

Chapter 951 - No Such Thing As A Bad Nickname

At the defensive position, the 6th Combat Brigade's soldiers were taking out the barbarians with their machine guns to their heart's content.

This battle started very suddenly and ended very quickly. The main forces of the expeditionary army had already started to reorganize. If not for the elite barbarians who said they would coordinate with the main forces from the inside for an attack, the barbarians would not have gone to battle again in such a hurry.

As a result, the expeditionary army paid a very heavy price in today's battle. Fortunately, the regimental commander leading the battle was still able to keep his cool. The barbarians did not panic when they retreated.

But even so, they still ended up paying with the lives of over 3,000 soldiers in this battle.

When the soldiers of the 6th Combat Brigade saw the barbarians retreating, the entire defensive position immediately cheered. Although they knew the war was far from over and they still had to face extremely tough battles after this, it did not stop them from getting excited at this moment.

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A veteran next to a heavy machine gun said animatedly, "See that? The barbarians were just about to pull out of range, but I managed to squeeze a shot through a gap in their shields and hit a barbarian in the head. How godlike is that? I told y'all I'm a sharpshooter. Y'all should've seen your expressions!"

A few soldiers sat down at the position and took off their boots right then and there. Immediately, the entire machine gun nest was filled with a faint stench of feet.

The boots were extremely thick and heavy, and all of the soldiers had tied their bootlaces tightly. Although it helped them be more nimble in battle, it made their ankles really sore after a prolonged period.

When they all took off their boots, some of them immediately let out a sigh of relief.

Today's battle had lasted for a full 16 hours, with four watches of soldiers rotating through this position alone. Everyone was extremely exhausted.

Suddenly, the aroma of meat drifted across the defensive position. Some of the veterans' eyes widened. "Meat, it's the smell of freshly stewed meat! It's not canned luncheon meat!"

"You can even distinguish by smell?" a recruit wondered.

"Of course." The veteran chuckled, "When you get sick of eating luncheon meat, you'll be able to tell as well. Quick, go and send someone to collect the food. If we're late, the meat will probably be finished by the others."

After some ten minutes, several dozen soldiers came back with their aluminum mess tins filled with food. They said excitedly, "Don't worry about the meat running out. Brigade Commander Zhang said there's plenty for everyone today!"

The veteran wondered, "Eh, where did the meat come from?"

"The brigade commander said that it was brought back by the future commander. I heard that he went out and robbed five of the barbarians' supply convoys." The recruit explained with a smile, "There's not only meat but fresh vegetables as well!"

When everyone heard there were fresh vegetables, they got even more excited than when they heard about the fresh meat.

Ever since they came to the Central Plains from the Northwest, they basically had carrots, radishes, and potatoes along the way. It was not that the Northwest Army was poor, but that only these types of vegetables could be stored conveniently.

It was impossible to be particular about food when fighting a war. Ensuring they had enough nutrition and enough to eat was already a very difficult task.

But now, when the veterans opened their aluminum mess tins, one of them fell silent after seeing shredded pork with green pepper in it.

Actually, this was just a simple meal that consisted of shredded pork with green pepper. However, it evoked many of his memories of home.

When going on campaign, even minor details could make people immerse themselves in the beautiful times they had in the past.

War was cruel. The harsher the environment, the more they needed these beautiful moments as support to continue fighting.

"I miss home." The veteran sighed.

A recruit suddenly asked, "Platoon Commander, what made you join the military?"

The veteran smiled. "I felt it was an honor. Y'all came from the Zong Consortium's territory, so you won't understand. To the people of Fortress 178, it's an honor to be able to defend the fortress."

"Do you regret it?" the recruit asked.

"What's there to regret?" The veteran held his mess tin up and shoveled down some of the shredded pork with green pepper. "When you're old and playing chess with other old men on the street, all you have to do is mention you've served as a soldier of Fortress 178, and those old men will automatically show you more respect. This is something that I can brag about for the rest of my life."

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After securing a great victory, nothing would make the soldiers happier than getting a good meal. P5092 quietly watched the soldiers shuttling back and forth near the chow tents and suddenly said to Ren Xiaosu in a solemn tone, "Thank you, Future Commander. These supplies came really timely."

They had begun rationing provisions the previous day to ensure there would be no shortage of food at the defensive position. Each soldier started receiving half the usual quantity for their meals just so there would be enough food to last.

However, after their rations had been reduced for just a day, Ren Xiaosu brought back an unimaginable amount of provisions.

The food from the five supply convoys he had brought back amounted to a very large quantity, with half of it previously looted from the Pyro Company by the expeditionary army.

Those were the provisions left behind by nearly a 100,000 troops. Even if there was not much left, it was easily enough for the 6th Combat Brigade to deal with their emergency.

Ji Zi'ang suddenly felt a sense of joy when he saw the atmosphere at the defensive position livening up again. He suddenly felt that men should fight alongside a group of like-minded people in a place like this.

But before he could rejoice for long, he saw Wang Yun walk over with a smile. "Old Ji, you've scored a really valorous deed in this battle. Not only did you manage to disgust the barbarians, but you've cleared out the cesspit as well. Y'know, Zhang Xiaoman was still worried the cesspit was too small yesterday. What if it spilled over? And then you came along and solved the problem immediately."

Ji Zi'ang's mouth twitched a little. Actually, he had no intention to bring up this achievement.

But Wang Yun continued, "And now, your achievements have spread throughout the 6th Combat Brigade. Do you know what they're calling you now?"

Ji Zi'ang got an ominous feeling. "What?"

"Hahahaha," Wang Yun suddenly burst out laughing. "They call you the Cleanser of the Altars1!"

Ji Zi'ang was speechless.

"How do you like this nickname?" Wang Yun asked happily.

"They're just cracking a joke," Ji Zi'ang said with a dark expression.

"Come on, didn't you say it before yourself? There might be names in this world that were given badly, but there's really no such thing as a bad nickname!" Wang Yun said.

Before this, the nickname of Qin Shihuang had been troubling Wang Yun for several days. While he was feeling depressed, Ji Zi'ang rubbed salt into his wound by saying there was no such thing as a bad nickname.

He finally returned the favor to Ji Zi'ang. Wang Yun felt the gloom in his heart had suddenly dissipated, and he felt much better!

Ji Zi'ang's face was flushed as he watched Wang Yun walk away triumphantly with his hands behind his back. His entire reputation was probably going to be ruined!

However, Ji Zi'ang actually chuckled as he thought about it. "Damn, which bastard gave me that nickname?"

A soldier who passed by said softly, "Actually, that nickname was given by Commander Wang Yun. We just thought that it was very appropriate...."

Ji Zi'ang's face darkened once again.

## Chapter 952 - The Barbarians' Desperate Counterattack

The soldiers were able to take a short rest after the great victory, but not the commanders.

Before everyone could even digest the food in their stomachs, P5092 called for an emergency war meeting.

The modestly sized command post was packed full of commanders and staff officers of all ranks.

Everyone was unsure why P5092 had summoned them. Didn't they just score a resounding victory?

Then P5092 swept his gaze across the officers in front of him and said, "Although we've just won a battle, everyone should understand that we'll have to face an even more brutal battle next. Time is tight, so I won't discuss it any further. We'll just assign the defensive tasks directly."

Everyone looked at one another and suddenly felt a sense of urgency. It was as though P5092 felt that a great disaster was about to befall the defensive position, and this left them even more puzzled.

P5092 looked at the 1st Regiment and said, "Previously, the 1st Regiment had been deployed as the maneuver force, so it was relatively simple carrying out your rotational defensive missions. But starting from tonight, things will be different. Beginning from zero hundred hours to zero six hundred, I want the 1st Regiment to be deployed at Position 3 and be on Level One combat readiness."

The 1st Regiment's commander, Qian Yiwen, was stunned. "Sir, so far, the barbarians have never launched an attack during the wee hours of the morning."

P5092 glanced at him and said, "It's precisely because they've never done so during this period before that it's easy to assume their attack patterns. So we need to be more vigilant. Moreover, you must prepare the soldiers for the worst. From today onwards, you all will have to bear the most important task of defending the entire defensive position."

Everyone looked at each other. According to P5092, if the barbarians were to launch their fiercest attack, they would definitely choose the period before dawn.

P5092 said, "We need a clear line of sight to use our Central Plains' firearms effectively, but the barbarians don't have that requirement when they attack. Even if we consider the advantages that each side has, the expeditionary army is still likely to launch a night attack rather than purposely avoid this period. That is where the problem lies, and I'll only explain this once. 2nd Regiment, I need you to prepare the things I've briefed you about."

The 2nd Regiment's commander, Kong Sheng, stood at attention and said, "Roger."

"If I'm not wrong," P5092 said, "the expeditionary army will either launch a full-scale attack tonight or tomorrow night at the latest. Everyone, it's all up to you whether we can hold the defensive position successfully or not. Perhaps we might all die here in another few days. The barbarians have many more troops than us, so even if we just clinched a great victory, they still have ten times our strength."

"All of you should also understand that in my battle plans, I'm pitting us against the expeditionary army in a battle that's ten on one. So the most optimistic scenario is that we perish here together with the barbarians. Over the next few days, you guys might not even have time to sleep. There will be people getting injured, and some of you might get exhausted. But I hope that everyone will constantly remember your purpose here before those moments arrive. Alright, meeting adjourned."

After that, all the officers walked out of the command post. Off to the side, Wang Yun asked, "Aren't you afraid it'll affect their morale if you deliberately make the situation sound so bad?"

"If I don't tell them, wouldn't they come to that conclusion themselves?" P5092 said calmly, "Honestly, we're all aware of the situation we're facing now. Desperate times call for desperate measures. I want to etch into their minds during the battle that killing ten barbarians will only be enough for us to draw even with the enemy. If they kill one more barbarian on top of that, another one of their comrades might be able to survive. This requires the courage to fight to the death; it's a strength that's gained from despair in the face of adversity."

"Then why did you speculate that the barbarians will force an attack?" Wang Yun wondered.

P5092 did not answer this question.

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Mt. Zuoyun lay quiet in the wilderness of the pitch-black night. Amid the towering mountain peaks, the defensive position appeared exceptionally insignificant and powerless.

But in fact, hundreds of blinds spread out across the defensive position in a staggered manner. When the soldiers traversed the trenches, the blinds reached as high as their chests.

This was even when the expeditionary army did not use any firearms and explosives, but if they did, they would have to dig bomb shelters and trenches so deep they would need ladders to climb up. Then, to observe the situation outside the trenches, they would even have to use periscopes to look over like they were in a submarine.

At the defensive position, the blinds were staggered like rows of houses. P5092 even gave specific names to every main route, such as Zhenxing Road, Killing Barbarians Road, and so on.

It was not because he wanted to boost their morale, but to facilitate the quick delivery of orders during chaotic battles.

Actually, this was a commonly used tactic in ancient warfare. Ever since people developed other forms of warfare communication, this method was gradually abandoned. But now that the 6th Combat Brigade could no longer depend on their communications equipment, P5092 reimplemented this method.



At this moment, a veteran was leaning against a trench blind on Zhenxing Road and was carving some words on it with a shell casing. A recruit went over to have a closer look and was surprised to see the words "Zhenxing Road."

But just as the recruit was about to say something, the veteran suddenly stood upright and looked over the blind with a pair of military binoculars.

In the distance, black figures could be seen rushing over at high speed. The dense crowd of people moved like a tidal wave and made the veteran's scalp tingle. "We're under attack! Quick, tell the command post that the barbarians are here!"

Everyone was curious if P5092 had made the right call when the barbarians clearly never launched an attack during this time before.

But now, everyone knew the answer. P5092 was right.

At the command post, Wang Yun turned to P5092 after being informed of the enemy attack. "How on earth did you guess that the expeditionary army would come? You didn't answer me last time."

"Because I went to check on the supplies Future Commander brought back." P5092 said, "Although there's quite a lot of supplies, a quarter of them was black bread. You had a taste of the black bread too. It's astringent, bitter, and sour. I doubt even the barbarians like eating something like that, right?"

"Yeah." Wang Yun said, "I don't think it's something fit for human consumption."

"This shows that their supplies are running really low. Perhaps the environment in the north is too harsh, so they don't have enough to eat, and that's why they headed south," P5092 analyzed. "But just when they breached the Pyro Company's defensive line and found a new source of supplies, it ended up getting snatched away by Future Commander. Including their own supplies and the ones they took from the Pyro Company, Future Commander did not leave anything behind for them."

"So their plans for the resources obtained from the Pyro Company to support the battle were disrupted by Future Commander," Wang Yun said with a start.

"That's right." P5092 said, "Now that their supplies have been stolen, if they still don't stake everything on this attempt and launch a full-scale attack, they might starve before they even have a chance against the Central Plains. Although it sounds a little weird, the barbarians no longer have the initiative. You might not believe it, but they might already feel that this will be their last desperate counterattack...."

To be honest, Ren Xiaosu never thought he could have such a great impact on the overall situation by just plundering a few supply convoys.

#### Chapter 953 - Man-portable Thermobaric Explosives

The supply line was known as the lifeline because if it got destroyed, more than a 100,000 soldiers at the front line would get plunged into starvation.

No matter how brave the soldiers were or how great their commander's military expertise was, once they ran out of food, it would be a terrifying event that would inevitably lead to their defeat in war.

When P5092 came to Mt. Zuoyun at the beginning, he was not actually planning to disrupt the barbarians' supply line. After all, the barbarians would definitely guard it heavily, and that was exactly how it was. In order to protect their supply line, the expeditionary army surrounded Mt. Zuoyun with 70,000 troops.

Therefore, P5092 only wanted to force the expeditionary army to come here and trade their lives for the position. He did not think his strategy would pose any threat to the barbarians' supply line.

But neither P5092 nor the expeditionary army could have expected that this impossible task would really be so "conveniently" completed by Ren Xiaosu.

Currently, the expeditionary army was facing a food shortage. They did not wish to launch an all-out attack at this time, but the situation forced their hand.

Just as P5092 had said, the expeditionary army was launching a desperate counterattack.

Wang Yun was stunned. But when he saw P5092 with a frown on his face, he asked, "Since we have the initiative now, why are you still frowning?"

"Because from this moment on, the true brutality of war will be vividly showcased." P5092 said, "War's not a chess game on a chessboard but a journey towards tragic victory built on the backs of many lives."

The inside of the tents glowed orange while the outside was pitch-dark. Several flares shot up into the sky above the defensive position and released a blazing red glow before falling down to the ground slowly.

While in midair, the magnesium powder in the flares burned brightly as it reacted with the oxidizing agent, barium nitrate. It was a truly spectacular sight.

But under this beautiful glow, the hideous expeditionary army charged forward with their ugly leather shields. This time, the expeditionary army's pace of attack was several times faster than before. Just as P5092 had guessed, the barbarians could no longer tolerate the 6th Combat Brigade's presence at Mt. Zuoyun. They would have to end the battle here as quickly as possible.

At the defensive position, the heavy machine guns were spitting out barrages of fire that resembled red-orange eggs in the night. When the 12.7 mm bullets burst out from the gun chamber at a speed of 800 meters per second, they resembled a burning flame in the darkness.

As the bullets passed through the rifling in the barrel, they started spinning rapidly, and this spinning force helped it to penetrate everything in its path.

After being hit by such tremendous power, the barbarians' leather shields started cracking like hideous flowers blooming in the mud.

However, there was no longer any hesitation from the barbarians today. They held up their rapidly deteriorating shields and kept charging forward just so they could get to the point below the defensive position before their shields were completely destroyed.

This was a tactic that held no regard for their lives. The barbarians sent here paved the way for the rest of the troops like they were cannon fodder. They sacrificed themselves to close the gap between the expeditionary army and the defensive position.

When P5092 saw this from the defensive position, he called Zhang Xiaoman over and instructed, "It looks like the barbarians will try to breach our defensive position and catch us off guard tonight. They probably still don't know we're waiting for them, so they launched their fiercest attack immediately. Go and tell the 2nd Regiment that the things I had them prepare will get put to use soon!"

As the expeditionary army gave their all to breach the defensive position, the defenders finally penetrated the barbarians' heavy shields when they were about 400 meters away.

But a second later, several dozen heavily armored warriors rushed out from behind the shields. They held steel shields in their hands and charged forward bravely without fear of death.

The barbarians who died earlier were just cannon fodder. Not until they were 400 meters away did they reveal their intentions.

So it turned out the cannon fodder's mission was to conceal the presence of these heavily armored warriors behind their leather shields and escort them here.

The heavily armored warriors were wearing their own armor and carrying steel shields that were dismantled from the Pyro Company's armored brigade they had defeated.

The 6th Combat Brigade quickly concentrated their heavy machine guns' firepower near these several dozen barbarians. But even if they could delay their advance a little, they were unable to deal any effective damage to these heavily armored warriors.

P5092 said to a staff officer, "Tell the 2nd Regiment to intercept them right away."

At Position 1's Northwest Road, 20 soldiers taking cover behind the blinds suddenly placed an RPG-like weapon onto their shoulders and aimed them at the heavily armored warriors, covered by their comrades' fire.

The 2nd Regiment's commander calculated the distance between them and the barbarians and shouted, "On my mark! Once those heavily armored warriors get within 310 meters of us, open fire! No fucking breakfast tomorrow for those who miss their targets!"

These soldiers were not carrying RPG launchers but thermobaric bombs! It was the most terrifyingly destructive weapon among all the incendiary bombs!

Initially, napalm was commonly used in the wars between the Alliance of Strongholds. However, it was gradually phased out.

Some people said that napalm attacks were too cruel. But in fact, if there was really anything that could make the military give up a weapon voluntarily, it was most likely an even more advanced weapon that could replace it.

This time, the 6th Combat Brigade came to the Central Plains with 32 single-use, man-portable thermobaric bombs. Currently, they were all in the hands of the 2nd Regiment.

"Open fire!" the 2nd Regiment's commander roared.

As soon as he gave the order, 20 thermobaric bombs were launched onto the battlefield.

The thermobaric bombs landed near the targets in the blink of an eye. Instantly, the first microexplosions occurred, and the secondary charges within were quickly dispersed into the air.

The secondary charge was not an explosive but a high-energy fuel such as ethylene oxide.

When the second explosion went off, the fuel burned at intense temperatures, instantly reaching up to 2,500 degrees Celsius at the explosion's core. This caused an extreme pressure to build up and created a powerful blast wave.

As the thermobaric bombs did not contain an oxidizing agent, all the oxygen in the surrounding air would be consumed upon an explosion, and an anoxic zone would be created.

As the heavily armored warriors charged forward bravely, the thermobaric bombs exploded around them. A modern civilization had collided violently with a barbaric civilization.

No matter how strong the barbarians' heavy armor was or how solid their shields might be, the high temperature and pressure would wipe everything out.

Then the anoxic zone created would cause the subsequent barbarians who rushed in to quickly suffocate.

But P5092 suddenly frowned. "Wang Yun, is there any difference between this group of heavily armored warriors and the ones that rushed out the first time?"

Wang Yun quickly compared the differences between the two groups. It only took him a second to say, "Something's not right. The heavily armored warriors this time are much slower than the first ones we saw!"

P5092 sighed. "I see. Order the 2nd Regiment to stop launching the thermobaric bombs and wait for my orders."

P5092 was glad he had anticipated this and was prepared beforehand. He did not order the 2nd Regiment to fire all of the thermobaric bombs in one go and kept 12 unused.

That was because the heavily armored warriors who showed up this time were probably just the higher-level cannon fodder the expeditionary army used to deplete their weapons and supplies. The real elites were still hidden in the shadows!

## Chapter 954 - Veterans Illuminate The Path Forward For Rookies

The heavily armored warriors who appeared this time were definitely not as quick and powerful as the first ones who appeared.

This incident undoubtedly reminded P5092 again that the enemy he was facing was extremely cunning and cautious in terms of tactics and strategies.

The incident back when the Pyro Company was lured north and nearly got wiped out was still fresh in his mind. P5092 said to a staff officer, "Tell the 2nd Regiment's commander to keep the remaining thermobaric bombs for now. I'll have the 4th Regiment use mortars to slow down the expeditionary army's attacks for the time being."

The staff officer left to carry out the order. Wang Yun said, "Although those heavily armored warriors can't be compared to the ones back then, they're still considerably strong, being somewhere between the elites and the average soldier. This expeditionary army is really ruthless. They're actually trading lives to probe our defense."

"We'll just have to counter whatever they throw at us. Since it isn't the first time I've dealt with them, I'm not too worried about it," P5092 said..

"Then what are you worried about?" Wang Yun asked.

"I'm worried that something will happen to the weapons we're depending on," P5092 said.

Wang Yun was taken aback. "Are you saying there's a problem with the weapons supplied by the Wang Consortium?"

"No." P5092 said, "You've checked them as well. They're fine. I'm referring to the lifespan of the HMGs and the lack of ammo."

Humans had a lifespan, and so did guns. Someone once tried to continuously fire an automatic rifle to see what would happen.

In the end, the barrel of the automatic rifle slowly turned red hot before melting.

This was the situation they were facing. As the expeditionary army was attacking too aggressively, there was no time to cool the guns at many of the 6th Combat Brigade's positions.

Since the water from the spring was limited, it could not be used to cool the gun barrels. As such, the only way would be to have the soldiers pee on them. However, they would also run out of urine eventually.

Moreover, it was not only a matter of whether the gun barrels could withstand high-intensity battles. If any of the heavy machine guns were to malfunction, it might cause a certain position to crumble.

In war, all kinds of accidents could happen. Just like how people would fall sick, sophisticated machines would break down.

And the ammunition the 6th Combat Brigade had might not last very long. There were simply too many enemies.

At Position 2's Guangfu Road, a veteran was firing a heavy machine gun in bursts at the barbarians. As the machine gun spat out a barrage of fire, brass shells were constantly ejected out of the chamber.

Clinks rang as the numerous shells dropped to the ground and accumulated and collided with each other.



"Reload!" Seeing that the machine gun was about to run out of ammo, the veteran called his assistant over to reload.

The recruit ran over with a box containing the ammo belt. He opened the cover on top of the machine gun and inserted the first round of the ammo belt into it.

Everything was proceeding very smoothly, but when he wanted to close the cover, he realized he could not!

The veteran shouted, "What's the matter? The barbarians are almost in front of us!"

The recruit was nearly in tears. "I don't know! I can't seem to close the cover!"

The veteran took a close look and knew it was not due to the recruit being clumsy, but that the front section of the ammo belt was not aligned properly, resulting in the cover failing to close. They would have to readjust the ammo belt before loading it again.

Ammo belts were invented to provide more ammo for heavy machine guns with a high rate of fire. They were more practical than having to reload from magazines and ammo drums.

However, the ammo belt also had its own flaws, which was that its loading speed was far slower than that of a magazine and ammo drum.

Of course, this was caused by their own carelessness. Soldiers were supposed to check that everything was proper before heading into battle, and such mistakes were not allowed.

The veteran did not say anything further. He drew a dagger from his belt and started to fix the ammo belt. But there was no time. The expeditionary army in front of them was only a few dozen meters away from the position.

When the barbarians heard the gunfire stop, they immediately rushed forward. They were almost running with all their might.

The veteran roared, "Covering fire! Toss grenades, fire grenade launchers!"

The soldiers around him provided suppressive fire with their automatic rifles, but the power of the automatic rifles was negligible compared to the heavy machine gun's.

Some of the soldiers tossed their grenades at the barbarians, but when the barbarians saw that they were not far from breaking through the defensive position, they abandoned their battered shields and used their powerful physical fitness to avoid the trajectory of the grenades.

The hand grenades still proved to be effective, as many of the barbarians immediately lost their combat capacity when they were hit by the blast or fragmentation from the grenades.

Moreover, this defensive line was equipped with four handheld grenade launchers. In an instant, dozens of barbarians were killed by the blasts!

However, these suppressive fire measures were still not enough to deal with the numerous barbarians rushing fearlessly up to the position.

It was not that they were not deadly enough, but that the barbarians did not cower at all. When their comrades at the front died, those behind would automatically take their place and continue the charge. The barbarians were mentally prepared to sacrifice themselves to the suppressive fire.

And as long as a few sporadic barbarians managed to get close to the position, there would be a continuous stream of barbarians behind trying to force an opening from there.

The veteran finally fixed the ammo belt. However, it was too late. He could even clearly make out the facial features of the barbarians by now. They were so close he could almost hear their heavy breathing and ferocious roars.

It was over.

The veteran's face turned ashen. He pulled the soldier beside him over. "You're the machine gunner now!"

With that, he pulled out a strip of explosives wrapped in yellow paper from under the blind and prepared to jump out of the position.

Hand grenades alone would no longer be effective.

The recruit grabbed the veteran's arm. "Platoon Commander, where are you going? It's all my fault, I didn't check it beforehand—"

The veteran slapped him. "Don't you fucking get in my way! Learn from this! You're now a veteran too!"

The recruit realized his platoon commander intended to sacrifice himself and block the barbarians' path. He wanted to open up a new firing line for the machine gun position.

There was a seven-second delay for the explosives he was holding, so he could not toss them at the enemy. If the barbarians caught them and threw them back at the position, it would all be over.

The recruit suddenly remembered a conversation he had with the platoon commander a few days ago. "What's the difference between a veteran and a recruit other than not having gone into battle or killed someone before?"

The veteran's answer left him confused at that time. His platoon commander said, "The molars of our martyrs are buried under the copper bell at Fortress 178. They belong to the veterans who were killed in action. Do you remember the words engraved on that copper bell? 'Life should be a candle, burning brightly from wick to end.' The candle represents us veterans, and we're responsible for illuminating the path forward for you rookies and also shining the light home."

It wasn't until this moment that the recruit realized what those words meant.

The veteran propped himself up with one hand and prepared to vault over the blind.

But in the blink of an eye, the veteran suddenly saw a bloody mist erupting from two barbarians' chests five or six meters away from him!

Snipers! The two snipers!

## Chapter 955 - Effortlessly Like On Flat Ground

The sniper bullets that appeared suddenly on the battlefield dashed the expeditionary army's hopes of breaching the defensive position. Not only were the barbarians about to close in on the defensive line quickly killed, but some of their elites hidden among the troops were also spotted by Yang Xiaojin.

This way, the snipers exerted an even greater psychological toll on the expeditionary army. They could not understand how the snipers were able to identify the elite barbarians from so many soldiers, as they did not even put on any heavy armor in order to conceal themselves and avoid being fired upon by the Central Plains troops.

Ren Xiaosu was not capable of something like this. When he looked through the sniper scope, his observation ability would be weakened. Like any other person, his ability to observe things through a pair of binoculars or a surveillance camera would be weakened.

But Yang Xiaojin was different. She was used to looking at the world through a scope. Some elite barbarians hidden among the troops were looking for an opportunity to strike and did not charge forward fearlessly like the other barbarians, but she still managed to identify them at a glance.

Actually, Yang Xiaojin did not know the barbarians were the elites who were lying low.. But through her scope, she noticed they were moving stealthily and did not charge forward with the others, so she thought there must be something fishy about them.

Since there was something wrong with them, she would just take them out.

At first, when the two snipers joined the battlefield, the expeditionary army did not pay special attention to them. This was because they also knew about snipers from the Central Plains. Therefore, the commander felt the two snipers could not influence the situation on the battlefield.

If there were only two standard snipers here, they would not have much of an impact on the entire front. It would take a long time for them to reload, and they might also not have much ammo to kill enough of them. They would also require armor-piercing bullets to deal effective damage to their heavily armored warriors.

But Yang Xiaojin's and Ren Xiaosu's black sniper rifles were different from normal ones. First of all, they did not need to be loaded and had unlimited firepower. The fact that they could switch between whatever types of ammo they liked was enough for them to rule over the battlefield. It was like having two howitzers defending the position.

Back when Ren Xiaosu gave one of his black sniper rifles to Yang Xiaojin, she was so happy as she knew how powerful it was.

Therefore, P5092 no longer regarded these two as normal snipers on the main battlefield.

Throughout the course of the suppressive fire, the expeditionary army's commander continued keeping up their attacks for a long time. He thought the snipers would eventually run out of ammo. How many shots could the two snipers fire? 50? A 100?

Even if they could fire 4 or 500 shots, their expeditionary army still had tens of thousands of warriors. There would definitely be a time when the snipers ran out of bullets, right?

The expeditionary army's strategy today was to trade their lives for the defensive position, so they did not care about a few hundred of their comrades dying.

However, the expeditionary army's commander slowly realized the sniper shots seemed unending. After a rough count and several hundred shots later, they still did not hear the end of it.

He ordered his adjutant to record the frequency and number of shots fired by the enemy. In the end, he realized the two snipers lying on the opposite mountain were firing at a much more terrifying rate than the Central Plains snipers they knew. Furthermore, the number of shots fired gradually climbed to a 1,000, but there were still no signs of it stopping.

The gunshots of the anti-materiel sniper rifles were so loud they could be heard despite the continuous firing from the heavy machine guns. Gradually, the barbarians developed a fear of the sound of the gunshots. It was like someone was holding a remote control on the opposite side, and one of their comrades would die whenever it was pressed.

This feeling of having their fate decided by others was way too unbearable.

The expeditionary army's commander remained unmoved and did not order the barbarians to tone down their attacks. He still intended to sacrifice more lives to forge a path ahead.

Actually, this strategy was correct. After all, who would give up attacking just because of two snipers? If that were the case, they might as well retreat right back to the Far North.

Moreover, Yang Xiaojin's mental strength was almost depleted. Every time she fired a shot from her sniper rifle, it would exhaust her mental strength.

She started feeling dizzy and nauseous. This was a sign she had overexerted her superpower.

Other than Ren Xiaosu, all superhumans had a limit to their mental strength, and Yang Xiaojin was no exception either.

The ability to kill over a 1,000 people on the battlefield before her mental strength was exhausted was terrifying enough, but it was still no match for the expeditionary army's numbers.

But Yang Xiaojin suddenly thought of something and put away her black sniper rifle. After that, she took Ren Xiaosu's sniper rifle from him. "Get down there and help them guard the defensive line. I'll use your black sniper rifle instead."

Ren Xiaosu was stunned. However, he discovered she could really use his black sniper rifle. Moreover, Yang Xiaojin was shooting even faster than before.

Every supernatural being would deliberately control the rate at which their mental strength was depleted when using their superpowers. As Ren Xiaosu had always had unlimited mental strength, he did not have such a concept. However, other supernatural beings had a "meter" for their mental strength, so they would naturally pay attention to it. Furthermore, superhumans had developed a habit of being meticulous and would use their mental strength sparingly.

Therefore, Yang Xiaojin did not use her mental strength recklessly when she was shooting previously.

But it was different now. By using Ren Xiaosu's black sniper rifle, it was tantamount to consuming his mental strength instead. In this way, the final shackle that restricted Yang Xiaojin's Perfect Firearms Proficiency was lifted.

Ren Xiaosu did not know whether to laugh or cry when he saw this. He had thought the gap between Yang Xiaojin and him was closing up since he was a Master Firearms Proficiency user.

But now, he finally understood what a Perfect Firearms Proficiency user was.

When Wang Yun heard the subtle difference in the frequency of the gunshots, he turned around and looked at the mountain behind him. But to his surprise, he saw Ren Xiaosu climbing down the mountain while Yang Xiaojin was the only one left at the sniper's nest.

The rate of fire of this single sniper was only a little slower than when two snipers' were shooting. Wang Yun could not understand how that was possible.

The defensive line that was originally on the verge of collapse stabilized again, and the barbarians' reckless attacks started to ease up as well. Only at this moment did P5092 finally heave a sigh of relief.

He turned around and had a look at Yang Xiaojin, who was still shooting at the enemy from the sniper's nest. "This terrain, coupled with such a powerful sniper, was totally beyond what I planned for. When we first got here, I thought it was not a bad idea to perish together here with the barbarians. Then when Future Commander robbed their supply convoys, I started thinking that we might stand a chance of

winning. But for some reason now, I suddenly have this inexplicable confidence that we might even be able to fight this battle very beautifully."

But then P5092 was stunned. He picked up a pair of military binoculars next to him and looked at the mountain. Then he shouted, "It's an enemy ambush! There's gray creatures moving quickly above the sniper's nest!"

But as soon as P5092 said that, a figure in a white mask suddenly climbed up towards those gray creatures under the shadowy cover of the mountain folds.

Although the mountain was at a 75-degree inclination, White Mask climbed it effortlessly like it was running on flat ground.

## Chapter 956 - Killing Resolve

No one noticed when White Mask had hidden in the mountain. Earlier, everyone was wondering why Ren Xiaosu went to the sniper's nest when he had always been fighting at the front line during their battles.

In the previous few days of battles, Ren Xiaosu was like a firefighter who fought wherever the pressure was. And indeed, he had not at all used his sniper rifle during this time.

Everyone was still a little unused to his sudden use of the sniper rifle today. However, they did not ask him about it and just assumed he had adjusted the way he fought.



In fact, the two snipers' suppressive fire was indeed very strong, so everyone felt that Ren Xiaosu's tactical adjustment was very successful.

What they did not know was that the most successful factor in Ren Xiaosu's strategy was handing Yang Xiaojin his black sniper rifle. This allowed her to achieve unlimited firepower.

Right now, Yang Xiaojin found Ren Xiaosu's black sniper rifle to be extremely useful.. She did not have to worry about depleting her mental strength at all. Being able to do so was simply too enjoyable.

Someone below the sniper's nest cautioned her to watch out overhead. However, Yang Xiaojin did not even look and just continued to pour suppressive fire on the enemies below.

Ren Xiaosu had already given her the heads-up that someone was coming to ambush them, and that "Old Xu" was already lying in wait somewhere. Any enemies that showed up here would die.

The reason Ren Xiaosu came over in the first place was because Xun Yeyu had found him and said he had detected 32 powerful lifeforms appearing behind the mountain where the sniper's nest was located.

Xun Yeyu did not know what these 32 lifeforms were. In any case, they would definitely have to be the enemy. Who else would come here for no good reason?

Xun Yeyu, the mobile human radar, was truly useful on the battlefield. It wasn't until this moment that Ren Xiaosu finally admitted that Xun Yeyu was the seventh powerhouse of the 6th Combat Brigade.

The alliance of seven powerhouses was finally formed.

Just a moment ago, Xun Yeyu was still sitting in a chair in the command post, eating and drinking. Xun Yeyu was talking about the barbarians' movements while Wang Yun noted down every detail being said before recreating a concrete picture of the situation on the sand table.

With Xun Yeyu's support in combat command, P5092 knew the barbarians' movements like the back of his hand.

The only drawback was that this fair-skinned chubster had been too lazy in the past. His mental strength was too weak, so he had to rest for some time after each "scan," and this led to their reconnaissance being carried out intermittently.

White Mask was scaling the cliff. Eventually, everyone could make out that those gray creatures were actually the Experimentals, and there were 32 of them!

P5092 was stunned. He had heard from Ren Xiaosu that Experimentals had appeared in the vicinity of the expeditionary army. But now that he saw it with his own eyes, he still found it a little unbelievable. In everyone's opinion, the Experimentals should have ceased to be.

The Experimentals swooped down, moving with extreme agility on the rocks like they were some huge and strange gray bugs.

Meanwhile, White Mask charged upwards like an extremely sharp saber.

At the defensive position, Ren Xiaosu shouted to Ji Zi'ang, "Lend me your support!"

As he spoke, Ji Zi'ang stretched his hand out towards the mountain. With every leap White Mask took on the mountain, a flat rock would appear under its feet for support.

It was precisely because of Ji Zi'ang's cooperation that Old Xu was able to move so agilely on the mountain.

In addition, an Experimental that was swooping down at Old Xu found its next landing point suddenly turning to sand as the hard surface turned to a fine powder under the Experimental's hand. All of the momentum the Experimental had built up while charging down was lost.

This Experimental suddenly lost its balance and wobbled unsteadily towards Old Xu.

A second later, Old Xu leaped up with its black saber raised horizontally. It went past the Experimental that had lost its balance and sliced it in half at the waist.

In that split second, Old Xu did not stop moving and was heading straight for the next Experimental.

Ren Xiaosu watched this quietly. Yang Xiaojin had given him her absolute trust. Even with 32 Experimentals attacking from above, Yang Xiaojin did not stop shooting. If it were anyone else, they would probably have run away.

Ren Xiaosu also made his move. A flat stone step materialized under his feet as the young man fought his way up the mountain rocks.

The violent Old Xu and Ren Xiaosu, the calm Yang Xiaojin, the battle atop the mountain, and the fearless sniper holed up in the mountainside. This was a perfect picture of stillness and action, and it captured the full aesthetic of battle all in one scene.

As Ji Zi'ang constantly altered the terrain, he was shocked by this sight. At some point, he felt that the man and woman in front of him were meant to be together. If it were anyone else in the world, they wouldn't cut such a pleasing picture.

A couple like them would be the nightmare of any enemy.

As the Experimentals' corpses dropped without stop, P5092 walked over to check on them. He confirmed that they were indeed Experimentals.

With their gray skin and sharp claws, these creatures could no longer be called humans.

Then if Ren Xiaosu's guess was right, that intelligent being among the Experimentals had escaped from the nuclear explosion at Stronghold 74, and it even went to the North to join forces with the expeditionary army.

In that instant, P5092 thought of many things. He even suspected that the expeditionary army's sudden attack on the South was also suggested by that Experimental.

If that were really the case, they would have to find an opportunity to kill it in this war. Otherwise, that disgusting thing would keep causing trouble for the Central Plains.

While P5092 was thinking, Ren Xiaosu and Old Xu had joined forces and killed the last invading Experimental at the top of the mountain.

But the moment Ren Xiaosu reached the top, he suddenly saw a black-robed figure quietly sizing him up from the mountain across from him.

Next to Black Robe, dozens of barbaric Experimentals could be seen crawling around on the ground and roaring. They were getting restless.

However, Black Robe did not send them over to fight. That was because it knew exactly what kind of strength the young man at the opposite peak possessed. Moreover, although the two mountain peaks might look very close, there was actually a huge gap between them.

Black Robe gave a hoarse laugh. It did not matter. Soon, it would possess an army of Experimentals. At that time, the entire world would belong to it.

But Black Robe suddenly saw the young man opposite him raise his hand and run his finger across his neck in a throat-slitting gesture before turning around and disappearing from the mountaintop.

For some reason, a chill ran down Black Robe's spine. It could feel Ren Xiaosu's killing resolve. Logically, the young man and the Central Plains people at the defensive position were in a precarious situation. It was clear they would run out of ammo after the expeditionary army attacked for another few hours. At that time, the Central Plains people would die to the expeditionary army's steel axes, and the young man was no exception.

But even so, Black Robe still felt an inexplicable fear. It was as though that young man was really going to kill it.

Black Robe patted Valentin, who was crawling on the ground next to him, and said, "Lead the rest into the mountains and hide. Once the defensive position falls, I want you to seal off all of his escape routes and then kill him."

## Chapter 957 - The Mysterious Troops

At the very least, there was one thing that Black Robe was sure of. In such a high-intensity battle, the expeditionary army's reckless attacks would definitely deplete all of the 6th Combat Brigade's ammunition very quickly.

It wouldn't take long. Ten hours would be enough. If the attacks were even fiercer, eight hours might do it.

A brigade only had a limited amount of ammunition they could carry around. Furthermore, every military unit had a strict rule on carrying ammunition. This was commonly known as the standard ammo load.

If one were to describe it in detail, it would basically be like 60 rounds of pistol ammunition, 200 rounds of rifle ammunition, 500 rounds of machine gun ammunition for a platoon, 1,500 rounds of ammunition for coaxial machine guns for tanks, and 120 rounds of 82 mm mortar ammunition for each battalion.

The amount of ammunition they could carry was related to their battle endurance and also related to the weight the soldiers could carry. It was a very particular expertise since one should not carry too much, yet it could not be too little.

And this time, it was fortunate the 6th Combat Brigade had brought more ammo than normal when they set off from the Northwest. The Wang Consortium had also sent over another batch of heavy machine guns and heavy machine gun ammo. Otherwise, they would probably not even be able to last eight hours.

The battle was now a fight to the death, with victory and defeat to be decided within the next eight hours.

The Wang Consortium at Mt. Daniu was also aware of everything going on at Mt. Zuoyun. If Mt. Zuoyun were to fall, the Wang Consortium would have to bear the pressure of facing the remaining expeditionary army troops. This was also something they did not wish to see happen.

Therefore, just as the expeditionary army launched a fierce attack on Mt. Zuoyun, the Wang Consortium launched a full-scale counterattack at their side. They did not want to waste any more time and went all out against the enemy.

And this chain reaction was only possible because Ren Xiaosu had destroyed the barbarians' supply columns.

At this moment, Wang Yun said to P5092, "I've made rounds at the various positions. Based on the current ammo consumption, we'll face a no ammo situation in eight hours and 41 minutes. Of course, this is only theoretical data averaged out. The future commander's wife will also get tired. If we continue fighting for another eight hours, her shot accuracy will surely drop. At that time, suppressive fire from the sniper will not be as effective anymore, and the ammo consumption at the positions will increase."

P5092 nodded. "I understand."

After that, P5092 turned to look at Xun Yeyu and pointed at a position on the sand table. "If you sense more than 10,000 expeditionary army troops gathering at this location, you must inform me immediately."

Then P5092 said to Ji Zi'ang, "At that time, you'll collapse Mountain No. 6 to delay the expeditionary army's attack pace. Our current situation is not optimistic, but fortunately, we don't only have firearms and explosives as our trump cards, but everyone here as well. Alright, let's see to our own duties. Commander Zhang Husheng, I'll have to trouble you to stand guard at Position 2. Once any heavily armored warriors appear over there, you must kill them all."

The Great Hoodwinker chuckled and said, "Don't worry, as long as I still have strength left, they won't breach Position 2."

With that, everyone departed for their positions. When Zhang Xiaoman left, he glared at the Great Hoodwinker. "Old man, we'll settle the matter of you taking advantage of me another time. Let's finish fighting this battle first."

The Great Hoodwinker walked off happily. "You're making it sound like you can beat me. Besides, you weren't even born yet when I knew your father, so what's wrong with me taking advantage of you a little? Besides, how do you know for sure that I'm not your biological father?"

Zhang Xiaoman was so angry his eyes nearly popped out. This dishonest old man was really taking advantage of him at every opportunity! Jerk!

Zhang Xiaoman scolded, "Even if I can't beat you, do you think you can stop me from cursing you? Just you wait, I'll curse you until you vomit blood after the battle ends!"

P5092 walked to the defensive position and looked at the assaulting expeditionary army outside. Next to him, Wang Yun suddenly said, "Actually, you're not optimistic about our situation, right? Although I can't figure it out from your expression, I've counted that you blink 16 times a minute when you're relaxed and nine times when you're nervous."

P5092 smiled. "It's really difficult to hide anything from someone like you."

"Future Commander and his wife have clearly displayed their great strength, and everyone is also giving everything they have for this battle. Seeing that the expeditionary army's numbers are lessening, why are you still getting more worried?" Wang Yun asked.

"Because we're fighting an isolated battle here." P5092 sighed and said, "Just now, Xun Yeyu said that another group of troops have appeared in the northwest. There aren't many of them, only 2,000. They're currently 80 kilometers away, and based on their marching speed, they'll arrive at the battlefield in two hours."

Wang Yun was stunned. "That can't be right. Why would the barbarians be coming from the northwest? Shouldn't they be from the north? Could those troops be from our Northwest Army?"

Wang Yun's choice of words when mentioning the Northwest changed.

P5092 said, "You also know that Xun Yeyu can perceive the life force of others. According to him, other than Future Commander, as long as anyone appears in his mental perception, he can determine their strength based on the intensity of their 'flames.'"

Wang Yun immediately understood. "Xun Yeyu told you that those 2,000 troops are very powerful?"

"Yes." P5092 nodded and said, "Their flames are even stronger than that of normal barbarians."

Wang Yun was also shocked. It was impossible that there were so many powerful supernatural beings in the Northwest. If there were, the Great Hoodwinker and Ren Xiaosu would definitely know about them.

Therefore, for 2,000 elites to suddenly appear to the northwest, they had to be the barbarians' reinforcements. After all, no one knew how many barbarians there were in the North and how many troops they had, so it should be no surprise that they could send more people.

It turned out P5092 was not optimistic because Xun Yeyu had discovered the presence of the enemy's reinforcements.

This time, Wang Yun could not feel optimistic either.

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At the same time, a group of troops were advancing rapidly on the mountain roads in the northwest. They followed the highway that led to the Central Plains and left it when they were 310 kilometers away from Mt. Zuoyun, because the road did not lead to Mt. Zuoyun.

The 2,000-strong force crossed the mountains swiftly. It wasn't until they could see Mt. Zuoyun from afar that Luo Lan, the leader of the group, suddenly stopped in his tracks and looked at the map. "We're heading in the right direction. Mt. Zuoyun is up ahead. All fighting forces, be careful. We'll arrive at the outer perimeter of Mt. Zuoyun in an hour. After we take a break there, we'll go and beat the shit out of those barbarians. Understand?"



The commanders of various fighting forces responded over the radio, "Roger that."

"Roger that."

"Roger that."

At this moment, Luo Lan was wearing an XL-sized combat uniform. When he was checking the map, it looked like he was ordering food from a menu in a restaurant. He muttered, "I wonder if Xiaosu and the others can hold on until we get there. I think they can. After all, fighting the barbarians should be as easy as chopping melons for him."

Behind Luo Lan was an entire reinforced regiment of nanosoldiers. Every one of the soldiers had silvery strands on their faces.. The blood flowing through their veins was silver in color, and they looked just like 2,000 troops that had descended down from the Heavens.

## Chapter 958 - The War Escalates

"Fatty, why on earth did we come all the way out here to the Central Plains' battlefield?" Zhou Qi, who was standing next to Luo Lan, complained, "We've only been back in the Southwest for two days, but you're dragging us out again already. Our secret base was just destroyed by the Wang Consortium and the Anjing House, so why are you rushing here to help them?"

"It's not like I'm here to help the Wang Consortium." Luo Lan said nonchalantly, "It's definitely a good thing if the Wang Consortium's strength is weakened. They actually sent someone to destroy our base while they were facing such a formidable enemy here. Did they have too much free time or what? However, I'm here because of Ren Xiaosu, understand? A friend! That's what he is!"

Zhou Qi curled his lips. "You're making it sound like your friendship runs that deep."

"Of course it's deep." Luo Lan said, "Have you forgotten how he saved us back then? I might not have any other strong points, but you can't question my loyalty. A drop of water should be repaid with a fountain. Ren Xiaosu has saved me on so many occasions. Since I know he's trapped at Mt. Zuoyun this time, it won't be right if I don't help him."

"You're already doing a lot by bringing 2,000 nanosoldiers with you." Zhou Qi said, "The value of a nanosoldier is comparable to a missile. I wonder what you two brothers are thinking. To think that Qing Zhen is putting up with your nonsense as well! Is he really not afraid the Wang Consortium will take this opportunity to capture you?"

Luo Lan said unhappily, "Why do you always have to put a sum on everything? Can friendship be calculated in monetary terms?"

"What should I calculate it with if not monetarily?" Zhou Qi said disdainfully, "In this world, only money will not betray you. But friendship? You care so much about friendship, but let's see how many people will come and save you when you're in trouble."

Luo Lan chuckled and said, "Who cares if they'll help? It doesn't matter if you don't understand the importance of friendship, but don't worry, if you ever get into trouble one day, I'll definitely save you even if it means risking my life."

After Luo Lan said that, Zhou Qi fell silent.

This reinforced regiment that had rushed over from the Southwest had been marching for several days. When Luo Lan found out Ren Xiaosu was trapped at Mt. Zuoyun, he immediately organized the troops and set off for the Central Plains.

Fortunately, the Southwest and Northwest were connected by road, and the Northwest also had a highway leading to the Central Plains. This made it easier for their military trucks to rush to the battlefield.

At this moment, they were only about ten kilometers away from the outer perimeter of Mt. Zuoyun. Luo Lan suddenly stopped in his tracks. "We're nearly there, right? We should be able to contact them! Operator! Where's the operator? Contact the 6th Combat Brigade of the Northwest Army at Mt. Zuoyun."

Luo Lan had already contacted Fortress 178 before coming here, so he knew how to contact the troops at Mt. Zuoyun.

Currently, all of the 6th Combat Brigade's communications equipment were basically no longer in use. However, the basic military radio set was still in working condition to maintain communications with the Wang Consortium.

A radio set like this basically only had a communications range of several dozen kilometers. Therefore, Luo Lan had to get close enough before he could get in touch with the other party.

Luo Lan muttered, "Ren Xiaosu will definitely be very surprised when he finds out that I suddenly came to his rescue!"

When the call went through, Luo Lan immediately shouted, "Where's Ren Xiaosu? I'm looking for your commander, Ren Xiaosu. Tell him that Luo Lan has come to support you all in battle!"

After a brief silence on the other end of the call, Ren Xiaosu's puzzled voice said, "Fatty Luo? Why are you here?"

"I'm here to save my friend. Enough with the small talk, I'm leading 2,000 nanosoldiers in preparation to join the battle. Quick, tell me your battle plan so that I can organize an attack," Luo Lan said excitedly.

Unlike Qing Zhen who did not like waging war, Luo Lan was a war fanatic. In the past, the two Qing Consortium combat brigades he and Qing Zhen led had always been the Qing Consortium's main armies.

So Luo Lan got excited at the mere mention of war.

Honestly, Luo Lan had been very busy for the past year or so, but it was not because he had participated in a lot of wars. He was basically just busy stirring up trouble everywhere.

It was not that he wanted to be a shit-stirrer, but that the Qing Consortium needed someone like him to do their shady work. Qing Zhen did not have many people he could absolutely trust, so he could only depend on Luo Lan.

At this moment, in the command post, Wang Yun and P5092 looked at each other as they listened to Ren Xiaosu take the call.

They were just talking about how 2,000 barbarians had suddenly appeared in the northwestern direction, and that made them very worried it would affect the battle. In the end, it turned out that reinforcements had arrived!

Xun Yeyu's mental perception would not be wrong, but P5092 really did not expect it to be reinforcements!

Seeing that the ammunition at the defensive position was about to run out and that the enemy was going to up their troop numbers further, P5092 appeared calm but was actually burning with anxiety.

But all of a sudden, reinforcements had arrived?

Ren Xiaosu glanced at P5092. "How should they coordinate with us? It's not like we know what the situation outside the expeditionary army's perimeter is like."

Luo Lan suddenly said, "Why don't I probe the barbarians' strength first?"

P5092 suddenly took the receiver and said calmly, "No, you all can't join the battle yet. Although we're very grateful that you rushed to Mt. Zuoyun's rescue, but based on your strength, it isn't enough to affect the battle much. So I hope you can go near the Ningzhi River first and wait for the next step of our battle plan."

It was definitely a good thing to have outside support, and the nanosoldiers were very strong. But if they were to fight the expeditionary army head on, 2,000 nanosoldiers would not be enough to determine the outcome of the battle. Therefore, they still had to wait.

The arrival of the reinforcements at this moment would boost the morale of the troops, but P5092 calmly analyzed the situation and decided to place the Southwestern troops on standby first.

On the other end of the line, Luo Lan chuckled and said, "Alright, we'll follow your orders. I had a look at the map just now and saw that the Ningzhi River is 11 kilometers south of Mt. Zuoyun. That's still 16 kilometers from where we are now. My troops are expected to arrive in 40 minutes. We'll contact you all again after we reach the designated location."

P5092 said, "Thank you, I'm looking forward to hearing from you."

"All the best."

After that, they ended the call. P5092 took a deep breath and said with a smile, "As long as the expeditionary army doesn't send in any more reinforcements, we still have a glimmer of hope."

"Only a glimmer of hope?" Xun Yeyu muttered at the side, "Why does it sound like we're still waiting for our deaths?"

"There's only a few thousand of us while the expeditionary army has tens of thousands of soldiers. It's great that we even have a glimmer of hope," P5092 said with a laugh.

Wang Yun examined P5092's expression and realized he really looked a little more relaxed this time. It seemed that the arrival of Luo Lan and his troops had boosted P5092's confidence.

But at this moment, a staff officer suddenly ran in from outside. "Sir, Position 3 was nearly breached by the stealthy elite barbarian. Fortunately, the Great Hoodwinker took care of the situation. Otherwise, it would have been over for us. Position 3 has forced the barbarians back with intense fire, but they're almost out of ammo.. They're hoping to get more fire support."

## Chapter 959 - The Foundation Of War

"Who still has something to eat?" A soldier at Position 2 shouted, "I remember someone had two pieces of hardtack when we were dining! Hurry up and let me have some. I'm starving."

Position 2 was currently garrisoned by the 1st Regiment. The troops here felt like it had been forever since they last rotated out from the position. Actually, counting the time elapsed, it should only be four hours since they took over. But to them, it felt like four long years.

Everyone's stamina was greatly depleted during the battle. The soldiers began to feel hungry very quickly, but they did not have time to eat yet and could only endure it.

Besides, it was one thing to be hungry, but the soldiers around made it worse for those who were starving. "Do you want to eat my fart?"

The group of gruff men from the Northwest were cursing as they fired at the barbarians. Whenever any of the soldiers killed a barbarian with their automatic rifles, they would even let out an excited shout.

They kept shouting until their voices turned hoarse.

A person's energy was limited, and so was their ammunition.

From the moment the all-out battle began, the expeditionary army did not let up in their attacks even for a second.

However, they did not get tired, because whenever troops were rotated into battle, it would be made up of soldiers who had already rested and regained their strength.

But it was different for the 6th Combat Brigade. They did not have that many soldiers to deal with the efforts of the expeditionary army. Everyone was constantly facing attacks at their positions, and over time, they would get tired and hungry.

P5092 managed tactics amid the fighting. The 6th Combat Brigade was established with the expansion of the Northwest Army. Although there were many qualified officers among the troops, they were all fast-tracked in their promotions. Therefore, in the face of a tense battle like this, they could not help but feel flustered. For example, they even needed to be reminded by P5092 for a matter like sending more supplies to the front line.

Fortunately, he had Wang Yun as his partner now, so he could get answers very quickly even if he casually asked for some information.

Batches and batches of supplies were sent to the front line of the defensive position by the logistic troops. The problem of hunger should be solved very soon, but the issue of the defenders' fatigue would still not be eliminated.

At this moment, Yang Xiaojin's rate of fire gradually slowed down after four hours of suppressive fire.

In order to ensure the accuracy of her shots, she had to do this. If she continued firing at the same frequency as before, she would probably miss three out of ten shots.

Moreover, the aftereffects of the prolonged shooting were starting to take a toll on her. The strong recoil of the anti-materiel sniper rifle was something that even a supernatural being like Yang Xiaojin found difficult to bear.

Her shoulder was numbing. Her trigger finger also began to feel sore, and it was even trembling a little. Meanwhile, her entire right arm was starting to feel a little weak.

At the foot of the mountain, Ren Xiaosu asked loudly, "Do you want to get some rest? You don't look too good."

However, Yang Xiaojin gave him a look and continued firing. "Get back to your front line. You don't have to worry about me here. The others haven't had any rest yet, so why should I? If you leave the front line again, I'll shoot you."

"... Alright then."

But when Ren Xiaosu saw Yang Xiaojin frowning with her lips pursed, he understood she was enduring the pain of using the sniper rifle for an extended period.

He did not say anything more and turned around to run towards Position 4. The ammo supply there was running out, and the staff officer said that Commander P5092 had already deployed some ammo reserves to them. However, Ren Xiaosu was worried that an opening would be created in the middle, so he went to check on the situation.

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P5092 had not only deployed the ammo reserves but also ordered some troops to transport potable water to the front line to be used for cooling down the machine guns. There was no other way about it. To ensure the heavy machine guns could function normally, he had to make the soldiers endure their thirst for now.

This was not the time to empathize with the soldiers, nor was he in the circumstances to empathize with them. Fortunately, everyone could understand.

At the beginning, Zhang Xiaoman even asked if the soldiers could drink the water first before peeing on the machine guns to cool them. Although it was a little gross, such a method should satisfy everyone.

However, P5092 said no. There would be a delay if they waited for the soldiers to feel any urge to pee, and with their bodies already in a state of dehydration, drinking water would simply replenish their bodies' water content. As a result, they would not even be able to produce much urine.

Some people thought there were many ways to achieve the perfect scenario on the battlefield, but that was because they had never experienced such a terrible battle before.



In a battle of attrition and defense, one side would have to fight until they were completely exhausted. At this moment, the expeditionary army did not dare to stop either. They knew that once they retreated for an hour at this time, the Northwest Army at the defensive position would immediately catch a breather.

P5092 asked Wang Yun, "Has the Great Hoodwinker returned to Position 2 yet?"

"He went back already." Wang Yun said, "But the situation isn't too optimistic either. When he went to reinforce Position 3 just now, he was surrounded by dozens of the enemy's elites and almost got left outside the defensive line. Now that he finally slaughtered his way back in, he's probably a little exhausted. But he said that it's not a problem. He can still fight."

P5092 shook his head. "It's indeed a little tough for him to face dozens of elite barbarians by himself, so it's best to let him rest."

"Why don't Ji Zi'ang and I head to Position 2 to hold the fort? We should be able to coordinate with the troops garrisoned there," Wang Yun said.

"No, the two of you must remain at the command post. You have to understand that you two have something more important to do," P5092 said firmly.

Meanwhile, the Great Hoodwinker was leaning against a trench blind and panting heavily. Off to the side, the 1st Regiment commander, Qian Dewen, said, "Commander Zhang Husheng—"

"Don't address me by my real name. Just call me the Great Hoodwinker. I've been referred to as that for a long time already, so I'm a little unused to hearing my real name," the Great Hoodwinker scolded.

"Alright, Commander Great Hoodwinker." Qian Dewen said, "You look a little pale. We can still hold out for now, so please get some rest first."

The Great Hoodwinker joked, "That sounds so awkward! Commander Great Hoodwinker?"

As they were talking, a group of over a dozen heavily armored warriors suddenly rushed out from behind the shields of the expeditionary army's troops that Position 2 was facing.

These heavily armored warriors advanced quickly against the gunfire. They were about to breach the defensive line, and even the heavy machine guns and grenades could not stop them.

The heavily armored warriors advanced like a storm. When they were only five meters away from the defensive line, they accelerated again and planned to break through it in one swift motion!

But just as a heavily armored warrior was about to grab the edge of the blind and leap over, a heavy kick landed on his forehead and broke his neck!

The Great Hoodwinker stretched his hand out and quickly jumped past the defensive line. "Covering fire! Stop the barbarians behind them and leave these heavily armored barbarians to me!"

In the blink of an eye, the soldiers behind the defensive position raised their muzzles. The heavy machine guns on the defensive line immediately formed a net of firepower to isolate the heavily armored warriors from the rest of the expeditionary army behind them. They were preventing the other barbarians from catching up and killing the Great Hoodwinker.

As the Great Hoodwinker intercepted and killed the heavily armored warriors, he sized up the expeditionary army that was suppressed by the firepower not far away. He praised loudly, "Well done, nice suppressive fire! Leave the rest to me!"

The regimental commander, Qian Dewen, was anxiously ordering the various garrison troops on where to shoot from the back of the defensive line. They had to help the Great Hoodwinker eliminate any potential threats. Although they did not have a good way to deal with the heavily armored warriors, they could still contribute their strength.

At this point in the battle, no one could stay out of it anymore. This defensive position was definitely not only defended by Yang Xiaojin, the Great Hoodwinker, Ren Xiaosu, P5092, Ji Zi'ang, and Wang Yun.

Rather, it was defended by every soldier of the 6th Combat Brigade.

Perhaps superhumans could perform more dazzlingly in this war, but normal soldiers were the foundation.

## Chapter 960 - A Miracle Occurs

While the Great Hoodwinker was fighting with all his might, Ren Xiaosu had just blocked off a wave of the barbarians' attacks at Position 4 on the other side and retreated to the rear for a short rest.

Meanwhile, the reserve ammo and supplies were finally transported to the front line.

To Ren Xiaosu's surprise, Zero actually came down to Position 4. He asked Zero, "What's the matter?"

"Nothing." Zero said, "I've calculated the remaining quantity of ammo. There shouldn't be much left."

Ren Xiaosu smiled and said, "Are you trying to say that we're going to fail soon? If the defensive position falls, the nanomachines that you have will also be buried here, right?"

"That's not important." Zero seemed to no longer be worried about not having enough nanomachines. It said, "I've been thinking about it. Actually, the war in the Central Plains has nothing to do with the Northwest. Why do you all insist on defending Mt. Zuoyun? That's not a rational call. If you all retreat to the Northwest and sit back and watch the Wang Consortium and the Pyro Company get depleted, that would be the most advantageous strategy for the Northwest."

"In your eyes, we might be different forces that are divided. But in our opinion, the only enemies at this moment are the barbarians in the North. Be it the Pyro Company, the Wang Consortium, or the Northwest, we're all allies." Ren Xiaosu said, "Humans are emotional creatures. After the barbarians

came to the Central Plains and started massacring cities, we were destined to stand up and fight to the death alongside our allies."

"Why did the Qing Consortium's people come here then?" Zero asked.

"Because they are friends." Ren Xiaosu said firmly, "Although Luo Lan is not a decent person and likes doing violent things to others, there's nothing much you can say about how he treats his friends."

"Friends? That's a term to look forward to. Are we considered friends now?" Zero asked.

Ren Xiaosu asked in return, "Do you think we are?"

Zero shook its head. "I don't know. You humans have a very complicated set of boundaries when it comes to friends. However, I see that you often use the concept of 'whether they will sacrifice for others' to define who your friends are. From this point of view, I don't think I count as one, as I've never done anything for you before."

Ren Xiaosu smiled. "Actually, it's not that complicated sometimes."

Zero suddenly said, "Based on my calculations, you all did not carry out a detailed enough ammunition control or management at the position. Currently, you only have a 10% chance of winning, and it will soon be less than 10%. Unless there's another miracle, you can't turn the tide with your powers. The expeditionary army's effective strength is too great."

"Miracle?" Ren Xiaosu, supporting himself against the blind, stood up. "The world of humanity has never lacked miracles before. I believe that a miracle will definitely happen."

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"Xun Yeyu." P5092 looked at the sand table in the command post and said, "Are you still monitoring the location I asked you to pay attention to?"

Xun Yeyu was no longer his unblemished-looking self. His face was stained with dust and sweat. Right now, he resembled a soldier of the Northwest more than an outsider who did not belong here.

He answered, "Yes, but the number of barbarians there has not exceeded 10,000 the entire time. The barbarians seem to be in a hurry to attack, but their deployment rate has remained very steady."

In Xun Yeyu's perception, the tens of thousands of barbarians were like a river of flames gathering in his mind. The river channel always remained open, but there were no signs of congestion. This showed that the other party had an extremely smart commander controlling everything.

"It seems that the barbarians are also quite aware that we still have trump cards," P5092 said, referring to the seven mountains. "So while the barbarians are keeping up with their attacking efforts, they've always maintained a clever pace to evenly distribute the troops that join the battle. Even if we can topple the mountains here, we'll only be able to kill 10,000 of them. That's not enough to affect the overall situation to win."

The nanosoldiers led by Luo Lan had already arrived south of Mt. Zuoyun. However, P5092 still could not find the key to victory. This made him feel a little helpless.

Xun Yeyu added, "Previously, I informed Future Commander that someone was lying in ambush behind the mountain. But actually, only a tenth of the Experimentals showed up that time. There's still several hundred Experimentals grouped behind us. Once we appear to be losing, they'll probably climb up the mountain again and attack the defensive position from the back."

This news made P5092's heart heavier. He asked Wang Yun, "Where is the future commander now?"

"Future Commander is at Position 4. He's just helped them to defeat a group of barbarians." Wang Yun said, "That position has only just replenished their ammo, so the barbarians took advantage of the downtime to attack. Do you want Future Commander to intercept and kill the Experimentals behind us? But you have to understand that even though Future Commander is strong, he isn't a god. He's already been fighting for five hours. Look, Future Commander's wife's rate of fire has slowed down, and the Great Hoodwinker is almost unable to hold on any longer. How can Future Commander be an exception?"

"Yeah." P5092 sighed. Moreover, even if Ren Xiaosu were still at his peak, he probably could not face the hundreds of Experimentals by himself.

The Experimentals that attacked Yang Xiaojin were only the ones that had transformed from the Central Plains humans. According to Ren Xiaosu, there were still many more Experimentals that were previously barbarians that were even stronger, but they just had not appeared yet.

If the strength of the Experimentals after their conversion was determined by who they were when "alive," how powerful would they be if the elites among the barbarians were turned into those terrifying monsters?

P5092 could not let Ren Xiaosu take this risk.

He turned to Ji Zi'ang and said, "Ji Zi'ang, you might need to make your move soon."

Ji Zi'ang straightened up. "Understood. All I'm waiting for is your word before I topple those six mountains."

"Not six," P5092 refuted. "Seven."

Ji Zi'ang was clearly taken aback. "Seven?"

Remember, the seventh mountain was right behind them. If this mountain were to collapse as well, the entire defensive position would be buried underneath it!

This was the method P5092 had kept as a last gasp measure to perish with the enemy. Was he going to use it now?

P5092 said, "The last batch of ammo has already been transported to the front line at Position 4. After that, all of our positions will be facing the threat of running out of ammo. The expeditionary army's attack is even fiercer than expected, and our ammo consumption is also quicker than expected. Thus, the defensive position will fall soon."

Ji Zi'ang looked at Wang Yun and realized he did not look surprised. It was obvious Wang Yun already knew about this.

"Go and call the future commander over." P5092 said, "I need him to use the steam locomotive to take some soldiers away from here. This is not an escape but to leave some of these troops as flames to carry on burning."

P5092 had already found out about Ren Xiaosu's power of the steam locomotive. But could they all leave? Once they left, the Wang Consortium would immediately have to bear all the pressure. Therefore, they could not leave.

Now that P5092 had confirmed that the defensive position was not salvageable, he planned to use three-quarters of his troops to delay the expeditionary army and buy some time for the remaining soldiers to get onto the steam locomotive and leave.

Then he got ready to have Ji Zi'ang topple all the mountains, including the one behind them.

"Should we continue fighting and see how it goes? What if Future Commander still has other trump cards?" Ji Zi'ang said, "There might even be a miracle!"

"A miracle?" P5092 smiled bitterly.

Along with the bitter smile, a staff officer ran in anxiously from the outside. "We've finished firing all the ammo at Position 1. What should we do now, sir?"

"You've run out just like that?" Wang Yun felt that something was not right. "I clearly calculated that it would take at least half an hour to finish expending the ammo!"

The staff officer said with a pained expression, "The barbarians suddenly withdrew their soldiers from Position 2 and concentrated their attacks on Position 1. There was nothing we could do but maximize our suppressive fire against the barbarians. It does seem like Future Commander's wife has killed one of their officers. That's why the barbarians are retreating for the time being. But if the barbarians come up again, Position 1 will probably be breached."

P5092 said to Wang Yun, "Quick, go and look for Future Commander. It's urgent that he gets to Position 1. Also, tell him that the evacuation will start immediately!"

Then P5092 asked Ji Zi'ang, "Do you realize that if we're going to topple the seventh mountain, we'll need you to remain behind?"

Ji Zi'ang smiled. "It's fine. I'm mentally prepared already."

"OK." P5092 nodded. "Topple the mountain near Position 1 right away and buy us some time. Hurry off."

But Xun Yeyu suddenly looked up and shouted, "Wait, another lifeform has appeared to the northwest."

P5092 and the others were stunned. "Only one? If it's only one, you don't have to shout that loudly, right?!"

Xun Yeyu said excitedly, "That's because I've never sensed such a powerful life force before! Y'know, I've encountered a lot of superhumans before, but I'm afraid that even all of them combined are probably only as strong as this person. In fact, they might even be less powerful than him!"

Everyone was shocked. All of the superhumans Xun Yeyu had come across in the past probably numbered over a 100. Even with all of them combined, they were still inferior to a single person? On what level would such a master be?

Was it a god?

But before anyone could figure it out, Xun Yeyu shouted again, "New lifeforms have also appeared in the north. There's more than 10,000 of them, including ordinary people and several thousand others on the level of the elite barbarians. They're rapidly approaching Mt. Zuoyun! Wait a minute, the flames of those thousands of powerful lifeforms are moving too fast. How can they be so quick?!"

P5092 was silent for a moment. "Are they reinforcements who came to look for Future Commander again?"



Wang Yun said with a smile, "I'm willing to believe that they're reinforcements."

A moment later, Ren Xiaosu was still resting at Position 4. As he rested, he made small talk with Zero.

Amid the conversation, the howling of wolves suddenly came from beyond Mt. Zuoyun, like a sharp sword had suddenly carved through the sky. Ren Xiaosu turned around immediately and looked at the mountain peak. He saw a massive silver wolf standing atop the mountain and looking down at the expeditionary army below like a king would.

Ren Xiaosu smiled at Zero and said, "See that? A miracle has occurred."

Zero was stunned. It had already discovered that the troops from the Northern Plains and wolves were approaching from the north. But before this, it thought they were here to take advantage of the situation and raid the Central Plains. However, it did not expect they would also head to Mt. Zuoyun.. Moreover, it seemed like they were here for Ren Xiaosu too, and he was well aware of who they were.