

First Order 911

## Chapter 911 - Zhang Xiaoman's Summon

"Brigade Commander, the commanders of the 4th Regiment and the 3rd Regiment are quarreling again," a staff officer said to Zhang Xiaoman at Mt. Youyu.

Zhang Xiaoman said impatiently, "What is it this time?"

"The 4th Regiment's commander said that their regiment's combat effectiveness is higher, so they should be the advance guard and the 3rd Regiment should just step aside, and that riled up the 3rd Regiment's commander," the staff officer said.

Zhang Xiaoman felt his scalp going numb with frustration. "What the hell is going on today? Since they're so energetic, let them argue all they want. Go and tell them to take their quarrel to the entrance of the camp. They aren't to stop arguing before it turns dark!"

The temporary military base at Mt. Youyu was a mess. As Wang Yun quietly observed this situation, he suddenly started to question whether his decision to join the Prosperous Northwest was too hasty.

In actual fact, Zhang Xiaoman had been promoted too quickly. Less than a year ago, he was still only a company commander. Then he had to lead a brigade to the Central Plains not long after he got promoted to regimental commander.

Zhang Xiaoman was totally unprepared for this as he was promoted too quickly and rushed into leading the troops.

He was suddenly forced to lead a brigade before he even learned how to be a brigade commander.

The difference between leading a 100 soldiers, a 1,000 soldiers, and several thousand soldiers was enormous. Leading soldiers into war was definitely not just a simple game of numbers.

Whether it was the allocation of supplies, the march progress, or achieving the balance between the officers under his command, all of this would be down to his knowledge.

As such, Zhang Xiaoman got so stressed recently that his lips started cracking. He kept having to deal with matters that made him angry all the time.

At some point, he got really worried that their own people would start fighting among themselves before they even encountered the barbarians.

Fortress 178's infantry brigade that was supposed to support the Central Plains war had already been stationed at Mt. Youyu for several days. As Zhang Xiaoman had no idea where to lead his troops next, everyone was suddenly left with nothing to do. It was as though they were here on vacation.

To be honest, the scenery at Mt. Youyu was really quite beautiful.

At this moment, Ji Zi'ang was sitting in the camp and looking intently at a photo that was sent over under the orders of The Great Hoodwinker. It showed a young woman with a little boy and looked like a recent photo of Ji Zi'ang's wife and child.

Zhang Xiaoman glanced at him. "You've looked at this photo so much since you received it that it's almost tattered. Why's a big man like you so sentimental?"

As Ji Zi'ang was 1.9 meters tall and extremely well-built, it really looked a little awkward when someone like him started smiling at the photo in his hand in a silly way.

Ji Zi'ang smiled and said, "You don't have a wife and child yet, but when you do, you'll understand. By the way, you don't look young anymore. Why are you still single?"

Zhang Xiaoman was 30 this year. In this day and age, he should have been married with children by now.

After all, in this era, some people would already have children who were ready to attend high school at the age of 15 while they were 30.

"I've considered it before too." Zhang Xiaoman sighed and said, "I almost got married to a woman a few years ago, but her family didn't agree to it when I was dating her."

"Her family didn't agree?" Ji Zi'ang wondered, "Did her parents object because you're poor?"

"Not really." Zhang Xiaoman replied, "It wasn't her parents."

"Then who objected?" Ji Zi'ang was even more confused. Normally, if there were any objections to an important milestone like marriage, it would usually be the parents who did so. If the parents did not say anything, who else in the family could object?

Zhang Xiaoman said with a sigh, "Her husband."

Ji Zi'ang was surprised.

Wang Yun, who was taking a sip of water beside them, spat it all out!

Zhang Xiaoman looked at Wang Yun. "What are you gloating about?"

"Oh." Wang Yun wiped his mouth. "Since I have nothing to do, why can't I gloat?"

"If you have nothing to do, go find something to do," Zhang Xiaoman said with a dark expression.

"Hehe." Wang Yun sneered, "Just tell me, how many days have we been here at Mt. Youyu? Have we done anything serious? Since you're the brigade commander, why don't you tell us what's our next step?"

Zhang Xiaoman said, "Oh yeah, what's our next step?"

Wang Yun's eyes widened. "How could you ask us this question when you're the brigade commander?"

Actually, this was what was troubling Zhang Xiaoman the most. Compared to the question of what their next step should be, the argument between the regimental commanders was a trivial matter.

After the Northwest's infantry brigade arrived at Mt. Youyu, they set up camp here right away. It was not that they did not want to join the battle, but that they did not know how they should fight.

Wang Yun continued sneering, "Don't give me excuses that you're unfamiliar with this place. The map of the Central Plains is all in my head. Tell me, where do you want to go? I'll definitely identify the most correct route for you. But you don't even know where you want to go. You're so undependable that it reminds me exactly of the Great Hoodwinker! Are you sure you're not related to him?"

Zhang Xiaoman immediately became agitated. "I'm warning you, that's a personal attack! If you mention it again, I'll beat you up!"

"Come at me then," Wang Yun straightened up. "Why would a superhuman like me be afraid of fighting you? I'll take you on with just one hand!"

Zhang Xiaoman was hopping mad. "Fight me without any hands if you dare!"

Wang Yun said, "... Can you not be such a coward!"

Wang Yun's subordinates and the infantry brigade's staff officers looked at one another. No one had any intention to stop them.

Wang Yun and Zhang Xiaoman had been quarreling almost daily for the past few days, but they would make up very quickly.

As for how they made up, it was all thanks to Ji Zi'ang, who mediated things between them.

Then they heard Ji Zi'ang say, "Stop quarreling. Instead of arguing among yourselves and affecting the camaraderie, why don't the two of you take a step back and curse at the Great Hoodwinker together?"

Wang Yun and Zhang Xiaoman said in unison, "Alright."

After their conflict was resolved, Ji Zi'ang thought that the atmosphere within Fortress 178's troops was still quite good. Although these two people always quarreled, Zhang Xiaoman never once asserted his authority as the brigade commander.

After the two of them were done cursing at the Great Hoodwinker, Ji Zi'ang suddenly said, "Actually, we shouldn't blame Zhang Xiaoman for not knowing where to go next. Wang Yun, although you have the map of the Central Plains memorized, the Wang Consortium lied to us before we got here that they would work with us. After we arrived at Mt. Youyu, they showed no intention of sharing their battle plan with us. As a result, we don't even know what the barbarians are doing now, so we can't really take the initiative to attack them."

"See that? There are still understanding people around," Zhang Xiaoman said.

"Then let's start with the scouting first." Wang Yun thought for a while and said, "My men don't have any abilities other than being really good at reconnaissance and infiltration. Once we have a clear picture of the situation, we don't have to wait for the Wang Consortium to share their battle plan with us. We can just act on our own."

"That's the way." Zhang Xiaoman beamed. "Let's discuss our countermeasures. As the saying goes, three stooges equal..."<sup>1</sup>

Wang Yun said, "You can be the stooge yourself. Don't drag us in."

"Alright, alright, it's not the three stooges but the three musketeers!" Zhang Xiaoman said nonchalantly.

However, Wang Yun, whose memory was excellent, suddenly said, "Wait a minute, didn't you say earlier that you led the troops here to the Central Plains for the future commander? And when he's here, he'll be the one commanding the troops? That's what you said, right?"

"That's right, I did say that." Zhang Xiaoman said, "And that's also what the higher-ups were hinting at."

"Then where's the future commander?" Wang Yun asked, "Since he'll be leading the troops, why don't you contact him now?"

Zhang Xiaoman snapped, "If I had a way to contact him, I would've contacted him a long time ago! Obviously I can't! Do you think he'll appear if I just shout for him? Future Commander! Future Commander, where are you?!"

But just as he finished speaking, the whistle of a steam locomotive came from beyond the mountains.

Zhang Xiaoman was shocked!

Chapter 912 - P5092 Takes Over Command!

Back when they were still fighting the Zong Consortium, Zhang Xiaoman had seen the steam locomotive. At that time, they were even being pursued by the Zong Consortium's armored brigade.

Therefore, when the iconic whistle of the steam locomotive suddenly bellowed in the desolate wilderness, Zhang Xiaoman's first thought was that the future commander was here!

As there were no railroad tracks in the vicinity of Mt. Youyu, there was no other explanation for this sound other than Ren Xiaosu's steam locomotive.

As the black steam locomotive appeared over the mountains with black smoke billowing from its smokestack, Wang Yun and the others could clearly see Ren Xiaosu's figure through the windows.

Wang Yun said to Zhang Xiaoman in a startled manner, "Did someone perform blessings on your tongue?"

Zhang Xiaoman wondered, "Why does it sound like you're scolding me?"

But no one had time to care about this right now as they were all concerned about something else. Why had Ren Xiaosu suddenly appeared here? Wasn't that too much of a coincidence?

After the steam locomotive came to a stop at the entrance of the base, it dissipated. Zhang Xiaoman walked up excitedly. "Future Commander, I finally get to see you again. After we parted ways that day—"

"Hold it right there." Ren Xiaosu could not stand it anymore. "What's with you? You didn't act like this the last time we saw each other."

"You weren't our future commander then, were you?" Zhang Xiaoman chuckled.

"Is that what you should be saying?!"

"Why have you suddenly come here?" Zhang Xiaoman asked.

"I read in Hope Media's newspapers that y'all were coming to Mt. Youyu. So after doing the Pyro Company a small favor, I came looking for y'all," Ren Xiaosu explained.

Yang Xiaojin, who was beside them, rolled her eyes at him. You call killing several thousand barbarians a small favor? Then what would be considered a big favor? Wiping out the expeditionary army?

Ren Xiaosu pulled P5092 to the front. "Let me introduce you. This is the Pyro Company's P5 commander. He's also joined the Northwest now, the Prosperous Northwest!"

P5092 had a look of conflict on his face, but he did not reject it in the end.

But Wang Yun was shocked by the sight of this. He used to be a member of the Kong Consortium and was very experienced when it came to dealing with the Pyro Company.

As a matter of fact, it was simply too difficult to pry any information out of a Pyro Company spy.

Therefore, the Kong Consortium would just routinely interrogate the Pyro Company spies they had captured since they already knew they would not talk.

But Ren Xiaosu was different. This guy actually poached a P5 division commander of the Pyro Company?

Wang Yun looked at P5092 as he had seen him in a photo before. But he still found this unbelievable, so he confirmed with him, "Pardon me, what's your serial number?"

P5092 answered, "P5092."

Wang Yun gasped. He could remember the information of every high-ranking P5 commander, and P5092 had always been the most difficult to deal with among the Pyro Company members. If a commander of the Kong Consortium's frontline troops heard their opponent was P5092's 3rd Division, they would act extremely cautiously.

Many of the Kong Consortium's officers were even said to admit defeat in advance once they heard they were going up against P5092's troops.



Someone within the Kong Consortium had suggested assassinating P5092 on multiple occasions. That was because he was the most likely candidate to take over the position of commander-in-chief of the military corps in recent years.

And such an important figure like him... had also joined the Prosperous Northwest?!

This Prosperous Northwest thing was this fucking irresistible?!

P5092 looked at Wang Yun and asked, "You know me?"

"Yes, I know you very well." Wang Yun said, "You're 29 this year, and you like eating apples. When your troops are reorganizing, you enjoy being alone. You live at 278 Guangxing Road in Stronghold 24, and you're the only one in your family."

P5092 was stunned. "Since you know me so well, might you be from the Kong Consortium? Wait a minute, you're that guy with the excellent memory from the Kong Consortium, right? I remember you. So were you all planning to poison me after finding out my address and favorite food?"

"That's right," Wang Yun admitted frankly. "But now I'm no longer working for the Kong Consortium, so I don't have to think about how to assassinate you anymore."

P5092 wondered, "You've joined the Prosperous Northwest as well?"

"Yes, I've joined the Prosperous Northwest as well."

These past enemies had suddenly joined the Prosperous Northwest, and it made for an exceptionally hilarious scene.

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "See, the Northwest is really one big, happy family. We recruit talent and find common ground while putting aside differences! Look at us, doesn't this feel like a fairy tale to you? The witch originally wanted to kill Snow White with a poisoned apple, but after being inspired by the Northwest, they put aside their grudges and devoted themselves to the building up of the Northwest!"

P5092 and Wang Yun's faces darkened.

Then P5092 looked over to the military base and was stunned by what he saw. "Who's the commander of these troops? Why are they such a mess? The soldiers and officers here have nothing to do at all. Wait, are those two men at the entrance regimental officers? Why are they arguing...."

Zhang Xiaoman said in embarrassment, "I'm the commander of the Northwest's 6th Combat Brigade...."

P5092 deliberated for a moment and said less harshly, "You should get these troops in order."

In just an instant, P5092's professionalism was triggered. He could not bear to see military management being handled so chaotically. How could an army like this possibly have any combat strength?

P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu. "Fortress 178 troops have always been well-known for their strict discipline and high combat effectiveness. But why do I feel like it's different from what I imagined?"

Zhang Xiaoman quickly explained, "Well, it's like this. A year ago, I was still just a company commander. But after the Zong Consortium's territory was folded in, our military expanded, and I was promoted three ranks. As I'm still learning the ropes, I'm not a competent brigade commander yet. This time, I'm actually only leading the troops here for Future Commander. He'll be the one leading them and deciding how we're going to fight this war."

P5092 thought for a moment and said, "Then learn from me."

With that, he walked straight towards the command post without regard for anyone. Zhang Xiaoman looked at Ren Xiaosu from the back and thought, 'That guy is so rude. Who the hell does he think he is? He's even telling me to learn from him?'

Ren Xiaosu whispered to him, "P5092 is indeed outstanding at leading troops into battle. You should watch and learn—"

But before Ren Xiaosu could finish speaking, P5092 turned around and looked at Zhang Xiaoman. "What are you still standing there for? Gather all the commanders and staff officers for a meeting. I want to be

brought up to date about the troop situation and status within half an hour. We have to fully reorganize the troops today and see results within three days."

When P5092 assumed the position of the commander, his aura was completely different from usual. He had the demeanor of the highest-ranking officer in the military and sounded extremely decisive.

P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu and said calmly, "You don't think that I'm trying to seize power, do you?"

Ren Xiaosu chuckled, "No, it's up to you to decide how to lead the troops. You are now the highest-ranking commander of these troops and can freely move around the base."

This corresponded with the treatment Ren Xiaosu received back at the Pyro Company.

P5092 nodded and said calmly, "This was your purpose for making me join the Prosperous Northwest. In that case, I shall not stand on ceremony. Those who disobey my orders will be court martialed."

## Chapter 913 - An Alliance Of Two Powerhouses

Everyone in the 6th Combat Brigade knew exactly who would be taking over command of the troops after they arrived in the Central Plains.

Currently, Ren Xiaosu's status in the Northwest was known to everyone. If this were the feudal era, he would be a designated successor without any siblings to vie with.

Although some veteran commanders were still watching from the sidelines, no one openly objected to his nomination.

Therefore, when Ren Xiaosu said P5092 would take over the command of the troops, Zhang Xiaoman sat to the side and listened in on the meeting without making any comments.

As a matter of fact, one of Zhang Xiaoman's greatest strengths was that he was very aware of his own capabilities and knew how much he could accomplish with his abilities.

However, he was also trying his best to learn. Everyone would have to grow up eventually.

When Wang Yun told him about P5092's background in a whisper, Zhang Xiaoman realized this was the best learning opportunity for him.

At this moment, the four regimental commanders, their adjutants, staff officers, and other commanders of the 6th Combat Brigade were all sitting in the command post. They were looking quietly at the unfamiliar P5092 who was sitting at the end of the long table.

On the way here, Zhang Xiaoman had told them the future command had poached this person from the Pyro Company. He was an outstanding military commander who would join them in the Prosperous Northwest from now on.

Everyone quickly understood what was going on. Quite a few talented people had joined the Prosperous Northwest in recent years. Although some people were not accustomed to the environment and did not get along with the Northwest, most of them were really quite capable.

Of course, there were also some people who grumbled in private that Fortress 178 would rather recruit outsiders than groom their own people. Therefore, they wanted to see just how capable this Pyro Company commander was.

Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin were sitting off to the side and listening in as well. Ren Xiaosu said to Yang Xiaojin, "Earlier on, I—"

"Be quiet. There should be no whispering during the meeting," interrupted P5092.

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. Then he replied with a smile, "Understood."

The other officers looked at one another. This P5092 was really quite bold. How dare he make an example out of the future commander to establish his authority?

The role of the future commander was not exactly a high-ranking position. Speaking of which, Ren Xiaosu did not even hold any real power. Even if anyone offended him, it was not like they would get fired or something. There was no such practice in the Northwest.

But the problem was that the future commander was extremely strong in combat. Wasn't P5092 afraid of getting beaten up in private for doing that?

In any case, everyone here knew about Ren Xiaosu. Just by looking at what the future commander had done before, all of them combined would not be enough to defeat him.

After confirming Ren Xiaosu's attitude, P5092 said calmly to the other officers, "OK, I want an update of the soldiers' statuses in each regiment. I need to know what the actual situation of the 6th Combat Brigade is. Which staff officer would like to brief me?"

Wang Yun piped up, "I'll do it."

Ren Xiaosu looked at Wang Yun. There was something he was very curious about. Both Wang Yun and P5092 were very smart people, but their talents lay in different areas. As one had a macro view of things while the other had a micro view, he wondered what kind of result would come of their cooperation.

P5092 nodded. "Go ahead."

"The 6th Combat Brigade is actually a reinforced brigade that consists of four regiments. As we don't require a supply line, they're all infantry regiments. The 1st Regiment has 1,497 soldiers, the 2nd Regiment has 1,501 soldiers, the 3rd Regiment has 1,419 soldiers, and the 4th Regiment has 1,521 soldiers.

"For troops with more than three years of combat experience, 1,041 are in the 1st Regiment, 1,011 are in the 2nd Regiment..."

"For troops who are over 30 years old, 310 are in the 1st Regiment, 170 are in the 2nd Regiment..."

"For those who have been through war before, we have 781 veterans in the 1st Regiment, 691 veterans in the 2nd Regiment..."

When Wang Yun went through the troop numbers, he did it with such familiarity that it felt like he had everything memorized clearly. Before P5092 joined them, he had validated all the data and was supposed to update Ren Xiaosu with it. However, someone even more well-versed in leading the troops, P5092, showed up instead.

These numbers might look normal, but an outstanding commander would understand that if the proportion of veterans and recruits in a fighting force was different, their performance on the battlefield would also turn out to be completely different. Therefore, it was no use to just look at the troop numbers.

This was originally a question P5092 wanted to ask, but he was worried these officers could not answer it. However, he did not expect Wang Yun to answer it so well.

P5092 praised, "Very good."

But at this moment, Wang Yun suddenly frowned. "No, the number of soldiers who are older than 30 in the 1st Regiment is not 310. I'm sorry, it's 311."

"It's fine. Remembering one wrong won't affect the overall situation much," P5092 said.

"It's not that I remembered wrong." Wang Yun said, "It's because someone is celebrating his birthday today, so the number of soldiers over the age of 30 in the 1st Regiment is 311."

With that, everyone, including P5092, was shocked. Was there really someone with such an excellent memory in the world?

There was a joke about three people who were captured by the enemy. The enemy told them, "As long as you can each answer one of our questions, we'll release you." The three prisoners hurriedly agreed to it.

So the enemy asked the first person, "How many people are there in your troops?"

The first person replied, "1,000."

He was released.

Then the enemy asked the second person, "How many men and women are there in your troops?"

The second person replied, "All of them are men."

He was released as well.

After that, the enemy asked the third person, "What are the names of these 1,000 people?"

Then the third person was executed.

But a freak like Wang Yun would not be stumped by this question. He could really recite all of the names.

At this moment, Wang Yun continued, "Now, let me touch on the allocation of weapons and equipment..."

This time, Wang Yun could even detail exactly how many bullets each regiment had, not to mention the number of heavy machine guns, grenades, and TNT.

While Wang Yun was speaking, P5092 recorded all the data in his notebook with a pen.

In just half an hour, P5092 knew the entire 6th Combat Brigade like the back of his hand.

Ren Xiaosu observed from the side and realized that P5092's eyes were brightening by the moment. It looked like he was getting more confident after he gained a deeper understanding of these troops.

Although the 6th Combat Brigade had yet to engage in battle with the barbarians, Ren Xiaosu felt it was the correct choice to poach Wang Yun and P5092 to the Prosperous Northwest.

This was an alliance of two powerhouses!

Then, coupled with Yang Xiaojin's and his ability to dominate the battlefield, a combat brigade might even be able to have a very big impact on the entire battlefield.

P5092 closed his notebook and said to everyone, "Let's take a half-hour break. Next, I'll be restructuring the brigade. Although the current distribution of soldiers is well-balanced, it can sometimes lead to fatal flaws on the battlefield. I'll need both people who can assault the enemy and those who can stand their ground to defend our positions at the same time. With the different roles, the personnel allocation of each infantry regiment will also be different."

"And where should we head to after that?" Zhang Xiaoman was suddenly curious. The atmosphere in the command center was no longer relaxed. They had a feeling that a great battle was imminent.

P5092 looked at Wang Yun. "Do you remember the terrain around the Central Plains?"

"Yes," Wang Yun said calmly.

P5092 thought for a while and said, "I'll state the conditions so you can help me identify a suitable location. It has to be within 50 to 70 kilometers of Mt. Daniu, close to a water source, and not further than two hours from Wanggan Ridge, which the enemy is using as a retreat route. Furthermore, it



should be a place where we can take advantage of the difficult terrain to defend our position and not be easily discovered..."

It took P5092 three full minutes to state all the requirements.

Then Wang Yun stood up and opened a map to point at a spot northeast of Mt. Youyu. "Here, Mt. Zuoyun!"

P5092 smiled and told Ren Xiaosu, "Even if you refuse to let me join the Prosperous Northwest now, I would not leave."

#### Chapter 914 - An Alliance Of Three Powerhouses

Before P5092 came to the Northwest, there were really no other places left for him to go. Moreover, under the threat of force by Ren Xiaosu, he decided to join the Northwest to see if the people here were really as Ren Xiaosu had described.

Therefore, his willingness to join the Northwest was at most 30% voluntary.

At that time, P5092 considered going to jail so he could have some peace and put an end to his past with the Pyro Company before coming out to live as a normal person.

If the Northwest were not to his liking, he would return to the Pyro Company and go to jail.

But it was different now. After working with Wang Yun, P5092 suddenly felt that all his previous partners paled in comparison to him. This was a partner a military commander should have.

He clearly understood what data P5092 asked for and could immediately answer with a quick recollection when P5092 asked for a strategic position to be identified.

Working with a colleague who was so proficient at his job gave P5092 a sense of complete control over the troops.

This was a completely different kind of feeling.

In the past, whenever P5092 felt there was something wrong with the troops, he could not find the root of the problem because he was not good at spotting some details.

But now, he could grasp the entire situation very clearly.

This was the difference between writing with your toes and writing with your hand. To an outstanding commander, this was a world of difference!

P5092 and Wang Yun were considered equal status. They were both recruited by Ren Xiaosu for the Northwest, so there wasn't really any differentiation in their ranks.

The two of them got along as partners in battle command. Wang Yun was his adjutant, and the two of them quickly became best friends in private!

This was a friendship between comrades, a friendship where they trusted each other. They were more like best friends.

In contrast, the friendship that Zhang Xiaoman and Wang Yun shared, which was built upon cursing at the Great Hoodwinker together, appeared a little inferior.

All of a sudden, Zhang Xiaoman felt like he had been left out.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu looked at Zhang Xiaoman and asked, "Oh yeah, where's your dad?"

Wang Yun and Ji Zi'ang looked at Ren Xiaosu in silence. No one answered him. However, Zhang Xiaoman started cursing, "That old bastard! How dare he take advantage of me in front of the future commander!"

Ren Xiaosu was baffled. Wang Yun explained in a whisper, "Zhang Xiaoman's father is someone else. The Great Hoodwinker was lying."

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry. What the heck was that Great Hoodwinker trying to pull?

In the evening, the Northwest's 6th Combat Brigade packed up and advanced towards Mt. Zuoyun from Mt. Youyu. They expected to arrive within two days.

P5092's orders were for everyone to march quickly and seize the advantageous terrain of Mt. Zuoyun while the Wang Consortium was engaged in battle with the expeditionary army.

Otherwise, it would not be that easy to occupy Mt. Zuoyun once the two sides' had a temporary ceasefire.

As the 6th Combat Brigade had yet to appear on the battlefield, the expeditionary army was still unaware that the brigade was in the vicinity. The barbarians were in the open, while they operated in the shadows.

However, Ren Xiaosu looked at the map curiously and asked, "Since Mt. Zuoyun is north of Mt. Daniu, shouldn't it be considered the rear of the expeditionary army? And it's also some distance from where the battlefield is, so why are we going there?"

"It's precisely because it's at the rear of the expeditionary army." P5092 said firmly, "As for why we're going there, I'll explain later."

Two days later, the 6th Combat Brigade arrived at Mt. Zuoyun safely. The mountains here were towering and steep. P5092 thought that this was indeed the position he wanted.

After walking around the mountains for a long time, P5092 suddenly pointed in a direction and said to the regimental commanders, "I want defensive fortifications to be built there within three days. Not temporary fortifications but a defensive line where we can put up a tough fight!"

However, Ji Zi'ang said from next to him, "It shouldn't take three days."

He and Wang Yun had recently joined the Prosperous Northwest together, but while Wang Yun was doing really well so far, Ji Zi'ang was just sitting idly around with nothing to do.

Ever since he knew his wife and child were really safe, he truly wanted to do his part for the Northwest. He also started seeing himself as a Northwesterner now.

Yet while he was the first to acknowledge the Northwest, he ended up contributing the least? He could not accept this.

When he heard P5092 needed defensive fortifications to be built, he immediately volunteered for the job. This was something he could do!

Ji Zi'ang was an earth-type supernatural being and was best at altering surface topography. Be it rock, soil, or even brick houses, all of that was within the scope of his abilities!

After saying that, Ji Zi'ang used his power to make changes to the terrain of the area that P5092 pointed out.

P5092's eyes lit up. Under normal circumstances, defensive fortifications would be built with stone or sandbags, so it was far less sturdy than what Ji Zi'ang had built.

He asked Ji Zi'ang, "If I draw a simple defensive operations map of the fortifications, can you build them immediately?"

"Yes," Ji Zi'ang said.

With that, P5092 looked at the mountainous terrain and immediately marked details of the defensive fortifications on the drawings.

This set of drawings tested P5092's basics greatly. In the defensive position, there would be blinds, frontline trenches, support trenches, travel trenches, communication trenches, concealed trenches, dugouts, weapon emplacements, and foxholes<sup>1</sup>, built for the purpose of fire support, mobility, and survivability operations.

If they had not seen it with their own eyes, no one would have imagined that a defensive operations drawing could be so detailed. Just for the trenches alone, P5092 clearly indicated where the foxholes, exits, and drainage channels should be located.

There were also watchtowers and suppressive fire points indicated, while places that needed walls and ditches were clearly marked as well.

The regimental commanders of the 6th Combat Brigade were surprised by P5092's professionalism as they used to build their defensive fortifications quite shoddily. After all, most people from Fortress 178 were quite crude.

After P5092 was done drawing, he said, "Build it according to this!"

However, Ji Zi'ang was dumbfounded when he saw the drawings. "What's a foxhole? And what's a weapon emplacement? I used to be in charge of intelligence gathering and have never fought positional warfare before, so I don't know much about the defensive fortifications that you've mentioned. If only I knew their structures, that would be great. Unfortunately, I've never learned about them before."

P5092 was a little disappointed. A lot of people's understanding of defensive fortifications was that all they needed to do was to dig some trenches, even though that was not the case.

But it was good enough for now. With Ji Zi'ang around, the time taken for the troops to build the defensive fortifications would be greatly shortened, and it would be easier for his plan to succeed.

But before P5092 could say anything further, Wang Yun suddenly said from nearby, "If I can draw the three-dimensional diagrams of those structures in the defensive fortifications from memory, can you build them according to the drawings?"

Ji Zi'ang was taken aback. "I just need to know what they look like."

P5092 looked at Wang Yun. "You can draw all the structures' diagrams?"

"Yes, all of them." Wang Yun pointed at his head.

In the military action against Vietnam in the late 1970s, the People's Liberation Army dug a large number of so-called "cat ear holes" (猫耳洞). A cat ear hole, a more or less horizontal foxhole, refers to a hole in the side wall of a trench or soil slope that can be used for shelter.

## Chapter 915 - An Alliance Of Five Powerhouses

Everyone knew that Wang Yun had an excellent memory. But Ji Zi'ang was a little confused. "Normally, such structural drawings are an esoteric subject, so how did you come to learn all this? It has nothing to do with your previous job scope."

Wang Yun explained to everyone, "When I realized I had a photographic memory, I deliberately spent some time reading in the library. I've been to public and military libraries. This way, I don't have to flip through books when I need the information. I can just retrieve it from my mind."

Then Wang Yun drew a series of three-dimensional structural designs, such as foxholes, trenches, and other structures from his memory. These would then be used for Ji Zi'ang's reference.

Wang Yun said, "There will definitely be some differences between the drawings and what is actually built. But with Ji Zi'ang's power, they can be adjusted accordingly after they're built, so it's not a big problem."

After The Cataclysm, 3D printing technology had been lost. Although some organizations wanted to redevelop this technology, it still only existed in legend.

Ji Zi'ang was just like a 3D printer now, but he could only print out something if he had the design sketches.

Meanwhile, P5092 and Wang Yun happened to be able to complement each other and complete the drawings.

The defensive position that usually required thousands of people to work for three days to build only took one day to finish under Ji Zi'ang's lead. Ji Zi'ang was in charge of altering the landform's foundation while the rest of the soldiers finished building the installations. This was because Ji Zi'ang's mental strength was limited, so he had to take a half-hour's rest every now and then.

When the large and complex defensive position was completed, everyone found it very difficult to believe that it was built in only one day. Furthermore, this was definitely not a makeshift defensive position. In the past, such complex structures would probably have taken half a month to construct.

When Ji Zi'ang saw everyone looking at him enviously, he chuckled, "When the world becomes peaceful again, I'll become a contractor and build houses for everyone."

Zhang Xiaoman's eyes lit up. "That's a good idea."

However, P5092 said with a sigh, "I wonder when peace will come again. We don't even know if we'll get to witness it."

"We definitely will," Ji Zi'ang said firmly.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu looked at P5092. "Now that the defensive position has been built, can you tell us your plans? Although this defensive position looks really sturdy, the barbarians won't be coming here, right?"

P5092 brought over a map and spread it out on the ground. "If they don't come, we'll make them come. Look here. We're located diagonally behind the expeditionary army. It's not only us Central Plains people who know how to build a supply line. As the expeditionary army advances southwards en masse, they'll need to have a supply line as well. I've marked three routes in red on the map. They'll surely use one of them to transport their supplies."

"Where we're situated right now, we can get to that farthest route within two hours. After we're done plundering their supplies, we can still beat a hasty retreat back here," P5092 said.

Ren Xiaosu figured out something. "Are you thinking of disrupting their lifeline at the rear so that they'll be forced to come and attack Mt. Zuoyun?"

"Yes," P5092 said, "we've already seen how the Wang Consortium has had a hard time dealing with the barbarians on the main battlefield at Mt. Daniu. But if there were another group supporting them and harassing the expeditionary army at that time, they would have had a chance of winning. In a war, both sides will sometimes have to compete in troop numbers when battling each other. But when both sides are evenly matched, you have to create an opportunity for the enemy to trip up. It's very difficult to make mistakes on the main battlefield, so only by pushing them to adjust their formation and to constantly make more decisions will such an opportunity suddenly arise."

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Are you confident of robbing the expeditionary army's supplies? What if there's a lot of barbarians escorting the supply convoy?"

They had framed a good scenario whereby robbing the expeditionary army's supplies would cause the barbarians a headache. But there was also another scenario where they might not even have enough troops to go up against the expeditionary army's transportation corps.

This was a very strong possibility. That was because the barbarians were physically stronger. In a situation where there was no defensive position to help the Northwest's army, the barbarians might be able to wipe out 3,000 Central Plains troops with just a 1,000 of their men.



P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu and said seriously, "That'll require you and Ms. Xiaojin to lead a team in. If it weren't on the presumption that you two would be leading the team, I wouldn't have drafted a battle plan like this. With your abilities, even if you can't wipe out the supply column, you can still retreat unscathed after destroying some of their supplies and harassing them. The two of you only need to concentrate on harassing them, and I believe you can do fine."

Realization dawned on Ren Xiaosu. So it turned out P5092's idea was to make use of his and Yang Xiaojin's combat capabilities.

P5092 said, "Actually, you two are the most important part of this plan. Once you've harassed the expeditionary army enough, they'll feel like something is nipping at them."

This was akin to discovering a venomous and hairy spider at home, but that was not the scariest thing. What was most terrifying was that you realized it had disappeared in the blink of an eye.

When Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin would vanish after robbing the barbarians' supplies successfully, the expeditionary army would start scratching their heads and wonder what happened.

Previously, Yang Xiaojin said to P5092, "Since you like to use decoys, and Ren Xiaosu likes being the bait, you two complement each other well."

And now, P5092 had really started using Ren Xiaosu as bait. However, this was bait that could kill.

P5092 continued, "Surely I don't have to explain any further how important a supply line is to all troops. So they'll definitely come to Mt. Zuoyun to encircle us. When the time comes, we'll be in for a tough battle. In the bigger picture, the 6th Combat Brigade doesn't have that many troops, but what if we're fighting a positional defensive battle? In a defensive battle, it's possible for one soldier to kill ten enemies. In war, we should always think of ways to put ourselves in an advantageous situation."

Once they occupied the advantageous terrain, the barbarians were nothing to be afraid of. Moreover, with Ji Zi'ang around, his power could really be quite terrifying in such a mountainous area.

Just imagine that as the barbarian troops marched down a mountain path, piles of boulders could suddenly fall from the mountains. This was a power that was comparable to heavy machine guns.

"Alright then," Ren Xiaosu said, "I agree with your plan. But if we're attacking their supply column, I suggest that Yang Xiaojin and I act alone. It'll be a little troublesome if we have to bring the others along."

It was obvious the future commander saw everyone as a burden. However, they pretended they did not hear it. After all, their future commander was fully qualified to say that.

However, P5092 disagreed, "You have to bring some people with you. If there's only the two of you, the expeditionary army won't care to encircle Mt. Zuoyun. The barbarians will only come if you take at least one company with you. I want you to bring them along not because they can help you with anything, but to make the barbarians know there's a group of soldiers hidden in Mt. Zuoyun!"

"So that's what you mean." Ren Xiaosu said, "Then who'll go with me? We don't have any special forces like the Pyro Company has, so our mobility is a little bad."

Zhang Xiaoman chuckled, "Future Commander, let me lead the Iron First Company of the 2nd Regiment and go with you. Those rascals might not be good at waging war, but they can run faster than anyone else."

## Chapter 916 - Flee When You're Done

Initially, the soldiers of the 6th Combat Brigade were actually quite nervous when they heard they would be heading to the Central Plains. After all, the wars they had been fighting were all in the Northwest. They were used to the conditions there, so even if they could not defeat the enemy, they still had comrades they could depend on.

But now, they were more than a 1,000 kilometers away from Fortress 178 at Mt. Zuoyun. By the time their reinforcements arrived, they themselves would probably be dead.

Later, everyone heard that some Central Plains people who were part of the Prosperous Northwest would join them, but they did not pay much attention to it. In truth, Wang Yun and the others were not enough to reassure the 6th Combat Brigade.

But ever since Ren Xiaosu got here, they now had P5092 making up for the brigade's lack of strategy while Ren Xiaosu strengthened their combat prowess. Meanwhile, Wang Yun and Ji Zi'ang, who had joined before them, suddenly showed their brilliance as well.

In just two days, all of the 6th Combat Brigade's soldiers could rest easy.

They had never been more reassured than this!

They knew full well that many of them would die when the expeditionary army arrived to encircle Mt. Zuoyun, but so what? The soldiers of Fortress 178 were not afraid of dying. They only worried their deaths would be in vain.

Truly, dying under the lead of Zhang Xiaoman just did not seem worthwhile at all.

On the same night the defensive position was built, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin quietly led the Iron First Company out of Mt. Zuoyun.

The mission P5092 gave them was to locate the expeditionary army's supply line within three days. After that, they would harass the enemy as much as possible.

Wang Yun and Ji Zi'ang had wanted to tag along, but P5092 said there was no need for that. Ren Xiaosu was more than enough.

In terms of battle strategy, there was no reason to let four superhumans go on a mission together. In P5092's opinion, anyone could get into trouble, but nothing must happen to all four of them at once. Therefore, Wang Yun, Ji Zi'ang, Ren Xiaosu, and Yang Xiaojin would have to work separately.

As P5092 was now the commander of the 6th Combat Brigade, everyone had to listen to him.

After some consideration, Wang Yun and Ji Zi'ang felt it was probably not a big deal anyway. What could possibly happen to Ren Xiaosu when it was the barbarians' transportation corps that he would be facing?

Before leaving, Ren Xiaosu confirmed with P5092, "Is there anything else that you want to tell me?"

P5092 thought for a moment and said, "Flee when you're done. This is the expeditionary army's rear, so retreat as soon as possible."

"Alright, I understand," Ren Xiaosu replied.

11 hours after Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin left, the Iron First Company relayed back the news that they had indeed discovered traces of deep tracks on one of the routes. It seemed that P5092 had correctly guessed where the expeditionary army's supply line was.

This relieved P5092. All Ren Xiaosu needed to do next was to wait for the barbarians' supply column to pass by.

He assumed Ren Xiaosu would just throw some grenades from afar or snipe the enemy's transportation corps when they passed by.

Once the barbarians showed intention to pursue, Ren Xiaosu would lead the Iron First Company and retreat back to their defensive line.

The situation went much more smoothly than expected. Six hours later, the Iron First Company's radio operator relayed back news that they had discovered signs of the enemy, and the supply column was heading south under the escort of 500 barbarians.

P5092 started laughing grimly on Mt. Zuoyun. Previously, the barbarians had harassed the Pyro Company's supply line, and now, it was his turn to get revenge.

The battle began, but just 30 minutes later, a staff officer on Mt. Zuoyun told P5092, "Sir, it's a call from the future commander."

P5092 took the receiver and asked, "Did everything go well? Did you get ambushed by the barbarians?"

"No, there wasn't an ambush. We're retreating now. We'll talk about the other things when we get back," Ren Xiaosu said on the radio.

"Alright then, I'm looking forward to your triumphant return. Great job," P5092 said.

About 10 hours after attacking the barbarians' supply line, Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin returned with the Iron First Company. On top of that, he also brought back the barbarians' supplies and distributed some biscuits to everyone.

At the beginning, everyone was worried that Ren Xiaosu and the others would encounter danger. But from the look of things, they were like tourists returning from an overseas trip and distributing local specialties to their family members.

The supplies were all food items, but they were almost no different from the food found in the Central Plains. Later, everyone realized the food came from Stronghold 176 and were not the barbarians' own rations.

After Stronghold 176 was destroyed, the food supply of several hundred thousand people stored there had become the barbarians' supplies. It was no wonder the expeditionary army was not worried about their supplies at all.

After Ren Xiaosu came back, he intended to wait for the expeditionary army to get here. All the soldiers quietly heightened their readiness in case the enemy came to attack them.

However, the expeditionary army did not come to encircle them even after waiting for an entire day. Puzzled, Ren Xiaosu asked, "What's happening? Why's the expeditionary army taking so long?"

Wang Yun replied, "They're probably mobilizing their troops."

When the expeditionary army still did not come, everyone felt that something was off.

Zhang Xiaoman approached Ren Xiaosu. "Future Commander, what's the matter with those barbarians? Why aren't they here yet?"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "Why don't I make a trip to Mt. Daniu?"

Zhang Xiaoman was startled. "Why would you go to Mt. Daniu?"

Peeved, Ren Xiaosu said, "I'll go and ask the barbarians why they didn't come to Mt. Zuoyun. If they don't come, wouldn't I have fought that battle for nothing?"

Zhang Xiaoman was confused.

Then Ren Xiaosu went to ask P5092 if the expeditionary army was not planning to consider their rear.

However, P5092 explained earnestly, "Don't worry, it takes time to mobilize the troops. We just need to concentrate on our defensive deployment now. They'll definitely come..."

Halfway through his sentence, P5092 suddenly felt that he might have caught onto something when he saw Ren Xiaosu eating some hardtack. "Wait a minute, did you steal the barbarians' supplies?"

"Yeah." Ren Xiaosu said, "All of it!"

"They let you snatch their supplies just like that?" P5092 asked doubtfully.

"They've all been killed anyway, so it's not like their corpses will stand up and stop me," Ren Xiaosu said.

P5092 finally realized what the problem was. He said in seriousness, "If you killed all the barbarians, they won't even know where we're hiding. You've left them without any eyewitnesses. Do you still remember what I told you?"

Ren Xiaosu repeated his words from back then, "Of course I remember. Flee when you're done! This is the expeditionary army's rear, so retreat as soon as possible. That was what you said, so we ran back here after I finished killing them."

This time, it was P5092's turn to be stunned. He finally realized what was going on. Ren Xiaosu's understanding of "flee when you're done" literally meant wiping out this supply column.

P5092 did not know how to react to this. "What I meant was for you to just harass them. For example, you could've fired a shot at them and run away. Of course, that's only an example. If you only fired a shot, the barbarians would suspect that we're deliberately trying to lure them into a trap."

Ren Xiaosu said, "I did consider fleeing after firing a shot, but I was worried the barbarians would catch up and inflict casualties on the Iron First Company, so I had them all killed."

When P5092 heard this, he felt that it sounded somewhat illogical. But when he thought about it carefully, there seemed to be nothing wrong with it as well.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a while and said, "I don't think that's the problem. It must be something else. It has nothing to do with leaving eyewitnesses since I didn't clean up the site when I came back. The barbarians have experienced hunters among them as well, so it should not be difficult for them to track us to Mt. Zuoyun."

P5092 agreed with what he said. "Then something must have happened on the main battlefield."

Any commander who was smart enough would know of the importance of a supply line. P5092 had been up against the expeditionary army so many times he was very sure their general must be a smart person.

Therefore, why didn't the expeditionary army retaliate after the 6th Combat Brigade plundered their logistic supplies? This was very unusual.

P5092 said to Ren Xiaosu, "It's very likely that the battle at Mt. Daniu has gotten so intense that the expeditionary army can't afford to encircle Mt. Zuoyun for now. All of their forces have been pinned down."

"Then what should we do now? Should we march to Mt. Daniu to support the Wang Consortium's efforts?" Ren Xiaosu said seriously with a sense of urgency.

However, P5092 said, "Since the expeditionary army is hard pressed on the main battlefield, we must create enough chaos in their rear to attract their attention! We definitely shouldn't head to the main battlefield at Mt. Daniu at this time!"

Before this, P5092 had said the 6th Combat Brigade did not have that many soldiers. If they rashly entered the main battlefield, they would be marching to their deaths.

Therefore, they should continue with their plan to disrupt the expeditionary army's lifeline for now. No matter what was going on over at the Wang Consortium's side, they should maintain their own rhythm instead of being influenced by random guesses of what others might be doing. This was the universal truth on the battlefield.

P5092 said, "How about this? Take the Iron First Company and make another trip to the expeditionary army's supply line. This time, kill as many barbarians as you can once you encounter their transportation corps. We must ensure that the expeditionary army can feel the threat coming from their rear."

"OK." Ren Xiaosu was then about to depart from the defensive position with the troops.



But at this moment, P5092 thought of another possibility.

...

Ren Xiaosu and the Iron First Company rushed towards the location they had previously plundered the supply column. However, the barbarians might not be taking this route anymore. After all, there were still two other routes to choose from.

P5092 instructed that if they did not manage to see the expeditionary army's transportation corps on the original route where they encountered them, they should head to the other routes to see if they could discover anything.

The soldiers of the Iron First Company quietly followed Ren Xiaosu without saying a word. They just did whatever Ren Xiaosu told them to do.

The company commander did not even ask Ren Xiaosu where they were headed this time. All they needed to do was follow along.

Ren Xiaosu turned around and looked at them. "There's no need to hide our tracks along the way. Since we're here to attract the expeditionary army's attention to Mt. Zuoyun, we should definitely leave some tracks for them to follow."

The company commander asked meekly, "Future Commander, why don't we leave some barbarians alive this time? That way, it'll be easier for them to find us...."

Ren Xiaosu had become the most ruthless person in the hearts of the Fortress 178 troops. When the barbarian troops encountered him, it would be difficult for them to even have any survivors left.

As they spoke, the troops were about to walk out of Mt. Zuoyun when Ren Xiaosu suddenly stopped in his tracks. The company commander behind him asked, "What's the matter, Future Commander?"

"Something's not right!" Ren Xiaosu suddenly roared, "Retreat! The enemy is lying in ambush beyond the mountains!"

There happened to be a mountain blocking their view up ahead. But before setting off, Ren Xiaosu had already unleashed Old Xu to scout ahead for the enemy.

Right now, Ren Xiaosu could clearly see through Old Xu's vision that over a 1,000 barbarians were lurking beyond the mountains!

In the blink of an eye, they heard a barbarian shouting coarsely on their left.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly looked up and was surprised to see a barbarian in charge of keeping watch hiding on the left side of the slope.

When the barbarian realized Ren Xiaosu and the others were thinking of retreating, he immediately alerted his companions to attack quickly. They vowed to show no mercy to Ren Xiaosu and these 100-odd troops.

The sentry barbarian assessed the situation. Even though the Central Plains troops were still about a kilometer away from their ambush spot, it shouldn't be difficult for nearly a 1,000 barbarians to annihilate them based on the expeditionary army's speed.

The Iron First Company's commander shouted, "Future Commander, what should we do?"

"Run!" Ren Xiaosu shouted, "Run back the other way as quickly as you can!"

A second later, the entire Iron First Company turned around and ran. They darted through the mountain paths with great proficiency.

The expeditionary army behind him angrily roared like a pack of wolves chasing after antelopes in the valley.

Ren Xiaosu thought as he ran. So the reason why the expeditionary army didn't care about their supply line at the rear was that they had already guessed there was an ambush waiting for them on Mt.

Zuoyun. It was not because they were caught up in the intensity of the main battlefield. Therefore, they did not head directly into the mountains to encircle them.

In the end, the barbarians had deliberately chosen not to come and encircle them. This caused P5092 to misjudge the situation. After that, they quietly set an ambush beyond the mountains to catch the Northwest's troops off guard.

This was a true psychological tactic. The commanders from both sides were playing mind games.

P5092 had wanted to make use of the supply line's importance to force the expeditionary army to come and encircle Mt. Zuoyun. Meanwhile, the barbarians made use of their enemy's concern for the main battlefield to entice them to make their next move.

Ren Xiaosu lamented that these tacticians were way too crafty. Their tricks were each more devious than the other.

He quickly ran towards the defensive position with the Iron First Company. The expeditionary army started closing in and gaining on them until they were only dozens of meters away!

The 1,000-strong expeditionary army was giving chase in the mountains like a long snake slithering speedily.

But Ren Xiaosu suddenly took out a remote detonator from his pocket and pressed one of the red buttons on it.

With a loud boom, the long slithering snake was blown apart in the middle. The expeditionary army's barbarians were stunned. They had not expected to encounter such a situation!

Then Ren Xiaosu pressed the buttons one after another, and the TNT that had been buried along the expeditionary army's route was detonated in quick succession!

A huge cloud of smoke started spreading in the mountains with a pungent smell so choking that it burned everyone's senses. Casualties and cries filled the wilderness of the mountains.

After several explosions, only around 300 of the originally 1,000-strong barbarian troops were left. Furthermore, their formation was torn apart by the bombs.

The barbarians were at a loss of what to do as they were unsure if another bomb would go off at any second.

Ren Xiaosu had stopped in his tracks. The soldiers of the Iron First Company also turned around and raised their guns, ready to fight back with their future commander.

At this moment, Ren Xiaosu was extremely happy. It was not because he had killed a lot of barbarians but that P5092 had guessed the expeditionary army's intentions correctly.

Although P5092 was unsure whether he had guessed correctly, their backup plan caused the expeditionary army, which was preparing the ambush, to suffer heavy losses.

Before setting off, P5092 told Ren Xiaosu that there might be barbarians lying in ambush beyond the mountains. Therefore, he instructed Ren Xiaosu to choose a good spot to bury the TNT before they left the mountains. If they really encountered the expeditionary army, they should lead them back to step on the mines.

From this incident, Ren Xiaosu witnessed P5092's outstanding leadership on the battlefield.

As expected of someone he had personally recruited to join the Prosperous Northwest!

Actually, P5092, who was far away at the command post on Mt. Zuoyun, was not particularly worried when he received news that the Iron First Company had been ambushed. Instead, he heaved a sigh of relief.

That was because as long as he guessed correctly, Ren Xiaosu would definitely score a brilliant victory in this battle with his combat prowess.

This time, P5092 wanted to prove his worth to everyone.

Ji Zi'ang had proven that not only could he fight battles, but he was also able to quickly set up a defensive position in the middle of a war.

This power to quickly alter the terrain might be a little useless in individual combat as it did not have as much lethality compared to other people's superpowers, but P5092 knew best what it meant to have someone who could change the environment in a war.

Meanwhile, Wang Yun's quick analysis ability and comprehensive data organization skills made him as good as a human search engine. On top of that, he was even good at catching clues.

As for Ren Xiaosu and Yang Xiaojin, it was unnecessary to talk about how strong their combat prowess was.

On the contrary, it was P5092 who had not displayed any outstanding abilities yet. Although he had done a good job at reorganizing the troops and planning the defensive position, many other veteran commanders could do the same.

These were just the basics that any commander should possess if they wanted to become great military leaders.

Therefore, when P5092 got to work alongside these great colleagues, he felt he should quickly make known his value so he would be worthy of these teammates.

This was a very strange feeling. In the past, P5092 always felt he could not work to the best of his abilities when he was with the Pyro Company. In the tactics he devised, he had to lower a lot of expectations for his officers and soldiers so they could keep up with his rhythm.

This was as good as breaking his arm before getting into a fight. He needed to deliberately lower his standards in order to achieve victory.

Of course, his priority was to secure the final victory, but he could clearly have won those battles more brilliantly.

For example, back at the forward operating base at the rear of Mt. Dashi, he had used the Qinghe University students as bait and left behind a group of special forces led by a T5 combatant.

But a lot of people still died in that battle, and their supplies were also destroyed by the barbarians.

If there were experts like Ren Xiaosu, Wang Yun, and Ji Zi'ang in that plan from the start, how could the supplies possibly get destroyed?

Therefore, P5092 always felt a sense of helplessness when he was with the Pyro Company.

But it was different now. He suddenly felt that everyone here was equally competent. P5092 no longer had to worry if his colleagues were good enough. He only needed to make sure he performed well himself!

What a fantastic feeling this was! He did not want his colleagues to think he was not good enough for the team. As such, before Ren Xiaosu left today, he specifically reminded him that the expeditionary army might set an ambush for them. If that really happened, he would have to make sure they lured the barbarians into the mountains and killed as many of them as possible with the TNT.

Right now, Ren Xiaosu should be on the battlefield taking out the remaining barbarians just as he always did in the past.

Speaking of which, it was also quite strange. Even without heading to the front lines, he would still continue being the future commander of the Northwest. So why did Ren Xiaosu always like going to the front lines?

Just like the chess game Ren Xiaosu played with Jiang Xu previously, Jiang Xu said he had never seen anyone move the general as their first move before.

At that time, Ren Xiaosu replied that since the general was the definite strongest, why should it keep hiding behind the others? Of course it would have to rush to the front lines to fight.

On this current chessboard, the future commander's general was indeed charging around on the battlefield and slaughtering like what Ren Xiaosu had said.

Once when Ren Xiaosu and Jiang Xu were playing chess, Ren Xiaosu's general stopped in front of one of Jiang Xu's pawns. Jiang Xu was delighted and immediately moved his pawn. "Checkmate! You've lost!"

However, Ren Xiaosu took that pawn off the chessboard and said to Jiang Xu, "Since that pawn can't beat my general, isn't it charging suicidal? You're so weird."

Jiang Xu thought to himself at that time, 'Who's the weird one here? It's clearly you, alright!'

But now, a similar scene to that chess game was happening in the blink of an eye.

Inside a valley in Mt. Zuoyun, a burly barbarian who was not affected by the explosions saw Ren Xiaosu charging at the very front. The barbarian raised his huge axe and slashed at him.

As his muscular arm swung the huge axe down at Ren Xiaosu, the barbarian was delighted when he saw Ren Xiaosu not even raising his gun. But sorrow often succeeded joy. Ren Xiaosu lifted his hand and directly cut off the barbarian's arm with a black saber that appeared out of nowhere.

Meanwhile, the axe that fell from his grip vanished without a trace after Ren Xiaosu gave a flick of his hand.

When the dozens of barbarians saw that Ren Xiaosu was a superhuman, they shielded their eyes, planning to forcefully surround and kill Ren Xiaosu with the gunfire of the Iron First Company's soldiers.

But a second later, the sound of a sniper rifle firing came from the distance, away from the battlefield. The bullet had arrived before the gunshot was heard, and it pierced through a barbarian trying to attack Ren Xiaosu, creating an opening for him.

It only took three seconds to blow up the hundreds of barbarians, but it took another half an hour to take out the remaining enemies on the battlefield. All of the remaining enemies could have been killed faster, but as Ren Xiaosu needed to divert his attention to protect the soldiers of the Iron First Company, it delayed him quite a bit.

P5092 was paying full attention to all of this in the command post. However, he did not say anything.

It wasn't until Ren Xiaosu confirmed that the barbarians lying around were all dead that he asked on the radio, "What do we do next?"

P5092 said calmly, "From the look of things, the barbarians really care about their supply line. Now that Mt. Zuoyun has become a thorn in their side, we should add on to their troubles. Future Commander, have the Iron First Company hang the bodies of these barbarians outside Mt. Zuoyun. Let the barbarians have a good look at what happened to their companions."

"Sure," Ren Xiaosu said.

P5092 said, "Also, during the battle at the Pyro Company's side, we discovered that the right ears of our compatriots in the Central Plains were cut off after they were killed on the battlefield. This might be how the barbarians accumulate their battle achievements, so can you please cut off these barbarians' ears and throw them next to their corpses? I think it'll be easier to provoke them that way."

Ren Xiaosu said with a smile, "You want to force the expeditionary army's main forces to come and attack us?"

"That's exactly what I have in mind." P5092 said, "But, Future Commander, aren't you worried?"



"What's there to worry about?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Aren't you worried that a lot of the 6th Combat Brigade's soldiers will die?" P5092 said, "And there will be a lot of casualties for sure."

Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "If I'm worried about that, it would be an insult to the soldiers of Fortress 178. They aren't cowards who're afraid of death. They're only worried that their deaths will be in vain. I just hope that there'll be no unnecessary casualties. I know that people will die in war, and I also know that you're even willing to sacrifice yourself. I understand all that. That's why I handed over command of the troops to you. You don't have to worry about anything."

However, P5092 said after a long silence, "I'll try my best to keep them alive. Of course, everything will still be based on achieving victory."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. "You've never cared about the lives of the soldiers before."

P5092 said, "People do change."

After that, P5092 ended their communications and sat quietly in the command post. He suddenly felt he would have to spend more time and effort on his battle strategies from now on.

## Chapter 919 - A Bad Situation

Ren Xiaosu and the soldiers of the Iron First Company hanged the barbarian corpses on the trees beyond the mountains.

The barbarians' bodies dangled from the ropes hung around their necks while their ears that were cut off were piled up under the trees. Their swaying bodies were so heavy they even caused the thick branches to bend.

The Iron First Company's commander muttered, "Fuck, these barbarians are pretty heavy!"

After they finished the task, the Iron First Company was totally worn out. Doing something to deliberately annoy the barbarians was not easy work either.

Ren Xiaosu recalled a novel called Spare me, Great Lord that he had read back in Stronghold 88. In it, the protagonist got stronger by annoying people.

If he also had that power, he would have become invincible by the end of this battle. Just the negative feelings that could be gained out of annoying and killing the barbarians would probably be off the charts!

What a pity.

Ren Xiaosu returned to the camp with the Iron First Company. The defensive position had already entered a Level One alert state. All of the soldiers would rotate in three shifts so someone would always be on duty.

Moreover, Wang Yun's 200-odd subordinates had now become the 2nd Reconnaissance Company of the 6th Combat Brigade, and they entered the wilderness together with the original recon company to prevent the barbarians from sneaking into their position.

After all, Mt. Zuoyun spanned a large area. If the barbarians were to sneak in from other directions, it would be troublesome.

P5092 stood at the entrance of the camp to welcome back Ren Xiaosu. "Great work."

"It's nothing, but what's coming next will be a tough battle." Ren Xiaosu said, "What should we do when we get surrounded by the barbarians? Although we'll have the advantage in a positional battle, we'll still run out of ammunition and food someday. Also, how do we solve the problem of our water source?"

"If it's about the water source, we've already got spring water here at our defensive position. Back when we were choosing the site, I already thought such a day would come." P5092 said, "As for the food, we're lucky you took some of the barbarians' supplies back. Including the 6th Combat Brigade's original rations, we have enough to last us another fortnight."

"And what happens after that?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

P5092 shook his head. "The barbarians can't possibly keep attacking Mt. Zuoyun for half a month, unless the Wang Consortium does not take any action at all. Just think. If the expeditionary army's main forces remain here and surround us, the Wang Consortium's side will be left with nothing much to do. All they need to do is to work with us and we can attack from both sides. If the expeditionary army can't capture Mt. Zuoyun, they'll be defeated by the Wang Consortium very quickly too."

However, Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "Then we'd better make more preparations. We must not place our hopes on the Wang Consortium. For some reason, the Wang Consortium has become unscrupulous in their goal to unify the Central Plains."

P5092 asked, "Future Commander, how's your relationship with Wang Shengzhi?"

"Our relationship is quite good." Ren Xiaosu said, "But in this world, is there any kind of relationship that can be trusted? When I was still living in town, I saw all kinds of people."

"Then we had better come up with another plan." P5092 said, "We can go and steal some more of the expeditionary army's supplies, but before they come and encircle us, they'll likely reduce the frequency of their supply runs first. If we want to steal enough of their supplies, that will be quite impossible. I'll think of some other ways then."

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and said, "Is that so.... If we can't steal from the barbarians, why don't I try stealing from the Wang Consortium's rear instead?"

P5092 was speechless.

He suddenly realized the future commander's ideas were really unrestrained. As long as it was beneficial to him, he would really dare to think of anything!

P5092 hurriedly said, "We're already collaborating with the Wang Consortium for the war. If you go and rob the Wang Consortium at this time, it would really cause some friction and affect the battle situation."

"Oh." Ren Xiaosu nodded. "Forget it then."

But a radio operator suddenly ran over and said, "Future Commander, the Wang Consortium suddenly called."

Ren Xiaosu wondered, "Why is the Wang Consortium calling at a time like this?"

He walked into the command post and answered the call. "Hello?"

"Are you Ren Xiaosu?" the person on the other end of the line asked.

Ren Xiaosu was taken aback. This was extremely unusual. How did the other party know he was with the 6th Combat Brigade? Could someone from the Wang Consortium be among their troops?

After all, he had not met any outsiders since joining up with the 6th Combat Brigade.

No, something was not right. Ren Xiaosu suddenly had doubts about the identity of the person on the other end of the line. He gave P5092 a look and then P5092 led everyone out of the command post.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Lingling?"

The male voice on the other end of the line changed to a female voice. The other party wondered, "So you're able to guess my identity every time."

Ren Xiaosu wondered to himself, 'Why would Lingling suddenly call here?' He asked, "What's the matter?"

Lingling said, "A group of soldiers from the Wang Consortium will set off from Mt. Daniu and head to Mt. Zuoyun tonight. They're expected to arrive before dawn."

Ren Xiaosu said, "Why are they coming here? Our troops are enough to defend this position."

"It's not enough," Lingling said. "I've already calculated the supplies you all brought. It won't last you much longer. If Mt. Zuoyun gets besieged by the expeditionary army, you will most likely run out of ammunition and food."

Ren Xiaosu said, "Can't the Wang Consortium fight the barbarians harder then?"

"No, we can't." Lingling said, "The Pyro Company on the Great Wall is already showing signs of defeat due to a shortage of supplies. If the expeditionary army diverts their forces to us after defeating the Pyro Company, the Wang Consortium will have to continue defending Mt. Daniu and fight this battle with the most stable strategy."

In other words, the Wang Consortium had to guard against the expeditionary army from another battlefield, and they predicted the Pyro Company would get defeated!

This left Ren Xiaosu with a bad feeling. "What's the probability of the Pyro Company suffering a defeat?"

"71.13%." Lingling said, "They still have a chance of winning, but they might not be able to seize the opportunity. If P5092 had become the commander-in-chief of the Pyro Company a year earlier, the situation could have been reversed. But it's too late now."

"Alright then." Ren Xiaosu sighed. He did not know how to break this news to P5092. "So what is that group of soldiers you were talking about coming here for?"

"They'll circle around the back of Mt. Daniu and use vehicles to transport some supplies to you. In the following week, the Wang Consortium will provide you with a steady stream of supplies so you can keep the expeditionary army engaged at Mt. Zuoyun for a longer time," Lingling said.

Ren Xiaosu pondered this for a moment. Since they were coming to send them supplies, let them come. That would save him the trouble of going out to rob them.

Lingling ended the call after telling Ren Xiaosu what would happen. Ren Xiaosu somehow felt that Lingling seemed to have changed a little again, but he could not point out what had changed.

Ren Xiaosu walked out of the command post and solemnly said to P5092, "The Pyro Company might suffer a defeat, so let's prepare for the worst outcome. The Wang Consortium will be transporting their first batch of supplies to us tonight and arrive before dawn. They're hoping that the 6th Combat Brigade can hold the fort at Mt. Zuoyun."

P5092 frowned. The situation was much worse than he had imagined.

## Chapter 920 - Guarding Against Each Other

It was very bad news that the Pyro Company might get defeated on the battlefield. When P5092 found out about this, he did not feel sad at all. Instead, he started making adjustments to the 6th Combat Brigade's tactics.

Ren Xiaosu said curiously, "You've been with the Pyro Company for ten years at least. Once the Pyro Company gets defeated, I'm afraid many people will die. The Pyro Company can't survive either, since the Wang Consortium will definitely find a way to annex them after the war."

The Kong Consortium had already ceased to exist. If the Pyro Company disappeared as well, the entire region north of Luoyang City would fall into the hands of the Wang Consortium, leaving only the Zhou Consortium to the south.

Initially, Ren Xiaosu thought the Wang Consortium would take a long time to unify the Central Plains. After all, the various organizations were not to be trifled with. But now that the expeditionary army had come down to attack the South, they had helped the Wang Consortium greatly.

P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu and said, "I have ten years of memories with the Pyro Company. I joined the military when I was 19 before leaving at the age of 29, so I do have feelings for them. But like I said before, feelings won't change anything. What we need to do now is to survive this war and drive the expeditionary army back to the North!"

Then P5092 called over all the officers of the 6th Combat Brigade for a war meeting.

In the wee hours of the next day, a group of soldiers entered Mt. Zuoyun from another direction. Wang Yun's subordinates informed the command post the moment the other party entered Mt. Zuoyun.

Ren Xiaosu, P5092, and the others were already waiting at the defensive position. When the other party arrived outside the defensive position, P5092 ordered a platoon to carry out an inspection.

The inspection was conducted very thoroughly this time. All of the Wang Consortium's people had to turn in their weapons, and every box containing supplies was opened up for examination.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Are you worried that the Wang Consortium will stab us in the back?"

"I'm not particularly worried about that." P5092 said, "If anything were to happen to Mt. Zuoyun and the Pyro Company at the front, the Wang Consortium would be left in a difficult position by themselves. The Northwest Army losing a brigade would do nothing to affect the big picture, so the Wang Consortium has no reason to do that. I just don't want to add such a huge security risk to our troops. If I knew you were so strong in combat when I let you read the newspaper back then, I would definitely have thought of a way to arrest you."

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Then I wouldn't have helped you out so much, and you wouldn't have joined the Prosperous Northwest."

"Yes, that's right." P5092 said, "But strategically, it's not wrong to adopt a cautious attitude."

"Why do you think the Wang Consortium suddenly changed their attitude? They even took the initiative to contact us and deliver the supplies," Ren Xiaosu wondered. "I thought they didn't care about the 6th Combat Brigade?"

"It's because we're at Mt. Zuoyun, and they've realized the importance of this position." P5092 said, "You said the Wang Consortium's AI assessed the Pyro Company as having a 71.13% chance of failure?"

"Yes, it was the AI's assessment," Ren Xiaosu said.

"Then they must have their eyes trained on this place from above." P5092 said, "How else could they know our exact movements and assess the Pyro Company's situation so accurately? But from what I know, the Wang Consortium doesn't have any satellites of their own."

However, the word "satellite" reminded Ren Xiaosu of something. Didn't the Wang Consortium try to seize satellites during the Battle of Luoyang City?

Wait a minute, could the Wang Consortium have succeeded that time?

After the Battle of Luoyang City, Ren Xiaosu continued to pay attention to the developments there. However, he did not see any mention of the satellites being seized in Hope Media's newspaper.

Ren Xiaosu looked up at the vast starry sky and suddenly felt like he had returned to Stronghold 61. He felt like he was constantly being watched.

He suddenly saw a huge silhouette flit across the sky. When Ren Xiaosu took a closer look, he realized it was a large hawk.



For some reason, Ren Xiaosu felt the hawk had just been observing the defensive position intently. However, he did not think too much of it. Perhaps it was the scent of blood here at Mt. Zuoyun that had attracted the birds in the sky.

P5092 said, "Since their AI can assess the situation, they must've judged there to be a change in the chances of winning after we moved to Mt. Zuoyun. When we were at Mt. Youyu, they probably concluded we were useless to them."

When Zhang Xiaoman heard this, he said in embarrassment, "I was just waiting for Future Commander, wasn't I?"

The Wang Consortium's troops transporting the supplies had no intention of entering the defensive position. Most of them left quickly after unloading the supplies, leaving only seven of them behind.

P5092 ordered the soldiers to bring all the supplies into the defensive position. After those seven people entered the defensive position, one of them took a document out. "This is the list of supplies. The main items are the heavy machine guns and bullets, which we determined to be most helpful to you all. The rest of it are TNT and RPGs."

Ren Xiaosu read the supply list and was surprised to find that the TNT accounted for half of the supplies. He thought to himself, 'Could Lingling really have gained control of the Qinghe Group's seven satellites?' Were they sent so much TNT because Lingling had seen that his most lethal attacks were ambushes involving planted TNT?

This was very possible.

But if Lingling had really gained control of those seven satellites, with its capabilities now, there would be no troops left on the land that could conceal their movements from it.

In the past, Ren Xiaosu had asked Qin Sheng, one of the Riders, about this. "Can the satellites in orbit take clear pictures of the ground?"

However, Qin Sheng said they definitely couldn't take clear pictures of a person, although they could see their outlines.

"What about the food?" P5092 asked.

"The food supplies will be delivered tomorrow." The person leading the other party was someone Ren Xiaosu knew. It was Wang Run, who went to Stronghold 31 with Ren Xiaosu. He looked at Ren Xiaosu. "It's been a while."

"What are y'all doing here at Mt. Zuoyun?" Ren Xiaosu asked, "Are you from the Wang Consortium's intelligence agency?"

"Yes," Wang Run said, "we came to Mt. Zuoyun as the Wang Consortium's liaison to ensure that both sides can work more closely together. If there's anything you need here at Mt. Zuoyun, you can request it from the Wang Consortium through me."

"Alright, you've all been busy working the entire night, so hurry up and get some rest." P5092 said with a smile, "Thank you for the supplies. I've already asked our men to prepare some tents and hot food for you."

"Thank you." Wang Run left with his men.

But when these people left, Ren Xiaosu realized a young soldier kept looking at him.

P5092 said, "Actually, they came here with a purpose. The Wang Consortium wants to guard against us."

"Why are they guarding against us?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Because the Wang Consortium sabotaged a lot of people. They're a little worried that others might do the same to them." P5092 said, "If Mt. Zuoyun suddenly chooses to play a passive role in the battle and the Pyro Company gets defeated, the Wang Consortium will also be put in danger. So with Wang Run and his men hanging around, they'll immediately know if we make any unusual moves."

Ren Xiaosu lamented, "All y'all scheme too much, coming up with all these tricks rather than standing united to deal with the barbarians."