Consortium had placed around a 100 of their soldiers here on Mt. Dingyuan and assigned them as the last line of defense. If their roles had been reversed with no supernatural beings participating in the battle, the Razor Sharp Company might not have even broken through the machine gun position after sacrificing all of their men.

Now that Ren Xiaosu had spotted the Zong Consortium's regulars, he was not going to go easy on them. From within the shadows at 200 meters away, he aimed his rifle at them and opened fire!

The Zong Consortium's regulars never expected an enemy to be over here as well. With just a burst of fire, the orderly formation they maintained while retreating was disrupted.

Zhang Xiaoman shouted, "Charge and continue pressing them! Go Ren Xiaosu!"

To the north, Zhou Yinglong was leading the entire Forward Strike Battalion to create a defensive line to ensure that the forward operating base at the rear could be built successfully.

There were no unusual activities from the Zong Consortium here. But ever since the bandit lair on Mt. Guan had been taken, the two sides knew that war had begun.

All of a sudden, a soldier ran up to Zhou Yinglong and said in a low voice, "Battalion Commander, the Razor Sharp Company's Zhang Xiaoman is requesting to speak with you."

"Bring the radio over," Zhou Yinglong said while lying on a hill.

When the radiotelephone operator approached him with the radio set on his back, Zhou Yinglong took the receiver and berated, "Didn't I say to just follow my orders and lay siege on the bandit lair at Mt. Dingyuan? What're y'all messing around for? You've been pinned down at the mountainside now, haven't you? Stay right there and don't move. I'll deploy Second Company there to support you!"

Zhou Yinglong was furious when a radioman from the Razor Sharp Company called in to report on the situation at Mt. Dingyuan. When the path leading up to Mt. Dingyuan had been sealed, it was clear the bandits were planning on fighting to the bitter end. They might have been able to carry out a sneak attack on the bandit lair previously, but it would be impossible for a single company to take the mountain fort.

Zhou Yinglong was really worried that Zhang Xiaoman would act impulsively and lead the entire Razor Sharp Company to its demise at Mt. Dingyuan.

However, Zhang Xiaoman interrupted Zhou Yinglong. "Battalion Commander, we've taken Mt. Dingyuan!"

Zhou Yinglong was confused.

Before the night was over, they had already successfully taken Mt. Dingyuan?! Everyone knew that a siege tended to take several days or even months before a mountain fort like that could be captured!

Zhou Yinglong said with a dark expression: "Have been drinking?!"

"Battalion Commander, we've really taken Mt. Dingyuan." Zhang Xiaoman said eagerly, "We were fortunate that we attacked this place. Did you know the Zong Consortium hid two howitzers on Mt. Dingyuan that were aimed at where the FOB would be built? If we didn't take Mt. Dingyuan, you would've all been in deep trouble!"

Zhou Yinglong cursed out loud: "What deep trouble? As soon as I heard that Mt. Dingyuan was sealed, I knew the Zong Consortium had such a move up their sleeves. We already relocated the FOB. Their howitzers would never reach us at all. Our FOB is about 80 kilometers away from Mt. Dingyuan, so what are they going to hit us with?"

Ren Xiaosu was somewhat relieved when he heard Zhou Yinglong's loud voice coming from the radio. Before this, he was wondering whether Fortress 178 would foresee this cheap move by the Zong Consortium. If they didn't, Fortress 178 really wouldn't live up to its great reputation at fighting wars.

However, even a battalion commander like Zhou Yinglong seemed to have a keen situational awareness. Fortress 178 was truly worthy of its reputation.

Ren Xiaosu clearly knew he was still deeply ignorant of military knowledge as compared to Zhou Yinglong. He only realized there were long-range howitzers on Mt. Dingyuan after overhearing the spy's conversation with the Qing Consortium.

Zhou Yinglong's voice eased up a little. "How many of our people were sacrificed or wounded?"

Zhang Xiaoman replied, "Battalion Commander, only seven people were wounded, and no one died."

On the other end of the call, Zhou Yinglong fell silent for a while. Then he asked, "How many bandits did y'all wipe out?"

Zhang Xiaoman said calmly, "We killed 927 enemies, of which 131 are suspected to be the Zong Consortium's regulars!" Behind that tone was a hint of smugness.

Zhou Yinglong knew well what the Razor Sharp Company was capable of. Under normal circumstances, he would not be surprised if the entire Razor Sharp Company perished while attacking Mt. Dingyuan.

Zhou Yinglong understood very quickly. He instinctively questioned, "Is the Ren Xiaosu assigned by the commander really that capable?!"

Ren Xiaosu had already walked away. Zhang Xiaoman looked at Ren Xiaosu as he sat alone in the ruins and rested in the distance. After ending the conversation, he walked over to the ruins. Then he sat down next to Ren Xiaosu and asked, "What are you fighting so hard for?"

Ren Xiaosu could clearly have attacked Mt. Dingyuan with them after the mortars had taken out the heavy machine gun positions. However, this young man chose to take the risk of climbing up the mountain with his bare hands and launching an attack on the entire bandit camp all by himself.

Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "Doing this can help reduce your casualties."

Zhang Xiaoman said, "But people always die in battle. Sometimes when walking on the road, enemies hiding in the forest and bushes will suddenly pull the triggers of their machine guns and turn your comrades around you into blood-drenched sieves. It's also possible that an artillery shell could suddenly land at your feet and blow up your legs, ripping your internal organs in the process. The battlefield's a place where we have to put our trust in fate. Everything lies with fate. No one can control it."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "How can we know if we don't try?"

Zhang Xiaoman was stunned. He realized the reason why Ren Xiaosu was pushing so hard was because he really wanted everyone to stay alive.

But this was war! How could there be no casualties in a company tasked to overcome all difficulties? Unless a miracle happened!

Chapter 397 The might of the Razor Sharp Company

After every big battle, there would always be rewards to reap. Zhang Xiaoman's men had finished firing all their mortar shells with just a few rounds of artillery bombardment. But it didn't matter to them as the bandits on Mt. Dingyuan turned out much more well-armed than they had imagined.

These things were not even worth much to an organization like the Zong Consortium.

They had almost finished expending their bullets as well. 7.62 mm bullets were most commonly used here in the Northwest, so plenty of them could be found at the bandit lair.

How much ammunition could be expended in a single battle? That was an incalculable amount. If you included the bullets used in training, it was likely that thousands or even tens of thousands of bullets would be expended just to down one person in battle.

This counting was purely based on data. Most of the time, the number of bullets expended using suppressive fire was probably much higher.

After Zhang Xiaoman and the others brought out all of the ammunition from the bandit lair on Mt. Dingyuan, the soldiers went to retrieve the empty magazine that had been tossed aside during the battle and reinserted fresh bullets.

Zhang Xiaoman sighed emotionally. "How satisfying it is to take this entire mountain fort by ourselves. All the spoils of war are ours to keep. Wait a minute, why aren't there any grenades here again?"

Everyone only realized it now that the company commander mentioned it. "Looks like it. We only found some individual grenades on the bandits and have not seen an entire box of them yet."

"The bandits on Mt. Dingyuan aren't even poor, so why can't we even find a full box of grenades?!"

When Ren Xiaosu, who was standing a distance away heard this, he felt so guilty he did not say anything. Actually, there were as many as ten boxes of grenades here, with each filled with 20 grenades. But he had already put all of them in his storage space.

All of a sudden, the voice from the palace said, "Quest complete. Awarded five attribute points. You can distribute them as you like."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. As expected, the rewards were much better for a more challenging quest like the one with a progression percentage!

However, he had only completed 90% of the quest in which he had to help his comrades lessen their burden. Why did it suddenly jump to a 100%?

Wait a minute, was it due to the ten boxes of grenades? By putting those grenades into his storage space, it could also be counted as helping his teammates lessen their burden?

Ren Xiaosu, who was always taking advantage of any loopholes in the palace's requirements, was shocked. It could even be done like that?

He had already stuffed six boxes of grenades into his storage space at Mt. Guan. But since there was no alert for the completion of the quest, he did not notice the quest progression had ticked up. If he did, he would have finished the quest at that time.

Ren Xiaosu was more than happy to help his comrades lessen their burden!

He evenly distributed three points to Strength and two points to Dexterity. His Strength now reached 13.5, while his Dexterity was at 12.1.

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From these attributes alone, Ren Xiaosu's current fitness was already more than four times that of a normal adult male.

However, Ren Xiaosu was looking forward to whether a new skill would emerge when his Strength and Dexterity hit 20 much more. Like the "City Crusher" powerup with a duration of 30 seconds that he had gained after surpassing 10 points in both those attributes. Perhaps there would be a qualitative change every time it exceeded a threshold?

While heading down the mountain, everyone in the Razor Sharp Company had their arms full of supplies. If they could move those two howitzers as well, Zhang Xiaoman would probably have dragged them all the way back to the forward operating base.

Before leaving, Zhang Xiaoman used the TNT to blow up the muzzles of the two howitzers' barrels. This was to prevent the Zong Consortium's people from using them again.

Under normal circumstances, they would rather choose to destroy large siege weapons on the battlefield that were less mobile instead of spending great effort to take them away.

On their way down the mountain, a fellow soldier suddenly thanked Ren Xiaosu when he walked past him before continuing on as though it were nothing.

Immediately after, more and more soldiers thanked Ren Xiaosu when they passed him.

They were thanking Ren Xiaosu for helping them take most of the fire in the battle. If it weren't for Ren Xiaosu taking the risk by himself, it would not be a surprise if half of them were killed in combat.

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. This time, he had not even requested them to thank him! Even so, all of his comrades were really sincere in thanking him.

In just a moment, Ren Xiaosu had gained more than a 100 gratitude tokens. His gratitude tokens had suddenly shot up to around 400.

After just one battle, Ren Xiaosu not only gained ten boxes of grenades, five attribute points, and a 100-odd thanks, but he also earned the trust of his comrades.

Zhang Xiaoman had said that you could only trust the guns and bullets in your hands, as well as your comrades in the trenches who provided covering fire for you on the battlefield.

Ren Xiaosu kept quiet as he looked at his comrades in front of him heading down the mountain.

Then he deliberately slowed down and waited for those who had not yet thanked him to pass him from behind.

They would have to advance all the way northwest now. Zhou Yinglong had ordered the Razor Sharp Company to join up with the Forward Strike Battalion at the forward operating base first. They would have to wait for the rear troops to fully assemble at the forward operating base before setting off to the next destination based on Commander Zhang's next battle plan.

The strongholds under the jurisdiction of the Zong Consortium were all northeast of the forward operating base, while the vast Gobi Desert was situated more than 200 kilometers north.

As the Razor Sharp Company had to travel more than 80 kilometers to get back to the forward operating base, all of the Razor Sharp Company's soldiers were dog-tired when they arrived. Even dogs would not be as tired as them! It was mainly because they had carried too many fucking things!

But the moment they entered the forward operating base, Zhang Xiaoman and the others held their heads high and looked really spirited. Fu Rao and Lin Ping'an even carried their rocket launchers on their shoulders proudly. They really couldn't look any more impressive than they did.

Then they walked all the way to the command post's tent to be welcomed back by the entire army's advance guard.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Captain, is this really necessary?"

Zhang Xiaoman said unhappily, "You wouldn't understand. Our Razor Sharp Company has emerged victorious, so the entire army must've heard about how a company of just over a 100 people wiped out two mountain forts. We have to put on a front to show them the might of our Razor Sharp Company!"

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. They had clearly been complaining that they were dead tired before entering the military base.

But when he saw his fellow soldiers around them, they really were looking at the Razor Sharp Company with adulation. Even the soldiers who were setting up the tents in the base had stopped their work to whisper among themselves.

Zhou Yinglong's loud voice boomed, "Put the fucking RPGs away already. It makes y'all look like you're coming here to attack the camp."

With that, Zhou Yinglong circled the Razor Sharp Company. When he saw the seven wounded soldiers lying on stretchers, he shouted, "Where's the medics? Come and carry the wounded off for treatment."

"There's no need for that." A wounded soldier from the Razor Sharp Company hurriedly said, "Ren Xiaosu has already applied some medicine onto our wounds. We've already recovered from our injuries."

“How can traditional medicine be effective?” Zhou Yinglong said unhappily, “If you’ve suffered any injuries, you should get them treated, so cut the crap!”

Ren Xiaosu realized that even though Zhou Yinglong was harsh with his words, his first reaction when he saw the Razor Sharp Company was to check on the casualties of the company and treat the wounded.

The Razor Sharp Company’s wounded were getting anxious. “Ren Xiaosu, please explain to the Battalion Commander that we’re truly alright.”

If they got taken away to be treated, they would not be able to participate in the next battle. While their brothers were off to fight at the front lines, they would have to recuperate in the medical center. How could they accept that?

Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhou Yinglong and said, “Commander Zhang has also seen the effects of my medicine before. It might be a traditional drug, but it’ll heal all kinds of surface injuries within three days. Nowadays, there’s plenty of magical herbs that can be found in the wilderness.”

Chapter 398 Third-class decoration

Zhou Yinglong specifically inspected the wounds of the injured and found that all of them had sustained gunshot wounds. One of them was even unfortunate enough to be hit by the fragments of a stray bullet.

However, the wounds below the layer of black medicine had already started to scab. It was as though the injuries were not that serious.

In order not to get stretchered off, the injured even jumped off their stretchers and moved about vigorously to show they were absolutely fine. It wasn’t an act at all and they really were fine.

Zhang Xiaoman who was standing by the side directly scolded, “Why didn’t you all fucking walk on your own when you were fine?”

The wounded chuckled and said, “If we could walk a little less, why not?”

Their comrades of the Razor Sharp Company who had carried them started cursing, “Ya bastards are fucking awful!”

“Y’all are too shameless!”

At this moment, Zhou Yinglong asked, “Are these all the casualties you suffered after taking Mt. Dingyuan?”

Zhang Xiaoman said modestly, “It was all due to Battalion Commander Zhou’s good teachings.”

Zhou Yinglong was so angry he smiled. “Enough of your bootlicking! Get out of here and write up the battle report for me!”

The faces of Zhang Xiaoman and the others fell. “Battalion Commander, all of us in the Razor Sharp Company are faithful veterans. Now should be the time for us to enjoy some good food and drink here at the FOB rather than writing some battle report.”

“Why?” Zhou Yinglong gave Zhang Xiaoman the side-eye. “Would you also like me to personally pour you some w

Zhang Xiaoman thought for a moment. “Well, if you don’t mind...”

Zhou Yinglong kicked Zhang Xiaoman in the ass. “Get lost and write the report for me!”

It was the usual practice to write a report after every battle. On one hand, it was to summarize all of the details of a battle. On the other hand, it was to list any mistakes and lessons learned in combat to prevent the same mistakes from happening again in the future.

But Zhang Xiaoman and this group of gruff men hated writing battle reports the most.

Since they had already won the battle, why should they still have to list their mistakes and lessons learned? All they had to do was win the battle!

These gruff men of the Razor Sharp Company were all nestled and gathered around Zhang Xiaoman in the tent that had just been put up.

At this moment, Zhang Xiaoman looked at Ren Xiaosu while holding a notebook and a pencil. “Ren Xiaosu, you...”

“I’m just a refugee, so I dunno how to write,” Ren Xiaosu said.

“Oh.” Zhang Xiaoman lowered his head dejectedly at first but immediately figured out that something was not right. How could the successor chosen by Commander Zhang be fucking illiterate? ‘If you don’t want to write the fucking report, just say it. Doesn’t it prick your conscience to lie that blatantly?!’

Zhang Xiaoman chewed on the end of the pencil and tried to recall the details of the battle. “It feels like the enemy was defeated even though we did not put in much effort.”

After thinking for a long time, Zhang Xiaoman still did not know how he should write the report. That was because their victory was mainly due to Ren Xiaosu. That was the truth.

“Ren Xiaosu, I think it’s better for you to write the report. If you’re really illiterate, you can just tell me and I will write it out for you.” Zhang Xiaoman said, “More importantly, we don’t even know how exactly you managed to turn the bandit lair at Mt. Dingyuan upside down. Also, what you did will earn you great honors. You’ll get promoted right after submitting this report!”

Ren Xiaosu said, “You can just write that everyone fought bravely. Fighting the battle involved the entire company, so I can’t take all the credit for it.”

“I don’t think that’s right.” Zhang Xiaoman said awkwardly, “We’ll be really embarrassed that way. It’s not like us to accept credit where it isn’t due.”

“There’s nothing to be embarrassed about.” Ren Xiaosu said, “Forget it, I’ll write instead.”

Then Ren Xiaosu grabbed Zhang Xiaoman's notebook and pencil from him and started making up details of the battle. He described his comrades as soldiers who had shown unsurpassed bravery and resourcefulness in combat.

He also wrote about how they broke through the defensive line and killed the enemies in an orderly manner. Zhang Xiaoman was dazed reading what he had written. "Was I that great?"

After he finished writing the report, Ren Xiaosu handed it to Zhang Xiaoman. "Take it to the battalion commander. We'll all share the credit."

As for Ren Xiaosu, he did not really have a sense of belonging to Fortress 178 yet. He just wanted to use the power of Fortress 178 to take revenge on the Zong Consortium. Therefore, whatever credit he might deserve was completely unimportant to him.

After his revenge, he would head to the Central Plains to search for Xiaoyu, Yan Liuyuan, and the others. He did not plan to become an official in Fortress 178. So he'd rather leave the credit for others.

By now, the entire Razor Sharp Company had acknowledged Ren Xiaosu, and he was no longer ostracized by the others. This group of men had even forgotten about the previous incident where Ren Xiaosu caused a misunderstanding and led them to pick a fight with Second Company.

However, Zhou Yinglong's intention was to find out about Ren Xiaosu's capabilities from the battle report. He knew it was mostly to the credit of Ren Xiaosu that they could take Mt. Dingyuan with almost no casualties. He also wanted to know what this person the commander had selected was like. However, Ren Xiaosu's name was hardly mentioned in the entire report!

Zhou Yinglong glanced at Zhang Xiaoman and said unhappily, "How dare you steal the accomplishments of your subordinate! D'you think I won't execute you?"

Feeling wronged, Zhang Xiaoman stammered, "But this report was written by Ren Xiaosu himself!"

Zhou Yinglong got lost in thought. How could a young man not be greedy for success? What kind of a successor had Commander Zhang chosen?

His group of old comrades would definitely ask him about Ren Xiaosu's performance as a soldier under his command. As the battalion commander, wouldn't it be such an embarrassment if he could not even answer that?

Zhou Yinglong suddenly asked Zhang Xiaoman, "Tell me, how did Ren Xiaosu fight this battle?"

Zhang Xiaoman replied honestly, "I didn't see it either, Battalion Commander...."

"Get outta here!"

Their days at the forward operating base were not as comfortable as expected. At 6.20 AM, Ren Xiaosu could already hear reveille blaring outside their tents.

Then soldiers gathered in their respective formations and began their morning exercises. Very quickly, cadences were being shouted from outside the forward operating base.

The soldiers had to run five kilometers in full kit before heading out to the battlefield. Only the Razor Sharp Company was the exception. That was because they had just finished a battle, so they had the privilege of skipping training to recover at the forward operating base.

But after reveille sounded, Jiao Xiaochen could not get back to sleep. He laid on his cot and said, "Something doesn't feel right if I don't do anything after reveille. Is there anyone else who can't sleep like me?"

In the military tent, there was a scattered response from everyone. "Wanna go for a jog?"

"You can't get back to sleep either?"

"It'll be a miracle if I can fall asleep now...."

"Come on, let's go for a run!"

With that, Ren Xiaosu saw everyone from 1st Platoon get up to put on their uniforms. As such, he got up as well. When he walked out of the tent, he realized that 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Platoons were also out of their tents. This included Han Minglei, a medic, and Li Xingcheng, a cook.

Zhang Xiaoman said with a chuckle, "Well done, gentlemen. Even though our Razor Sharp Company has gained victory, we can't get too uppity. We have to keep training!"

Jiao Xiaochen muttered, "You're the one who's most uppity right now...."

"Will you die if you don't speak?" Zhang Xiaoman stared at him.

But at this moment, Zhou Yinglong's orderly trotted over to them. "Captain Zhang Xiaoman, Battalion Commander Zhou is requesting your presence at the command post!"

Chapter 399 The petition

In the command post, Zhou Yinglong said earnestly to Zhang Xiaoman, "I just handed in the battle report yesterday, and the commander has already issued a commendation for you today. Things really move quickly during wartime. This shows that the commander values you a lot."

Zhang Xiaoman looked overwhelmed. "What did Commander say?"

"So, your current rank is half a rank above your appointment, but due to the Razor Sharp Company being a reinforced company and even though your pay had been increased, your responsibilities remained unchanged." Zhou Yinglong said, "You've made another big contribution this time, so the Personnel Division is already preparing talks with you...."

Upon hearing this, Zhang Xiaoman knew what was going on. "I'm not leaving the Razor Sharp Company!"

Zhou Yinglong was stunned. "This is a good thing. Why're you unhappy?"

"Right now, the Razor Sharp Company is in the midst of a tough battle. What does it say if I, the company commander, leave at such a time? Even if I get transferred, it'll have to be at the end of the war!" Zhang Xiaoman raised his voice and shouted.

"What are you yelling for?" Zhou Yinglong got unhappy. "I was just trying to hear your opinion. It's a good thing to begin with, but look at what you're making it out to be."

"Battalion Commander, do you want me to open up a space for Ren Xiaosu? If that's the case, that's fine too. You'll just have to let me remain a soldier in the Razor Sharp Company." Zhang Xiaoman said, "I'm willing to let him take over as company commander, but I won't leave the Razor Sharp Company."

Zhou Yinglong's temper went away. People like Zhang Xiaoman, who was unwilling to be promoted and would rather get demoted than leave the company, probably only existed among the troops of Fortress 178.

However, Zhou Yinglong said, "Then you can just stay and continue being the commander of the Razor Sharp Company. This matter has nothing to do with Ren Xiaosu. The commendation has already been given, and the entire company will receive the third-class unit citation, except for him."

"Why?" Zhang Xiaoman was shocked. "Just because he was selected by the commander, that's why he's being treated so harshly?"

Zhang Xiaoman was shocked. He had thought he was going to be transferred to make space for Ren Xiaosu, even though he did not think Ren Xiaosu would be promoted so soon. But it turned out that Ren Xiaosu was the only one who would not receive a medal.

"Enough, we can't figure out the commander's thoughts. You should go back first. The award ceremony will be held tonight." Zhou Yinglong waved him off.

Zhang Xiaoman returned to his company looking out of sorts. He continued to lead everyone in their exercise and training, but everyone could tell that Zhang Xiaoman had something on his mind.

"Captain, did the battalion commander lecture you?" Jiao Xiaochen asked. "I feel like you have something on your mind."

Zhang Xiaoman said, "The commander's decided to give each of us the third-class unit citation because we took Mt. Dingyuan and Mt. Guan successfully."

"That's great." Jiao Xiaochen was overjoyed. "Maybe everyone in our Razor Sharp Company will even get promoted to officers after the war is over."

"What's so good about that?" Zhang Xiaoman said, "Only Ren Xiaosu did not get commended and won't receive the third-class medal."

Everyone was surprised. "Why? Even if Ren Xiaosu did not mention anything about himself in the report, he should still get the award if the rest of the company's also getting it. Could there be some problems with the report? Why don't we get the battalion commander to write a new one?"

"Yes, let's go look for the commander! This is so unfair!"

"Ren Xiaosu risked his life to complete the company's mission. No one else could've climbed the back of that mountain, right? Even if any of us could've climbed that mountain, we might not have caused much damage to the bandit lair." Jiao Xiaochen said angrily, "Winning this battle should have been his credit in the first place!"

Everyone looked at Ren Xiaosu. However, Ren Xiaosu just smiled and said, "It's alright. It's pretty useless to me even if I were given an award. There's no need to go to the commander on my behalf. Didn't you all say that obedience is our soldierly duty? Let's leave it to the higher-ups to decide however they want. We just need to listen to our orders."

Zhang Xiaoman said in exasperation, "You need to fight for what you deserve too!"

"Why should I?" Ren Xiaosu laughed and continued running. "Hurry up and run, or we won't make it in time for dinner."

Everyone looked at one another, not knowing what to say.

As the night's award ceremony was quite important, the forward operating base had organized it as a pep rally to motivate the soldiers.

However, Zhang Xiaoman started addressing all of the Razor Sharp Company's soldiers except for Ren Xiaosu. "Listen up, all of you. Writing this jointly signed petition is an act of insubordination. If the commander gets upset, I'm afraid that every one of us here will no longer have a future in the military."

"I don't believe that the commander is that kind of person. He's definitely open to suggestions." Jiao Xiaochen said. "Anyway, I'm gonna sign it. We have to make sure that Ren Xiaosu gets recognized for his contributions. If Ren Xiaosu does not want to fight for it, we'll fight for it on his behalf."

Zhang Xiaoman said, "Alright, I'll write it, then all of you can sign it!"

The group of gruff men lowered their heads and pondered how to write the petition. It was really difficult for them.

Zhang Jinglin arrived at the forward operating base and was having a meeting with all the commanders of the fighting forces. Just as they were about to discuss how to cross the Beiwan River at the front line, an orderly came inside and whispered to him, "The officers from the Razor Sharp Company are all here. They said they're representing the entire Razor Sharp Company in submitting a petition."

Zhang Jinglin smiled and said, "Didn't I already say they would be given the third-class unit citation? What are they petitioning about? Let them in."

The other commanders whispered, “Commander, should we go outside?”

“No need.” Zhang Jinglin shook his head. “Let’s listen to what our men from the Razor Sharp Company have to petition about.”

Zhang Xiaoman, Jiao Xiaochen, and the other officers were brought into the command post tent. Zhang Jinglin smiled and said, “Tell me, what do the men of the hour who got us our first victory in the opening battles want to petition about?”

“This is our petition.” Zhang Xiaoman handed a crumpled piece of paper to Zhang Jinglin. “We just feel that Ren Xiaosu’s been treated unfairly. We would like to resubmit our battle report. He should be the one credited for winning this battle.”

“Oh.” Zhang Jinglin nodded as he read the petition. The petition was even signed by all the soldiers of the Razor Sharp Company. He said, “Do you mean to say you all fabricated the battle report, and that you two, Zhang Xiaoman and Jiao Xiaochen, have falsely claimed credit for the war contribution?”

Zhang Xiaoman said through his teeth, “Even if Commander wants to punish us, we’ll still admit to it. However, Ren Xiaosu really contributed to the victory. You can’t give all of us the third-class unit citation but forget about him. Isn’t that as good as a slap to the face?”

Zhang Jinglin said calmly, “Let’s look at the facts without any bias. Fabricating the battle report, condemning the military from within, and falsely claiming credit for war contributions—these actions will subject you to be revoked of your third-class unit citation. It’s no exception even if you were all men of the hour. As for Ren Xiaosu, I already knew about it.”

Zhang Xiaoman and the others were stunned. What did he mean by he already knew about it?

After that, they were led out of the tent by the orderly. Zhang Jinglin slid the petition to the other commanders with a smile. “Everyone, have a read.”

Zhou Yinglong was seated at the end of the line. He thought to himself, ‘Commander Zhang clearly looks like he’s in a great mood.’ By showing the petition to the other commanders, he was obviously trying to tell them what Ren Xiaosu, his chosen candidate, had contributed to the war.

As a soldier who had just joined the company, what had he done to deserve his comrades giving up their third-class citation just so they could petition on his behalf?

Ren Xiaosu was far more endearing to the Razor Sharp Company than they had imagined.

If you were a beam of light, you would eventually encounter other beams of light behind a dark thundercloud.

Chapter 400 Urban warfare

The commanders of the various fighting forces in the command post tent were passing around the jointly signed petition and going through it. The contents of the petition roughly described that during the battle to take control of Mt. Dingyuan, Ren Xiaosu had climbed the back of Mt. Dingyuan

barehanded to launch a surprise attack on the bandits there. As the credit was his, everyone at the Razor Sharp Company felt ashamed to be awarded the third-class unit citation for it.

Moreover, because Commander Zhang did not award the third-class decoration to Ren Xiaosu as well, this was seen as really unfair.

As Zhou Yinglong read the petition, he stole a glance at Zhang Jinglin's expression. However, he realized Zhang Jinglin did not seem unhappy. He softly probed, "I didn't expect those bastards would come here to chide the commander for acting unfairly. Should I punish them when I return to the barracks?"

Zhang Jinglin smiled. "How could I not know what you're thinking? Alright, there's no need to test me. I'm not angry."

"That's good then." Zhou Yinglong chuckled. "Commander, you're such a kind person."

At this moment, a brigade commander suddenly wondered, "The Razor Sharp Company under Zhou Yinglong's command is notorious for being difficult. Ren Xiaosu's only been posted there for a few days, but he's already gained so much support?"

Zhang Jinglin said, "Enough, let's not discuss this anymore. The award ceremony tonight will also be canceled. Zhou Yinglong, go back and tell the Razor Sharp Company that the reason Ren Xiaosu was not included in the third-class citations was that I had intended to award him the second-class decoration. However, since Ren Xiaosu fabricated the battle report that was submitted to me, his second-class medal will also be revoked. We'll start discussing our next battle plan now."

Zhou Yinglong, who was sitting in the back, suddenly felt his teeth aching. The commander was way too scheming. He did not even have to give out any awards in the end, and all the commanders of the various fighting forces already knew Ren Xiaosu had already gained a foothold in the Razor Sharp Company. Not only was his combat strength ferocious, but he was also a very inspiring figure there.

Previously, the commanders were still discussing among themselves that Zhang Jinglin might have placed Ren Xiaosu into the Razor Sharp Company purely by coincidence, not because he wanted Ren Xiaosu to be his successor. But judging from Commander Zhang's actions, he was clearly paving the way for Ren Xiaosu, wasn't he?

Of course, to forge iron, one had to be strong first. If Ren Xiaosu were a weakling, Zhang Jinglin could not groom him as commander even if he wanted to.

But as it turned out, Ren Xiaosu was not even close to being a weakling.

Zhou Yinglong was a little puzzled. Why did it feel like Commander Zhang was very confident in Ren Xiaosu?

Although Ren Xiaosu did not seem to have gained anything out of the mission, all the commanders had a clearer understanding of Zhang Jinglin's intentions and got to know Ren Xiaosu better as a person.

Perhaps this had always been Zhang Jinglin's intention.

Zhang Xiaoman and the other officers were not back at their own camp yet. People from the Personnel Division were already coming to the barracks to tell them the award ceremony that was to be held that night had been canceled. Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Why did it get canceled?"

It was only the officers who went to submit the petition. The rest of the soldiers did not go.

The soldiers from the Razor Sharp Company standing next to Ren Xiaosu did not say a word when they heard that. It was those from the Personnel Division who said, "Your company's officers went to the commander to protest the fact that you weren't awarded the third-class citation and everyone at the company thought it was unfair to you. The commander has also revoked all of their three-class unit citations over how the battle report was fabricated."

Only now did Zhang Xiaoman and the others finally appear back at the camp. Ren Xiaosu frowned and looked at Zhang Xiaoman. "Why did y'all do that? I already said that I don't need any credit for my contributions."

"You might not want to claim it, but that's your business." Zhang Xiaoman said loudly, "But our brothers at the Razor Sharp Company can't stand to see such unfairness. We're from the Razor Sharp Company, and we're all in this together. One for all, and all for one!"

Ren Xiaosu stayed silent for a long time. However, the employee from the Personnel Division who was standing beside him curled his lips and said, "Ren Xiaosu had been awarded the second-class decoration, but that's also been revoked now."

"Revoked..." Zhang Xiaoman's smile faded away. "What the fuck did you say?"

The employee from the Personnel Division shot a look at Zhang Xiaoman. "We already prepared the second-class commendation document for Ren Xiaosu, but it's been canceled now."

Zhang Xiaoman looked at Ren Xiaosu, then at the employee. He facepalmed and did not know what to say.

The employee from the Personnel Division laughed. "Alright, don't be in a hurry to feel dismayed. HQ has already told us to hold back all of your third-class unit citations until y'all make another contribution. We'll take everything into consideration then."

"Really?" Zhang Xiaoman suddenly looked up.

The staffer from the Personnel Division said, "As the entire military already knows that you all are the heroes of the opening battle, you'll still get what you deserve. Also, the commander has given the word that you can keep the spoils of war from the battle at Mt. Dingyuan."

Zhang Xiaoman was instantly overjoyed. The spoils of war had always been required to be sent to the Supply Division to be allocated. After every battle, the Razor Sharp Company's supplies would instantly get knocked back close to zero again.

Now that the commander had allowed them to retain their spoils of war, they had probably become the most well-armed company in the entire military.

After the Personnel Division left, Ren Xiaosu thanked Zhang Xiaoman and the others very seriously. “I’ll remember everyone’s efforts. Thank you.”

“What’s there to thank us for?” Zhang Xiaoman waved his hand. “If it weren’t for you, most of us wouldn’t have made it back.”

Ren Xiaosu looked at these gruff men from the Northwest and was suddenly looking forward to continuing to fight alongside them.

At this moment, Zhou Yinglong strode over with a loping stride and yelled, “You maggots, I’ll settle the score with y’all after the war is over! Everyone is to pack up your stuff and head to Shichuan Village. I want you to take the village within seven days.”

Shichuan Village was about 70 kilometers northeast of the forward operating base. No one lived there, and it was just a small town that remained behind from before The Cataclysm. Now it was a defensive strongpoint for the Zong Consortium at the southernmost side of their territory.

The reason Fortress 178 was so eager to attack Shichuan Village was because it was too close to their forward operating base. It was to prevent the Zong Consortium from setting up long-range artillery there and putting the forward operating base in their attack radius.

The safety of the forward operating base was one of the most important issues at the beginning of the war, and the main mission for the Forward Strike Battalion was to ensure the safety of the forward operating base.

Zhang Xiaoman took out a map and scanned it. “I heard there’s a ton of buildings in Shichuan Village that are still standing. They’re very suitable for setting up HMGs in. Also, there’s new defensive fortifications and bunkers built by the Zong Consortium. This urban warfare isn’t going to be easy to handle.”

Urban warfare was also called urban combat. Under most circumstances, urban warfare was fought at close quarters, and situations would even arise where close combat was required. Hostile and friendly forces could hardly be differentiated from each other, leading to extremely dangerous conflicts.

The narrow streets, complex environment, unseen enemies, and gunfire that could come from anywhere...

You wouldn’t know when a gun would suddenly point out of a dark window and start taking lives.

“Can’t we get the armored brigade to provide cover?” Jiao Xiaochen asked with a frown.

“No.” Zhang Xiaoman shook his head. “The FOB’s facilities haven’t been fully upgraded to serve them yet. The armored brigade can’t throw themselves headlong into the battlefield.”

For a moment, even these fearless thugs from the Razor Sharp Company got a little worried.

Only Ren Xiaosu was unaffected. It was as though he were not bothered by the prospect of urban combat.

