

Chapter 931 - They Just Wanted To Entrust Their Hopes To Others

When soldiers were taken prisoners, all of their usable weapons would definitely be taken away as well. In other words, the Pyro Company soldiers were truly unarmed.

Meanwhile, the enemy they were facing was the expeditionary army who might not be defeatable even if they were armed.

At the beginning, these soldiers did not entirely resist capture. In the Pyro Company, there was nothing shameful about being held captive by the enemy. What they should do was to preserve their strength and wait for an opportunity to strike back.

Although their goal was to keep humanity's flame alive in the Central Plains, it did not mean they had to fearlessly charge at the enemy and sacrifice themselves. If the expeditionary army used them for hard labor later, they would still have a good chance of making themselves useful again.

But after the Wang Consortium's people told them what the expeditionary army intended to do, the Pyro Company soldiers realized they had no chance of fighting back anymore. If they remained alive, they would only cause trouble and casualties for their friendly forces. Furthermore, a large amount of ammo would be expended if their Central Plains compatriots had to kill the 3,000-odd of them when they got to Mt. Zuoyun.

Rather than becoming a burden, they might as well fight to their deaths.

Therefore, these 3,000-odd soldiers found an opportunity to fight back that very night. No one attempted to escape. If they had fled separately, they would only get caught by the expeditionary army and be killed effortlessly.

They came together to carry out an operation under the lead of a 3rd Division battalion commander acting as their highest-ranking officer. All they hoped was to have the best chance of killing some barbarians.

When one soldier could not defeat a barbarian in a one-on-one battle, they fought them with four to five people.

Although they did not have any firearms, they still tried to grab some weapons from the barbarians. Those who did not manage to do so even resorted to biting them with their teeth.

There was barely any hint of tragedy in Wang Run's brief description of the battle. He only described it with a simple sentence. "All of them died on the battlefield."

But everyone could feel how impactful those words were.

In war, there were always people who sought to emerge as heroes. However, these people never thought of wanting to be heroes themselves. They just wanted to do their part before they died.

After a long silence, P5092 asked, "What are their serial numbers?"

Wang Run shook his head and said, "There's too many of them. It's impossible to remember all of their serial numbers."

P5092's expression turned a little gloomy. Yes, those people died just like that without anyone remembering their serial numbers.

At this moment, Wang Run said, "But we know the battalion commander's serial number was P31831. He seemed to be aware that you've joined the Northwestern troops, so he wanted our people to pass a message to you."

"What did he say?" P5092 asked.

"He said that although he won't have a chance to serve under you anymore, he didn't disgrace you," Wang Run said.

"I still remember when P31831 first joined the 3rd Division." P5092 smiled and said, "At that time, he had just graduated from cadet school and directly became a platoon commander after he was posted over. However, as he was the youngest in the platoon, his soldiers always used to tease him by calling him 'Little Platoon Commander.'"

"He gradually matured as a commander. I asked him why he joined the Pyro Company, and he told me he wanted to become a commander like me to fight for the survival of mankind in the Central Plains." P5092 continued, "At that time, I even patted him on the shoulder and said laughingly that he was still young and the world was not that simple. Now it seems he's fulfilled his dream after all."

Even though P5092 was smiling, everyone could sense the bitterness within his smile.

P5092 said, "Regardless, this is definitely great news. It means we'll be facing 3,000 fewer refugees at Mt. Zuoyun, so we'll be able to save a lot of ammo."

"It's not only that," Wang Run said. "When they attacked the expeditionary army, they created an opportunity for the other refugees to escape. From the intel supplied by our field agent, more than 3,000 refugees fled off into the wilderness tonight. The expeditionary army has already sent out their troops to capture them, but they definitely won't be able to catch all of them."

"So when the expeditionary army arrives at Mt. Zuoyun, we might only need to face about 3,000 to 4,000 refugees." P5092 asked, "How about your guy? Has he escaped?"

Wang Yun shook his head. "He doesn't intend to flee. He's staying with the group so he can still relay back more information. We've also told him to retreat, but he insisted on staying behind."

Everyone in the command post fell silent. If the field agent stayed in that group, it meant he would be driven to the battlefield at Mt. Zuoyun with the rest of the refugees by the expeditionary army. At that time, the 6th Combat Brigade would not recognize him at all. He would surely die under their gunfire.

If he wanted to escape, tonight was his last chance. If he did not escape tonight, he would definitely die.

This agent should also know the outcome, but he still chose to stay behind so he could relay information back at any time.

P5092 said, "It's admirable that the Wang Consortium has such martyrs too."

Wang Run said with a serious look, "Although our Wang Consortium walks a different path from your Pyro Company, and we might also be a little unscrupulous in the way we do things, you all should not underestimate us. The Central Plains will eventually be unified under our Wang Consortium, and everyone will understand the importance of it at that time."

"I've always understood the importance of unification, but I just disagree with the way you all are doing it." P5092 shook his head. "Alright, let's stop discussing such things in the face of a great war. Whether the Wang Consortium can unify the Central Plains or not, we will debate that after this war. What we need to do now is not let down those who have died. Now that the situation has taken a turn, we can plan better countermeasures."

"Explain?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Previously, I thought of planting explosives in advance to blow up those 10,000 refugees, but that would actually be a waste of explosives. After all, the bullets of our automatic rifles might not pose a threat to the expeditionary army, but buried explosives can. Therefore, I had wanted to prioritize using bullets against the refugees instead and leave the explosives for dealing with the barbarians."

"But it's different now. Under the circumstances where the number of refugees is not that many, burying a small amount of explosives is our best option. This way, the soldiers will not be left with a guilty conscience. I'm more inclined to maintain morale among the troops." P5092 said, "And they won't have to feel bad for the rest of their lives when they make it out of this war."

This way, only the person who pressed the detonator would have to bear the guilt.

From the look of it, P5092 wanted to be that person.

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Since I'm already well-versed in detonating bombs, I'll do it."

P5092 looked seriously at Ren Xiaosu. "Future Commander, are you sure?"

Ren Xiaosu took a deep breath and continued saying with a laugh, "I've probably killed more people than you've commanded soldiers. Don't worry, I'll be fine."

That night, Ren Xiaosu stood on the edge of the defensive position and looked up at the starry sky. Actually, if such a decision was only mentioned as empty talk or read as an anecdote of someone in the newspapers, one would not be able to personally experience the struggle of taking thousands of innocent lives.

All of a sudden, Zero came to Ren Xiaosu and asked, "Senior, there's something I don't quite understand tonight. Why did those soldiers suddenly launch a suicide attack against the expeditionary army?"

Ren Xiaosu turned to Zero and said with a smile, "Because they no longer had any chance of surviving, so they wanted to entrust their hopes to others."

After the war in the Southwest, it gradually returned to its former prosperity.

The outside world was under the impression that the Southwest was probably shrouded by the shadow of the Qing Consortium's rule. But in actual fact, after the Qing Consortium gained control of more than 30 strongholds in the Southwest, they did not increase taxes or excessively settle scores with the previous people in charge.

In the Southwest, many important figures from both the political and business world had thought the Qing Consortium would continue on their expansion path, and as a result, they felt that all the industries in the Southwest would get dragged into the resulting wars and be set back further.

However, the Qing Consortium did not do that. The first thing Qing Zhen did was to try to revive the Southwest.

First, he standardized the currency before organizing transport routes.

The entire Southwest was connected through basic roads, while the Qing Consortium established a specialized department to oversee the maintenance of roads linking the various strongholds.

After the road network was well established, Qing Zhen began to encourage the various strongholds to build trade relations with one another.

The merchants thought that since the Qing Consortium had spent so much money to build the roads, the road maintenance fees must be very expensive.

But on the contrary, the toll collection rates were much cheaper than they had expected. At this moment, the merchants realized that the Qing Consortium was really doing their part for the Southwest.

But everyone still adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

After that, the Qing Consortium merged all of the agricultural departments and established the Ministry of Agricultural Development. They started researching how to improve the enthusiasm for farming

among the refugees. One of the most controversial plans proposed was to allow the refugees to share the rights to the farms.

Before this, the various consortiums were firmly in control of the land and the refugees. No one could have expected that the Qing Consortium, as a consortium, would come to a decision like that.

It was not only the rest of the world that was surprised. There were also voices of resistance within the Qing Consortium.

Unfortunately, the Qing Consortium was now controlled by Qing Zhen alone, and the entire Southwest Army was also his to command, so the voices of resistance were quickly silenced.

After all, everyone knew exactly how Qing Zhen had gotten his position as the head of the Qing Consortium. He was no pushover. He had slowly conquered this vast territory, and rumor had it that the blood of those who died in the process could even make the rivers run red.

The Qing Consortium's reforms were too many. If the Qing Consortium were located in the Central Plains, Hope Media would probably have started publishing full-length reports covering them.

Immediately after, the trade routes between the Qing Consortium and the Northwest were also opened up. Not only could the merchants take this opportunity to sell their goods to the Northwest and the Central Plains, but they were also able to import goods back from there.

All of a sudden, supply and demand changed. When the goods from the Southwest were sold to the entire Alliance of Strongholds, they could barely meet demand. This also greatly stimulated the industrial development in the Southwest.

As a result, the industrial reforms the merchants had been waiting for finally arrived. They were even allowed to set up their own factories outside the strongholds.

For the past year or so, all of the ambitious people in the Southwest were in a state of excitement. They received good news almost every day.

Immediately, everyone praised Qing Zhen and said he was a wise leader of the modern day.

However, when everyone wanted to go and look for Qing Zhen to sing praises of him and pledge their loyalty, they could not even get to see him. Qing Zhen was either living in the military base most of the time or on an inspection tour of the troops.

They were only able to meet the seven principal secretaries of Qing Zhen.

Gradually, everyone started wondering what the Qing Consortium's head was doing. Why was he suddenly behaving so mysteriously?

Sometimes, Qing Zhen would conduct visitations to see how the agricultural reforms were going. But when everyone rushed over there after receiving news of his visits, Qing Zhen had already left. Moreover, he constantly had an elite unit following him. It was as though he was defending against something.

Everyone thought the head of the Qing Consortium must cherish his life too greatly. Could it be that it was perhaps still dangerous in the Southwest?

As such, some astute people realized the Qing Consortium had also been mobilizing its troops frequently. No matter how they looked at it, it felt like a war was about to break out.

At this moment, four people were traversing the forested mountain range at the Southwest's border.

If Ren Xiaosu were there, he would surely have been surprised, because he knew all four of them.

Cheng Yu, the previous leader of Ren Xiaosu's group and a witness to the song and dance during the expedition to the Sacred Mountains, was here.

Luo Xinyu, Yang Xiaojin's old partner, was here.

Dong Funan, who had awakened the powers of a vampire and lost two of her blood-sucking fangs to Chen Wudi's armor and become a "vegetarian" for more than a year as a result before finally growing back her teeth, was here.

And rounding out the group was Yang Xiaojin's aunt, Yang Anjing, the leader of the Anjing House and the Saboteurs.

"Boss," Cheng Yu said to Yang Anjing in front of him, "where's Tang Hualong and Vanilla? Why aren't they here?"

Today, Yang Anjing was still dressed in a black combat uniform. Her shoulder-length hair was tied into a ponytail, and it made her look extremely neat and tidy.

She answered, "Tang Hualong and Vanilla were assigned a last-minute mission at Luoyang City, so they can't participate in this operation."

Cheng Yu nodded. He was wondering what mission Tang Hualong and Vanilla had to deal with at Luoyang City that caused them to even miss out on such an important operation in the Southwest.

At this moment, Yang Anjing took out some earpieces from her backpack and distributed them to the other three. "We'll be entering the Qing Consortium's secure zone in another 800 meters. Our operation this time is mainly to confuse the Qing Consortium's garrison troops while the final objective is handled by someone else. Understood? Once we get pursued, don't get caught up in the battle and just carry out the plan as I've drafted."

"Understood."

"Understood."

"Understood."

When everyone put on their earpieces, Yang Anjing did a simple radio check with them. After confirming there were no issues with the communications, she said to Cheng Yu, "Let's begin."

A myriad of colors suddenly appeared within Cheng Yu's dark pupils, which resembled a kaleidoscope from up close.

Then the four people's presence in the mountains suddenly vanished. If one were to look over here, they would only see the mountains.

This was Cheng Yu's power of illusion.

Moreover, this superpower was not a hypnotism-based method that affected the brain waves in a human. It really changed what was projected in the vicinity, so even if one were to look here through a surveillance camera, they would fall for the illusion as well.

Initially, Cheng Yu had a combat style of grandeur, and he was extremely good at creating projections of terrifying flying birds and beasts.

But after getting crushed at the Sacred Mountains, Wang Yun had reminded Cheng Yu that his illusions should be more grounded in reality. He should create an environment that could pass off as something real, rather than making exaggerated projections like before.

Yang Anjing looked around and said calmly, "You've improved, but don't get careless. The Qing Consortium troops stationed here will definitely be equipped with thermal cams. Such illusions can't trick them. Xinyu, head to our designated pick-up point. I'll call for you when we need you to fetch us."

"Roger." Luo Xinyu turned around and left.

At this moment, no one at the huge nuclear test site hidden in the mountains up ahead had realized the impending danger.

Yang Anjing examined her surroundings and thought that if it weren't for Zero, they would probably not have found such a well-hidden spot.

## Chapter 933 - Subverting The Saboteurs

Cheng Yu was a little nervous. He carefully maintained the illusion so it would not get discovered by the Qing Consortium's scouts. Dong Funan glanced at him. "Why do I get the feeling that you're particularly scared?"

"It's only normal to be scared." Cheng Yu muttered, "The Qing Consortium must have an extremely tight defense in a place like this, and there's only the four of us...."

Zero had used the satellites to locate this place. Based on its analysis, there were probably over 10,000 Qing Consortium troops stationed here in this mountain all year round, because the supplies transported in from outside were definitely enough to support 10,000 people daily.

Under such circumstances, it felt extremely dangerous for four people to face over 10,000 enemies.

Although Yang Anjing was here, and while Cheng Yu knew she kept a low profile but was not inferior to other legendary supernatural beings, he had never seen her take action personally. As such, he felt a little unsure.

It was rumored that the leader of the Saboteurs had once been in battle, but that was during the time when the war in the Southwest had not broken out yet, and Yang Anjing had led the Saboteurs to the Central Plains after falling out with the Yang Consortium.

A small consortium once claimed they had achieved nuclear capability, but their nuclear test site got destroyed by the Saboteurs seven days later.

There were thousands of soldiers guarding the nuclear test site, yet they still could not stop the countless paper cranes that blotted out the sky.

By now, that small consortium had been swallowed up by the Zhou Consortium.

Some people said the leader of the Saboteurs was also likely to be an expert on the level of a demigod, but up until now, no one had witnessed what really happened in that battle. The nuclear test site that had been destroyed was blown up by an explosion in the end, so everyone suspected the leader of the Saboteurs might not have reached the demigod level yet but resorted to some special means to achieve that.

Everyone knew how important this nuclear test site was to the Qing Consortium. There were probably not only troops stationed here but also powerful superhumans in the Qing Consortium.

But since Yang Anjing dared to come here, she must be confident of herself. Yang Anjing ignored Cheng Yu. She stood where she was and said to Dong Funan, "Guard my surroundings."

Dong Funan hurriedly heightened her alertness and said, "Yes, Boss."

With that, Yang Anjing suddenly raised her hands, and the sound of flapping wings could be heard in the wilderness. In the blink of an eye, countless paper cranes materialized through her actions and appeared like a white storm.

One of the paper cranes turned around and looked at Yang Anjing before leading the "white storm" to fly towards the nuclear test site up ahead.

Yang Anjing, dressed in a black combat uniform, stood there quietly with her eyes closed as she focused on controlling the countless paper cranes.

But Dong Funan's expression suddenly changed. An exquisite-looking dagger suddenly slipped down from her sleeve, and her gaze drifted over to Yang Anjing, seemingly unintentionally.

Although Dong Funan seemed to be on guard as she patrolled around, she was getting closer and closer to Yang Anjing.

She confirmed that Yang Anjing's eyes were indeed closed and that she was no longer paying attention to her surroundings.

Dong Funan glanced at Cheng Yu again but she did not think much of him. After all, Cheng Yu was not exactly a combatant.

The distance between her and Yang Anjing was almost a meter now, and that was close enough!

However, Dong Funan did not make a move. It was as though she was waiting for something.

Suddenly, a paper crane that had been hiding behind her pecked her wrist. Dong Funan cried out in pain as the dagger in her hand dropped to the ground.

Yang Anjing asked nonchalantly without opening her eyes, "When did the Qing Consortium subvert you?"

Dong Funan's eyes widened. "Boss, I wasn't turned by anyone."

"Let me recall." Yang Anjing said, "Oh, when I sent you to the Zhou Consortium previously, Fatty Luo was also there. I underestimated Fatty Luo on this. He was even able to make my people defect to his side. So the Qing Consortium must already know we're coming, right?"

Dong Funan remained silent while Cheng Yu looked very surprised. It was obvious he was totally unaware.

"Let me ask you, what method did Luo Lan use to get you to defect to their side? He was actually able to make you work for the Qing Consortium willingly?" Yang Anjing asked.

"It wasn't Luo Lan." Dong Funan pursed her lips and said, "Qing Zhen personally made a trip to the Zhou Consortium."

Yang Anjing was obviously surprised by this answer. "He still dares to step into the Central Plains?"

Yang Anjing suddenly realized something. It was no wonder Qing Zhen's whereabouts had become so unpredictable after he had unified the Southwest. No one from outside his organization had seen him.

So it turned out Qing Zhen was trying to hide his true whereabouts by doing so.

But who could have expected the Qing Consortium's head would actually risk his life to go to the Central Plains?

Everyone could see Luo Lan, who was open with his whereabouts, but not Qing Zhen who hid in the shadows.

In the past, Qing Zhen was the Qing Consortium's Shadow, so he handled all of the difficult, dirty, and dangerous work.

But now their roles had changed. Qing Zhen had become the Qing Consortium's leader while Luo Lan took over as the Qing Consortium's new Shadow.

"So how did Qing Zhen find you and convince you to defect to his side?" Yang Anjing smiled. "A honey trap? He really is quite good-looking, but it's real low for the head of the Qing Consortium to resort to such means."

While the three consortiums in the Southwest were fighting each other, the other two consortiums realized something. In fact, one of Qing Zhen's expertise was planting spies in the enemies' ranks.

For example, the Li Consortium's frontline commander had died at the hands of Qing Zhen's spy. Likewise, those old fogeys of the Qing Consortium's board had also died to Zhou Qi's hand. Strictly speaking, Zhou Qi was also Qing Zhen's spy.

Throughout these wars, Qing Zhen had come up with ingenious ways of using information warfare. As a result, everyone was troubled by a need to get rid of the Qing Consortium's spies.

And now, Qing Zhen had planted a spy in the Saboteurs too.

Indeed. The Saboteurs had always been an enemy of the Qing Consortium. With Qing Zhen's nature, how could he not have made preparations in advance?

"You won't understand." Dong Funan clenched her teeth and said, "I don't think destroying nuclear weapons is that important at all. Besides, now that we're facing foreign enemies from the North, shouldn't we head to the front line there? Why did we come here instead? If the Wang Consortium fails in the North, the Qing Consortium's weapons will become the Alliance of Strongholds' trump card. How can we undermine each other at a time like this?"

Yang Anjing shook her head. "It's impossible that we'll lose the war in the North, so there's no need for such weapons in the first place. Moreover, you said you don't think destroying nuclear weapons is important. Then let me ask you this: How many people do you think will die in this war where the expeditionary army tries to migrate southwards?"

Dong Funan answered, "Even if the Wang Consortium manages to win this war, hundreds of thousands of people will still die."

"Then do you know how many people can die in a global nuclear war?" Yang Anjing said, "7.4 billion."

Dong Funan suddenly stopped talking, because the figure of 7.4 billion was simply too large for her to grasp.

Yang Anjing opened her eyes and said to Dong Funan with a smile, "What? Are you shocked? This is a true disaster humanity went through. A lot of people like telling me that having such weapons in hand is a form of deterrence.. But what I need to tell you is that when a real disaster comes, nuclear weapons will no longer be a form of deterrence but the real disaster no one can withstand."

## Chapter 934 - Did It Succeed?

Dong Funan was no match for Yang Anjing in debating. She was just a normal person whose powers had suddenly awakened, while Yang Anjing had received top-tier education since childhood.

In fact, there was a common problem among highly educated people and intellectuals, and it was that they liked making decisions on behalf of others.

When normal people suggested they did not need to be represented or have someone make decisions for them, the highly regarded people would think they were too short-sighted to see what they knew.

It was not only Yang Anjing who was like this. Wang Shengzhi was also the same. Even the leaders of the Pyro Company and P5092 were like this too.

Such thinking had its pros and cons. For example, such knowledge and experience could make P5092 even more confident on the battlefield, while the Pyro Company would be fearless in the face of foreign enemies.

But once these highly regarded people became ingrained in their own stubborn beliefs, it would be very difficult to say whether it was a blessing or a curse for normal people.

Without a doubt, their beliefs were very firm and not something anyone could refute with just a few words.

Yang Anjing looked at Dong Funan. "Why didn't you make a move just now? Were you waiting for someone?"

Dong Funan pursed her lips and did not say anything. "Since you're so powerful, why are you still asking so much? Why not just kill me?"

"No." Yang Anjing shook her head. "You might not believe it, but I've never killed anyone unnecessarily."

Based on what Yang Anjing had just said, she did not view Dong Funan as innocent but unnecessary. On the path she was pursuing, she would not kill someone if it did not help her in the advancement of her goal.

Shuffling footfalls came from the wilderness at this moment. Yang Anjing smiled and said, "Thank you for helping me lure them away from their posts."

Dong Funan was taken aback. "What do you mean?"

She quickly realized Yang Anjing was using her as bait to lure away the main garrison of the secret base. If it were anyone else who came here, the main garrison, which likely included superhumans as well, would probably not even be forced into action.

But it was different with Yang Anjing here. Because the head of the Anjing House was here personally, they had to take the situation seriously.

Therefore, Yang Anjing was already aware Dong Funan had defected. However, she did not expose her and waited for this moment so Dong Funan could help create this small window of opportunity in the Qing Consortium's tight defense.

Yang Anjing knew how meticulous Qing Zhen was in his actions. Even though she had already schemed against him like this, there would still definitely be a very tight defense in this secret base.

However, the power of superhumans was the most unpredictable. She had kept a trump card like Wang Wenyan's power hidden for many years and only used it once. So when she used it again now, it would still be very effective.

Even today, no one could guess how the Wang Consortium managed to seize the seven satellites of the Qinghe Group. Everyone knew the Wang Consortium might have gained control of the satellites, but no one knew how they did it.

Because Wang Wenyan could turn into a black mist that permeated everywhere, it was too difficult to defend against an undetectable infiltration like that.

But if he only had the means to sneak in, it would not affect the secret base much. Even if he could operate alone inside the nuclear test site for a few hours, he might not be able to figure out the details of how things worked.

However, Wang Wenyan only needed to bring a small flash drive with him to help Zero get here.

With Wang Wenyan and Zero working together, they could invade practically every network and system in the world. So Wang Wenyan was actually the highlight of the show while Yang Anjing came along willingly as his accessory.

Now that she had helped Wang Wenyan open a path, it was time for him to take action.

At this moment, the paper cranes that had flown off into the distance started flying back. When Yang Anjing saw the Qing Consortium troops surrounding them in all directions, she did not go on a killing spree. Instead, she said into her earpiece, "Xinyu, the mission is over. Get us out of here."

However, a man's voice rang out through the earpiece, "I'm sorry, but she can't pick you up now. But I can bring you to the Qing Consortium. I'm sure the boss would love to have a chat with you."

Yang Anjing looked at the troops surrounding them and suddenly laughed. "As expected of Qing Zhen."

But just as she finished speaking, a girl's voice said in her earpiece, "Wang Wenyan has already completed the mission. The base's self-destruction sequence has been activated. 10, 9, 8..."

Just as the Qing Consortium's troops had surrounded them and were about to make their move to capture the Anjing House party, a huge and glaring explosion erupted at the secret base in the distance.

It was not a nuclear explosion but a self-destruction device that had been installed when the base was constructed. This was Qing Zhen's contingency plan to prevent the base from being controlled by those with evil intentions. However, Zero now made use of it.

A second later, a huge shockwave spread outwards from the base. The soldiers who tried to capture Yang Anjing were all sent flying into the air by the shockwave. And not only them, Yang Anjing, Cheng Yu, and Dong Funan were no exception!

After being sent airborne, some of the elite troops immediately got up and prepared to force the enemy into battle. However, Yang Anjing and Cheng Yu disappeared within the chaotic paper cranes that surrounded them!

A burly man holding Luo Xinyu in his hand walked over slowly and looked at the secret base that was aflame in silence.

Eight years. He had been guarding this place for eight years, but someone destroyed it just like that. He naturally felt angry about it.

He took out his satellite phone and called Qing Zhen. "Boss, I'm sorry."

However, Qing Zhen did not blame him. He just said slowly, "That place had been exposed, so it was only a matter of time before it got destroyed. It's alright, just come back. Don't pursue Yang Anjing anymore. That woman's power is unfathomable. You all might not be able to defeat her."

The burly man felt suffocated. The more Qing Zhen did not blame him, the guiltier he felt. By entrusting such an important place under his protection, it could be said that Qing Zhen had placed the Qing Consortium's trump card in his care, yet he had failed to protect it.

"By the way, Qing Ze, why don't you come directly to Stronghold 111? I'll play host and throw you dinner. What would you like to eat? I remember that you like shredded pork with garlic sauce," Qing Zhen asked. From his tone, it did not sound like he was particularly anguished.

"OK, Boss." Qing Ze hung up and reorganized his troops. He inspected Luo Xinyu, who he was holding, before handing her captive to a soldier. "Have a platoon keep a close eye on her 24/7. Prevent her from activating her Shadow Door."

Cheng Yu had already been carried several kilometers away by the hundreds of paper cranes and thrown to the ground.

He hurriedly stood up and shouted at Yang Anjing next to him, "Boss, Luo Xinyu is still in their grasp! We have to go back and save her!"

Yang Anjing glanced at him. "I can't save her now. I'll find an opportunity in the future. But don't worry. Luo Xinyu and Xiaojin are friends, and Ren Xiaosu and Qing Zhen are on very good terms too. So the Qing Consortium won't do anything to Luo Xinyu."

Cheng Yu was stunned. He had not expected Yang Anjing to say that.

After a pause, Cheng Yu asked an unrelated question. "Boss, did Tang Hualong and Vanilla go to Luoyang City... to kill someone?"

Yang Anjing glanced at him and answered, "No."

As she spoke, Zero's voice rang out again through Yang Anjing's earpiece. "Did you manage to escape successfully?"

"Affirmative, we've escaped successfully. Where's Wang Wenyan?" Yang Anjing asked.

"He's already fled southwest. I estimate he'll reach the retreat route in three days and then return to the North nine days later," Zero replied.

Yang Anjing asked, "Was this mission verified to be successful?"

"The main mission was successful," Zero said. The main mission was to destroy the Qing Consortium's nuclear test site, and it had been destroyed. However, Zero quickly added, "But we were unable to find any relevant data on the 12 carrier rockets the Qing Consortium launched. We were unable to determine what they had launched into space. If they were satellites, there wasn't any way to control them from here."

Yang Anjing was stunned. She was a little puzzled by what kind of preparations Qing Zhen had made.. And she was also a little unsure if this mission had really succeeded.

#### Chapter 935 - The Battle Begins

At Mt. Zuoyun, Ren Xiaosu led Ji Zi'ang on a walk in the wilderness with only the two of them.

"Bury a set of TNT here," Ren Xiaosu said as he looked at the map and pointed at his feet, "P5092 said that there'll be barbarian elites passing through here to provide cover for the expeditionary army's flanks."

With that, Ji Zi'ang followed Ren Xiaosu's instructions and placed the TNT on the ground. Then he controlled the soil on the ground to "swallow" up the TNT.

These days, burying explosives had become a technical skill. The barbarians had been blown up enough times that if the TNT were buried too obviously, it would definitely be discovered by the enemy.

There were many outstanding hunters in the expeditionary army, so it would be extremely easy for them to determine whether the ground's surface had been dug up before.

Therefore, after some thought, Ren Xiaosu asked Ji Zi'ang if he could bury the explosives without revealing any traces that it had been buried. Ji Zi'ang said that he could.

This answer left Ren Xiaosu overjoyed. It was as though he had found a new companion in his quest to ambush the barbarians.

Ji Zi'ang suddenly asked, "Future Commander, do you think we can win?"

"Definitely." Ren Xiaosu said firmly, "It's just a group of barbarians. How long do you think they can continue being so arrogant here in the Central Plains?"

"Then what if we really get trapped here?" Ji Zi'ang wondered. "Wang Run did say that there are still about 140,000 expeditionary army troops on the battlefield. That's much more than P5092's initial estimate."

According to P5092's plan, they were planning to fight this defensive battle with a kill ratio of ten to one, and that was still in the most ideal of situations. In other words, the 6th Combat Brigade could at most take out 60,000 expeditionary army troops in the best-case scenario.

However, the Pyro Company's early defeat had left the troops at Mt. Zuoyun and Mt. Daniu to bear all the pressure. Mt. Zuoyun alone might have to face 70,000 barbarians now. Even if everyone could achieve the best results and the expeditionary army might suffer heavy casualties, the 6th Combat Brigade would still definitely be wiped out.

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and comforted, "Actually, if we really get surrounded here for more than ten days, the 6th Combat Brigade will definitely not be left to fight alone."

"What do you mean?" Ji Zi'ang was puzzled.

"Fortress 178's troops will not sit back and do nothing. They don't have the habit of leaving their comrades helpless," Ren Xiaosu said.

"But P5092 said in the previous meeting that the best strategy for Fortress 178 is to defend the Northwest tenaciously and not recklessly send troops to the Central Plains," Ji Zi'ang said.

"Of course that's the best strategy." Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "But when has the Northwest ever followed such conventions? With more than 6,000 Northwestern comrades at Mt. Zuoyun. Mr. Zhang won't stand to see us all die in battle. The Northwest's current military strength is much stronger than before."

During the wee hours of the fifth day, an emergency call to arms sounded at the defensive position.

Ren Xiaosu put on his clothes and came out of his tent. He rushed to the command post and asked, "What's the matter?"

P5092 was already dressed smartly as he stood in front of the sand table. "Wang Yun's recon troops have discovered the enemy's situation. The expeditionary army has herded more than 3,000 refugees and appeared at a location 40 clicks away. It's estimated they'll arrive at Mt. Zuoyun by dawn. But we don't know if they'll stop to rest and reorganize. Based on the progress of their advancement, the expeditionary army's main forces will likely maintain their stamina and should be ready for battle at any moment. Moreover, the expeditionary army troops that have us surrounded inside Mt. Zuoyun have rested for many days. If they don't start fighting soon, their morale will start to drop."

"Do you think that they might launch a direct assault once they arrive at Mt. Zuoyun?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Yes." P5092 said, "I figure there'll be a fierce battle at dawn, and it will likely last for the entire day. The expeditionary army's main forces are prepared to attack. They'll take turns to wear down the 6th Combat Brigade's troops, so we have to be prepared."

"Then let's fight them," Ren Xiaosu said.

"The expeditionary army will definitely try to break past the defensive position tomorrow." P5092 said, "You also know there's still elites hidden among the expeditionary army. Their destructive power is too strong for the defensive position, and they'll definitely appear during the positional battle tomorrow. Therefore, Future Commander, you mustn't make a reckless move. You have to wait for those elites to appear."

"Understood." Ren Xiaosu nodded.

"Also," P5092 suddenly said, "Future Commander, if the expeditionary army drives the refugees to charge at us, you can't become soft...."

P5092 was most worried that Ren Xiaosu would not have the heart to take action against the refugees when he saw them in a pathetic state and try to seek other strategies to save them. That would definitely delay the timing to blow up the barbarians.

How could there be so many perfect scenarios in war?

Ren Xiaosu gave him his word.

But by daybreak, Ren Xiaosu was still a little shocked when the refugees who were being herded into the mountains by the expeditionary army appeared.

When he saw the refugees approaching from afar, their feet were still bleeding as they walked on the mountain path. To make the refugees appear even more pitiful, the expeditionary army ordered them to throw away their shoes and walk barefooted.

The refugees had numb expressions on their faces. But when they saw the Central Plains front line appear in front of them, they started running madly as though they had seen their savior.

The expeditionary army followed close behind them and was ready to spring into action at any moment.

Everyone at the defensive position fell silent. Over the past few days, the soldiers were briefed by the officers on more than one occasion on what they were about to face. And the future commander had also volunteered to take on what would be the most difficult task at hand. All they needed to do was to wait quietly and take revenge for these Central Plains people.

The ones responsible for the deaths of these people were the expeditionary army, not the future commander.

Ren Xiaosu could see a glimmer of hope in the eyes of those refugees from afar. That was because they had finally seen hope. They thought they were about to reach the end of their suffering and could see the light again. However, these refugees did not know what was waiting for them.

Ren Xiaosu realized why P5092 specifically reminded him not to become soft. He must have anticipated this scene.

The 3,000-odd people were clearly looking with anticipation and excitement in their eyes, yet you had to personally kill them who had placed their hopes in you. This was a very cruel thing to do.

It was so cruel that even Ren Xiaosu's breathing turned heavy. For the first time, he felt the burden of letting down the trust and expectations of more than 3,000 people.

He asked Wang Run next to him, "Has your spy left the group yet?"

"No." Wang Run shook his head and said, "He's still among them. There's no chance to escape anymore."

P5092 looked at Ren Xiaosu. Right now, he was very worried that Ren Xiaosu would hesitate. But before he could say anything, Ren Xiaosu pressed the button just as the refugees rushed past the detonation zone.

Explosions boomed in Mt. Zuoyun as a series of buried explosives kicked up a huge cloud of smoke. Ren Xiaosu watched this sight quietly with a livid expression as though he were trying to commit to memory everything happening here.

The real battle on Mt. Zuoyun had begun.

## Chapter 936 - Fault Tolerance Measures

The expeditionary army had herded the refugees here over such a great distance, but it was all for naught in the end. Not only that, but it even helped to enrage the soldiers of the 6th Combat Brigade.

They knew it was the Pyro Company soldiers' fearless suicide attacks that had created an opportunity for some of the refugees to escape while they were being driven here.

Now that those Pyro Company soldiers had placed their hopes in them, the soldiers of the Northwest would naturally cherish their sacrifice even more.

As soon as the battle started, Ji Zi'ang and the others were hoping the explosions would scare the expeditionary army into retreat like the previous time. However, that did not happen on this occasion. The expeditionary army soldiers did not retreat at all. It was as though they insisted on trading their lives to force through this attack.

P5092 said, "This is the worst outcome we could anticipate. The expeditionary army's general understands it's impossible to take down Mt. Zuoyun with simple tactics. They know they have to exchange any progress with their lives. The opponent has already accepted this fact, so this means that we have the toughest battle to fight on our hands."

Ji Zi'ang looked at the barbarians charging up with their shields raised. He said to P5092, "I can still topple those seven mountains. Why don't I bury them alive right now?"

"No." P5092 shook his head and said, "There's too many of the expeditionary army's troops this time. They still have more troops stationed beyond the mountains, so they're ready to replace their troops and continue attacking at a moment's notice. Even if you manage to wipe out a group of them, they'll be immediately replaced by another group from out there. So it's better to leave such a trump card for when it's really necessary. You can topple a mountain every time we face a crisis at the defensive position, so even if the barbarians manage to break through the line, you can still cut off their subsequent attacks. That way, the defensive position won't suffer too great a loss."

According to P5092, Ji Zi'ang's toppling of the mountains was a fault tolerance measure for the defensive position.

Ji Zi'ang muttered, "But leaving seven mountains intact is probably overkill, right? Why don't we topple two first to crush their spirits?"

"No." P5092 refuted, "Rather, I feel that seven is too few."

Everyone was stunned. So it turned out P5092 was so pessimistic about the situation.

P5092 explained, "Perhaps you guys don't understand the concept of a defensive battle, especially one where the kill ratio is ten to one. For the next ten days, weeks, or even months, we'll have to face an endless intrusion by the expeditionary army every day. At some point, you'll start doubting yourself, the world, and whether there's an end to these barbarians. During this period, everyone will be going through the abyss of suffering. The soldiers will start having trouble getting enough rest, getting feverish, and then becoming constipated. Our ammunition will start dwindling, and our food supplies will start getting rationed so we'd have enough to last. After that, the expeditionary army will start breaking through the defensive position more and more times until we can no longer defend this place."

Everyone fell silent. As this was just the beginning of their defensive battle, everyone felt that the expeditionary army was not that strong when they saw the barbarians falling one by one under the assault of the heavy machine guns.

But P5092 told them the scales of war would not always tip in their favor.

The expeditionary army was prepared to use tens of thousands of people to take down this position. In that case, the battle facing them would surely be the most devastating one in the world.

It would only get harder and harder by the day.

"Alright, everyone, just follow my orders." P5092 said, "The future commander promised I would be the highest-ranking officer of this army on the battlefield."

Everyone looked at Ren Xiaosu who nodded. "All y'all must obey his orders."

P5092 looked at Ji Zi'ang. "Everyone else can die, but before I give you the orders to topple those seven mountains, you can't die. Those seven mountains are our final trump card. You have to stay alive. You have to survive for the sake of the entire defensive position."

Everyone suddenly got the feeling that their existence on this battlefield was for a reason. That reason was so they could win the final victory of this war. They had to abandon their own wills to obey the collective will.

At this moment, the expeditionary army that had rushed forward was advancing rapidly on the mountain path. It was still the same old tactic as before. They were using the barbarians carrying shields in front of them as cover to protect the rest of the main forces at the rear as they advanced.

However, the shields they were wielding were different. A portion of the original leather shields had been replaced by the scrap of the armored vehicles they had dismantled. Even when the heavy machine guns' bullets hit them, only some sparks were produced.

The armor was so thick it required several barbarians to work together to lift it up.

When the expeditionary army came close to within 200 meters of the defensive position, the soldiers at the position were still firing at their usual rhythm. However, one of the barbarians at the front of the expeditionary army raised a shield by himself and suddenly launched into a rapid charge!

The barbarian's sudden burst of speed was extremely shocking. Even though he was carrying a shield by himself, he was still able to advance quickly on the uneven mountain path. When the soldiers at the defensive position reacted and were about to switch to using rockets and grenades to intercept him, the barbarian suddenly threw his shield horizontally at them.

The huge shield spun and whistled through the air. Meanwhile, the barbarian who had suddenly broken through the defensive position followed close behind it.

After he had thrown his shield, everyone realized the barbarian was wearing a full set of heavy armor that even bullets could not penetrate.

Before this, the expeditionary army had never been seen wearing such heavy armor. Therefore, no one knew the barbarians actually had that kind of defensive armor.

From the look of it, this was specially prepared for the barbarian elite to break through the defensive line of the Central Plains people. When a powerful individual possessed an unparalleled defensive capability, they would become extremely terrifying to deal with.

Just like Ren Xiaosu's armor, normal firearms were absolutely no match for it.

The heavy shield flew towards the defensive position and headed straight for the machine gunner!

Just as the shield was about to crush the machine gunner to pieces, a figure in a white mask suddenly appeared from the side and caught the shield with both hands.

In that same instant, White Mask's arms suddenly exerted strength and threw the shield back.

The barbarian did not seem to have expected someone to be able to catch the flying shield, so when it was sent flying back, it was too late for him to dodge, because the inertia of his charge was too great.

A second later, he sneered beneath his heavy faceplate. The Central Plains people were doing what he just did.

Thinking of this, he reached hands out to catch the flying shield and prepared to continue his attack.

But the moment his palm came into contact with the shield, the barbarian was stunned, because the momentum of the shield was much greater than the force of his initial throw!

The startled soldiers at the defensive position saw the barbarian who had let down his guard get knocked back by the flying shield.

P5092 had already arrived at this position. The soldiers here hesitated and said, "Sir, we didn't expect that barbarian to be so speedy. He was even wearing heavy armor, so we were nearly caught out..."

The soldiers felt very ashamed. If they allowed the barbarians to break through on the very first day, how were they supposed to fight the rest of the battle?

However, P5092 consoled them with a smile and said, "Don't worry, it's just the probing phase right now. The barbarians and I are both trying to see what tricks each of us have up our sleeves. It's a good thing to have found out they still have something like heavy armor on the first day of battle. The situation is ever-changing on the battlefield, so no one can guarantee they won't make any mistakes. Just be more careful next time."

After that, P5092 looked rather happily at Ren Xiaosu, who had rushed over. "Why did you know to arrange for White Mask to be here in advance? Did you know they would try to break through this side first?"

Ren Xiaosu replied, "I guessed."

P5092 nodded nonchalantly. Ren Xiaosu's accurate judgment of the barbarians could almost be categorized as magic.

He said to Ren Xiaosu, "You heard what I said to Ji Zi'ang just now, but I'd like to repeat it to you as well. Everyone else can die, but not you. You must survive until the end, not because you're the future commander, but because the defensive position can only continue to hold with you around. If you're gone, the defensive position can crumble at any moment.. Earlier, I said the seven mountains are our fault tolerance measures, but you have to understand that you're more important than those seven mountains."

Facing the heavily armored barbarian warrior, White Mask charged out from the defensive position and killed him in front of the defensive position. Then it stripped him of his heavy armor and brought it back to camp.

This was because P5092 had said he wanted to study the structure and load-bearing properties of the heavy armor, and Ren Xiaosu easily helped him with that.

After the ambush by the expeditionary army's heavily armored warrior, the entire defensive line became even more cautious.

In fact, the mutual probing conducted during the initial phase of the battle was just both sides constantly making mistakes and correcting them. It was not only the 6th Combat Brigade that wanted to find out what other trump cards the expeditionary army had. The expeditionary army was doing the same.

After the heavily armored warrior was killed by White Mask, no other similar heavily armored barbarian warriors appeared again in battle that day.

Everyone understood the expeditionary army did not only have one heavily armored warrior. It was just that the opponent felt it was not yet time to send out a large number of them into battle.

When these trump cards appeared again on the battlefield, it would probably be the time for both sides to fight to their deaths.

White Mask returned to the camp with the heavy armor. Even Ren Xiaosu found it too heavy to carry. "Moving so quickly while wearing this thing, it looks like the elites among the barbarians are also quite fearsome. If there's hundreds or thousands of such warriors, won't it be very dangerous for our position?"

P5092 examined the heavy armor and said, "Even if they have a unit of heavily armored warriors, they'll still need to sacrifice many lives to trade for this position. I've had a look at the ammunition brought by

the 6th Combat Brigade. Something surprised me quite a bit. Don't worry. When these heavily armored warriors appear again, I have a surprise in store for them."

If the defensive position could be so easily breached, P5092 would not have chosen to continue defending it after learning about the Pyro Company's defeat. He had said before that if the expeditionary army wanted to take down this position, they would have to trade with their lives for it, and he meant what he said.

The battle went on for four hours before the first group of defenders were rotated out. Since this was going to be a protracted battle, P5092 would have to consider the physical fitness and energy levels of the troops.

In a high-intensity battle that went on for a long time, if the soldiers got tired, their reaction speed and shot accuracy would decrease while their vision would gradually blur.

Therefore, P5092 had already drafted a new defensive plan to ensure that the soldiers at the defensive position were always energetic.

The first thing the troops who rotated away from the defensive position did was replenish their fluids.

They had been shouting and fighting at the front line without having much of a chance to get a drink of water. Some of them even shouted until their voices turned hoarse. Amid the intense gunfire, they had to shout as loudly as they could so their comrades could hear what they were saying.

In current battles, soldiers did not wear any communications equipment as there was nowhere to recharge them. The battle could last more than ten days or even up to a month, so communications equipment was no longer versatile for their operations.

Therefore, they could only return to the most primitive way—roaring.

Although some of the veterans in the relieved troops were exhausted, they still patted the recruits on their shoulders encouragingly. One of the veterans said with a hoarse laugh, "You've taken some lives on the battlefield now. From today onwards, you're also veterans."

Some of the recruits were still in a panicky state. The first time killing someone would always bring about a psychological impact on humans. This impact was definitely not something that could be eased by shouting some slogans.

But before they could fully lose themselves to their fear and panic, the veterans dragged them to the chow hall to eat and drink.

Then the veterans led them back to their barracks and conducted firearms checks. They did some basic physical training to prevent their muscles from tensing up before sleeping.

After going through a flurry of activities, the initial fear the recruits had was starting to subside.

This was the difference between veterans and recruits in the military. It was also the importance of having veterans lead recruits. The veterans would teach the raw recruits through their actions on what to do and how to dispel their fears.

When it was time to sleep, one of the recruits was lying in his sleeping bag with his eyes closed. But all he could hear was the sound of gunshots coming from the defensive position. As such, he realized it was impossible to quickly replenish his sleep and energy. How could he possibly sleep in a place like this?

When one of the veterans nearby realized the recruit was wriggling around in his sleeping bag, he gave him a kick and joked, "Yang Qingzhou, why aren't you asleep yet?"

Yang Qingzhou said meekly, "Platoon Commander, I can't fall asleep. The gunfire is too loud...."

The platoon commander thought for a moment and then plucked some cotton out from a hole in his military uniform's cotton-padded jacket before handing it to him. "Here, stuff your ears with it. Although it can't completely block out the noise, it'll help a lot. The other recruits who can't sleep, stuff your ears with cotton like he did."

A recruit asked, "Then what if we can't hear the command for us to muster?"

"Hehe, I'll kick y'all awake one by one. Now hurry up and go to sleep!" After that, the platoon commander crawled into his sleeping bag and started snoring within two minutes.

When the recruits who had just returned from the battlefield heard the snoring, they felt much more at ease. All of them stuffed their ears and quickly fell asleep from the exhaustion.

Only at this moment did the veteran platoon commander crawl out of his sleeping bag to check on the soldiers one by one. After confirming they were all asleep, he sat down at the entrance of the tent with a sigh.

The platoon commander lit a cigarette for himself. A few other veterans also came out from the tents beside his. They looked at each other and realized they were all facing the same plight.

The veteran platoon commander smiled and said, "When I saw them, I suddenly remembered when I was still a new recruit. At that time, Fortress Commander Zhang had just returned and was carrying out an internal purge. Our troops were stationed at the Zong Consortium's border to prevent their troops from coming over to cause trouble. In the end, a skirmish broke out on the same day we arrived at the border and many people died. I was very panicky then, but my platoon commander kicked me in the butt and I nearly faceplanted. Only then did I stop feeling anxious..."

Calculating the time, it had not been long since this soldier became a veteran.

But legacies in the military were actually passed down through the generations of people like these veteran platoon commanders. The high-ranking officers were in charge of strategy, while they were responsible for showing the recruits what war was about.

Next to him, a veteran puffed out a mouthful of gray smoke. "I've already been constipated for the past two days. I couldn't even take a dump after squatting there for a long time yesterday. A soldier in my platoon asked me why I took such a long trip to the latrine. Haha, I didn't even know how to answer him. I just told him that he'd understand soon, and then he told me today that he also became constipated."

This was actually a very crude topic, and their conversation was also very crude. But only those who had been in battle before would understand that in a high tension environment, it was very normal to either suffer from incontinence or constipation.

War was not about machines taking up arms to kill enemies and achieve victory. Instead, it involved people with flesh and blood, building a new wall for others with their own bodies.

It would soon start smelling at the defensive position as well. There was not enough spring water here for everyone to scrub down. Sometimes, the water supply could even get a little low.

Moreover, they couldn't go outside the defensive position to take a dump before running back in. If they really did that, they might not be able to make it back. Even if they managed to get back, they would probably have an axe stuck in their back or the like.

So they could only dig a latrine and bury their waste in there.

As such, this place was not as clean and tidy as one might imagine. The soldiers were not as glamorous as the heroes of legend. Instead, as time passed, they would only become more and more unkempt.

However, this did not stop them from understanding their purpose here.

## Chapter 938 - Tunnel Battle

Currently, the hygiene conditions at the defensive position were a big problem. It was not that the people here disliked keeping clean, but that there was simply not enough water.

Actually, P5092 had considered the issue of the water source when he chose this place to be their defensive position. The spring water that flowed out of the mountains was definitely enough for more than 6,000 people to drink.

As for having enough to take a shower with, that was really not the main consideration in war.

If it were a long-term war, P5092 would definitely make everyone wash their hands diligently and pay attention to hygiene. However, this battle was destined to end within a month. Whether the expeditionary army won or their 6th Combat Brigade emerged victorious, they would not be staying here for long.

It was the afternoon of the first day since the actual battle began. Two shifts of soldiers had already been replaced at the defensive position, and the expeditionary army's troops outside were also constantly being rotated. As long as the troops showed signs of fatigue, new troops would take over.

P5092 looked at Wang Yun and asked, "How many of their wounded and dead have they replaced with their fresh troops?"

Wang Yun said, "Four batches of troops have been deployed during this period. Some of them lasted on the battlefield for two hours, while others retreated after suffering 23% casualties. Their criteria for troop rotation can't be confirmed."

"How's the situation with their casualties?" P5092 continued asking.

During the battle, P5092 requested Wang Yun to keep track of everything that happened on the battlefield from the best vantage point so they could review it.

It was not enough to just fight a battle recklessly. They would need extremely precise data to support every decision.

Wang Yun recalled the scene in his mind and summarized, "The expeditionary army suffered a total of 2,169 deaths over the past eight hours. 1,891 of them died immediately while the rest died after going into shock from bleeding out on the battlefield. These barbarians should have some criteria they follow. If they're sure their comrades won't survive even after they save them, they'll just leave them. They're very decisive that way. I think there were a few of them who could have been saved, but their comrades did not help them. That could be because the expeditionary army's standard of treatment is not that good."

"What about the wounded?" P5092 asked.

"1,769 troops were lightly injured and carried away. I estimate that the injuries suffered by these people will quickly heal. There are also 312 who were seriously injured. I've confirmed they broke bones after getting shot by MGs, so they shouldn't be able to join the battlefield for the time being," Wang Yun said.

At this moment, Wang Yun started bleeding from his nose.

P5092 was stunned. "Rest up and don't overtax yourself. We still have a lot of battles to fight. From now on, you just have to remember how many of the enemies are dead and wounded. You don't have to remember the injuries they suffered."

From the look of it, it was quite tough for Wang Yun to analyze such a huge amount of data from the entire battlefield. After all, he was keeping track of the data in real time, and that was constantly changing by the second.

This was an extremely heavy burden on Wang Yun's brain, so much so that his body could not bear it any longer and resulted in him getting a nosebleed.

P5092 said, "However, it's not that I'm trying to abuse you, but I still hope you can try to remember the faces of each of their wounded. Can you do that?"

Wang Yun simply wiped the blood from his nose and said firmly, "Yes!"

"Mhm." P5092 nodded and said, "Once their wounded return to the battlefield, you must inform me as soon as possible. In principle, the expeditionary army has more than enough soldiers. With 70,000 soldiers against our 6,000, there shouldn't be a need to send their wounded back into battle no matter how we think about it. If you see them putting large numbers of their wounded back onto the battlefield, it must be that their strategic deployment has changed, or something could've happened within the expeditionary army."

"Understood." Wang Yun said, "Don't worry, I'll pay attention to that."

P5092 sighed in his head. At the very least, no one at this defensive position was unnecessary. Everyone was working hard for the final victory.

Then P5092 turned to look at the others. "This is only the initial stage of our defense. Personally, I don't think we should keep staying here and just wait to be attacked. We have to seek change!"

When Ren Xiaosu heard that, he realized P5092 was looking for a new strategy because he felt a sense of danger.

P5092 explained to Ren Xiaosu, "Back then, we didn't know the Pyro Company would be defeated so quickly, so I thought our 6,000 soldiers would be enough to hold off the expeditionary army here. But the problem now is that we were initially planning to trade ten of their lives for each soldier we have. Right now, we don't even have enough lives to trade for all of theirs anymore, so we have to think of other ways."

"Share what plans you have. We'll cooperate fully," Ren Xiaosu said.

P5092 nodded and said, "I'm afraid it'll be very difficult to change the overall situation of the battlefield by relying on our own strength now. So we have to think of a way to reduce the pressure on the Wang Consortium's side. That way, the sooner they win the battle on their front, the sooner we can disengage. Ji Zi'ang, can you open up a tunnel on your side that leads beyond Mt. Zuoyun? I'm talking about the kind that'll allow two or three people to pass through abreast."

Ji Zi'ang looked at Wang Yun. "How far out is this place from the mountains?"

Wang Yun said, "Six clicks."

Ji Zi'ang thought for a moment and shook his head. "I'm afraid that's beyond me. It's easy for me to open up a tunnel with my power, but it's too long a distance at six kilometers. Moreover, there's hard rocks everywhere in the wilderness. The mental strength I need to alter the hard surface is several times higher than normal, but I probably don't have enough capacity to do that. It's not a problem to open up this tunnel, but I'd probably have to work for 15 days while recovering my mental strength at the same time."

P5092 frowned. But Mo Fei suddenly said, "If I can guide you around the areas with hard rocks and calculate the most effective route, I think six days will be enough."

Everyone was stunned. Ren Xiaosu already knew that Mo Fei was actually Zero. It seemed that it was not difficult for an artificial intelligence like Zero to analyze the makeup of the mountains.

However, almost every time Zero spoke and offered to help, it was at the most critical moments.

Before this, Ren Xiaosu had always felt that Zero was a little unreliable, because its judgment was not entirely accurate when it came to matters in which it lacked data.

But from the look of it, it was quite reliable to let it analyze matters where it had known data.

Ren Xiaosu looked at P5092. "What do you want to achieve by creating this tunnel?"

"I'm thinking of sending troops to attack the expeditionary army's supply convoy outside." P5092 explained, "Now that the expeditionary army has surrounded Mt. Zuoyun, they must think their supply line is safe. But if we attack their strategic supplies at this time, it'll definitely give them a huge shock. And such a large number of troops will definitely require a lot of supplies. As long as we can destroy it once or twice, it'll be enough for the Wang Consortium to find an opportunity to win the battle!"

Ren Xiaosu thought for a moment and then said to Ji Zi'ang, "If it's a tunnel that only fits one person, how long would it take?"

Ji Zi'ang was stunned. "Two days would be enough then!"

Ren Xiaosu looked at P5092. "I can go alone.. There's no need to dig such a wide tunnel."

## Chapter 939 - The Last Mountain Is For Ourselves

"No." P5092 refuted, "As the future commander, why're you risking your life by going behind enemy lines alone at a time like this?"

"But I'm the most suitable person to handle this matter, aren't I?" Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Wang Yun, how long can the provisions at our defensive position last?"

Wang Yun said, "If we don't ration them, we still have enough to last us another ten days. I had thought the Wang Consortium would continue transporting supplies over, so I didn't plan for any rationing. But who could've expected the expeditionary army to act so quickly? The Wang Consortium can't transport their supplies over anymore. If we reduce the quantity of food to be distributed, we should still be able to last for another 15 days. After all, fighting a battle expends physical strength, so we can't reduce it by too much."

Ren Xiaosu asked P5092, "How long do you think this defensive battle will go on for?"

P5092 thought for a moment and said, "Around 20 days or so."

"So if you get the others to go, even if they really manage to harass the expeditionary army's supply convoys, they won't be able to bring back the supplies. But if I go, it'll be killing two birds with one stone. Not only can I harass them, but I can also solve the problem of the supply shortage at our defensive position."

"But the defensive position needs you more." P5092 said, "If you aren't around and those heavily armored warriors suddenly appear, how's the defensive position going to deal with them? It's not time for our troops to resort to using the firebombs yet. We have to wait for the expeditionary army to get more aggressive before we start using them."

P5092 had previously said that if the expeditionary army used their trump card and sent out the heavily armored warriors into battle all at once, he would give them a surprise.

And this surprise was the incendiary bombs brought by the 6th Combat Brigade. No matter how amazing the defensive strength of the heavy armor was, they were not fireproof.

In P5092's plan, although there would definitely be sporadic elite barbarians breaking through the defensive position in the early stages, he wanted this trump card to be kept for the most critical of moments. If they could inflict heavy losses to the enemy's heavily armored troops in one fell swoop, that would be a great victory for them!

But before that, Ren Xiaosu would have to be the one to deal with those elites who suddenly appeared on the battlefield.

If a high-level combatant like Ren Xiaosu was not at the defensive position, they would probably be forced to use the incendiary bombs prematurely.

Yang Xiaojin suddenly stepped forward. "I can take care of a few sporadic expeditionary army elites during the early stages. As long as they don't number more than a 100, I'm confident they won't be able to breach the defensive position. I just need Ji Zi'ang to build a sniper's nest for me in the mountain behind the defensive position."

The rear of the defensive position was backed by a perilous peak. If they could create a sniper's nest in the interior of that mountain, there would be no need to worry about Yang Xiaojin's safety.

Ren Xiaosu asked, "Are you sure?"

Yang Xiaojin said in a relaxed manner, "I've taken a look at the heavy armor they're wearing. Standard armor-piercing bullets will be enough to deal with them. One shot and they're dead for sure. And if they didn't get bogged down by the heavy armor, it might really be difficult for me to hit them judging by how fast they can move. There would be a chance I would miss if that were the case, but I'm a 100% sure now."

Ren Xiaosu understood what Yang Xiaojin meant. For normal firearms, heavy armor was indeed very effective against them. But if it was the black sniper rifle paired with armor-piercing bullets, it would be truly dumb of the barbarians to carry such a burdensome load.

P5092 hesitated for a moment. "This lady's marksmanship..."

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and said, "Oh, she's the one who taught me how to shoot, so you don't have to worry about that."

"But the 6th Combat Brigade did not bring much sniper ammunition with them either." P5092 said, "The 6th Combat Brigade does not have any particularly outstanding snipers, so the quantity they brought—"

Before he could finish speaking, he saw Yang Xiaojin's black sniper rifle get conjured. Yang Xiaojin said, "There's no need for bullets."

"How about this?" P5092 thought for a moment and said, "Ji Zi'ang will need two days to create the tunnel. In the meantime, we can assess if Ms. Xiaojin is up to the task tomorrow."

"No problem," Yang Xiaojin said.

At this moment, everyone was performing their duties and doing everything they could to win this battle.

Thinking of this, everyone felt inexplicably excited as though they were unaware this might be their burial place.

Wang Yun laughed. "I'm sorry, I was used to being held back by my colleagues back at the Kong Consortium. I even had to be wary of others plotting against me while carrying out my missions, so I'm still a little unused to being part of such a united organization all of a sudden."

Ji Zi'ang nodded. "I feel the same way as Wang Yun."

Off to the side, Wang Run watched all of this quietly. He did not say anything because he did not feel a sense of belonging to the Northwest Army. At Mt. Zuoyun, he was still considered an outsider who could not truly be trusted.

However, he could also understand Wang Yun's feelings as an intelligence agent himself. Wang Yun was an intelligence agent of the Kong Consortium, Ji Zi'ang was an intelligence agent of the Zhou Consortium, and he was an intelligence agent of the Wang Consortium.

Just as Wang Yun had said, they had to watch their backs at all times.

Everyone started moving. When the expeditionary army made a short retreat that night, Ji Zi'ang and Zero immediately created a tunnel from the defensive position that meandered out of the mountains.

Moreover, when Ji Zi'ang used his power to create the tunnel, he would not even make a sound that would alert the expeditionary army on the surface. This was what it truly meant to be an underground operation.

Ren Xiaosu sized up the dark tunnel and said, "Speaking of which, this tunnel should only be usable once or twice, right? The expeditionary army will discover this place once I head out once or twice."

"Don't worry, it's good enough to just harass them once." P5092 said, "Your mission is to unsettle the expeditionary army and make them think there's other troops out there in the wilderness. That way, they'll be restrained in whatever they do."

"By the way, you mentioned previously that it was necessary to keep the seven mountains that could be toppled by Ji Zi'ang as our trump cards. When do you plan on using them?" Ren Xiaosu asked.

"Six of them will be used to destroy the expeditionary army's most difficult to deal with main forces." P5092 explained. He then pointed out the six mountains for Ren Xiaosu. The mountains towered like sharp swords within Mt. Zuoyun as though they were safeguarding the defensive position.

Ren Xiaosu suddenly wondered, "But that's only six of them? What about the other one?"

P5092 said, "The last one will only be used if we're left with no choice. I hope there'll never be a need for it."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. He suddenly looked at the mountain behind him. The defensive position was built into this particular mountain.

P5092 nodded and said, "This is the one. If the day comes when we can't hold on any longer, I'll order Ji Zi'ang to topple this mountain as well. Then we'll all be buried here together with the expeditionary army."

When P5092 spoke, his tone was very calm. There was no inspirational air when he said they would perish together with the enemy as one would imagine. But these words made Ren Xiaosu understand he was ready to die.

It was no wonder P5092 said to Ji Zi'ang that anyone could die but him. So it turned out that Ji Zi'ang was the glorious last bullet the 6th Combat Brigade would fire.

Ren Xiaosu smiled.. "Don't worry, I won't let y'all die."

## Chapter 940 - Aroma-tactic

During the entire day of defensive battle, it felt like everyone only needed to lie low in the defensive position and shoot at the enemy. However, it was actually more tiring than it looked.

As some of the soldiers had fired too many shots, their ears were ringing from the gunfire.

Basically, every soldier that had just stepped down from their defensive position duties ended up having to shout at their comrades to get the message across when they headed to the temporary field mess to eat.

It was somewhat funny yet also a little sad.

In the afternoon, when the chow squad had just served some food to a soldier, the soldier shouted, "Give me another scoop of rice!"

That soldier of the chow squad muttered, "If you want additional servings, speak nicely. What are you shouting for?!"

However, the soldiers of the chow squad quickly realized something. The soldiers they were serving had been on the battlefield for too long and could not clearly hear what was being said to them.

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Some of the soldiers even suffered from shoulder pain. When they took off their outer jackets, there were bruises all over their shoulders. The bruises were caused by the recoil of their firearms.

It was not like the recoil was that strong, but they had been fighting for too long and had pulled the trigger too many times.

These grown men were not afraid of the cold at all as they laughed and compared whose bruises were more serious. If the bruises on anyone's shoulder were not obvious enough, everyone would laugh at them for not being serious in the battle and decide they did not kill enough barbarians.

After a day of fighting, everyone's lips became dry. Some of their lips were even chapped, making each of them look more pathetic than the other.

But even so, they could still laugh at their plight.

No one knew what they were comparing the bruises on their shoulders for. In any case, it was all about being happy.

Just as Ren Xiaosu had said a long time ago, did humans not deserve to be happy after the era of the wastelands arrived? Did everyone in this era have to struggle to survive with a bitter face?

That should not be the case.

In town, no matter how poor an adult was, they would still happily buy pork to make dumplings for their children during the New Year.

Some fathers would even buy sweets from Wang Fugui's shop and hide them in their children's pockets to surprise them.

Their lives were very tough, but wasn't it precisely because humans were a species that was extremely good at finding joy in suffering that they could survive that disaster?

A materialistic lifestyle was never the foundation that determined whether humans were happy.

At this moment, a group of like-minded companions who fought hard to fend off foreign enemies and suffered together was what made them feel at ease.

In a row of latrines, the soldiers of a combat platoon were all squatting inside and taking a dump with great difficulty. When someone finally came out, they gave a roar of happiness which invited jeering from their comrades in the latrines next door.

Sometimes, a man's happiness could be as simple as this. A recruit maturing into a veteran through constipation, a boy becoming a man through the flames of war, these were the most realistic portrayals of what was happening at this moment.

However, the expeditionary army's attack this time came even faster and more ferocious than expected.

After a two-hour truce, the expeditionary army's troops appeared outside the defensive position again.

The soldiers in the latrines were all cursing as they pulled up their pants. "These barbarians are really something. They didn't even let us finish shitting before returning to fight again. What are they in such a hurry for? To eat shit?"

There was no sense of "refinement" in this place. Everyone had returned to their most primitive and crude selves, yet they still found each other's company extremely enjoyable.

Ren Xiaosu watched from afar as these veterans hurried out of the latrines. He suddenly thought of something and turned around to ask Wang Yun, "Um... can you draw away the air from the latrines? The defensive position isn't exactly big, but it's not small either. The toilets are way too smelly."

Wang Yun's expression changed. "Future Commander, you're actually asking me to do a job like that?"

Ren Xiaosu said unhappily, "C'mon, you're stationed here as well. Don't you find the smell horrible?"

"It's really bad," Wang Yun said upon thinking for a moment.

After all, there were more than 6,000 people at the defensive position. Could anyone possibly hold their shit in until they returned to the Northwest?

Ren Xiaosu said, "Don't feel insulted. After Ji Zi'ang is done with the tunnel works, I'll get him to use his power to make a cesspit and bury all this shit before digging a new one, so there's no need to despise each other."

"Alright." Wang Yun said with a bitter expression, "But the smell is constantly wafting out. How much mental strength would I need to use to get rid of it?"

Nearby, Zero suddenly said, "You control the air to create an air pressure vortex above the latrines and form a wind tunnel. Once the air pressure vortex is formed, you'll only need to maintain the updraft every now and then like a tornado. Do you know about wasps? Actually, a long time ago, many scientists believed the surface area of a wasp's wings was not enough to support its flight. However, it still manages to fly very fast. In fact, a wasp's wings don't flap up and down but back and forth at high speeds. That creates a low-pressure vortex around it at a frequency of several hundred beats per second..."

Wang Yun was stunned. "Don't talk about wasps. Say it more clearly. I know the principle behind it, but I don't really understand how it works."

In the end, Zero led Wang Yun straight to the command post to look for pen and paper. Zero forcefully drew a model for Wang Yun and even provided him with some parameters.

After Wang Yun came back, he stood next to the latrines and hesitated for a long time. To be honest, he did not expect that his superpower would one day be used in this manner.

He was a supernatural being, so how did his power suddenly become the new ventilation system for toilets?!

However, Wang Yun was amused as he thought about it. When he started to accept the fact, he actually found it quite interesting.

The air above the latrines started surging. A large volume of air moved upwards quickly and formed a huge low-pressure vortex.

Wang Yun asked, "Future Commander, where do you want it to blow towards?"

"Towards the expeditionary army's battlefield, of course," Ren Xiaosu said matter-of-factly. "That'll teach those barbarians!"

"Alright!" Wang Yun agreed.

As they spoke, a huge tornado carrying a pungent stench drifted towards the expeditionary army from the defensive position. When the wind reached the expeditionary army's troops, several barbarians vomited on the spot!

The barbarians were nearly physically impenetrable, and they even had heavily armored warriors who were not afraid of firearms. But no matter how good their physical defense was, they could not

withstand this smell. The expeditionary army's commander was almost nauseated by the smell. He wondered if this was the Central Plains' biological weapon he heard about in legends.

Didn't Black Robe say that biological weapons were banned in the Central Plains? Why was there still something like that then?

In this confusion, the expeditionary army started retreating. This sight stunned Ren Xiaosu.

The expeditionary army's sudden attack on the first night was actually resolved by Wang Yun's power alone?

Ren Xiaosu chuckled and praised Wang Yun, "Tonight, you're the hero of our 6th Combat Brigade. With just that smelly attack, you were able to turn the tide of an overwhelming situation."

Wang Yun said with a dark expression, "Future Commander, don't say anything yet. It's grossing me out...."