

First Order 871

### **Chapter 871: Mutual instigation**

Ren Xiaosu looked at the little black book in his hand. Since the Pyro Company soldier next to him could recognize it at a glance, it showed that a precedent had been set for this black book among the Pyro Company troops. He asked again, "What other uses does this little black book have other than allowing the holder to move around 3rd Division without any restrictions?"

"Oh." The Pyro Company soldier thought the commander was probably too busy and did not have time to explain to Ren Xiaosu what it was used for after handing him the little black book. Thus he explained, "This is Commander P5092's ID. Seeing it is equivalent to seeing the commander. You could say that other than commanding the troops to battle and other important things like that, there's nothing else you can't do with it."

Ren Xiaosu's eyes lit up. P5092 had told him that he had specially applied for the ID for him. But after asking around, Ren Xiaosu realized P5092 had actually temporarily handed over his high-ranking officer ID to him.

He was immediately moved to tears. P5092 really treated his friends sincerely. If he had the opportunity, he would definitely invite such a friend to the Northwest as his guest so he could have the honor of playing host!

Actually, P5092 was not about to let him know about how powerful the little black book was. That was because he had other motives for handing it to him. But who could have expected that Ren Xiaosu would ask a soldier to explain to him what it could do.

The soldier was not wrong either. He thought that since the commander could hand over his ID to Ren Xiaosu, it should not be a problem explaining the authority it had when asked, right?

Ren Xiaosu looked at the little black book in his hand and confirmed again, "Is it true that I can freely move around the camp and do whatever I want?"

"That's right, sir," the Pyro Company soldier answered.

Ren Xiaosu pondered for a moment before suddenly saying, "Sing me a song."

The Pyro Company soldier was confused.

In the past, some people had used this ID to freely move with the troops before, but this was the first fucking time someone holding the ID requested to be sung a song!

The Pyro Company soldier said with difficulty, "Sir, my singing is terrible."

"Are you saying that this black ID isn't effective now?" Ren Xiaosu wondered.

"Rosy clouds, sunset, ends the day. Returning from target practice, back to base, back to base..."

Ren Xiaosu listened to the out-of-tune military song and looked at the little black book in his hand happily. Suddenly, he was beaming with joy.

When the soldier explained the uses of the black ID, Ren Xiaosu was skeptical of what he was told. But now he really believed it. This black ID was proving to be really useful!

“Alright, alright, stop singing.” Ren Xiaosu said, “Bro, your singing isn’t just terrible; you totally can’t sing. Here, take this. As long as you don’t suffer a fatal injury on the battlefield, applying this will save your life.”

After that, Ren Xiaosu stuffed a small vial of black medicine that was enough for just one application into the soldier’s hands. He was in an extremely good mood, so surely he could not make him sing for nothing, right?

However, Ren Xiaosu still had some doubts in his mind. Why did P5092 suddenly come out to welcome him? And he even gave him such an important identification document? He felt that something was off no matter how hard he thought about it.

Perhaps this was some kind of a ploy? And the Pyro Company soldier next to him might also be putting on an act together with P5092?

As he did not know what P5092’s motives were, Ren Xiaosu could only make wild guesses.

At night, when it was time for dinner in the military base, Ren Xiaosu swaggered around with meal boxes in one hand and the black ID in the other. He was surprised to find that as long as he flashed the black ID, he did not even have to line up for food. Furthermore, the chow squad even asked him if he had any special orders to make.

To test the power of the black ID again, Ren Xiaosu pulled over another few people and asked them about it. After verifying, he confirmed that the black ID really held great authority within the 3rd Division!

That night, P5092 had just finished his follow-up battle plan and was rubbing the bridge of his nose in exhaustion.

When the deputy commander walked into his tent, P5092 looked at him and asked, “Where did that kid go today?”

“Apart from collecting his meals, he remained at the field hospital and hasn’t been anywhere else.” The deputy commander replied, “But why did you hand over your P5 ID to him? I keep getting the feeling that kid is sick in the head.”

P5092 was taken aback. “What happened? What did he do with the black ID?”

“He used it to order some dishes from the chow squad.” the deputy commander said.

P5092 did not know whether to laugh or cry. “He only ordered some dishes when I gave him my black ID?”

“Not only that,” The deputy commander had a strange look on his face. “He even made a few soldiers sing for him. It wasn’t enough getting them to sing military songs for him. He even made them sing nursery rhymes!”

P5092 was confused. This answer really caught him by surprise.

Actually, the black ID was even more powerful in the 3rd Division than Ren Xiaosu was aware of. He could really go anywhere he wanted without any restrictions at all. If he wanted to see P5092, he would be exempt from the routine body search and other verification procedures. He could even freely exit and enter the front lines as he wished, including going to the armory!

However, that young man only requested some dishes and songs when he had been given such an important document?

Curious, the deputy commander asked, “Why did you give the black ID to him?”

P5092 shook his head. “I want to recruit him into our Pyro Company. If we can get him to defect to our side during his time here, it would greatly help our 3rd Division.”

The deputy commander was taken aback. “You want to make him defect to our side?”

The word “defect” was used very appropriately in this case. At the very least, the other party would have to belong to an organization first to use this term. However, the deputy commander could not figure out why P5092 would go through all that effort just for a doctor.

P5092 explained, “There’s some things I can’t tell you yet. I can only say he’s not that straightforward. Alright, you may get back to your work. I know what I’m doing. By the way, remember to increase the number of soldiers on duty on the walls. You must notify me immediately when the scouts report back with their intel. I want to know what those barbarians are up to.”

“Understood.” The deputy commander left.

P5092 looked at the document in front of him and wondered if he could successfully get the young man to defect to their side.

He muttered to himself, “Not only can he save lives, but he’s also good at sniping. If he and his girlfriend defect to our side, our 3rd Division’s individual combat strength will be raised. At the very least, our dominance on the battlefield will be much improved with these two snipers around.”

But P5092 was probably not expecting that Ren Xiaosu was also planning to “invite” him to the Northwest as his guest at this moment.

Both P5092 and Ren Xiaosu were thinking about how to get along with the other party as they harbored their own intentions.

As for how that would end up, no one could tell for sure.

When night fell, Ren Xiaosu led Yang Xiaojin onto the walls of the New Great Wall with his black ID.

No one came to stop or question them. All the Pyro Company soldiers on duty even subconsciously avoided Ren Xiaosu when they saw him.

While everyone was having dinner in the evening, the events of Ren Xiaosu making soldiers sing for him using the black ID spread among the 3rd Division. The Pyro Company soldiers did not even dare to make eye contact with Ren Xiaosu as they were afraid that he would suddenly make them sing "Five Little Ducks."

The soldiers felt as though they were suddenly brought back to the time when they were still in school. Back then, when the teacher was choosing students to answer questions, this was exactly how everyone avoided the teacher's gaze.

### **Chapter 872: Listening in on the battle plans**

"Why are they avoiding you?" Yang Xiaojin asked in confusion as she walked up the steps of the Great Wall. "What'd you do when you went to get your food just now?"

As Ren Xiaosu went to get food by himself earlier, Yang Xiaojin did not know what he had done.

Ren Xiaosu said with a laugh, "It's nothing important. You don't have to worry about the details."

Yang Xiaojin looked at him curiously and thought to herself, '*As if nothing important happened!*' None of the Pyro Company soldiers even dared to make eye contact with Ren Xiaosu anymore!

"By the way, can you really move around in the base freely with that black ID given by P5092?" Yang Xiaojin asked, "You said you were going to test it out..."

Midway through her sentence, Yang Xiaojin guessed why the Pyro Company soldiers did not even dare to look straight at Ren Xiaosu. Her mentioning to him to test it out must have really frightened them.

The two of them walked onto the walls and looked out. What they saw was not the forest in the distance but the sight of barbarian corpses that extended outwards from the bottom of the walls!

They saw that the Pyro Company soldiers had erected several thousand wooden stakes outside the Great Wall and hung all the barbarian corpses on them one by one. Ren Xiaosu gasped. "P5092 is more ruthless than I thought. Is he trying to make the barbarians attack this section of the Great Wall?"

"Looks like it." Yang Xiaojin nodded.

Ren Xiaosu turned his head and looked at the Pyro Company soldier on duty close by. "Come here for a sec."

The Pyro Company soldier was nearly driven to despair. "Sir, I really can't sing..."

Yang Xiaojin chuckled, "Hehe."

Ren Xiaosu hurriedly said, "I'm not asking you to sing. I just wanted to ask you something. Did the barbarians come and attack this section of the walls during the past few days?"

“Yes.” The Pyro Company soldier explained with a sigh of relief, “At the beginning, they kept launching feint attacks and tried to lure out the 3rd Division’s main forces, but a lot of them were killed. With so many of the barbarians’ corpses hanging under the walls, it greatly affected their morale. Therefore, they attempted multiple times to come and take back the bodies, but they ended up getting beaten back instead.”

Ren Xiaosu nodded. It was no wonder the barbarian corpses at Mt. Dashi had all disappeared. So it turned out they had been transported here by P5092.

Truly, P5092 was also a very ruthless person. Ren Xiaosu noticed no corpses were hanging under the walls where the other divisions were stationed. Once the war fully broke out, this place would most likely come under the heaviest attack.

Ren Xiaosu said, “Since it’s already spring, the weather will only get warmer. If these corpses are left hanging outside the walls, they could cause a plague outbreak. Even with a wall separating us, the germs could still get blown inside by the wind.”

“It’ll be fine.” The Pyro Company soldier said, “We’ve already ‘pickled’ those corpses with slaked lime.”

Even for someone like Ren Xiaosu who was unfazed by many things, he was still left a little speechless when he heard this. Why were all the Pyro Company soldiers so savage? They actually talked about this like they were pickling vegetables?

But at this moment, a dense group of black dots appeared on the horizon. The Pyro Company soldier said to Ren Xiaosu, “Sir, please get off the walls quickly. The barbarians are here!”

With that, the soldier began reporting the enemy’s disposition on the radio. Within two minutes, the entire 3rd Division sprang into action, and P5092 quickly came on the walls as well.

P5092 did not bother greeting Ren Xiaosu and picked up the binoculars to take a look.

“What’re they doing?” Ren Xiaosu asked.

“Have a look for yourself.” P5092 said with a laugh as he handed the binoculars to Ren Xiaosu, “Those barbarians are just wasting their time with useless attacks.”

When Ren Xiaosu looked through the binoculars, he saw the barbarians bringing out some wooden stakes with them in the distance. Then they hung the corpses of the Central Plains people onto them.

However, their actions did not even faze the cold-blooded Pyro Company soldiers. The words that they liked to utter the most were probably “emotions are useless.”

“Continue to keep your guard up.” After that, P5092 invited Ren Xiaosu to the command center.

After entering the command center, Ren Xiaosu brazenly pulled over two chairs and sat down in front of the deputy commander and the combat staff officers. One of the chairs was for Yang Xiaojin.

As he picked up the newspaper from the table, he asked, “Y’know, y’all hung so many of their comrades’ corpses outside the walls. Aren’t you worried that they’ll concentrate their attacks here when the battle begins?”

“I’m not worried.” P5092 shook his head. “The 3rd Division is the main fire support of the Pyro Company. If the barbarians come here, they’ll only be asking for trouble. Furthermore, they’re very cunning too. They’ve been trying to attack 3rd Division’s base over the past few days, but when they finally launch their full-scale attack, they might unexpectedly attack the other sections of the walls instead.”

“Oh.” Ren Xiaosu finally understood. So it turned out P5092 also had his own considerations. He had dealt the barbarians several defeats over the past few days and deliberately provoked them as well. But when it was time for the barbarians to launch a full-scale attack, this area might not bear the brunt of it. “Aren’t you afraid that your wit might end up ruining you? What if their plan was to make an example out of you? Now that the supplies in the rear have been destroyed, you probably don’t have enough artillery shells to deal with them, right?”

P5092 smiled but did not answer the question. Instead, he asked about Ren Xiaosu’s living conditions. “So are you satisfied with our arrangements here at the front lines? We’ve built a makeshift field hospital, and the dorms that were assigned to you all are also temporary.”

“Yes, I’m very satisfied,” Ren Xiaosu said with a smile. The field hospital was located in a standalone area within the military base, and there were no brick structures around, with the accommodation being all collapsible military tents. Initially, he and Yang Xiaojin should have also stayed in one of the shared dorms with the others. After all, these were the conditions in wartime, so they would just have to make do with whatever there was.

But after P5092 had specifically passed down orders to look after Ren Xiaosu, the people from the field hospital actually set up two individual tents for them to live in. In the entire field hospital, only the two of them and the director enjoyed such treatment.

P5092 said with a smile, “Keep the little black book well, but don’t use it to request the soldiers sing for you anymore.”

“Hahahahaha.” Ren Xiaosu laughed in embarrassment and said, “Can’t you see that I was just trying to help them relax? Alright, you should get back to your work. I’ll leave after reading the paper.”

“Mhm, take your time.” After that, P5092 started gathering his deputy commander and the combat staff officers for a briefing. On one hand, it was to convey the information brought back by the scouts. On the other hand, it was to formulate the next step in the battle plans based on the gathered intelligence.

During this time, P5092 and his men made no attempt to avoid speaking while Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin were around. Ren Xiaosu was allowed to listen in on everything regarding the barbarians’ movements and the Pyro Company’s plans. It was as though he were really a member of the Pyro Company.

After listening for a while, Ren Xiaosu roughly understood the Pyro Company had very little information about the barbarians, and that both sides were still testing each other out. The most important thing for the 3rd Division now was not to kill as many barbarian troops as they could but to accurately assess the true strength of the expeditionary army.

As the saying goes, if you know your enemy and know yourself, you will win every battle. Only by finding out how many barbarians there were would the Pyro Company know what to do next.

If they assumed there were only a 100,000 barbarians and another 100,000 were to pop out while they were fighting, everything would be over.

### **Chapter 873: Free pass**

As P5092 and his men were having their meeting, Ren Xiaosu casually picked up the paper and started reading. The deputy commander thought to himself, *'You're acting like you're really one of us. Do you think you can listen in on our military secrets as you wish? Shouldn't you take the initiative and excuse yourself?'*

But when he remembered P5092 mentioned he wanted to instigate Ren Xiaosu to defect, he kept quiet and did not say anything.

Ren Xiaosu was reading through the newspaper. In the past, Hope Media's newspaper was only 16 pages. But now, its contents had temporarily been increased to 24 pages long. The eight additional pages were for reporting about the war to provide comprehensive coverage to readers.

To Ren Xiaosu's surprise, it was even reported in the paper that Fortress 178 had also sent their troops to the Central Plains. They were expected to arrive in seven days' time. Moreover, Commander Zhang Jinglin of Fortress 178 and Wang Shengzhi had come up with a joint battle plan after holding a conference call together.

In this news article, Ren Xiaosu was surprised to see the mention of a certain Brigade Commander Zhang Xiaoman. He thought to himself, *'Damn, isn't Zhang Xiaoman getting promoted a little too quickly? He became a brigade commander just like that?'*

However, the barbarians would not be so easy to deal with. He wondered if this group of Northwestern troops had any good countermeasures to use on the barbarians? To be honest, Ren Xiaosu was even tempted to leave the Pyro Company to join up with the Fortress 178 troops.

How could he be happier fighting alongside the Pyro Company than with his comrades from the Northwest?

Ren Xiaosu got up to leave. He waved to P5092 who was still in the meeting and said, "I'm leaving."

P5092 smiled and said, "Come over whenever you have free time."

This casual exchange sounded like a regular customer saying goodbye to the owner of a noodle shop he often hung out at.

After Ren Xiaosu left, the deputy commander couldn't help but say, "Sir, what makes you regard that kid so highly?"

“Let’s carry on with the meeting.” P5092 said calmly, “In my opinion, it’s absolutely necessary to get him to defect to our side now. Our 3rd Division is lacking in individuals with high combat capability. We can’t keep relying on those special forces, can we? I’ve already requested HQ to send us some T5 combatants. But the problem is that with so many armies, everyone is applying for the T5 reinforcements as well.”

It was a different era now. As a high-ranking officer with the wisdom of war, P5092 naturally knew that high combat capability could also play a significant role at the divisional level. That was why he was so eager to get Ren Xiaosu to defect to his side.

He held his meeting in the presence of Ren Xiaosu because he thought that even if he failed to instigate Ren Xiaosu’s defection for now, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin would at least know what the Pyro Company was planning in case they decided to act alone when the battle broke out for real.

One good thing about this war was that there was no need to worry about spies. At the very least, the barbarians did not have time to develop their spies.

On their way back to the field hospital, Ren Xiaosu muttered to Yang Xiaojin, “Do you find that P5092’s attitude towards me is a little weird?”

“Yes, I’ve noticed it.” Yang Xiaojin said nonchalantly, “He even let you sit in on the meeting where he and his officers were formulating their battle plans. That was weird no matter how you look at it.”

“Moreover, he even gave me his P5 ID which allows me to go anywhere I want in the base,” Ren Xiaosu continued muttering.

“Just what’re you trying to say?” Yang Xiaojin raised her eyebrows.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, “Could it be that he likes me? That won’t do. I have to find a chance to tell him that I already have someone I like.”

Yang Xiaojin said, “... Is that what you think?”

“Ahem, I was just kidding.” Ren Xiaosu said, “What I mean is, could that guy have figured out that we were the ones who helped him back at Mt. Dashi and the FOB?”

“That could be possible.” Yang Xiaojin said, “After all, we already aroused their suspicions by leaving the FOB to gather herbs at Mt. Dashi.”

“So he’s guessed that we’re the two snipers.” Ren Xiaosu nodded. “And then, he might have also figured out that we’re from the Northwest like Wang Yun had guessed?”

Yang Xiaojin frowned. She could not rule out this possibility.



Ren Xiaosu continued, "So by extending his goodwill to us, allowing us to move freely about in the base, and even letting us sit in during the military meeting, is it because he's thinking about... joining the Prosperous Northwest?"

In Ren Xiaosu's opinion, if the other party were showing such a friendly attitude after figuring out their identities, it was as good as telling him, "Recruit me, recruit me already!"

Suddenly, in Ren Xiaosu's opinion, P5092 became a fellow comrade who wanted to take the initiative to join the Prosperous Northwest. He did not even consider that the other party was actually trying to get him to defect to their side instead.

Ren Xiaosu absolutely did not think of this possibility!

What he did not know was that even though P5092 was an excellent commander, his memory was not as good as Wang Yun's. From a different perspective, P5092 was a tactical genius on the macro level, while Wang Yun's strength lay in noticing the details. They were completely different types of people.

Therefore, P5092 was not aware that Ren Xiaosu was from the Northwest. He was just trying to get Ren Xiaosu to defect to his side.

When they returned to the field hospital in the evening, Ren Xiaosu saw a group of students standing around the entrance. They were stopped from going out by a platoon.

Currently, these students were attached to the field hospital to receive basic medical training before the war escalated into total war. Once it fully kicked off, they would become the first line of medical staff responsible for carrying out simple tasks like the cleaning and dressing of wounds.

Although it might seem a little rushed to train them now, the problem was that there were no better options than this. It wasn't like they could continue to sing and dance here at the northern front lines.

At this moment, a Pyro Company soldier explained in a loud voice, "Martial law has been implemented at the field hospital, so you guys can't leave this place after 7 PM. Our military base is located right outside, so we can't make an exception for you since it involves military secrets."

A student shouted, "Why are we being locked in? We just want to visit the Great Wall to have a look."

"I'm sorry, but you can't go outside," the Pyro Company soldier said.

Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin entered the field hospital without saying anything and headed straight for their temporary accommodation. When a student saw them, he asked the Pyro Company soldier, "Didn't the two of them go outside earlier? Why are they allowed outside but not us?"

The Pyro Company soldier replied, "They're friends of our 3rd Division's commander, and they have the black ID with them too. If you also have the black ID, you can move around the base as you wish too."

The students were speechless. They had all traveled here to the north together, so how did the young man suddenly become a friend of the 3rd Division's commander? Also, what the hell was that black ID the soldier was talking about? None of them had even heard of it before.

Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin did not worry about them. When they returned to the entrance of their tents, Yang Xiaojin entered her tent with Ren Xiaosu following behind.

However, Yang Xiaojin turned around and said with an ambiguous smile, "What're you doing in my tent? Your tent is just next door. You're not allowed to enter my tent."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment before saying, "I have the black ID, and they said that I can go anywhere I want in the base with it...."

Yang Xiaojin smiled and stared at him without saying anything. In the end, Ren Xiaosu backed off and returned to his own tent.

#### **Chapter 874: Seamless integration**

At 6 o'clock in the morning, reveille trumpeted across the entire military base. Even though the Pyro Company troops were in the middle of a war, they did not slack off on drilling.

The soldiers of the 3rd Division who were not on duty on top of the Great Wall got started with their simple exercise routine. As P5092 put it, "Self-discipline should be a habit that is maintained at all times."

At 6:30 AM, the soldiers simply jogged around the barracks. When Ren Xiaosu passed through the base bustling with activity, some of the jogging platoons immediately changed their routes to avoid him.

Ren Xiaosu headed straight to the command center. At this moment, P5092 was standing at the sand table and had already started formulating a battle strategy. Across the sand table, the south of the Great Wall was filled entirely with red flags while blue flags littered the area to the north of it.

But there were purple flags on it as well. Ren Xiaosu did not quite understand what they represented, so he asked, "What do the purple flags represent?"

P5092 looked up at Ren Xiaosu and explained with a smile, "Those are the unknown areas we haven't explored fully yet. The expeditionary army's main forces might or might not be hiding in those locations."

"Oh." Ren Xiaosu nodded as he sat down at a table off to the side and picked up the day's Hope Media newspaper. When he saw the news of Zhang Xiaoman in the newspaper, he suddenly asked, "What do you think of the Northwest?"

P5092 was stunned. "Are you referring to the people and the regional culture of the Northwest or Fortress 178?"

"Fortress 178." Ren Xiaosu said, "See this? They're also coming to participate in this war."

P5092 said in seriousness, "I've always quite admired Fortress 178. As you know, they've been protecting the Central Plains civilization for at least as long as our Pyro Company has. Although both our parties protect the Central Plains in different ways, our end goal is the same."

Ren Xiaosu was amused when he heard this. He thought to himself that it was no wonder P5092 was acting so friendly towards him. It looked like he was indeed keen on joining the Prosperous Northwest. He had just expressed his interest, right?

P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu's expression and wondered, "Why are you suddenly smiling blankly?"

"Ahem, it's nothing." Ren Xiaosu said, "Um... can you have your orderly deliver breakfast directly here? I'll have breakfast while reading the newspaper."

P5092 did not know whether to laugh or cry. "You're treating this like your own home."

Ren Xiaosu blinked at him. "We're gonna be one family soon, so why the need to be so formal?"

P5092 was overjoyed. He was starting to wonder if this young man had understood his friendly intentions and was thinking of joining the Pyro Company.

So that was why Ren Xiaosu said they were going to be one family soon!

Initially, P5092 thought there was still much left to be done to get Ren Xiaosu to defect to his side. He was planning to encourage him slowly, but he didn't expect it would be this easy!

Thinking of this, P5092 was very happy. He called the orderly over. "Go and get some food. My friend and I are going to eat here in the command center."

Ren Xiaosu said, "But we still have to wait until your Pyro Company wins the war before discussing this matter further."

In Ren Xiaosu's opinion, although he was very eager to poach P5092 to his side, he could not cause the 3rd Division to have to appoint a new commander right before they faced the barbarians, right? If that happened, it might lead to a disaster for them.

There were only six armies like the 3rd Division in the entire Pyro Company, so not just anyone could replace such a high-ranking commander like P5092. If P5092 were to defect now, it would probably lead to the potential failure of this war.

However, Ren Xiaosu did not consider if he and P5092 had misunderstood each other's intentions.

Ren Xiaosu said firmly, "Win this war first and we'll talk. Otherwise, it's useless to say anything."

When P5092 heard this, he understood it as something different. He was wondering if this young man was waiting to assess his leadership qualities. There was nothing wrong in assessing him since powerhouses had been known to only join forces with the strong, so this was to be expected.

But he could not just let Ren Xiaosu assess him as he was not someone who could be easily ordered around either.

He said to Ren Xiaosu with a smile, "But I have to make sure you're strong enough too."

Ren Xiaosu wondered if P5092 was only willing to follow him to the Northwest after he had made sure that he was strong enough.

Ren Xiaosu nodded and said, "You'll see for yourself."

They looked at each other with a smile. It was as though they had both gotten the answer they wanted.

Both of them had their own intentions, but their conversation had somehow gone through seamless integration.

Ren Xiaosu said, "Yesterday, I overheard in the meeting that y'all were planning to initiate an attack on the barbarians. Why do you want to launch an attack when the Great Wall is so well-guarded?"

P5092 explained, "Our ultimate goal is not just to defend the south of the Great Wall, but to have the barbarians pay with their lives and send them back to the North. So it's definitely not enough to just defend the Great Wall. We have to take back Stronghold 176 and drive them back to the steppe."

"Oh, I see." Ren Xiaosu nodded. "But isn't it somewhat hasty to initiate an attack when we're still at the stage of probing each other?"

"The barbarians have obtained our Central Plains firearms and explosives from Stronghold 176 and are now scattered across more than ten locations in the northern forest." P5092 said, "As long as those emplacements remain standing, even if we win the battles at the Great Wall, we can't pursue them. Y'know, the purpose of war is to kill as many enemies as possible to secure the final victory. Otherwise, the expeditionary army will make a comeback in the future if they manage to preserve their strength and return to the North. This time, we'll have to defeat them and set them back by 20 years. In a few more years, our Pyro Company can even go to the North and wipe them out in one fell swoop."

Ren Xiaosu thought the Pyro Company was rather ruthless. He asked, "Then what do y'all plan to do?"

"Yesterday, the barbarians transported the corpses in Stronghold 176 here and hung them on wooden stakes. They're trying to provoke us, so we plan to beat them at their own game. We'll pretend to be very enraged by the sight of the corpses and launch a feigned attack. Then, we'll take the opportunity to investigate the locations of the barbarians' emplacements," P5092 explained. "If conditions allow, we can even send some scouts in to provide laser guidance for a missile attack on those emplacements. We will kill the barbarians with our long-range firepower."

"But that should be very difficult," P5092 continued. "After all, the barbarians are really strong, so our scouts might not be able to get close to their emplacements."

Ren Xiaosu nodded. "In that case, I'll join the operation with your troops this time. It can also be considered as doing my part to defend the Central Plains."

Ren Xiaosu thought that if his Northwestern comrades were here, they would probably make the same choice.

P5092 was stunned. He did not expect Ren Xiaosu's attitude to change so drastically now that he was no longer hiding his strength. P5092 immediately had a plan in mind. "The main forces will launch a feint to create chaos so that you can enter the forest. I'll assign a company of troops to escort you in. After

entering the forest, you won't have to launch any attacks on the barbarians. All you need to do is identify where the emplacements are located!"

Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "Since you were wondering how strong I am, don't forget to take a good look from the Great Wall."

At this moment, the seal on his powers broke.

### **Chapter 875: Setting off**

In the evening, the Pyro Company's 3rd Division base was completely quiet. Everyone had already eaten dinner in the afternoon as they made a last-minute change to their meal plans. This was a sign that they were preparing to launch a surprise attack.

The artillery troops were already on standby atop the walls. This time, it would be an infantry brigade that would advance into the northern forest. What the artillery troops needed to do was to provide cover for the infantry brigade during their retreat.

The Pyro Company troops did not choose to set off at night because there were spotlights installed on the Great Wall. With all the lights switched on at night, their troops would be exposed to the barbarians.

But if they deliberately switched off the spotlights, it would also attract the barbarians' attention. After all, they had been switching them on punctually every day. If the lights were not switched on today, it would be obvious that something was off.

Therefore, the best way would be to set out in the evening and quickly pass through the area where the spotlights would cover.

They roughly estimated that even though it was already spring, the northern sky would start turning dark at around 5 PM. They would have 38 minutes to pass through this terrain.

Ren Xiaosu wondered why the Pyro Company did not just carpet bomb the area since they had artillery. Didn't the Pyro Company previously bombard an area with artillery fire? So why couldn't they do that now? After all, this forest was still within range since it was only a few kilometers away.

However, P5092 explained to him that the forest in the north covered an area of over 600 hectares. Even if their supplies were not destroyed, they couldn't possibly carpet bomb a forest this big. Comparatively, it would be more worth it to sacrifice some human lives in exchange for a targeted attack.

Ren Xiaosu had to admit that this was what was probably known as the mindset of a commander. Weapons and soldiers were nothing but chess pieces on the board. All they cared about was winning, and their only consideration was which pieces they had to sacrifice to gain a worthwhile victory.

Ren Xiaosu thought that if he really brought P5092 to the Northwest with him in the future, he would need to have a good talk with him. Although the Northwesterners were not afraid of sacrificing themselves, it would be better if they did not have to do that.

In Ren Xiaosu's eyes, he always felt that everything was possible as long as people were alive.

But this was also why he could not become a military commander.

Now that they were facing a shortage of supplies, P5092 would have to carefully ration the ammunition they could use. During the afternoon, Ren Xiaosu realized the rations allocated to the field hospital had been reduced to half of what they used to be, leading to many people complaining they didn't have enough to eat.

From this, it could also be seen that there were indeed some problems with the Pyro Company's material supply chain. The destruction of the supplies at the forward operating base in the rear had affected the Pyro Company greatly.

When the sun finally set in the distant horizon, the sky quickly turned dark.

The gate of the Great Wall was slowly raised up to a height that was only about half a person tall. Then, the 3rd Division's infantry brigade quickly passed through it.

Meanwhile, Ren Xiaosu joined up with an independent reconnaissance company and put on the Pyro Company's combat uniform and tactical vest. He thoroughly inspected his night vision goggles, automatic rifle, pistol, and other items.

The reconnaissance company was extremely well-equipped. Every soldier was issued with an automatic rifle that had two scopes, with one of them being an optical sight while the other was a holographic sight.

This reconnaissance company played a similar role to the special forces within the 3rd Division. They would usually carry out challenging missions such as rescues, infiltration operations, and decapitation strikes.

Ren Xiaosu carefully sized up his "comrades" and realized these people were even bringing along single-shot, 40 mm, under-barrel grenade launchers with them, and each platoon had six soldiers capable of providing heavy weapons support.

Just as Ren Xiaosu was sizing them up, the elites of the reconnaissance company were also sizing him up. They already knew he was a friend of Commander P5092, but they didn't expect the young man would participate in the battle as well.

To be honest, Ren Xiaosu had never shown his combat prowess before. Meanwhile, the mission assigned to the reconnaissance company by the General Staff Division this time was not to carry out a surprise attack, decapitation strike, or infiltration operation, but to protect this young man.

As for all other matters, they would just have to follow this young man's orders. Ren Xiaosu would become their acting commanding officer.

The reconnaissance company's commander could not help but remind him after hesitating for quite a while, "After we get on the battlefield, please stay in the middle of the group. Don't do anything unnecessary so your safety can be ensured."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned as the company commander was quite polite. He nodded. "Don't worry. I know that your mission is to protect me, but I don't need any protection."

The reconnaissance company commander thought to himself, '*You don't need any protection? You can really boast, huh?*' However, they had seen people like him before. Before heading to the battlefield, they would be full of confidence. But once they were out there, they would not even know which way to turn.

A fighting force like the reconnaissance company had already fought countless battles, so they naturally had pride. On the battlefield, they had always been the most trustworthy comrades to others. If total war broke out, all of the troops would be hoping to fight alongside an elite unit like them.

As such, they understood the battlefield very well and had also taken on the barbarians before. The reconnaissance company's commander knew that even supernatural beings were unlikely to survive if they were attacked by those extremely strong barbarians.

He asked again, "Sir, may I ask you something? Our mission is to protect you, but what is your mission?"

"Oh, my mission?" Ren Xiaosu started thinking with a frown. "I'm not sure what my mission is exactly either, so let's just improvise."

The reconnaissance company's commander was at a loss for words. How could he not even have an objective?

Just what were they going on the battlefield for?

Ren Xiaosu patted him on the shoulder and said with a smile, "Relax, everything will be fine. Just follow me and provide cover. By the way, what's your serial number?"

"T40219." The reconnaissance company's commander answered with a mental sigh. They were probably going to encounter trouble on the battlefield this time.

Ren Xiaosu asked again, "So you're a T4 combatant, not bad. What about the other soldiers?"

"They are all T3s," T40219 answered.

Ren Xiaosu nodded. All T3s? The overall physical fitness level of this reconnaissance company was quite good, and it looked like they were the elites of the 3rd Division. He said to T40219, "Since they're all T3s, make sure you all follow close behind me when I pick up the pace later. Don't fall behind."

T40219 almost laughed out loud. Fall behind? How could the reconnaissance company possibly fall behind?

But Ren Xiaosu did not say anything further and just led the reconnaissance company out of the gate. When the gate was slowly lowered again behind them, T40219 said coldly on the radio, "All units, radio check."

"Loud and clear."

“Loud and clear.”

“Loud and clear.”

When they quickly passed through the area where the spotlights would illuminate, T40219 said, “Bullet, switch on your helmet cam.”

In this way, their in-combat footage would be transmitted back to the command center in real time. Bullet was the call sign of one of the soldiers.

As night fell, Ren Xiaosu turned around and looked at the reconnaissance company behind him. He had not expected them to have call signs and thought they would address each other by their serial numbers.

Sometimes, Ren Xiaosu wondered if the Pyro Company soldiers desired to have a real name instead of just a serial number.

### **Chapter 876: Charging ahead**

P5092 was sitting in the command center with his arms crossed in front of his chest. He calmly watched the real-time images that were transmitted back by the recon company and suddenly realized they were advancing at a very fast pace. In fact, they were already about to overtake the infantry brigade.

The recon company and the infantry brigade had taken different routes. One was heading northwest while the other was heading northeast. The infantry brigade was in charge of launching a feint to distract the enemies while the recon company played the main role in this recon mission.

Next to him, his adjutant asked, “Will there be any problems with the recon company advancing at such a rapid pace?”

“Let’s wait and see.” P5092 did not interfere with the recon company’s plans and chose to observe the situation for the time being.

At this moment, the recon company was maintaining radio silence. As they were getting close to the edge of the forest, everyone started becoming more alert.

All of a sudden, the voice from the palace in Ren Xiaosu’s mind said, “Quest: It has been detected that your team members are extremely nervous. Please help ease their anxiety.”

Ren Xiaosu’s eyes lit up when he heard the voice from the palace assigning him a quest. He was very experienced at helping others ease their anxiety. He thought for a moment and said, “Um... it feels like everyone is very nervous, so let me sing a song for y’all.”

Saying that, he started singing “Five Little Ducks.”

T40219 was taken aback. “Sir, what are you doing?”

“What? You don’t like this song?” Ren Xiaosu wondered why the quest was still not complete. “I’ll sing a different song then.”



After that, he started singing “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.”

However, Ren Xiaosu’s ever-successful performances failed this time. When this song reverberated over the radio, it not only failed to ease everyone’s anxiety, but it made everyone even more nervous!

It was understandable they would feel nervous since they were going to enter the forest soon. Although the main infantry forces had launched a feint on the other side to help conceal their presence, was this the right time to be singing nursery rhymes? The enemy was just up ahead, yet one of them over here was actually singing?

This scene was simply too bizarre and absurd.

T40219 said nervously over the radio, “Sir, what are you doing?”

Their exchange was also being transmitted back to the command center in real time. All the staff officers in the command center were dumbfounded by what they heard. Having been in the Pyro Company for so many years, this was their first time encountering such a situation!

The deputy commander looked silently at P5092. “Sir...”

After a long silence, P5092 said, “Let’s wait and see. He must have his reasons for doing that...”

When Ren Xiaosu saw the palace had still not informed him about the completion of the quest, he immediately got anxious. “All of you, sing a song for me. Hurry up.”

When he heard everyone stumbling through the singing of the military song over the radio, the tension rose further.

Ren Xiaosu felt a little helpless. He had met his Waterloo for the first time ever in the process of doing a quest. What was with this situation?

But a moment later, the recon soldiers suddenly saw Ren Xiaosu, who was at the tip of the spear, get down on one knee and raise his gun to shoot.

After firing two shots, Ren Xiaosu picked up the pace and sprinted forward. He shouted on the radio, “Keep up!”

With that, Ren Xiaosu took the lead and charged into the forest. The recon company behind him was clueless about what was happening until they saw a barbarian who had fallen to the ground when they entered the forest a short while later.

This barbarian was likely a hidden sentry in the forest who was responsible for keeping watch. But the soldiers of the recon company were puzzled. How could Ren Xiaosu have spotted this barbarian?

Furthermore, the two shots from earlier had hit the barbarian in the eyes. If he were shot elsewhere, it would at most have hurt the barbarian slightly, but Ren Xiaosu was somehow able to kill him with those two shots.

To be precise, he had killed him with one shot. He only fired twice out of habit.

1

T40219 looked at the barbarian's corpse in silence. There were two bloody wounds left where his eyes used to be. He knew he couldn't shoot with such accuracy. Not only that, he would not even have discovered the barbarian's presence in advance.

He suddenly realized that although the other party was a little unpredictable, it was just as he claimed. He was not someone who needed any protection.

Ren Xiaosu had charged ahead into the forest. T40219, who was behind him, hurriedly said on the radio, "Sir, don't get separated from the group!"

However, Ren Xiaosu did not slow down at all. He simply answered, "Y'all're quite fit as well, so you should be able to keep up with me. I'll slow down a little bit for y'all."

T40219 was stunned. Ren Xiaosu was saying that he would slow down and wait for them? That was to say, even though the other party knew the recon company was made up of T3 combatants, he still felt he had to slow down for them to keep up with him?

Intense gunfire rang out in the distance. It seemed that the main infantry forces were already exchanging fire with the barbarians.

Ren Xiaosu said, "Let's charge forward while the main infantry's taking fire from the enemy. We need to find out where the barbarians' emplacements are."

T40219 said anxiously, "Sir, our firepower might not be effective against the barbarians. If we get heavily surrounded, we'll be in deep trouble."

Ren Xiaosu said curiously, "Why would it be ineffective? Just shoot them in the eye."

With that, he opened fire again as they advanced. The bullet burst out from the chamber of the rifle and hit a barbarian right in the eye.

T40219 thought to himself how they were always troubled by the barbarians' "defense" when they faced them. The barbarians had such thick skin they could even block the bullets of automatic rifles.

But these barbarians were fragile as a sheet of paper in front of Ren Xiaosu. Just as Ren Xiaosu had said, since the barbarians had thick skin, they should just aim for the eye instead.

But T40219 was helpless and could not argue with him anymore. Shooting them in the eye was easier said than done. No matter how elite they were, it was impossible to guarantee they could always hit the barbarians' in the eye with both sides moving so fast.

As they advanced, the recon troops following Ren Xiaosu did not even get a chance to shoot. Any barbarians Ren Xiaosu encountered would be immediately killed with a single shot!

P5092 showed a smile as he quietly watched the real-time footage that was transmitted back. This was what he wanted to see. Next to him, his adjutant had nothing more to say. From the look of it, that young man was indeed the *crème de la crème*.

But the recon company was only advancing from the flank, so the barbarians they encountered were only their scouts. No one knew what would've happened if it were the barbarians' main forces they had bumped into instead.

Ren Xiaosu came to a sudden stop. T40219 asked nervously, "Sir, what's the matter? Have you detected enemies?"

"Oh, it's nothing. The barbarians ahead of us should be their right flank. I'll go relieve myself first," said Ren Xiaosu while running towards a denser part of the forest. Then everyone could hear the sound of water trickling.

1

T40219 believed those at the command center would definitely hear it as well!

T40219 felt a little helpless. Why did Ren Xiaosu have to suddenly mess up the impression he gave after his opinion of him had just changed for the better?

However, no one noticed that as Ren Xiaosu was moving away from the group to relieve himself, a shadow had emerged from behind him and instantly disappeared into the forest.

### **Chapter 877: Reaping**

This time, Ren Xiaosu did not dress up or put a mask on for Old Xu. He let it blend into the night completely as its original self, a shadow.

This might have sounded a little odd, but when they quickly infiltrated the forest, Old Xu's base color was the best camouflage for it.

When Old Xu traveled through the forest in the cover of the shadows, the enemy would probably not discover its existence if they did not get closer for a careful look.

Furthermore, as Old Xu did not breathe or sweat, even the most experienced hunter in the world wouldn't detect it with their sense of smell.

The barbarians could never have expected there to be a superpower that was so suitable for scouting in this world.

Of course, Old Xu was not entirely undetectable since some of the hidden sentries were in unexpected locations. As Ren Xiaosu had to lead the troops and control Old Xu at the same time, Old Xu might encounter a hidden sentry if Ren Xiaosu was a little distracted.

But it was not too much of a problem. As long as the sentries were killed, no one would discover Old Xu.

Ren Xiaosu did not make Old Xu start a killing spree. If he attracted the expeditionary army's main forces, the soldiers of the recon company behind him would probably be in danger.

If it were other times, Ren Xiaosu would actually not care about what happened to these people he did not know. But wasn't his intention to recruit P5092 to the Prosperous Northwest? He would have to show him what the Northwesterners were capable of. If the mission was completed but all of his men died, that wouldn't prove his competency at all. How embarrassing that would be!

The soldiers of the recon company just now realized Ren Xiaosu was even wearing his night vision goggles. They wondered how he could see things in the forest. And the young man could even move so quickly in the forest without the aid of the night vision goggles.

1

"To the right." Ren Xiaosu suddenly turned right. "There's an ambush ahead. Don't go over there. Follow me!"

The soldiers of the recon company behind him looked at one another. What ambush? Why couldn't they see anything? Were they blind or something?!

T40219 asked in confusion over the radio, "Sir, are you mistaken? We didn't notice anything." He even took a look through his night vision goggles. However, he still did not find anything suspicious in the forest ahead.

Ren Xiaosu said, "I don't have time to explain. Just follow me."

Right afterwards, Ren Xiaosu led the reconnaissance company on a huge detour through the forest. This roundabout route was about two kilometers long.

Then he stopped in his tracks and whispered, "We've circled around to the rear of the barbarians. All units, maintain radio silence and listen to my commands. We're now slowly approaching them."

1

T40219 was confused right then and there. Approaching them? He could not even see any signs of the enemy. Who were they approaching?

The recon company followed Ren Xiaosu and moved forward quietly. Ren Xiaosu said softly, "Alright, we're downwind now. Soldiers with the 40 mike-mikes, step forward."

"40 mike-mike" was military slang for the 40 mm grenade launcher. What Ren Xiaosu meant was to have the soldiers carrying the grenade launchers in each platoon gather.

When the soldiers came up to him, Ren Xiaosu knelt behind some bushes and pointed in a direction. "You, you, and you, aim your weapons for 200 meters over there."

T40219 took a quick look in the direction he pointed, but he still could not see anything.

"Sir!" T40219 pulled Ren Xiaosu back and said, "Shouldn't we be scouting the vicinity first? There must be other barbarian troops around here. If they're alerted, we'll get surrounded...."

Ren Xiaosu waved it off. "Don't worry, there's no other hidden sentries around here."

That was because those hidden sentries had already been quietly taken out by Old Xu. This was also the reason why Ren Xiaosu led them on such a huge detour. They actually did not have to travel that far, but Ren Xiaosu did not want them to discover the barbarian bodies Old Xu had killed.

Then Ren Xiaosu pointed in another direction. "You, you, and you, aim your weapons for 170 meters over there! Alright now, listen for my command.... Fire!"

Although the soldiers did not know what was going on since they could only see the dark forest in front of them, they only needed to obey their orders in battle. It was unnecessary for them to have any other opinions.

A second later, the six soldiers pulled the trigger of their grenade launchers at the same time. When the grenades fired out of the launchers, they flew leaving a smoky trail across the air.

After a few loud explosions, fiery flames suddenly illuminated the forest over there. It was not until this moment that T40219 could finally see the barbarians lying in the bushes. They were covered in grass and camouflaged!

If Ren Xiaosu had not pointed them in the right direction, they would definitely have encountered the barbarians if they followed their original plan. And it would have been very late by the time they discovered their enemy. This would mean they would have to engage in close combat with them!

Then it would be considered fortunate if even a few dozen of them from the recon company could survive.

The six grenades had landed accurately at the positions Ren Xiaosu had specified. The dozen or so barbarians hiding in the forest were dazed by the explosions.

Ren Xiaosu immediately charged. "Covering fire! We're gonna quickly take out the remaining barbarians on the battlefield. Leave no survivors!"

T40219 added, "Fourth Platoon, provide cover for the rear. Keep your guards up!"

Of course, the six grenades that were launched at the barbarians was still insufficient to take them all out. Ren Xiaosu's aim was to use the destructive blast to drive them into their line of fire and disorient them at the same time.

After the grenades went off, the barbarians who were still alive would experience a temporary loss of hearing, sustain injuries to their organs, and have blurred vision.

They would not be able to take advantage of their superior physical fitness anymore.

When Ren Xiaosu raised his gun and charged forward, T40219 and the others were almost unable to keep up with his pace. For the soldiers of the recon company, they could only hear Ren Xiaosu firing continuously as they advanced.

Under normal circumstances, everyone was used to taking aim and shooting after getting into the 100-meter range so their accuracy would be greatly improved. After all, Ren Xiaosu had instructed them to shoot the barbarians in the eye and even put on a very good demonstration for them.

But now, all the barbarians were already dead as soon as they got to within a 100 meters of them.

T40219 looked at the barbarians who were left with bloody wounds in their eyes and sighed. He felt no sense of participation at all.

Their combat SOP now was having Ren Xiaosu lead them to circle around to the barbarians' rear and ordering the soldiers to launch six grenades in the directions he specified before following him as he put on a show of killing the barbarians.

Although they opened fire as well, it was only imprecise suppressive fire they provided.

T40219 suddenly wondered why he was here.

Oh right, the commander had ordered him that their mission this time was to protect this guy.

As if this guy needed anyone to protect him! Who was protecting who now?!

The recon company had always been the most elite fighting force in the 3rd Division, and even their training was carried out separately. During the military combat competitions, they would often crushingly defeat their comrades.

But now, for the first time, T40219 felt like he was a burden.

Ren Xiaosu looked at the battlefield. "Alright, we're done killing them all. Follow me!"

### **Chapter 878: A sense of familiarity**

In the command center, P5092 watched quietly as the images and sounds were transmitted back in real time on the screen. He asked his adjutant, "You were also looking at the screen the entire time. Did you notice any barbarians?"

His adjutant shook his head. "No, I didn't. I wonder how the kid did that. Back when I was carrying out the carpet search in Mt. Dashi, I also fought against the barbarians. They were really tough opponents. But why do I get the feeling that these barbarians are suddenly being absolutely crushed by this kid?"

"Do you feel a sense of familiarity?" P5092 asked.

This feeling was similar to when they were in Mt. Dashi. Although the main forces of the Pyro Company had carried out a carpet search in the mountains, the barbarians were always able to surprise them by hiding in various terrain like they were cheetahs on a hunt.

But ever since Ren Xiaosu appeared, those hunting cheetahs had become the prey. It was as though a real hunter had arrived.

Regardless of how Ren Xiaosu did it, he was always one step ahead of the barbarians.

At this moment, several barbarians were sitting at the entrance of a tent in the depths of the forest. The tent was made of animal skin and looked extremely rugged.

Suddenly, a barbarian emerged from the forest and said to one of them, "Commander Valentin, the enemy's on our right flank."

The barbarian named Valentin looked at him. "How many of them?"

"We still haven't confirmed the numbers yet. The other party encountered our hidden sentries at the front line and caused a huge explosion. But they've not made direct contact with our main forces yet," said the reporting barbarian.

As he watched the flames flickering nonstop in the fire pit in front of him, Valentin said, "Those tricky Central Plains troops are trying to mislead us. The Pyro Company's main forces are currently holding just outside our front. These enemies on the right flank are probably just a decoy. They're trying to trick us into splitting up our troops before coming here to steal back the bodies of their Central Plains companions."

In Valentin's opinion, their opponent could probably not bear to see their compatriots' corpses hanging on wooden stakes and had come to take them back.

The Pyro Company had been trying to quickly approach the bodies during their previous few attacks.

However, Valentin was not stupid either. He said to his subordinate next to him, "It's best to send an elite squad to check on the situation on the right flank. If there aren't many enemies, just take that decoy out. If there's a lot of them, we can send an army to encircle them. The wilderness is our home field, after all!"

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was lying in the bushes on a small hill with the recon company. As the terrain here was generally flat, even the hills were not that high.

Other than Ren Xiaosu, the others were wearing camouflage uniforms and had camouflage paint on their faces. When they lay motionlessly on the ground, it would be difficult for the enemy to detect anyone here from a distance.

T40219 wondered, "Sir, the barbarians have already occupied this forest. I don't think it's a good idea to ambush them in their territory. We might get into trouble."

Ren Xiaosu glanced at him. "This is the ambush spot that I carefully selected. There's no such rule in this war that only the barbarians can ambush us but we're not allowed to ambush them. So what if it's their territory? If we want to gain an upper hand in battle, we have to catch them by surprise and fight them in their territory."

T40219 hesitated for a long time before finally saying, "But we're not facing the right direction either. The main forces of the barbarians are behind us..."

The recon company had entered the battlefield from the west side of the forest while the Pyro Company's main forces exchanged fire with the barbarians from the east where their defensive line was located.

So logically speaking, even if the barbarians were to send more people over, they should be coming from the east of the forest. However, Ren Xiaosu insisted on keeping a lookout on the west side.

Ren Xiaosu could not care to explain too much. "Just wait and see."

The reason he chose this direction was entirely based on the terrain. He had just taken a huge detour with the recon company in the forest earlier before deciding to set up an ambush here.

There were certain factors like the wind direction and the layout of the surroundings that affected his decision. More importantly, it was based on a hunter's judgment.

Felines liked to sneak up on their enemies from behind. And so did hunters.

However, Ren Xiaosu felt it would be too troublesome to explain this to T40219. So he might as well let the outcome speak for itself. And if he explained it quite logically but the barbarians did not appear in the end, wouldn't that be very embarrassing?

So it was still necessary to maintain a certain sense of mysteriousness.

T40219 was speechless for a long time. But 20 minutes later, he actually saw some figures moving on the west side of the forest, and they were slowly approaching them as well.

Everyone, including all the staff officers and commanders in the command center were surprised. They did not expect the enemies would really appear behind them. No one knew where they had skirted around them from.

But what surprised them even more was why that young man's judgment was so accurate.



P5092 thought that if not for the fact he knew about Ren Xiaosu's superpower, which was to materialize the black medicine, he would almost think the young man could predict the future!

Ren Xiaosu lowered his voice and ordered over the radio, "Follow the same firing formation as earlier. Pay attention to my hand signals for directions. Three of you, aim your weapons at my 1 o'clock, and the other three, aim at my 3 o'clock. After firing, the rest of you follow me and take out any remaining enemies. There ain't that many of them!"

After that, he began to wait patiently. The barbarians were advancing very quickly. It was as though they were not expecting that someone would turn around to ambush them!

Ren Xiaosu started counting down in his mind. "10, 9, 8..."

The moment he counted to one, he said, "Fire."

With a few muffled bangs, Ren Xiaosu almost darted out together with the launching of the grenades. When the barbarians saw someone suddenly rushing out, they raised their huge axes. But before they could throw their weapons at Ren Xiaosu, the grenades exploded next to them.

The recon company followed Ren Xiaosu and started taking out the remaining enemies on the battlefield. A barbarian was shouting in pain within the smoke and saying something very long. It seemed like he was calling for reinforcements.

T40219 reacted very quickly. He immediately sent out two platoons to establish a firing line on both flanks in case barbarian reinforcements suddenly appeared.

But after waiting for a long while, he still could not see any of the barbarians' reinforcements arriving.

Inside the forest in the distance, Old Xu was standing next to a pile of corpses with its black saber still dripping with blood.

When the battle concluded, or to be precise, when Ren Xiaosu was done killing, a soldier of the recon company muttered, "No wonder the commander sent him to lead the troops. Previously, we still thought the commander—"

T40219 started panicking as whatever they said on the radio would be transmitted back to the command center in real time. Wasn't this as good as doubting the commander's decision? He hurriedly said, "All combat units, maintain radio silence!"

But it was too late. The soldier's words had already been relayed back to the command center.

However, P5092 was not angry. Instead, he revealed a smile. If he could get an expert like Ren Xiaosu to defect to his side successfully, that would make him even stronger in the war against the barbarians!

### **Chapter 879: Decoy?**

The recon company was utterly convinced now.

From feeling suspicious at the beginning to having some skepticism afterwards, they no longer had any doubts now. Ren Xiaosu only took a few hours to change their fundamental worldview.

“Sir, where are we heading now?” T40219 asked earnestly.

“The barbarians who came this time were only here to investigate.” Ren Xiaosu said, “But I’m afraid that we’ll have to face some of their main forces next.”

T40219 was stunned. “Then should we retreat?”

“Retreat?” Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, “This is such a good opportunity, so of course we would have to kill more of them.”

In the command center, P5092 fell silent. His adjutant next to him suddenly said, “Did he forget about the mission you assigned him?”

The mission objective P5092 set for Ren Xiaosu was to scout out the deployment of the barbarians’ emplacements in the forest and locate the weapons they had taken from Stronghold 176. However, there was no need for them to engage in a head-on battle.

However, what Ren Xiaosu was doing now seemed to have nothing to do with that mission. Ever since that guy entered the forest, he had been engaging in guerrilla warfare with the barbarians and did not even carry out any investigations, to say nothing of scouting out the emplacement locations.

If they continued fighting like this, this scouting mission would have been for nothing.

Even though Ren Xiaosu had already killed about 300 barbarians so far, it should still be considered very fortunate that a 100-strong recon company was able to win the battles without suffering any casualties at all.

But for the war effort, obtaining intelligence of where the barbarians had deployed their emplacements in the forest was much more important.

After all, the recon company could not possibly defeat a group of the barbarians’ main forces no matter how elite they were. At that point, a battalion or even a regiment might be going after them.

The adjutant continued, “When the main forces of the expeditionary army arrive, they’ll have no choice but to retreat. Then our feint to conceal the investigations will have failed this time. The final outcome would only be the deaths of several hundred barbarians.”

The adjutant was implying that it was not that killing the enemy was not desirable, but that they had more important things to focus on.

P5092 shook his head. “Let’s wait and see. He might have a plan.”

At this moment, T40219’s voice crackled on the radio, “Sir, do you have a plan?”

Ren Xiaosu replied, “A plan? What plan?”

The command center fell into a strange silence. Suddenly, P5092 could feel his face hurting.

If not for the fact they did not have sufficient ammunition, he might have ordered his men to bombard the forest right away.

Ren Xiaosu said as he advanced, "We've been using guerrilla warfare all this while. But from here on out, I'll be leading y'all into a tough battle."

"A tough battle?" T40219 wondered, "Sir, don't tell me you're thinking of fighting against the barbarians' main forces?"

"Is there anything wrong with that?" Ren Xiaosu replied calmly, "The enemy has arrived on our doorstep. If we retreat at the sight of some barbarians, that would be such cowardly behavior!"

In the command center, the staff officers looked over at the adjutant again. At some point, the adjutant wondered if that guy had heard their conversation. But they had not pressed the push-to-talk button at the command center!

Right after that, Ren Xiaosu led the troops back into the forest. However, T40219 realized Ren Xiaosu's "tough battle" was to take them on a stroll through the forest. No one knew what he was looking for.

The scope of their activities was very large. Since the recon company did not know what Ren Xiaosu was up to, they could only follow him around. It wasn't until two hours later that Ren Xiaosu suddenly stopped by a river. "Did you bring the TNT?"

"Yes, four satchels!" T40219 perked up at the thought of having something to do.

Portable heavy firepower like remote-controlled TNT was standard issue for the recon company. It was used to destroy enemy defensive fortifications and deal large amounts of effective damage to them.

Ren Xiaosu pointed to the river and said, "Bury a satchel of TNT here. Act quickly."

With that, someone in the recon company took the entrenching tool from his back and skillfully buried a TNT demolition charge under a patch of wild grass before cleanly covering up the excavated area.

"C'mon, let's move to the next location," Ren Xiaosu said.

T40219 finally understood. So it turned out Ren Xiaosu was looking for spots to bury the TNT after wandering around for two hours.

Following that, Ren Xiaosu led them on another huge detour. It was only after they had completely buried all the TNT that they withdrew from the blast radii.

T40219 took out a remote detonator and said, "Button 1 is for the TNT buried in the river, button 2 is for the west side of the forest, and buttons 3 and 4 are for the north side of the forest."

Ren Xiaosu nodded and took the remote detonator. "Alright, we just have to wait here now."

“Hang on, shouldn’t we wait closer to the TNT locations?” T40219 was stunned. He thought Ren Xiaosu was going to detonate the bombs when the barbarians passed by. But they were so far away from the bombs and could not even see them, so how could they know if the barbarians passed by?

However, Ren Xiaosu said in a serious tone, “There’ll be heaps of enemies coming, so it’ll be very dangerous if we’re too close.”

“Then when are we detonating them?” T40219 asked.

“Now,” Ren Xiaosu said matter-of-factly before triggering bomb number one.

A loud explosion burst in the distance. T40219 thought to himself, *‘Aren’t you being too hasty?!’*

“Keep quiet.” Ren Xiaosu leaned against a tree with his eyes closed. He seemed to be muttering like he was chanting an incantation.

Ten minutes later, Ren Xiaosu pressed button 2 and another loud explosion boomed.

Another five minutes later, Ren Xiaosu pressed down buttons 3 and 4 at the same time. Then he said to T40219, “C’mon, let’s go and finish off the remaining enemies on the battlefield.”

T40219 was confused. *‘What’s this about finishing off the remaining enemies? What on earth happened? Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing?’*

But he still braced himself and followed Ren Xiaosu back to the site of the explosions. He was shocked to find there were barbarians wailing in agony on the ground!

And many more of the barbarians had been blown to pieces by the explosions.

Ren Xiaosu felt a little bit of regret. Just how many axes were there! It was a pity he could not collect the axes and put them away in his storage space with the Pyro Company’s soldiers here.

At this moment, everyone present and those in the command center looked at one another. T40219 had even forgotten about finishing off the remaining enemies. Just about everyone was only thinking one thing. How did Ren Xiaosu know which route the barbarians would take?

A battalion of barbarians was destroyed just like that?

A sense of absurdity erupted in everyone’s minds. They had never fought such a bizarre battle before!

All this while, everyone’s impression of the barbarian troops was that they were the best at hunting in complex terrain. As they were cunning and powerful, it caused the Pyro Company and the Wang Consortium a great headache.

But now, everything had changed.

20 minutes later, on the other side.

Valentin was still sitting next to the fire pit when a barbarian came back to relay some military intelligence to him.

Valentin asked calmly, "Have Alexei and the others taken out the decoy on the right flank yet?"

The barbarian who came back to relay the information said with difficulty, "Alexei and the others were taken out by the decoy...."

### **Chapter 880: Fleeing!**

Sitting next to the fire pit in the forest, Valentin remained dazed for a long time after hearing the update. He had intended to take out the decoy force by sending out a battalion of his troops, but they got killed instead. They must be kidding!

Besides, how was that a decoy force? It was clear they were the main forces of the Pyro Company! How else could they possibly take out an entire battalion of their expeditionary army?!

Valentin stood up next to the fire pit and looked at a barbarian at his side. "Go, I want to hear the news of their deaths before daybreak."

That barbarian threw away the meat bone he was holding and rubbed his oily hands across the front of his attire before leading his troops westwards.

In the span of a second, a pack of barbarians rushed off to the west with the intention to encircle the "decoy force."

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was still leading the troops forward. The soldiers of the recon company were no longer saying anything. They had tacitly acknowledged a fact: There was no need for them to put in much effort for the mission in the forest this time, and all they had to do was to tag along with Ren Xiaosu.

Suddenly, Ren Xiaosu stopped in his tracks. T40219, who was behind, wondered, "Sir, what's the matter?"

Ren Xiaosu stood still and did not say anything. Ten seconds later, everyone saw him turn around and run away!

Shortly after taking off, Ren Xiaosu looked back at the recon company and shouted, "Run! Hurry up and start running!"

T40219 said in confusion, "Sir, where are we running off to?"

"We've poked the hornet's nest by slaying too many of the barbarians, so all of them are coming after us now! Hurry up and run!" After saying that, Ren Xiaosu ran as fast as he could in the direction of the Great Wall. He was planning to get back there before the barbarians' main forces could find them!

T40219 hurriedly sought permission from the command center. “We’ve encountered the main forces of the enemy. Can we retreat?”

Everyone in the command center was stunned. Honestly, they did not even notice any barbarians in the images that were transmitted back in real time. If it were any other person lying about a battle situation to ask for a retreat, P5092 would definitely treat them as deserters and punish them accordingly.

But since it was Ren Xiaosu who initiated it, P5092 believed it. “Retreat.”

With that, the recon company started fleeing for their lives with Ren Xiaosu.

No one saw where the barbarians were. In any case, they just had to flee with Ren Xiaosu.

The 100 or so troops were retreating with all their might. At the beginning, there was still a platoon providing cover at the rear of the recon company. However, Ren Xiaosu roared, “Why are y’all covering the rear at a time like this? Everyone, keep running. Hurry up and run! I’ll smash in anyone’s head that’s still covering the rear!”

In Ren Xiaosu’s opinion, how could one or two platoons possibly stop a pack of barbarians in the forest? Providing cover at such a time was as good as suicide, so they might all as well flee for their lives.

As the recon company had started retreating early, and their average physical fitness was rated around T3, they fled very efficiently. The main forces of the barbarians were unable to catch up to them after a long time.

All of a sudden, several hundred barbarians rushed forward from the main group. They were no longer pursuing with the rest of the troops but started tracking at their full speed in the direction the recon company had headed.

They were the elites of the main forces, with the lowest ranked being centurions while the higher-ranking ones even included the primus pilus.

In the expeditionary army’s ORBAT, five soldiers made up a squad that was led by a squad leader known as a decanus. A decurion commanded 20 soldiers, a centurion commanded a 100 soldiers, a Pilus Prior commanded 500 soldiers, a Primus Pilus commanded a 1,000 soldiers, a Praefectus commanded 5,000 soldiers, while the legate, also known as the general, commanded 10,000 soldiers.

Above that was the king.

The division of power within the expeditionary army was also very simple, with the strong being favored over others. Only a few skilled military commanders could surpass this hierarchy of strength, but they would still be looked down upon by other barbarians’ officers.

In fact, the recon company was already about to leave the forest’s perimeter. But when T40219 turned around and had a look, he saw that those several hundred elite barbarians had appeared in the distance behind them. Moreover, they were moving even faster than them. The barbarians were closing the distance between themselves and the recon company!

T40219 explained the situation over the radio, “The enemies are catching up to us. Requesting reinforcements!”

The deputy commander in the command center said firmly, “Sir, we can’t save them. If we send the other main forces out of the city at this time, it’s tantamount to giving up the defensive advantage of the Great Wall. When they encounter the main forces of the barbarians, they’ll definitely suffer heavy casualties.”

P5092 looked quietly at the screen and finally said to T40219, “There will be no reinforcements. But when you all get within three kilometers north of the Great Wall, we’ll provide cover fire from the walls with artillery and heavy machine guns.”

P5092 was absolutely rational. As the highest-ranking commander of the 3rd Division, he must make sure that every decision he made would be absolutely correct and not let his personal feelings get involved.

He made this decision even though Ren Xiaosu, someone he wanted to defect to their side, was still with the recon company.

If he had to use thousands of lives in exchange for Ren Xiaosu, P5092 did not feel it was worth it either.

It was not that he did not want to save him but that he could not do so.

Honestly, P5092 suddenly felt a little sad for some reason when he made the decision. It seemed that every time he gave up something important to him, he would feel a little upset like this.

As a member of the Pyro Company, his “usefulness” to the organization was his leadership ability which was where his value lay.

Meanwhile, this sadness he felt in him was what he should be experiencing as a person.

It was just like how he would spend the night alone in his tent after every big battle.

People often said that as a person, one should prioritize being a good person before talking about other matters.

But Pyro Company members were different. They were seen as precision parts to a grand ideal first before they were seen as a person.

Yang Xiaojin, who had been observing from the sidelines in the command center, suddenly got up and left. Before leaving, she even took with her a standard-issue anti-materiel sniper rifle of the Pyro Company.

By this moment, the recon company had scurried out of the forest. There was also a soldier atop the walls responsible for observing the situation with his binoculars relaying back the news, “The barbarians are pursuing the recon company at an extremely fast speed. I estimate that a battle will break out between the two sides in three minutes.”

But then the soldier who was observing on the Great Wall was stunned, because he saw a girl tying a rope around a merlon of the wall before sliding down to the bottom. She also had a standard-issue Pyro Company anti-materiel sniper rifle slung over her shoulder.

Then the girl made a mad dash onto the battlefield.

As the two sides got closer and closer, the girl suddenly crouched on one knee and started shooting. The huge recoil of the gun caused her body to jerk backwards slightly. Right afterwards, she adjusted her shot angle before pulling the trigger again.

A bloody mist erupted from a barbarian's chest, and another barbarian had his head blown clean off. Meanwhile, the exhaust from the gun chamber swept up a large cloud of dust and smoke around Yang Xiaojin.

To Yang Xiaojin, anyone could choose not to save Ren Xiaosu but her.

To have a more direct view of the battle, P5092 got right up on the walls and took the binoculars.

He saw more and more of the elite barbarians exploding with bloody mist after being hit by the sniper while Ren Xiaosu headed straight towards the sniper with the recon company.

The elite barbarian who were pursuing the recon company finally hesitated in the face of a sniper. They began to slow down and waited until their rear troops joined up with them.

But Ren Xiaosu couldn't care less about that. Since the enemy had slowed down, this was a good chance for them to make their escape.

Ren Xiaosu ran to where Yang Xiaojin was lying in ambush, picked her up, and ran off again. When P5092 saw this, he fell silent.