

### **Chapter 431 Sneaking into the North**

Li Shentan did not finish off the person from the Zong Consortium Wang Congyang had deliberately left alive. He squatted next to the overturned vehicle and asked with a smile, "Can you contact your boss right now?"

The man was still dangling from the backseat of the vehicle. As the vehicle was flipped with its chassis facing up, the man was unfortunate enough to have his foot stuck and could not move at all.

When Li Shentan reached out and opened his clenched fist, the squashed vehicle actually started uncrumpling as though it were an expanding balloon.

When the man could move again, he kowtowed to Li Shentan. "I have a satellite phone, so I can get him right away!"

Li Shentan nodded and said with a smile, "Give him a call then. You heard what that person said just now. Since he asked you to report back to the Zong Consortium, you should report it quickly."

"OK, OK." The man was traumatized and did whatever he was told. Part of it might have been the effect of Li Shentan's hypnosis or maybe panic.

Li Shentan looked into his eyes and said, "A supernatural being who can control a steam locomotive has attacked you all. He said he wanted to take revenge on the Zong Consortium and has taken away all the gold."

When the call went through, the man hurriedly reported the situation. The person on the other end of the line did not even grumble and just hung up in silence.

Li Shentan sighed and said, "Why isn't there any reaction? Alright, there's nothing left for you to do. You can end yourself now."

With those words, the man stood up and limped quickly towards a rock on the roadside. He rammed himself into it and died.

Next to him, Hu Shuo asked, "What was the point of having him make that call?"

"Grandpa," Li Shentan smiled and said, "wouldn't it be fun if that starts a chain reaction?"

Hu Shuo looked at Li Shentan. He felt a sense of anguish when he heard it was about having fun. The old man understood that his grandson did not have a healthy mind, but he knew exactly what caused it. Most people who had experienced those situations would also find it difficult to live like a normal person, wouldn't they? So all he could do was protect his grandson while he still could. Whatever he wanted to do, he would be there with him.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu, who had just reached the shore, was unaware that the big picture in the South had been decided. Li Shentan was guarding at the Zong Consortium's escape route and saying he

wanted to help Ren Xiaosu eradicate all of the Zong Consortium's people. He also did not know that Wang Congyang had actually been hiding in the Zong Consortium's territory for over a month after escaping from the valley, and he even pulled off a big ambush against the Zong Consortium before swaggering off.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was leading the Razor Sharp Company along the shore while moving in a crooked fashion.

When the group of thugs from the Razor Sharp Company disembarked from the ferry, they could barely maintain the wedge. However, they seriously underestimated the aftereffects of seasickness. After all, this group of people had been seasick on the ferry for two days and two nights. They did not have much to eat during this period, and even when they did eat something, they ended up vomiting it all out. The entire group was tottering around and could not even keep to a straight path!

When Ren Xiaosu asked them whether they were alright, they still answered that they were fine!

After coming ashore, they would definitely have to do something. Ren Xiaosu suggested that they change out of their uniforms first.

Zhang Xiaoman had suggested they put on the Zong Consortium's khaki uniforms and impersonate the Zong Consortium's soldiers to catch the enemy by surprise. But there were too many holes in the uniforms they could gather at that time, so Ren Xiaosu rejected the idea.

Right now would be the correct moment for them to put on the Zong Consortium's uniforms. They almost certainly wouldn't encounter any friendlies in the place they were stepping foot in. There would only be enemies here.

On the northern shore of the Beiwan River was a farming settlement. But at this moment, there were weeds everywhere in the fields, and the fields looked hardly taken care of.

In the territories controlled by the consortiums, it would not be enough to just own factories. Without a supply of food, they couldn't support many people. So the consortiums also commanded the refugees to cluster farm like how they managed their factories. Farming was basically the same as working in a factory.

"Looks like the farmer refugees have also been recruited to fight the war," Zhang Xiaoman muttered.

"Look at all these crops. They're dying with no one taking care of them."

Farming was definitely not as simple as "sowing in spring and reaping in fall." If there were no one to clear the weeds, they would end up growing even better than the crops.

"What the hell!" Jiao Xiaochen said, "Look, the corn is about to bear ears, right? We don't even have this to eat in the fortress, yet they don't cherish what they have."

"However, it can also be seen how great of an exaggeration the Zong Consortium made when they claimed they had 200,000 soldiers." Zhang Xiaoman spat on the ground. "How can a group of farmers fight a fucking battle? No wonder I thought the enemy's marksmanship was piss-poor in the Battle of

Shichuan Village. I think there's probably a lot of similar cannon fodder deployed at Mt. Wuchuan as well."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "If the refugees here had been recruited, they might have left in a hurry and not taken their clothing with them. Let's look around and put on whatever we can find first before searching for the Zong Consortium's military uniforms."

"It'll be easy to find clothing left behind by the refugees here," Zhang Xiaoman replied. "What'll be difficult is getting our hands on the Zong Consortium's military uniforms. We have to obtain those that are clean and not bloodstained. You can't possibly expect to capture an entire company of Zong Consortium soldiers alive, right?"

Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. "We can just look for a garment factory. The Zong Consortium's garment factories must all be producing those military uniforms now. We can choose whatever size we like after we take one of the garment factories."

Zhang Xiaoman was stunned. This idea had not crossed his mind before.

But before they could walk much further, they came across some simple ranch houses near the farming settlement that were neatly arranged in rows. It looked like these were the refugees' living quarters.

There were a lot of clothes inside, but they were all filthy.

But at a time like this, they could not be particular. Everyone in the Razor Sharp Company took the clothes from the houses and changed into them.

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu heard someone humming and approaching from behind the row of houses. It was even a girl's voice that he heard.

Ren Xiaosu said, "Don't worry, it's just some normal refugees, and they aren't carrying any weapons."

When they heard Ren Xiaosu, everyone was relieved. They did not even care how Ren Xiaosu knew that.

Zhang Xiaoman said in a low voice, "They're probably refugees who came here to escape from the war. Don't alert them. We're also refugees now. Hide the guns inside the house and then head out."

The moment they stepped out, everyone was surprised to see an old man holding a little girl's hand standing in front of them. The old man and the little girl were also stunned. They had not expected so many people to suddenly appear here.

Zhang Xiaoman smiled kindly and said, "Sir, we are refugees passing by this place. Do you have any food that we can eat?"

"Refugees?" The old man said in a startled manner, "I don't think y'all're refugees?"

Zhang Xiaoman was taken aback. "Why do you say that?"

The old man trembled while replying, "This is the first time I've seen refugees carrying a mortar..."

Zhang Xiaoman turned around and looked at Jiao Xiaochen. When he saw Jiao Xiaochen still carrying the mortar in a daze, he kicked him right in the crotch. Only now did the Razor Sharp Company finally snap out of their seasickness.

Zhang Xiaoman said angrily, "Why're you still carrying the fucking mortar?"

Jiao Xiaochen climbed back to his feet and muttered, "Captain, you only told us to leave our guns in the houses. You didn't say anything about the mortar!"

### **Chapter 432 Forced by circumstance**

The old man looked at the Razor Sharp Company not knowing how to react. Instead, it was the little girl who started laughing when she saw Zhang Xiaoman and Jiao Xiaochen bickering with each other.

A child's world was a simple one. They still did not understand how terrifying this world was.

Ren Xiaosu asked the old man, "What's the stronghold closest to here?"

"That would be Stronghold 144," the old man replied truthfully. "It's about 60 kilometers to the west."

Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhang Xiaoman. "So can you confirm our location now?"

"Yes." Zhang Xiaoman nodded. "Stronghold 144 is the Zong Consortium's granary, as 70% of the farming settlements are located near it. You could say it's a stronghold that was specially built for handling food stores, just like what Stronghold 114 is to the Qing Consortium."

"Oh, I see." Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, "Then let's start by attacking the areas around Stronghold 144 first."

Jiao Xiaochen suddenly asked, "What should we do with this old man and the little girl? Are we just gonna let them go? What if they report us to the Zong Consortium?"

The old man immediately turned anxious. "Sir, don't you worry. We definitely won't report y'all to the Zong Consortium. Y'all're from Fortress 178, right? To be honest, we were all hoping that you would come here as well."

The Zong Consortium had oppressed the refugees too much. As a result, they had lost the support of the refugees.

Ren Xiaosu said, "If all the young and able adults weren't already conscripted by the Zong Consortium, we might've been able to organize the refugees into an armed force behind enemy lines and encircle the stronghold. When I attended Mr. Zhang's lessons, he once mentioned that such a division won..."

These words startled Zhang Xiaoman and the others quite a bit. However, they did not have the conditions to recreate something like that right now.

From the company, someone asked, "Grandpa, is there any food here?"

They were asking this because their rations were running out. Although there was the food that Ren Xiaosu had brought, Xiaoyu only prepared enough for him alone.

Based on Xiaoyu's plan, the provisions would be enough to last Ren Xiaosu three months in the wilderness without needing him to constantly look for something to eat.

Although there was plenty of food, it was not sufficient for the entire Razor Sharp Company. Three months' worth of food for a single person would only last two days for 184 people. Therefore, it was extremely urgent that they find food first.

Although Ren Xiaosu could plant some of the Potato Shooters, he would only use a method that would consume his gratitude tokens as a last resort.

The old man said, "How could we still have food? It's all been seized by the Zong Consortium. They even found and took the food that we stashed away."

Ren Xiaosu glanced at the basket the old man was carrying and saw it was filled with wild vegetables. It seemed like he had taken the little girl out earlier to dig for them. The old man was not lying.

"Then what should we do?" Jiao Xiaochen asked.

Zhang Xiaoman gave a wave of his hand. "Don't worry, we can go and blow up the factories. There's so many workers in the factories, so how can they not have food there?"

When everyone heard this, they immediately headed west. They were going to seek uniforms and food at the same time.

It went better than they expected. It didn't take them long before they came across a factory that had a continuous trail of white smoke gushing out of its chimney.

The Razor Sharp Company had meticulously planned to attack it from two different directions. However, they did not even encounter any presence of a decent garrison around it, with only two private troops guarding the place. When they saw Ren Xiaosu and company, they instantly knelt on the ground and begged for mercy without any resistance.

Furthermore, all of the refugees in the factory also came outside promptly and lined up.

Zhang Xiaoman wondered, "You only have two people guarding the entire factory?"

The private troops who were kneeling on the ground said, "The rest have been transferred to the Zong Consortium's combat troops."

"Alright then!" Zhang Xiaoman seized their weapons and said, "Bring out the food y'all eat here. We want to take some of it with us."

The two private soldiers hesitated a little but still ended up doing as they were told.

However, Zhang Xiaoman and the others were shocked when they saw the moldy cornbread that was brought out. He said in surprise, "Is this all you have in this factory? Can any refugees step forward and answer me?"

One of the refugees said, "Sir, this is what we usually eat."

Zhang Xiaoman's face darkened. It was no wonder the Zong Consortium was unpopular with the people and that the old man had said they were all hoping for Fortress 178 to invade. It turned out the refugees were leading miserable lives.

Ren Xiaosu sighed. Although the Qing Consortium was also an organization that exploited its refugees, the refugees in their factories at least had enough to eat. It wasn't about how good the Qing Consortium was, but how the other organizations made them look better.

Jiao Xiaochen broke a moldy top of cornbread in half and saw that there were even grain chaff mixed into it. "Is this thing really edible? Wouldn't you die after eating it?"

"Sir, it's enough as long as it keeps us alive," the refugee replied.

As this was a bronze smelter, the Razor Sharp Company could not find any clothes nor the Zong Consortium's military uniforms. This upset Zhang Xiaoman a little. He looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, "We can't eat this. We've also eaten horrible food before, but we really can't eat something that's already moldy. It'll affect our combat effectiveness."

"I think it'll be the same at the other nearby factories," Ren Xiaosu lamented. "So if we want something to eat, we'll have to find it at the Zong Consortium's stronghold."

"Since Stronghold 144 is known as the Zong Consortium's granary, we'll definitely find food there. Besides, if we can destroy that 'granary,' it'll trouble the Zong Consortium quite a bit. If their troops don't have any food to eat during the war, they might just stage a mutiny."

"Dream on!" Zhang Xiaoman joked. "There should be at least a regiment garrisoned inside Stronghold 144, so how're we supposed to attack it?"

Ren Xiaosu piped up, "We can attack their baggage train first!"

Initially, the Razor Sharp Company did not wish to come into contact with any of the Zong Consortium's regulars since they were behind enemy lines. But now, they had no choice but to fight. If they did not fight, they would starve to death. Their hand was forced by circumstance.

No one could have expected that the bloodshed about to take place within the Zong Consortium's territory would actually be sparked by a search for food.

Two days later, the Zong Consortium's headquarters suddenly received news that a convoy moving provisions had been attacked by a small group of enemy troops outside Stronghold 144. As the enemy was only a single company from Fortress 178, they did not manage to completely wipe out the supply column.

Currently, Stronghold 144's garrison infantry regiment was pursuing this company with all its might.

A general at the headquarters on the front line frowned when he received this news. As Stronghold 144's geography was unique, Fortress 178 would have to cross a river to be able to attack that place. But since Fortress 178 did not have any ships, the Zong Consortium did not worry too much about this place when they were previously considering their strategic plans.

But to their surprise, something just had to happen at Stronghold 144.

The headquarters issued an official document to Stronghold 144 to order the infantry regiment's commander to eliminate this company that came from Fortress 178. He was to ensure the safety of the rear supply lines!

But just a few hours after the document was sent, Stronghold 144 relayed the news that the regiment had lost sight of the enemy.

The general at the headquarters who was in charge of logistics was enraged. "How could you even lose sight of the enemy inside your own territory?! Find them! Locate this company no matter what! Otherwise, you won't have to be the regimental commander anymore!"

#### **Chapter 433 Your regimental commander is dead**

Actually, the general who was in charge of logistics had bypassed the chain of command by issuing the order directly. However, no one said anything about it since whoever was in charge of logistics would usually be close to the higher-ups.

The Razor Sharp Company had not actually disappeared and were instead hiding in the bronze smelter they had arrived at first. On one hand, they had to watch over the refugees in the factory to prevent them from running off and revealing their whereabouts. On the other hand, they shared a portion of the provisions they had robbed from the Zong Consortium with the refugees to win them over.

At first, everyone was still on edge as they were afraid something could happen. After all, Ren Xiaosu's idea of hiding in the factory was a bold one. They were surprised that none of the refugees had any intentions of tattling on them. But of course, they did not have the chance to do so either.

The refugees said that being a snitch was more trouble than it was worth. Even if they tried every means possible to escape from here and went to inform the Zong Consortium, they would not be given any rewards.

The Zong Consortium's harsh treatment of the refugees was evident.

Some of the refugees even requested that Ren Xiaosu and company equip them with firearms as they hoped to join the battle to fight the Zong Consortium together.

Zhang Xiaoman naturally did not agree. But he sighed emotionally and said, "If a civilization wants its people to fall to its knees, then the people will show that civilization the pride of their savagery."

Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhang Xiaoman in surprise. "You're quite cultured."

“I didn’t think of it.” Zhang Xiaoman chuckled and said, “Commander Zhang said it.”

After they successfully seized the food, the Razor Sharp Company hid in the factory again and lay in wait for another opportunity. Meanwhile, the infantry regiment was not expecting the Razor Sharp Company to be so bold as to hide right under their noses.

“Currently, the garrison of Stronghold 144 must be conducting a thorough search for us. If an enemy appeared to our rear as well, we’d definitely have a headache like them too,” Zhang Xiaoman said with a smile.

Amid their chattering, the factory carried on with its usual operations. Only in this way would it not seem suspicious.

Ren Xiaosu said, “The Zong troops will definitely come around to ask if there are any suspicious figures around. At that time, we can determine whether they’ve split up into groups or concentrated their forces to search for us. If they have split up, we can seize the opportunity to attack them.”

Although the general in charge of logistics at the Zong Consortium’s headquarters was furious, he also felt that the matter was not actually that serious. They had already guessed that this company might have been the one that accidentally made the river crossing at Mt. Qiangwan, but it would be fine as long as they were not the main forces of Fortress 178.

After all, a regiment’s strength was ten times that of a company’s. It was obvious who would win.

The infantry regiment left behind a battalion to defend Stronghold 144, while several companies were deployed to search in all directions. According to their plans, if a company encountered the enemy, they should stall and call for reinforcements. It would then take at most two hours for two of their companies to surround the enemy.

But less than two days later, headquarters received yet another report that a company from the garrison infantry regiment of Stronghold 144 had been wiped out and that the enemy remained on the loose. On that same afternoon, another company was wiped out by the enemy. This company that was killed had actually gone to support the first company that was taken out.

Headquarters was alarmed. What was this turn of events? Didn’t the enemy only consist of a single company? How did they manage to wipe out two companies of theirs?

The Zong Consortium’s infantry regimental commander was not an idiot. He immediately combined his fighting forces and no longer split them up.

This regimental commander even went to the battlefield to have a look. He was surprised to discover that the enemy did not suffer any casualties in the previous battles. What the hell was with this combat effectiveness? A supernatural being had to be part of this Fortress 178 company!

The regimental commander frowned as he stood on the battlefield and wondered how he should resolve this thorn in the side. His responsibility for staying behind at Stronghold 144 was to ensure that



the logistics and provisions to the front line were kept safe. If this problem remained unresolved, he probably wouldn't keep his position as the regimental commander.

But then a pink mist erupted from the regiment commander's chest, and his entire body was knocked backwards.

The soldiers around him grew anxious. "Sniper! Sniper! Save the CO!"

But how could the regimental commander who was shot in the chest by a sniper rifle possibly survive that.

To be honest, the Zong Consortium had never fought tough battles before. Most of the officers at the grassroots level did not even have the awareness to keep a lookout for snipers.

No one could have expected that a sniper would actually appear here. How could an elite soldier like a sniper be attached to an infantry company? Just how many troops from Fortress 178 had crossed the river?!

Meanwhile, the Zong Consortium's headquarters was still waiting for news of the annihilation of the Razor Sharp Company. However, they were told about the regimental commander's death instead.

When the general who was in charge of logistics heard this news, he wanted to curse out loud. He immediately handed the case over to the Department of War for them to handle. This was a big deal. There was a need to appoint a new regimental commander, and someone had to be held accountable as well!

In fact, Ren Xiaosu was also unaware that he had killed the regimental commander of Stronghold 144's garrison. He was purely trying his luck when he found a commanding point to observe the battlefield from. But when he spotted the regimental commander in his scope, he decisively took a shot at him.

After Ren Xiaosu scurried off from his sniping position, he even asked the palace, "What's my firearms proficiency now?"

The voice from the palace answered, "Master."

Not bad, not bad at all. Ren Xiaosu was happy. Ever since he killed the two snipers in the mountain range, he felt that his skill should have improved.

This was the first time Ren Xiaosu had raised one of his skills to master, so he still felt a sense of accomplishment. After all, he did not achieve this by copying but through his actual skill and training.

Ren Xiaosu did not fire a second shot because he saw the Zong Consortium troops armed with heavy machine guns. If they somehow managed to react and attack his position with the heavy machine guns, he might not survive.

After joining back up with Zhang Xiaoman and the others, Zhang Xiaoman asked him, "Any success?"

"Yeah, I killed an officer," Ren Xiaosu answered.

“An officer? What was his rank?” Zhang Xiaoman asked.

“You think I could tell?” Ren Xiaosu said. After all, the scope was not some kind of divine artifact. At that great a distance, a person would appear as small as an ant.

Zhang Xiaoman nodded. “Alright, I don’t think it’s anyone important anyway. Let’s head back to the factory and lie low for now.”

This time, they stayed hidden for seven days straight. The Razor Sharp Company did not even see any signs of the Zong Consortium’s companies pursuing or searching for them during this period. Zhang Xiaoman joked, “Why have the Zong Consortium’s troops ceased their search? Ren Xiaosu, could you have killed their regimental commander?”

Ren Xiaosu laughed. “As if we could get that lucky! Don’t even think about it. I doubt that officer would be anyone as important as the regimental commander since he doesn’t even have the awareness to keep a lookout for snipers.”

But unbeknownst to them, a chain reaction had already started due to Ren Xiaosu’s sniping of the infantry regimental commander.

It would even go on to affect the situation at the front line too.

All because the Zong Consortium now suspected that there had to be more than one company from Fortress 178 that had infiltrated their rear lines.

#### **Chapter 434 Your new regimental commander is dead too**

The Razor Sharp Company did not feel like they had really done much. To them, they had at most eliminated two companies while Ren Xiaosu killed an officer. As for how he killed the officer, the Razor Sharp Company was numb to it and not particularly concerned.

In their opinion, this was trivial. Compared to what they had done previously, it was nothing at all.

However, that wasn’t the case for the Zong Consortium. At this moment, the Zong Consortium had recalled an elite officer from the front line to Stronghold 144 to take over as the new commander of the infantry regiment there.

This young officer’s performance at the front line was without peer. The Zong Consortium’s higher-ups had even intended to let him take responsibility for guarding Position 128 on Mt. Wuchuan.

In the end, to resolve the matter at hand, they ordered him to return from the front line to take charge of the encirclement operation in the rear.

Someone suggested they should just arrange for a full regiment to be redeployed to the rear to carry out the encirclement.

However, one of the generals at the headquarters rejected this suggestion. “Fortress 178 does not have a fleet. Although our defensive line at the southern shore of the Beiwan River has been crushed by the

Qing Consortium, the waterway still remains under our control. There are no other vessels on that river, and even if there were, we would've spotted them already. Therefore, this fighting force from Fortress 178 that's currently sneaking around in our backyard must be the troops that boarded the ferry at the harbor behind Mt. Qiangwan. That ship can fit 300 people on it at most, so this is the intel we have to work with."

"Mhm, the 1237th Regiment from Stronghold 144 isn't weak either. If Zong Jing still can't handle this matter with a regiment at his command, he's probably not that capable after all," a middle-aged general said calmly.

At this moment, everyone stopped talking. This general actually brought up the internal strife between the factions of the organization the moment he spoke.

Just like most other organizations, the Zong Consortium had cracks in the foundation. Otherwise, no one would have secretly transferred their assets out.

Zong Cheng and Zong Xiang, who were from the Zong clan's main branch, were currently considered the frontrunners to lead the Zong Consortium. Meanwhile, this young officer named Zong Jing was from the fourth ancillary branch, and they were all considered competitors with one another.

In the end, one of the generals in Zong Jing's branch said, "The enemy has a sniper, so we have to deploy our most elite snipers to Stronghold 144 as well, since the battle at Mt. Wuchuan has not reached its climax yet."

This was considered a quid pro quo, to which the other generals agreed to.

Stronghold 144 was about 500 kilometers away from Mt. Wuchuan, and the Zong Consortium had built a simple concrete road to link up these two locations. But due to tectonic movements and a lack of maintenance, the road was already riddled with potholes and cracks.

Currently, Zong Jing had the most elite snipers from the Zong Consortium traveling with him.

The off-road vehicle was driving down the road at a top speed of only 50 kilometers per hour.

Zong Jing had set off during the night to head to Stronghold 144. As he was traveling light, he arrived in the territory that was overseen by Stronghold 144 by the next afternoon.

Zong Jing was also getting very impatient. He was hoping to deal with the threat in the rear as quickly as possible so he could return to the front line where it was more feasible for him to gain accolades for a promotion.

Before he even arrived at the stronghold, he was already making arrangements with the deputy commander of 1237th Regiment via a phone call. The first thing he did was to order his deputy to quickly search the nearby factories. While reading the situation reports, Zong Jing realized the previous regimental commander had missed out on checking the factories and had a feeling that the enemy troops might be hiding in one of them.

Thus, the second-in-command sent out several companies to check on the twenty-something factories in the area.

As expected, while he was still on the road that night, his second-in-command contacted him and reported that their troops had engaged the Fortress 178 troops in battle at a bronze smelter.

Zong Jing heaved a sigh of relief. It was just as he had guessed. Right after, he asked about the outcome of the battle but was met with evasiveness from his second-in-command, who told him that because there were too many factories, he had no choice but to split up the troops to check on each of the factories. He said that only a single company went to check on the bronze smelter, and they ended up being defeated by the enemy.

Zong Jing went silent for a while before asking about the number of casualties the enemy had sustained. He was told they suffered no casualties at all.

In fact, before the company could even get close to the bronze smelter, Ren Xiaosu's shadow clone had already taken out most of their troops. The shadow clone rushed into the company's formation and slashed the radio operator and his radio set first. Then it started slashing all over the place within the formation before telling the Razor Sharp Company to come and clean up the mess.

But it didn't just end there. The shadow clone also hunted down the Zong Consortium's soldiers who were fleeing into the wilderness. In the end, the company that went to the bronze smelter was wiped out before they could even see the main entrance of the factory.

The second-in-command only reacted after he realized he couldn't contact this particular company after half an hour had passed. But by that time, the Razor Sharp Company had already sent the refugees away and blown up the bronze smelter before escaping themselves. He didn't even have an idea of where they had fled.

All of this was thanks to the fact that there was a war going on at the front line. Otherwise, Stronghold 144's troops were definitely not a force that Ren Xiaosu could beat. However, Ren Xiaosu only dared to attack the Zong Consortium in their own territory precisely because of that.

Zong Jing was starting to burn with worry. It would be not appropriate for him to chide his new second-in-command in the call. After all, how could he tell him off so quickly when he was freshly posted to this regiment himself? If the other party did not cooperate with him as a result, that would be even more troublesome.

His second-in-command asked: "Should I send some troops to go and escort you? If there's any danger, they'll at least be able to protect you."

Zong Jing was really frustrated. Although he wanted to learn from the higher-ups to act patiently, he was still young and unable to rein in his anger. He couldn't help but criticize, "There's no need. Continue tracking the enemy. Even though you can't do your duty, you sure are great at being an asskisser. If you can't locate the Fortress 178 troops within the day, you won't need to stay around in 1237th Regiment any longer. I'll ship you north to mine."

Meanwhile, the Razor Sharp Company was marching west in the wilderness. Thanks to Zong Jing, they could no longer hide comfortably in the factories anymore. Zhang Xiaoman was cursing at Zong Jing, "I wonder which Zong bastard is so cunning that they actually guessed where we were hiding."

"What'd you expect?" Ren Xiaosu said calmly, "We can't treat the other party like they're idiots. It was only a matter of time before the Zong Consortium found out."

When they heard the sudden rumble of a vehicle driving in the wilderness, everyone threw themselves on the ground. Some of them hid in ditches while others took cover behind trees.

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They had not been walking on the main road as that would be a death wish. However, they were marching parallel to the road in case they lost their bearings. If they encountered the Zong Consortium's convoys, they might even be able to rob them again.

After all, their provisions were running out again.

An off-road vehicle sped past them on the road. Jiao Xiaochen mumbled, "It's not a convoy...." There was a hint of disappointment in his voice.

Chuckling, Zhang Xiaoman chided him softly, "That vehicle came from the direction of the front lines. Even if they are a convoy, it would only be an empty vehicle. Eh? Where's Ren Xiaosu?"

They looked around and were surprised to see Ren Xiaosu lying on a hill and holding a large black sniper rifle in front of him.

With a loud bang, a huge dust cloud kicked up around where Ren Xiaosu lay. He had fired an incendiary bullet that hit the off-road vehicle right in the gas tank.

Everyone saw the off-road vehicle explode into a fireball in the wilderness. The vehicle parts were blasted into the air before landing on the ground, scattering everywhere.

Zhang Xiaoman and the others watched in shock as Ren Xiaosu put away his sniper rifle. They only knew that Ren Xiaosu was capable of sniping, and this was the first time they had witnessed the process themselves. Including the sniper rifle, how many powers did Ren Xiaosu have? Three?!

Stunned, Zhang Xiaoman wondered if Ren Xiaosu might even possess more than three superpowers.

When Ren Xiaosu came back over, Zhang Xiaoman asked, "Why did you shoot them?"

"Why not?" Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment before answering, "If they can travel in an off-road vehicle, they should at least be lieutenants, right? In that case, why not just kill them?"

"True.... Let's hurry and leave. It's time to switch locations." Zhang Xiaoman led the Razor Sharp Company and escaped into the depths of the wilderness. The Zong Consortium was tracking them closely, so they had to find a place to lie low for a bit.

But when news of Zong Jing's death was reported back to headquarters, the Zong Consortium's central command fell so quiet that only their heartbeats could be heard.

### **Chapter 435 Pursuit**

Zong Jing, who was from the fourth ancillary branch of the Zong clan, was also one of the frontrunners of the younger generation. But it was only because Zong Cheng was a supernatural being that he, as a normal person, had mostly been overlooked.

Of course, they were only outstanding because they were compared with the other members of the Zong Consortium. If this comparison included everyone else, then Qing Zhen, who was a similar age to them, had already surpassed their achievements by becoming the head of the Qing Consortium. But because of Qing Zhen's coup, the Zong Consortium's Board seemed to have started becoming wary of the troops controlled by the clan's family members. They were all worried that what happened to the Qing Consortium would play out in their organization as well.

The fourth ancillary branch of the Zong clan knew that Zong Jing was definitely not comparable to Zong Cheng or Zong Xiang, but still, he couldn't just die like that!

Moreover, Zong Jing had taken two of the most elite snipers from the Zong Consortium's military with him. As a matter of fact, the cost of training a sniper was comparable to training a fighter pilot before The Cataclysm!

"I'll deploy the recon battalion to Stronghold 144." A general said gloomily, "I want to make sure these Fortress 178 troops will never return home!"

"Seconded! It's better to leave such pursuits in the wilderness to the recon battalion. Besides, the front at Mt. Wuchuan doesn't require them either. But more importantly, we can't allow these Fortress 178 troops to find out about our contingency plans," the general sitting at the end of the conference table said in a low voice.

Everyone was cowed by the words. The contingency plans seemed extremely important.

Moreover, Stronghold 144 was the Zong Consortium's granary, and the military rations at the front line could only last for about 15 days. If they did not resolve the problem of the infiltration quickly, the battles at the front line might get affected as a result.

"It's decided then. Order the recon battalion to set off immediately. As for the role of the infantry regiment's commander, I recommend Zong Han take over. The defeat we suffered at the Beiwan River has already proven that Zong Han is not suitable as a brigade commander, so demote him and make him report to Stronghold 144 instead." "Seconded, but let's not make the same, stupid mistake as the previous time. Have the 1237th Regiment send some troops to receive him."

All of the Zong Consortium's generals were upset. Although this issue did not really affect the Zong Consortium as a whole, these troops from Fortress 178 that had infiltrated their rear lines were a thorn in the side and a niggling source of pain.

They were about to begin the final battle at Mt. Wuchuan, yet they still had to redeploy their troops to the rear.

However, the Razor Sharp Company evaporated into thin air and did not appear again around Stronghold 144 for the next seven days.

When the Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion arrived, they started tracking from the area where Zong Jing was attacked. These soldiers were all experts at hunting people in the wilderness, so it would be easy to find the tracks of an entire company if they wanted to.

For example, trampled grass, human excrement, and other tracks that suggested people had been there before would all alert them.

But when they followed the trail to a small stream, the tracks stopped abruptly. The Zong Consortium's reconnaissance troops realized that the Razor Sharp Company had made use of this small stream to escape, but they could not ascertain where they had gone.

This left the Zong Consortium in a very uncomfortable position.

For example, someone wouldn't be disgusted by seeing a palm-sized spider at home but that it disappeared right after one turned one's eyes away for a moment.

Three days later, three military factories in the vicinity of Stronghold 145 fell under attack. These three factories were not technologically advanced in any way either. They were just factories that manufactured the most common bullets, hand grenades, and mortar shells.

The defenses at the military factories were still pretty tight, yet the mysterious troops from Fortress 178 seemed to have come prepared and were able to blow up all three factories in a day.

Of course, the Razor Sharp Company was only able to make such swift attacks because they had the refugees helping them. How else would they have gotten such detailed information on where to attack?

After blowing up the factories, the Razor Sharp Company once again made use of the stream to leave so that they could hide elsewhere in the wilderness. Some of the Zong Consortium's generals were going crazy with rage. "It looks like Fortress 178 was fully prepared for this. How could those troops have made the river crossing accidentally? They're obviously trying to copy the Qing Consortium's tactics and are targeting our military factories! Tell the garrisons of those strongholds that if anything happens to the other military factories under their watch, I'll have all of them executed!"

Immediately, all of the military factories in the north were placed under lockdown. It looked as though all of them were facing a formidable enemy, as they split up half of the troops garrisoned in the strongholds to head out and protect the military factories.

Meanwhile, the Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion lived up to their expectations of locating the Razor Sharp Company. At some point, from atop a distant hill, they even managed to catch a glimpse of the retreating figures of the Razor Sharp Company.

The Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion was cursing at this in their minds. Why weren't these troops from Fortress 178 following a proper route? Were they just randomly moving and going wherever they liked?

At the start, the Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion was chasing after them from behind. When they spotted some disorderly tracks, they thought the Razor Sharp Company was deliberately trying to mislead them. However, after almost catching up to them a few times, they suddenly felt that from the unconcealed manner that this group of soldiers were moving, it did not suggest that they were trying to intentionally leave behind a trail to mislead them. It purely felt like they had just taken the wrong route and were turning back to retrace their steps!

But the more it felt like this, the more disgusted the Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion grew. After the Razor Sharp Company's attacks on the military factories, they felt that they had more or less figured out what the Razor Sharp Company was thinking

Hence, the Zong Consortium's reconnaissance battalion took a shortcut as they wanted to set up an ambush for the enemy, but they did not see the Razor Sharp Company appear even after a long time had passed. It was only then that they realized the Razor Sharp Company had turned around again.

What the hell was this? Weren't they afraid that there would be pursuers behind them? They actually turned around?!

In fact, the Razor Sharp Company had only turned around because Fu Rao had lost his Shichuan Village medal. They turned back to see if they could find it. After all, the medal was worth 10,000 yuan.

Of course, the Razor Sharp Company was not treating this as a game either. When Fu Rao asked to turn around to search for his lost medal, he had sought Ren Xiaosu's permission to do so. Then Ren Xiaosu said that he happened to want to turn around as well.

There was actually another layer of safety for the Razor Sharp Company, and that was the shadow clone that was roaming the wilderness.

In fact, as long as their presence was small enough, it wouldn't be difficult for them to stay hidden in the wilderness. If the Razor Sharp Company was any larger in size, they would not be able to resort to such guerrilla tactics.

"So where do we go now?" Zhang Xiaoman asked.

"That group of soldiers pursuing us makes things a little tricky. I feel like their overall quality is much higher than the Zong soldiers we defeated before." Ren Xiaosu frowned.

If it were a normal unit, they would have abandoned the chase long ago. However, these troops were much more difficult to deal with. Ren Xiaosu had also planted a few of the Brambles as a trap for them. But in the end, they were not even hindered by it. When the enemy troops saw the strange red vines hidden within the patches of grass, they avoided them entirely.



Even if someone accidentally got entwined, the others would definitely try their best to rescue them. As such, it was very difficult for the Brambles to cause any casualties.

“We can’t just keep letting them chase us like this. We nearly had a close range exchange of fire with them on many occasions already.” Zhang Xiaoman thought for a while and said, “Why don’t we attack them frontally?”

“No.” Ren Xiaosu shook his head. “I suspect that they might also have snipers. How could there be no snipers in such an elite battalion? So I think it’s still better to avoid them for now.”

“Then what should we do?”

### **Chapter 436 The annoying recon battalion**

“Come on, let’s forced march. We’re turning back to Stronghold 144 while they’re busy setting up an ambush ahead!” Ren Xiaosu decided.

The soldiers of the Razor Sharp Company did not question Ren Xiaosu on how he knew the enemy had taken a shortcut and gotten ahead of them to set up an ambush. They were used to this.

But suddenly, Ren Xiaosu frowned. This reconnaissance battalion was able to react much faster than he had expected. When the enemy saw that the Razor Sharp Company had not fallen for their ambush, they immediately pursued them again!

“They’re really annoying.” Ren Xiaosu frowned. However, he also gained something unexpected.

His shadow clone was lurking in the wilderness and taking the most concealed routes to get everywhere. These routes were also the favorites for a sniper to take.

His shadow clone had come face to face with an enemy sniper. However, when a sniper encountered something as powerful as the shadow clone, it was easy to imagine what would happen. All it took was a single slash and it was over.

However, the Zong Consortium’s reconnaissance battalion was still rapidly closing in on them. The troops had switched from their previously patient pursuit into a headlong attacking chase. It was as though they wanted to overwhelm the Razor Sharp Company right here with their strength and numbers.

An ORBAT like the reconnaissance battalion was always the strongest in terms of individual combat effectiveness. Some people would even refer to them just as spec ops.

Although the Razor Sharp Company had also won their fair share of battles, the difference between them and the reconnaissance troops was still huge. Be it their physical strength, marksmanship, or tactics, the Razor Sharp Company was nowhere near the level of the recon troops.

Seeing the distance between the two combatants closing, Ren Xiaosu did not even use his shadow clone to slow them down. If it got struck in the center of its forehead again in a crossfire, the situation in which Fu Rao got struck down would probably repeat itself. His shadow clone was now his most important scout.

Ren Xiaosu tried to activate the Shadow Door to throw some grenades at the enemy. However, the enemy's recon troops were well-trained. As soon as the Shadow Door opened up in the darkness, it was greeted with a hail of bullets.

Fortunately for Ren Xiaosu, he did not look through the Shadow Door at a direct angle. Otherwise, the bullets would probably have penetrated and struck him! If he had put his arm out, it would most likely would've been shot to mincemeat too.

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They were facing a strong opponent this time!

It was Ren Xiaosu's first time coming up against such a well-trained unit in battle. This was just like the sense of oppression he felt back when he faced Xu Man's troops from the Qing Consortium in the Jing Mountains.

"Xiaosu, are we gonna get out of here this time?" Jiao Xiaochen asked rather nervously. "I heard that people call out the names of those closest to them in times of fear?"

Ren Xiaosu rolled his eyes. "Then d'you know who 'fuck' is?"

Zhang Xiaoman did not know whether to laugh or cry. He said, "How the fuck are you still in the mood to crack shitty jokes? Why don't you leave on your own first, Xiaosu? You can move fast, so bring the others along with you. I'll stay behind and form a defensive line with 1st Platoon to cover you all as you leave!"

When a decision was called for, someone would have to sacrifice themselves to ensure the survival of others.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhang Xiaoman. "Why are you always trying to sacrifice yourself? Don't worry, with me around, it'll be hard to die even if you really want to."

Suddenly, a black steam locomotive spewing black smoke from its smokestack phased into reality as it sped out of a gray fog.

When Zhang Xiaoman and the others saw something that large appearing in front of them, the warriors of the Razor Sharp Company felt very humbled. At the same time, they were very shocked by the sight of it. This was probably another one of Ren Xiaosu's superpowers.

Speaking of which, just how many powers did Ren Xiaosu have? This was throwing common sense out the window! It would have been fine if he only had two or three powers, but why were there still more being revealed?

"Hop on!" Ren Xiaosu said, "I'll take y'all for a spin."

“Damn, it’s my first time riding a train...”

While muttering, everyone got onto the train, each faster than the last. After all of the Razor Sharp Company had boarded the steam locomotive, it started traveling north, traversing the mountains like they were a roller coaster.

When the enemy recon battalion that was pursuing them saw this sight after stepping out from a mountain pass, they could only stop in their tracks and stare in bewilderment, not knowing what to do.

The commander of the recon battalion nearly went crazy with anger. ‘If you had such a power in the first place, you should have used it long ago! We’ve been chasing after you for two days, yet you only revealed such a hack now?! Why! By not showing off a power like that, does it make you feel closer to the ground?’

The commander of the recon battalion felt like a mess. “Radioman, hurry up and notify HQ about this. Which stronghold is north of here? Tell them to be on guard with everything they’ve got. There’s a train heading for them right now!”

However, after Ren Xiaosu’s steam locomotive drove north for dozens of kilometers, it suddenly made its way back towards Stronghold 144. Having already attracted so much attention from the enemy, wouldn’t it be asking to die if he continued heading further into enemy territory?

Moreover, the Zong Consortium’s stronghold garrisons in the north would surely be waiting for them by now.

Therefore, it was better to return to the vicinity of Stronghold 144 instead. It was easy to choose between fighting or leaving. If he decided to flee in the end, he could just cross the Beiwan River.

Although the steam locomotive was traveling through the mountains like there were no obstacles, it was still a particularly “exciting” ride. Sitting down, the soldiers of the Razor Sharp Company held tightly onto the armrests in the carriages while yelling, “Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!”

Ren Xiaosu guffawed. “See? Didn’t I tell y’all that when people get scared, they shout ‘fuck,’ not the names of those closest to them?”

The steam locomotive was moving at a very fast speed. In the blink of an eye, it disappeared into the wilderness. A few hours later, the steam locomotive returned to the territory of Stronghold 144 once more. Ren Xiaosu suddenly looked ahead of the train and said, “There’s some troops up ahead. Looks like about two companies of soldiers. Why don’t we get some target practice while we’re on the train?”

“Two companies? They’re probably troops escorting a supply column. We don’t have a lot of rations left, so why don’t we hold them up?” Zhang Xiaoman said, “But can your steam locomotive stand it?”

“It’s strong! Let’s do this!” Ren Xiaosu roared carefreely. The strong winds on both sides of the steam locomotive howled as it traveled alone across the vast wilderness.

It had been a long time since Ren Xiaosu felt so carefree!

The steam locomotive was rapidly approaching the two companies of soldiers. However, when it got closer, they realized these troops were not part of the supply columns.

The deputy commander of the 1237th Regiment had just led two companies to receive Zong Han, their new regimental commander, and escort him back to Stronghold 144.

They had heard that Zong Han used to be the commander of the brigade that was stationed at the Beiwan River. Due to his defeat at the front line, he got demoted to regimental commander. However, everyone knew that Zong Han had the backing of the Zong clan's main branch, so he would surely rise again someday. Therefore, they still had to serve well for him.

The deputy commander sat in the passenger seat of the troop transport truck while Zong Han took the off-road vehicle. Suddenly, the driver of the troop transport truck shouted, "Oh no, there's a train approaching us from behind!"

As the steam locomotive had followed the convoy of vehicles, only the driver had noticed it in his rearview mirror. When the deputy commander heard that, he was amused. "How can there be a fucking train out here? That thing only runs between Stronghold 145 and Stronghold 146!"

"But there's really a train!" the driver said in panic.

The deputy commander peeked out of the window in his confusion and was greeted by the sight of a black steam locomotive surging towards them. Black smoke was puffing out of the steam locomotive's smokestack as it whistled!

### **Chapter 437 Chain reaction**

"Quick, avoid it! Get out of the way!" The deputy commander watched as the steam locomotive got closer and closer. He went numb with fear and could only wonder why something like that would suddenly appear out in the wilderness.

Segments of railroad tracks were materializing and joining up at the front of the train as a loud metallic clanging rang out while it surged forward. The driver tried his best to speed up, but if he went too fast on this uneven road, the truck would flip over!

"Soldiers in the back, set up the HMGs and prepare to fire!" The deputy commander shouted, "Prepare for battle!"

While the vehicles drove over the uneven ground, the soldiers of the 1237th Regiment were hastily setting up the heavy machine guns at the back of the trucks. As the road was too bumpy, it took them a long time to even load the ammunition.

The radio in the truck crackled to life. Zong Han, who was in the off-road vehicle up front, asked, "What's going on? Why did a train suddenly appear behind us?"

"It should be an enemy attack, but don't worry, Regimental Commander, we'll definitely stop the train behind us!" The deputy commander turned around and shouted to the soldiers, "Fire!"

The machine guns were going ratatat, but the troops realized these normally unstoppable killing machines of the battlefield could only cause some sparks to fly as the bullets ricocheted off this strange steam locomotive in front of them!

The steam locomotive was traveling much faster than the convoy. Ren Xiaosu frowned as he endured the pain and said, "When we pull up to them, I want all of you to get up and start shooting! Remember to look out for any supplies that they might be carrying!"

The Razor Sharp Company's soldiers hid under the windows of the carriages, which acted as natural defenses for them. This was clearly a quick pursuit battle, yet it felt like an ambush instead.

This Zong Consortium's convoy consisted of ten troop transport trucks and a single off-road vehicle. When the steam locomotive caught up and began traveling parallel to the convoy, the Zong Consortium soldiers fired crazily at it.

But even their bullets would run out at some point. When the Zong Consortium's heavy machine guns finally required reloading, their soldiers were greeted by the sight of multiple automatic rifles and some heavy machine guns poking out from the train's windows and firing at them.

The Razor Sharp Company's soldiers did not even have to reveal their heads since they remained crouched under the windows as they fired.

The scene could not look any stranger than what was happening.

The Zong Consortium troops were shocked. What kind of fucking power was this?

They wanted to take cover, but the problem was that they did not even have a place to hide. The troop transport trucks were just covered by a simple sheet of canvas, and it wasn't like it was bulletproof!

As soon as the exchange of fire started, many of the Zong Consortium soldiers were downed by the gunfire.

Ren Xiaosu shouted from the front of the train, "I've had a look! This convoy isn't carrying any supplies. Let's leave!"

With that, the steam locomotive turned away and headed in a different direction in the wilderness.

It was not that Ren Xiaosu did not want to take out this group of Zong Consortium soldiers. But when they fired at the steam locomotive, Ren Xiaosu still felt the pain. He was already sweating as he could not take it much longer.

Fortunately for the deputy commander of the 1237th Regiment, he survived the attack. He had also been hit by bullets, but since he was sitting in the passenger seat, the side door helped to lessen the velocity of the bullets. Hence, the gunshot wounds he suffered were not too deep. He got slightly lucky as the recoil of the heavy machine guns was so strong that their aim became erratic and mostly missed him.

After all, the Razor Sharp Company's troops did not even show their heads and were only hit whoever was unlucky enough to get in their blindfire.

The deputy commander recalled that he vaguely heard Ren Xiaosu shouting. So they had fucking come here to steal supplies, and at the same, took the opportunity to shoot at his troops?

The deputy commander stared blankly at the steam locomotive as it disappeared into the distance. They were leaving just like that?! What kind of fucking troops were these?

Suddenly, the deputy commander's expression changed. He picked up the radio and said, "Regimental Commander? Are you OK, Regimental Commander?"

The driver in the off-road vehicle picked up his radio and replied, "The Regimental Commander... has fallen in the line of duty..."

The deputy commander of the 1237th Regiment was on the verge of tears. Did Fortress 178 have a grudge against their 1237th Regiment or something? Why were they always targeting the commanders of their regiment? In less than half a month, three of their regimental commanders had died! This must have been on purpose! Who had the regimental commanders provoked?!

On the train that had gotten far away, the Razor Sharp Company's troops were cheering. "That was such a fun battle, and the enemy did not even get to see any of our faces! I dare say that we killed at least half of their two companies. That makes how many companies we've wiped out so far?"

"Lemme see..." Zhang Xiaoman started counting on his fingers. But after a long time, he still could not come up to an exact figure.

Jiao Xiaochen suddenly asked, "Did you get that person in the off-road vehicle just now? It didn't look like the driver was killed. Did we not hit him?"

They had been so focused on avoiding getting shot that no one dared to look out of the steam locomotive before it fully turned away.

Ren Xiaosu thought back and said, "The passengers in the front and back should all be dead."

"I wonder who it was that died," Jiao Xiaochen mumbled. "I reckon the officer was not a junior officer this time. My guess is that it'll be a battalion commander at the least."

"Haha, who cares?" Zhang Xiaoman said, "As long as they're dead, that's all that matters!"

Actually, even the Razor Sharp Company themselves did not know they had already killed three regimental commanders. After all, it was unlikely that a regimental commander would be so bored that he'd flit around outside.

They also did not know that the deputy commander of the 1237th Regiment was on the verge of a breakdown at this moment.

The Zong Consortium's headquarters once again received news of a death, Zong Han. The generals called for an emergency meeting, and one of them said, "There must be a spy among us. How else would the people of Fortress 178 know about Zong Han's redeployment and go ambush him?"

“That’s right. The enemy wants the 1237th Regiment to fall into disarray so they can disrupt the supply lines at Stronghold 144.” One of the generals said, “There must be an insider who leaked Zong Han’s whereabouts.”

Suddenly, a middle-aged man looked over at the staff officer who was listening by the side. “What did you say about the method the enemy used to attack them?”

“It was a steam locomotive!” the staff officer replied.

That middle-aged general sneered and said, “This was all Zong Cheng’s doing. I remember that he had deployed his troops to ambush a supernatural being named Wang Congyang, and that supernatural being’s power is to summon a steam locomotive.”

“However, the steam locomotive that appeared this time seems a little different. The train that was previously mentioned only had four carriages, but the train that appeared today had sixteen!”

“The powers of supernatural beings are not something that we can really assess. What if the superhuman can freely change the number of carriages as they please? I’ve never come across a repeated superpower in the world before.” The middle-aged general sneered and said, “It was Zong Cheng that didn’t handle this matter properly. He’s still young, after all, so maybe we should not rush to place him in too important a role. My 131st Brigade won’t be playing along with you all anymore. I’m going to hunt down those troops from Fortress 178 myself.”

“I don’t think you should do that.” Someone asked in confusion, “Your 131st Brigade is in charge of one of the most important positions at Mt. Wuchuan. Who will guard the front if your troops leave?”

“That’s none of my business. If we don’t get rid of these Fortress 178 troops, it will be a disgrace if word gets out.” The middle-aged general turned around and left the headquarters.

It wasn’t really as righteous as it sounded when he said that he would hunt down the Razor Sharp Company. In reality, the assets he had tried to transfer to the Central Plains were all in Wang Congyang’s hands! That was the wealth he had spent the greater part of his life amassing!

With the appearance of the steam locomotive, this middle-aged general had immediately found his adversary. He was going to take back all of his assets.

### **Chapter 438 The deputy commander makes a run for it**

In the Zong Consortium’s headquarters, the general sitting at the end of the conference table had a grim expression on his face. However, this was not due to Zong Han’s death, but because Zong Wu actually disobeyed his orders and pulled his 131st Brigade out from Mt. Wuchuan!

The soldiers of the 131st Brigade were the trusted troops of Zong Wu. As they had undergone training in Stronghold 149 for several years, their allegiance lay with Zong Wu and not the consortium.

In the past, no one bothered about him over that. But after this time, the patriarch of the Zong Consortium would probably have to deal with him. However, that would have to wait until the war was over.

Although the Zong Consortium had not been united all along, they still maintained the same goals. At the very least, no one dared to break the status quo like now. Zong Wu was actually using the military

influence that he had to openly defy his battle orders. Instead of guarding the front, he decided that he wanted to capture the troops from Fortress 178.

If it continued like this, the morale of the Zong Consortium would plummet!

Instantly, the generals in the headquarters fell silent. No one knew what the others were thinking

Actually, the matter of Zong Wu transferring his assets was initially kept secret. But there was no such thing as a perfect secret, so everyone already knew about it.

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“We’ll now move on to discussing the situation affecting the stability of our rear lines.” Zong Ying, the commander of the frontline forces, said, “Does anyone have any

opinions?”

Everyone had assumed this was just a company of soldiers that likely consisted of a supernatural being and a sniper. Later on, it felt like there might have been more than one company involved. But up until then, no one felt that a single unit could be enough to affect the entire war.

But all of that had changed today. The appearance of that steam locomotive meant that this small group of soldiers had great mobility, and not even the reconnaissance battalion could catch up to them in the wilderness.

Thus, this small unit from Fortress 178 had suddenly become a huge threat because no one knew what exactly they would do next.

The main issue was that Ren Xiaosu and the Razor Sharp Company did not have any clear objectives of what they wanted to achieve. They would spontaneously start a battle if they felt confident of winning. If they did not think that they could win, they would just run away. No matter what actions they took, the results were all that mattered...

They operated by the motto: Even we don’t know what we want to achieve!

This unpredictability proved to be very fatal in the war. The Zong Consortium could no longer sit idly by as the enemy troops messed around in their territory!

Zong Ying, the commander of the frontline forces, wore a dark look. He never expected that he would have to worry over a small company when he was in charge of over a 100,000 troops!

Someone spoke up, “I also think that we have to get rid of this unit in the rear. However, hasn’t Zong Wu already taken his 131st Brigade to handle them? Isn’t a single brigade enough? He’s also leading a mechanized brigade that’s well-equipped, so just let him deal with them.... There’s no way we can call him back now anyway.”

“That’s not enough.” Zong Ying said, “Attach two supernatural beings to his brigade.”



Next to him, a general who was in charge of managing the supernatural beings nodded and said, "Alright, but we only have a total of five supernatural beings. If we lose any of them, that could affect our subsequent plans."

Zong Ying looked at him coldly. "Now is not the time to consider the future. I want those troops from Fortress 178 to die in our Zong Consortium's territory. Also, there's no need to appoint a new commander for the 1237th Regiment anymore. Just have the deputy take over as the acting commander."

Being appointed the acting commander was a good thing. If one did not make any mistakes in that duration, the appointment would likely be made permanent as a result.

But at this moment, a staff officer said, "I've just received news that the deputy commander has run away."

Zong Ying was confused.

The simple-minded Razor Sharp Company did not know how huge of a chain reaction they had set off. This series of events even managed to affect the main forces of Fortress 178.

At this moment, Zhang Jinglin was being briefed on the sitrep. The key point of the report was that the Zong Consortium's 131st Brigade had suddenly retreated from the front line and abandoned their position entirely.

This was extremely odd. In fact, the Zong Consortium's 131st Brigade was causing a lot of trouble for Fortress 178 on the front lines. That mechanized unit was extremely difficult to deal with.

Hu Xingzhi, who was the commander of Fortress 178's armored brigade, frowned and said, "It's very out of character for them to suddenly abandon their position entirely. They retreated just like that while we were still shelling them. In the end, we were only shelling an empty space. But the good thing is that we've already captured that position, so it'll save us a lot of trouble."

"Do y'all think that this might be a scheme by the Zong Consortium?" Zhou Yinglong mumbled. "They did blow up all of Shichuan Village, after all, so they had better not have buried something destructive in the position we just captured!"

Hu Xingzhi shook his head. "I thought the same as you at the beginning, so I ordered our troops to immediately carry out checks after seizing the position. We found no problems at all."

"That's weird..."

"Not only that," Wang Fengyuan, the director of the intelligence agency, said from beside them, "every one of you should know that our Fortress 178 was quite late to the intelligence gathering game. However, we've got a pretty good network spread through the Zong Consortium. I've received updates via radio that the Zong Consortium has also moved their recon battalion back to the rear. However, our intelligence agent is still quite low-ranking, so we don't know exactly what is happening over there."

“Also, the Zong Consortium’s supply lines have suddenly changed, so that could somehow be related to this. Originally, they were transporting their supplies from Stronghold 144, but they have temporarily switched to using the backup supplies at Stronghold 145.”

“It’s the Razor Sharp Company,” Zhang Jinglin said.

As soon as Zhang Jinglin spoke, the entire headquarters quieted. Zhang Jinglin said calmly, “I think the Razor Sharp Company might be causing quite a bit of trouble for the Zong Consortium in their rear. That’s why they had to deploy their recon battalion and 131st Brigade back, to deal with the Razor Sharp Company.”

Zhou Yinglong cautiously asked, “Commander, are you serious? There’s only a hundred-some men in the Razor Sharp Company. How could they possibly kick up such a huge fuss? I know those bastards very well. They’re not capable of something like that.”

“Ren Xiaosu’s in the Razor Sharp Company now.” Zhang Jinglin said, “With him around, there’s definitely such a possibility. Otherwise, it’d be very difficult to explain why the Zong Consortium is acting so strangely. Moreover, for a unit like the recon battalion to be moved back to the rear, they must be fighting a very targeted battle. Apart from the Razor Sharp Company, would the Zong Consortium have any other enemies at their rear?”

“I don’t think so,” Zhou Yinglong answered.

Everyone knew the Razor Sharp Company were the only Fortress 178 troops who were currently behind Zong Consortium lines. It was just that everyone had a feeling that they would not trouble the enemy so badly. As such, they found the idea a little unbelievable.

But after eliminating all of the possible scenarios, the Razor Sharp Company’s presence behind enemy lines was still something they could not deny.

“No matter how they did it, and no matter what they’re doing now,” Zhang Jinglin looked at the commanders around him and said, “we have to pressure the Zong Consortium even more on the front lines now. We can’t let them deploy more troops back to deal with the Razor Sharp Company any further, so we’ll have to press even harder in order to help the Razor Sharp Company in the rear. After this, we’re going to implement a more detailed battle plan.”

“Understood.” Everyone nodded.

But the commanders of Fortress 178 were all very curious as to what the Razor Sharp Company had done behind Zong Consortium lines.

The troops from both sides were still at the stage of testing each other’s capabilities at the front line of Mt. Wuchuan. But a series of dominoes that had been toppled by the Razor Sharp Company brought the tempo of the war to a more intense level.

Meanwhile, the Razor Sharp Company that was the cause of all these happenings was currently hiding in the mountains and eating roasted potatoes.

## Chapter 439 A brief reorganization

"Ahh, this potato smells so good!" Zhang Xiaoman retrieved a charred potato from the campfire with a tree branch. Before it even cooled down, he had already opened his mouth and bit into the potato. Instantly, the entire makeshift campsite was filled with a unique aroma of roasted potatoes.

At this moment, they were situated at the edge of the Zong Consortium's territory. The reconnaissance battalion that was pursuing them was probably still around 200 kilometers away, so they did not have to worry about enemy troops for now.

For the next few days, they could finally eat some fresh rations. The moment everyone bit into the potatoes, it felt like their life was complete.

"How exciting it is to be fighting a war alongside Ren Xiaosu." Zhang Xiaoman sighed and said, "In the past, I've never thought that our Razor Sharp Company would actually kill so many enemies. I was still expecting that half of our troops would get sacrificed in the Battle of Shichuan Village."

"Oh, where's Ren Xiaosu?" Fu Rao asked.

"He said he was going to catch some fish," Jiao Xiaochen answered. "I've realized something. With Ren Xiaosu around, it wasn't even necessary to bring our rations. We'll never starve since he can find food at any place."

As they chatted, the company of soldiers removed their shoes and leaned back against the rocks next to them in contentment.

The soldiers of the Razor Sharp Company were all thinking they were probably the most leisurely fighting force on the battlefield right now with the most freedom to do whatever they wanted.

Hiding behind enemy lines, they did not have to listen to anyone's orders and did as they liked.

"Do you think we'll be awarded a second-class decoration when we return this time?" Fu Rao asked, "Will we be given some rare medal for our achievements?"

Someone said, "You're trying to ask if there'll be a more valuable medal given out, right? Haha!"

Fu Rao was from a poor family, so he always felt a little inferior around others. There was a woman he liked but did not dare confess to, and in the end, he could only watch as someone from the armored brigade snatched her away from him.

In the beginning, the Razor Sharp Company did not actually have the practice of selling their medals. After all, it was a badge of honor that was bestowed to them for their contributions. But there was one time when Fu Rao asked that if he was the only one to sell off his medal, would that make him look like he did not have a collective sense of honor? His mother had fallen sick and he needed the money urgently. Although medical allowances were a thing in the stronghold, his mother needed a controlled substance for her illness, which was more expensive.

In the end, Zhang Xiaoman asked him why he did not sell off his medal when the rest of them had already sold theirs.

With that, Fu Rao started to feel more at ease, and selling war medals became common practice within the Razor Sharp Company.

Back when Fu Rao wanted to turn around to search for the medal he lost, Zhang Xiaoman and the others agreed to do so without a second thought. As for the medal they found, that was actually Zhang Xiaoman's.

After all, how could it be that easy to find a thumb-sized medal out in the wilderness?

At this moment, Zhang Xiaoman analyzed, "Look, our military's most impressive award is the Nebula Medal that buyers in the black market offer 200,000 yuan for. However, we don't stand much of a chance of getting that since it's only awarded to the most outstanding soldiers with the greatest contributions in war. But I think we can try to aim for the Star Medal instead. That medal can still fetch over 50,000 yuan on the black market!"

Fu Rao's eyes lit up. "That much?"

"You had better believe it!" Zhang Xiaoman chuckled and said, "Once you receive the Star Medal, you can pay off the debts incurred from your mother's medical treatment."

"Hehe." Fu Rao said with a silly smile, "Then what kinds of contributions do we need to make to get that award?"

"We should've already earned enough battle achievements. Since we don't have that many people in our unit and were made to fight this battle by ourselves, the standards could probably be lowered a little. We were lucky to take advantage of our enemies in the rear to stand out with our contributions." Zhang Xiaoman thought for a moment before saying, "We've already wiped out at least six companies, but that's probably only enough to earn us the Star Medal. If we can add a few more kills involving the more important Zong Consortium officers, we'll definitely qualify for the Nebula Medal."

"More important officers? What rank would those officers have to be?"

"They would have to be regimental commanders at least."

"Then how can we possibly achieve that? For someone like a regimental infantry commander, they'll surely be heavily protected." Fu Rao shook his head in disappointment.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu returned with several dozen fish strung up through their gills on a straw rope. He said, "If y'all want to earn a medal, then earn the best one there is. Let's aim for the Nebula Medal with our achievements. Y'all have yet to count the three factories that we destroyed, and who knows what else we can achieve later."

Zhang Xiaoman's eyes lit up. "Why don't we take the fight to Stronghold 144? That stronghold is the Zong Consortium's granary, so if we can cut off the food supply to the Zong troops, it would definitely be

a great achievement from us. With so many of Stronghold 144's troops already wiped out by us, their defenses must be quite empty."

"As if it would be that easy. We might've been successful in our attacks on the Zong combat troops in the wilderness, but for a small unit like us to break into a stronghold, that's nothing more than a death wish," Ren Xiaosu said testily as he skillfully skewered the gutted fish onto the branches.

Jiao Xiaochen came up with a bad idea. "Why don't we poison Stronghold 144's water source at the river? We can either throw some animal carcasses in to spoil the water. That'll cause a lot of misery to Stronghold 144."

But Zhang Xiaoman retorted, "Then wouldn't the stronghold residents suffer as well?"

"Well, that's true...."

Ren Xiaosu did not say anything. After a while, the aroma of roasted fish drifted into the air. He spoke up, "Let's have fish for the next few days. They're really easy to catch. It feels like there's too many of them in the river."

Zhang Xiaoman came over. "Xiaosu, skip the fish talk for now. Do you have any good ideas? What should we do next?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and answered, "We can at most pull off another attack in the vicinity of Stronghold 144 before we leave again. Think, is there anything other than food that requires a constant supply in wartime?"

Zhang Xiaoman clapped his hands. "I've got it! Let's destroy their garment factories so their soldiers on the front line have no uniforms to wear!"

The entire Razor Sharp Company looked at Zhang Xiaoman in silence as the sight of Zong Consortium soldiers fighting naked in battle appeared in their mind's eye. It was an awful sight that made their eyes bleed!

"Uniforms aren't a necessity." Ren Xiaosu shook his head with a dark look. "Even if new uniforms can't be sent to the front line, they can still wear their old and tattered ones. It wouldn't cause much of an impact."

Zhang Xiaoman gave it some more thought. "Then let's attack their footwear factories! Boots wear out very quickly in war, so it would surely cause a huge impact if they don't get new ones to wear, right? It'll hurt their feet if they don't have boots to wear."

The Razor Sharp Company continued looking at Zhang Xiaoman in silence. This time, Ren Xiaosu ignored him.

Ren Xiaosu thought about all the effort they had put in so far to deal with the enemy, and all that was just so they could make the Zong Consortium soldiers have no boots to wear?

It actually felt quite good thinking about it, but the problem was that there were too many footwear factories around. Something like that did not require much technical know-how to make, and some of the factories were even located inside the strongholds.

Jiao Xiaochen piped up, "There's one thing the Zong Consortium really can't do without. If its supply is stopped, they can't fight anymore."

"What is it?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Their oil supply! Gas and diesel! The Zong Consortium has many mechanized troops that can cause a lot of trouble for our forces. But without oil, their mechanized troops are as good as scrap metal."

#### **Chapter 440 Are you a sore loser?!**

In modern warfare, there were myriad uses for gasoline and diesel. Without it, mechanical equipment such as tanks, trucks, and off-road vehicles could not be operated. How were the tanks supposed to operate when the time came for them to roll out? Would the armored brigade troops push them into battle?

So when this suggestion was proposed, everyone's eyes lit up. Jiao Xiaochen said, "I'm guessing that the Zong Consortium's attention is already on us, so it won't be easy for us to launch another attack on Stronghold 144. But we're a highly mobile force and can take the battle elsewhere quickly."

Zhang Xiaoman felt like he could already see the end of this war. "That's right. If we can lay waste to all of the Zong mechanized troops, I would definitely protest against Commander Zhang, the old bastard, if he doesn't award us the Nebula Prize!"

Everyone looked at the arrogant Zhang Xiaoman without saying a word. Zhang Xiaoman rubbed his face in awkwardness and coughed. "Excuse me, I got too proud."

Zhang Xiaoman was the typical thug in their company. Ren Xiaosu said, "We still haven't gotten down to cutting off the supply lines for their oil supply. But since we're about to depart from this area, we have to bring something with us to eat. Who knows if it'll be easy to look for food farther in the north? Once we find the oil refineries there, we're gonna destroy them all!"

The plan was immediately put into effect. The Razor Sharp Company set off the next day. Since Ren Xiaosu had already revealed his Steam Locomotive power, there was no point in holding back anymore.

In this war, Ren Xiaosu was no longer apprehensive about keeping too many secrets. Instead, he tried to come up with more ways to use his powers to the best of their potential so he could live up to his determination of getting revenge.

In the morning, the Razor Sharp Company took the steam locomotive as they prepared to ambush the convoys traveling on the supply lines. While they waited, they were bored out of their wits. But before any convoys could arrive, they heard a loud rumbling.

This distant rumble sounded like heavily armored vehicles rolling across the ground. Ren Xiaosu wondered, "What's that sound?"

"We've got fucking tanks incoming!" Zhang Xiaoman was startled. He picked up his binoculars and observed the troops that had just appeared on the horizon. "What are these mechanized troops doing

here? Shouldn't they be engaged in battle at Mt. Wuchuan? Or is our intel outdated? How has the situation changed at the front lines?"

Fu Rao muttered, "Could we have already lost?"

The Razor Sharp Company fell silent for a moment. That was actually a very reasonable assumption. After all, why would an armored brigade suddenly appear at the rear if the war hadn't ended yet?

And from the looks of it, the armored brigade even seemed like they were still at full strength.

"That's impossible." Zhang Xiaoman firmly denied it. "Even if the Zong Consortium is really strong, we still have a lot of Fortress 178 troops in the war. So how can we be defeated so quickly? These mechanized troops must be here for us!"

Pfft! Ren Xiaosu who was next to him drinking from a canteen spat out a mouthful of water onto Zhang Xiaoman. Zhang Xiaoman wiped his face and said unhappily, "What's wrong?"

"An entire armored brigade coming to fight an infantry company like us?" Ren Xiaosu was shocked but could not figure out why this armored brigade would appear here either. "Has the Zong Consortium gone mad?"

Didn't their Razor Sharp Company only wipe out several of the Zong Consortium's companies, a few convoys, and several junior officers while giving their recon battalion the slip for two days?

'Well, alright, although we did go a little overboard, that still shouldn't warrant sending an entire armored brigade to attack us! Is there really a need for that? Huh? Is there? Are you a sore loser?!

"What should we do now?" Zhang Xiaoman looked to Ren Xiaosu.

"What's the point of fighting if they're really here for us?" Ren Xiaosu said. Who knows how painful it would be for him if the tanks fired at the steam locomotive? He did not even know if he could endure such great pain.

"Retreat, retreat! If this armored brigade is really here for us, it'll be a great achievement if we can lure them away from the front lines." Zhang Xiaoman was not panicking and even got a little excited as he said, "Let's head north now to attack the oil refineries!"

The Zong Consortium's headquarters had just come up with their next battle plan as the original needed revising. This was because Fortress 178's troops had suddenly started attacking them relentlessly at Mt. Wuchuan, putting immense pressure on them.

The two sides had been probing the other's strength with their attacks. But all of sudden, it had turned so intense that it felt like it was the final battle already.

This was Fortress 178 trying to buy time and space for the Razor Sharp Company in case the Zong Consortium deployed more troops back to the rear to deal with them.

And they were successful in achieving this objective. The Zong Consortium's frontline commander, Zong Ying, was calling Zong Wu three times a day to request him to divert the armored brigade back to the front lines. In the end, Zong Wu ignored him, which left Zong Ying fuming mad!

This was too maddening!

He was even tempted to tell Zong Wu that he would make up for the gold he lost, so just hurry up and bring the armored brigade back to the front line!

At this moment, the generals at the Zong Consortium's headquarters knew that Zong Wu was likely to leave the Zong Consortium for good after capturing that person who had seized his gold. It was either that, or he would end up forming a new consortium of his own. After all, Zong Wu did control an army now, and that was something that could truly help him survive in this chaotic world.

But would the Zong Consortium let him off so easily? Zong Ying had attached two supernatural beings to Zong Wu's forces to hunt down the Razor Sharp Company together. However, these two supernatural beings had another mission as well. After the primary objective was achieved, they would immediately kill Zong Wu to prevent the armored brigade from leaving with him.

Moreover, if Zong Wu were not dead, how would Zong Ying establish his authority in the future? How would he answer to the elders of the Board?

"Zong Wu will definitely not return to Mt. Wuchuan. We'll have to think of another plan," Zong Ying said with a dark expression.

But at this moment, a staff officer came in to report, "Those troops from Fortress 178 in our rear have suddenly destroyed three of our oil refineries in a day!"

Zong Ying jumped out of his seat. "They destroyed what?!"

"Our oil refineries. But there's no need to worry, Commander. It was just the cooking oil refineries that were destroyed," the staff officer hurriedly explained.

Zong Ying heaved a sigh of relief. "Why the fuck did those Fortress 178 troops destroy those factories? So that we won't have oil to cook with? Or did they have other goals?"

One of the generals hesitated for a moment before asking, "Could it be that they were trying to destroy our crude oil refineries but blew up the wrong targets?"

"That's impossible." Zong Ying coldly rejected this possibility. "How could such elite troops make such a rookie mistake? They must have some other motives. Send orders down to study the connection between the oil refineries that were destroyed!"

A general asked, "But what if they really just wanted to destroy our crude oil refineries?"



Zong Ying hesitated for a moment. “Tell the crude oil refineries to go on full alert! Raise the readiness of the garrison troops at those refineries!”

The crude oil refineries had their own garrison forces to defend them. If Ren Xiaosu and the others knew the importance of fuel in wartime, how could the Zong Consortium not know?

Meanwhile, Jiao Xiaochen was complaining to Zhang Xiaoman on the train, “Captain, if we can’t find the right target next time, why don’t we just give up? The Zong Consortium must’ve started taking precautions at those refineries.”

Zhang Xiaoman shouted at the top of his lungs, “Can you blame me for that? Huh? When we questioned the refugees on where the oil refineries were, they were so enthusiastic to answer us. At that time, none of you doubted what they said either, so why are you blaming me now!”

“We aren’t blaming you....”

Listening to this noise, Ren Xiaosu could feel the back of his head throbbing.