

Chapter 41: Resolve it by yourself

There was a reason why the band members were unhappy with Ren Xiaosu. Even though they were “important people” from the stronghold, he had actually made excuses to reject them when they came looking for a guide in town. It was as though being their guide was an embarrassing thing for him.

In their opinion, shouldn't you, Ren Xiaosu, take the initiative and volunteer like the first guide had done?!

How many people were hoping to strike up a closer relationship with those from the stronghold? Wang Fugui was indeed right to say that whoever the important people from the stronghold picked to do their bidding would lead to said people having a prosperous life.

Yet Ren Xiaosu's reaction was to simply avoid them.

As a result, everyone's impression of Ren Xiaosu worsened after the cracker incident. Especially Liu Bu. He was now even trying to persuade Luo Xinyu to head back to town to find another guide.

“Xinyu, we've only set off for half a day.” Liu Bu said, “It's still not too late if we return to town. We'll only be wasting a day of travel time.”

“But that's still a waste of time,” Luo Xinyu said as she looked out of the window.

“But have you thought about it?” Liu Bu continued, “This kid seems really unreliable. If he gets even more unreliable, we won't just be wasting a day's time. I've heard before that the refugees in town don't have much class, but I didn't expect it to be so bad!”

Luo Xinyu shook her head and said, “Wang Fugui said that if even he can't lead us through the mountains, no one else can do it.”

“I don't believe that.” Liu Bu said in scorn, “The town is so big, so how can there not be someone who can lead us through the mountains? We only asked around the town, but there are actually a lot more people in the vicinity where there are seven large factories. Quite a few of them live at the factories, so if we went there to ask around, we might just discover something new.”

“There are only six factories now,” Luo Xinyu corrected.

One of the factories had just been destroyed by the wolves' attack. As such, there were only six left.

“Then we can go and check out the other factories,” Liu Bu said in embarrassment.

“Enough, there will be no more discussion on this matter.” Luo Xinyu rejected him and said, “It wasn't easy for us to get 12 soldiers from the private army to escort us this time, so don't complicate things any further.”

Liu Bu did not keep arguing. Outsiders might think that Luo Xinyu was still young and most of the decisions would be made by him, the agent. But Liu Bu knew best that Luo Xinyu was a highly independent girl, and he was just the executor of her decisions.

Nowadays, there were celebrities like Luo Xinyu in every large stronghold. They were commonly known as “protags.”

But these protagonists would generally only have supporters within their own strongholds, and it was very difficult for them to make it at the other strongholds.

After all, the roads in the outside world were not as well-developed as before The Cataclysm happened. Furthermore, it was difficult to predict what people liked, so there were certainly some risks to bear if they wanted to expand their influence out of their own strongholds.

Once, a celebrity in Stronghold 89 wanted to cross over to the other strongholds to expand his influence. As a result, he went missing after leaving his stronghold. His agent and accompanying bodyguards were also nowhere to be found. It wasn't until two months later that a body suspected to be his was found in the wilderness. There was a bullet embedded in his skeletal remains that clearly suggested he died from a gunshot wound. Further, he was even shot from behind.

This made everyone else even warier.

But Luo Xinyu was never satisfied with only being prominent in one stronghold. She was willing to take risks even though she knew it was dangerous to do so. For a girl, this required a lot of courage.

Luo Xinyu looked at Liu Bu, who kept silent. “You can pick on him, but don't let it affect our journey. We just need him to properly guide us to our destination. Once we get back from Stronghold 112, you can do whatever you want with him.”

“OK,” Liu Bu responded.

It was a bumpy ride in the vehicles, with the soldiers from the private army driving. They were already driving the vehicles as safely as possible to avoid any irreversible damage to the suspensions, chassis, tires, and other parts of the vehicles. However, the road was too bumpy. There was hardly anything they could do about that.

Ren Xiaosu sat in the backseat of the point vehicle and gave directions to the driver from time to time. But as Liu Bu did not trust Ren Xiaosu, he'd specifically assigned two band members to sit beside him and keep an eye on him. This led to the point vehicle carrying five passengers in total.

The two band members sitting in the back had standoffish looks on their faces. They used to have plenty of room to spare in the backseats. But with Ren Xiaosu joining them, everyone felt uncomfortable.

This group that was planning to pass through the Jing Mountains suddenly looked like they were a special task force established to escort Ren Xiaosu to Stronghold 112...

But Ren Xiaosu felt that Liu Bu was a little naïve. With only one soldier from the private army driving the vehicle, the remaining three were all members of the band.

If he really wanted to cause trouble, he could probably kill everyone else in the vehicle in a mere three seconds, leaving him the only person alive inside.

The stronghold's people did not understand a thing about the living conditions of the refugees. They only knew that it was full of hardships and was very dirty. That was basically all the knowledge they had.

The band member sitting next to Ren Xiaosu glanced at him and said haughtily, "You'd better behave yourself and not cause any unnecessary trouble."

Ren Xiaosu said unhappily, "I only ate a little of your crackers. Is this really necessary?"

The band member raised his voice. "You call that a little? Let me tell you, you had no say over your own life from the moment you joined us, do you understand? Don't overestimate yourself!"

The band member sitting in the front seat laughed and said, "Kid, do you know what'll break when you throw an egg at a rock?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment. "The heart."

That band member was taken aback. "Whose heart?"

Ren Xiaosu answered, "The hen's heart will be broken."

Ren Xiaosu was quite happy with his reply as he managed to show a trace of humanity amid the witty response.

That evening, the convoy successfully crossed through a mountain pass in the Yun Range. From here, the terrain opened up, and a large forest could be seen beyond the Yun Range. Ren Xiaosu was gazing out the window, spellbound. A picturesque gully cutting through the vast, lively, and flat land had sprung from the extraordinary craftsmanship of nature.

The schoolteacher, Mr. Zhang, had said that this unique landform was formed by the tectonic movement of the Earth's plates. Ren Xiaosu sometimes felt that humans were miniscule in the presence of such majesty.

The trees here were flourishing. Only a few muddy paths proved that humanity had been here before. This was also where the band had lost their way during the first expedition. Ren Xiaosu had heard from Mr. Zhang that trees in the tropical rainforest were so dense that it was almost impossible to pass through. However, the forest north of here was still relatively sparse. Only the grass seemed to be growing a little taller than usual.

In the evening, the convoy finally arrived at the clearing that Liu Bu had talked about. Liu Bu jumped out of the vehicle and laughed loudly. "Let's set up camp here for today. Everyone, get some rest and eat something."

The moment he finished speaking, Ren Xiaosu walked towards the pickup truck. But Liu Bu immediately stopped him. Ren Xiaosu said in surprise, "What?"

Liu Bu sneered. "We didn't bring your share of the food and water, so resolve it by yourself."