

ARC OF FIRE

Chapter 13: Conserving Strength to Better Eliminate the Enemy

Captain Sergey parked the vehicle in front of the building, and Wang Zhong hurried down with brisk steps, took a couple of steps, then remembered something important, turned around, and said to Sergey following him, "Give me your pants."

Sergey reacted as if facing a great enemy, "No way! If I do that, I won't have anything to brag about in front of girls anymore!"

Wang Zhong put on a stern face, "This is an order! It'll affect the morale of our troops, and if morale collapses, we'll only be able to meet in a prisoner of war camp."

Wang Zhong actually thought that meeting in a prisoner of war camp wouldn't be such a bad thing, but given the current situation, he couldn't bring himself to say "Let's surrender."

He could only struggle for a bit.

Sergey was still playing tough, "I think us exchanging pants in public could also have an immeasurable impact on morale."

Wang Zhong looked around, "No one is paying attention to us, right now they're more worried about the enemy, hurry up, it will only take a few seconds to switch!"

"You're the one who's done! I'm ruined!" Sergey complained while taking off his pants, and Wang Zhong also unbuckled his belt to take off the pants with Aleksei's "authentic" signature.

Underneath the military trousers were boxer shorts, and realizing this, Wang Zhong let out a huge sigh of relief.

However, just at this moment, a group of officers came out of the building. The officer at the front was a Lieutenant Colonel, just like Wang Zhong, and he was stunned by the scene before him.

The staff officers behind the Lieutenant Colonel were even more dumbfounded, their mouths open in an O shape.

Forcing himself to look nonchalant, Wang Zhong slipped into the pants he had switched for.

Sergey was a bit shorter than Wang Zhong's current body, so he had to try his best to pull up the waistband.

After completing the change of clothes, Wang Zhong put on a stern face, "What were you arguing about just now? I could hear you from a great distance!"

"Ah?" The questioned Lieutenant Colonel looked at Wang Zhong, blinked his eyes, and asked tentatively, "Count Aleksei Konstantinovich Rokossovsky?"

Wang Zhong, "It's me. Don't you recognize my voice? I recognize yours, Colonel Ivan Panzhelayevich Yegorov of the Third Rear Amur Group."

The main reason Wang Zhong remembered such a long name was that the dog tags had the unit number and the name and rank of the commander written on them.

Also, because of the Golden Finger, Wang Zhong knew that the people he encountered were from the Third Rear Amur Group, and with both pieces of information, he could naturally infer that the man before him was Colonel Yegorov, the commander of the Third Rear Amur Group.

Before responding to Wang Zhong, Yegorov took a moment to glance at Captain Sergey, who was still putting on his trousers, his gaze lingering on the water stains for a full second.

Wang Zhong stepped forward, blocking Yegorov's line of sight, "Lieutenant Colonel, even though we hold the same rank, I've been entrusted by the Duke to command the entire force, I am your superior."

Yegorov hadn't reacted yet, but the staff officers beside him saluted.

It was then that Yegorov had his realization and stood at attention to salute, "You were a Count all along, I should be saluting you."

Wang Zhong mimicked the gesture and returned the salute, "What were you just debating about?"

Yegorov answered, "Just now, my staff officer Pavlov was insisting that we directly attack the enemy's army group headquarters marked on the map we captured, claiming that we should go and die!"

The staff officer stepped forward, "That's not right! What I said was that we should fight bravely to the last moment. That's the enemy's Corps Command, and our valiant fighting might change the situation on the battlefield to some extent!" ῚANŌβ&S

Wang Zhong's first reaction was no, absolutely not!

He didn't even understand the name of his own country yet, let alone feel any sense of loyalty.

Before Wang Zhong could speak, the staff officer Pavlov continued, "If Colonel Yegorov insists on fleeing, we can only consider it an act of treason and hand him over to the Tribunal!"

Wang Zhong frowned slightly, "Did I just hear a term that should not appear in this context?"

The Tribunal? Another way of saying a military courtroom?

Yegorov's tone was clearly hesitant, filled with an air of bravado, "The Tribunal! Hmph, where are all those judges who strutted around peacocking before? They've run off without a trace first!"

Wang Zhong was shocked; he had absolutely no idea about this Tribunal or the judges these two were discussing. Could it be something like the military police?

Due to his lack of knowledge, he chose to keep his mouth shut and listen some more before speaking.

But Yegorov turned the conversation towards Wang Zhong, "Let His Excellency the Count say it! His Excellency the Count's intention must certainly be to retreat through the small path."

Wang Zhong was startled. There was a small path? A way to retreat? That was wonderful news!

But no, he had to restrain himself, not to let others see any flaws.

Wang Zhong looked sternly at the two officers.

What should he say? Clearly, Yegorov knew of a small path that could be used to retreat to the rear, so he should support Yegorov.

But this staff officer named Pavlov had a resolute look, obviously prepared to embrace a noble death.

Just as Wang Zhong was struggling with what to say, he suddenly remembered the opening scene of "Patton," his favorite movie: General Patton standing before the American flag, delivering a long speech that lasted several minutes.

Though Wang Zhong couldn't remember the exact words, he could recall the general idea, so he said out loud, "Major Pavlov, you are very brave, and your courage is admirable."

The staff officer stood tall and proud, adopting the pose of a victor.

Wang Zhong, "But, through the ages, no victory has been won purely by shedding blood and sacrifice! To achieve victory, it is not enough for us to shed blood and make sacrifices alone, we must also make the enemy bleed and sacrifice!

"We must make the enemy bleed more than us!"

Wang Zhong paused, as if to emphasize his words, giving others time to digest them.

But in fact, he had forgotten what to say next. He vaguely remembered a line about "cleaning our tracks with the enemy's blood," but felt that using it directly lacked persuasive power.

Hence, Wang Zhong began to improvise, "You just said that by attacking the enemy's Corps Command, we might disrupt the enemy's arrangements, delaying their advance by a day or two.

"I can only say, you have overestimated the role of one regiment, and you have overestimated the role of a Corps Command!

"Across the entire front, the enemy has hundreds of divisions in action, dozens of Army Groups attacking! What's the use of just disrupting one Army Group?

"No, it is useless! A more effective approach now is to send these soldiers, who have endured the first wave of fire, back to the rear to regroup, to resist the enemy's attacks more effectively!

"Preserving our fighting force now is to better annihilate the enemy later, to make the enemy bleed and sacrifice until the day comes when we return the fire to their own country, and let them defend their homes!"

Good, this is the moment, time to use Patton's famous line!

Wang Zhong paused to gather his thoughts and then declared emphatically, "And then, what we must do is crush their skulls under our boots, and clean our tracks with their blood!"

Major Pavlov stared at Wang Zhong for several seconds before relenting, "Alright, you've convinced me. Even though I've seen you change your wet trousers, you've still convinced me."

Come on, do you really have to bring up that wet pants incident? I didn't pee them!

Damn it, look at the mess that coward got me into!

Oh my God, if I get a chance, I'm going to kick that coward's ass so hard!