

### Chapter 55: A temporary alliance

Right from the beginning, Xu Xianchu had not told them what their mission was. Meanwhile, the band members, such as Liu Bu and Luo Xinyu, obviously did not know. Otherwise, they would not have asked Xu Xianchu in such a manner.

Ren Xiaosu had some doubts about this. Was there any relationship between their mission objective and the changes that had been happening in the Jing Mountains?

Xu Xianchu suddenly said, "Actually, we didn't expect there to be such great changes out here. Otherwise, it wouldn't have only been the 12 of us coming on this mission. What I can tell you is that we do not know what is going on around here at all."

"It's still uncertain if all of us can get out of here alive, so why can't you share your secret with us?" Liu Bu was on the verge of a breakdown. He just wanted to know what kind of situation he was in, so he was unwilling to give up on any possible leads. He clenched his teeth and said to Xu Xianchu, "We're all in the same boat. If you don't tell us, the secret could end up getting buried with us!"

Liu Bu's face was almost touching Xu Xianchu's face and his spittle was flying around.

Xu Xianchu pushed Liu Bu aside and said, "You still dare to blame us when you were the ones who approached us in the first place? I heard that you've always wanted to go to the other strongholds, so it's not like you won't be heading there even without this mission. To be denying everything at this time, you're putting it like we're sending you to your deaths!"

Ren Xiaosu was watching the argument. All he lacked were some peanuts to munch on. All of a sudden, Yang Xiaojin said from beside him, "I'm hungry."

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback and thought, 'Why are you telling me that you are hungry for?'

Yang Xiaojin said, "The dagger."

"Oh, oh, oh!" Ren Xiaosu nodded immediately. "Sit still, I'll get you something to eat right away! Is there anything that you don't eat?"

"No," Yang Xiaojin said while sitting on the ground. Luo Xinyu had laid a piece of clothing on the ground before sitting down, but Yang Xiaojin was not particular about it.

However, Ren Xiaosu was a little despondent because he had lost the rat he had been holding onto. He had to drag the driver around with one hand and hold his dagger in the other at the time, so he couldn't carry the rat around any longer. As such, it became a little difficult for him to find food now.

Besides, the dense forest up ahead was way too strange. It was impossible to see what was happening inside during the night. He would have to wait until the daytime to examine the forest before he would dare to go in and find food.

As a result, when Yang Xiaojin saw him looking somewhat stumped, she said, "I threw the rat into the trunk earlier."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. He vaguely recalled that Yang Xiaojin was holding something in her hands amid the recent chaos. But he was in such a hurry that he didn't get a careful look at it. So the thing she was carrying turned out to be the large rat.

It had to be said that Yang Xiaojin's proactiveness had saved Ren Xiaosu a lot of trouble. In the past, he was always alone in the wilderness with no one to help him. Hence, he needed to face the dangers and difficulties all by himself.

Actually, some people in town had approached Ren Xiaosu to go hunting together, but he rejected them all.

It was not that they were not competent enough, rather he could not trust them. As it was very easy to get exhausted in the wilderness, he found it was better to be in the company of wild animals rather than humans.

Ren Xiaosu had previously thought about training Yan Liuyuan so that a huge burden could be lifted off his shoulders. But after some thought, he dismissed the idea entirely. He did not want to place Yan Liuyuan in any danger.

Right now, Ren Xiaosu was feeling for the first time what it meant to have his own "helper."

However, Ren Xiaosu immediately banished the idea. This was purely a relationship for mutual benefit. They had formed a temporary alliance in the wilderness because they trusted each other's skills and resources. The alliance was a silent agreement, but they did not actually trust each other and just took what they needed from the partnership.

Ren Xiaosu went to the vehicle and took the large rat out of the trunk. At this moment, even though the others were extremely hungry, they were not that desperate yet that they'd eat a rat. So when they saw Ren Xiaosu holding the rat, they felt a little nauseated at the thought of him eating it.

While the others were busy discussing what to do, Yang Xiaojin collected some firewood and came back to start a fire. Ren Xiaosu reminded her softly, "When you come out of the forest, make your retreat facing it."

Yang Xiaojin raised her eyebrows and asked, "Why?"

"Because the big cats get tempted to make a sneak attack due to their instincts. It's something that I feel they don't even have any control over. It's just what cats do," Ren Xiaosu explained. "There are actually many wild felines in the wilderness. Mr. Zhang once mentioned that the wild felines could have descended from the domesticated cats that existed before The Cataclysm. Without their owners, they could only go live in the wilderness. Gradually, their behavior turned feral as a result of living in the wild. Furthermore, the wild felines are getting larger and larger, and they're getting incredibly lethal as well."

"Are they that dangerous?" Yang Xiaojin asked.

“Yes, very dangerous. But they might not attack you when you’re facing them, so don’t ever turn your back on the forest. No one knows what’s hiding in it,” Ren Xiaosu said.

Ren Xiaosu shared a few more things with Yang Xiaojin because he was thinking of maintaining this short-term alliance a little longer to improve his chances of survival.

Ren Xiaosu started cutting open the rat with the dagger. Honestly, he had planned to use the rat meat to catch centipedes. Compared to the rat meat, Ren Xiaosu thought that roasted centipedes tasted better.

But he had no other choice now. After the interaction with the face bugs, Ren Xiaosu was a little worried that he might end up catching something even stranger...

He quickly cut off the thick and muscular hind legs of the rat and handed them to Yang Xiaojin to roast over the fire. It didn’t take ten seconds before the aroma of the meat drifted a dozen meters away.

Prior to this, Liu Bu and the others were having a heated discussion. But when they smelled the aroma of the meat, all of them swallowed hard. Whatever they were discussing was forgotten.

Everyone quietly turned around and looked at Ren Xiaosu. However, they saw him throwing the rest of the rat into the forest with just a swing of his hand at this moment. Ren Xiaosu currently felt like he had infinite strength, and that meat vanished from sight with just a simple throw.

Liu Bu said anxiously, “Why did you throw the meat away?”

“Since y’all don’t want to eat it, why would I keep it here to attract the wild animals?” Ren Xiaosu glanced at them unhappily. “If you want to eat it, go and pick it up by yourself.”

Liu Bu was stunned for a while. He then said with a sneer, “I will not eat something that disgusting.”

Ren Xiaosu calmly said, “That’s because you haven’t eaten something even more disgusting yet...”

Eh, no, these people had clearly eaten something even more disgusting before. In Ren Xiaosu’s opinion, these people in the stronghold could even eat something like bird’s nest, so what was the big deal with some rat meat?

Ren Xiaosu had heard from Mr. Zhang that many of the aristocrats in the stronghold liked eating bird’s nest. He wondered how the swallows had so much phlegm to make them. Perhaps all of those birds had suffered from tuberculosis? No wonder there was an idiom that went “forced to go separate ways 1.” So that was what it meant.

However, he didn’t care much about these people. The plump rat meat that had been skinned was quickly roasted to a light brown color over the fire. Liu Bu and the others had already ended their conversation as they couldn’t stop swallowing their saliva.

Everyone had been kept busy for the entire night. Due to their fear, they had no appetite during dinner. Now that they had spent the entire evening running for their lives, their stamina had almost been depleted. Everyone was so hungry that their stomachs were rumbling.

Someone thought of going into the forest to pick up the remaining rat meat, but the problem was that Ren Xiaosu had thrown it too far away!