

The Mechanic 71

Chapter 71: Burn the Damn Creature

The train rocked violently. The shaking came from the last carriage of the train. The Covert Ops agents, who were trying hard to maintain their footings, peeked out of the windows, and the sight in front of them was shocking.

Under the cover of darkness, a gargantuan black worm was coiled up around the last carriage. The worm's body spanned over tens of meters, and it had a glossy, black exoskeleton that was composed of chitin, reflecting the moonlight.

The creature looked hideous. The head of the worm housed its gigantic mouth, with sharp teeth that continued way down into its throat. The worm was chewing on the metallic exterior of the train carriage, perforating the carriage's exterior. An unfortunate agent ended up in the worm's mouth, and in a brief moment, the screaming ended as the victim turned into minced meat.

Xiao Han felt a cold shiver. The bold ideas he previously had vanished instantly.

"It is the Dark Earthly Worm!" One could see the fear on Qi Bai Jia's face.

Xiao Han drew his Berserk Eagle out from the holster and fired a shot at the worm. He tensed up the moment the stats of the worm flashed on the screen before his eyes.

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The Dark Earthly Worm

Level: 48

(Infant stage) Lv. 10, (Adolescent stage) Lv. 10, (Adult stage) Lv. 10, (Mating stage) Lv. 10, (???) Lv. 8

Age: 71 years old

Stats: STR 80, DEX ?, END ?, INT?, MYSTERY 1, LUCK 2

Energy: 0

Energy rank: ?

HP: ?

Abilities:

– Thick chitin exoskeleton: DEF +20

– Dark: +15% darkness attributes

– Large body: HP +1000, reduction of shock by 20%

– Metal-chewing: additional 25% damage to metallic elements

– Rare blood of the Earthly Dragon: HP +2000, +10% defense against supernatural elements

– ???, ???, ??? ...

Skills:

– Kill by Strangling Lv. 7

– Slither Lv. 10

– Rotating incisors Lv. 6

– Acid-spit Lv. 5

– ???, ???, ??? ...

Xiao Han felt it was really unfair that even the monster had more luck than him.

“Fire!”

The agents fired their pistols. The gunshots were deafening. However, the bullets merely grazed the thick exoskeleton of the worm, causing almost no harm to it.

The wilderness of Aquamarine was especially dangerous. All sorts of ghastly creatures roamed in it. There were many cases from the past where these creatures brutally slaughtered towns and cities. Humans had to rely on their collective intelligence and wisdom to counter these creatures in order to stay at the top of the food-chain.

The Dark Earthly Worm had a long lifespan. Its length increased proportionately with its age. Under normal circumstances, it peacefully resided in darkness with little activity. However, it would be awakened by violent vibrations in the ground.

It became clear to the folks that the worm had been woken up by the noise of the passing train.

To prevent encounters with wild creatures, every rail line had maintenance personnel who would inspect the infrastructure and survey the traffic, which also included surveying the underground for signs of life. If the worm had come before the last survey, it meant that the personnel in charge had slacked and failed to inspect the ground thoroughly.

The agents, who were considered prey by the worm, reacted to the situation with shock by firing their pistols. However, the smaller bullets from the pistol dealt almost zero damage to the worm, whose defense points were way above one hundred.

All the explosives and Gatling guns were in the store carriage. However, the agents were unable to obtain these weapons. Their access to the store carriage was blocked by the worm. The situation was not optimistic for the agents.

Amidst the chaos, a strong gust of wind buffeted the carriage. Random items fell out and started drifting in the wind. The train tilted at an angle of fifteen degrees as sparks flew out from the base of the train screeching against the track. The carriage looked as if it would be flipped by the massive body of the worm at any moment.

“Move aside!” Li Ya Lin shouted as she leapt forward with the foldable machete in her hand. She channeled the flames of yellow energy and hacked hard into the worm’s exoskeleton. A crack was heard, and a distinct cut appeared on the worm’s body.

It was useful!

Pugilists could channel their internal energy to deal astonishing damage. In this case, the punches and kicks had immense power and worked effectively.

After a quick glance, Di Su Su also went forward. With the foldable machete in her hand, channeling the flames of green energy, she hacked hard and fast, like streaks of lightning. A small piece of exoskeleton fell off the worm, and a faint glow of green could be seen.

The worm showed no signs of apprehension. It had its thick flesh and armor for protection and was, therefore, especially calm. It subsequently shrank its body to give the carriage a harder squeeze.

The monsters on Aquamarine were ferocious, and many had stacked abilities that made them especially hardy. The worm was evidently a wild BOSS level creature, and without the firepower of the modern military, it would be difficult to slaughter the monster. The worm was a creature that required at least fifty players of the same level to defeat. However, there were some instances where the monster was defeated by solo players.

In two gulps, another two agents were swallowed by the worm. The flesh of humans tasted much better than that of the sandworms underground. The Dark Earthly Worm ground its teeth as if it had enjoyed the meal.

The agents were shivering, and the brutality of the predator caused many to almost collapse to the ground. At that instant, it seemed like humans had lost their intelligence and had been reduced to prey waiting for their fateful moments to arrive.

“Use fire, the worm is afraid of fire!” Di Su Su yelled.

The worm had poor eyesight and was especially sensitive to heat and sparkles of ember, which had a similar effect on the worm to flashbangs on humans.

The agents realized that if the situation remained stagnant for much longer, the train would be destroyed. The only solution was to use flames to push the worm back. Zhang Wei immediately took out the magazine housing the High-Explosive ammunition.

Bang!

Instantly, the impregnable exoskeleton of the worm started burning. The worm lost its composure and started wriggling violently. The flames and the temperature made it especially uncomfortable. It became as agitated as a restless baboon.

Xiao Han stood there steadily like a nail in a plank. The increasing magnitude of the jolts made him worry about the carriage flipping. Almost all of Division 13’s agents had purchased the High-Explosive rounds, so he was confident that they could handle the situation effectively without him getting involved.

The fire started growing on the worm, and in less than a moment's time, the worm could no longer withstand the glaring ember. It gave a shriek and loosened its grip on the carriage. Following that, it tunneled into the ground. In a matter of seconds, it was deep in the ground, leaving only piles of dirt.

The agents that managed to escape the wrath of the monster were still feeling shocked and fearful. They collapsed onto the ground.

"We are saved!"

"We are not dead yet, not dead yet..."

"Mama, I miss you!"

Although the worm only appeared for a few minutes, the damage it had caused was immense. There were holes everywhere on the carriage. It was in a shambles. If the worm had not been chased away, the train along with its passengers would have... well, maybe not all of the passengers would have perished, but the train was definitely going to have been delayed.

Luckily, there was the High-Explosive ammunition. The folk all looked toward Xiao Han. One could sense the appreciation in their eyes.

Zhang Wei patted on Xiao Han's shoulder. No words could describe his gratitude.

"If you want to thank me, just say it. I can't really read minds."

"..."

Everyone was speechless.

Xiao Han's words completely destroyed the atmosphere.

The agents rested for a moment and started clearing up the mess.

The attack by the Dark Earthly Worm was ultimately a one-time incident, and the fact that only one of such accidents had occurred proved that the military rail line was safest.

The scenery outside the train's windows was mainly mountains, dense forests, and loess plains, which gradually became boring.

Along the way, Xiao Han stationed himself in the large black carriage, practicing his energy training technique and machine manufacturing skill.

Three days later, the train arrived at the Hesla Border station.

Chapter 72: The Camp-Destroyer Mission

Hesla and Stardragon belonged to the same continent. The more liberal culture on Hesla was perhaps due to the hot and humid climate. Even outside of the beaches, bikini girls and topless guys could be seen walking on the streets.

The train pulled in to the military train station. Looking through the window, a man in shades wearing a loose-fitting flowery shirt could be seen standing on the platform. He was probably the next point of contact.

Han Xiao alighted from the train together with the rest as Qi Bai Jia led the way. Qi Bai Jia walked up to the man and introduced himself. "I am Qi Bai Jia from the Stardragon's Division 13."

The man laughed and removed his shades. He had unshaven stubble and looked unkempt, as if he was a fishmonger from the market.

"I am Ye Fan from the Hesla Intelligence Department."

Han Xiao was in disbelief.

Ye Fan?

Which Ye Fan was he?

What exactly happened!

The man looked nothing like the dashing and cool Ye Fan that Han Xiao pictured in his mind.

Ye Fan saw the hole-studded train carriage and immediately asked, "You guys encountered a monster?"

"It was just a small worm, no real threat."

Qi Bai Jia gave a dry cough. Despite of the danger caused by the worm, there was no way he would admit that the situation had been greatly perilous. He needed to maintain the reputation of the Stardragon agents and wanted the folks on Hesla to believe that they were strong.

"It must have been really fortunate for you guys to arrive safely." Ye Fan laughed. He did not further probe into Qi Bai Jia's words.

Ye Fan put his shades back on and said, "Let us quickly head to the command center and report in. Our administrative procedures here are less complicated than those in Maple, at least 90% less."

Some agents chuckled to themselves. Maple was known for its inflexible system. Apparently when the Shanuks from Theseus and Maple collaborated to wipe out the Vagrant Warlords, the short-tempered Shanuks were so frustrated with the elaborate reporting procedures of Maple that they almost fought with the officials at the Maple Intelligence Unit's Caroma headquarters.

The administrative pre-requisite for this joint operation required the commanders to submit their operation plans before the actual execution of the mission.

For this operation, the Hesla military was delegated to be the offensive force. The agents were in charge of reconnaissance missions to uncover the enemy's defense blueprints at the Dark Crow Valley Base.

Along the way, one could see the brand-new bulletproof jeeps and small tanks parked in garages. There were also honeycomb missile-launchers and groups of soldiers transporting ammunition.

Zhang Wei, Di Su Su, and Ma Qing Yang became really quiet, a stark contrast from their usual chatty behavior. It was their nationalistic sentiments affecting them. Han Xiao realized that he should not do anything overboard at that point in time.

The commanding officer was a muscular Caucasian man by the name of Colonel Carl. Colonel Carl was studying the operation plan hanging on the wall. Upon hearing the door creak, Colonel Carl, who thought that it was his assistant officer entering the room, blurted out, "Do not disturb me when I am thinking!"

Ye Fan coughed and said, "Colonel, the agents from Stardragon are here to submit their report."

Colonel Carl turned his head to face Ye Fan. The tension on his face relieved immediately. He squinted his eyes and stared coldly at the Stardragon agents with distrust. He took out a document from his drawer.

"Take them down to rest, we will set off together in an hour," he ordered.

Carl seemed unfriendly to the agents of Division 13. Ye Fan took the agents to a room and asked them to stay put at the location since they would be moving out shortly.

After Ye Fan left, the agents were left alone. Lin Yao finally dared to speak and asked softly, "Why do I get the feeling that the Hesla soldiers, especially the commanding officer, seem to not like us?"

Ma Qing Yang gave a sarcastic grin and said, "In the past, there were wars between Stardragon and Hesla. Therefore, the people of Hesla are unfriendly toward us. It is really frustrating that we have to face such situations even when we are on a collaborative mission with them. Colonel Carl definitely doesn't look like an easy figure to appease."

The different cliques within Division 13 was not unique to Stardragon. In fact, many countries faced such situations. Maple and Ordina were more conservative. Raylen and Theseus were more assertive. Stardragon and Hesla were more neutral.

Lin Yao remarked in disbelief, "Why did the department send us to Hesla then? What if they make us the sacrificial objects for the mission?"

"Nobody knows what the higher-ups have in mind. I guess we have to count on ourselves to stay safe."

Ma Qing Yang, being a seasoned member of the department, was no longer surprised or shocked by such arrangements.

Qi Bai Jia explained, "Don't worry, every command given to you guys has to gain my approval."

The agents fell silent after a series of discussions to get into the mode for the mission.

"I am going out to take a puff."

Han Xiao stood up and walked out of the room. He lighted his cigarette and took a deep puff, which went all the way down to his lungs, then out of his nostrils in two trails of smoke. He felt a sense of relief.

He ignored the unfriendly stares from the Hesla soldiers and diverted his attention to the mission plan on the screen of the tablet.

—

You have activated [Operation Dark Crow Valley Base].

Mission Brief: This is a small-scale military operation. As a member of Division 13 and participant of the operation, look out for what you can do!

Hint: The mission is a part of the Camp-destroyer series and you can claim these rewards upon completion of the mission.

Reconnaissance 1: Team mission. Monitor the situation in Crow's Forest Town. 3,000 EXP rewarded.

Reconnaissance 2: Team mission. Monitor the situation in Dark Crow Valley Camp. 8,000 EXP rewarded.

Logistics member: Solo mission. Complete 20 tool repairs for your teammates. 8,000 EXP rewarded.

Assassin: Solo mission. Kill 8 sentries. 18,000 EXP rewarded.

Direct conflict: Solo mission. Kill 50 Germinal Organization soldiers. 35,000 EXP rewarded.

Assassination 1: Kill Dormund. Rewards based on contribution.

Assassination 2: Kill Ji Jie. Reward based on contribution.

Assassination 3: Kill Pan Kuang. Rewards based on contribution.

Destroy the Dark Crow Valley Camp: Rewards based on the level of completion of mission and individual contribution.

At the end of the mission, rewards will be issued based on individual stats and performance.

Initially, Han Xiao thought that it was going to be a normal mission, but instead, the operation was part of the Camp-destroyer series, which allowed for a varied and outstanding performance.

There were many types of missions, and for those belonging to the Camp-destroyer series, as long as one completed most of the objectives, the rewards would be generous. There were also additional rewards based on one's individual performance.

As Han Xiao was smoking, a lady with short red hair approached him and asked, "Are you from Stardragon?"

Staring at her in the eye, Han Xiao nodded. "I suppose so."

Immediately, the lady drew a knife from her waist and stabbed toward the neck of Han Xiao!

Chapter 73: Acing the Test

Han Xiao stared at the red-haired woman without flinching.

The knife was only three centimeters from his main artery when it stopped and turned away, displaying the woman's strong skill wielding her weapon. The woman gave a fierce look. "Why aren't you dodging?"

"Why should I dodge?"

"So, you think I do not dare stab you?"

"You can try."

Han Xiao's face did not change one bit. Somewhere beneath his clothes, the magnetic-controlled extendable suit had already inched near his collar. He could protect his neck at a moment's notice, and therefore, he was fearless.

Furthermore, since she was able to move freely in the military campsite, she had to be a Hesla agent. She would not really harm him like this. This would most likely be a test of his ability or to instill fear in him. However, how dare they picked him as the target! Han Xiao was slightly irritated. His eyes turned ice-cold.

The red-haired woman suddenly felt a shiver down her back and did not realize where it came from. She collected her mind, and harrumphed. "Winna, agent from Hesla Intelligence Department."

She had just finished talking when she felt something pushing onto her stomach. She looked down; a large caliber pistol was pointing right at her stomach.

Only then did Han Xiao laugh and say, "Han Xiao."

That was fast! I didn't even see how he drew his gun!

Her pupil constricted. She put away her knife. Han Xiao withdrew his gun, too.

"I will remember that."

Winna turned around and left.

Han Xiao narrowed his eyes. "Hesla personnel sure are hostile toward us. They'd better not drag me down."

....

After Winna walked some distance away, she gave a sigh of relief. She realized cold sweat was dripping down her hairline and became serious.

That Stardragon agent gave her... an extremely dangerous vibe.

Winna returned to the lounge to look for the rest of the Hesla agents. Ye Fan smiled and asked, "Discover anything?"

Winna took a sip of water to sooth her parched throat and replied in a serious tone, "That Han Xiao is likely very dangerous."

“Han Xiao?”

Ye Fan thought of something based on the physical description of him.

That guy had been very low profile ever since they alighted the train. He only gave a weird look when someone called his name.

“A strange person,” Ye Fan concluded.

...

Han Xiao finished smoking and stepped on the cigarette butt. He walked back into the lounge.

Qi Bai Jia looked over and asked abruptly, “Nothing happened, right?”

“Something happened. I saw a female pig falling into a ditch.”

Qi Bai Jia felt slightly awkward. “Can you be more serious?”

“In that case, there was nothing,” replied Han Xiao nonchalantly. Since it was only a test meant to scare him, he did not want everyone to hear about it. Firstly, it was to protect the mission. And secondly, he didn’t think he wanted to be strayed by emotions.

In his mind, they were three types of enemies. The first type pissed him off or violated his interests. The second type wanted him dead or endangered his life. The last type was his nemesis. There was also the type that not only had mutual hatred but also conflicting interests. One example would be the Germinal Organization. This was the enemy that was top priority for Han Xiao. The first kind was too mild for him to care about.

Qi Bai Jia gave Han Xiao a complicated look. He was sitting by the window and had seen the whole incident unfold. He had gone on a lot of field missions before, and he knew that the other country’s agents would surely test their ability and show off their own prowess. This was a covert rule. All the agents were proud and arrogant. They would not get respect and power without showing off their ability. If anyone were to complain to their superior, they would actually be laughed at.

Qi Bai Jia greatly approved of what Han Xiao had done. He did not let Stardragon’s reputation down, and he was glad that Han Xiao had kept his mouth shut. *This guy’s ability is good, and he understands the bigger picture.*

...

“They didn’t fight?”

Carl nodded his head in satisfaction after he heard his deputy’s report.

“Good. Seems like those Stardragon people know their place on our territory.”

....

Soon, it was time for them to depart. Everyone gathered at the border exit. Ye Fan, together with Winna, brought a dozen agents, armed and ready to go.

The first stop of the mission was a position far away from the Crow Valley Town. There was an abandoned secret hideout of Hesla's. They would be using it as their temporary base.

Division 13 transported the land rovers using the train. They were just regular all-terrain cars. Only Han Xiao's Big Black was unique. He drove his team off amid loud revving of the engine.

This time, he drove steadily and comfortably. Li Ya Lin was almost moved to tears. The other three teammates, cramped in the other seats, were puzzled. They didn't understand Li Ya Lin's big reaction to all this.

It was half a day's ride. Hesla's motorcade was leading, and Division 13 followed.

Suddenly, Hesla's motorcade sped up, gradually increasing the distance between the two parties. Di Su Su and Ma Qing Yang accelerated when they realized it.

Only Han Xiao, driving Big Black, followed slowly at the back.

"Xiao Ge, we need to catch up with them!" Lin Yao said anxiously.

Han Xiao's had one hand on the steering wheel while the other one was out of the window and enjoying the wind. "Why do we need to catch up? No matter how fast they drive now, they will have to wait for us later."

"Well... you are right when you put it that way."

Suddenly, Di Su Su's laughter came from the radio. "Little Lin Lin, how come you guys are so slow. Hurry and catch up with us. Unless Han Xiao's skills are not up to par?"

"I do not want to waste my petrol," Han Xiao replied briefly.

Di Su Su was instantly stunned. This was the first time she heard such a unique excuse. *Agents like us need to worry about paying for petrol?*

Ma Qing Yang chimed in on the radio. "Zhang Wei, this is Hesla's agents showing off. We must not lose to them."

Zhang Wei pondered for a few seconds, and he patted on Han Xiao's shoulder. "Let's catch up with them."

Li Ya Lin's face immediately turned pale. She grabbed Zhang Wei's sleeve hurriedly and urged, "Please don't. This speed is great!"

"What exactly do you fear?" Zhang Wei was really puzzled.

"Captain, is it not good to be alive?" Li Ya Lin said in a trembling and sobbing tone.

Zhang Wei was extremely baffled.

Han Xiao raised his eyebrow. "You really want to pursue them?"

"Yes." Zhang Wei nodded his head.

Han Xiao sighed and changed the gear with ease. "Okay then. You guys had better hold on tight."

Li Ya Lin was deeply fearful. She held onto the car door as tightly as she could and clenched her jaw.

"You... you guys will definitely regret this."

...

In the afternoon, everyone arrived at the destination.

As soon as they alighted their vehicles, they all looked at the big black truck with shock, horror, and disbelief. Cold chills ran down their spine whenever they thought of the scene from before.

Even though they were experienced agents who had seen many things, such as "S" and "Z" shape movements, this was the first time they had seen an "&" shape movement! And it was faster than anyone else!

This could not even be counted as drifting... more like flying!

The truck driver must have been heavily under the influence!

Zhang Wei, Lin Yao, and Li Ya Lin fumbled out of the vehicle, held onto a tree at the side, and started vomiting everything they had inside them. At that moment, they felt like they'd be better off dead.

"Blargh—"

"Oh my god... I feel like I'm dying. Blargh—"

"Told you that you would regret this. Blargh—"

Han Xiao strolled down from the car and clamped a cigarette comfortably in his mouth. He smirked and said, "Well, you guys told me to chase."

"You... Do you specialize in driving bumper cars?"

Han Xiao curled his lips. *Bumper cars? Don't look down on me. I used to drive Mechas!*

Lambert got out of the car with sturdy steps, as if nothing had happened to him. Han Xiao's eyes gleamed. "See? There is someone normal enough to enjoy my driving."

Just as Lambert opened his mouth to speak, vomit came out like waterfall. Only after everything was vomited out did Lambert commented with a poker face, "If you ever touch the steering wheel again, I will just jump out of the car."

Chapter 74: Separate Operations

The cars were parked outside. After everyone moved their equipment into the secret base, they began their pre-mission briefing.

"We have two operations. Firstly, disguise as wanderers and blend into Dark Crow Forest Town to gather intel; secondly, search for sentry guards from the Germinal Organization that are left alone and force information about their base out of them.

“We will handle the sentries, your people can go to the Dark Crow Forest Town,” Winna immediately stated.

Di Su Su frowned. There would mostly likely be spies hidden in the town. If they attempted to blend in, they might be exposed and be put in dire danger. If so, they would not achieve anything. Searching for sentries would be much safer and easier to accomplish.

Hesla just could not wait to throw all the dangerous and tough jobs to Division 13. This attitude annoyed them greatly, but someone had to do the missions after all. If it was not going to be Hesla then it had to be Division 13. As such, no one voiced any objection.

“To infiltrate the town, we must first disguise ourselves as wanderers and then find an opportunity to gather intel covertly. We must not act rashly and alert the enemy,” said Qi Bai Jia.

After some discussion, it was decided that some people would stay at the base as backup. Four people stayed behind: Lin Yao, Qi Bai Jia, Ma Qing Yang, and Han Xiao.

Hesla also left some personnel to guard the base. Han Xiao only knew Ye Fan from their group.

It was only the afternoon. The Hesla agents decided to take a rest first. They would wait till dawn, when enemy’s alertness would be at its lowest, to move off to find enemy sentry guards. They had brought infrared imaging devices, so the darkness actually provided them with an advantage. Also, they secretly wanted Division 13 to be the guinea pig to sweep away some danger first.

Once the mission plan was finalized, those Division 13 agents who were going in mixed together to form a team with Di Su Su as the leader. They were disguised in wanderer’s clothes and looked travel-worn and weary. They hunched their backs to look as if they were being weighed down by stress. They carried giant backpacks and looked exactly like those real wanderers. They then headed toward the Dark Crow Forest Town on foot.

The secret base was equipped with many computer screens that were connected to agents’ camera and earphones. Han Xiao, Lin Yao, and Qi Bai Jia would rotate to monitor the situation.

Di Su Su’s team soon arrived at the crowded town, which was displayed on the screens. There were many different types of buildings, and despite the housing being simple and crude, there were many people there, making it look like a marketplace. Although the town was small in area, it had everything, even hotels for guests.

“Let’s look for a place to stay first.”

Di Su Su and the gang were questioned by the locals, but she answered perfectly. They were just ‘wanderers that were migrating’ and ‘wanted to rest here for a while before moving off.’ Afterwards, they successfully checked in at one of the hotels in the town.

As soon as they entered the room, they immediately swept for monitoring cameras and bugs professionally. They started discussing their next steps after they made sure the room was safe.

“How should we proceed now?” Li Ya Lin curled her lips and gave Di Su Su a cold look.

Di Su Su was not in the mood to banter with Li Ya Lin. Her brows knitted together as she said in a serious tone, “People in the town are still suspicious of our identity. I think we should stay put.”

Han Xiao suddenly chimed in through the earpieces. "You guys had better act today."

"Give me a good reason." Di Su Su was slightly provoked.

"You guys are now foreign wanderers, so you should act your part. It is only normal to gather information about this place. It will actually look strange if you purposefully conceal yourselves, making others feel that you have an ulterior motive."

Everyone looked at one another. "That seems like a good point."

"...Let's do what Han Xiao suggested."

The town had many amenities, including entertainment facilities, casinos, a pharmacy, restaurants, and even places for one to release. As night fell, the team moved out in different groups and pretended to spend money, probe for intel, and gather information. However, they did not achieve any substantial success. The locals there were mostly ordinary wanderers, and they did not spot any people of interest.

"Our enemies must be hiding deeply. We probably won't get anything through this method." Qi Bai Jia's expression was grave.

"Actually, I know a way." Han Xiao smiled. He knew the specific spy that was station at this town. After 'real' players earned enough reputation from missions, they could choose to join the Germinal Organization through this NPC. By catching this NPC, they could get quite a lot of intel.

Han Xiao knew the exact coordinates of the Dark Crow Valley Base, but he was unsure of the specific military strength and defenses of the base. After ten long years, he only remembered a little information about the place. Furthermore, they were at the different point in time, so the changes would be different. It was essential for them to gather intel from the NPC.

"You guys should go to the southern part of town, where you will see a casino. There should be a bald-headed dude who knows the intel about the base." Han Xiao was describing the spy from the Germinal Organization stationed at the town. Those 'real' players who were born at Dark Crow Forest Town could only join the Germinal Organization through this guy.

Everyone was shocked. Di Su Su frowned. "Where did you get this information from?"

"I have my ways."

"What if the information is incorrect?" Di Su Su was adamant.

"Listen to him." Qi Bai Jia spoke up for Han Xiao. Before the mission, higher ups had told him to trust his intel. This showed that the higher ups valued Han Xiao highly.

Di Su Su had to repress her suspicion and follow to the order. She took some agents to the small casino and looked for the person quietly. Without fail, they found the bald-headed guy, who was the banker of the casino.

"What should we do now? If we act rashly, we could alarm our enemies. He might have companions from the organization around him," asked Di Su Su.

Han Xiao was speechless. “We’ve already found our target. Can’t you just be professional and do what you usually do?”

Di Su Su felt her chest tighten, enraged by his comment. But at the same time, she realized that she had asked a dumb question. She gathered her teammates to secretly surround the guy.

Han Xiao looked at the time. He got up and let Lin Yao take over his duty. He did not feel that he needed to supervise the actual execution. If they could not even catch the guy, those agents should just knock themselves out with a piece of tofu.

At the same time, Winna and her team of Hesla agents left for their objective after she gave Han Xiao a fierce glare.

Han Xiao did not plan to rest at the secret base. He went into the trunk of Big Black and started assessing the situation. *Both operations are team-based. They will most likely complete them without any hiccups. I should be more concerned with my personal mission. I will need some handy tools in order to assassinate the sentry guards in the forest.*

Han Xiao took out some spare parts and began working on his interface.

—

Do you wish to proceed with talent fusion?

(Basic Spatial Sensing + Basic Bio-engineering + Basic Mechanical Engineering)

This fusion will cost you 15,000 EXP.

—

Fusion Success!

Congratulations, you have invented [Miniature Biological Sensor (Spider)]!

...

Winna’s team sneaked among the trees silently as if they were hunters searching for prey in the dark forest. They were wearing camouflage suits and night-vision goggles.

The sentry guards were stationed right outside the base. One of the team members was a master in investigating trails. He could deduce the number of people that had walked past a location a day before based on the minimal evidence left behind.

He was called Magarnu, a tall Sharnuk. He was built like a small mountain, which made it hard to believe that he was extremely meticulous. He rubbed the soil between his fingertips, smelt it, and pondered for a few moments. “There was a man, weighing around 180 pounds, who walked past here in a northwestern direction seven hours ago.”

Winna did not doubt Magarnu's deduction. She and her team walked carefully in that direction. Suddenly, they came to a halt. Night vision goggles showed a living entity on tree three hundred meters out.

"Search the surroundings!"

Winna kept a cool head and did not act prematurely. She instructed her team to search for any other sentry guards or surveillance devices in the surroundings. After about twenty minutes, they confirmed that they were safe.

Ye Fan gave the order through the radio. "Take him down!"

Winna activated her power, and immediately, a maroon energy trail flashed under her feet. She moved swiftly and quietly within a hundred-meter radius from the enemy. She always stayed in the blind spots of the enemy by using the trees to hide her body like a master-level assassin. She hopped onto a tree in a cat-like manner before summoning her maroon-colored energy. The energy allowed her to stick onto the tree branches, and she jumped constantly from tree to tree, quickly approaching the enemy.

The Germinal sentry guard felt a sudden gust of wind over his head. He looked up and saw a dark shadow accelerating toward him.

Chapter 75: Hacker

Ten minutes later...

Snap!

Magarnu twisted the neck of the sentry guard.

They had already secured the information they wanted.

Winna's voice blared out from the communication device. "From our preliminary reconnaissance activity, we discovered that the base has been divided into 6 high-alert regions. The level of defense gradually increases from the innermost to the outermost sectors. We are currently at the outermost region.

"Every high-alert region will have a sentry post manned by an officer and his troops. Based on our previous interrogation, officers have access to the intranet of the military base. Therefore, as long as we can arrive at the sentry post, we will be able to access the intranet and gather intelligence using the officer's computer.

"This sentry guard revealed the exact position of the post. Let's move out immediately!"

Ye Fan knew that even the slightest delay would change the outcome of the operation. There was a series of protocols to follow for the shift-changing of the sentry guards in the next few hours; by then, other soldiers would discover the disappearance of the sentry guard who had been killed. However, their first priority was still to gather sufficient intelligence even if that risked revealing their positions, since ultimately, the enemy would realize the impending invasion by the Hesla military. They needed to find out the military strength and defenses at the Dark Crow Valley base.

If Winna managed to succeed, the agents of Division 13 hiding in Dark Crow Forest Town would fall into the precarious situation of revealing their positions to the enemy. The agents might even be caught before they made their moves.

Ye Fan analyzed the situation rationally and made the decision.

“Operation approved! Immediately head out to the enemy base.”

Winna nodded and disposed of the sentry guard’s body. She then led her teammates into the enemy base.

Ye Fan heaved a sigh of relief, and his eyes moved away from the screen. He glanced at the operations’ office of Division 13 and shook his head slightly. He did not know what his decision would bring, but he wanted the best for the mission. He would inform the department afterwards.

There were times when one had to take a leap of faith.

...

Before twilight, Winna and her team found the sentry post.

It was a shed camouflaged deep in the vegetation used by the hunters.

Quietly, the team moved closer to their target. Magarnu grabbed the sound-wave detector from his haversack and scanned the interior of the shed from outside. The results returned revealed three human targets: one lying on the sofa and two who seemed to be consuming their supper at the table.

Winna raised her hand and started the count.

Three, two, one! Winna leapt forward into the shed through the window. Her teammates followed behind.

The three enemy soldiers were shocked by the unexpected attack, and before they could retaliate, they were shot with the tranquilizers by the Hesla agents and collapsed onto the ground.

The Hesla agents then searched the shed and the clothing of the unconscious soldiers. They uncovered a hidden compartment behind the wall. The agents discovered that out of the three soldiers, one of them was an officer based on the identity card he carried.

“This is our target.” Winna grinned to herself. This officer by the name of Roman seemed to be the one in charge of the sentry post.

The agents tied Roman up and gave him an injection to wake him up. Magarnu then slapped Roman repeatedly to speed up the process. “Tell us the password to the safe if you want to live!”

Roman was scared to death by the troop of heavily armed agents and immediately confessed the password without any sign of hesitation.

After entering the password, the safe successfully opened, and a laptop could be seen. After turning on the laptop, a sign-in page appeared on the screen, and both the identity card and a verbal password were required to access the portal.

Roman was very cooperative, and the agents managed to access the portal with his account. Following the jingle, the words 'Dang Dang Dang the Germinal assistant is at your service.' flashed on the screen.

Startled, Ye Fan choked on his coffee.

All the agents had confused looks on their faces. No one could have imagined that the portal's interface would look like that.

Ye Fan didn't know what to say. "What a cute portal..."

A couple of menus appeared on the server, and due to the low rank of Roman, he could only access a few of them. Winnie found the page that displayed the daily activity log for the military base, and the team became really excited.

There must be important information hidden in the daily logs.

"Let me do it." Ye Fan instructed Magarnu to plug the chip into the computer, which allowed Ye Fan's computer to also access the server.

There was a look of seriousness on Ye Fan's face, and his fingers started to punch the keyboard and input the codes like a butterfly dancing in the air.

Level 1 Firewall, hacked!

Level 2 Firewall, hacked!

Level 3 Firewall, hacked!

One-time-password, hacked!

Rights restrictions, hacked!

Ye Fan gave a slight smile. He was a seasoned hacker in Hesla with hundreds of viruses and bugs in his arsenal. Except for certain servers on the dark web, there was practically no server that could escape his attacks.

In less than three minutes, all the encrypted documents were decoded. At that point, the enemy technicians realized what was happening and started deleting the documents frantically while Ye Fan was copying the files.

In a brief moment, all the documents were deleted. Ye Fan's computer was too slow and only managed to copy 28% of the documents. The more confidential documents were deleted first.

However, the copied documents contained sufficient intelligence, including defense blueprints, internal structure information, and the military strength of the base.

Ye Fan felt relieved. "Good job and well done! Now it's time to return."

The attempt to steal sensitive information about the Dark Crow Valley base would definitely heighten the security of the enemy. However, it was all worth it for the intelligence reports.

But despite the success, there was still a sense of unease in Ye Fan.

It seemed a little... too easy.

...

A member of staff from the central control room of the Dark Crow Valley base reported, "Sir, our external server was hacked."

The assistant director of the military base was Ji Jie. He was a tall, lanky man with a sly appearance. He proceeded calmly to the screened and asked, "What data was stolen?"

"The daily activity logs, internal structure of the military base, the coordinates of the base, the sentry logs for the base..."

Even though so much critical information had been stolen by the hackers, there was no sign of panic within the base.

"Were the hackers actually from Hesla?"

"The bait is set; now, we are just waiting for the fish." Ji Jie gave an eerie grin. He was like a hunter, excited to see the prey he had managed to trap.

Ji Jie went into the director's office and reported the situation to Pan Kuang.

"Our external deceptive server was hacked. I presume the hackers to be from Hesla, and they will probably launch a military invasion soon."

Pan Kuang was polishing his dark, long machete with his handkerchief. The machete had an icy cold blade and a thick body with its handle wrapped with strips of cloth. There were clear spots of dried blood on the cloth. The machete had been used to slay many enemies throughout the years.

Pan Kuang was fixated on polishing his blade. He then asked calmly, "What do you think we should do?"

Ji Jie cleared his throat and said, "Although the information stolen by the enemy is false, we have unfortunately revealed the existence of the base. Therefore, I hope that the chief can evacuate the base and bring along all necessary equipment and information. In addition, I also recommend that we deal a hard and decisive blow to the existing enemy forces."

"Ok, just tell me when you need me to fight," Pan Kuang replied.

Chapter 76: Abnormalities and Assassinations

[Reconnaissance 1 completed, you gained 3,000 EXP]

Han Xiao was woken up by the pop-up message on the screen. He looked out of the car's window to see it was twilight, and the sky was a grayish blue hue and was gradually getting brighter.

The previous night, Han Xiao had been busy creating new machines and only had two hours of sleep. He took out his water bottle and splashed the water onto his face. The cooling splashes refreshed his senses. Then, he went out of the storage and headed for the base.

Lin Yao had worked throughout the night, and she was exhausted. Qi Bai Jia was next in line for the shift, and he woke up from his nap on the couch.

“How was last night’s operation?” Han Xiao asked.

Lin Yao replied with fatigue, “The bald guy revealed the positions of his comrades to us in the forest, and we managed to apprehend them. Also, we discovered the exact location of the Dark Crow Valley base from the captives’ statements. However, our prisoners are low-ranking personnel, and therefore, they do not have the authority to access confidential files.”

Han Xiao nodded to himself. The outcome was what he expected.

“Is the operation team still in action?”

“Yes, the agents are all still hidden in the forest, waiting for new orders.”

“There is no point waiting in the forest. The agents should return,” said Han Xiao.

Qi Bai Jia, who was munching on his breakfast rations, blurted out, “Hey, I am supposed to be in-charge here.”

“Aren’t you in-charge because you are supposed to take the blame for all of us?” Han Xiao questioned.

Qi Bai Jia choked on his rations. He wanted to rebut Han Xiao but was interrupted by Ye Fan.

“Fellow agents of Division 13, our guys have successfully obtained critical intelligence of the Dark Crow Valley base.”

Qi Bai Jia was puzzled. In less than a day, the Hesla agents had managed to complete the mission. Their efficiency seemed too impressive to be true!

“You guys really secured information about the base?”

Ye Fan nodded in affirmation. “Winna captured an enemy officer. Our operation is done, and we are getting our agents back. After which, we will compile the gathered intelligence and pass the critical information to the military.”

Although it was claimed that the mission was completed, Han Xiao’s tablet indicated that [Reconnaissance 2] was not completed. He frowned and then questioned, “Can you ensure that the information we obtained is accurate and not fake. Also, can you explain the flow of events to us?”

“Of course,” Ye Fan and Winna briefly described the completed operation.

“Don’t you think the mission seemed to be too smooth-sailing?” muttered Han Xiao.

“The mission was indeed easy, but there is nothing especially suspicious. Perhaps, it was a result of the enemy letting their guard down. Also, our mission this time was supposed to be a covert assault.”

“I have second thoughts to the reliability of the information obtained.”

“In our line of work, we must not be too trusting, but you must also back your word with evidence.” The frustrated Ye Fan frowned even harder and ordered, “In any case, we will move out at dawn tomorrow.”

Looking at the Ye Fan's back as he left, Han Xiao's face dimmed. He could confirm with hundred-percent certainty that there was something wrong with the intelligence gathered by Ye Fan.

Han Xiao started thinking about the events that Ye Fan had described. Although Winna and her fellow agents were a little too brash with their actions, they had not made any critical mistakes. Therefore, the only possibility was that Dark Crow Valley contained hidden traps that outsiders were unaware of.

Han Xiao unfortunately had no evidence, and even if he voiced his opinions, nobody would believe him.

A mere speculation was insufficient to convince anybody.

"Looks like I have to go and take a look at it myself."

In the morning, Di Su Su and Winna returned back to the base. Both brought with them their prisoners. Since Roman was an officer, his value exceeded that of all the prisoners brought in by Di Su Su.

Winna beamed with pride like a victor. In her opinion, the operation was likened to a battle between the two countries of agents. It was exhilarating for her that the agents from Hesla had trumped the agents from Stardragon.

The agents from Division 13 were irritated by the arrogance of the agents from Hesla. Li Ya Lin remarked, "If we were the ones in charge of your mission, we would have been winners ourselves."

Winna smirked. "Accept the sad truth that you guys lost."

Han Xiao went forward and said, "The information you guys obtained might be fake."

Even if the agents from Hesla did not believe him, Han Xiao still felt the obligation to voice that fact.

Winna's face instantly slumped and questioned, "Any evidence?"

"My intuition."

Everyone was astonished by the answer.

Winna laughed. "Then I guess you have to shut up. Who do you think you are?"

Han Xiao calmly replied, "Do you have any evidence then?"

Winna patted on the shivering Roman and said, "He is my evidence."

Han Xiao squatted down and gave Roman a thorough scan. It seemed like the Dark Crow Valley base had a master of deception.

Roman did seem to be genuinely frightened, and this showed that he was not providing fake information to the agents on purpose. Therefore, the only reasonable deduction was that the higher-ups of the enemy base had never intended to reveal genuine military information to their lower ranking officials. The sentry guards on the outer circumference of the base were merely posted as bait.

The information obtained by Ye Fan was highly likely to be deceptive.

To uncover the truth, Han Xiao needed to go deeper into the Dark Crow Valley base.

A plan started formulating in Han Xiao's mind. However, he needed to wait till nightfall to execute the plan.

All the other agents were busy interrogating the prisoners and consolidating the intelligence report. They would leave the next morning. Therefore, he could carry out his plan at night.

...

Night arrived, and the bright moon masked the twinkle of the stars.

Han Xiao told his fellow agents that he wanted to be in the truck.

Nobody replied. The agents of Hesla could not be bothered with him, and the agents from Division 13 were too lazy to say no. Only Zhang Wei said, "Go if you really want to, nobody's stopping you."

Han Xiao nodded. After which he proceeded out of the camp. He went into the container and equipped himself with Lambert's sniper-rifle. He also took other necessary equipment. After a few quick glances, he realized no one was present around the camp. Han Xiao sneaked out into the woods

He did not plan to inform his teammates. Qi Bai Jia would surely not approve of his actions, and this would only create more trouble.

After hours of trekking, he finally reached the stipulated location.

Equipped with his thermo-tracking night vision goggles and camouflage suit, after confirming that there were no enemies around him, he started digging a trench deep enough to fit himself.

After which, Han Xiao took out a small mechanical spider from his toolbox. The mechanical spider was the size of his palm. He flicked the switch, and the mechanical spider immediately stooped up before his eyes as if it was awaiting orders from its master.

[Miniature biological sensor (Spider): Miniature bug-like sensor]

This was the latest creation by Han Xiao. It was a practical tool due to its size, ability to camouflage, and ability to be remotely controlled. It also had thermo-sensors that enabled it to avoid other animals. It was like a walking surveillance camera. Han Xiao was not required to move up close to the sentry, and therefore, he was also less likely to be caught.

Han Xiao took out his tablet computer to remotely control the spiders. He was able to locate the positions of several sentries and most of them were hidden beside trees. Han Xiao pictured the location of the sentries in his mind so that he could come up with an optimal route for the assassination he was going to carry out.

Han Xiao carried the heavy sniper-rifle and trudged through the condensed vegetation. The target was now within the range of the rifle.

Lambert's rifle had a silencer that allowed it to fire out a large beam of energy at a sound that was as light as a finger knocking on wood. In this dark and condensed vegetation, a seasoned agent would be able to spot the any slight movement within the range of one hundred meters. However, Lambert's rifle could be operated from a distance of eight hundred meters. It was also the main reason that compelled Han Xiao to select this weapon for the mission, which offered greater safety and convenience.

Han Xiao looked into the scope with great concentration and held his breath. The distance somehow did not matter, and Han Xiao could feel the adrenaline rushing through him.

The target was the enemy's head!

The wind was blowing in 8 o'clock direction!

Wind-speed at 1.3 m/s with a 43 mm inaccuracy!

All the corrections and modifications were completed.

Han Xiao pulled the trigger. His body absorbed all the recoil coming from the butt of the rifle, and his hands gripped the rifle to stabilize it.

Through the thermo-sensing scope, Han Xiao could see that the bullet had managed to hit the target. The target had instantly lost his head, and blood was spurting out.

Chapter 77: Forest Assassin

The bullet from the heavy sniper pierced through the target's head. Like a watermelon pounded by a hammer, the head disintegrated into bits and pieces.

Through the video feed transmitted from the spider, Han Xiao adjusted his position and stabilized himself again, before firing a shot at another sentry guard. One shot after another, the sentry guards were eliminated. The interface flashed with each successful kill made by Han Xiao.

—

The sudden blast is charged up to 200% and ready to be deployed.

The enemy has been successfully eliminated by the fatal blast. You have dealt 190 points of damage to the enemy.

You have successfully eliminated the sentry guard. 500 EXP gained from the attack.

—

The sudden blast is charged up to 200% and ready to be deployed.

The enemy has been successfully eliminated by the fatal blast. You have dealt 201 points of damage to the enemy.

You have successfully eliminated the sentry guard. 500 EXP gained from the attack.

These level 10 sentry guards were merely ordinary troops. Their fighting abilities were similar to those of the guards back at the lab where Han Xiao had once been held captive. Han Xiao had no issues wiping out the lab guards back then. Likewise, he had no problems now.

One after another, the sentry guards were killed, and Han Xiao gained 18,000 EXP from the kills.

[Forest Assassin mission completed, you gained 18,000 EXP.]

The mission proceeded smoothly. After killing so many sentry guards, reinforcements were bound to arrive... and there they came!

The Spider detected three fully-armed quick-response teams approaching in their jeeps. After the jeeps pulled up, the team members hopped down and started conducting thorough searches.

The sentry guards had their earpieces, which enabled them to connect main communications network. If a sentry guard was killed, their radio channel would fall silent. If a large number of channels operated by the sentry guards fell silent, it would raise suspicions at the Dark Crow Valley Base, which would dispatch quick-response teams to the field to investigate the situation in response.

Han Xiao predicted that once the quick-response teams discovered the murdered sentry-guards, they would start searching intensely. Through the 'eyes' of the Spider, which he shifted up the tree, he could observe that the troopers were equipped with Jackson machine guns, high-explosive grenades, and RPG rocket launchers. Instantly, Han Xiao called off the plan of challenging these heavily armed troopers

It was the perfect time for Han Xiao to flee.

Han Xiao disassembled the heavy sniper and lugged it onto his shoulders. Clad in his camouflage suit, he sneakily shuffled to the trench he had dug. He transferred all the unnecessary accessories into the toolbox and then dumped both his sniper rifle and toolbox into the trench.

At that instant, the search-teams discovered the headless sentry guards. The armed troopers immediately started searching warily, using the torchlights on their machine guns.

The tree beside the trench was Han Xiao's hiding spot. The spot had been carefully selected by Han Xiao. It was at the edge of the high-alert sector. The further away from the enemy base, the more dispersed the enemy troopers would be. It was likely that the troopers would search the area alone.

The rays of a torchlight flashed beside the tree. Han Xiao gradually lowered his body and held the thin metal wires tightly. He concentrated all the energy in his legs and was preparing to launch himself forward like a mantis.

The moment the trooper's foot crossed the tree's body, Han Xiao moved his body like a phantom and instantly went behind the sentry guard. Although the enemy had already detected Han Xiao's movement and had intended to fire at him and call for help, Han Xiao reacted faster and managed to strangle the trooper by coiling the metal cables around the trooper's neck.

Han Xiao then kicked the trooper's machine gun to one side. After which, he wrestled the trooper to the ground. The trooper's entire upper body was resting beneath his knees.

The suffocation caused the trooper's face to turn purple. It was as if the blood was going to burst out of the vessels. At this point in time, the metal cables had already pierced into the flesh of the trooper. The trooper waved his hands hysterically, trying to grab Han Xiao by any means, but it was to no avail. The trooper's eyes also flipped upwards.

Han Xiao maintained the tension until the interface indicated that the trooper was dead.

Throughout the entire process, he had managed to keep the struggling trooper silent.

Han Xiao quickly changed into the trooper's uniform. The trooper was a Caucasian of similar height to himself. He quickly used his pocket knife to trim his hair. After which, he straightened his collar and pulled the sleeves tight to ensure none of his skin was showing, since he was of a different skin tone from the trooper. He then used his finger to tap his forehead to activate the face scanner. A light beam emerged from his forehead and scanned the dead trooper's face.

Replicate the scan!

Almost immediately, Han Xiao's face morphed into that of the trooper!

That was the trump card to be used in his successful infiltration.

He dumped the dead trooper's body and the unwanted accessories into a hole and buried the contents. He then marked out the area. Han Xiao, clad in a trooper's uniform, made his way forward blatantly. He could also clearly hear the conversations on the enemy's communication channel.

"This is H103 reporting. Everything is fine in the northwest sector."

"This is H141 reporting. Everything is fine in the southeast sector."

The call-sign of the trooper that Han Xiao had killed was H223. Han Xiao made his report in a similar fashion using his suppressed voice.

"H223, what happened to your voice?" A man that seemed to be his captain spoke.

"I have a sore throat."

After 'searching' the area for a while, Han Xiao was recalled. More than twenty troopers gathered at the jeep, and Han Xiao had not yet raised any suspicions.

The captain asked, "None of you found anything?"

"No sir," the troopers replied.

The captain frowned and said, "Get in the car. Let's head back to base."

Han Xiao squinted. He had managed to infiltrate the team, and it was all part of his plan to enter the Dark Crow Valley base.

...

The car drove into a cave, and three minutes later, an unexpected sight appeared before Han Xiao's eyes.

There was something special about the cave; it was actually a mini car-park.

The jeep pulled over, and the troopers alighted from it. Han Xiao tagged along with the team and came before a wall of rocks. The captain pulled out a rock that was actually a modified metal casing that contained a card-scanner.

The captain scanned his identity card, and following a boom, the rock wall split open. At this point, Han Xiao realized that the rock wall was a metal gate in disguise. The gate was sprayed with a greyish paint, and it looked very much like a rock. One would be unable to tell the difference if he or she did not examine the wall closely.

How strange. This looks exactly like what the agents from Hesla reported.

Han Xiao was confused. All of this had actually been detailed in Ye Fan's intelligence reports. It was all accurate information. However, why did the interface claim that 'Reconnaissance 2' was not yet completed?

What was the problem exactly? Could it be something to do with the time? Perhaps the base appeared differently at different times of the day?

Han Xiao proceeded together with the rest, and they came upon a gantry. After scanning his identity card, he was finally into the base.

The base was hidden deep in the ground. It was supported by metallic structure, which added a cool greyish tone everywhere. There were winding corridors and many rooms. The troopers were busy transporting containers of items.

Han Xiao lifted his head, and he could see a surveillance camera positioned at the corner of the ceiling. He retracted his neck instinctively.

Going behind enemy lines alone was tough, and Han Xiao prayed for the success of his operation.

So, now that I am in the base, what shall I do next? Hang around aimlessly or chat someone up... better not. Chatting with someone will likely reveal my identity. What information am I hunting for exactly? Since for 'Reconnaissance 2', I am supposed to uncover critical intelligence with regards to the Dark Crow Valley base, there must be some loopholes here! Since the low-ranking officers serve merely as bait, most of the people are not likely to have access to important information. I need to find someone that looks and acts differently from the rest.

Once this thought flashed in Han Xiao's mind, he started wandering about the base, carefully examining every inch.

...

"13 sentry guards were killed?"

Ji Jie frowned in disbelief. Based on his prediction, since the enemy agents had obtained the necessary intelligence, they would not kill any sentry guards. Unless, they were suspicious of the information they stole.

It appeared that these invaders were indeed meticulous and careful with their actions.

Ji Jie shook his head and said proudly, "But they are still greenhorns."

The double-server network was the best trap Ji Jie had ever planted during his stint as the assistant officer in-charge of the base. Its sole purpose was to prevent invaders from attacking, and now, the security network's effect was finally showing.

If only false information was planted, it would only raise the suspicions of the invading agents. Therefore, to deceive his enemies, Ji Jie was willing to risk his life and included some true information in the bait. The information included were the exact location of the base, the deployment of the sentry guards, and defense mechanisms in the third and sixth high-alert sectors. To successfully trick the enemies, a certain degree of true information needed to be weaved in with the false. The final two sectors had defense mechanisms with firepower that was more than ten times stronger than the rest. There was also another trump card.

“The chief has approved the path of the retreat. Reinforcements will arrive in five days. That will also be the day for the retreat. For now, let’s deliver a huge present to Hesla.”

The main forces of the Germinal organization were concentrated on the continent of Andrea. The Germinal Organization had also covertly extended its influence to the other continents through setting up secret facilities and bases. These bases remained hidden, and if they were discovered, the Germinal Organization would order the retreat as it was impossible for a single facility to withstand the raids from the military forces of the six nations.

Ji Jie was highly confident of his trap. He was not afraid to expose real information and the location of the base. He had one trump card in his hand. All the other troopers, and even the base itself, could be sacrificed in order to deal a strategic and painful blow to Hesla.

Chapter 78: Multiple Hideouts

The more nervous he was, the harder it would be for him to infiltrate without being exposed. Han Xiao had many experiences infiltrating enemy bases. Thus, he was very calm and walked as fast as blowing wind, without alarming anyone.

He gradually understood more about the base after exploring it for a while. The base was hidden at the hill side, and it was about five to six times larger than the laboratory that he used to stay in. The base had two exits: one was the entrance that he took; the other was a side gate for the individual personnel to access the outside world conveniently.

Not knowing why, Han Xiao felt that some places in the base were unusual. However, he could not pinpoint the exact reasons.

Most of the personnel had a serious face, as if they were expecting an incoming storm. They were loading up important supplies hurriedly.

“Have you heard? The higher ups want us to evacuate the base. It seems like Hesla’s agents have found us.”

“They mentioned that the spy stationed at Crow Forest Town lost contact. I think a battle is going to happen soon.”

Han Xiao heard some voices as he turned a corner. A few armed guards were gathered together and having a discussion. They looked worried. As they saw Han Xiao, one of the guards shouted, “Hey Mandela, did you guys find anything from the search inside?”

Mandela was H223's real name. He was a Caucasian. Han Xiao covered his skins fully with his uniform so that the rest would not get suspicious.

These few guards seemed to be acquainted with Mandela. "The sentry guards outside were all shot in the head by a sniper. We still haven't uncovered the enemy. I bet it was done by the Hesla agents," lied Han Xiao while innocently blinking.

The guards looked troubled. They were all armed personnel, so if the enemy were to strike, they had to be at the frontline to defend the base.

"I am so jealous of the non-military personnel. They get to evacuate the base first." One of the guards was disgruntled with his circumstances.

Light flashed in Han Xiao's eyes. Since they were up against an army from Hesla, it was predicted that the enemy was going to evacuate the base. Furthermore, this was only a supplemental base, not a main one; it was impossible for everyone to stay back and fight to their death.

However, evacuation was not an easy feat; too many people leaving at the same time risked leaving trails in the forest for the Hesla army to track. So, it was essential to leave some military personnel to stay behind and cover their tracks, while the officers and non-military personnel leave first with important supplies, which were more valuable than those armed guards. They would only get to leave after the more important personnel had evacuated safely.

The final Camp-Destroyer mission was to destroy the entire base, which included their personnel. If they only took hold of an empty base, the completion rating of the mission would be really low.

A thought suddenly occurred in Han Xiao's mind. *They already know Hesla is going to attack the base; they should have evacuated by now. Ye Fan's team infiltrated the base last night, which was twenty-four hours ago. They should have had enough time to leave. This is strange.*

A muscular-looking guy walked over and shouted, "What are you idling here for? Don't you have things to carry?"

The guards apologized in great trepidation. It was the captain of the base's security team, Dormund, a buff Sharnuk.

A core member like him would definitely know the secrets about this base.

Dormund left after some reprimanding, and Han Xiao followed from a distance behind. After turning a few corners, Han Xiao was dumbfounded. He barely looked away for two seconds, and Dormund was already missing from his sight.

There was no one on the walkway, only a storage room.

Han Xiao walked over to the room and turned the knob. It was not locked.

He pushed the door open and walked inside. The room was about a hundred square meters, and it was filled with miscellaneous items, with no one else inside. The lamp was not switched on, and the light from the walkway shined through gap beneath the door.

Han Xiao knitted his brows as he suddenly realized something unusual.

The room was spotless, and the floor was clear of any footprints.

Normally, very few individuals would go into the storage room. Even five-star hotels would not send people to clean their storage unit like this, so it was impossible for the Germinal Organization to keep an ordinary storage room as immaculate as this.

There must be a secret door somewhere here. Otherwise, Dormund would not have disappeared so quickly. But Han Xiao could not locate the door.

What would be behind the secret door?

All of a sudden, Han Xiao pretended to cough while bending his back. He took this chance to take out the Spider from his pocket. He then threw it into the corner silently before leaving the room immediately. He took out his tablet in a spot that was hidden from the surveillance cameras, switched the Spider on, and stared at the storage room.

It took Han Xiao two hours of high intensity monitoring, during which he started to become quite weary, before that was some movement in the storage room.

One of the walls creaked open, and a secret metal door was shown. Two people, unarmed, walked out. They seemed to be technical staff.

There is my secret door.

As the two personnel left the room hurriedly, Han Xiao followed behind quietly. He suddenly sped up to bump onto the staff from the back. Three of them almost fell.

“Sorry. Sorry. I am really sorry about this,” Han Xiao apologized as he stabilized the two staff with his hands.

They did not make a fuss over it and left.

Han Xiao turned around to continue following them. However, this time round, he had gotten a white card. It was an access card from the pocket of one of the two staff.

His stealing skill had come in really handy.

This card had no noticeable difference from the ordinary identity card from the base. However, Han Xiao believed that the chip inside should be different; it should have access to the secret door.

He followed the two staff for a while and arrived at the side gate of the base. The two greeted the door guard and left through the gate.

All of a sudden, Han Xiao realized what was wrong with the base.

Atmosphere!

Although most people were worried sick over the incoming Hesla attack, a small group of personnel still held on to their posts without any anxiety. They seemed to have some backup plans and were as calm as the sea—greatly contrasting the first group of personnel.

Han Xiao squinted and soon arrived at a reasonable deduction. However, he still needed some evidence to confirm his thought. He went forth toward the side gate before the door guard stopped him.

“You are not allowed to enter or leave the base without a mission.”

Han Xiao took out the access card he had stolen and said, “I bumped into those two people just now, and they dropped this card. I want to return it to them before they walk away.”

The door guard nodded his head before allowing Han Xiao to go.

Han Xiao walked out of the gate and saw a forested valley; it was already past midnight. The two staff were few hundred meters away, so one could only see their tiny back view. He chased them up quickly.

The staff turned around as they heard footsteps coming from behind and looked guarded.

“You dropped your access card.”

As Han Xiao walked near, they realized that he was the colleague that they bumped into in the base beforehand. They let down their guard. One of the duo searched his pockets and exclaim, “Where did I drop the card? Thank you very much.”

“You don’t have to thank me. We are all comrades of the Germinal Organization, working hard to build a new tomorrow. This is just a part of my job.”

Han Xiao smiled as he walked closer to them.

“You are quite an interesting guy.”

The person laughed while he moved his hand over to grab the card. Han Xiao’s face instantly turned serious, and he launched his attack all of a sudden. His fist punched hard onto the person’s stomach, injuring the internal organs with its shear force. The person stared with astonishment, as he vomited. The other person almost screamed before Han Xiao quickly grabbed his neck to choke him. He then slammed his head onto the floor and slapped them as hard as could, knocking them out.

Han Xiao took off his belt to tie the two personnel. He dragged them behind him while taking a big detour to avoid all the sentry posts. As soon as he had moved far enough away from the base, he slapped the two awake.

They woke up with faces full of horror. “You...you are not from the base!”

Han Xiao took out his foldable machete and rubbed its blade. He was clearly threatening them. He said in an ice-cold voice, “I know the two of you know something that the ordinary members are kept in the dark about. You’d better tell me honestly now.”

They gulped in fear and stuttered, “We are just low-ranking members who do not know anything.”

“Low-ranking?” Han Xiao laughed before he moved his knife swiftly toward one man’s crotch.

“Ahhhh...”

The person screamed as if his soul was tearing apart, like a pig that was being butchered. But he suddenly realized he was not in pain. He looked down and saw the shiny blade had grazed past his inner thigh and cut into the soil beneath. It was only three centimeters from his genitalia. His crouch could feel the chill from the cold metal blade.

“I know that is a secret door in the storage room. Tell me everything you know, or I will make you the first eunuch in the Germinal Organization,” Han Xiao said in a murderous tone.

Although they did not know what a eunuch was, Han Xiao’s action was quite telling. They were badly shaken up immediately.

“How... how did you learn about the secret door?”

“I am the one asking questions.” Han Xiao lifted his machete to brush his genitalia gently, as if he would just lop it off at any moment. He was so frightened that he almost peed his pants and... *He really peed his pants? Damn... my machete!*

The two staff looked crestfallen. Since the secret was out, there was no point in hiding. They spilled the intel as they trembled in fear.

After ten minutes...

Han Xiao’s brows were knitted tightly together.

“No wonder...”

[Reconnaissance 2 completed. You gained 8,000 EXP]

Chapter 79: Suspicion

Dawn, at the secret base...

All the agents were busy packing their equipment as it was time for them to evacuate.

“Brother Xiao, Brother Xiao! Where are you?” Lin Yao slapped on the door of the truck’s container. He looked frustrated. He had been trying to find Han Xiao for the past fifteen minutes, but his efforts had been futile. The rest of the agents from Division 13 were running out of patience.

“He is not in the truck. Where could he possibly have gone?” Li Ya Lin was puzzled.

Everyone looked at one another and did not have a single clue.

Last night, Han Xiao had mentioned that he wanted to stay on the truck, but now, he was not there. What exactly did he do last night?

“What is your team’s plan?” Qi Bai Jia said to Zhang Wei’s team.

“We are going to stay back to wait for his return,” Zhang Wei replied.

“Is there a need to do so?” Di Su Su was rather surprised.

“Because the truck key is with him!” Zhang Wei was gnashing his teeth in great anger, and the vein on his forehead was about to pop at any moment.

Everyone was rendered speechless, not sure whether they were lucky or unlucky to have such a member on their team.

Qi Bai Jia was very displeased as he hated any unexpected changes during a mission. Just when he thought Han Xiao had a clear understanding of the big picture, he caused trouble like this.

I must be blind! Any team member who acts on their own accord without following any order is a rascal!

If something went haywire, Qi Bai Jia would have to assume the responsibility!

Han Xiao was such a jackass!

...

The Hesla agents stationed on the other side discovered Division 13’s unusual behavior, and they started discussing secretly.

“Some of the Division 13’s agents are intending to stay behind.”

“I thought we agreed to move together?” Ye Fan frowned. He went to find Qi Bai Jia to get an answer on this. After which, he came back and explained the reason to the Hesla agents.

“Who is the agent missing?”

“It was the agent that was wearing the mask; his name is Han Xiao.”

“It’s him.” Winna’s face suddenly tensed up, and said, “Last night, when we received the intel, Han Xiao rejected it without any supporting evidence, and then he was gone for the whole night without leaving a message. This seems quite suspicious. Is it possible that he is a... spy?”

All the Hesla agents startled.

“Be careful of your words.” Ye Fan frowned. He did not buy that deduction, but Han Xiao’s actions definitely aroused his suspicion. “We will report all the facts to the commanding officer when we get back to the army camp.”

....

After all the other agents left, Zhang Wei and the other three teammates stayed back at the base.

Lin Yao could not help asking, “Where did Han Xiao go and what is he going to do exactly?”

“How would I know? He did not say anything to me last night.” Li Ya Lin rolled her eyes.

Zhang Wei shook his head as he felt irritated; that guy had zero respect for his team leader!

...

The other agents arrived at the border several hours later.

Winna and Ye Fan went to report to Colonel Carl immediately.

“A Division 13 agent was missing for the entire night?” Colonel Carl walked back and forth, and his brows furrowed.

“Is this 100% true?” he asked.

Winna nodded. “He left last night without telling anyone, and it was right after we uncovered the intel about the Dark Crow Valley base.”

“Although it seems suspicious, this does not mean that he is a spy,” Ye Fan added.

Colonel Carl nodded slowly. “I will go and clarify this with Stardragon a while later. Now, tell me more about the intel.”

“The captive that we brought in passed our lie detector test, which means that everything he said was true. Furthermore, Ye Fan personally hacked their network to gather all this intel. We can guarantee its authenticity!” said Winna.

Colonel Carl’s eyes turned sharp as he said decisively, “Then let’s attack immediately before anything changes!”

Ye Fan was hesitant. “The Division 13 agents left at the secret base will be in danger if the army attacks now.”

“To achieve our strategic objective, it is reasonable to sacrifice one or two people from Stardragon. Since they are not from our country, we need not care so much.” Colonel Carl did not give it a second thought.

At the same time, after taking a long, indirect route, Han Xiao finally brought the two captives to where he had hidden his toolbox, bypassing all the detectors and sentry posts. The whole journey had been arduous and onerous; he was so tired by then that he almost wanted to puke blood. The captives were not wearing camouflage suits, so he’d had to spend hours to bypass the alert areas.

Fortunately, they were the technical staff in charge of the testing detectors and landmines, so they provided much valuable information. Otherwise, he would not have left without alerting anyone.

However, the captives had tried to lure him into a high-alert area to expose him once, but he’d realized immediately. He had punished them harshly before they cooperated fully with him.

The Sun was shining brightly above the sky. Han Xiao calculated the time and sighed. “Crap, I went beyond the stipulated time. I guess all the other agents have already left.”

He dug out his toolbox and took out his radio equipment to contact Zhang Wei.

“Hello. Hello. Yangtze River. Yangtze River. This is Yellow River. Please reply if you can hear me.”

“Yellow your head!” Zhang Wei’s fury could be heard through the earpiece. “Where exactly did you go? You were missing for the whole night, and all the other agents left. We could only stay at the base and wait for you!”

“That’s right. You’d better make up for this. I want new equipment!” Li Ya Lin chimed in on the radio channel. One could hear the annoyance in her voice and imagine her pouting; it was actually a little cute.

Han Xiao shook his head and started acting more seriously. “I infiltrated the Dark Crow Valley base and discovered top-classified intel!”

“Let me get Officer Qi for you,” Zhang Wei said with a look of solemnity.

...

Qi Bai Jia received the radio message at the border army camp.

“Zhang Wei, what are you calling me for? Is Han Xiao back?” he asked.

“He wants to speak with you.”

“He’d better cook up a good explanation for his actions.” Qi Bai Jia was clearly displeased.

After Han Xiao was connected to the channel, he said, “I just received the intel saying that the Dark Crow Valley base has two sectors: the outer sector and the inner sector. The outer sector is where all the low-ranking personnel work, while the inner sector is where the core members stationed themselves. The inner sector is hidden deeper in the mountainous valley, and the low-ranking personnel outside are not even aware of its existence. The information about the inner sector is classified for all the low-ranking personnel, and the path connecting the two sectors is always blocked...”

The two captives had told him that the base was divided into two sectors. The inner sector was hidden deeper in the mountains, where all the important supplies were stored. It was the real core of the base. The higher ups in the base did not tell the periphery personnel anything about the inner base. So, it was a secret to many of the Germinal Organization personnel. In their previous lives, the ‘real’ players did not even know the existence of the inner base.

The inner base had many evacuation routes. The core members could leave without leaving a trace. They were very cunning in the sense that each of these roads was classified. Nobody knew which path they would take before the actual evacuation was decided by the top leadership of the base.

Qi Bai Jia understood the importance of this information immediately. If Hesla did not know about the existence of the inner sector of the base and the army went ahead to attack the outer base, they would simply retreat when they took down the outer base, declaring it a military success. In that case, the core force of the enemy would be entirely unharmed, and the inner base would remain safe. The enemy could move back secretly in the future, ensuring that hideout was secure from the enemies.

Qi Bai Jia was dumbfounded. He could not believe that Han Xiao’s solo act could bear such critical intel!

“Cough, cough. Even though it was a move well played, I still have to emphasize that it is unacceptable to act on your own without any orders.

“Hold on for a while. I will report this to the commanding officer immediately!”

Qi Bai Jia was stopped by the deputy officer when he requested to meet Colonel Carl. He waited anxiously for five minutes before was allowed to go into the office. He realized Ye Fan and Winna were there too.

Colonel Carl looked at Qi Bai Jia and asked, "What do you have for me?"

"One of my team members just discovered some critical information that needs to be reported to you."

"Han Xiao?"

"Yes."

Qi Bai Jia nodded, but he did not realize that the other three started having a weird look.

Colonel Carl's eyes flickered. "Speak."

Han Xiao repeated what he said before, and at the end, he added, "If we attack brashly, we will only take down an empty shell. I hope we can pause the operation until our guys get hold of the enemy's evacuation time, evacuation route, and the detailed structure of the inner base. By doing so, we can directly kill their evacuating troops and prevent a direct attack against their fortification. This will greatly reduce our casualties."

Colonel Carl was expressionless after he heard everything.

"Where did you get this intel from?" he suddenly asked.

"I infiltrated the base by disguising my face, and I managed to capture two personnel from the inner base..."

All of a sudden, Colonel Carl yelled, "You are lying!"

To Colonel Carl, it was impossible for Han Xiao to infiltrate, even if he said he could disguise his face. It would take at least tens of minutes to make a legitimate face mask. During that time frame, Han Xiao would have faced all kinds of danger. At the same time, he could not predict which enemy he would encounter next, so it was impossible for him to make the face mask beforehand. So, it was an impossible situation that Han Xiao could never achieve.

Han Xiao was startled. He realized that these people did not know the capability of his Facial Simulator.

The function of the Facial Simulator was his trump card. He would not divulge such information. However, without exposing it, he could not explain the details of his infiltration.

"I have the capability to do so." Han Xiao had to give an ambiguous answer.

"Unless you can demonstrate, there is no way we can believe you."

Colonel Carl was still expressionless, but he was more untrusting of Han Xiao's words.

This person... is really suspicious!

Chapter 80: Bold Move

Han Xiao's brows furrowed.

"Do you have any evidence to support your claim?" Qi Bai Jia quickly provided a solution as he trusted Han Xiao. However, Hesla had a different position. Both parties were mutually untrusting toward each other.

Han Xiao paused and said, "I have two captives with me. You can test them with a lie detector to confirm that I am not lying."

Colonel Carl squinted. "Well then, you can bring them over."

Qi Bai Jia heaved a sigh of relief. Although he was skeptical of how Han Xiao had managed to infiltrate the base, he chose to believe that Han Xiao had his own ways.

Fortunately, he had captives to prove to them that what he said was true.

However, after the radio connection was cut off, Colonel Carl told his deputy, "Order the troops to move out. Our target will be the Dark Crow Valley."

Qi Bai Jia was stunned—it was the complete opposite of what was previously promised.

Colonel Carl was reluctant to explain his rationale. It would take Han Xiao a few hours to bring the so-called captives in, and if Han Xiao was to play tricks and delay further, the enemies from the Dark Crow Valley base might seize the opportunity to evacuate completely before his troops could reach the target. As the commanding officer, he would not simply alter his decision based on certain unverified intel.

He was more inclined to trust Ye Fan's intel; it had witnesses, evidence, and originated from reliable sources.

Colonel Carl believed that he would not risk any damage for moving out earlier even if Han Xiao was right. Han Xiao could still bring the captives to him. The only difference was that the base would be on high alert earlier, and that would cause danger to Han Xiao's team.

But, he didn't care about the lives of a bunch of Stardragon agents. Even if they were killed, the Hesla top-level officers would not look into it. Someone from Hesla would naturally block the protests from Division 13.

Furthermore, Han Xiao had already provided the information about the inner base. Colonel Carl did not give a hoot whether or not Han Xiao could prove his story. He could verify this information himself after he took down the base.

"My men are still stationed near the base. Your rash attack will put them in great danger!" Qi Bai Jia was clearly enraged.

"Such a great opportunity may pass at any moment. We cannot risk a delay because of one or two agents. Since they are agents themselves, I am sure they can understand the bigger picture," Carl replied calmly.

"Objection!"

Qi Bai Jia's face was filled with anger.

“It’s not your place to disagree.” Carl pressed on an electric bell to summon a section of troopers; they pointed their rifles at Qi Bai Jia. “Send our ‘friends’ from Stardragon to the vehicles. We will move out together later. I do not want them to communicate with anyone else as that may leak our plan, so remove all of their communication devices.”

Carl emphasized the word ‘friends’ to stress his point.

Qi Bai Jia was so furious that his body started shaking vigorously.

“Sigh. How did things come to this stage?” Ye Fan was bereft of words. Han Xiao had suggested a conservative method, while Carl was more radical. Neither was wrong, but Carl was the commanding officer, and Han Xiao was only a subordinate. Furthermore, they were not from Hesla.

Winna watched coldly from the side.

....

After the connection was cut off, Han Xiao’s face blackened.

He had a hunch; Carl was a radical commanding officer, so he would most likely attack in advance.

This guy is eager for a quick success. Han Xiao was clearly irked. It seemed like he had to complete the mission by himself since time was running out.

However, he only knew about the existence of inner base but not the enemy’s evacuation route and time. He needed to infiltrate again to gather more information.

This time, Han Xiao did not plan to accomplish it himself. To achieve his plan, infiltrating alone was not the optimal option.

The best option for a partner was actually Lin Yao, a hacker that could be planted inside the base. Like a computer virus, he could cut the enemy’s communication network at the critical junctures, rendering them blind and deaf.

Therefore, he had to make two facial masks based on the two captives. There were molds and make-up tools in the truck storage. Thus, he could craft the masks in an hour or so.

Han Xiao forced his mind to focus and used his remaining energy to drag the two captives toward their secret base. He reached it in the afternoon, and his teammates came out to welcome him.

“Are you alright?” Lin Yao quickly came forward to support the exhausted Han Xiao.

Han Xiao shook his head and said, “There is not much time left. We need to make two facial masks based on the captives. Lin Yao and Lambert will use their identity cards to infiltrate the inner base. I will explain the details later.”

“Brother Xiao...Brother Xiao, I have no experience in spying. Can you give the job to another person?” Lin Yao’s face turned pale due to the overwhelming fear.

“You are our only hacker, so it has got to be you.”

Lin Yao looked petrified.

"I will take the other slot." Li Ya Lin volunteered herself.

Han Xiao peeked at her and shook his head without any hesitation.

"What are you trying imply? Are you looking down on me?" Li Ya Lin was infuriated.

"These things are too big, making them hard to conceal." Han Xiao pointed at her breasts.

Li Ya Lin was speechless.

Lin Yao anxiously grabbed onto Han Xiao's sleeve and said in a hopeful voice, "Brother Xiao, are you going in with me then?"

"Nah. I won't. This mission is too dange... cough... too simple for me. It is not challenging enough for me!"

You definitely said something fishy there! Lin Yao and Li Ya Lin were screaming in their hearts.

"I shall do it then," Zhang Wei said.

Han Xiao shook his head again. "No, you can't. No one else can operate the armored suit. And, you are the team leader."

" **Oh** , so you still know that I'm the team leader?" Zhang Wei gave a bitter smile. Ever since the appearance of Han Xiao, he had become a mere figurehead.

There was only one possible candidate left.

"It has been decided that it will be you!" Han Xiao pointed at Lambert.

"..." Lambert.

"Oh my god. I am definitely going to die." Lin Yao was exasperated.

Lambert slapped the back of Lin Yao's head with an expressionless look as he was unhappy with Lin Yao's attitude at the decision; he made it seem so much worse than choosing Han Xiao.

...

One of the team members drove the truck closer toward Dark Crow Valley so that they didn't need to walk so far, while the rest were busy putting on make-up to disguise the two unlucky souls. They parked the truck right outside the alert zone.

After more than an hour, Lambert and Lin Yao's disguises were completed. They looked exactly like the two captives. After putting on micro-earphones, they held the access cards and entered the Dark Crow Valley base from the side gate.

"Brother Xiao, how concrete is this plan?" Lin Yao asked Han Xiao softly.

"If you dream of its success with sincerity, you will make it."

Lin Yao felt a clot of blood stuck in his throat as he was made speechless by that answer. He turned to Lambert for more assurance.

“Are you not afraid?” Lin Yao asked Lambert in a quiet voice.

“To accomplish the mission, we must try even if there was only a slight possibility of success,” Lambert said calmly.

“Well said. You seem to be very dedicated to the mission.”

“...” Lambert.

Soon, the two of them arrived at the gate. Lin Yao was so nervous that his jaw was trembling.

“Will we get exposed?”

“The more nervous you appear, the easier it will be for you to be exposed.” Lambert patted Lin Yao’s shoulder and reassured him.

Lin Yao took out his access card after he had gathered his senses.

The security guards checked the access cards, and shortly after, they opened the gate for them.

They then walked to the storage room under Han Xiao’s instruction. They found the access card reader and successfully opened the secret door using the two captives’ access cards. A metal pathway appeared before them.

The pathway was long; it took them ten minutes to reach the inner base.

The defenses were much tighter in the inner base, and many computer screens were seen hung on the walls. The enemy personnel were busy moving supplies and data.

Lambert and Lin Yao looked each other in the eye.

Now, they were really deep inside the enemy’s base!

All of a sudden, a screeching alarm was heard in the base, and the lights turned red.

Lin Yao was scared to death as he thought that they had been discovered. Lambert frowned slightly and held onto Lin Yao.

“Calm down. The alarm was not triggered by us,” he said softly.

The personnel in the base were whispering to one another.

“What is happening?”

“Is the enemy invading us?”

Ji Jie walked out calmly and updated everyone, “Be quiet. Hesia’s border troops are advancing toward the base. The military personnel in the outer base have already set up the necessary defenses. They will be able to hold our enemy back long enough for us to get ready to evacuate.

Lin Yao’s expression changed, and he whispered anxiously over the radio, “You guys must leave now!”

