

Blackfield 251

Chapter 251: It's Difficult To Understand (2)

Du-du-du! Du-du! Du-du-du-du!

AK-47 gunshots echoed as Gérard reported their situation.

“Daye! Cha Dong-Gyun!” Kang Chan called, then swiftly charged ahead.

Swoosh! Swish!

The ground was slippery. Rocks and the ground itself kept crumbling under their feet.

They stumbled every time they lost their footing, but they didn't slow down.

Kang Chan turned left and immediately crouched, Seok Kang-Ho and Cha Dong-Gyun stopped behind him.

Haah. Haah.

The enemies were in a large cave about twenty meters below them. Sparks flew from inside it with every rifle shot.

Still crouching, Kang Chan turned to Seok Kang-Ho. In response, Seok Kang-Ho raised his hand, sending a signal to their men. Kang Chan soon heard the soldiers coming to a stop.

The French team and the Spetsnaz were waiting at similar spots across the mountain.

Chk.

“Those fuckers pulled an RPG on us out of nowhere.”

Evidencing what Gérard said, they could see two black craters in front of the French team where the grenade had hit.

Chk.

“Any casualties?” Kang Chan asked.

Chk.

“We've got two lightly injured men,” someone answered.

Kang Chan took a slow look at their surroundings. They were about ten meters away from the roof of the cave.

Chk.

“They don't seem to have seen us yet. We'll go around the mountain and get to where the cave is. Keep drawing their attention until we're in position,” Kang Chan said.

Chk.

“Yes sir,” Gérard answered.

Chk.

“Andrei, I need you and your team in front of the cave. It would be best if you don’t get spotted, but station somewhere you can avoid an RPG just in case.”

Chk.

“Copy,” Andrei responded with determination.

Kang Chan couldn’t bring himself to trust that kid, but doubting the Spetsnaz’s abilities would be nonsensical.

He slowly moved to the back.

Pew! Pew! Du-du-du! Du-du-! Du-du-du-du!

When the French team tried to shoot down their enemies, the latter immediately retaliated.

“We’re climbing to the top and head down to the left side of the cave,” Kang Chan ordered his men. “Stalling will put us in more danger, so we’re cornering them instead. Make sure you don’t make any noise.”

After looking at his men, Kang Chan led them up the mountain.

They had all gotten used to their formation by now. Kang Chan was naturally at the very front, and Seok Kang-Ho and Cha Dong-Gyun followed behind him. Choi Jong-Il, Kwak Cheol-Ho, and Woo Hee-Seung supported the two from the back.

Rustle. Swoosh!

The falling dirt and pebbles put them on edge. Fortunately, the gunshots drowned out the noises they made.

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan remained alert as he headed forward.

Even though they were walking on rough and dried terrain, the mountain had quite a lot of low trees and plants.

They were now only fifty meters away from the cave.

Haah. Haah.

Clatter! Clank!

They heard rocks rolling down the mountain with each step they took.

The moths that were difficult to differentiate from tree branches, the vividly colorful frogs, the large mosquitoes, and other insects of this mountain were just as scary as their enemies. After all, touching or getting bit by some of them could result in surprised reactions, sudden loss of consciousness, and even death.

Among them, the ants had to be the scariest. The soldiers never knew when the ants would crawl into their military boots and bite their feet. By the time they had looked down to check the stinging pain, they would already be feeling sick and dizzy.

Hence, the one leading their formation always had to examine the ground and make sure they avoided the nests of such ferocious creatures.

Du-du-du-du! Du-du!

Pew! BAM!

After a couple of gunshots, another explosion resounded, sending tremors through the ground. Soil fell from the sky.

Damn it!

Kang Chan kept moving. Soon, they found a winding path to their right.

Rustle. Swoosh. Rustle. Swish.

If soldiers who had served in locations with paths like these were tossed into makeshift cities with asphalt roads for training, they would never make a noise no matter how much they ran.

Du-du-du! Pew! Pew! Du-du-du-du!

France's special forces team kept drawing the enemies' fire toward themselves.

Chk.

"Spetsnaz on standby," Andrei radioed in.

After another five minutes of walking, Kang Chan and the South Korean team finally reached their destination.

Kang Chan gestured to his eyes with his index and middle finger, then pointed to areas left, right, and opposite of the cave. Cha Dong-Gyun assigned two people to stand guard at each area.

There was about ten meters in between the top of the mountain and the cave.

Chk.

"We're going down to the cave. Spetznas, France, cover us. Make sure tangos can't fire at us," Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

"Understood," Gérard answered.

Chk.

"Roger," Andrei replied.

After getting their confirmation, Kang Chan pointed to Seok Kang-Ho, Cha Dong-Gyun, Choi Jong-Il, and Kwak Cheol-Ho. He then carefully laid down in the direction of the hill.

Rustle! Rustle!

The slope was so steep that they would slide down if they relaxed let gravity do its work.

Following Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho went prone and crawled down.

Swoosh!

Dirt fell from under their heads and shoulders, but Kang Chan's position stopped them from rolling past him.

Pew! Pew! Pew!

Ta-da-dang! Ta-da-da-da-dang! Ta-da-da-da-dang!

When the Spetsnaz opened fire at the entrance of the cave, the enemies inside stayed behind cover instead of immediately returning fire. They seemed to have been caught by surprise.

Kang Chan let himself slide down, using the gunshots to cover any noise he could make.

Ta-da-dang! Ta-dang! Ta-da-dang! Ta-da-da-da-dang!

Having caught onto Kang Chan's plan, the Spetsnaz blatantly fired at their enemies, denting and chipping away at the wall at the entrance of the cave.

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

Under the cover of the rapid gunshots, the four quickly made their way down the hill and stood behind Kang Chan.

All preparations were complete.

Ta-da-da-dang! Ta-da-dang! Pew! Pew!

Kang Chan held up his right hand and straightened his index finger. He then raised his middle finger.

One! Two!

Whoosh!

When the firefight stopped, Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and three of his men ran into the cave.

Unless they were stupid, they wouldn't just stand at the entrance of the cave.

Pew! Pow! Pew! Pow! Pew! Pew! Pow!

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho killed three hostiles as their men took cover behind the walls of the cave and provided cover fire.

Like lightning striking through the night sky, sparks flashed inside the dark cave, briefly illuminating rebels with rifles at the ready.

Click! Pew! Bam! Pow-pow-pow!

Where do you think you're aiming?!

Pew! Pow! Pew! Pow!

Special forces found fights like this easy.

If it wasn't for the damn suicide bombers and the RPGs that the enemy fired at random, this would have been almost no different from shooting at training dummies.

"Sit down!" Kang Chan yelled in Korean.

He then gestured at the hostages to sit back down. Since the hostages were standing up, it seemed safe to assume that all of the rebels had died.

The light coming from outside lit up the cave a little.

This is the scariest part!

A rebel hiding among the hostages could end them all with a press of a button.

Pew! Pow! Pew! Pow!

“Sit down!” Kang Chan yelled in Korean again after sending two bullets to the cave’s ceiling.

When the cave finally quieted down, he raised his hand to his helmet.

Chk.

“Spetsnaz, meet the hostages in front of the cave! Gérard, keep an eye on our surroundings and cover us if necessary!” he ordered.

Chk.

“Yes, sir.”

Chk.

“This is Kang Chan. Team One, Head down to the entrance of the cave. Teams Two and Three, guard our perimeter and provide suppressive fire if needed.”

Chk.

“Understood,” Lee Doo-Hee answered.

Seok Kang-Ho and Choi Jong-Il stood at the left wall of the cave, and on the right Cha Dong-Gyun and Kwak Cheol-Ho were aiming at the hostages with their rifles on their shoulders.

“I’ll start sending the hostages out of the cave. You have the permission to shoot as soon as you notice something odd,” Kang Chan said. He then approached the hostage at the very front.

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan sharply examined the hostage, then looked straight into his eyes. The hostage glanced back at him, fear evident in their gaze.

Kang Chan nodded toward the entrance of the cave, signaling that they could leave. When the hostage hesitated, he repeated the gesture, finally making them inch their way toward the entrance. They moved so slowly that it seemed as if they were crawling.

Click!

Kang Chan pointed his gun at the woman sitting behind the hostage. If they let their guard down in situations like this, the hostages would all run outside. Worse, a bomb could explode right in their faces.

Even though there were approximately two hundred hostages, they decided to inspect them one by one anyway. Even if they spoke the same language, this would have still been their best and only option.

One by one, the hostages were sent out.

Kang Chan's procedure was so slow that it could be mistaken as him stalling for time. However, the hostages seemed to have understood his intentions. They were now silently waiting for instructions instead of rashly standing up and running out.

"Daye! Check the first row of hostages. Make sure you thoroughly examine them!" Kang Chan said.

"Alright."

Kang Chan walked to the right, and Seok Kang-Ho scanned the hostages at the front before letting them go outside.

Looking at them was enough to tell who had a bomb attached to them. After all, those who did would already be crying during times like this.

Haah. Haah.

Upon receiving Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho's orders, the thin, dirt-covered hostages with big eyes and rough, chapped lips ran outside so fast they quickly ran out of breath.

Among the hostages were women with children in their arms. Kang Chan nodded at one of them.

Would people believe that these women were just fourteen or fifteen years old?

These young girls gave birth despite suffering from aids and malnutrition. They didn't wear a hijab, but since they were influenced by Islam, they couldn't eat at restaurants or eat with men.

Even if they had food, the men and children would eat first. Since they were also still breastfeeding, they often lost weight until they eventually collapsed and died.

Kang Chan quickly sorted through the hostages and then sent them outside.

Click!

They had sent about a hundred and thirty hostages outside when Kang Chan pointed his rifle at another woman carrying a child.

Haah. Haah.

She was crying, the tears from her round eyes rolling down her cheek and chin.

Damn it!

Kang Chan looked at the child in her arms. The child looked so exhausted that they were barely conscious. Flies buzzed around their eyes, nose, and ears. Moreover, their stomach was so bloated that they looked as if they had just eaten their full.

It seemed the child had already died of starvation.

"Daye," Kang Chan quietly called. Seok Kang-Ho already understood the situation.

“Cha Dong-Gyun. Make your way to where I am slowly,” Seok Kang-Ho softly said. He then walked over to Kang Chan, who was still looking right into the woman’s eyes.

Kang Chan nodded at the woman.

‘I’m going to remove the bomb.’

She was still crying.

‘It’s okay. I’m going to save you and your child. Don’t worry.’

Seok Kang-Ho carefully stood beside Kang Chan.

Kang Chan slowly crouched and put his rifle on the ground.

Clank!

He then held up his hands.

“Four o’clock, two meters away from us,” Seok Kang-Ho said, informing Kang Chan where they should go if worse came to worst and the bomb exploded.

Kang Chan didn’t look away from the woman, not even for a second.

‘Let me rescue you both.’

The woman looked at Kang Chan with suspicion.

“Dhibaato lahayn,” he said ever so softly, telling the woman that everything would be okay in Somali.[1]

Having worked in Africa for ten years before, it would have been rather strange if he didn’t pick up at least this much.

Haah. Haah.

Don’t cry. We’ll survive this.

The woman flinched when Kang Chan approached her, but she didn’t protest or twist away from him.

Kang Chan slowly reached out and put his hands under the child.

It’s okay! I’ll rescue your child no matter what.

They would all die if he lost eye contact with the woman now.

It would also be over if someone beside her suddenly stood up or yelled that an outsider had touched a woman.

Haah. Haah.

The woman looked at her child. He and his men would always be in the most danger whenever hostages looked away from them.

“Dhibaato lahayn,” Kang Chan repeated.

The woman immediately looked up at him.

Can I trust you?

Kang Chan softly nodded when he saw the suspicion in her eyes. Soon, she passed her child to his arms.

He slowly pulled the child toward him. Nothing happened.

Keeping his eyes on the woman, Kang Chan moved his arms to the left. Seok Kang-Ho then took the child from his arms.

I’m going to rescue you as well.

Kang Chan lowered his arms, then carefully took out the bayonet that he had on his ankle.

Swoosh.

‘Don’t be anxious. You’ll be all right.’

The woman looked anxious, but they couldn’t stall forever. Kang Chan carefully walked behind her. Under the blood-stained clothes, he found dynamites wrapped around the woman like a belt.

This bomb’s got to have a cable connecting it to a switch somewhere.

It could be tied to the ground so the bomb would explode if she stood up. It could be wrapped around her hands or ankles as well. It could even be tied to a child.

Seok Kang-Ho just watched Kang Chan in silence. Although he had the child in his arms, he would shoot immediately if the woman moved even just a tiny bit suspiciously.

Kang Chan slid his bayonet under the leather strap attaching the dynamite to the woman, then pulled the bayonet toward him.

Snip!

He still couldn’t see any cable.

Their enemies often hid the cables in areas that were difficult for others to touch. The most common ones were the groin and thighs since they could position the cables to trigger the explosion if the hostages stood up.

Snip!

The woman’s chest heaved as she breathed deeply.

Snip!

There was only one leather strap left.

Snip!

When Kang Chan cut it, the dynamites fell forward. He slowly made his way to the front of the woman, and then looked into her eyes.

‘Where is it?’

The woman dropped her gaze. She wasn't telling Kang Chan where it was. Rather, she was instinctively looking at the most dangerous thing around them with the hope that she would live through this.

When she looked up again, Kang Chan met her gaze and nodded.

Her dark hand lifted her clothes, revealing a cable wrapped around her knee.

Things like this were nothing.

With his left hand, Kang Chan grabbed the cable and bent it. He then slid his bayonet through the loop.

Snip!

Grabbing onto one side of the dynamites, he carefully pulled them away from the woman.

Swish.

Along with what seemed like a snake brushing against clothes, the explosives were finally pulled out from under the woman's clothes, putting them in full view. Attached to them was the device that would trigger the explosion.

'Phew!'

Kang Chan softly sighed after pulling the last cable. He then nodded at the woman.

The woman hesitated but soon wobbled to her feet. She walked over to Seok Kang-Ho and took her child. Together, they headed out of the cave.

Kang Chan sheathed his bayonet at his ankle and picked up his rifle. Afterward, he continued examining the hostages with Seok Kang-Ho.

They checked them all in a span of thirty minutes. It seemed the enemies only attached a bomb to one person.

When they went outside, they found the Spetsnaz and South Korea's Team One guarding the hostages, who were now sitting in a group in front of the cave.

Kang Chan felt drained. Perhaps it was because he hadn't done this in a long time.

There were a few things he wanted to complain about, but that was a problem for another time. Right now, taking care of the hostages took priority.

Chk.

"Command, we have rescued two hundred hostages. Requesting evac, over," Kang Chan radioed in.

No one answered.

Chk.

"I repeat. We have two hundred hostages with us. We need evac stat. Do you copy?"

Chk.

“This is Command. You can’t take the hostages back to base,” the headquarters finally answered.

Kang Chan was surprised.

Chk.

“If we leave them here, they’ll either be killed or taken hostage again. If we can’t bring them back with us, we should at least set up a temporary barracks in front of the base.”

Chk.

“I repeat. Do not take the hostages to the base.”

What’s going on? They’re telling us to let the hostages die after rescuing them?

Kang Chan turned his head to Andrei, his eyes filled with suspicion.

Does this fucker know something?

However, looking at Andrei made him conclude otherwise. The man had always looked simple-minded, but he looked as if he really didn’t know what was happening right now.

“Andrei!”

“Oui, Monsieur Kang,” Andrei answered, hiding his dissatisfaction.

“I will no longer follow Command’s orders. The Spetsnaz can do what they want.”

Click!

Kang Chan held up his rifle as Andrei gave him a serious look.

Chapter 252.1: Let’s Not Overdo It (1)

The blazing sun was slowly making its way above their heads. Hot winds blew past them, causing heat to rise from the ground and the hostages’ repulsive smell to rush to the soldiers.

“Cha Dong-Gyun! Have our snipers and men stand guard at the top of the cave and the path down! Assign five soldiers here as well!” Kang Chan ordered.

Cha Dong-Gyun answered affirmatively, then radioed in his orders. Meanwhile, the hostages anxiously examined their surroundings.

Kan Chan raised his hand to his helmet again.

Chk.

“Gérard! Position your men at the back, then head down here.”

Chk.

“Yes, sir.”

Everyone, including the ones waiting for them in the UN command vehicle at the foot of the mountain, could hear what was being said on the radio. Hence, Kang Chan decided not to say anything else through the radio for now.

“What are you planning to do ?” Andrei asked as he approached Kang Chan. He had his gun pointed to the ground.

“They’re ordering us to leave them here to die even though we just rescued them. Don’t you find this weird?” Kang Chan asked.

“We’ll be in deep trouble if we don’t follow the orders of the command center—”

“Andrei,” Kang Chan interrupted. He looked him in the eye. “I won’t stop you from following your orders as a soldier. But look over there.”

Andrei looked to where Kang Chan was staring, finding the Somalis who were sitting on the ground.

Kang Chan continued, “If we leave them behind, they will either die or get taken hostage again. However, we’ve made their deaths inevitable by rescuing them. If we’re just going to abandon them, it would’ve been much better if we didn’t rescue them in the first place. I won’t abandon these people unless we’ve come up with a countermeasure against the two fates waiting for them right now.”

Andrei looked at Kang Chan as if he couldn’t understand what Kang Chan was saying.

However, Kang Chan didn’t tell him all of this with the hope that a dumbass like Andrei would be able to do something about it.

Soon, Gérard and another soldier stopped in front of Kang Chan.

“Did you hear what I said on the radio?” Kang Chan asked Gérard.

“I did. By the way, this guy knows how to speak Somali, Captain.”

The soldier with him briefly saluted Kang Chan. “Roberre, sir.”

Kang Chan nodded in acknowledgment, then turned to Gérard. “Have the men secure the perimeter. We’ll hold this place and protect the hostages here for now.”

“They need some food and supplies.”

“Then let’s have six of your men and six of mine bring over our rations, blankets, and other necessary supplies from the base.”

“Captain,” Gérard called.

Kang Chan already knew what he was about to say but chose not to because Andrei was around.

The army interpreter next to Seok Kang-Ho quickly delivered what they were talking about in Korean.

“If this becomes a problem later on, just say I used my rank as the DGSE’s Deputy Director-General to make you obey my orders.”

Gérard's eyes showed mixed emotions. However, Kang Chan being the Deputy Director-General seemed to have surprised him the most.

"I can just retire if things go south. Will you really be okay, though?" Gérard asked. He felt conflicted, but he didn't easily back down.

"Gérard! If I had looked the other way during moments like this in the past, I would be a General by now."

Rendered speechless, Gérard could only softly exhale.

"All right. Please designate which soldiers from the South Korean team will be going to the base with us," Gérard said afterward.

Kang Chan looked around him for Cha Dong-Gyun.

"Team Three, I need you to head back to base with the Foreign Legion's special forces team and bring us our worth of lunch, dinner, rations, and basic bedding," Kang Chan ordered.

"Copy, sir."

Cha Dong-Gyun—who had been listening to the conversation through the army interpreter until now—gathered the soldiers to the front.

"What was your name again?" Kang Chan asked.

"Roberre, sir."

Kang Chan turned to the Somalis.

"Roberre, tell these people that we're going to keep them safe in this place for now. Make them go back into the cave and mention that we're going to hand them food and blankets as soon as the soldiers get back with supplies."

As ordered, Roberre loudly spoke in Somali.

"I can't believe you really went back to Africa," Gérard commented. Finally giving in, he shook his head as he smiled. "Should we prepare a campfire?"

"Yes. We have to keep our guests warm."

Seok Kang-Ho grinned after the army interpreter finished interpreting their conversation.

When Roberre stopped talking, they heard the hostages' immediate replies.

"They said they need medical supplies for their children and first aid for festering wounds," Roberre said.

"Gérard, you know what to do," Kang Chan replied.

"Of course! I'm not a newbie at this anymore," Gérard answered.

As Gérard walked off with Cha Dong-Gyun, Roberre quickly told the hostages what was happening.

“Should I tell them to go into the cave now?” he asked Kang Chan afterward.

“Yes. That would be for the best.”

“That’s true,” Roberre answered as he looked at the sun. It had already reached its peak.

He spoke in Somali again, the hostages rushed inside the cave.

“Seok Kang-Ho, assign two soldiers to the entrance of the cave,” Kang Chan said.

“All right.”

Seok Kang-Ho called over two of their men and gave them a briefing about the things they would have to watch out for.

The hostages were obeying them right now, but they had been in situations where hostages protested, argued, and even used violence against other hostages. In such situations, the soldiers would have to scare them by firing into the air and separating and isolating them if needed.

Kang Chan approached Park Chul-Su, who was looking at their surroundings.

“Colonel, This is a direct violation of the UN command center’s orders. If this becomes a problem, just say that you couldn’t defy the orders of the National Intelligence Service’s Assistant Director.”

Park Chul-Su looked at Kang Chan the same way Gérard did earlier. The gauze on his nose was so dirty that it could infect his wound.

“No, I’ll take responsibility for this. I definitely wouldn’t have been able to do this if I was in command, but I don’t see anything wrong with what we’re doing right now. Please proceed with whatever you’re planning,” Park Chul-Su responded.

Hearing that made Kang Chan feel much more at ease.

“We’ll withdraw for now,” Andrei grimly said.

Kang Chan just nodded in response.

Clunk. Clunk.

The Spetsnaz headed down the mountain, their rifles and equipment clanking against each other.

“Let’s have some smoke over there,” Seok Kang-Ho suggested.

He slung his rifle over his back and searched through his pockets.

Now that Kang Chan thought about it, they didn’t have any reason to stay under Africa’s intense sun anymore. Hence, he led his men to sit in the shade created by some boulders.

“Here you go,” Seok Kang-Ho said, offering a cigarette to Kang Chan.

Chk chk! Swoosh!

“Hey!” Kang Chan exclaimed in alarm.

The lighter spewed out flames like a flame thrower when Seok Kang-Ho flicked it on. This was why they had to mix oil into gasoline in Africa.

“Phuhu. I completely forgot!” Seok Kang-Ho exclaimed. He laughed cheekily. He then weakened the lighter’s fire.

Chk chk! Chk chk!

“Huu!” Kang Chan exhaled the cigarette smoke. Smoking made him thirsty and crave for sweet instant coffee.

After a while, Gérard walked over to them. “Daye! Give me a cigarette as well.”

“For some strange reason, this fucker has changed so much!” Seok Kang-Ho complained.

Every now and then, they would understand each other without needing anyone to interpret for them.

Seok Kang-Ho handed Gérard a cigarette. He then lit it up for him.

This scene was so familiar to Kang Chan that he mistakenly wondered if he actually just went on a short trip to South Korea before ultimately returning to Africa.

“Huu!”

Kang Chan blew out the cigarette smoke. He felt as if the nauseating smell had disappeared.

The smell of Africa depended on the time of the day. It was different in the morning, the afternoon, when the sun was high in the air, and right after sunset. That was why they never had time to get used to the unpleasant scent irritating their nose. Fortunately, a week was enough for people to get used to it enough for it to no longer bother them as much.

They spent about an hour lazing around in the shade.

Chk.

“The soldiers who were sent to the base are coming back,” someone radioed.

Kang Chan walked over to an area that gave him a clear view of the bottom of the mountain. He then leaned forward. Although it looked as if it would be amazing to climb up the boulder next to him and look down and at the distance from there, he chose to just lean forward a little instead since he could end up getting himself killed otherwise.

Kang Chan didn’t know when and where hostiles would try to shoot him. It would be nonsensical to risk his life by going up the boulder and leaning down just to get a better view.

In the distance, he could see three Humvees and three trucks speeding toward them.

“Send some people down. Have them help the others bring the supplies over,” Kang Chan said.

“Got it.” Seok Kang-Ho, who was sitting on a rock, stood up and went down the mountain.

A moment later, Cha Dong-Gyun, the Foreign Legion’s special forces team, and the soldiers who had gone down to help them reached their camp. They were carrying a mountain of goods.

Gérard and Seok Kang-Ho took out the supplies and food that the soldiers were going to use first, then sorted through the ones they would give to the hostages.

“How do you have so much supplies?” Kang Chan asked.

“About half of these are from the United States’ Green Berets. We accepted them just in case.”

Kang Chan nodded in understanding. It would have been weirder not to take the help that the Green Berets offered them.

Gérard, Seok Kang-Ho, and a couple of other soldiers carried the supplies into the cave.

The hostages murmured as the soldiers entered. Soon, they started yelling at each other.

Pew! Pew!

When Gunshots rang out and sparks flew from the cave, the noise immediately died down.

The hostages would get used to this soon. They would learn to wait for their turn once they realized that they would all receive food at every meal.

Chapter 252.2: Let’s Not Overdo It (1)

“Ahhhhh!” a woman screamed as the soldiers were handing out food.

Kang Chan took out a cigarette and lightly bit on it. His eyes were on Park Chul-Su, who was so startled that his eyes swiftly darted toward the cave entrance.

“A child probably died,” Kang Chan explained.

“A child?”

“This will happen again, so you’ll probably hear another person screaming.”

Park Chul-Su stared at Kang Chan, pity and sorrow evident in his eyes.

Couldn't they save the children?

Chk chk.

Even if the medical team rushed over right now, they still wouldn’t be able to save the child that had just died or the child that Kang Chan was assuming would die later. Giving food to the children who were going to die was the best gift they could give them right now.

A moment later, a skinny woman with a dark-skinned child in her arms weakly walked out of the cave. The child still had food smeared all over its skin, having failed to eat them.

The cries of African women made them sound as if they were screaming.

These people would dance if they got just a bit excited, but the opposite held true as well. They weren't the type to hide their sorrows.

Two soldiers from France's special forces team guided the woman deeper into the mountain. They then used a long stick to help her dig a grave and bury her child in it. Just like that, another African who had lived a life full of nothing but hardships passed away.

The woman's wails mixed with the sound of people talking noisily inside the cave.

On one side of the mountain, they were burying a child, and on the other side, they were eating to survive.

Kang Chan extinguished his cigarette and blankly stared at the cave. Soon, the woman from earlier staggered into view from deep into the mountain. She wobbled back into the cave, her hands and knees still covered in dirt.

"Now that we've rescued them, I'm sure that woman will die today as well if we don't keep her and the other hostages safe," Kang Chan explained.

"If so, then why would..." Park Chul-Su trailed off. He turned his head away, seemingly finding it difficult to understand what was happening.

"I'm just as confused as you are. The Green Berets put their lives on the line to rescue these people. Some of them even got injured in the process. Unfortunately, rescuing them has guaranteed the SSIS' retaliation. If we don't do anything, they will get killed. Despite knowing that, the UN still told us to leave the hostages behind."

"What if the command center doesn't know what's going to happen?"

Kang Chan smirked as he glanced at the cave.

"They know about what's going on here more than anyone else. That's why Gérard believes that they're hiding something. I also feel uneasy about this whole situation."

Park Chul-Su just nodded in response. While they were talking, Seok Kang-Ho and a couple of other soldiers walked over to them with a small box.

"Let's eat," Seok Kang-Ho said.

Thud!

Inside the box were c-rations that the American soldiers normally ate.

"Where's Gérard?" Kang Chan asked Seok Kang-Ho.

"I think he went over to check on the men."

It felt uncomfortable to split the South Korean and French teams now.

The soldiers that were nearby all sat and ate together. They also drank as much water as they wanted.

Seok Kang-Ho smacked his lips. He then looked around him, seemingly feeling as if something was missing.

Noticing his behavior, Kwak Cheol-Ho leaned forward, a mischievous expression on his face. “Do you guys want a cup of coffee?”

“What? We have coffee?”

“I brought instant coffee with me. I should have enough for all of us to have a cup. We can just light up a fire in front of the cave.”

Seeing Kang Chan smile, Kwak Cheol-Ho walked over to just beside the cave with another soldier. They had enough water that it wouldn't cause any problems if they boiled and made coffee with a portion of it. Moreover, they could easily make a fire since they had straws and dried-up trees and plants all around them.

A moment later, the distinct scent of instant coffee wafted out in all four directions. Smelling it made them feel so happy and fascinated.

Kwak Cheol-Ho picked up cups of coffee and handed them out to everyone. “Delivery coming through!”

“Kwak!” Gérard shouted. He quickly walked down from the right side of the mountain and accepted a cup.

Kang Chan wasn't sure if Gérard smelled the coffee or was simply destined to show up right at this moment.

“This is nice!” Park Chul-Su exclaimed after taking a sip of his coffee, expressing his amazement.

He likely never imagined that he would enjoy drinking hot coffee while sitting around in Africa, which was fucking hot.

Seok Kang-Ho blew on his drink to cool it down. After taking a sip from it, he turned his head to Kang Chan. “We can't stay here forever, can we?”

The army interpreter was passing on Seok Kang-Ho's question to Gérard in French.

Kang Chan turned his head toward Gérard.

“Gérard, didn't you say that there are six hundred Somalis here?”

This time, the army interpreter passed on what Kang Chan said to Seok Kang-Ho.

What did this army interpreter do to get chosen for this kind of joint force?

“I was thinking of double-checking with the hostages once they have settled down in the evening,” Gérard answered.

“Let’s stay here for now. We have to prioritize keeping them safe. Knowing full well that they’re going to die the moment we drop out, we can’t just abandon them now, can we?”

“Will you be okay?” Seok Kang-Ho asked Kang Chan.

“Of course. I’ve already had my fair share of situations like this in the past.”

Seok Kang-Ho nodded in agreement. Gérard looked away from them after the army interpreter passed on what they said. He seemed to be asking, ‘Well, who can stop him anyway?’

They took turns resting and keeping watch.

The soldiers mostly sat together facing the cave or in areas that gave them a clear view of the foot of the mountain. Fortunately, they could afford to relax a little since they had snipers assigned to keep an eye on the bottom of the mountain.

Honestly, this battle was a breeze compared to any of the other operations that Kang Chan had been in in the past. Perhaps that was why the soldiers seemed much more relaxed.

Kang Chan sat on a rock with his rifle slung over his back. He then looked down the mountain.

What on earth are those sons of bitches hiding? If I could freely make a call right now, I would’ve already asked Anne about it...

South Korea would have trouble exerting its influence in this kind of situation, but the same couldn’t be said for France. France’s right to speak to the international society and their experience in colonizing various parts of Africa and keeping them under their command were enough to eliminate any need to explain the difference between the two countries.

Kang Chan sighed softly.

He had promised himself numerous times already that he would turn South Korea into a strong country. However, after a ridiculous turn of events, he was now sitting near a cave on a mountain in Africa instead, deliberating whether he should borrow France’s power or not. He couldn’t help but feel quite pathetic.

It was almost five in the afternoon now.

The soldiers would be bringing over their dinner in a bit since they had to be considerate of those who would be standing guard at night. They would have to give them enough time to sleep before their shift.

At night, the temperature would drop to less than twenty degrees Celsius. Although the South Korean soldiers thought it was still somewhat liveable, it was already enough for the hostages to feel cold.

I wonder how my mother is doing. When I get back home, will she be so surprised that she will burst into tears again? Well, I’ve been surprising them too often lately. She might actually welcome me with smiles this time instead.

Kang Chan smiled as he thought of Yoo Hye-Sook. Soon, Gérard approached him.

“Captain, from what I’ve gathered, there are four hundred Somalis beyond the mountain. The hostages were asking if those people were attacked as well because some of them have albinism,” Gérard said.

Kang Chan shook his head. “The Islamic insurgent group doesn’t believe that, do they?”

“Well, the hostages also mentioned that they don’t know why they were ambushed. Two hundred of the hostages here were just trying to evacuate the women and children toward our base when the circumstances became so dangerous that they were forced to hide in that cave.”

Gérard sat down near Kang Chan with a plop. He had long eyelashes, arms, and legs, and a strong upper body—which was common among Caucasian people. He also had a scar on his cheek.

His appearance alone could make people think of him as a respectable veteran.

“We shouldn’t overdo things, Captain,” Gérard said. He turned his gaze to the horizon when Kang Chan smirked. “An arm and a leg of someone with Albinism is worth over a thousand US dollars right now. I also heard their heads go for over ten thousand dollars, so what they do is they cut their heads and submerge them in alcohol.”

“Gérard, the Islamic insurgent group doesn’t believe in sorcery.”

“Let’s just focus on taking care of the hostages already in our responsibility. Have you forgotten that a lot of people became wary of you in the past because of what you did in moments like this? We’re already going against the UN’s orders right now. Are you planning to defy the entire international society as well?”

Gérard seemed to have recalled the moment Kang Chan was killed by a bullet to the neck. That could be why he was softly consoling him in French, something unbecoming of him.

Unfortunately, people don’t change that easily.

“If I didn’t genuinely care for you or Daye, what do you think would we be doing right now?” Kang Chan asked.

“Isn’t it gross that you genuinely care for us?” Gérard asked, turning his gaze from the sky to Kang Chan.

“Do you want to get hit?”

The two chuckled.

“Hahaha! All right! We’ll probably someday get through all of this for as long as we follow you anyway. I feel like I’m getting the short end of the stick, though, since I’m with someone who’ll just reincarnate again if he dies.”

Kang Chan smirked and then burst into laughter.

“If you reincarnate again, you should return somewhere close to me,” Gérard smiled as he was saying nonsense.

Chapter 253.1: Let’s Not Overdo It (2)

The Foreign Legion’s special forces team and Cha Dong-Gyun’s Team Three brought dinner over. They then lit a small fire inside the cave and handed out blankets to everyone. Emotionally, the Somalis didn’t seem to be doing too badly. However, after dinner, another child died.

Park Chul-Su failed to mask his sadness when pitiful shrieks erupted. He still wasn’t used to this kind of situation—anyone would need quite some time to get adjusted to and understand that moments like this were simply a part of life in Africa.

After dinner, Kang Chan sat back down on the rocks that overlooked the river. He leaned back, staring off into the distance.

Compared to the blood-red sunsets in Mongolia, Africa had quite normal ones. However, they carried with them a certain sadness that was difficult to hide, making the hearts of anyone watching them mourn.

The cries of a deer whose throat was clamped on by a beast, the moans of a lion dying from the horns of a water buffalo, and the sight of predators in every direction—the sunsets of Africa always gave off a mood that spoke of death.

Kang Chan made his trademark smirk as he watched the sun sink below the horizon. He had been in Africa for quite a long time, but he had never seen a giraffe, a rhinoceros, or a lion even though they were frequently shown on TV.

Rustle. Rustle.

The aroma of delicious coffee tickled the bottom of his nose as he heard someone walking over.

“What are you up to?” Seok Kang-Ho asked as he approached Kang Chan.

“What do you think?” Kang Chan jokingly shot back.

Seok Kang-Ho laughed as he handed Kang Chan a mug. “Phuhuhu.”

“It’s worth two packages of instant coffee,” Seok Kang-Ho explained.

Yeah, this is what I like about this guy.

“I brought some water too so you can brush your teeth when you’re done with your coffee.”

Lifting the mug to his mouth, Kang Chan smiled against its rim. Seok Kang-Ho was the only one who took care of him like this.

“Gérard’s quite worried about you. He thinks you’re going to be in a lot of trouble tomorrow when the UN command center issues new orders for the operation.”

“These people are more important than that.”

“Is that what’s making you worry?” Seok Kang-Ho asked as he used his free hand to take a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket. He then offered it to Kang Chan. “Are you going to go rescue the other hostages tomorrow?”

Kang Chan gazed at him as he accepted the pack and pulled a cigarette out of it. To them, instant coffee should always be accompanied by a smoke or two.

Click!

The flickering red glow on the tip of the cigarette was more noticeable now that it was starting to get dark.

“Hoo! I hate how much fun it is to live!” Seok Kang-Ho randomly exclaimed. The stream of smoke from his cigarette rose and eventually disappeared into the darkness. “We’re probably going to die early from smoking cigarettes, though.”

Kang Chan couldn’t stop himself from chuckling.

“So you should just fuck all and do whatever the hell you want before you die! What’s the point of letting anything hold you back? Life’s too short for that!” Seok Kang-Ho declared.

“Are you worried about me?” Kang Chan mischievously asked.

“Who? Me?”

“Is there anyone else here that I’m talking to?”

Seok Kang-Ho rubbed the tip of his cigarette on the ground.

“To be honest, I am a bit concerned about you, Cap. What are you going to do about the backlash? I doubt you even have a plan for the consequences that would soon follow.”

Pft. Phuhu.

The two made their trademark smiles and looked off into the horizon.

Kang Chan inhaled the last of his cigarette and rubbed it on the ground the same way Seok Kang-Ho did. He then flicked it away.

“My dream was never to become a soldier,” Kang Chan began. “As I said before, I came all the way to Africa back then because I didn’t want to live like trash after being fucking born into this world. If I hadn’t met you or Gérard back then, I have no idea what would have become of me.”

Seok Kang-Ho made himself comfortable and rested his hands on his knees. He then watched the darkness settling on the earth.

“Failing to protect the people I need to protect horrifies me the most in this world,” Kang Chan continued, then let out a long sigh.

“I can’t let these people die just because the color of our skin is different or simply because they’re not a part of our everyday lives. I’m sorry for making you, Gérard, and the rest of the men stay here, but if I return to the base now, I know I’m going to live the rest of my life haunted by the fact that I left them alone to fend for themselves.”

Seok Kang-Ho nodded, empathizing with him. “Is it just me or are you also craving some ramyeon right now?”

“Hey! I’m trying to talk about serious matters here!” Kang Chan complained.

“Don’t blame me! Topics like this always make me crave ramyeon!”

The two ended up chuckling together, bringing their discussion to an end.

“I’m already happy and satisfied for getting to reunite and return to Africa with you. If anything, all I hope for right now is that Africa didn’t call you back here,” Seok Kang-Ho said, concern evident in his voice.

“What are you talking about?” Kang Chan asked with a baffled expression.

“It just seems that way. It’s almost like Africa summoned you here again because it couldn’t stand watching you become happy.”

Why is this punk saying something so deep?

Kang Chan smirked. “Did saying that make you crave ramyeon again?”

“Hey! Did you really have to interrupt me while I’m talking about a serious topic?” Seok Kang-Ho asked, pretending to be angry.

“You little bastard!” Kang Chan exclaimed in mock shock.

“Phuhuhu!”

The two chuckled again as the sun finally disappeared completely from view.

“The moon looks so fucking beautiful!” Seok Kang-Ho exclaimed.

Having been apart for a while, they were glad they got to sit together like this.

“Geez! It would’ve been perfect if it weren’t for these damn mosquitoes!”

Seok Kang and Kang Chan quickly gulped down the rest of their coffee in an attempt to get rid of its sweet smell. If they kept the coffee in their hands any longer, the mosquitoes would come swarming over for it, eventually turning it into a half-coffee and half-bugs mixture.

“Are you going to stay here? Why don’t you have some of the other guys switch out with you?”

“They probably haven’t gotten used to this place yet. It would be for the best if either you or I take the responsibility of watching over large areas like this. That aside, you should teach them how to watch out for bugs or bats,” Kang Chan said.

Seok Kang-Ho grinned. “I already told them about it,”

He stood up and took Kang Chan’s mug from him. The moonlight made the outlines of the gun at his waist, the one at his ankle, and his bayonet clearly visible.

“Are you still planning to use your mug as an ashtray?”

Kang Chan snorted. “Considering how much ashes we’ve scattered on the ground already, I should still have plenty of room here.”

“All right. I’m going to go put this away. Let’s switch after I’m back.”

“Take your time.”

Seok Kang-Ho headed toward the cave. Pebbles crunched under his boots with each step he took.

There would always be mysterious and unrecognizable noises coming from the darkness of the night. One would die from anxiety if they paid attention to every little thing like that. However, they would also die if they missed a sound the enemy made.

An explanation wouldn’t be enough to understand something like this. Experience was the only one that could truly prepare them for such situations.

Krrk! Krrk! Kerk! Keerk!

The cries of birds and animals were also quite hard to get used to. They were totally out of sight during the day, but they cried so fucking loud at night.

A moment later, Kang Chan heard footsteps closing in again.

“What are you doing here, Cap?”

Why are these punks all asking the same question?

“Can’t you tell just by looking?” Kang Chan asked with feigned annoyance.

Gérard and Kang Chan grinned in a similar fashion before Gérard sat down next to Kang Chan.

Click!

The punk rested the rifle he had brought with him against his shoulder.

“How many guys will you take tomorrow?” he asked.

When Kang Chan turned to him, he saw Gérard waiting for a response with thoughtful, deep eyes.

“I don’t know yet,” Kang Chan responded. “I’m not familiar with the geography of this area, and the UN command center could order a rescue as well.”

“From what I’ve heard, it’s a pretty long way around the mountains because we’ll have to take some detours. If we’re going to do something, we better get going as soon as we’re done with breakfast. The UN won’t issue any rescue operation for anyone for as long as the rebel forces haven’t launched any offensive yet anyway.”

“What about the terrain?”

“Apparently similar to where we are now. I’ll grab a map when we go on a food run tomorrow.”

Kang Chan nodded. If the area on the other side of the mountain was similar to where they were now, they could end up taking a nice RPG hit like the American Green Berets.

Gérard continued, “Even if we do get them out, their numbers will be an entirely different problem in itself. No matter how hard you squeeze them in, the trucks can only hold a hundred people at most. We need a way to bring back the other three hundred people.”

“What about our heavy weaponry?” Kang Chan asked.

“Aside from the ones that we brought with us, we also have Iglas and machine guns. We’ll bring them tomorrow morning if you think you’ll need them.”

“Go for it. It’s better to be safe than sorry.”

“Got it, Cap,” Gérard responded, looking far more at ease than before. “Do you remember when I said I felt uneasy in the past?”

“That’s the reason I told you to come to Korea in the first place,” Kang Chan answered.

Keeping his gaze on the horizon, Gérard replied, “If you go to Korea, I’ll take my uniform off. I no longer have the confidence to stay alive in a place like this alone.”

Chapter 253.2: Let’s Not Overdo It (2)

Gérard’s appearance was a perfect fit for Africa. He had deep eyes, thick eyebrows, a scar on his cheek, and a nose that was refined and pointy for a French person.

Kang Chan suddenly found himself craving some hot, spicy ramyeon.

“Why are you laughing?”

“I just suddenly thought about ramyeon,” Kang Chan replied.

Gérard looked as if he couldn’t help but wonder if he heard wrong.

“Anyway... you really are the best in the world when it comes to making noise,” he commented.

“What now?”

“I just never imagined I’d live to see the day someone stand up and go against the UN.”

“Who cares about them anyway?” Kang Chan nonchalantly replied.

Gérard grinned. “This is fucking crazy!”

Even though their conversation wasn’t funny in the slightest, the two still snickered. However, Gérard’s reaction was probably how any normal person would react upon hearing Kang Chan’s insane remarks.

“That aside, you’re the Deputy Director-General of France now?” Gérard asked in disbelief. “How did that even happen?”

“It just sort of happened. One thing led to another, and here I am. Think of it as an honorary position,” Kang Chan casually answered.

Astonished, Gérard could only sigh. “Haah!”

“Well, I did find it was unusual when they made you captain of a special forces team too. Looks like you’ve gotten quite the fine promotion, Cap.”

“You punk!”

They shared another hearty laughter.

“Are you planning to stay here for the entire evening?” Gérard asked.

“My men don’t have enough combat experience here in Africa to do guard duty at night yet,” Kang Chan replied.

“I see. Well, I’ll be sure to come over later when I want to kill some time.”

“Go get some sleep instead. Daye and I will take shifts.”

“I’ll keep an eye on the situation first. I’ll come by again.”

“All right.”

Gérard strode off, the clunking of his rifle echoing out.

Moon Jae-Hyun raised his gaze from the documents on the desk to Hwang Ki-Hyun and Kim Hyung-Jung, who were sitting across from him.

“We have just received an unofficial complaint that the Assistant Director ignored UN orders and took military actions on his own, Mr. President. They told us that if this issue isn’t resolved within the next few days, they will be filing a formal protest,” Hwang Ki-Hyun said.

“You mean him protecting the hostages?” Moon Jae-Hyun, confusion evident both in his voice and expression.

“Yes, sir,” Hwang Ki-Hyun answered.

“How is protecting hostages a violation of the UN’s commands? Are you saying that they gave orders to abandon the very hostages they just rescued?”

Hwang Ki-Hyun’s expression darkened. “From their perspective, although the UN decided to prevent the assassination of the Somalis, protecting them despite not being ordered to is a form of internal affairs interference.”

Moon Jae-Hyun sighed as he flipped the page at the top of the pile of documents he was looking at. He then looked back up. “Where did you find these documents?”

“I attached information gathered by a National Intelligence Service agent to the materials that the UN sent us.”

Moon Jae-Hyun nodded. He spent a bit more time skimming through the documents before returning his gaze to the two in front of him.

“Is there any countermeasures we can take?”

“The quickest way to deal with this is to tell the Assistant Director to follow the UN’s commands from the UN.”

“Do you really think the Assistant Director will adhere to such an instruction?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked with a genuinely curious face.

“I don’t believe so,” Hwang Ki-Hyun presumed.

“Exactly. Considering everything that he’s shown us so far, he probably has a reason for going so far as to defy UN orders to protect the hostages. What are the possible outcomes from telling him to abandon the people they saved?”

Hwang Ki-Hyun turned his gaze to Kim Hyung-Jung, who immediately answered the question.

“As we’ve already reported before, this deployment has too many unanswered questions. The Assistant Director’s actions are likely related to those issues in some way.”

“How did the French intelligence respond to this situation?” Moon Jae-Hyun asked.

“We believe they are choosing not to exchange any key information with us,” Kim Hyung-Jung replied.

“Then there really must be something that we don’t know about,” Moon Jae-Hyun mused.

He glanced at the documents in front of him again.

“For now, let’s show them that we’re siding with our Assistant Director. If the UN files an official complaint, then issue an announcement that it was the best course of action our men could take since they had precious lives to protect. The last thing we need right now are the UN’s words demoralizing our own special forces team, especially since we deployed them to Africa at our own expense. We’re going to stay by letting everyone know that our government has the utmost respect for our men for how they are handling the situation,” Moon Jae-Hyun stated.

“That may come across as an insult to the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom, Mr. President. After all, they did refuse to join Assistant Director Kang’s initiatives,” Hwang Ki-Hyun countered out of concern.

Moon Jae-Hyun leaned back on his chair and clasped his hands together on the desk.

“Then we can just announce that we respect their decisions as well, can’t we? For as long as I am president, our government will not criticize any of our troops that are deployed overseas. I made a promise in this very room that I would protect Assistant Director Kang to the best of my ability, and I believe this exact moment requires me to uphold that promise.”

Hwang Ki-Hyun let out a quiet sigh.

- South Korea has issued an official announcement. They are choosing to respect the judgment of their special forces team.

Lanok looked at the document on his desk with a masked expression.

“I want us to monitor every move—even the ones that seem insignificant—made by Saudi Arabia, SSIS, SISS, and the United States,” Lanok said.

- Everyone in our bureau is already working away to uncover anything we can. However, at this rate, they will most likely notice our actions too.

Lanok’s lips curved into a smirk.

“Monsieur Kang’s judgment is out of this world. He’s approaching the center of the mystery as if he knows our plans. Have the French intelligence bureau and the DGSE defer to his decisions even if it risks putting everything else at stake.”

- Understood, sir.

“Moon Jae-Hyun and Monsieur Kang’s chemistry and teamwork are truly fantastic. Considering how things are progressing, we could end up with a world dominated by South Korea.”

- The United States' DIA and CIA are working on an operation that involves Moon Jae-Hyun. The South Korean National Intelligence Service doesn't have the power to take them on yet. If they proceed with the operation, South Korea could lose Moon Jae-Hyun soon.

Lanok stared into space as he took a moment to contemplate.

“For the honor of France, I think we should keep quiet and pretend not to know, but considering Monsieur Kang's disposition, we should still help them. What does the bureau have to say about this?”

- They think Monsieur Kang will be left with no other choice but to fall into the arms of France if the United States succeeds in taking Moon Jae-Hyun out of the picture.

Lanok tilted his head in thought.

“We still have some time left to decide. Let's wait and see for things to unfold first before making a decision on this matter. Report back in twelve hours with any changes to the situation.”

- Yes, sir.

Click.

Putting down the receiver, Lanok sharply flipped through the papers on his desk.

The sun rose in the distance like a lazy wolf pup. Although France and South Korea's special forces teams had just woken up, they immediately prepared to go back to base to get some food. They had a long day ahead of them, after all. Once they were done with breakfast, they would have to secure the safety of the hostages and head out to save the four hundred Somalis who were still being held captive by the rebel forces.

There was a chance that the UN would step up and help rescue the Somalis, but that only made it more difficult to predict how the situation would develop.

“Captain, we're going to pay the base a visit now,” Gérard said as he strode over.

When he stopped right in front of Kang Chan, his expression stiffened due to the look his captain had on his face.

“I'm sure you'll do well on your own, but be extra careful today,” Kang Chan warned.

“Are you getting a bad feeling about this?” Gérard asked.

“If we didn't have to keep the hostages safe, I would've gone myself.”

“I see. I'll keep that in mind,” Gérard replied with confidence before turning around.

Cha Dong-Gyun would be accompanying them too. With their numbers and capabilities combined, a bunch of good-for-nothing rebels shouldn't be able to kill them at the very least.

The vehicles drove off not long after.

Kang Chan couldn't shake off the uneasiness he had been feeling since dawn broke. If only he could figure out what was going wrong...

He soon found the thought ridiculous, though. If he had all that information, they wouldn't have ended up getting stuck here in the first place.

Click, click.

Turning around when he heard a rifle clunking, he found Seok Kang-Ho walking over with a mug in each hand.

"Here you go. Coffee," Seok Kang-Ho greeted. His voice was horribly scratchy probably because it hadn't been too long since he woke up. "Hoo! After you're done with that, you should go get some rest."

His mouth opened wide when he yawned, making him look like one of the hippopotamuses that roamed the lands of Africa.

"I'll have to observe the situation first. You can go and get some more rest yourself if you're tired, though," Kang Chan said.

"Nah, I'm good, Anyway, what are you talking about? What's your gut telling you?" Seok Kang-Ho asked.

"Nothing good."

"I thought that might be the case."

"Why?"

Meeting Kang Chan's gaze, Seok Kang-Ho nonchalantly shrugged. "It's not like we've ever gotten an easy break. I just thought it's about time you start getting a bad feeling about all this."

Seok Kang-Ho stared into the distance as Kang Chan laughed, finding it funny how correct his prediction was.

When they finally finished their coffee, Kang Chan chose not to head back to the cave to rest. He leaned back on a boulder and closed his eyes instead.

He could sleep for at least thirty minutes, maybe an hour at the longest.

Feeling the heat slowly rise, Kang Chan fell into a slumber.

Africa? The Somalis? The UN's ridiculous commands?

Fuck that! Why am I even here?

People didn't change easily.

Chapter 254.1: Surdkad (1)

“Captain.”

Kang Chan shot awake from his power nap at Seok Kang-Ho’s sudden call. Instead of verbally communicating, Seok Kang-Ho gestured with his chin to his left, where a cloud of dust was rising in the distance.

Chk.

“We’ve got an unidentified vehicle approaching from our left,” an agent radioed in at the same time as Kang Chan looked over.

As Kang Chan stood up, the army interpreter relayed the agent’s words in Korean. Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet.

Chk.

“I want all snipers on standby. Those who are currently on break, head to our left,” Kang Chan commanded in French. The army interpreter immediately interpreted his orders in Korean.

“Guard this place,” Kang Chan ordered. “I’ll go take a look.”

“Got it,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

Since predicting what would happen was impossible in situations like this, it wasn’t ideal to assign inexperienced men to important positions. Hence, he left Seok Kang-Ho in charge.

Kang Chan made his way to the area that the Foreign Legion’s special forces team was watching over.

Clank! Click! Clank!

The other soldiers were already on their way up the mountain.

Who the hell are those bastards?

The cloud of dust was about five kilometers away from the mountain. They were already so close that they should have already radioed in their affiliation and purpose. However, the special forces’ frequency remained dead silent.

Kang Chan quickly dashed up to a good vantage point and then looked back down.

Seeing three trails of dust, he assumed that the unidentified guests brought three vehicles with them. Considering there were two special forces holed up in this mountain, they were practically begging to be killed.

Rustle. Rustle. Rustle.

Kang Chan strode next to Choi Jong-Il and checked how many bullets were left in his gun’s magazine. He wouldn’t refuse the opportunity to eliminate idiots who were so desperate to die.

Those who would attempt to take the life of another should be prepared to put their own lives on the line in the process. In such battles, those who were stronger usually won. It was simply the natural order of things.

As Kang Chan checked his magazine, he heard clicking from all around him as the others examined their weapons as well.

Chk.

“The vehicles have the Somalian flag and the Red Cross sign on them.”

The army interpreter quickly interpreted the French agent’s words into Korean.

What the hell do these bastards think they’re doing?

Somalia was the most prominent anarchic country in Africa, yet the Somalian government was trying to make them believe that they had the power to protect these people? Even a passing hyena would burst out laughing if it heard about this bullshit.

Moreover, it was far too random for the Red Cross to appear out of nowhere and head to the special forces’ location. Although international organizations had a presence in this area, Kang Chan had never seen the Red Cross foolishly go out in the open with their flag waving behind them.

Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet.

Chk.

“Roberre, head to the top and remain on standby when those people get close,” Kang Chan briskly ordered the army interpreter who could speak Somali. He had to be prepared for the off-chance that the approaching group only spoke that language.

Chk.

“Yes, sir,” Roberre replied.

The vehicles had narrowed the distance between them and the mountain by two more kilometers. He still couldn’t do anything, though. He could protect hostages from insurgents all he wanted, but shooting government and Red Cross vehicles would be going too far.

‘No wonder I’ve been getting a bad feeling since this morning. Even though it’s still so early that I haven’t even had my first meal yet, I already have a pain in the ass to deal with.’

Kang Chan kept his eyes on the approaching group, which had reached the one-kilometer mark. They soon narrowed their distance from the mountain to less than a hundred meters.

Click!

Kang Chan raised his gun and aimed at the ground just a few feet ahead of the group. He had been in many situations where vehicles loaded with unimaginable amounts of explosives had rushed toward them the same way. Carrying the flag of a government alone didn’t make anyone trustworthy. If he or any of his men let their guard down and walked right up to those people, they would end up as proof of the mighty power of a suicide bomber.

This was Africa, where fake IDs that were incredibly hard to distinguish were produced right inside a literal dump. In this goddamn land, trusting any proof of identity was impossible.

If someone's uniform fooled them enough to let the bastards get close, they would be ripped to shreds before they could even check if it was real or not.

Pew! Pew! Pew!

He kept the muzzle of his gun pointed in front of the cars, firing a couple of warning shots only when they reached the bottom of the mountain.

Creeeak!

The vehicles swiftly skidded to a halt when the bullets made the dirt around them spatter. The doors opened to reveal three white people and about a dozen black people in military uniforms. The black soldier from the car at the very front of their convoy raised his arms high and waved them in an intercrossed motion. He was telling them not to shoot.

Eight of the group started to walk toward where Kang Chan was. At this distance, even if the vehicles were loaded with explosives, it wouldn't be all that dangerous if they were to explode.

Chk.

"Roberre, come to the front. I want all snipers aiming at the vehicles. You have my permission to shoot as soon as you deem them a threat," Kang Chan swiftly ordered.

Kang Chan stood up and walked over toward the strangers as his men radioed in affirmative responses. Roberre caught up to him on his way down.

Rustle. Rustle. Swish!

The two trudged down the crumbling dirt of the mountain. When they reached the bottom, one of the black men began to address them with an awkward smile.

"He says they're from their people's leadership," Roberre relayed, interpreting the man's words into French.

Afterward, one of the white people asked Kang Chan a question in perfect French.

"Are you the commander of the South Korean special forces team?" he asked.

"Why do you ask?" Kang Chan responded.

"My name is Mike. I work for the Red Cross. We came here at the request of the UN to return the hostages you rescued to where they used to live," Mike diplomatically said.

He smiled awkwardly when Kang Chan glared at him.

"Got any IDs with you?" Kang Chan asked, blatantly displaying his suspicions.

In response, the white man took out an ID that resembled a driver's license from his pocket. On the front was his picture and name, and on the back was a bunch of English sentences.

"Mike?" Kang Chan questioned, reading the name on the card.

"That's right," Mike replied.

When Kang Chan returned the ID, one of the black government officials handed over an ID card next. As large as the palm of Kang Chan's hand, it had a photo and a large seal stamped at the bottom-right side.

Kang Chan compared the man's face with the one in the ID before returning it to him.

"How will you get them there?" Kang Chan asked.

"Our only option is by feet. Fortunately, all the insurgents who attacked yesterday have retreated from the area," Mike answered.

Kang Chan was staring at Mike when the radio crackled again.

"The vehicles that left for the base are returning," a soldier radioed in.

"Well, our breakfast just arrived. I'm going to eat before I decide," Kang Chan then said.

"But we're here on the request of the government and the Red Cross," Mike protested.

"Mike. I make the decisions here," Kang Chan firmly warned.

The white man tilted his head, his expression becoming disgruntled. The government official behind him said something, to which he replied with a stiff and curt tone. It sounded as if he was informing the official of what Kang Chan just said.

"Wait here," Kang Chan instructed.

"All right," Mike replied, not having much of a choice.

Mike glanced at Kang Chan's gun once before turning to the official and talking to him.

Kang Chan turned around and headed back up the mountain with Roberre. It was only a short climb, so it didn't take him too long to reach Choi Jong-Il, who was waiting for them.

"Keep an eye on those people down there. If they try to come up without permission, fire a warning shot at them and let me know immediately," Kang Chan commanded.

After getting an affirmation from Choi Jong-Il, he made his way to Seok Kang-Ho, who was still standing guard at the top.

"What did he say?" Seok Kang-Ho asked, curiosity in his voice.

"They claim that they're government officials and Red Cross employees. They want to take the hostages back to where they used to live," Kang Chan replied.

Seok Kang-Ho looked suspiciously at where the French team was keeping watch. As he did, Gérard and Cha Dong-Gyun walked up to them.

“Command has just informed me that they requested assistance. They want us to hand over the hostages to them,” Gérard said, speaking up first.

“Is that so? Well, the people they sent over are already right over there. I guess there’s no reason to keep doubting their identity, then,” Kang Chan mused.

“It seems the UN has chosen to put a nice end to things rather than lose face,” Gérard remarked.

While they were talking, the soldiers carrying food in their hands finally reached the top.

“Focus on distributing the food for now,” Kang Chan directed.

“Got it,” Gérard replied. He made a gesture with his head and went inside the cave with Roberre.

As they left, Kang Chan interpreted what Gérard had just told him in Korean, getting Seok Kang-Ho up to date with what was going on.

“What’s the plan, then?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Well, with all the evidence we just got, it just seems logical to trust them now, doesn’t it?” Kang Chan responded.

Seok Kang-Ho nodded.

Chapter 254.2: Surdkad (1)

Kim Hyung-Jung had been so busy since the crack of dawn that his soul probably couldn’t catch up with him. He had a presidential briefing yesterday, and he immediately had to take care of the requests from the Mongolian base today as soon as he woke up. To top it all off, he also had to handle the reports that were coming in from the National Intelligence Service agents all over Europe.

He received important reports every day, so this should’ve been nothing new, but today, all the intelligence from the agents came in as coded messages with red “Top Secret” markings. It was as if they had collectively decided to pull a prank on him. He was already overwhelmed just sorting out and processing the information.

‘Is there some kind of war going on?’

There was so much urgent and important information rushing in all at once that he couldn’t even think straight. To make things worse, the agency picked up strange movements from the Arabs as well.

Ring, ring, ring. Ring, ring, ring. Ring, ring, ring.

The phone on his desk rang a couple of times before he picked up its receiver.

“Kim Hyung-Jung speaking,” he greeted.

- I'm at the hospital, sir. The patient has just woken up.

"Got it. I'm on my way. Make sure you keep security tight," Kim Hyung-Jung ordered the agent.

- Yes, sir.

Kim Hyung-Jung set down the receiver and sent all the information he had gone through to the analysis room via the agency's internal communication network.

Within the next three hours, he would be getting reports updating him about the situation.

Heading underground, he pulled out his phone and pressed the call button.

- What is it?

Jeon Dae-Geuk's gruff voice immediately came through the call.

"Kang Sunbae has regained consciousness," Kim Hyung-Jung informed him.

- Really?

Jeon Dae-Geuk sounded extremely pleased. He had been waiting to hear this news since the surgery.

- I should be able to visit him tomorrow morning at the earliest. What about you?

"I'm already on my way to the hospital," Kim Hyung-Jung replied.

- I see. While I have you, any updates on the support for Africa?

"We sent a shipment yesterday. It should arrive later today."

Kim Hyung-Jung stepped into a car as soon as he reached the underground parking lot.

"Section Chief," he then called.

- Why don't you call me back later if it isn't anything urgent?

"It's something related to the two-zero-zero," Kim Hyung-Jung stated.

Two-zero-zero was code for the presidential guard.

Jeon Dae-Geuk remained silent, choosing to wait for Kim Hyung-Jung's next words.

Kim Hyung-Jung continued, "All the rice fields and mountains are moving quite fast. I've never seen anything like this before."

- I thought you said it was something related to the two-zero-zero's tasks?

"Well, we're caught in the middle of that movement. There are only two reasons why all the rice fields and mountains would be targeting us."

- I see.

“We’ll know for sure after the analysis reports come out in the afternoon, but until this incident is settled, I think you should focus on Code One,” Kim Hyung-Jung stated.

The call abruptly ended as soon as he was done talking. Considering the nature of Jeon Dae-Geuk’s job, strengthening security was far more urgent and important to him than making small talk just so they could put a smooth end to their conversation.

They had to quickly figure out why the intelligence bureaus from the United States and all the European countries were moving so fast. More importantly, they had to analyze the reason those intelligence bureaus were willing to incur heavy expenses and use every satellite at their disposal just to collect information on South Korea.

They had given the United States the codename of rice fields. The mountains were Europe.

South Korea was struggling just to match the pace of these powerful countries’ agencies. Why would they be so intent on gathering information on a country they always deemed boring?

Kim Hyung-Jung frowned as he got lost in his thoughts.

The car soon pulled up in front of a hospital. An agent waiting for him immediately guided him to the elevator.

After putting on a sterilized suit complete with a cap, shoes, and gloves, Kim Hyung-Jung went through a disinfection process once more before getting to walk over to Kang Chul-Gyu’s bedside.

The skinny Kang Chul-Gyu slowly raised his gaze to him.

“Sunbae, it’s me, Kim Hyung-Jung,” Kim Hyung-Jung greeted.

Kang Chul-Gyu still didn’t seem to have gotten his bearings yet. His lips moved, seemingly to say something, but it was too faint to hear.

“Sorry?” Kim Hyung-Jung asked.

When Kang Chul-Gyu forced his lips to move again, Kim Hyung-Jung bent over and lowered his ear to Kang Chul-Gyu’s mouth.

“What about... Kang Chan?” Kang Chul-Gyu managed to rasp out.

Kim Hyung-Jung masked his expression before raising his head again. With a smile, he answered, “He’s doing fine.”

Kang Chul-Gyu’s lips moved again.

“Thirty men flew to Mongolia when they heard that you were there. Everyone’s waiting for you, so hurry and recover,” Kim Hyung-Jung said with a grin.

Kang Chul-Gyu blinked as if to thank him.

The Somalis seemed somewhat rejuvenated and well-rested now that they had eaten breakfast. However, that all changed when Roberre, who made sure they were fully fed before breaking the

news, told them that government officials and Red Cross workers would be guiding them back to their homes.

Hushed murmurs erupted inside the cave. The people exchanged glances. Eventually, their chatter started growing louder and louder.

“Aamusay! Aamusay!” Roberre shouted, barely managing to contain the commotion.

Before silence could settle back in, a black woman started to wave her hand in the air. She seemed to be expressing her displeasure with the option presented to them.

Roberre looked at Kang Chan with a troubled expression.

“She says she would rather stay here because she can’t trust them. She hopes you would instead save the other Somali hostages and bring them here,” Roberre interpreted.

“Did you tell them that the people we’re handing them over to are government officials and Red Cross workers?” Kang Chan asked.

“They can’t trust them because they’ve never met them before.”

Kang Chan let out a low sigh. It wasn’t as if they had met him before this operation either.

“Tell them to meet the government officials and the Red Cross workers first. We can make a decision after.”

Roberre turned around to the hostages and spoke in Somali again. The woman from earlier replied immediately after, and several others followed her lead, nodding in agreement and backing her words up.

Kang Chan finally understood Seok Kang-Ho’s frustration for not being able to understand French.

He watched as the woman spoke rapidly and suddenly pointed a finger at him. The other Somalis in the cave nodded or clapped, expressing their agreement.

Roberre quickly turned his head back to Kang Chan.

“They say they will follow them if you go with them, Captain,” Roberre said.

Is it because the trip going back to their home would be dangerous?

Kang Chan looked back at Roberre, wondering what he should do, when the Somali woman began to speak again. Applause rang out in the cave once more.

“They say that you’re the guardian of Mount Surdkad. It’s a legend that is passed down among their tribe. According to the story, the mountain supposedly glows red when the guardian of Mount Surdkad returns to protect the people. It’s something along those lines, at least. The bottom line is they really want to take you with them,” Roberre said.

Damn it!

“I didn’t know you’re so popular with the Somalis,” Gérard joked, amusement clear on his face.

Unable to bring himself to believe what was happening, Kang Chan threateningly scowled at Gérard before returning his attention to the hostages. He didn’t know what he should do next.

“Do we really have to think about this so hard? If we offer to escort them, it’ll be hard for the government officials and the Red Cross workers to say no. We can then use them as an excuse to shoot any insurgents that would block our way,” Gérard said with a grin.

Kang Chan nodded in agreement. “I’ll talk to the officials so we can start planning. While I’m gone, get everyone ready to move out.”

As soon as he got out of the cave, he informed Seok Kang-Ho, Park Chul-Su, and Cha Dong-Gyu that they would likely be escorting the Somalis. He then headed down the mountain. Upon reaching the bottom of it, he found the government official and the Red Cross worker he had talked to earlier waiting in the shade. They stood up with relieved and curious faces.

“We will accompany you to the destination point,” Kang Chan said, getting straight to the point.

A hint of discomfort flashed across the Red Cross worker’s face. However, he quickly composed himself and feigned indifference before turning to the government official.

The two had a short discussion for a bit before Mike turned back around and replied to Kang Chan.

“Understood. If you can, please hurry things up. We should avoid leaving in the afternoon.”

“How much time do we have before then?” Kang Chan asked.

“About an hour.”

“I’ll come down with the hostages as soon we’re ready to go.”

Kang Chan climbed up the mountain again.

“Gérard! Looks like we’re going to be escorting them. Have the women, children, wounded, and ill hop on the trucks!” he ordered as soon as he reached their camp.

“Got it, Captain!” Gérard shouted in response.

Kang Chan repeated the same information to Park Chul-Su and Seok Kang-Ho before telling the soldiers to prepare to head out.

Noisy rumbles echoed from inside the cave. A few moments later, Somalis emerged into the clearing. Their thin legs wobbled as they walked.

As Roberre shouted over the noise, Gérard gestured with his chin to give priority to those who were going to board the trucks.

Footsteps and clunking noises from the soldiers' equipment filled the area in front of the cave.

It took them about twenty minutes to get the wounded into the trucks. Because there was an ample amount of space left, they picked a few more people to board the vehicles.

The soldiers divided themselves into three. As soon as they boarded the vehicles, they positioned themselves in a way that would let them keep an eye out from within the trucks.

Vroom!

When the engines of the Humvees and trucks roared awake, the palpable tension and anxiety crashed on them. The government officials and Red Cross workers' vehicles lead the convoy, followed by a Humvee, the people on foot, the three trucks with soldiers, and lastly, another Humvee.

“Let's go!” Kang Chan shouted.

Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, and Gérard would be traveling by foot to command the front, left, and right sides of their formation. The soldiers accompanying them surrounded the Somalis who would also be walking.

Not long after they started their journey, a woman began to sing a song that was characteristic of African tribes.

“Uiwa-ya!”

The rest of the Somalis soon joined her.

“Uiwa-ya!”

The dust, the song, and the hot sun once again reminded Kang Chan that he was back in Africa.

Chapter 255: Surdkad (2)

Intense heat gradually rose up from the ground.

Click, click.

With every step, the sounds of their guns, the magazines in their vests, and the pistols in their holsters announced their presence.

Kang Chan took off his helmet and hung it on his left shoulder. He then pulled out his bandana, wrapping it around his forehead before tying it back. The others, including Seok Kang-Ho and Gerard, followed suit. Gerard and a few other French soldiers also put on sunglasses. However, it was not to look cool; White people simply tended to struggle against the rays of the sun.

They had walked for about an hour. The Somali were still singing their songs, not looking particularly tired. The soldiers were also doing well, which was to be expected. If walking this much was enough to tire them out, Kang Chan would have questioned whether or not they were qualified to be in the special forces.

He probably should check if anyone was hurt, though.

Should we take a short break?

Kang Chan looked at their surroundings. He had intentionally chosen a route that was a good distance away from the mountain. This way, if someone was lying in ambush for them, they at least wouldn't be gunned down in one fell swoop. It would also give them some more time to dodge if an RPG was fired at them.

He still felt a bit uneasy, but his heart wasn't racing to warn him.

They marched on for about ten more minutes. When Kang Chan heard a slight change in the enthusiasm of the Somali songs, he raised his hand, signaling the procession to stop.

“Give the Somalis some water! We'll be taking five!” Kang Chan commanded.

The army interpreter quickly relayed Kang Chan's orders to the Korean soldiers. At the same time, the vehicles ahead of them came to an immediate halt.

Kang Chan considered giving the people in the vehicles some water but decided against it. He knew they would come ask for some themselves if they were really thirsty.

The soldiers carried the water over from the vehicles and poured it for the Somalis.

Glug.

The women cupped the water in their dusty palms and drank a few sips before stepping back to make way for others. Over the course of three meal distributions from the soldiers, they had learned that there was no need to be greedy.

“Madad!”

In their mother tongue, the women who drank water collectively expressed their gratitude toward Kang Chan and the soldiers.

The smell of fishy odors, acrid smells, and spoiled food wafted over from the Somalis. A few of them probably had rationed food hidden somewhere in their garments.

Kang Chan didn't want to take it away or criticize them for it, however. He knew it wasn't their fault that they were forced to live so desperate for even just a morsel of food.

If he fed them a bit more, taught them a bit more, and protected them a bit more, perhaps one of these people with those pure, innocent eyes would manage to fulfill their dreams and build up this country.

However, such a feat would be difficult to accomplish for as long as all the bastards who stole their food, supplies, and dreams were still alive.

“Here you go,” Seok Kang-Ho said, holding out a pouch of water to Kang Chan.

Kang Chan popped open the cap and took a small sip with his mouth away from the cap. He then waited for a few moments as the Somali people all quenched their thirst.

“Let's get going,” Kang Chan declared afterward.

“Got it, Cap,” Seok Kang-Ho replied, taking the water pouch back before returning to his original position.

“Let’s go!”

Under Kang Chan’s command, they slowly began to make progress again.

“Uiwa-ya!”

“Uiwai-ya!”

Don’t their throats hurt?

Despite Kang Chan’s concerns, the Somalis continued to sing loudly and shrilly at the top of their lungs.

In about twenty minutes, Kang Chan would have to hand the hostages over. If another emergency situation required him to come running again, the majority of them would probably be dead by the time he reached them, but that was life in Africa. There was nothing he could do about it.

After approximately fifteen more minutes of marching, the vehicle at the front began the ascent toward the mountain. When they were about a hundred meters away, Kang Chan raised his hand and made everyone stop.

“Gerard!”

“Oui!” Gerard replied, swiftly approaching Kang Chan.

“Order the people who can walk to get out of the vehicles. Position the heavy weapons inside the vehicles on the truck and assign ten people to man them. We’ll be securing our position at the front of the mountain!” Kang Chan ordered.

“Oui!”

Gerard quickly headed to the rear.

“Seok Kang-Ho, I want a Humvee stationed here! Order someone to bring the other one to the front!”

“Got it, Cap!” Seok Kang-Ho responded, turning to move.

Kang Chan wore the helmet that he had hung on his shoulder again.

He didn’t have a bad feeling in his gut yet. However, despite the risks it posed, they always had to secure a position whenever they entered new terrain.

Vrooom!

One of the Humvees blocked off the front of their formation, serving as protection and cover.

Click, click!

As the soldiers propped up their guns from behind the vehicle, Gerard and ten others approached Kang Chan.

Kang Chan looked at the back of the truck, finding a heavy machine gun sitting on top of its cab and a soldier aiming an Igla toward the mountain.

“Let’s go!” Kang Chan shouted.

Vroom!

The Humvee that Lee Doo-Hee was driving drove up ahead. Kang Chan, Gerard, and the rest of the soldiers spread out as they followed.

Seemingly displeased, the Somali government officials and the Red Cross vehicles in front of them sped up to get to the front of the mountain. It didn't matter, though. There was no guarantee that these bastards weren't in cahoots with the rebel forces.

Vroom. Clack, clack.

They covered about fifty more meters.

“You two! Secure that position!” Kang Chan ordered, pointing at the closest boulder to the group.

Whoosh!

As the two dashed forward, the rest of the soldiers walked with their rifles at the ready so they could shoot at any time.

One of the two hid behind the boulder and raised and spun his index finger in a circle. He then pointed at the top of the mountain.

Kang Chan could finally have some peace of mind.

They were only thirty meters away from the mountain now. The government officials and the Red Cross workers looked on with exhausted expressions. Kang Chan sent two more soldiers to secure the middle of the mountain.

They had ten meters left to go.

Kang Chan nodded at Gerard. He then started to head up the mountain.

Rustle! Swish!

The dirt crumbled beneath him, preventing him from getting a stable footing. Fortunately, the terrain wasn't as delicate as soft sand.

Gerard deliberately walked about three or four paces diagonally behind Kang Chan.

Ten minutes later, they reached a spot that gave them a clear view of their surroundings. Kang Chan climbed up higher and surveyed the horizon. Except for the mountain behind them, all he could see was thin, withered vegetation. They wouldn't have anywhere to hide.

Chk.

“Seok Kang-Ho, get going,” Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

“Copy,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

The vehicles roared onward. They only had to travel a hundred meters more before they had to climb up the mountain and pass through the path under Kang Chan.

“Whew!” Gerard exclaimed, hanging his index finger on the trigger of his rifle as he stood next to Kang Chan. “Captain, how about I order our men take off their uniforms and leave the military so we can come here and make our own country?”

Kang Chan smirked but kept his eyes on the clearing up ahead.

“If you say you’re down for it, I’m sure a bunch of soldiers will retire from the South Korean team as well. You’re pretty popular with the Somalis too, so why don’t you give it some thought?” Gerard joked.

“Do you want to go against a multinational force?” Kang Chan scolded.

“Hmph! They’re the kind to charge right in but run away as soon as they realize they won’t gain anything. If we stand united, they’ll probably lurked around and try to play nice with you.”

By the time Gerard was done, the Somalis had started climbing up the mountain. They looked quite hot because they were wearing the blankets distributed to them yesterday on their heads.

Leading them were the government officials and Red Cross workers, and all around them were soldiers keeping them in a protective encirclement.

“Let’s go,” Kang Chan directed.

“Got it,” Gerard answered.

The two began to climb up a path that was already on the mountain.

Ten of the vanguard accompanying them took turns guarding the position that Kang Chan and Gerard had secured earlier. The procession was so smooth that Kang Chan felt stupid for being so nervous.

After climbing the mountain and walking for another thirty minutes, they found themselves on a flat area with houses made of mud. This was likely what people pictured whenever they thought of Africa.

The villagers came out, having noticed a group of people approaching their home. At the same time, the Somalis under the special forces’ care ran over to them.

It was quite clamorous.

“Are you satisfied now?” Mike, the Red Cross Worker, asked with a bit of spite.

Kang Chan just grinned back at him.

“Let’s head back down,” he told Seok Kang-Ho.

“Yup.”

As Kang Chan turned the way they came, he heard one of the Somali women shouting at the top of her lungs.

“Surdkad!”

What's going on?

Kang Chan turned back around.

“Surdkad! Mungala Iniba! Iniba!”

The woman was most definitely shouting at Kang Chan.

Where is that punk when you need him?

Before Kang Chan could even turn his head to search for him, Roberre quickly came over.

“She is saying you are the Surdkad. She wants you to come inside the village,” Roberre explained.

The code name “God of Blackfield” was already good enough for Kang Chan.

Gerard and Seok Kang-Ho watched Kang Chan, who seemed to be in disbelief, with amused expressions. The woman said unintelligible words in quick successions.

“She says you have to see the shaman before you leave,” Roberre interpreted.

Kang Chan sighed in exasperation. “Haah!”

The government officials and the Red Cross workers were standing off to the side, looking as if they hoped Kang Chan would return soon. Was he expected to go visit the shaman in this atmosphere? He had already gone against the UN’s instructions just to get to this point.

“Come up with a nice excuse to say no,” Kang Chan ordered.

While Roberre responded to the woman, Kang Chan turned toward the path they had come from. He heard the noisy sound of horses neighing from behind and the woman repeatedly calling him the “Surdkad,” but he genuinely did not want to meet the shaman.

The trip down the mountain was definitely faster than going up. When they got out of it and reached a place with a clear view of their surroundings in no time, he decided to have his men take a short break.

Thud!

Aside from the six soldiers standing guard, everyone else sank to the ground.

“Is it okay if we smoke?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Give me one too,” Gerard insisted.

Seok Kang-Ho handed him a cigarette. Gerard then lit it up with a lighter.

Click. Swish!

“Hoo!” Kang Chan exhaled.

“This is a bit strange,” Seok Kang-Ho commented.

“I think so too,” Kang Chan replied.

After exhaling a puff of smoke, Seok Kang-Ho glanced suspiciously back and forth between the Somalis and the government officials.

Receiving a look from Gerard, the army interpreter came over and translated their discussion from Korean to French.

Kang Chan bet this soldier would never join a deployment ever again.

“Don’t you find what the UN is doing strange? They ordered us to ignore the hostages that we saved and sent government officials and Red Cross workers only after you stepped up to rescue them?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Yeah, definitely, but let’s head back and shower first before thinking about this,” Kang Chan responded.

Gerard nodded in agreement after the army interpreter told him what was being discussed.

“Look at those punks,” Seok Kang-Ho said as he nodded upward toward the government officials and Red Cross workers, who were lingering near the vehicles. “It looks like they’re trying to make sure that we’re going back. It’s not like we’re going to steal anything from this place or something...”

Noticing Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho’s gazes, one of the government officials quickly turned away and spoke to a Red Cross worker. It looked more like he was trying to avoid eye contact than actually having something to say.

“Let’s just head down for now,” Kang Chan said.

“All right,” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

After a few more cigarettes and taking care of their business, they all stood up and started to descend the mountain.

“Mike! We’re going to head back,” Kang Chan informed him.

“I see! You did great!”

Little fucker, putting on a strong facade now that we’re done!

Kang Chan stepped into a Humvee with Park Chul-Su and Seok Kang-Ho. The French team filled one Humvee, and the rest climbed onto the trucks.

Vrooom!

The engines of their vehicles roared as they began to make their way back to base. After about forty minutes on the road, the base finally came into view. The men radioed their arrival before going in.

Creak.

Rambunctious applause greeted them as they stepped out of the vehicles.

Clap, clap, clap, clap! Fheew!

“Good job!”

The Green Berets standing at the entrance even whistled as they welcomed Kang Chan and the others back. The Spetsnaz and the SNS, who were sitting on the bench, looked a bit awkward, but they didn't show any hostility toward them.

“Gerard, report our return,” Kang Chan ordered.

“Got it.”

The two teams split up and went back to their respective barracks. The French special forces and the South Korean soldiers cast wistful glances at each other, already missing each other. They had gotten quite close during the single day they had been together.

Ha!

Kang Chan took a shower as soon as he got back.

Swoosh!

When the water washed over him, He finally felt as if he could breathe again.

However, this was Africa. He couldn't use as much water as he wanted, and he felt bad about taking one of the only two shower stalls that were available to them. Hence, he quickly finished up and got out of. However, the soldiers, who should have been desperately waiting for their turn, were distracted by something else.

“What's that?” Kang Chan asked curiously.

“They told us there was a shipment from Korea. I went over and got them while you were in the shower,” Seok Kang-Ho answered.

There were two boxes about the size of a desk and ten boxes the size of apple cartons.

“What's in them?”

“Can I open them?” Seok Kang-Ho asked.

“Why are you asking me that? Hurry up already.”

The soldiers all rushed forward and opened the packages.

“Huh?” exclaimed one of the soldiers opening a large box. There was another aluminum box inside. When he opened it, he found another styrofoam box.

“Are we just going to get smaller boxes as we open them?” Seok Kang-Ho grumbled.

When the soldier opened the styrofoam box, he finally cheered.

“It's kimchi!”

“What?”

Seok Kang-Ho was about to peer inside when the soldier raised a pack of kimchi with his two hands to show him.

It was quite the sight to behold.

Like children, the soldiers grew excited every time they opened a box. There were cup noodles, chocolate sweets, instant rice, instant bibimbap, instant black bean noodles, and even the ramyeon that Seok Kang-Ho had been craving so much.

They felt as if they were in a school field trip. One box was completely filled to the brim with nothing but instant coffee.

A soldier opened the box in the middle. He then pulled out a bunch of letters from inside it.

We're already getting letters? We haven't even been here that long.

The boxes kept revealing things that Kang Chan couldn't even imagine they would get.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho didn't have anyone to send them letters anyway, so they started to leave.

"You're not washing up?" Kang Chan asked.

"I am. Let's have some kimchi and hot ramyeon once I'm done."

As Seok Kang-Ho and Park Chul-Su headed inside the bathrooms with towels in hand, Kang Chan pulled out a clean pair of army pants and put them on.

Not long after, one of his men handed him three letters. "They're letters for you."

No one knows I'm here, though.

Kang Chan was dumbfounded. In a daze, he took the letters and looked at the envelopes.

The first one was quite colorful. It had "Lee Yoo-Seul" written on it with pencil.

Kang Chan couldn't help but smile.

Even in his previous life, he had never received a personalized letter like this. He could imagine getting a written death threat but never this kind of letter.

Kang Chan walked out of the barracks with the letters in his hand. He wanted to read them in private.

As he headed over to a bench, he looked at the yellow envelope of the second letter.

'To my dear son.'

It was from Yoo Hye-Sook.

How was that possible? Not even Yoo Hye-Sook suddenly appearing right in front of him would surprise him as much as this letter did.

There was still one letter left. He moved the second letter to the back to reveal a pink one. The name written on it made him freeze up.

'Kim Mi-Young.'

It was written in a pretty, girly handwriting.

Chapter 256: Certainty Set In (1)

Lost in thought, Kang Chan stared at the name "Kim Mi-Young" on the envelope.

Gérard, who looked so refreshed that he seemed to have just finished showering, approached Kang Chan.

"What are you doing?"

"Letters have arrived for me..." Kang Chan answered.

"Huh? You get letters, Captain?"

Kang Chan smirked at Gérard, realizing that neither he, Daye, nor Gérard had ever received a letter. If they had loved ones who would write letters to them, they would not have chosen to be mercenaries.

"Are they death threats? Are people saying they'll kill you?" Gérard asked.

Kang Chan's thoughts about receiving letters didn't differ much from Gérard's.

Damn it! How is anyone supposed to expect any kind of affection from these people? They have about as much vibe as a brick wall!

"What's up?" Seok Kang-Ho asked as he walked over. "Huh? You got letters?"

Seok Kang-Ho's reaction was no different from Gérard's.

"Who are they from?" Seok Kang-Ho asked.

"Yoo-Seul, Mother, and Mi-Young," Kang Chan answered.

Seok Kang-Ho looked at the envelopes and then at Kang Chan with surprise. "They know you're here?"

"I'm not sure."

"Did Manager Kim have a hand in this? Open them up."

"I can read them later. Go make some coffee."

"What's the big deal? Just read them."

As Seok Kang-Ho peered suspiciously at the letters, Gérard glanced around, probably looking for the army interpreter.

Finding it best to divert their attention in this situation, Kang Chan called out to Gérard, "Gérard! Have you reported back to Command yet? Any issues?"

"I already handled it. They looked rather relieved, which made it seem like a routine procedure to them. This is just a hunch, but I think they already knew we were on our way back."

As Kang Chan and Gérard conversed in French, Seok Kang-Ho looked toward the barracks.

"Captain, Someone is probably using the UN as an excuse to gather us here," Gérard said.

"Why do you think so?" asked Kang Chan as he pocketed the letter.

"Thanks to you, I've become the commander of the Foreign Legion's special forces. Anyway, I contacted the 11th Regiment in Congo via satellite phone earlier. Their situation is dire, yet here we are, calm as can be. It doesn't make sense."

"Trouble in Congo?"

At the mention of Congo, Seok Kang-Ho looked back and forth between Kang Chan and Gérard. Congo, a prominent French colony in Africa, was stained with blood and ruthless battles that had claimed dozens of lives. Most African countries starting with the letter "C" had once been French colonies, and among them, Congo was a notable nation plagued by civil war.

To break their enemy's will, tribes engaged in brutal conflicts had committed various atrocities just to kill their enemies in horrific ways. They had beheaded, poured boiling oil over, and burned people alive. They had even cut open pregnant women to remove their unborn children.

Half of the civil wars in Africa were due to policies implemented by former colonial powers, and the other half were caused by the borders that the occupying nations had arbitrarily drawn. Even now, France held the right to station its military in its former colonies whenever conflicts arose. Hence, whenever a local leader instigated a civil war, France invariably dispatched its Foreign Legion.

Kang Chan had rushed into these tribal wars but often saved the wrong tribe. Hence, despite having accumulated remarkable achievements, he often found himself with reduced allowances or his medals stripped.

"The Congo rebels are attacking Butuba, which we are supporting," Gérard explained, "yet, the 13th Regiment is here, wasting time."

"Butuba? Did you just say 'Butuba'?" asked Seok Kang-Ho.

His eyes glinted upon hearing the name, clearly well aware of Butuba's notoriety for incredibly brutal battles.

"Ah! I can't stand this! How long is he going to shower?" Seok Kang-Ho grumbled and headed toward the barracks.

"Hey, interpreter! Shouldn't you be done by now?" he shouted.

With a gruff bellow, a soldier rushed out with his hair still dripping water. He was probably growing tired of speaking French.

"Look, you subdued the Spetsnaz, and I'm sure Andrei is at the top of their chain of command," Gérard said.

Looking at the Spetsnaz soldiers, who were resting, Kang Chan inwardly agreed.

Gérard continued, "We also have the SBS, not the SAS, sprawled out in the blistering sun. Do you really think the situation here is bad enough to warrant the strongest units of four countries?"

Seok Kang-Ho nodded in agreement after the interpreter conveyed Gérard's words.

Gérard added, "Honestly, with the military power present here, we could achieve landslide victories against the nearby rebels. I heard the Green Berets were just unlucky to be hit by a suicide bomber and then an RPG right after, but the skirmish wasn't that fierce."

"You mean, except for the United States, the other countries have their strongest teams tied up here?" Kang Chan asked.

"Yes!" Gérard exclaimed.

"Now that I think about it, that's true!" Seok Kang-Ho chimed in.

"Moi aussi," the interpreter translated. After oddly translating Seok Kang-Ho's words as "me too," he nervously glanced over at Kang Chan to see his reaction.

'It would be best to pretend not to notice such oddities.'

Kang Chan's brows furrowed as he gazed into space.

It could be argued that South Korea was here because it was weaker than the others, but if that were the case, why were France, Russia, England, and the United States also here? Something was amiss.

Every soldier was fated to put their lives on the line rushing into battle like a pawn in a chess game. However, Kang Chan had already endured such absurdities in his previous life. Letting the South Korean special forces die in vain like dogs in this place was unacceptable. They weren't just some random mercenaries.

Who else could provide the most accurate answer to Gérard's doubts but Lanok? It would be impossible for him not to know the answer.

'What could it be?'

What was going on that made even the UN orchestrate this stupid act?

Kang Chan gazed at the Spetsnaz and SBS soldiers seated on a bench. Talking to Andrei or that gorilla would probably just feel awkward and raise unnecessary suspicions.

"Let's just observe for now. I'll make a few calls tomorrow so we can at least get a rough idea of what's happening," he said.

Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard nodded in response.

Brandon, the Director of the DIA, set down a pure gold teacup, his lips twitching subtly as he did. His mind was occupied by the thought of the countless people, including agents and soldiers he cherished, dying for such frivolous luxury. However, he wasn't foolish or dense enough to express such emotions. Such behavior was more expected of Ethan of England.

A cool breeze swept through the interior, perhaps from the air conditioning, but Brandon couldn't really tell where it was coming from. The distinctive Islamic arches and opulence adorning the room held Brandon's attention until Abdul Abib, dressed in a thobe, entered from an adjoining door.

Abdul Abib was the de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia. He possessed wealth so vast that not even the CIA could accurately track its total amount daily.

"My apologies for keeping you waiting," Abdul Abib greeted Brandon in fluent English, ostentatiously kissing his cheeks. "Please have a seat."

He gestured to a chair and sat down. Grapes and a cup of tea were then promptly brought to his side table.

"There seems to have been a minor commotion in Africa," he remarked.

"It's already been dealt with," responded Brandon.

"What about Lanok's and Vasili's movements?" Abdul Abib asked as his fingers, each adorned with a large ring, plucked a grape and brought it to his mouth.

"They're proving difficult to deal with," Brandon replied.

"Same with Moon Jae-Hyun, I suppose?"

"Despite how he is, he's still the President of South Korea. It will require some time."

As Abib plucked another grape, he raised his gaze to meet Brandon's.

Brandon continued, "We're doing our best."

"I know, but what we need right now is results. If their plans are what we suspect, then we can't afford to take things slow, and neither can America, especially since the Eurasian Rail is about to choke off our breathing room," Abdul Abib replied. He straightened up, seemingly losing interest in the grapes. "After tomorrow, the special forces in Africa will no longer be a concern for you, Director."

Brandon's eyes widened. Abdul Abib remained calm, seemingly unaffected by his reaction.

"Don't worry about the UN or the international community."

"We still need confirmation," Brandon urged.

"Hesitating may mean missing an irreplaceable opportunity. That's why, when the strongest forces of France, Russia, and that detestable Korea are eliminated, I expect you to show results."

Brandon felt as if Abdul Abib's words were choking him. Even he, the DIA Director, couldn't unilaterally decide on such a matter.

"I haven't gotten approval from the homeland yet, and our men are still there. Besides, if we use force against globally recognized special forces and fail, it'll only heighten their vigilance," he countered.

Abdul Abib smirked, raising only one corner of his lips. "Director, you've always underestimated the might of our Islamic soldiers. It would be a problem if you mistook our patience for weakness."

Seeing the determination in Abdul Abib's eyes, Brandon knew there was no reversing this decision.

Abdul Abib added, "We will no longer just watch the base in Mongolia."

'Have things developed to that extent?'

Brandon, who controlled a worldwide intelligence network, found himself involuntarily shaking his head.

"Now is the time for action, not just opinions, Director. People are starting to learn about Blackhead, denadite, and cetinium. If we can't possess them all, then we have to utterly destroy them. That will cause the Eurasian Rail to collapse."

Brandon pursed his lips and sighed softly. Abdul Abib was right. After all, Lanok, Vasili, and the damn God of Blackfield were involved.

"Eliminating the heads of intelligence who are aware of Blackhead's potential will make Germany and Switzerland naturally bow down."

"Isn't it still too early to tell? Can't we proceed a bit more slowly?" Brandon asked.

Abdul Abib shook his head. "If Blackhead and the two other minerals become an alternative to oil as we fear, my country won't be the only one affected; all of the United States' oil engines, their components, and the intellectual property rights to their designs will become obsolete. I'm quite disappointed with what you've said today, Director."

'Why the hurry?' Brandon thought. His expression hardened.

"Our soldiers are already on their way to Africa. If you're still not ready, we will deal with Lanok and Vasili ourselves," Abdul Abib declared.

"Lanok is in South Korea, and Vasili is in the heart of Russia," Brandon pointed out.

Abdul Abib gave Brandon a faint smile, the corners of his eyes curving. "The biggest issue with you, Director, is your tendency to prioritize assassination. You're always so concerned with covering your tracks. Our soldiers, however, are different. Moreover, as I'm sure you're well aware of, South Korea is particularly vulnerable to bombings due to its weak defenses and lack of experience."

"Have you considered the consequences?"

"Do you really think America can hold its position if we delay things and let the next generation of energy technology come to fruition? If we let that happen, the revenue flow we're currently enjoying will shift toward South Korea, France, and Russia."

Abdul Abib made a gesture with his hand that looked like a fish changing direction. He then shook his head.

"Can America handle such a massive loss in revenue and drop in the value of the dollar? The moment South Korea establishes its next-generation energy operations at the Mongolian base, their won will become the leading currency in international transactions. If Ethan of England hadn't foolishly caused a mishap by mistaking this next-generation energy source for a weapon, we would have been duped as well. Now is not the time to worry about consequences."

"You're planning a Jihad?"

"Well, South Korea did humiliate our warriors in Afghanistan with France's support."

Brandon's expression hardened further.

Abdul Abib gazed at the grapes as he asked, "Did you know Germany is secretly developing electric cars?"

"Don't you hold a substantial stake in the company that's making them?"

Abdul Abib smiled out of formality. "It's a new type of car that's powered by electricity that isn't derived from oil or uranium. It's a revolutionary technology that reduces the number of engine parts to just 45% of the current number."

Brandon gasped. This was news even to the DIA.

"Moreover, under the guise of waste recycling, the German intelligence agency secretly secured funding for this project from a completely unexpected source—Japan."

Startled, Brandon felt as if he'd been struck on both cheeks.

"The countries that feel my country and the US can't come up with a strategy to combat the new energy source are independently seeking survival. Do you still think my plan is wrong?"

"We should at least warn Japan," replied Brandon.

"We can't make them give up on the undersea tunnel. Even if a new source of energy is being utilized, the shares for that must belong to my country and the US."

"Understood," Brandon said, firming his resolve.

"Tonight, we start in Africa," Abdul Abib stated calmly. "But before we do, we would like to extend our goodwill to you."

Brandon had no choice but to agree.

Kang Chan spent a satisfying afternoon enjoying a meal of ramyeon, instant black bean noodles, and kimchi. Although he wanted to read the letters, he hadn't found the time to yet. That was just an excuse he was telling himself, though. He could easily make time for it if he just set his mind to it.

However, he didn't want to rush reading his first-ever letters, especially since they were marked with the names "Lee Yoo-Seul," "Yoo Hye-Sook," and "Kim Mi-Young." It was comparable to a man not wanting to hastily consume a feast that he was seeing for the first time in his life.

Hence, when Kang Chan finally had some time to kill, he chose not to read the letters. Instead, he picked up the satellite phone and went to his room. He had to know why he had been dumped in this damn place. He'd probably be in a better state of mind to read the letters once he had gotten answers to that.

Kang Chan considered prodding Anne for information first but decided against it since it would be impolite. Rather, it would just make it seem as if he were doubting Lanok. If he truly trusted Lanok and considered him an ally, then it would only be proper to call him directly. This was how Kang-Chan normally handled things.

The call was answered as soon as he pressed the call button.

- Mr. Kang Chan!

Does Lanok know my number?

Kang Chan couldn't help but admire Lanok's intelligence-gathering capabilities.

"It's been a while, Mr. Ambassador," Kang Chan greeted.

- How are you finding Africa?

Both Lanok and Kang Chan burst into laughter at the question. Hearing the voice of a dear ally filled them with joy and a sense of comfort even though they likely had feelings of disappointment and regret.

"Mr. Ambassador, I'll get straight to the point since you're probably busy. I want to know the real reason I'm here."

Kang Chan wasted no time. After all, this was an important matter that concerned the lives of his men. Moreover, he didn't want to chat and laugh around questions were weighing on his heart.

- Monsieur Kang.

Lanok's tone changed, making Kang Chan listen more intently.

- It's hard to discuss even just the dinner menu through this line. For now, trust me and your instincts, Monsieur Kang.

"You mean I should stake my life on it."

After a brief silence, Lanok burst into laughter.

- Hahaha! Those listening to this call would be surprised. I'll contact you soon.

"Understood, Mr. Ambassador."

- Mr. Kang Chan.

"Yes?"

Lanok's tone and the way he addressed Kang Chan changed again. Kang Chan felt as if he was beginning to understand the emotions that Lanok wanted to convey.

- We will win this war.

'What is that supposed to mean—ah!'

Kang Chan suddenly recalled the scene at the press conference that Lanok had mentioned. Back then, Kang Chan had spoken about the God of Blackfield, the name his enemies had given him, and explained that it meant "a god who brings death."

He'd said, "We will win this war."

Kang Chan also remembered his last words at the press conference.

"Because I've got your back."

Lanok's gentle laughter rang out.

- You might want to prepare a fiery gift over there.

"I will."

After hanging up, Kang Chan got lost in his thoughts. If he was right, then he had to prepare to deliver death to the enemy. Anyone eavesdropping surely wouldn't miss the underlying meaning of such a conversation. In fact, it proved more effective than blatantly telling him that the enemy could strike at any moment.

Kang Chan's suspicion turned into certainty. Now, the only task left was to uncover what was happening beyond the prying eyes of other intelligence agencies.

As the sun neared the horizon, Kang Chan contemplated reading the letters he had tucked into his pants.

He glanced at the door.

'Should I lock it?'

The thought struck him as amusing. Why was he checking the door just to read three letters?

As he finally decided to push through with it, the door burst open and Seok Kang-Ho barged into the room, urgency written all over his expression.

"Captain! We need you outside!"

Kang Chan didn't even have time to ask questions. He hastily followed Seok Kang-Ho outside and to the barracks that he had pointed at.

'What now?' Kang Chan thought.

A Somali woman was rushing toward him. Her head, forearms, hands, and shins were drenched in blood,

"Suurudkaad! I caawiya! I caawiya!" she exclaimed.

Kang Chan examined the woman's face as she clutched his sleeve and wailed. He then turned his head toward the men.

One of them explained, "She's saying that the rebels are here! I didn't catch all the details because she kept frantically running around to find you, but she keeps repeating that people are dying! She's begging for help!"

"Suurudkaad!" The woman's large eyes filled with tears as she looked at Kang Chan. "I caawiya! I caawiya!"

She gazed in the direction of her tribe, wailing incessantly despite her parched mouth. Her lips were extremely dry, which made sense considering she had just run a distance that would take forty minutes to cover by car.

"Someone bring us some water!" Kang Chan shouted.

A soldier quickly brought over some water in a mug.

Not even glancing at the water, the woman prostrated in front of Kang Chan. "Suurudkaad!"

She had run here, with her arms and legs soaked in blood, to plead for them to rescue her people, who were being brutally murdered at this very moment. These were the pitiable people of Africa—people who had songs as their only solace from the harsh lives they endured.

UN? International politics? Red Cross? No matter which organization Kang Chan was attached to, he couldn't ignore someone begging to be saved.

"Suurudkaad! I caawiya!"

The tear-drenched woman looked up at him.

Kang Chan called out, "Gérard!"

"Yes, sir!"

"Tell everyone to grab their weapons and move out!"

"Yes, sir!"

As ordered, the French special forces sprinted to the barracks.

Realizing what was happening, the woman burst into tears again, her mouth wide open. "Whaaa!"

"Daye! Cha Dong-Kyun! Everyone, arm yourselves!"

"Roger that!"

"Understood!"

Whoosh!

The South Korean special forces rushed into their barracks as well. A few moments later, a soldier brought Kang Chan his rifle, vest, and helmet.

"Mahad! Mahad! Suurudkaad!" the woman cried out, barely managing to express her gratitude.

Chapter 257: Certainty Set In (2)

Just as Kang Chan was putting on his helmet, the Green Berets ran out of their barracks fully armed.

"We'll go with you!" the commander of the Green Berets shouted.

Vroom! Clank! Clank!

Noises from the soldiers running out of their respective barracks and the engines of vehicles starting filled the base.

The commander continued, "Consider this as thanks for saving us! It's our fault for getting ourselves in a situation where we'd need saving in the first place, but it's still about time we get our revenge on the insurgents for attacking us!"

Kang Chan nodded.

"Thank you!" With a determined expression, the commander turned around to send his men outside. "Go! Go! Go! Move! Move!"

The woman who had fallen on the ground pushed herself up and ran out of the base. They couldn't possibly stop her from going with them.

Kang Chan turned around as another group of soldiers stood in attention in front of him. It was the Spetsnaz blocking his way this time, also armed to the teeth.

"We'll go with you," Andrei said.

Did all these sons of bitches take drugs?

"We're under Director Vasili's orders," he continued.

"Why should I follow his orders?" Kang Chan shot back.

"Please, monsieur Kang."

Kang Chan looked into Andrei's eyes. Despite being the commander of the Spetsnaz, Andrei still bowed down to him in front of his men. He didn't know why the fucker was acting this way, but ignoring him would be as insulting as spitting on someone bowing their head to him.

“Then get moving!” Kang Chan shouted.

“Thanks!”

Andrei turned around and headed out of the base. The Spetsnaz followed behind him.

Damn it! Why does everything keep getting out of hand?

He and his men were only going over to knock down an insurgent group, but South Korea's special forces team, France's Foreign Legion's special forces team, the Spetsnaz, and even the Green Berets were all going with him.

Forget the insurgents. They had enough military might to overthrow most regimes.

Vrrooom! Vroom!

As soon as Kang Chan got in one of the vehicles, they all simultaneously started moving.

He glared at the UN command center as they drove off. The UN had mobilized government forces and even the Red Cross to address the African tribes' problems, yet not even one of them had come out to see what was going on despite all the commotion.

Rattle! Rattle!

The Humvee made its way through the unpaved ground.

Kang Chan found something weird about this situation, but it wasn't important right now. He raised his hand on his helmet.

Chk.

“It's the God of Blackfield. I'm assigning codename Bravo to the Foreign Legion, Charlie to the Green Berets, and Delta to the Spetsnaz.”

The army interpreters for South Korea, the United States, and Russia quickly passed on what Kang Chan said in French into their respective native languages.

Chk.

Kang Chan continued, “This is a tribal war. We do not have permission to engage, but we have to prioritize the tribe's safety anyway.”

Choi Jong-Il glanced at Cha Dong-Gyun.

Unlike yesterday, the world-famous special forces teams chose to fall under South Korea's command themselves today. Hence, it was only natural that South Korea's special forces team was Team Alpha, which symbolized command.

Rattle! Rattle!

Chk.

“Cha Dong-Gyun! Secure the access road as soon as we get there,” Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

“Yes, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun firmly responded from one of the speeding trucks that were leaving clouds of dust in their trail. He didn’t want to ruin things by dawdling in situations like this.

The sun had almost set. If one were to look at it from the side, it would seem as if it was flying alongside the vehicles.

The French team was to the left of the South Korean team, the American team to their right, and the Spetsnaz behind them. They looked as if they were escorting the South Korean team.

At their current speed, it would take them twenty minutes to reach their destination.

Kang Chan glared ahead of him, his eyes as intense as the blazing sun.

He had a lot of questions. He could understand the American team’s reason for going with them. But why did Vasili order Andrei to obey him? Moreover, not one person from the UN’s command center showed up even though their troops were rushing out of the base without permission.

Rattle! Rattle! Rattle!

The Humvee roughly shook, seemingly telling Kang Chan to focus on the task at hand for now.

Fine! I’ll rescue the tribe first!

Having made up his mind, he scanned their surroundings.

The woman sitting at the back was suffering from motion sickness, which was quite understandable since the vehicle kept swerving, rattling and vibrating like crazy.

The blood that had dripped from her curly hair and the dried-up tears on her face made her look like a mess, but she still seemed full of hope.

I don’t know how many people we can rescue, but I’ll try my best.

After a while, a ridge blocking their way came into view. The Humvee stopped and Kang Chan got out.

Chk.

“I want all snipers to keep an eye out for anyone with rocket launchers.”

Chk.

“This is Team Bravo. We’re good to go. Over.”

Chk.

“This is Team Charlie. Ready when you are.”

Chk.

“This is Team Delta. Awaiting further instructions.”

Having gotten confirmation from every team, Kang Chan held up his right hand in the air and spun it in a circle twice. He then pointed ahead of him.

Vroom!

The truck that Cha Dong-Gyun was in rushed to the front.

“Colonel!” Kang Chan yelled. “Please secure the entrance with Cha Dong-Gyun!”

“Understood!” Park Chul-Su answered.

Kang Chan got on the back of the Humvee and slung his rifle over his shoulder.

Rattle! Rattle!

Even though the vehicle was shaking, they still had to provide the soldiers who had gone ahead with cover.

Haah. Haah.

If their enemies were hiding up in the mountains, then the truck that Cha Dong-Gyun was in could explode into a ball of fire before they could even think, ‘Oops!’

To Kang Chan, everything seemed to be moving in slow motion—even Lee Doo-Hee turning the wheel, the front part of the Humvee bouncing, and the swaying trees and plants at the ridge.

Haah. Haah.

“Daye! I’m going to run out with Gérard once Cha Dong-Gyun secures the access road!”

“Copy!”

They only had a bit of time left before they reached the ridge.

Chk.

“Gérard! Form an advance party with ten people!”

Chk.

“Roger that.”

Chk.

“You too, Choi Jong-II!” Kang Chan ordered again.

Chk.

“Yes, sir.”

Cha Dong-Gyun and the soldiers got out of the truck and ran to secure the strategic position uphill.

Chk.

“Team Delta, I want you up the mountain covering us,” Kang Chan commanded.
“Team Charlie, cover us from the back.”

As the two teams radioed in determined replies, the Humvee stopped in front of the ridge.

Whoosh! Clank! Clank!

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho got out and charged onward. Gérard and Choi Jong-Il followed behind them with the other soldiers.

Crunch! Crunch! Rustle! Rustle!

The path felt slippery, but Kang Chan didn't stumble.

They were running with their rifles at the ready. Since anyone in hiding could shoot them while they were running, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho, the ones with the fastest reaction time, brought up the vanguard of their formation.

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan was breathing so heavily that it would be difficult for him to count his breath. With their surroundings starting to get dark, they would be in real trouble if the rebels had installed boobytraps.

When Kang Chan got to the top of the ridge, he took a couple of steps closer to the downhill slope of the mountain. Dirt rolled down the mountain when he stopped.

Crunch! Crunch!

Dirt scattered as Seok Kang-Ho, Choi Jong-Il, Gérard, and the soldiers following right behind them stopped. They couldn't hear anything.

Kang Chan gestured to his flanks with his left hand, and the soldiers quickly hid in either side of him.

Ba-dum. Ba-dum.

Kang Chan suddenly got goosebumps all over his body and found it difficult to breathe. He had only ever experienced something like this once.

He had to be conscious of his breathing, but still be silent. But in this state, the soldiers that were near him would be hearing how quickly and how hard he was breathing.

What's going on? Why am I like this?

All Kang Chan could hear was his heart beating, but it sounded as if it was coming from his head.

Ba-dum. Ba-dum.

The soldiers nervously examined their surroundings. They were running out of time, but since Kang Chan wasn't moving, all they could do was wait for orders.

Seok Kang-Ho looked at Kang Chan with glinting eyes. He had never seen him acting like this.

Kang Chan was the type to charge in and quickly work through the situation if he found it dangerous. Now, however, it looked like he couldn't even move an inch.

Ba-dum. Ba-dum.

Kang Chan's heart was beating so fast that he felt like blood was rushing to his cheeks.

They're about to shoot me in the neck like last time! Is this what people call fear?

"Captain!" Seok Kang-Ho called, making Kang Chan turn his head toward him.

'Daye?'

'What are you so scared of?'

'Scared? I'm scared?'

'You are, aren't you?'

'You fucker, what did you just say...?'

Just as Kang Chan was about to give Seok Kang-Ho a mouthful...

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan could finally hear himself breathing again.

I'm scared? Me? I'm scared of being shot in the neck again?

Pft.

Kang Chan smirked, and Seok Kang-Ho grinned in response.

The path in front of them led down the mountain. If Kang Chan's instinct was right that snipers were all around them, then they would likely be aiming at Kang Chan and his men from Mount Surdkad.

"Move back! That mountain is suspicious!" Kang Chan ordered.

Kang Chan then quickly assigned the soldiers to their positions.

Haah. Haah.

Chk.

"I want all teams prepared to come across armed hostiles up ahead. Be on the lookout for RPGs or tangos lying in wait on Mount Surdkad."

He had some of the best teams in the world under his command right now. As soon as he was done issuing orders, he heard the soldiers in the mountain and at the back withdrawing.

They moved behind the tallest point of the ridge.

"Daye! This is probably a trap similar to the one we experienced before! Act accordingly!"

Seok Kang-Ho glared at Mount Surdkad. "Got it."

"Gérard!" Kang Chan called.

"Oui!"

“Consider this whole situation a trap. Be especially careful of our enemies attacking us from the mountain.”

“Oui!” Gérard answered.

Ta-da-dang! Du-du-du! Ta-dang! Ta-da-da-dang! Du-du-du!

At the same time, they heard loud gunshots coming from the mountain to their left.

Chk.

“This is Team Delta! We’re being ambushed! The tangos are wearing a black military uniform with a black bandana!”

Du-du-du! Du-du-du-du! Ta-da-dang! Ta-dang!

Multiple gunshots echoed in quick succession.

Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam!

At the same time, the dirt in front of Kang Chan splattered into the air.

Ta-dang! Ta-da-dang! Ta-da-dang! Ta-dang!

The French soldiers immediately returned fire, roughly guessing where their enemies were.

Those sons of bitches!

Overexerting themselves, the enemy snipers shot at them even though it would have been better to wait. The distance between them was so huge that just hiding behind the ridge should be enough to keep them safe.

Ta-da-dang! Du-du-du! Du-du-du! Ta-da-dang!

Chk.

“The enemy’s overwhelming us with their numbers! We need backup!” someone from Team Delta radioed in.

Bright flashes could be seen from the left ridge.

Chk.

“Charlie! Support Delta!” Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

“Copy that!”

After getting an affirmative, Kang Chan approached Gérard.

Pew! Bam!

More bullets hit the ground as he did, sending dirt flying again.

Ta-da-da-dang! Ta-da-da-dang! Ta-da-da-dang!

Gunfire could be heard from all over the mountain. The gunshots that rang out from the ridge that the Spetsnaz was at mixed with the sounds of the French soldiers returning fire.

“Gérard, do you have heavy weaponry?” Kang Chan asked. The enemy fire forced himself to duck right after.

Damn it!

“We have an Igla and a machine gun mounted on the truck.”

“Bring them over.”

“Yes, sir.” Gérard answered. He immediately contacted his men through the radio.

Chk.

“Cha Dong-Gyun!” Kang Chan called. “Our enemies might ambush us from the other side of the battle. I want heavy weaponry ready at that side! Don’t let your guard down, you hear me?!”

Ta-da-dang! Du-du-du! Du-du! Ta-da-dang!

Chk.

“Yes, sir.”

Clank! Clank!

Four French soldiers soon reached them with an M240 and an Igla.

Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam.

With the area now pitch black, Kang Chan could finally see the sparks flying from the bottom half of the mountain more clearly.

“We’re going to advance. If any of you see the snipers, shoot them down!”

“It’s going to be hard to do that with a machine gun,” Someone responded.

“It doesn’t matter! Just stall for a bit and then fire the Igla!”

“Understood.”

This should be enough.

“We’re heading down the mountain and hit our enemies from behind!” Kang Chan ordered.

Although there weren’t any bushes around, they at least had the cover of darkness at their disposal. Their enemies would easily spot them if they had binoculars, but for as long as they didn’t walk in such a stupid way that the snipers could shoot them, their objective was doable.

Ta-da-dang! Du-du-du! Ta-dang! Ta-da-da-dang! Du-du-du!

Lights were still flashing from the left ridge.

How many people did their enemies send here for them to put up such a fierce fight against the Spetsnaz and the Green Berets?

Kang Chan and his men showed up to this tribal war assuming that they were going to fight insurgents only to be stabbed in the back.

‘You bastards dare try to kill me?’

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan first made sure that the machine gun and the Igla at the back were ready to go.

Chk.

“This is Team Alpha. We’re going to hit our enemies from behind with Team Bravo.”

Chk.

“Copy that, Team Alpha! We still got a lot of tangos on us.”

After informing his men of his plan, Kang Chan slightly raised his head and immediately ducked down.

PEW! Bam!

Almost at the same time, the enemy snipers immediately shot at him.

Du-du-du-du-du! PEW!

The machine gun blazed up not long after, sending a flurry of bullets toward the mountain, followed by the Igla being fired.

Bam!

Du-du-du-du-du!

“Let’s go!” Kang Chan yelled.

Whoosh!

Kang Chan, Seok Kang-Ho, Gérard, and the other soldiers ran down the ridge while the other teams were providing suppressive fire.

Haah. Haah.

If they went all the way down, they would find themselves exactly where the tribes were. Kang Chan and his men were currently in the part of the mountain that was covered by a large hill, preventing anyone from shooting them.

Chk.

“Team Alpha! The tangos probably belong to the Quds!”[1] a Green Beret radioed in.

The Quds? The mercenary-like special forces that got themselves involved in wars and terrorism with the Arabs after being established in Iraq?

There was no way the Green Berets would mistake the Quds for some other force.

‘Why are those fuckers kicking up a fuss here?’

Kang Chan felt much more relaxed now that he knew who their enemies were.

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan turned to the opposite direction of where the tribespeople were and headed to where the Spetsnaz’s location. They would soon be in a position to pincer their enemies.

Even though Kang Chan didn’t order them to, Seok Kang-Ho went to his right and Gérard to his left. South Korea and France’s special forces teams spread out as they followed behind them.

The mountain barely had any trees, but it did have good indents that made for good cover for both them and their enemies.

Rustle! Rustle!

Du-du-du-du-du-du!

Hearing the machine gun’s rapid fire, Kang Chan assumed that snipers tried to shoot down the squad they left behind again.

Haah. Haah.

Kang Chan carefully moved forward.

Click! Pew!

Upon closing the distance by fifty more meters, he shot an enemy who was about to take aim.

Du-du-du! Pow-pow-pow! Du-du! Pow!

Bam! Bam!

The hostiles quickly jumped down, getting themselves out of the line of fire. Their quick reflexes and accurate aim were enough to know that they had trained hard for situations like this.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Ta-da-dang! Ta-dang! Ta-da-dang!

In the blink of an eye, as the night fell, another battle erupted.

Du-du-du! Du-du-du-du! Du-du-du!

Every gunshot that echoed helped them pinpoint their enemies’ location. However, their enemies were so skilled that they were quick to hide after returning fire.

Kang Chan smirked.

Still, we’re leagues above you bastards!

Du-du-du!

Pew! Bam!

Kang Chan quickly shot one of the hostiles’ forehead.

Du-du-du-du! Pew! Bam!

After getting behind cover, he pointed his index and middle fingers to the ground and then to his right.

Seok Kang-Ho tapped his chest twice in response, then headed to the right flank with Choi Jong-Il.

Du-du-du-du! Pew! Pew! Ta-da-da-dang! Ta-da-dang!

Catching on to Kang Chan's plan, the French soldiers immediately provided cover fire.

Click! Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam!

At the same time, Kang Chan shot two more hostiles in the head.

How dare these fucking bastards show up out of nowhere and trick us!

Pew! Bam!

Ta-da-dang! Pow-pow-pow!

Kang Chan and Gérard each took down an enemy with a bullet to the head.

Chapter 258: You Should Get Used To It (1)

In combat, one could read the flow to determine who had the upper hand.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Pew! Pew! Du du! Du du du!

Kang Chan put bullets into more of their enemies' heads. With Gérard stepping up to help him and Seok Kang-Ho assisting them from below, the enemy's ferocity began to weaken.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Thud! Thud! Thud! Thud!

Even if the Quds could be considered as one of the best special forces among the Arabs, the teams they were up against were some of the best in the world.

The fight quickly tilted in the South Korean team's favor when they gained momentum.

Du du du du! Pew! Du du! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang!

Judging by the flashes of gunfire, the enemy numbered about two hundred. In African tribal wars, the insurgent rebel forces easily added up to at least a thousand men. Even so, Kang Chan couldn't understand why so many Quds had shown up here today.

Fortunately, in addition to the forty-five Spetsnaz and Green Berets, they also had twenty South Korean special forces. They weren't at too much of a disadvantage.

Peew! Pew! Du du du! Peew! Pow pow pow! Pow!

Shooting an enemy right in the forehead from only thirty meters away could seem easy, but in truth, it was impossible. In actual combat, even hitting an enemy running just twenty meters ahead would already be difficult. After all, behind such a target, someone would always be providing suppressive fire to cover them. Moreover, one had to get up and back down to hide in a split second in this situation, making it hard to properly aim at the enemy.

Du du du! Pow pow! Pow! Thud! Peew! Pew!

The dirt and dust right next to the shooter would splatter up, and the boulders they were hiding behind could break into pieces, overwhelming them far too much to do anything.

Du du du! Pow! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Pew! Pew! Pew! Bang, bang!

Before Kang Chan got back up, Gérard covered fire for him. In situations like this, Kang Chan was always more than grateful to have someone he could trust his life with.

Likewise, Gérard and his men shot back believing that Kang Chan would eliminate all their enemies.

Du du du! Bang, bang, bang! Pew! Pow! Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang!

When the Spetsnaz and Green Berets started their triumphant descent, the tide of the battle began to turn completely in their favor.

In just fifteen minutes, they had killed over fifty enemies. At this rate, they would clear out this side in an hour.

Du du du! Pow pow pow! Du du du du! Peeew! Pew! Pow pow pow!

Haah, haah.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Click!

Kang Chan fired four consecutive bullets before crouching over and releasing the empty magazine in his gun.

Pew! Pow! Pow pow pow!

More rocks shattered and dirt splattered.

Click!

Kang Chan was inserting a new magazine when the radio crackled.

Chk.

“There are trucks in pursuit of our vehicles, and they’re shooting at us from the back! I repeat! We’ve got trucks on our asses, and they’re shooting at us!”

Could they be the SBS?

Du du du du! Pow pow pow! Du du! Peeew! Pow!

Still crouched over and keeping his head down, Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet.

Chk.

“They might be the SBS! Flash your lights to send them a signal!” Kang Chan ordered.

The army interpreters relayed Kang Chan’s command in their respective languages.

Chhhhk!

“This is the vehicle at the entrance! Check the lights! We need backup! I repeat! We need backup!”

Rough engines, gunfire, and shouts mixed in with the crackles of radios.

Chk.

“Cha Dong-Gyun! Fire the Iglas at the approaching vehicles! They’ll have us surrounded if they get around us! I’m putting all Bravo members in your location under your command!” Kang Chan shouted in Korean, then repeated it in French.

Ta ta ta ta ta ta ta! Weeew! Boooooom!

Along with flashes of light, they heard a cacophony of gunshots, splattering dirt, screams, and shouts from the entrance. It was pandemonium.

Chk.

“Daye! Head back! There’s been a new development!” Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

“Got it!”

Seok Kang-Ho’s response was mixed with the sound of gunshots. Kang Chan couldn’t even hear it properly.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Du du du!

Chhk.

“Captain! We need cover!” Seok Kang-Ho shouted.

Chk.

“On three, start running!” Kang Chan responded.

Chk.

“One! Two...!”

“Cover them!” Kang Chan ordered the others.

Pew! Pew! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang! Peew!

As commanded, the soldiers began to send bullets flying in the direction that Seok Kang-Ho would be returning from.

Pow! Pow! Peeew! Pew! Pow pow pow pow!

A moment later, Seok Kang-Ho reached Kang Chan’s position.

Chk.

“Charlie! Delta! Come back this way! The enemy is at the entrance trying to overwhelm us with numbers! Keeping our forces split will be dangerous! Withdraw and provide support to the soldiers at the entrance!” Kang Chan shouted.

Chhkk!

“Understood!”

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Tu ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta!

Chk.

“Charlie! We got wounded over here! Provide cover!” Kang Chan ordered.

Chk.

“This is the entrance! We’ve got three SBS soldiers in critical condition!”

Du du du du! Du du du! Du du du! Weeooo! Boom!

Another bright flash lit up their dark surroundings.

Chk.

“We’ve got more injured! The enemy’s too many!” Cha Dong-Gyun shouted, his words buried under the gunshots.

Chk.

“Retreat up the ridge!” Kang Chan commanded. The situation had taken a bad turn. “Gérard! Take charge of this place!”

Du du du! Du du! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang!

“Daye!” Kang Chan shouted as he climbed up.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Peew! Pew! Du du du! Pow pow pow! Du du du du!

While Gérard and the soldiers were providing suppressive fire, Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho climbed up the ridge.

Du du du du! Du du du! Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta!

Damn it!

Trucks were all around them in front of the mountain, and the unmistakable M60 gunfire and a mass of white flew up from them.

Pow pow pow pow pow pow pow pow!

Chk.

“Drag the injured to the back!” Cha Dong-Gyun shouted over the radio.

Rustle! Rustle!

Kang Chan went down the ridge so fast that he almost slid down. “Retreat! Go back up!”

As he issued commands, Spetsnaz and Green Beret soldiers appeared next to him.

“Defend that side! Don’t let the enemies get up there no matter what!”

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta ta ta!

Pow pow pow pow pow pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow pow pow!

Several of the men were sent flying backward, and a big part of the ground in front of Kang Chan sunk in.

Kang Chan and Seok Kang-Ho rushed forward to take a look at the wounded soldier. Half of his chest was missing.

“Daye! Hold this position!”

Hisssss!

Kang Chan sprinted and pulled the dead soldier up the ridge when he heard the loud boom of mortars ringing out in the distance.

Bam! Bam! Bam!

“Get down! Get down!” Kang Chan shouted.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

Clumps of dirt flew into the air and rained back down toward them.

“Lee Doo-Hee! Focus on getting those bastards!”

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang! Pew! Pew! Pew!

“Snipers! Eliminate the enemies manning the mortars and RPGs first!” Kang Chan ordered both in Korean and French.

Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta!

As a French soldier let his M240 loose, the snipers eliminated the men near the mortars, forcing the enemy’s offensive to enter a brief lull.

“Move the wounded over here!” Kang Chan shouted.

Hissss!

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Du du! Tu ta ta ta ta ta!

Sparks flashed all over the area as different kinds of gunshots mixed.

After putting the dead and the wounded to one side, Kang Chan immediately turned to Seok Kang-Ho. “Daye! Let’s retreat to where the tribe is! Gérard is blocking the bottom of the mountain, so you lead the way! I’ll cover for you from behind!”

“Copy that!” Seok Kang-Ho replied.

Pew! Peew! Du du! Du du du du!

Chk.

“Charlie! Delta! We’re moving to where the tribe is! Keep your guard up as you follow our lead! I’ll be taking the rear!” Kang Chan commanded.

Chk.

“Understood!”

After getting the other teams' confirmation, Kang Chan headed down the ridge.

“Cha Dong-Gyun! We're heading to where the tribe is! Retreat!”

Pow pow pow! Peeew! Pew! Pew! Pow pow pow! Pow pow pow pow!

The dirt around them splattered.

“Go up!”

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!

The enemies hiding behind the trucks were no more than thirty meters away.

Du du du! Pow! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Du du du!

When another soldier fell, Kang Chan immediately dashed toward him and pulled him by the arm.

“Ahh! Argh!”

The bullet likely hit the soldier in a vital spot. As Kang Chan tugged him to safety, the soldier shook his head from side to side, screaming over and over again.

Pow!

“Kegh!” Kang Chan groaned, suddenly feeling searing pain in his right thigh.

“Take him! Go!”

Pew! Pow pow pow! Pow! Pew! Du du du! Du du!

It was too much for them to handle a hail of bullets from over four hundred enemy soldiers. They could've taken this in stride if they were up against rebel forces, but their opponent right now was four hundred Quds.

Pow! Thud! Pow pow pow pow! Peeew! Pew!

Another soldier fell backward, hitting the ground hard.

Kang Chan extended his thumb, index, and middle fingers. He then pointed upward, signaling the others to form a three-point perimeter and cover their allies who were climbing up.

“Carry the wounded on your back! Daye! Go!”

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Peeew! Pew! Peeew!

“Andrei!” Kang Chan called just as Andrei let a round of bullets loose from behind the Spetsnaz. “I want you to take four soldiers and hold the rear with me!”

“Understood!” Andrei replied.

Du du du! Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Pow! Pow!

Another soldier fell to the ground. Their men who were at the front of the mountain had almost all gotten up to the ridge.

Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang!

“We’re low on ammo!” Andrei shouted out through gritted teeth.

You motherfucker! Considering how much you were firing, I’m honestly not surprised!

It wasn’t his fault either, though. The sparks from guns were getting closer to them from Gérard’s side as well.

Chk.

“Gérard! Take your soldiers and fall back! Daye will open up a path for you!” Kang Chan shouted.

Chk.

“Yes, Cap!”

Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang! Du du du! Du du! Du du du du!

Cha Dong-Gyun and his men ran along the ridge, carrying the wounded on their backs.

“Snipers! Fall back!” Kang Chan shouted.

Click! Click!

While Lee Doo-Hee and the French sniper got up, Kang Chan swiftly got a hold of the M240.

Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta! Tu ta ta ta ta ta! Boom! Booom!

Two of the trucks soon exploded. Kang Chan saw bodies fly up and crash back down to the ground.

“Andrei!”

Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Pow pow pow!

Andrei and his soldiers dashed past Kang Chan.

Tu ta ta ta ta ta ta ta!

Kang Chan fired the M240 at the enemies coming up from below.

Click! Click! Click!

When he ran out of bullets, the enemies began to scramble up to the ridge in a flutter of movements that resembled cockroaches streaming out of the trucks.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!

Kang Chan backed away as he shot at the enemies.

“Gérard!”

Bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Du du! Du du du du!

With the wounded on their backs, the French soldiers ran up the mountain. Gérard and Choi Jong-II were the last to reach the ridge.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!

Kang Chan rained more bullets down on the incoming hostiles, protecting Choi Jong-Il until he got to safety. Gérard and Choi Jong-Il then fended off the enemies climbing up from the sides as he blocked off the front, but it was hard to beat their overwhelming numbers.

Bang, bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang! Du du du! Boom! Boom! Boom!

Mortar strikes followed right after the gunshots.

Thud! Thud! Thud! Hissss!

This time, the bombardment fell on the enemy on the other side.

As they ran along the ridge to go around the mountain, Kang Chan finally got some breathing room. If they hadn't taken out the sniper on the opposite mountain, this fight would have ended then and there.

Du du du du! Pew! Pew! Bang, bang, bang! Bang, bang, bang, bang!

The narrow path made it impossible for the enemies to come up all at once.

“Run!”

Rustle! Rustle! Clack!

A French soldier carrying a wounded soldier on his back tripped and fell forward.

Kang Chan and Gérard sprinted toward him, grabbed him by the shoulders, and lifted him to his feet. At the same time, Choi Jong-Il carried the wounded on his back.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Click! Click! Pew! Pew! Pew!

Kang Chan kept their enemies under constant fire as he retreated. Whenever he had to swap magazines, Gérard covered for him.

The ridge was quite narrow. The enemy's offense momentarily paused as a series of bullets pierced their men's foreheads on their way up.

Running through a slippery path in the middle of the night, the soldiers with the wounded on their backs kept sliding, preventing them from going any faster.

Pew! Pew! Du du du! Bang, bang, bang! Pew! Pow pow pow! Pow!

Every time sparks flashed, another person went down.

Kang Chan was almost grateful that the road to the tribe had a lot of twists and turns.

Chk.

“Where do you want to go?”

Chk.

“Go up to where the enemy's snipers were!” Kang Chan replied.

Chk.

“Got it!”

Five minutes after Kang Chan responded to Seok Kang-Ho's question on the radio, they finally reached the tribe.

Kang Chan gritted his teeth. On one side of it was a large pile of the corpses.

Du du du! Pew! Pew! Pew!

Turning around, he fired at the enemies chasing after them, landing headshot after headshot.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Soon, he heard sniper rifles firing from the mountains overlooking the tribe's homes.

Thud! Thud! Thud!

When the enemies started falling, Kang Chan ran up the mountain.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

The gunshots were like music to his ears.

Du du du! Du du du du! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Going deeper into the mountain made him feel a bit more at ease.

“Move the injured to that side! I want all snipers prioritizing the enemies manning machine guns, mortars, and missiles! Gérard! Have ten men hold this position!” Kang Chan commanded.

Gérard assigned six soldiers from the French team and four from the South Korean team to guard the path into the village, giving them a bit more breathing room. It would be difficult to enter the village from the mountains behind them.

“Cha Dong-Gyun! I want three soldiers guarding that area and these two others!” Kang Chan pointed to three different locations. “Get the snipers up there when you're done!”

“Understood, sir,” Cha Dong-Gyun replied.

The enemies were likely regrouping as well, considering they weren't rushing in yet.

Now that time was no longer against him, Kang Chan started to feel a sharp pain coming up from the gunshot wound on his right thigh. Choosing to ignore it, he looked at the tribesmen's houses when someone came up to him.

“I'm Tyler. I have eight dead and five wounded,” said the commander of the SBS. He was as burly as a gorilla, and dust and blood were all over his face. “It bothered me that no one was at the UN command center after everyone left.”

Exhausted, he took off his helmet and met Kang Chan's gaze.

“We were armed, yet they still suddenly attacked us.”

“You did well,” Kang Chan commended.

He raised his hand to remove his helmet, releasing the heat that had been trapped inside.

“I won’t forget your help today,” Tyler said.

“Let’s talk again after we get out of here alive,” Kang Chan replied.

“Sure.”

Tyler glared at the entrance of the village, turned around, and walked away.

After a while, Gérard walked over to Kang Chan. He took off his cap and slung it over his left shoulder.

“We’ve got four dead, four wounded,” he said. “Our chick is in critical condition, Cap. Can you come over and take a look?”

Damn it!

The two walked over to the wounded.

The chick, lying on the rightmost of the four French soldiers, smiled weakly at Kang Chan. Shot in the left side of his forehead, he likely wouldn’t be able to survive.

“It was... a glorious battle,” the soldier managed to utter.

Kang Chan sat down next to him in silence.

“I was lucky... to have met you.”

Kang Chan smirked. Lucky? How was he lucky to meet on the battlefield and part ways like this?

“Captain... that smirk... I can’t do it...”

“Hurry and get up. I’ll teach you how to do it.”

“Can I... smoke a cigarette?”

“The enemies can’t see us from here. You don’t have to worry about them shooting at us, so it’s fine. Do you want one?”

The chick thanked him in response.

Kang Chan turned back to look at Gérard, and Gérard handed him a cigarette and a Zippo lighter.

Kang Chan took out two cigarettes and lit them up, putting one in the chick’s mouth. As the soldier struggled to draw on it, the flame on the end of the cigarette flickered and died.

“Hoo...”

Swish.

The soldier’s head dropped to the side as he exhaled the smoke, a corner of his mouth curved into a smirk.

“Hoo!” Kang Chan blew out a long puff of smoke.

“Gérard.”

“Oui.”

“Since we just took a hard blow, isn’t it only proper that we punch them back twice as hard?”

Gérard nodded, his eyes glinting.

Chapter 259: You Should Get Used To It (2)

The two soldiers next to the French soldier unbuttoned his uniform and used it to cover his face. They then rested his hands on top of his chest.

If they had a stretcher right now, they would have tied the rookie French soldier’s hands with a belt and the shoelaces of his military boots together, which was a tradition in the Foreign Legion.

Kang Chan rubbed his cigarette on the ground and stood up. He then went around the mountain, finding soldiers from different teams carefully laying down their dead brothers.

“We suffered three casualties, three wounded, Captain,” Cha Dong-Gyun said.
“And...”

As Cha Dong-Gyun provided his report, they reached their fallen comrades. The soldiers’ noses and ears were covered with cloth cut from their sleeves, and their arms were crossed on their chests.

Cha Dong-Gyun continued, “... the woman who came to our base was also killed. She was shot while she was retreating to this place.”

Damn it!

They could only do so much to prepare against ambushes, considering they were meant to take their targets by surprise, but Kang Chan never imagined that they would have this many casualties.

“You’ve all gone through a lot already, but don’t lower your guards yet. Take turns resting.”

“Yes, sir.”

When Cha Dong-Gyun turned away, Andrei—who was nearby—approached Kang Chan.

“I’ve got four dead, one wounded.”

“How much ammo do you have left?” Kang Chan asked Andrei.

“Only about two magazines per person.”

“I see... Get some rest for now.”

“If the South Korean team is going out for a night operation, we’d like to come with you,” Andrei gruffly requested. He then turned around.

The Green Berets were hit the roughest. The chances of survival of the five wounded soldiers they left behind at the base were looking slim.

“I’m Robert[1], commander of the Green Berets. Three of my men were killed. Including the five we left at the base, we also have a total of nine wounded,” Robert reported.

Robert had sharp eyes and an angular face with high eyebrows—a distinct feature of Caucasian men.

“I’m sorry. You all only came here to help us.”

“You are the God of Blackfield,” Robert began as he looked Kang Chan straight in the eye. “Getting to witness the operation you conducted in Afghanistan made us all want to fight alongside you. Going out on an operation without receiving orders from Command will likely cause problems later, but none of the wounded or deceased soldiers will resent you for this.”

He then turned around and walked away.

The moon peeked out from between wispy clouds.

Rustle! Rustle!

Kang Chan went back around the mountain and walked to the front. He then stood next to Seok Kang-Ho, who was standing guard.

“The Quds seem to be praying,” Seok Kang-Ho commented.

“The question is, why did those sons of bitches suddenly come here and attack us?”

Seok Kang-Ho glanced at Kang Chan because of his response, which didn’t seem relevant to the topic. He then turned his head toward the tribespeople’s village in front of them.

“Combining the ones who attacked us from the front and the back, they sent more than six hundred people against us. Isn’t deploying that many Quds enough evidence of how badly they want to kill us? That’s the only logical explanation here.”

“You think so too?”

Seok Kang-Ho responded with a brief grin.

“Why would they kick up this much of a fuss, though? They even used the UN. The United States, France, the UK, and Russia’s special forces are here as well. Among these people, we’re the only one that isn’t from a powerful country. What can those fuckers gain from killing all of us here?”

“What would overthinking this give us?” Seok-Kang Ho asked with a wry grin.

Kang Chan nodded in response, then glared at where their enemies could be.

“You’re right! Let’s Focus on taking down those bastards for now. We’ll naturally figure out their motives once we’re done with them anyway.” Kang Chan turned his head to Cha Dong-Gyun. “Does anyone have a satellite phone?”

“We’ve got one in the back,” Cha Dong-Gyun answered.

He then trotted to the back of the mountain. A moment later, he returned with the phone.

Even though they were on a mountain, the trees and plants around them only went up to their waists. The wave-like ridges were connected to each other, forming a lot of deep craters they could use like trenches to hide in. It would be easy for them to defend this position as well, considering their enemies would have nowhere to hide if they attacked head-on.

If their snipers could neutralize the enemy mortars, missiles, and machine guns, then they would have a shot at survival.

Kang Chan turned on the satellite phone.

Triiing!

Along with an electronic trill, the blue backlight of the keypad lit up.

Kang Chan dialed a number. The call rang twice before it was answered.

- Anne speaking.

“You already know what’s going on here, don’t you?”

- Yes, we’re monitoring the situation through a satellite.

Kang Chan looked at the tribal village right in front of the mountain and the ridge that was connected to it through a path.

“Can I request support from France’s Foreign Legion?”

- The Director-General’s approval is required when the enemy isn’t African insurgents.

“Anne, I believe the DGSE is also aware that our enemy is the Quds. Saying that I need the Director-General’s approval in this situation is more insulting than just saying you can’t help.”

- I simply informed you of the procedure. Even if they were given orders, it’ll take approximately four hours for them to reach your location.

Now that he thought about it, Anne did only tell him about the official procedure.

“Send enough men to surround the Quds. I want them here as soon as possible.”

- Understood.

“Thanks, Anne.”

Kang Chan handed Cha Dong-Gyun the satellite phone, then called over all the commanders through the radio.

When everyone arrived, he immediately started their meeting. “As everyone probably already knows, we’re surrounded by well over five hundred Quds.”

He had roughly figured out how many Quds were left by subtracting the dead from the previous fight and the ones from this fight from the estimate he had of those who had arrived on the trucks.

Kang Chan continued, “The Quds will launch another offensive once they’re done praying. They probably calculated how much ammunition we have. And since so many of them rushed over here, it’s obvious that they want to kill all of us before reinforcement arrives.”

The commanders nodded.

“I heard it’ll take more than four hours for the closest Foreign Legion team to reach us, so we better start conserving ammo as much as we can. I need three people from each team.”

“What for?” one of the commanders asked,

“They’re going to stand at the forefront when we engage in close combat.”

Tyler exhaled a groan, then nodded.

Kang Chan continued, “They’re probably almost done praying. Do your best to survive.”

“So we just have to survive until the Foreign Legion gets here?” Robert asked.

The commanders looked at Kang Chan for an answer.

“No.” Kang Chan looked at all of the commanders. “I’m telling you to survive until we’ve killed all of our enemies.”

Robert looked at Kang Chan blankly, seemingly unable to understand what he just said.

Kang Dae-Kyung put down the economics magazine that he had been reading on the sofa. “What are you doing?”

Yoo Hye-Sook smiled. “You mean this?”

“Are you... writing a letter to Channy again?”

“What do you mean ‘again’? This is only the second letter.”

Kang Dae-Kyung stood up and walked to the table. “What are you writing about? Should I also write him one?”

“You want to write him a letter?” she asked.

Kang Dae-Kyung tried to look at what she was writing, but she quickly covered it with her hand.

“What? Why are you covering it? Are you bad-mouthing me?”

“Honey! Go away! Go!”

“Why? What did you write?”

Kang Dae-Kyung forcibly leaned forward to look, but all he could read was ‘to my dearly missed son,’ which was written at the very top.

“All right, all right! I won’t look! Tsk, how petty!” Kang Dae-Kyung joked.

He then sat across from Yoo Hye-Sook and started to read the magazine again.

“I heard that it’s really cold over there. I wonder if he’s doing well,” Yoo Hye-Sook said, concern evident in her voice.

“He’s at a facility provided by South Korea, so it likely has great heating to keep him warm.”

“I hope so... I hope he can read my letters somewhere warm,” Yoo Hye-Sook mumbled, her wish disappearing into the air.

As the Qud’s prayers came to an end, tension rose among the special forces teams standing by on the mountain.

Click! Clank!

As the sounds of soldiers inspecting their weapons rang throughout the area, Kang Chan’s wound started to throb. He looked down and frowned.

Seok Kang-Ho asked, “What’s wrong?”

“This...!”

Kang Chan carefully slid his hand out of his pants pocket, revealing a letter covered in dried blood.

He wouldn’t be able to read it if he forcibly pulled it apart. He could soak it in water to get rid of the blood, but that would also smudge the ink. He had no choice but to give up on reading it.

Seok Kang-Ho seemed surprised. “You haven’t read it yet?”

Kang Chan stared at the first hand-written letter he had ever received in silence. He couldn’t even read the name written on the envelope now. He felt as if the world was telling him not to wish for too many things.

Kang Chan let out a deep sigh.

Right now, he had to fight the enemies in front of him.

Kang Chan returned the now-rigid letter in his pants pocket, then slowly looked around them.

The worst-case scenario would be their enemies attacking them all at once. Unfortunately, the bastards would be well aware of it too, which meant that was exactly what they would do and why Kang Chan had told the commanders to choose and prepare soldiers for close combat.

If their enemies rushed at them all at once, some would likely assume that they would just go shooting and killing Kang Chan and his men, but it was much more complicated than that.

A battalion of five hundred soldiers would be simultaneously attacking less than sixty people. They could certainly somehow gun down the five special forces teams if they were about two hundred meters away. However, there were only a little more than thirty meters between the tribe’s mud houses and where Kang Chan was hiding.

Nevertheless, Kang Chan and his men would have to fight accordingly if even just ten of their enemies managed to get over the ridge. Otherwise, they would eventually have hundreds of Quds bearing down on them.

Being surrounded by this many hostels would make those who lacked experience freeze. The moment they started fearing guns, glinting blades, shouting, and the bloodshot eyes behind the black masks, then they would no longer be able to do anything but die.

Crunch! Crunch!

Kang Chan heard dirt being crushed under heavy footsteps. The Quds had finished praying.

In this hot and humid environment, an unpleasant odor wafted toward the five special forces teams from the tribe's houses. It smelled as if they had a wet goat nearby.

As the sound of crunching dirt became increasingly louder, Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet.

Chk.

“Our enemies are on the move. Snipers, on my signal, neutralize all mortar and RPGs.”

The army interpreters passed on what Kang Chan said through the radio in their respective native languages.

Chk.

Kang Chan continued, “My enemies gave me the codename ‘God of Blackfield,’ the god who brings death to his enemies.”

Clatter! Clatter!

Black shadows soon came into view, quickly going up the ridge and moving toward them.

Chkk.

“Our enemies will meet the god of death today. Hold your ground. Show them the might of world-famous special forces. The God of Blackfield will be at the very front.”

The scar on Gerard's cheek twitched when Kang Chan looked at him. With glinting eyes, Seok Kang-Ho grinned even though all he understood was Kang Chan's codename.

Kang Chan raised his hand to his helmet again.

“This is for South Korea's special forces team! Just like every other battle we fought before, we're going to return alive from this fight as well. We're going to pass on the experiences we gained here to our juniors so that they too can one day go out on operations and be the object of envy. We will not stop until then!”

Kang Chan slowly twisted his upper body and looked at Cha Dong-Gyun, who was behind him. He nodded at him to take over.

Cha Dong-Gyun turned around, facing the soldiers hiding on the ridge.

“Make sure General Choi, the other special forces teams, and our enemies get a clear view of your determination!” he yelled furiously. The soldiers’ blood started to boil. “Brothers, let everyone hear our conviction!”

“If I can!”

The chant echoed across the mountain and toward the rest of Africa.

“Protect the country with my blood!”

The foreign special forces teams stared at Cha Dong-Gyun with glinting eyes.

“I am happy!” the South Korean soldiers finished.

“Hooah!” the Green Berets shouted, their unique warcry reverberating through the lands.

The Russian team followed, “Arrai!”

“Oorah!” The SBS yelled.

Gerard looked around them with an amused expression.

“How nice would it have been if this happened in the past?” he asked Kang Chan.

Just as Seok Kang-Ho glanced at the two out of curiosity, the dark shadows simultaneously charged toward them.

Click! Pew!

Kang Chan pulled the trigger of his rifle. The battle had begun.

Du du du! Bang! Du du du! Pew! Pow!

“Whoo-ah!” their enemies roared.

Dirt splattered as the enemies rushing toward them fell backward one after the other. However, in that short moment, they had already reached the tribespeople’s houses.

Du du du! Pew! Pew! Du du du! Bang! Bang! Du-du!

“Whoo-ah!” they repeated.

The gunshots and the Quds’ roars made it almost impossible for Kang Chan to think.

The Quds were attacking them with the determination to die.

Du du du! Du du du! Du du du! Du du du du! Thud! Du du du!

Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud! Pew! Thud!

One of Kang Chan’s men fell to the side as more enemies collapsed, now only ten meters away from them.

More people ran past those who fell with bullets in their heads, taking over their position.

Du du du du! Du du du du du du!

Du du du!

The dirt in front of the five special forces teams exploded every time their enemies' guns blazed.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Click!

Kang Chan shot at the hostiles in rapid succession, stopping only to change magazines.

Pew! Bang! Du du du du! Thud! Du du! Thud! Du du du du!

More and more of his men fell as sparks flew right before their eyes.

This fight would be determined by who could shoot faster and more accurately, not by whether they could avoid getting hit or not. Another deciding factor was whether they could maintain the ten meters between them or not.

After about ten minutes of a gruesome battle, their enemies stopped attacking and instead hid in the tribe's houses.

Click! Clank! Click! Whoosh!

Kang Chan could hear the soldiers inspecting their weapons, checking their magazines, and dragging the wounded to safety.

“Haah. Haah.”

The soldier right next to Kang Chan was breathing heavily, but that didn't sound awkward during their break.

Clatter! Clatter!

They heard the dirt crumbling again. Their enemies could be on the move again.

Those sharp motherfuckers!

Their enemies knew that it would be much easier to attack them while their formation hadn't recovered yet, especially since it would take a while before they could regroup. They were better than Kang Chan expected.

Since you bastards seem to know us so well, I'll have to work that much harder to kill you all!

Click! Clank! Click!

When Kang Chan held up his rifle and aimed at their enemies, he heard the soldiers all around him lifting their guns as well.

The stink of blood and the disgusting odor from the dead brushed past them with the heat.

Du du du du! Du du du du! Du du du du du!

AK-47 muzzles flashed as bullets flew toward Kang Chan, seemingly letting everyone know that their battle had resumed.

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!

Du du du! Du du! Du du du! Du du du du! Du du! Du du du du!

Another soldier fell backward.

Du du du du du!

‘Damn it!’ Kang Chan thought.

In Somalia, AK-47s and RPGs were displayed and sold like fish in markets.

Pew! Pew! Pew!

Du du du du! Du du! Du du du du du!

As Kang Chan shot at the Quds, he suddenly felt as if something was amiss—as if he was missing what their enemies were telling them through the damn gunshots.

Bam!

Pew! Pew! Pew! Pew!

When Gerard stumbled, Kang Chan provided cover fire and blocked him from the hostiles' line of sight. For now, he had to focus on the fight in front of him.

“I’m okay!” Gerard yelled.

Du du du! Du du! Du du! Du du!

Kang Chan didn’t have time to check if people were okay in situations like this. They had to prioritize protecting the ten-meter distance between them and their enemies above all else.

Under the moonlight, their enemies' blood and clumps of dirt splattered all over the battlefield. The smell of gunpowder, blood, and death lingered in their surroundings.

Thud!

A Green Beret fell back. Kang Chan heard the soldier next to the fallen Green Beret yelling something through the gunshots and pulling the wounded away, but he couldn’t take his attention away from the hostiles in front of them right now.

Bam! Thud!

Another soldier collapsed not long after.

Kang Chan didn’t know where and how Gerard got shot, but the latter swore loudly as he changed magazines.

Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam! Pew! Bam!

Kang Chan relentlessly put bullets right into the hostiles’ foreheads. He would emerge victorious in this battle.

His goal now was completely different from his mercenary days, but just like back then, he still needed to win.

Whoosh! Thwack!

Under the moonlight, Kang Chan took down another, their blood fountaining out as they fell.

Pew! Bang! Bang! Bang! Du du du du! Du du! Twack! Pow!

The Quds were just right around the corner now.

Whoosh!

Kang Chan shot another enemy on the forehead and pulled him by the collar.

Pew! Bam! Pew!

He then shot two more in the chest. The other Qud members ran toward him from behind the person he was holding, but they too fell forward as if they tripped on something.

Chapter 260: I Can, But Not You (1)

Whoosh! Puk!

The blood from the chest, whom Kang Chan was holding by the collar, splattered all over Kang Chan's face. The muzzle of the rifle next to him sparked red, likely because blood had covered his eyes.

Whoosh! Thwack! Whoosh! Thwack! Whoosh! Thwack!

Despite his bullets piercing through the foreheads of charging enemies, the area in front of him was still full of enemies in black bandanas and military uniforms.

Ratatatatat!

One of their enemies perched on the defensive barrier and pulled the trigger of his AK-47, causing the allied troops beneath it to convulse.

Whoosh! Thwack!

Kang Chan fired back, his bullet piercing the enemy's forehead. At the same time, loud rifle fire erupted in front of him.

Ratatatatat! Ratatat!

The hail of bullets violently tore apart the enemies lying in front of him as he ducked down.

Bastards! We're just making piles of corpses at this point!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Seok Kang-Ho shot an enemy in the neck.

Swoosh! Whiz! Whiz!

Kang Chan grabbed the arm of the Qud who had just fired at them. He then unsheathed his bayonet and slashed with enough force to nearly sever the enemy's limb.

Bang! Clang! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Kang Chan had fought so many battles alongside Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard that they already knew why he decided to pull out his bayonet and how to cover him in such moments. They were well aware that when they were forced into a melee combat, someone had to clear the way.

Puuk! Puk! Whiz! Pwook!

With more than ten enemies charging at them, aiming a rifle from the vanguard became impossible. In such cases, they had no other option but to resort to fighting with bayonets.

Puk! Crk! Psssh!

As if a rubber hose had been punctured, blood spurted into the air the moment Kang Chan pulled the bayonet from his target's neck.

Puk! Puuk! Puk! Puk!

Blood splattered all over Kang Chan's face. It was as if someone was spraying water into his nose and mouth using a garden hose during the summer.

Gulp!

'I'll get killed if I let the blood in my mouth distract me! If I fall now, it won't take long for the Quds to kill the people I'm protecting as well!'

Whiz! Pwook! Puk! Puk!

With his left arm, Kang Chan grabbed another enemy by the nape and plunged the bayonet into their neck multiple times. As he did, he stared into the eyes of the terrified, the resentful, and even those in tears.

Pssh! Pssssh!

The blood from his prey spewed over his face, flowing down to his nose, mouth, and throat. It didn't matter how they looked at him. He had no other option but to keep thrusting his blade into their necks.

Tatatang! Thud! Tatang! Thud! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Crack! Crack!

His bayonet would snag on the bones in his enemies' throats whenever they twisted in agony.

"Aaaargh!"

Crunch!

Kang Chan tightened his grip on his weapon.

'Hell? We can discuss me going to hell after I've ensured the men's safety!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

The sound of a sniper firing from atop the mountain reached Kang Chan's ears.

'I doubt even hell can be worse than this!'

Crack! Puk! Ratatatatat! Ratatat!

Bullets tore into their ranks as Kang Chan pulled an enemy by the collar and forced his bayonet, the blade of which had dulled after cutting through so many bones and muscles, into their neck. He then retreated and unholstered his pistol.

Click!

'Damn it!'

Bang! Bang! Bang! Thwack! Bang! Bang!

Seok Kang-Ho was changing magazines when Kang Chan felt a sharp pain on the right side of his stomach. If he had been hit a bit closer to the middle, it would have grazed his spine and made him collapse screaming.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

As he heard Seok Kang-Ho returning fire again, he unsheathed his bayonet again. Not long after, he heard Andrei shout through the radio.

Chk.

"We're out of ammo!"

Puk!

Kang Chan thrust his bayonet into a charging enemy's solar plexus. He then crouched down and hit them with his shoulder, driving him up into the air.

"Aaargh! Aaaaargh!"

Slash!

With a twist of his blade, the enemy finally slumped lifelessly.

Tch.

"Melee combatants! Hold on just a bit more!"

He had no time for lengthy speeches.

"Eeek!"

After pushing off the foe he had slung over his shoulder, Kang Chan charged toward the enemies up the ridge.

"Captaaaain!!!" Gérard shouted after him.

"Shit!" Seok Kang-Ho cursed, unable to suppress his concern for their commander. Unfortunately, retreating was not an option.

A misstep here could mean the annihilation of the Spetsnaz.

Tch!

"Snipers! Cover the captain!" shouted Seok Kang-Ho.

Countless enemy bodies were strewn in front of the chest-high dirt wall that was providing the men with cover.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Bang! Whoosh! Bang! Whoosh!

Cover fire poured in during the brief opening.

Click!

Kang Chan picked up an AK-47 and shot the enemies fighting the Spetsnaz.

Ratatatat! Brrrrrt! Ratatatatat! Brrrrrt!

With each bullet that hit, bodies jerked and blood splattered.

"Andrei!"

Ratatatat! Ratatat! Ratatatatat!

He managed to buy the Spetsnaz time to retreat, but he was hit in the legs, side, and shoulder as a consequence.

Thwack! Thump! Thump! Thump!

Kang Chan staggered, but he didn't let his wounds stop him. With a smirk, he threw himself forward.

Squelch!

Amid the dead, he reloaded his rifle.

Ratatatat! Ratatat! Ratatatatat!

"Daye!"

Ting! Ting!

The sound of safety pins being pulled from grenades echoed grimly all around him.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

For snipers to fire as rapidly as they were now, their hands would have to move so fast to reload that they wouldn't be visible anymore.

"Captain!"

Ratatat! Ratatat! Wheeek!

Kang Chan stopped reloading and dove into a gap between bodies.

Kuuuuuung! Kuuuuuung!

Thud! Thump! Rustle!

More arms, legs, and other body parts flew over the wall than clods of dirt.

Ratatatat! Ratatatatat! Ratatatatat!

The Spetsnaz changed the magazines of their AK-47s. The close-quarters combat and the explosions from the grenades seemed to have given them some respite.

Ratatat! Ratatat! Ratatat!

The sound of gunfire finally faded. With the Spetsnaz securing their position, the enemy was forced to retreat and regroup.

"Huff! Huff!"

Gérard and Seok Kang-Ho rushed to Kang Chan, who lay next to a corpse.

"Fuck!"

I'm already feeling bitter about being shot, but now I have to listen to this bastard cursing at me too? It's not like his shoulder wasn't shot either.

"Alright, let's get you up!"

Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard grabbed Kang Chan under the armpits and helped him up.

"Krrrgh!"

Damn it!

Kang Chan gritted his teeth and climbed over the defensive wall. He felt as if his body was being torn apart.

Thud! Thud!

What remained of their forces were busy throwing enemy corpses over the wall and moving their dead or wounded to the rear.

Click-clack! Click-clack!

Others checked the enemies' rifles and stacked magazines to one side.

"Seven dead. No injured," said Andrei, covered in blood. He lurched over to Kang Chan.

In close-quarters combat like this, hardly any men could come out with mere injuries. More often than not, they would be shot in the forehead or heart, and if they managed to somehow survive, the enemy would simply shoot them again before they could resist.

"Six of our men are dead," Robert spoke as he walked over to them, a grim expression on his face.

When Kang Chan looked up, Tyler, who was standing beside him, added, "Seven, sir."

"Position the remaining personnel in front. In such battles, the enemy never pauses for more than five minutes."

"Understood."

With that one word, the commanders quickly acted. Kang Chan turned to Cha Dong-Gyun.

"Five dead," Cha Dong-Gyun reported, making Kang Chan involuntarily take a deep breath.

"I need a new bayonet," Kang Chan commanded.

Cha Dong-Gyun nodded and left.

"What about the French team?" Kang Chan asked.

"Three casualties, two in critical condition." Seok Kang-Ho responded

Being near Kang Chan resulted in casualties.

"Let's hurry," said Seok Kang-Ho.

He moved closer to Kang Chan as he cut a bandage with a bayonet. He then rolled it tightly and pushed it into the wound on Kang Chan's shoulder. Injuries like this had to be covered immediately.

"Krrrgh!" Kang Chan groaned.

Like this, Seok Kang-Ho pushed the fabric of the bandages into each of Kang Chan's four wounds and tied them all up afterward. Rather than wrapping them thoroughly, he just looped the bandages twice and tied them tightly enough to avoid completely cutting off the blood flow.

The procedure brought Kang Chan excruciating pain, but it would make his wounds feel like nothing more than a minor ones once he returned to battle. It would seem as if he didn't even get injured in the first place.

Gérard wrapped a bandage over Kang Chan's left shoulder and armpit while Seok Kang-Ho wrapped his right shoulder. As they did, blood soaked the bandages until not even a hint of its white color was left.

Afterward, Kang Chan sheathed the bayonet he received from Cha Dong-Gyun into the sheath tied around his leg.

Click! Click-clack! Clicker-de-clack!

He piled up AK-47s beside him, picked one up, and checked its magazine.

"Looks like we killed around a hundred fifty to two hundred of the bastards."

Smirking, Kang Chan looked ahead of him. They still had four hundred to four hundred fifty enemies to deal with.

"Damn it! We only got to eat ramyeon once!"

Seok Kang-Ho glared at their enemy's position, his face smeared with blood and his eyes glinting more fiercely than ever. Gérard and the others were no different.

The moon shone on the crown of their heads as it hung high in the night sky. The soft light it cast illuminated their movements.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Damn it! This isn't a commercial for bugs, yet here we are, watching these bastards dressed in black approaching from the darkness like they're cockroaches!

Click-clack!

As Kang Chan picked up his rifle, the others also lifted their rifles and took aim.

As the enemy finally came into view, weaving through the partially collapsed huts of the tribe, Kang Chan heard a determined shout from beside him.

"Green Berets!"

"Hooah!"

They didn't want to lose. They didn't want to be scared.

"Spetsnaz!"

"Arrai!"

"SBS!"

"Oorah!"

Gérard grinned. The scar on his cheek twitched.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

"Captain!" Gérard called out to Kang Chan as he took aim. The enemies were clustering around the native huts now.

Kang Chan couldn't risk looking away from their enemies now. If they were to erupt into a charge, all hell would break loose once more.

This bastard! Why call me when you're not going to say anything?

"Legion Etrangere!" Gérard ferociously yelled.

"Legio Patria Nostra!" the Foreign Legion special forces team roared in response.

"Pfffft!"

Seok Kang-Ho's vicious laughter echoed right after.

"Aaaaaaaaaarrggh!"

The enemies broke into a charge.

Yes! That's how we met! Shouting "The legion is my homeland" every morning!

In his miserably lonely life, finding meaning in the daily entanglements with Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard had become Kang Chan's solace. Perhaps he was fighting so desperately because he was afraid of losing them.

Whoosh!

Kang Chan was the first to shoot. Seemingly taking it as the signal for the continuation of their battle, gunfire and sparks erupted from both sides once more.

Let's survive! Even though we're fighting so desperately, we should still try to live on!

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Ratatat! Ratatat!

The Quds were still ten meters away from them.

Ratatat! Brrrrt! Wheeeng! Brrrrt!

Their bullets destroyed the defensive wall in front and broke the mound behind Kang Chan into smithereens. At the same time, they halved the distance between them.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Ratatat! Ratatatatat!

An enemy leaped over the wall only to collapse in front of Kang Chan with a hole in his forehead.

Kang Chan grabbed a Qud by the collar.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Kuuuuung!

Thanks to a sniper taking out the hostile who had pulled out a grenade, a massive explosion occurred in the middle of the enemy ranks.

Thud! Rustle! Ratatat! Ratatat!

Severed wrists and piles of dirt flying all over. Amid the gruesome scene, Kang Chan unsheathed his bayonet and stabbed his opponent's hand.

Wheeeng! Puk! Puk!

Don't take it too hard, rookie.

Ratatat! Thud! Bang! Thwack!

When the South Korean soldier next to Kang Chan collapsed against the wall behind them, Kang Chan bore a bullet into the forehead of the enemy who shot him.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

Puk! Puk! Wheeeng! Wheeet!

Wasting not even a single second, Kang Chan swung his bayonet again.

You were quite cool in Afghanistan! I'll remember you for as long as I live!

Pwook! Krrk!

"Aaargh! Aaaagh!"

Crack! Crunch!

'I'll only leave this place once I've killed all these bastards. You know that, right?'

Thwack!

A sharp pain surged from Kang Chan's left shoulder shortly after he heard Seok Kang-Ho's gun click empty. As Kang Chan returned fire with his pistol and took a few steps back, Seok Kang-Ho was knocked back while he was reloading.

Bang! Bang! Tatatat! Tatatatat! Tang!

Gérard stepped forward and guarded Seok Kang-Ho from the front, and Kang Chan stood by his side with a pistol.

Tatang! Bang! Tang! Bang! Bang! Tang!

At this rate, they would only keep being pushed back.

"Gérard!"

Whoosh!

Kang Chan charged at the enemy.

Pwook! Puk! Puk! Pwook!

With the enemies charging at them and preventing them from taking aim, they were left with no other option but to switch to their bayonets and engage in melee combat.

Wheet! Pweet! Wheeet! Wheeeng!

"Damn it!"

Much to their surprise, despite all the gunfire, shouts, and screams, they still heard Seok Kang-Ho's curse quite clearly.

Seeing Kang Chan change fighting styles, the commander and selected members of each team charged at the enemy. At times like this, the members at the back of their formation had to cover fire for those at the front. However, doing so came with the risk of friendly fire.

The moon reached its zenith as they stormed toward the incoming hostiles.

Hurry up!

Pwook!

Kang Chan thrust his bayonet into an enemy's neck. He then pushed forward.

"Grrrk! Grrrk!"

Pshhhhhh!

Blood sprayed onto his face as he pulled out his bayonet, but he couldn't afford to avoid it or close his eyes. He had to create space so those at the back could start providing cover fire.

Ratatatat!

Sparks from a rifle flashed right before his eyes, instantly turning everything dark. Nevertheless, he showed not an even ounce of hesitation. The enemy was all around him. He just had to thrust toward wherever he heard breathing.

Pwook!

"Ugh!"

His vision returned as he heard a scream, returning him to a world dyed in red once more.

Kang Chan pulled out the bayonet stuck in the enemy's nape.

Puk!

"Aaaargh!"

Thwack!

Missing not even a single beat, he shoved the enemy by the chest with his shoulder and pushed forward. In this situation, advancing more than a meter risked being surrounded and killed. Hence, the best he could do was create enough space for their fellow soldiers at the back to open fire.

Ratatatat! Ratatatatat! Tat! Ratatat! Thud!

Sparks erupted all around. One of their allies fell to the ground in front of the defensive barrier.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh! Whoosh!

A steady stream of sniper shots echoed all around them, targeting those attempting to pull out grenades.

Whoosh! Whoosh! Tang! Whoosh! Whoosh! Tang! Tang!

Seok Kang-Ho and Gérard's gunshots mixed, knocking down the enemies around Kang Chan.

Pwook! Puk! Puk! Thwack!

Kang Chan managed to swing his bayonet three more times before finally taking a hit to his right shoulder.

"Urgh!"

He gritted his teeth. When he tried to launch another attack, immense pain coursed throughout his body. It made him feel as if his shoulder was being torn off.

I can't stop now! The bastards behind me will die if I do! Do you know why I became the God of Blackfield?

Pwook! Puk! Puk!

The pain was so intense that his consciousness blurred with each swing he made.

Ratatat! Tatang! Tat! Whoosh! Ratatat! Whoosh! Tat! Ting! Ting!

Amid the crossfire, Kang Chan heard safety pins being pulled from grenades. Explosives were certainly more effective when enemies were crammed together.

Wheeeek!

Seeing a grenade in the air, Kang Chan pulled the enemy's collar with his left hand. He stabbed them in the neck and pushed them toward the grenade.

"Fucking hell!" Gérard shouted.

Kuuuuung! Kwaaang! Thud!

Kang Chan felt as if he was flying. Soon, he crashed in front of the defensive barrier.

Ratatatat! Ratatat! Ratatat!

Like madmen, his subordinates stood up and engulfed the battlefield with a rain of bullets using the AK-47s that they had gathered earlier.

Brrrrt! Brrrrt! Brrrrt!

Wherever bodies exploded, flesh and blood splattered.

Ting! Wheeeek! Kuuuuung!

Splash! Thud!

One of the corpses flew over Kang Chan.

"Huff! Huff!"

Lying among the corpses, he looked at the moon, now appearing red in the sky, as if watching over him.

Having fun?

Kang Chan thought the moon was talking to him. In his haze, he had forgotten that it couldn't speak.

Right now, if someone carelessly opened their mouth—if they asked why he lived like this or if he really wanted to live through all of this—he would probably immediately stab them with his bayonet.

"Ugh!"

Kang Chan involuntarily groaned as he got up. His right shoulder was in visibly bad condition. The pain coming from it traveled down his arm to the joint, making him feel as if it was being torn apart.

"Daye!" Kang Chan called. Seok Kang-Ho suddenly came to mind as he was about to climb over the defensive wall.

A moment later, a pair of arms reached over and pulled him by the shoulder.

'It already feels like my shoulder is being torn apart,' Kang Chan thought. 'Who the hell is—'

"I'll do whatever you ask!" Andrei bluntly exclaimed.

He stood right in front of Kang Chan, snarling and covered in blood.

"So keep commanding us until we've killed all these motherfuckers!"

This fucking bastard! I already have Daye to take care of! Having to look after two idiots would be too much!

"Monsieur Kang!"

"Call me captain!" Kang Chan ordered.

"Understood, Captain!"

Andrei stared at Kang Chan for a moment before turning around and heading back to his position.

Kang Chan leaned against the defensive wall as he walked, using it to keep himself upright. After a while, he found Gérard binding Seok Kang-Ho's upper body.

"Daye!"

"I'm fine! Fuck!"

Of course he is! That bastard wouldn't die that easily.

Ignoring the pain, Kang Chan approached Seok Kang-Ho.

"You better fucking hold on, got that?" Kang Chan shouted.

"What made you think I'd die here? I'm not leaving ramyeon and kimchi behind" Seok Kang-Ho replied.

They didn't have much time left. The enemies would resume their offensive in five minutes. They had to prepare as much as they could before then.

Just as Kang Chan was about to turn away from Seok Kang-Ho, he heard a sound from the distance.

Du dududududd!

A helicopter was cutting through the clouds.