

### Chapter 831: Special treatment

"It's great to hear that we don't have to head to the front line," Wang Jing said weakly. After taking some antibiotics today, he was feeling much better. Ren Xiaosu even went to get some warm water for him.

He looked at Ren Xiaosu. The young man had already reverted back to his harmless and innocent persona after the battle in the stronghold. If they had not witnessed for themselves how this fellow had performed a "craniotomy" on Kong Erdong, everyone would probably think that Ren Xiaosu was just a normal cardiac surgeon.

Suddenly, someone sighed and said, "I'm so hungry. If we don't get any food, I'm afraid we'll die of starvation before we even get to the medical center. Ren Xiaosu, do you have any ideas?"

"There's nothing we can do about that." Sima Gang wrapped himself in a blanket and said limply, "As you all can see, every time Ren Xiaosu went to line up for food, if they refuse to serve him, they'll refuse to serve him. I've seen many of the Pyro Company soldiers getting turned away as well."

"I'm not blaming Ren Xiaosu." The person who spoke up quickly responded, "What kind of person do you think I am? Xiaosu has already done a lot for us. I just thought I'd ask if he had any good ideas since he's so resourceful."

Although they were all adults, they could not help but hope that Ren Xiaosu could come up with something whenever they faced any thorny survival issues. However, Sima Gang looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, "Xiaosu, you don't have to feel bad. Since we still get about a meal a day, we should be able to make it to the medical center. At that time, we'll definitely have enough to eat."

Ren Xiaosu gave it some thought and said, "I'd better think of something. If we keep having to endure the hunger and cold while sleeping in the truck bed for another four days, it *will* become a problem."

Normally, it would be fine if they had to go hungry for a few days. But weathering the arduous journey while enduring the hunger and cold, some of them might fall sick.

After saying that, he went off to look for the Pyro Company officer again as the troops were reorganizing. The officer was in his vehicle reading an unknown newspaper. When Ren Xiaosu approached him, no one even tried to stop him. The Pyro Company soldiers really treated them like helpless doctors.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu realized the Pyro Company's troops had an advantage that no one else had. All their commanding officers possessed extremely strong physical fitness, and they could even survive gun attacks like the T5 combatants. In many cases, this would prevent the total collapse of the troops if the commander were to suddenly be killed.

When the Pyro Company officer heard the footsteps, he looked up at Ren Xiaosu. "Anything the matter? Is Mr. Wang Jing feeling better?"

"He's better now. Thank you for the antibiotics," Ren Xiaosu said.

The Pyro Company officer glanced at Ren Xiaosu. "There's no need to thank me. From a rational perspective, if the doctors can avoid getting sick, they can save more of my comrades in the upcoming war."

"Sir, how should I address you?" Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked.

"P5092." The Pyro Company officer said with a smile, "The name might feel a little unfamiliar to you all."

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. He knew about the T5s, but this was his first time seeing a P5-ranked officer. So it turned out the commanding officers within the ranks of the Pyro Company were prefixed with a "P." Moreover, his serial number was 092. It seemed like he was someone quite high ranking in the Pyro Company.

P5092's curiosity was piqued. He looked at Ren Xiaosu. "I've already verified all of your identities, but I'm still curious about something. Although you're only a resident in your group, which isn't exactly very high ranking, you're the person handling everything. Why is it not the older ones looking for me instead? Aren't you afraid of us?"

The Pyro Company members knew they had been demonized by the rest of the world, but they did not feel wronged. After all, their way of doing things had always been different from the other organizations. They only pursued the outcome and did not care about the process.

As such, normal people would fear the Pyro Company.

But P5092 realized the young man in front of him did not seem to be afraid of him at all. And he even came to look for him twice as though it were a casual visit between neighbors.

Ren Xiaosu replied, "I'm actually very afraid of y'all. But as a junior member of the group, of course I'll be running the errands."

P5092 smiled and said, "I don't believe your explanation. Rather, I think it's because you're more responsible and braver than them. So tell me, what is it that you want this time?"

Ren Xiaosu said, "Since we've been conscripted as military doctors, can you issue us official military uniforms? We don't need any ranks, just the uniforms will do."

P5092 was a little puzzled. "Why do you need military uniforms?"

"So that we can eat." Ren Xiaosu explained clearly, "If we're not in uniform, we have to wait for the other soldiers to finish collecting their meals before we can get ours."

P5092 laughed. "So it's just because of that?"

"Eating is very important." Ren Xiaosu said seriously, "You said earlier that from a rational perspective, if the military doctors are well taken care of, they can save more of your comrades later on."

P5092 nodded. "I can't issue you the military uniforms as it's a matter of principle. But I'll tell my men so you won't need to wait for them to finish collecting their meals before you get yours. But remember, I'll only make this exception for you alone."

Ren Xiaosu suddenly bent down and picked up a watch from the ground. "Eh, did you drop this watch, sir?"

This time, P5092 did not reject it. He put on the watch and asked, "Looks like you have another request?"

"Yes," Ren Xiaosu said, "for the next few days, can you pass me the newspapers after you finish reading them?"

P5092 thought for a moment and said, "No problem." He then passed the newspaper in his hand to Ren Xiaosu.

After Ren Xiaosu thanked him, he turned around and left. The deputy commander came over and asked, "Sir, why did you accede to so many of that kid's requests?"

P5092 said with a smile, "I'm not sure either. I just feel like there's something special about him, so maybe it's for the karma? Did you not notice that he isn't actually afraid of us at all? No matter how good his acting might be, his gaze can't fool me. His pupils never constricted throughout the conversation."

The deputy commander wondered, "Could he be a spy?"

"A spy?" P5092 laughed and said, "How could he be a spy when he's so skinny? Besides, doctors are highly specialized professionals, so spies won't usually use this as their cover. Go and inform the troops that he can collect his meals together with our soldiers from now on."

On the way back, Ren Xiaosu caught sight of another large group of people entering the temporary camp from the south. It looked like there were quite a lot of them too.

The troops who had conscripted Ren Xiaosu's group were probably just part of the main forces responsible for the siege from the west. And now, the other troops had probably caught up.

However, what surprised Ren Xiaosu was that there seemed to be even more escapees being escorted in that group. He wondered if they had also been temporarily conscripted by the Pyro Company like himself.

Ren Xiaosu roughly estimated the number of escapees to be around 600. A small number of them were wearing glasses and looked like they were intellectuals.

A small portion of them were also carrying toolboxes in their hands, and it looked like they were technicians from the stronghold.

As for the others, Ren Xiaosu could not tell who they might be.

## Chapter 832: Planning ahead

One by one, the military transport trucks entered the temporary camp. This time, the reorganization took longer than before and lasted for a full four hours. It seemed that the Pyro Company troops were planning to completely assemble before setting off again.

Tens of thousands of Pyro Company troops had already gathered on this route leading north. If one were to stand on a hill and gaze all the way to the end, the temporary camp would look like a vast sea, with the convoys of vehicles stretching as far as the eye could see.

Only those who had seen it with their own eyes would understand how spectacular a formation of tens of thousands of soldiers was.

Although these people had launched a long-range raid on the South and destroyed the Kong Consortium's most impregnable Stronghold 32 and Stronghold 31, they did not care about the interests right before them and decisively returned to the North.

Over a dozen military trucks escorting more than 600 escapees had stopped next to the vehicle that Ren Xiaosu's group was in. If there were no surprises, the escapees would be grouped together and transported away.

Ren Xiaosu carefully sized up the escapees who came from all walks of life. The only thing they had in common was that they all looked exhausted.

In comparison, those people were much worse off than Ren Xiaosu's group. Not only did they not have blankets to keep warm with, even their seats were a little cramped.

The truck carrying Ren Xiaosu's group was very spacious as there were only about a dozen people in it. However, more than 50 people were packed together in the backs of the vehicles that had just arrived. The people inside were all huddled together.

Thinking of this, Ren Xiaosu went to look for the drivers of their truck. He secretly gave a watch to each of them. "It's been hard on y'all for the past few days, driving us around like this. We don't have anything valuable on us, so please let us express our gratitude with these watches."

The three Pyro Company soldiers did not reject him like the officer. Since they were not highly paid, they would be more than pleased to be given a watch.

Ren Xiaosu's choice of giving away watches was also a particular one as it was unsuitable to gift gold bars. Although he was carrying a lot of gold bars, people would easily get tempted if they saw it. They might wonder if he still had some more gold bars, and that could easily invite disaster for him.

As for gifting medicine? That would be unsuitable as well. Although Ren Xiaosu had also brought some antibiotics with him to use as a hard currency, he wanted to save them since war was about to break out soon.

Hence, gifting a watch became the best choice. First, it would be easy to explain where he got it from. Second, it would be easy for the other party to trade it for cash after receiving it.

This was something Wang Fugui had told him, and Ren Xiaosu took note of it and kept it in mind. Back at the black market, he had bought dozens of watches all at once so he could use them for a time like this.

The three Pyro Company soldiers were quite surprised. They even started chatting with Ren Xiaosu with great interest.

After the Pyro Company troops finished reorganizing and before they got ready to set off again, some of the escapees from the other vehicles immediately rushed over to Ren Xiaosu's truck and tried to take seats in it when they noticed it was quite empty. They thought they could finally sit a little more comfortably.

But before they could even climb onto the back of the truck, they were kicked right off by Ren Xiaosu.

A middle-aged man who was kicked fell down hard on his butt. He flew into a rage. "What are you doing!"

Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "This is our vehicle. Get back to wherever you came from."

"What do you mean your vehicle?" A dozen people were standing behind the middle-aged man, so he said confidently. "What gives you the right to occupy an entire truck when there's only a dozen of you?"

The middle-aged man shouted at him, but Ren Xiaosu remained unmoved. As such, the middle-aged man went to look for the three Pyro Company soldiers in charge of transporting Ren Xiaosu's group. He put on an aggrieved look and started complaining to them, "Sirs, those captives in your vehicle are way too arrogant. We just wanted to—"

"Get lost, or I'll beat you until you throw up your lunch," interrupted the soldier sitting in the driver's seat coldly.

The other escapees were taken aback by the words. This Pyro Company soldier was obviously siding with Ren Xiaosu.

Sima Gang and the others looked at Ren Xiaosu in surprise. They wondered when Ren Xiaosu had bribed the Pyro Company members. Ren Xiaosu had given away the watches so secretively that even the doctors were unaware.

As Wang Jing was still sick, he said with a feeble smile, "How'd you get so crafty despite your age?"

Ren Xiaosu chuckled, "When you're out in the world, you can't survive long without being crafty. I only did this so that we can be more comfortable."

Actually, this was the significance of Ren Xiaosu giving away the watches beforehand. He could not behave too arrogantly in the presence of the Pyro Company's troops unless he had some backing. Just like in prison, the notorious inmates could only push other inmates around because the prison guards were willing to turn a blind eye to them.

Ren Xiaosu did not regard himself as a captive. But since he could not directly take Wang Jing out of this place, he had to seek the best outcome without breaking the rules.

He still had plenty of gold bars left, so he could always buy more watches after giving them away. Although Ren Xiaosu loved money, he knew what ought to be spent would have to be spent.

Even if he had been temporarily conscripted, he did not intend to put himself through too much hardship.

When the military truck started moving off, the escapees standing outside could only dejectedly watch Ren Xiaosu and the others chatting and laughing. Meanwhile, one of the soldiers who was responsible for escorting them had gotten down from the truck and was admonishing, "Hurry back in the truck! Stop wasting time here!"

Someone next to the middle-aged man whispered, "That kid must have bribed the Pyro Company members. Why don't we offer them a gift as well?"

The middle-aged man was stunned. "What are we going to gift them? Do we still have anything valuable on us?"

"What about your watch?"

"Do you know how expensive my watch is? How can I give it to the Pyro Company members!" The middle-aged man angrily climbed back onto the truck and continued squeezing in with everyone else.

Wang Jing looked at Ren Xiaosu at this moment and noticed he had actually brought back a newspaper. "Where'd you get the newspaper from? Whose publication is it?"

"It's Hope Media's newspaper." Ren Xiaosu replied, "I got it from the Pyro Company officer."

Everyone was even more surprised. It had only been a few days, but Ren Xiaosu was already so chummy with the Pyro Company officer? He even managed to obtain a newspaper from the other party?

Asking for a blanket and whatnot could still be understood as a necessity. But asking for a copy of the paper made it seem like their relationship had taken another step closer.

Ren Xiaosu explained, "I can also line up with the Pyro Company soldiers to collect our meals from now on. When the time comes, y'all don't have to do anything. I'll bring the mess tins and collect the meals for everyone."

The containers used by the military for serving food were rectangular mess tins made of aluminum, the type that could be covered with a lid. Even if there were a dozen of them stacked up, Ren Xiaosu could still carry them easily. Although the officer said only he was allowed to collect the food, he did not specify how many portions he could collect, right?

When Ren Xiaosu said that, everyone was overjoyed and a thought suddenly came to their minds. It seemed that there was nothing in this world that this young man could not handle.

Yang Xiaojin sat in the truck with her arms around her knees and watched Ren Xiaosu chat with the doctors with a smile on her face. Actually, she was also a prideful young lady, but it was not jewelry or

riches that she liked. Yang Xiaojin only hoped that everyone would learn of how great the person she liked was. That young man was really one of a kind in this world.

### **Chapter 833: You're not qualified**

After setting off again, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin got together to read the newspaper they had just gotten. However, Ren Xiaosu was stunned the moment he started reading, because the entire page was about the Wang Consortium's garrison forces on the border. After the Pyro Company withdrew, they suddenly launched an attack on the Kong Consortium. In just a single day, they occupied two of their strongholds one after the other!

The Kong Consortium's garrison troops no longer had any desire to continue fighting. The two strongholds did not even put up any resistance and opened the gates to surrender!

Their surrender was likely the result of a privately engineered move the Wang Consortium had been undertaking for a long time. It was said that someone had been trying to persuade the highest-ranking military executive in these two strongholds to surrender, but they did not respond to the Wang Consortium because the Kong Consortium's boss was still around. Now that the entire Kong Consortium was in chaos, those two executives immediately gave up resisting when they realized it would be difficult to turn the situation around.

After that, the Wang Consortium left some garrison troops behind and set off to the north to face the enemy.

The Kong Consortium was already there for the taking. These two strongholds had been an obstacle to the Wang Consortium's advance east. Once they were taken, there would be no further obstacles hindering them from expanding eastwards.

In the paper, Hope Media detailed how Stronghold 176 was massacred by the northern enemies. They reported how the Pyro Company had headed north to face the new enemy and gave up on attacking the Kong Consortium while the Wang Consortium took the opportunity and attacked the Kong Consortium.

There were no subjectivity in the article, just a factual reporting of the events.

But on the second page, Ren Xiaosu realized there was actually an article written personally by the chief editor, Jiang Xu. The entire article criticized the Wang Consortium's defeat in the North that led to the massacre of the city and how they took advantage of the situation to attack the Kong Consortium.

According to the article, the nomads had informed Stronghold 176 that an enemy was coming from the North. With more than 10 days to prepare, the Wang Consortium should have been able to deploy their entire military to face the enemy. However, even though the Wang Consortium had troops heading to the North, their main forces remained stationed on the Kong Consortium's border.

Maybe the Wang Consortium might not have stopped the massacre even if their main forces had rushed to Stronghold 176's rescue. However, they would surely have been able to save a lot of people.

During the massacre, some escapees were fortunate enough to escape from the stronghold and traveled south to seek protection from the Wang Consortium. However, they did not encounter any of the Wang Consortium's reinforcements even after traveling more than a 100 kilometers. In the end, they were still caught by the northern tribe and killed.

And now, not only did the Wang Consortium fail to defend Stronghold 176 and send reinforcements to reclaim it, they even launched an attack on the Kong Consortium. With the foreign enemy coming, they were still thinking of how to maximize their personal interests. This made Jiang Xu extremely angry and helpless.

In contrast, Jiang Xu expressed his admiration for the Pyro Company's just actions. It would've been a very difficult decision to give up occupying Stronghold 31 and 32 when they were already theirs for the taking.

Jiang Xu mentioned in his article that the residents of the Central Plains should remember the Pyro Company's decision and the choice made by the Wang Consortium.

At the same time, Jiang Xu appealed to the entire Alliance of Strongholds to work together to fend off foreign enemies. The massacre of the city announced the ambitions of the foreign tribe, so the Central Plains people should put aside their differences and unite.

When this news came out, the entire Alliance of Strongholds was in an uproar. The word "massacre" horrified everyone, and everyone was raging at the Wang Consortium's indifference and how scheming they were.

The third page was an interview between a Hope Media reporter and the Pyro Company's higher-ups. They described their confidence in fighting off the foreign enemies.

The fourth page talked about the reporter's findings during an interview of the potential problems the Pyro Company might face while fighting the foreign enemy such as the lack of medical facilities, medical supplies, clothing, and other logistics issues.

After all, they had just finished fighting a war with the Kong Consortium. Before that, they had not expected something like this to suddenly happen in the North. As such, they had not made enough preparations.

Rage mounted in the people in the other consortiums' strongholds as they condemned the Wang Consortium's actions. Many public figures stepped forward to openly praise the Pyro Company, while students started coming out onto the streets to raise funds for the Pyro Company's war efforts.

Some of them donated medical supplies, while others said they were going to the North to volunteer. Qinghe University organized a volunteer group of more than 600 people to liaise with the Pyro Company. In a few days, they would head north with a large number of supplies to provide support.

Once everyone read through the four pages and took in all the shocking news, they would see the words "Don't let the sorrows of our era become your sorrow as well" on the fifth page.

This sentence suddenly became a faint hope in this era.

When Ren Xiaosu put down the newspaper, Yang Xiaojin noticed his frown and asked, "What's the matter?"



Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked, "Jiang Xu's article was too critical this time. Will it infuriate the Wang Consortium? This report is tantamount to isolating the Wang Consortium from the Alliance of Strongholds. The Wang Consortium has become quite tyrannical in their ways recently. Do you think Jiang Xu will be fine?"

Yang Xiaojin immediately knew what Ren Xiaosu was worried about. "I don't think they'll do anything to him. My aunt still has a bottom line when it comes to such matters. No matter how Jiang Xu criticizes the Wang Consortium, he's only a journalist. He has no political stand or faction, so killing someone like that will cause public outrage."

"I hope so." Ren Xiaosu sighed.

He then passed the newspaper to Wang Jing and the others for them to read. When Wang Jing got to the fifth page and saw that sentence, he suddenly said, "I really wish I could get to know the person who said this."

Ren Xiaosu raised his eyebrows but did not say anything. However, Yang Xiaojin was sure that he was very happy right now...

When it was time for dinner, Ren Xiaosu jumped out of the truck with over a dozen aluminum mess tins distributed by the Pyro Company before the vehicle could even come to a stop and ran all the way to the chow squad.

He was holding six mess tins in his left hand and the rest in his other hand. The mess tins were stacked higher than his head. When the Pyro Company soldiers saw this sight, they were shocked. They had never seen someone collect their meals like this before!

The soldiers on chow duty were also stunned. It was as they had seen a bootleg version of the Pagoda-Bearing Heavenly King[1]...

One of the cooks said in surprise, "Those who know will understand you're here to collect food, but those who don't will think you're here to subdue me with your magical weapon!"

Ren Xiaosu opened the mess tins one by one. "Please fill them to the brim!"

The cooks were speechless. However, their superior had ordered that this young man could line up with the soldiers when it was time to eat, so no one said anything about it.

After collecting the food, Ren Xiaosu ran back again with the mess tins. This somehow became an "attraction" among the Pyro Company troops.

When the other escapees saw Ren Xiaosu was allowed to collect food, they rushed over. But the moment they dashed over, they were pushed aside by the Pyro Company soldiers. "Don't you know the rules? You're to wait for the Pyro Company's regular troops to finish collecting their food before you can collect yours."

The middle-aged man who had had an altercation with Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "If that kid can collect the food, why can't we? Isn't this discrimination?"

The Pyro Company soldier sneered, "We were specifically ordered by our superior to give him special treatment. If you want to be like him, go and look for our commander. What? You scared?"

The soldier was right. The other escapees were really not as bold as Ren Xiaosu to dare to keep asking for favors from P5092. Honestly speaking, P5092 was only willing to talk to Ren Xiaosu that much because he also found him very interesting.

As such, the escapees could only watch Ren Xiaosu's group in their truck eat their fill while they waited aggrievedly for the Pyro Company soldiers to finish eating before being allowed to collect the leftovers. There might not even be any leftovers for them!

The middle-aged man finally made up his mind. "C'mon, I don't believe we can't even get a proper meal if I give my watch away! Once the commander accepts my gift, we're gonna chase these people out of their vehicle!"

With that, he went to look for P5092. But before he could even approach the commander, he was chased away by a soldier guarding him.

The middle-aged man smiled obsequiously and said, "I'm here to present something to the commander."

The soldier sneered, "Go back. The commander says you're not qualified."

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### **Chapter 834: Not believing himself to be an outsider**

Even though the group from the Trinity Institute was able to eat meals during the past few days, they were having the leftovers the Pyro Company soldiers could not finish. Furthermore, the large pot of rice had gotten cold after being taken out for nearly an hour.

In the current season, they were already very cold due to the weather. If they were to have a cold meal on top of that, you could just imagine how unbearable that felt.

Moreover, there was as good as no meat in the leftover rice. At most, the cooks would just pour some meat broth over it. But now, their mess tins were covered by large servings of braised chicken cubes, and the rice was also a nice soy sauce color due to the meat broth, making it look extremely appetizing.

Liang Ce and the others gobbled up their food while harping, "Xiaosu, you really have a way with people. You can even get along with the people of the Pyro Company."

As everyone had not bathed for many days, and having to eat and sleep in the truck, their faces were now very dirty. They looked no different from the escapees.

Ren Xiaosu opened up a mess tin and handed it to Wang Jing. "Elder, eat while it's hot."

Wang Jing said with a smile as he looked at Liang Ce and the others, "Aren't you all going to thank Ren Xiaosu?"

Sima Gang immediately took the lead and said, "Thank you, Xiaosu. If it weren't for you, we probably wouldn't have made it to the medical center."

"Gratitude received from Sima Gang, +1!"

Liang Ce said with a chuckle, "Xiaosu, with our relationship, I'll skip the thanking. But if you need any help in the future—"

"I think it's better that you thank me," interrupted Ren Xiaosu.

Liang Ce said, "Thank you..."

"Gratitude received from Liang Ce, +1!"

Everyone in the back of the truck burst into laughter. They did not know why they were laughing, nor did they know what had triggered it. Perhaps it was the full meal they just had or because Ren Xiaosu had insisted that Liang Ce thank him.

Their fatigue from the past few days seemed to have been swept away.

However, it did not sound so nice to the other escapees when they heard the laughter. In fact, it even sounded a little annoying. After all, while Ren Xiaosu's group had filled their stomachs tonight, the other escapees did not manage to get any food. They could only wait until tomorrow morning to see if they would have a chance of eating something.

At this moment, a meek voice came from outside Ren Xiaosu's truck, "Um, excuse me?"

Not all the escapees were as hostile as that middle-aged man.

The escapee who came over this time was a tall and skinny young man. He looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, "I have a gold ring here. Can I buy a few meals off you?"

Everyone in the vehicle looked at one another. Although Wang Jing was the leader of the Trinity Institute's medical team, he would definitely not make any decisions for Ren Xiaosu at a time like this.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment before turning him down. "I'm sorry, I was only allowed to collect our meals after receiving permission from the Pyro Company. I can't make the decision on this matter. Rather than looking for me, I think it's better that you approach them directly."

The escapee standing outside wore a look of reluctance. It was obvious that he was too afraid to interact with the Pyro Company members.

For Ren Xiaosu, he had dealt with the Pyro Company on many occasions, so he did not feel scared at all. But the average person would not feel that way when faced with the enemies that destroyed their cities and homes.

Ren Xiaosu simply ignored the man. Right now, he only wanted to protect the group from Trinity Institute and did not care about others.

What if the Pyro Company members stopped providing any meals to the Trinity Institute when they saw that he had secretly accepted money from other people?

When that escapee left in disappointment, Wang Jing suddenly asked, "Actually, you can help him, right?"

"Elder, there's too many people in the world that need help. One more won't make a difference anyway," Ren Xiaosu replied calmly. "Do you think I did the wrong thing?"

"No, no, no." Wang Jing shook his head. "It's just that I'm a little sad and sorry all of a sudden. A good kid like you must've experienced a lot of hardship to make a choice like that. You're not in the wrong, and I'm in no position to criticize you either. It's just that we don't know when the world will become better again."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. He did not expect Wang Jing to say this, so he fell silent.

Wang Jing was right. It was the world that taught him how to live in it. He had suffered countless hardships all those years, so how could he have the mindset to help others?

At some point, Ren Xiaosu remembered that someone had told him before that he was also a ray of light.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly asked Wang Jing, "Elder, do you think I'm a good or a bad person?"

Wang Jing asked, "If it weren't for us, what would you have done when you encountered the Pyro Company troops?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and answered, "They couldn't have stopped me, so I'd've left."

"So you only stayed behind for our sake, right?" Wang Jing said with a smile, "A good person doesn't have to save everyone in the world. It would be too tiring for them otherwise. You've already done all that you could, so your conscience should be clear."

Wang Jing did not directly answer Ren Xiaosu's question, yet it seemed like he answered it.

The Pyro Company continued advancing northwards with a rumble. Ren Xiaosu sat in the jostling truck with a blanket covering him and looked out at the starry sky and wilderness.

Yang Xiaojin was quietly holding his hand under the blanket. Her soft hand was warm but had a firm grip.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly smiled. Why was he thinking so much?

But at this moment, for some reason, Ren Xiaosu suddenly remembered what the artificial intelligence had said to him before. It had witnessed the way humans treated other lifeforms at Stronghold 61.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu said the creeper vine was eliminated because it had hurt humans. The artificial intelligence then told him it had also hurt humans before.

Just as Wang Jing had just said, humans would always make decisions based on their past experiences. Thus, if the artificial intelligence also had a life of its own since it was created, then like a baby born into this world, would the things it saw also affect its future choices?

Just like when Ren Xiaosu saw Zhang Baogen being taken away by Stronghold 113's soldiers, he immediately decided to stay hidden and regarded them as imaginary enemies.

Otherwise, he would not have kept his identity a secret either. But he would feel freer if he could just be a supernatural being openly.

And now, wasn't the artificial intelligence that had concealed itself similar to him who had concealed his identity as a supernatural being back then?

Thinking about it, Ren Xiaosu drifted off to sleep with his hand still holding Yang Xiaojin's hand tightly.

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The next morning, when the Pyro Company troops were regrouping and eating again, Ren Xiaosu decisively dashed to the cooks with two stacks of mess tins. The cooks' eyelids kept twitching when they saw him. They looked like they were afraid Ren Xiaosu would call their names and dare them to respond.<sup>1</sup>

After breakfast, Ren Xiaosu eagerly went to look for P5092 again. He wanted to ask if today's newspaper had arrived yet.

P5092 was amused when he saw Ren Xiaosu. "You came to visit so early in the morning? You really think this is your home?"

"Well..." Ren Xiaosu looked at the newspaper in P5092's hand and said, "... since you've already finished reading the first and second pages, why don't you let me read them?"

### **Chapter 835: Even willing to sacrifice themselves**

When P5092 heard Ren Xiaosu say that, he got so angry he laughed. "You really don't believe yourself to be an outsider!" But even so, he handed the first two pages of the newspaper to Ren Xiaosu.

As a result, a strange scene played out in the Pyro Company's temporary camp. As one of the highest-ranking officers of the main forces, P5092 was sitting in the back of an off-road vehicle and leisurely reading a newspaper.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu, an escapee conscripted into the military, was sitting in the driver's seat with his legs crossed and reading a newspaper as well.

In the eyes of everyone, the difference in their statuses could not be more different, yet the two of them did not seem to mind at all and got along very well.

Moreover, P5092 even took the initiative to hand the newspaper to Ren Xiaosu page by page after he was done reading. And Ren Xiaosu took it from him very naturally.

The escapees who were still lining up to collect their food were dumbfounded. *'Who is this guy? What's his background? Why is he so friendly with the commander?! Is he even a fucking escapee?!'*

Even the Pyro Company soldiers were a little confused by this, to say nothing of the escapees...

Reading the newspaper, Ren Xiaosu found out there was nothing much that happened today. It was reported that the Pyro Company's main forces were currently rushing to the northern battlefield, and while the northern tribe had made contact with the Wang Consortium at the front line at Mt. Baiwen, neither side had gained any advantage over the other. They were basically just probing each other.

Then there were bits and pieces of miscellaneous news. For example, Qinghe University was done preparing the material assistance, and the first batch of supplies would be sent out this very afternoon. It would not only be the Luoyang City garrison troops who were going to escort the convoy, but some students were heading to the front lines to volunteer as well.

The Luoyang City garrison troops would have to liaise with the Pyro Company if they wanted to head north. After all, having another force's troops enter their territory would be a little unsettling.

For example, the Wang Consortium had already rejected the Zhou Consortium's offer of material assistance. Everyone felt that the Wang Consortium's rejection was purely because they did not want to give the Zhou Consortium a reason to assemble their troops.

But what surprised everyone was that the Pyro Company actually accepted Luoyang City's offer without any hesitation. They also allowed them to personally escort the supplies up north and even agreed to let Luoyang City's garrison troops participate in the war against the foreign invaders.

Importantly, participating in a war together was a very sensitive issue. This was equivalent to the Pyro Company showing the defensive deployment map of their northern defensive line to the Qinghe Group.

But everyone was a little puzzled by this. Although the relationship between the Qinghe Group and the Pyro Company had always been good, they were not this close. When Luoyang City was previously in a precarious situation, the Pyro Company did not even send any reinforcements to support them.

After Ren Xiaosu finished reading the newspaper, he asked, "Does the Pyro Company have any opinions on this war? Can y'all win?"

"It's not about whether we can win or not, but that we must win no matter what!" P5092 said.

"Are many people gonna die?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "The reason that the Pyro Company allowed the Luoyang City garrison troops to participate in the war was probably because y'all feel that your troops might not be strong enough, right?"

"I can't say for sure." P5092 shook his head. "It's only the barbarians' advance guard that have arrived at the moment. So it's very difficult to judge how many more of them will come later .... Why am I telling you this?!"

P5092 stopped discussing the military situation with Ren Xiaosu any further. Why would a P5-ranked officer like him talk about this with Ren Xiaosu? He snapped, "Have you finished reading the newspaper? Go back to your vehicle if you're done reading!"

"I have another question." Ren Xiaosu ignored P5092 and started asking again, "I saw y'all bring in another few hundred escapees from Stronghold 31. Who are those people? Why did you arrest them?"

"Around half of them are maintenance workers." P5092 said, "When war breaks out, the mechanized troops must have their equipment well serviced. Defective vehicles are as good as worthless. The rest are either the former higher-ups of the Kong Consortium who have been captured to facilitate our interrogation or some researchers."

Ren Xiaosu thought to himself that it was no wonder he saw several trucks transporting research data earlier. So it turned out the Pyro Company had seized some of the Kong Consortium's research data.

"But the maintenance workers would have to be deployed to the front lines, right?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"That's right." P5092 nodded.

"But they might not be willing to head to the front lines since they could end up dying." Ren Xiaosu pursed his lips.

"That's not up to them." P5092 said with an extremely firm attitude, "For this war, we're even willing to sacrifice ourselves at any moment, so why can't they?"

Ren Xiaosu nodded. This was how the Pyro Company should be, not treating others as human at all. However, Ren Xiaosu realized the Pyro Company members were also quite ruthless. That was because they were not only ruthless on others but also ruthless towards themselves.

Back when Stronghold 74 was attacked by the Experimentals, the Pyro Company combatants were willing to perish together with the Experimentals by rushing in with TNT.

It seemed that in the Pyro Company's view, the northern tribe was just the same as the Experimentals. They were all regarded as "anomalies." As for them, they thought of themselves as the protector of the Central Plains people, even though the Central Plains people did not agree with that.

P5092 glanced at Ren Xiaosu. "Do you think that what I'm doing is a little unfair to them?"

Ren Xiaosu did not say anything.

P5092 continued, "There's no such thing as fairness in the world. Have you ever considered that if our Pyro Company is defeated in the North, they'll die all the same? Then who'll protect them when those beasts from the north invade the South? Can they depend on the vulnerable paper tiger, the Kong Consortium? Or would it be the Wang Consortium?"

Ren Xiaosu thought there was nothing wrong with P5092's argument. If the Pyro Company really got wiped out in the North, those people in the South would still die even if they did not get conscripted now. It was just a matter of dying earlier or later.

P5092 continued, "We are doing this for the survival of the Central Plains' humans. You probably think that since there's so many people in the Central Plains, there's no worry about them getting wiped out. But what I feel is that they're extremely vulnerable and can't withstand any more threats. Do you know how many people used to live in a medium-size city before The Cataclysm? 10 million! But now, there's only a few hundred thousand people living in a stronghold. No matter how great human civilization used to be before The Cataclysm, there aren't many people left now."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned by this revelation. He used to think the cities before The Cataclysm were not much different from the current strongholds. But when comparing 10 million people with a few hundred thousand, he finally realized what that disaster did to mankind.

P5092 lamented, "Between a disaster and the next day, you never know which will come first. I know that other people will not understand this, but we don't need them to understand. When a disaster strikes again, Neo-Humans blessed with stronger physical fitness will definitely survive to the end. Not everyone is as fortunate as superhumans, but the Pyro Company can bring this 'blessing' to everyone. It's just that the current technology has not been perfected yet."

"Alright, alright, you don't have to tell me so much." Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. "I didn't say that you did anything wrong. Actually, I'm on the side of the Pyro Company this time. It's everyone's responsibility to defend against foreign enemies, so we shouldn't have to let the Pyro Company take on everything by themselves. Can't you see that I'm also playing my part? Don't worry, when your comrades get handed to me for treatment, as long as it's just external injuries and they're still breathing, I won't let them die."

With that, Ren Xiaosu walked back to the Trinity Institute's truck. Before leaving, he even waved and said, "See you tomorrow."

P5092 was dazed for a long time. When did the two of them apparently become such close friends? See you tomorrow?

On the way back, the escapees noticed Ren Xiaosu had somehow become the most privileged person among the Pyro Company's captives. Many of the Pyro Company soldiers even took the initiative to greet Ren Xiaosu when they saw him. Some of them even offered him cigarettes!

The middle-aged man who had had a dispute with Ren Xiaosu got a little nervous. Would that kid bear a grudge against him? If the other party decided to make things difficult for him with the troops, no one would speak up for him, right?

### **Chapter 836: Warfare on the front line!**

Right now, Ren Xiaosu's status within the Pyro Company's troops was indeed special. After all, to be reading the newspapers together with P5092, who knew what the relationship between them was like?



As such, the Pyro Company soldiers who witnessed the friendly scene in the morning started becoming very courteous towards Ren Xiaosu. Those who did not see it had heard about an escapee who was on good terms with their commander, so they took care not to offend him.

Honestly, the Pyro Company soldiers were also very puzzled about the relationship between their commander and this young man.

As a result, when Ren Xiaosu returned to the Trinity Institute's truck, the three soldiers who had accepted his watches actually ran over and said they wanted to return them. However, Ren Xiaosu refused to take them back and even comforted the three soldiers in turn, "Y'all can just keep them without any worries. It's alright, I gave it to y'all as thanks for your help on the journey. It doesn't mean that I don't have to thank y'all just because I'm bros with your commander. That's not right!"

After Ren Xiaosu convinced the three soldiers and sent them away, the news that Ren Xiaosu and P5092 were bros spread like wildfire. When it was time to collect their food the next morning, the cooks even enthusiastically asked Ren Xiaosu what he wanted to eat for lunch...

Looking on, the other escapees could not accept this situation. They were still unable to get any food, yet this young man was allowed to order whatever dishes he liked with the Pyro Company's troops!

Why was there such a huge difference in their treatment?!

On the same day, the Pyro Company's marching plan was suddenly accelerated. Ren Xiaosu could clearly sense the vehicle driving faster, so he leaned on the guardrail at the front of the bed and asked the soldiers, "Why have y'all suddenly sped up?"

The three soldiers said, "The higher-ups have ordered that we must get to the front line within two days. It's not only Stronghold 176 that has been attacked; the northern tribe has also appeared to the north of our Pyro Company. They've already slaughtered the workers in two of our factories, so we need to drive them away and build a defensive line at our north before their main forces arrive in the Central Plains."

Ren Xiaosu started thinking. It seemed that this northern tribe was launching an all-out attack on the Central Plains. They actually intended to take on the Wang Consortium and the Pyro Company together?!

Were they being too confident, or did they not understand the situation in the Central Plains at all?

He sat back down in the truck bed and watched the long stretch of vehicles crossing mountains and rivers. Ren Xiaosu suddenly felt like he was fighting alongside the Pyro Company to overcome the difficulties in front of them. It was a very strange feeling, and Ren Xiaosu was unable to explain how two initially opposing sides would suddenly work together to deal with a foreign enemy.

As spring was already here, the entire wilderness was starting to turn green. The frozen streams had broken through their icy seal as snowmelt began flowing down the mountains, converging into a turbulent river. When the river crashed into the rocks, whitewater rapids surged.

If the Pyro Company succeeded in fending off the foreign enemies, the sight of everything here would be preserved. But if they failed, the mountain streams would run red with blood.

On the third day, the Pyro Company troops finally made it to the forward operating base that was rearmost of the front line. But to Ren Xiaosu and the others' surprise, the entire forward operating base was in a state of chaos. The veterans who had returned from the front line were leaning against the walls and hugging their guns as they slept. They were all grimy and looked extremely pathetic.

Ren Xiaosu and the others also saw a lot of wounded soldiers being carried into the base's medical center from the north.

Outside the medical center, someone had built a drying area for clothes with hundreds of wooden stakes and steel wire. There were bed sheets, clothes, and bandages hanging.

It was a ghastly sight to still see bloodstains on those clothes that were washed and dried.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly realized the war in the North was far more brutal than he had imagined while they were rushing to the front line the past few days!

Someone was carrying a wounded person and crying out loudly outside the three-story building of the temporary medical center, "Someone, please save our platoon commander!"

Ren Xiaosu watched this scene from afar. It was the first time he had seen a Pyro Company member crying. So it turned out these people's emotions were also normal and they would feel sad for their comrades.

Ren Xiaosu had never seen such a sight before. In his impression, these people would not show any emotions even if their teammates had died.

It did not matter whether it was the Midnight or Dusk teams. They were all the same.

Yang Xiaojin seemed to have sensed his confusion. "The people in the intelligence agency are different from those in the fighting forces. People in the intelligence agency don't spend much time together. Some of them only work together temporarily when carrying out their missions. Moreover, those in the intelligence business tend to always abandon any useless emotions."

Some other soldiers were standing next to the Pyro Company combatant who was wailing. Next to them on the ground was another Pyro Company combatant on a stretcher who no one knew was dead or alive.

Someone ran out from the medical center to receive the patient. However, he said awkwardly, "There aren't enough doctors in the medical center right now. All of them are busy treating the patients who were sent here earlier on. You all can carry him inside first and wait for a while!"

The Pyro Company combatants who had brought the wounded soldier over were unwilling to comply. They pulled the nurse back. "Please save him. He was hacked in the abdomen with an axe. If you don't save him now, it'll be too late!"

The Pyro Company combatants were physically stronger than most people. So even though the wounded soldier was axed in the abdomen, he was still able to endure the pain for almost half an hour. But no matter how strong he might be, he could still die.

“Quick, save him!” Wang Jing beckoned for everyone to get out of the vehicle.

The doctors from the Trinity Institute experienced a lot of resentment and disappointment on their way here. But when they saw a dying person in front of them, the first thing they thought of was to save him. Everything else could be left for later.

Ren Xiaosu helped Wang Jing down from the truck. Wang Jing said to the nurse, “I’m Wang Jing from the Wang Consortium’s Trinity Institute. Please prep for surgery!”

The nurse looked pleasantly surprised upon hearing Wang Jing’s name. “You’re Dr. Wang Jing?”

Only now did Ren Xiaosu realize how well-known Wang Jing’s name was in the medical industry. The nurse absolutely trusted him after only hearing his name.

But the nurse said hesitantly, “The OR is fully occupied. It’s not that we refuse to let you use them, but there’s just too many wounded around. All the doctors capable of performing surgery are already working hard to save lives. Some of them haven’t even slept for an entire day.”

Wang Jing was caught in a dilemma. What should they do if they could not even get an operating room to work in? How could he possibly operate on a patient in a non-sterile environment?

Nearby, Ren Xiaosu suddenly said to Wang Jing and the nurse, “Nurse, please bring over the suture needles and thread. Elder, can you help do the stitching? I still have some ancestral medicine here that should be able to save him.”

With that, the nurse turned around and went back into the medical center to bring out a tray of medical equipment such as hemostatic forceps, suture needles, and thread. Wang Jing gave Ren Xiaosu a look. “You should know how serious the consequences will be if bacteria and viruses remain in his body without proper disinfection. Are you sure of it?”

Ren Xiaosu grinned. “Elder, don’t worry.”

After that, Wang Jing actually started stitching up the patient’s wounds. This Pyro Company combatant was so seriously injured that even his intestines had been cut into, and his entire person was in a state of shock due to blood loss. In the nurse’s opinion, it was impossible to save this person. But it seemed that Wang Jing trusted the young man next to him very much.

Each time Wang Jing stitched up a wound, Ren Xiaosu would apply some black medicine onto it. He didn’t care whether the black medicine would have the same effects after being applied onto internal organs as compared to taking it orally. He would have to make sure the wounded soldier survived first.

The Pyro Company combatants next to them were still in a state of despair. But they suddenly realized that when the black medicine was applied onto the first wound, their platoon commander’s pallid face

regained some color. They looked at one another and wondered what kind of medicine that was. How could it be so miraculous?!

Not far away, P5092 was watching this scene with great interest. The deputy commander next to him wanted to say something, but P5092 stopped him. "Let's watch and see."

### **Chapter 837: Let's meet again if fate wills it**

Actually, before that platoon commander was stretchered over, the soldiers who carried him here had given up hope.

Although they were not doctors, they could still understand that after a person was hacked in the abdomen with an axe and spilled their guts, not even God could save them, especially if the treatment was delayed for half an hour.

So the soldiers had only cried in front of the hospital because they had lost their rationality.

But little did they expect that with Wang Jing's stitching and Ren Xiaosu's application of the black medicine, their platoon commander's pale face actually turned pink again.

The scariest thing was that their platoon commander's crotch suddenly...

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A soldier wiped his tears and muttered, "Comrades, a dead person shouldn't react that way, right?"

"Of course they won't. Didn't Platoon Commander lose a lot of blood? Why is he still getting a rush of blood there...."

Ren Xiaosu muttered to himself while applying the black medicine, "So the black medicine can really trigger the other effect when applied on internal organs!"

Since he had never tried it out before, he was happy to learn something.

When a nearby nurse saw this sight, she was shocked. Not only was the almost dead patient's heartbeat and complexion going back to normal, he was even... getting a rush of blood there.

At this moment, the platoon commander who was lying on the stretcher coughed once. Right after, he opened his eyes and looked around blankly. "Where am I?"

His soldiers were overjoyed. "Platoon Commander! Platoon Commander, you're awake!"

Then they turned their heads to Wang Jing and Ren Xiaosu. "Are the two of you doctors of our medical center?"

In the eyes of these soldiers, Wang Jing's and Ren Xiaosu's images were starting to get elevated. Seeing their platoon commander come back to life, they thought these two doctors must have some kind of magical ability to revive the dead!

Wang Jing said with a smile, "Your platoon commander should pull through now."

Ren Xiaosu wiped the blood off his hand and stood up. "Although my ancestral medicine is amazing, y'all must not let him move around for the next three days. And make sure he doesn't head to the battlefield again thinking that he's already recovered. I suggest that he recuperates for a month first."

The soldiers were rambling incoherently as they thanked them, "Thank you, we are really very grateful. You two are simply gods among men!"

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu realized the four soldiers who thanked him had actually earned him 12 gratitude tokens in one interaction!

His eyes lit up as he turned around and looked at the medical center. Ren Xiaosu had thought that if the patient had remained unconscious, wouldn't he have wasted his black medicine on him?

But the situation now was completely different. If all the wounded were to get carried over by their comrades, they would thank Ren Xiaosu even if the patient did not regain consciousness and thank him themselves. Moreover, there would be at least two people carrying the stretchers. This would mean he could receive double the gratitude for every dose of the black medicine he exchanged.

This was simply the best place for him to farm his gratitude tokens. It was double the happiness!

P5092, who had been watching for a long time, said to Ren Xiaosu with a smile, "It wasn't until this moment that I felt like you were a doctor."

The blood on Ren Xiaosu's hands was rapidly drying, and there were also a lot of bloodstains on his body that could not be cleaned off.

Ren Xiaosu cut a sorry figure.

In P5092's opinion, Ren Xiaosu did not look like a doctor at all before this. He simply did not look like how a doctor should look.

Now that he saw with his own eyes how Ren Xiaosu had saved the patient's life, he finally believed when Ren Xiaosu had said, "When your comrades get handed to me for treatment, as long as it's just external injuries and they're still breathing, they won't die."

Thinking of this, P5092 instructed his deputy commander to leave. Then he said to Ren Xiaosu, "You're a supernatural being, right?"

Ren Xiaosu's heart skipped a beat at the words. "Sir, what are you talking about? Why can't I understand anything that you're saying?"

"Don't worry." P5092 said with a smile, "Even if you're a supernatural being, it's no big deal. There's no need to explain. I can judge for myself. But your awakened superpower makes you really suitable to be a doctor. Everyone says that superpowers are an extension of one's willpower. Since you were able to awaken a power that can treat and save people's lives, it shows that you're a kind person."

P5092 had jumped to conclusions. He thought the black medicine was a manifestation of Ren Xiaosu's power.

"What power are you talking about?" Ren Xiaosu continued playing dumb.

P5092 shook his head. "Stop faking it. You should know how our Pyro Company does things. We can still take you away even if we only suspect you of something. After all, this is the Pyro Company's territory. But don't worry, I'll keep it a secret for you."

Ren Xiaosu fell silent for a few seconds before asking with a smile, "Why didn't you arrest me then? Isn't the Pyro Company very interested in collecting the DNA of supernatural beings?"

"That was the past." P5092 shook his head and said, "Do you hear about the Pyro Company capturing supernatural beings nowadays?"

It was Ren Xiaosu's turn to be puzzled. "Why did they stop capturing them? I really haven't heard of such things happening lately."

"Because there's always imperfections in the DNA of normal people," P5092 explained. "They're now only interested in the No. 001 Experimental."

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. "The No. 001 Experimental? The one mentioned in Hope Media's newspaper?"

Of course he knew about the No. 001 Experimental, and he was also aware that there used to be three drops of "God's Blood" in the Sacred Mountains.

But Ren Xiaosu could not reveal that he had been to the Sacred Mountains before. He could only pretend that he did not know anything about it.

However, Ren Xiaosu did not understand something. Since the Pyro Company was able to preserve the three drops of blood and also wanted to extract the No. 001 Experimental's DNA, why didn't they start with the three drops of blood first? Could it be that they were unable to extract the DNA from those three drops of blood? Thus, they needed to look for the No. 001 Experimental so they could find other breakthrough points from it?

At this moment, the deputy commander led his men to bring over a dozen or so suitcases into the medical center. Ren Xiaosu immediately recognized them as the luggage of the Trinity Institute's group.

"What's this about?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

P5092 smiled and said, "I'm returning your luggage to you. How else are you going to explain where your medicine comes from?"

P5092 felt that he had figured everything out, that the black medicine was a manifestation of Ren Xiaosu's superpower. By returning the luggage to Ren Xiaosu, it would make it more convenient for him to explain the source of his medicine. Truly, P5092 was quite thoughtful.

Ren Xiaosu glanced at P5092. In any case, the other party had expressed his goodwill. "Thank you."

P5092 explained, "There's no need to thank me. I'm just making the most rational choice in the face of a formidable enemy. With a doctor like you stationed in the medical center at the rear, I'll rest easier. I'm entrusting my comrades' lives to your hands. Let's meet again if fate wills it, but it's unlikely that I'll get to see you again."

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Why won't we get to see each other again? Who can say for sure? You could still get injured and be stretchered back here, don't you think?"

P5092 said, "... You're even cursing me now?"

"Ahem, it was a slip of the tongue." Ren Xiaosu also realized there was something wrong with his phrasing.

A few more patients got carried to the medical center. Liang Ce shouted from a distance for Ren Xiaosu to go over and treat the patients. Ren Xiaosu glanced at P5092. "You've greatly changed my impression of the Pyro Company. I hope that you'll survive on the front lines, and I believe that we'll still have a chance to meet again in the future."

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Then Ren Xiaosu ran towards the medical center.

### **Chapter 838: The backbone of the medical center**

P5092 watched as Ren Xiaosu walked away. He asked his deputy commander, "Have the troops fully assembled?"

"Yes." The deputy commander said, "But Commander P5091 did not stop here and headed straight to the battlefield. He said there was an ambush at the front line, so he needed to rush there to provide support."

"Since 091 has gone there, we can take a breather." P5092 said, "Let everyone take a hot shower and have a good meal before we set off tonight."

"Got it." The deputy commander wondered, "It seems you're quite interested in that young man? You said earlier that he might be a supernatural being, so have you confirmed it yet?"

"He's only a supernatural being who saves the dying and treats the wounded." P5092 said with a smile, "Don't tell anyone about this. We're lucky to have someone like him in the rear. By the way, go look for those three soldiers who drove the doctors from the Trinity Institute and have them come here. I want to ask them some questions."

"OK." The deputy commander left. 20 minutes later, he led three soldiers back.

The three soldiers were trembling in fear. They wondered if their superior had found out they had accepted bribes and was looking to use them as a warning to the others.

However, P5092 was stunned when he saw the watches on their hands. He muttered under his breath, "Just how many watches does that kid have? Alright, you three can go back now."

The watches the three soldiers were wearing were exactly the same as the one on his wrist!

P5092 had thought Ren Xiaosu had given him his own watch. But he did not expect that Ren Xiaosu had actually distributed them in batches!

After that, P5092 walked towards the forward operating base. As he walked, he started laughing uproariously, making his deputy commander and the three soldiers look puzzled.

...

Everyone was extremely busy in the medical center. It was so busy that ever since Ren Xiaosu arrived, he never came out once. Ren Xiaosu did not have time to check out what this forward operating base looked like, nor did he find out where the cafeteria was. All of their meals were delivered here by the nurses while the doctors who finished their surgery would squat in the hallways and have a quick bite before rushing back into their operating rooms.

It wasn't until this moment that Ren Xiaosu understood why the Pyro Company had to enlist the Trinity Institute. In fact, he later heard that the escapees who had come to the North with them were only the first batch to be brought here. Subsequently, all the doctors in the Kong Consortium would be deployed here as well.

There was a real lack of doctors.

Occasionally, the doctors who were squatting in the hallways and eating would even chat with one another. However, they only talked about their patients' conditions. A doctor said as he gobbled up his food, "That wounded soldier from earlier had to be amputated because he was sent here too late."

"What a pity." Another doctor threw his finished lunch box into the trash can and said, "We're running out of medicine in my department. How's the situation on your side?"

"We're starting to run short of medicine as well," the doctor lamented. "But have you heard? It seems that a team from the Trinity Institute is here, and they've newly established the Fourth Emergency Department. I heard they're very competent."

"This is the first time I stepped out of the OR since this morning, so I don't know much. I have to get back now. I still have more than 10 patients waiting to be treated." This doctor left in a hurry.

The five minutes they had to eat was a rare break for them throughout the day.

Just as Wang Jing had lamented, when war broke out, the rate of saving people would never keep up with the speed of them getting wounded or killed.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu was standing in front of a standalone, makeshift operating table. Wang Jing, who was standing across from him, was skillfully stitching up the patient's wounds.



They did not even have the most basic sterile conditions here as it was just an office space hastily converted into an operation room. The nurses would just push in a reclining operating bed and they would start performing the operation right away.

At first, the director of the medical center expressed his concern over the situation. Without a sterile environment, they would not be able to save the patients even if they operated on them as it would just cause severe complications.

At this moment, it was Wang Jing's reputation that proved to be most important. After he went and explained things to the director, the other party did not bother them anymore.

Wang Jing and Ren Xiaosu suddenly became partners, with Meng Nan and Liang Ce acting as their assistants while Yang Xiaojin passed surgical instruments to Wang Jing and played the role of nurse off to the side.

To Wang Jing's surprise, Yang Xiaojin adapted extremely quickly and was also very serious about her work.

Usually, there would be problems with the coordination between the operating surgeon and the nurses. During an operation, the nurses would have to pass instruments based on the doctor's habits. For example, they would need to consider the angle at which the doctor was used to receiving the scalpel and the needle holder, and what angle they should be tilted at so they could be handed off quickly. It would take awhile for them to get used to one another's working style.

It was not that the operating surgeon was making things difficult for the nurse, but that everyone was racing against time when performing an operation. To ensure that the patient would survive, allowing the operating surgeon to perform their work without any hindrance was one of the basic conditions.

Initially, Wang Jing was a little worried he would need to change his habits during operations. But it took Yang Xiaojin only ten minutes to remember all of Wang Jing's hand positions when receiving the surgical instruments.

Not only that, but Ren Xiaosu would also assist in the stitching procedures other than just applying the medicine during the operation. At times, Wang Jing even discovered that Ren Xiaosu's method of stitching was exactly the same as his...

Moreover, Ren Xiaosu could anticipate what Wang Jing was thinking even though he did not open his mouth to express it. After all, Ren Xiaosu had directly copied this mastery from Wang Jing.

This made Wang Jing feel extremely comfortable. He had never performed such a well-coordinated surgery before!

Ren Xiaosu said with his mask on, "Right angle forceps."

Yang Xiaojin accurately found the right angle forceps that Ren Xiaosu wanted and handed it to him with extreme efficiency.

Wang Jing realized that when Yang Xiaojin handed the right angle forceps to Ren Xiaosu, it was also at the most convenient angle for him to take it.

At the end of the operation, Ren Xiaosu applied the black medicine onto the wounds and Wang Jing lifted an eyelid of the patient to check the pupil. After confirming the patient was fine, he shouted to the nurse outside, "Push him out and send in the next one."

Ren Xiaosu made use of this free time to walk out of the operating room. Wang Jing wondered where he was off to. Then he saw Ren Xiaosu take off his disposable gloves to shake hands with the patient's comrades and accept their thanks.

After they were done thanking him, Ren Xiaosu returned to the operating room and continued saving lives.

More and more patients were being carried into the medical center. And nearly half of them were stretchered to the operating room where Wang Jing, Ren Xiaosu, and the others were working.

As their surgical procedures were a lot simpler, Ren Xiaosu's group progressed much faster than the other departments.

When Liang Ce mentally counted the number of patients they had treated, he realized it was almost the total number of patients the other seven departments had treated.

Gradually, many of the doctors and nurses who were taking a break no longer squatted down in the hallway to chat. Instead, they made a special trip to the operating room where Wang Jing's group was working and watched from outside.

Ren Xiaosu and the others did not even close the door of their operating room. That was because they did not even need a sterile environment to perform surgery in. On the contrary, keeping the door open would facilitate the medical staff to better carry patients in and out of the room.

A patient had just regained consciousness after his operation. But when he opened his eyes, he saw a dense crowd of people standing outside the operating room.

### **Chapter 839: The most resolute doctor in history, Ren Xiaosu**

Honestly, it was not that the doctors and nurses of the medical center liked spectating, but that after the arrival of the Trinity Institute group, the pressure on them was suddenly relieved. Everyone heard the Trinity Institute was really fast at treating their patients, and the operations were even performed in a basic operating room that was not sterile.

When the doctors heard about this, they found it a little incredulous. How could the surgeries be performed in an unsanitary environment? Wouldn't the patients suffer from complications?

But when they went to check on the patients in the wards, many of the doctors realized the patients were actually recovering very well. Some of the patients were actually able to sit up in bed and chat with others after being operated on just a few hours before.

As there were too many patients, a lot of them could only lie on the mobile hospital beds in the hallways. When the hallways were filled, noisy chatter from the patients reverberated throughout the hospital.

A doctor stood in a hallway and lifted the gauze from a patient's wound to inspect it. He was astonished to find the wound had already started to scab. He asked the nurse beside him in surprise, "When did this patient's surgery end?"

"Four hours ago. He was hacked in the abdomen and spilled his guts. Everyone had already given up on him. But he looks absolutely fine now," the nurse said helplessly.

Just as the nurse finished answering the doctor, the patient who was being examined suddenly said, "Um, do you have any playing cards here in the medical center? We'd like to play cards to kill time...."

The doctor was shocked. This guy had just spilled his guts four hours ago, yet he had the energy to play cards now?!

Was the Trinity Institute really that amazing? Not only did the patient not suffer from any postoperative complications, he even recovered that quickly?!

From the look of it, there was clearly something to that black medicine!

At this moment, someone brought in a wounded person from outside the medical center while exclaiming, "Doctor, please save my comrade!"

When the doctor in the hallway was just about to receive the patient, another voice rang out. Ren Xiaosu poked his head out of his OR. "We've just finished an operation here. Bring him to our room!"

The doctor standing in the hallway was speechless. After a long time, he finally asked, "Nurse, how many patients have they operated on already?"

"I don't have any specific figures right now." The nurse answered him, "But I can tell you that half of the patients in the medical center were sent to them."

"They're amazing." The doctor sighed.

A lot of medical staff had gathered outside the operating room Ren Xiaosu's group was in. Even the director of the medical center came to have a look.

"Amazing, they're so efficient!"

"What on earth is that black medicine that he applied?"

Ren Xiaosu explained with a smile while applying the black medicine on the patient, "It's my family's secret ancestral remedy. It's really effective."

Looking at Ren Xiaosu's profile, the nurses muttered, "He looks so young! He's already performing operations at such a tender age. Have you guys realized something? Elder Wang Jing is actually just supporting him in performing the surgeries...."

Any discerning person would realize that Wang Jing was only doing the stitching on the operating table while Meng Nan and Liang Ce were responsible for stopping the bleeding and using instruments to remove dirt and debris from the wounds. Ultimately, everyone's actions were to support Ren Xiaosu's application of the medicine.

In a hospital, it was not easy for a young doctor to have a chance to perform surgery on the operating table. Those who could do so were definitely the stars of the hospital.

When it was time to eat, the nurse in charge of delivering meals to Ren Xiaosu's group was almost unable to squeeze through the crowd.

That nurse wanted to personally place the boxed lunch in Ren Xiaosu's hands, but Yang Xiaojin intercepted it and glared at her.

The nurse muttered, "What are you doing?"

Yang Xiaojin took off her surgical mask and continued staring at her silently. "I'm his girlfriend."

When the nurse saw Yang Xiaojin's exquisite looks, she flinched and stepped back...

On the one hand, Yang Xiaojin had worn a cap to hide her identity in the past, and on the other hand, she did not like others judging her by her looks. But now, she realized her appearance was quite useful for convincing many potential competitors to back off.

Ren Xiaosu looked at Yang Xiaojin in surprise and nearly burst out laughing. "You're acting like you're a little protective of your food."

Yang Xiaojin rolled her eyes at him. "Hurry up and stitch up the patient's wounds."

Beside them, Wang Jing chuckled, "You two really are a good match, y'know?"

Since arriving at the medical center, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin had spent over 20 hours working continuously. Meanwhile, Wang Jing could not bear it any longer and had already let Sima Gang and the others take over for him.

After all, Wang Jing was already getting on in age and was unable to handle such high-intensity surgeries. After careful consideration, he knew he could not afford to wear himself out right at the beginning with such long days ahead. So he came up with a plan to have the other operating surgeons work for eight hours each on three shifts to support Ren Xiaosu as they saved lives.

When Ren Xiaosu got tired, he would personally take over from him.

However, Ren Xiaosu remained standing for 24 hours straight at the operating table. The other doctors and assistants had already rotated through their shifts, but only Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin worked resiliently throughout.

When Sima Gang, Liang Ce, and the others got tired, they lay in the hallway and dozed off. They were so tired no one could wake them even if they called out to them. If it weren't for the fact they had a heartbeat and were breathing, everyone would have thought that they had suffered a heart attack.

But even at this moment, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin were still performing surgery on the operating table.

Most of the doctors who claimed to have good stamina were shocked by this.

In the end, it was Wang Jing who came to dissuade them. "Don't keep working. Health is the most precious asset we have when it comes to saving lives. I know you're very eager to save people, but you can't treat all the patients in the world without rest, right?"

Only then did Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin step away from the operating table. When Ren Xiaosu walked out of the medical center, he found the sunlight above him a little blinding.

But when the spring sunshine glittered down on him and permeated his dry clothes, he felt a sense of warmth enveloping his entire body. It was as though he were welcoming a new lease of life.

The voice from the palace in his mind suddenly said, "188 people have been saved from the verge of death. 'Lifesaver' achievement unlocked. Awarded two allocatable attribute points."

Ren Xiaosu was overjoyed. He increased his Strength and Dexterity to 15.5 and 15.1 respectively. Not only did he gain nearly a 1,000 gratitude tokens in a single day, he even unlocked a new achievement.

Unknowingly, Ren Xiaosu's physical fitness was already getting close to Old Xu's original Strength and Dexterity values.

But just as he was about to go and get some rest, a group of wounded people were transported in again from outside the forward operating base. Ren Xiaosu did not head back into the medical center but started pondering something.

Next to him, Yang Xiaojin asked curiously, "What are you thinking about?"

Ren Xiaosu sighed and lamented, "There's way too many patients. It's almost like we can't finish helping them all. There's three medical centers in the vicinity, but even still, we can't keep up with the rate of everyone getting injured."

"It can't be helped. That's how war is." Yang Xiaojin also sighed.

"This won't do. If it goes on like this, all the doctors in the medical center will burn out from exhaustion." Ren Xiaosu shook his head and said, "We should secretly head to the front lines!"

Yang Xiaojin was a little surprised. "Why do you want to go to the front lines? You're a doctor now."

“We can reduce the number of casualties on our side by killing the enemies. That’s also a way to save lives, right? Isn’t that what a doctor should do!” Ren Xiaosu’s expression was firm. He was using the most ruthless words with the kindest of intentions.

Yang Xiaojin thought about it carefully and realized it seemed to be the case. There was a constant stream of casualties being sent back here because the enemy at the front lines was too brutal. But if they could kill the enemies, wouldn’t they suffer no more casualties?

The most resolute doctor in history was born. He was the normal cardiac surgeon, Ren Xiaosu.

#### **Chapter 840: Salute**

Ren Xiaosu’s principle was that if he could not solve a problem when it arose, he would take care of it by getting rid of the person who caused it.

A very pointless thought experiment had once been proposed. Suppose there was a child on one side of a forked trolley track and five children on the other side. The question posed was that if you had a track switcher in your hands, which side would you choose to let the trolley go down?

If Ren Xiaosu were asked this question, he would simply beat the shit out of whoever asked it.

However, Ren Xiaosu was not in a hurry to join the battle. After all, he and Yang Xiaojin had worked over the operating table for over 20 hours. Moreover, they would definitely face a tough battle after they went to the battlefield, so what Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin needed most right now was some rest.

Before they arrived here, the forward operating base had prepared their accommodations for them. They were supposed to live in shared dorms. But after the incident of them treating the wounded soldiers had alarmed the entire forward operating base and caused a sensation, their assigned dormitories were switched to single-person rooms.

Honestly, Ren Xiaosu would like to tell the P3 commander in charge of the forward operating base that in this situation where resources were lacking, he didn’t mind sharing a room with Yang Xiaojin.

But in the end, he did not manage to say it as he was unable to locate the major.

After an entire day of surgery, a total of 190 patients had been treated. This figure might not sound like a lot, but it would be considered exceptionally impressive for other doctors if they could even treat 10 seriously injured patients in a day. After all, surgeries were extremely complicated procedures, and other doctors would still need to disinfect their surgical equipment and ensure they had a sterile environment to work in.

Wang Jing told him that the number of wounded soldiers could not really be counted as a lot at the moment. Once the war ramped up to total war, they would probably have to set up many makeshift tents outside the medical center. At that time, no one would care if the conditions were sterile. It would all depend on the patients’ own will if they survived or not.

It was not that the doctors’ medical skills were not good enough, but that the conditions just did not allow it.

However, an entire day of surgery had not only brought Ren Xiaosu all those gratitude tokens and unlocked an achievement for him, he had also earned the respect of the Pyro Company soldiers and officers here in the forward operating base.

Everyone had already heard that the Trinity Institute group who had just arrived at the medical center was extremely capable. As long as the wounded were sent to them for treatment, they would definitely survive!

Not only would they survive, but they would also be able to actively move around after a few hours.

The only thing that was puzzling was why most of the patients got an erection after they were operated on...

In normal circumstances, the nurses were not separated by gender while they were on duty. But faced with such events, even the most experienced nurses would find it a little embarrassing.

When Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin woke up in the evening and went to the chow hall at the forward operating base, a soldier suddenly stood up and saluted them.

Off to the side, someone asked, "What's going on? Who are they?"

Everyone who knew about Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin's deeds had mostly only heard about it. They'd never met them in person before.

The soldier explained to the others who were eating, "When I carried our platoon commander back today, he was the one who saved our captain. He's that young doctor from the Trinity Institute."

When he said that, the thousands of soldiers eating in the chow hall slowly rose out of their seats and saluted in the direction of Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin.

This sight was so shocking that Ren Xiaosu was unable to react for some time.

The Pyro Company soldiers all stood to attention with their arms firmly locked in salute. Some of them had just returned from the front lines in defeat, while others were lightly wounded and wrapped in bandages.

But none of this stopped them from expressing their respect.

To a soldier, it was too important that doctors possessed good medical ethics and expertise. Although their commanders were unable to prioritize their lives due to tactical and strategic considerations, doctors would.

In the past, Ren Xiaosu always felt it was too difficult to earn the respect of others in this era, so he decided it was better to make them fear him. So he spent most of his time solving problems with his fists.

But now he had gained the respect of others.

To be honest, he never thought he would get respected by so many Pyro Company troops. After all, this was the Pyro Company everyone regarded as cold-blooded animals.

Suddenly, the voice from the palace in his mind said, "Received the sincere respect and trust of 999 people in a single day. 'Respected by All' achievement unlocked. Awarded two allocatable attribute points."

Ren Xiaosu's Strength and Dexterity were suddenly raised to 16.5 and 16.1 respectively.

Ren Xiaosu asked his mind palace, "So the quests to help others were assigned because you wanted me to become a good person? It seems that I've approached them using the wrong mindset in the past... But what's done is done, and I don't plan on changing my ways either..."

Yang Xiaojin elbowed Ren Xiaosu. "Aren't you gonna say something?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "If any of you get stretchered to me in the future, I will make sure I do my best to treat you..."

The soldiers burst into an uproar. Did he just curse all of them?!

Ren Xiaosu touched his head in embarrassment and thought it was indeed inappropriate for a doctor to say something like that. It was equivalent to a funeral parlor organizing a group visit to volunteer at a nursing home. It was rude just hearing about it.

But very quickly, loud laughs burst through the chow hall. Someone shouted, "Doctor, we aren't allowed to have drinks during wartime. But after we win this war, you'll have to raise your glass for saying that!"

With that, the atmosphere in the chow hall turned cheerful. It was a 180 from the heavy atmosphere just now.

When Ren Xiaosu went to collect his meal, the chef serving him gave a flick of his wrist and shook off the vegetables on the ladle, leaving only meat behind.

Ren Xiaosu raised his eyebrows. "You must've trained for decades to be this skilled."

"Haha, eat more meat to replenish your strength," the chef chuckled. "Capable doctors like you deserve our admiration."

While they were having dinner, the P3 commander in charge of the forward operating base also came by to visit Ren Xiaosu and shook hands with him excitedly.

Ren Xiaosu said, "Oh yeah, I was just looking for you. There's something I need to tell you. Both me and her need to make a trip outside."

P31921 was taken aback. "Where are you going?"



“Into the mountains to gather some medicinal herbs.” Ren Xiaosu said, “You should know that my treatment method depends entirely on my secret ancestral remedy. But there’s simply too many patients, so the herbs have been completely used up in one day. We have to go out and gather some more so we can treat the patients who get sent here later.”

P31921 got anxious at the words. “You don’t have to personally do that. Just tell me what herbs you need, and I’ll get my men to gather them for you!”

“No, no, no.” Ren Xiaosu shook his head and said, “I wish I could get y’all to help me too, but my family has ordered me not to spread the remedy’s formula since it’s how we make our living. No outsiders can learn about it. So please be understanding. I really have to go out for a while.”

P31921 immediately understood. “I can’t stop you from going out, of course, but I have to warn you: Don’t head in the direction of Mt. Dashi. That’s where our main forces and the northern foe are battling.”

Ren Xiaosu nodded. He had a clear idea of where he should head now.