

The Crafts 308

Chapter 308: Operation Final Line

"Fancy seeing you here, Tanner."

A bulky man who could easily be cast for the role of hulk, walked over to another man while grinning at him. The bulky man was ripped with muscles and reached a height of at least 2.5 metres or 8 feet and 2 inches tall. This made him appear terrifying, especially with his large and broad figure. Rather than a human being, he looked more like a mass of muscles; the personification of a god of strength and muscles.

"You make it sound like I have an option to not work." The target of the statement rolled his eyes at the comment with a smile.

"Heh. Not really, but I heard the incident over a month ago did a number on you." The hulking mass said while staring at Tanner, trying to get a reaction out of him.

Tanner was one of the members of the taskforce dispatched over a month ago to rescue the tourists trapped inside of the East Brafford relics during that untimely incident. During that time, he was the commander of the taskforce. But after the inclusion of seventh level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioners, Tanner—a peak sixth level stellar practitioner—was unsuitable to take command of the group, and so, he was relegated to second-in-command.

"As you said, it's been over a month. It's enough time for me to move past it." Tanner calmly answered.

The hulking mass who stood before him looked at the latter, seemingly finding it hard to believe that. After all, Tanner, alongside his then deputy, were the only ones who didn't agree with the decision of the higher-ups to abandon all the other victims and quit their search activities. Unlike his deputy, Tanner was an official executive and he was the one most likely to have received the hammering of the higher-ups after his challenge.

But since Tanner said he was okay, then there was nothing the man could do about it.

"Holad, tell me, do you have any news about what exactly is going on here?" Tanner asked his companion as the two began making their way to the makeshift base set up at the border of the Neon Summer province.

"Not much. There are at least one hundred thousand desolate beasts ranging from the third to fifth levels. Some leader-level beasts have also been spotted but the strongest is only at the seventh level; not exactly a threat. But their sizes make this at least a Class B threat."

Holad, the heavily built man, explained with a frown on his face, which made him scarier than he already was.

By Eretre's standards, a Class B threat was a threat that could wipe out a district of a city-state. In the case of the unofficial Belfargos city-state, this was a threat that could easily take on a city or even two.

Although the Millennium Mountains was a Class A desolate beast domain and also a Class A threat, meaning it could wipe out an entire city-state, it was an insubstantial threat. There was the city of Belfargos close by to keep the true threats from the Mountains in check; even Trundel City's top forces weren't to be messed around with. So, the citizens were never really worried about it.

However, the current beast wave was different. It was a direct treat to the city and couldn't be underestimated. Even though Trundel City's powerful factions were technically superior to this horde, mistakes could happen. There was also the fact that the true size and power of the beast swarm was yet to be uncovered.

"One hundred thousand beasts? That's a lot. I'm guessing we'll need to empty out our armoury for this. That's a lot of paperwork." Tanner sighed as he massaged his temples.

"That's true." Holad chuckled.

Since Trundel City was close to a Class A desolate beast domain, they have made preparations for the event that the desolate beasts in the Millennium Mountains would run riot and attack them. Tons of vestiges, especially cold weapon-type vestiges, were developed. Many of them were designed to handle wave attacks—in other words, they had AoE capabilities [1]. Rocket launchers, stellar-powered missiles, .5 decametres[2] stellar howitzer, were just a few of the vestiges manufactured for such events.

With the threat of a Class B desolate beast assault, it was only natural for some of these weapons of war to be rolled out for use. But even then, a documentation is made right from when they are

taken out of the armoury, to how they were used and for how long, then finally the return trip. It just so happened that as an executive official, Tanner would have to handle the report.

By this time, the duo finally reached the location of the meeting. It was a building with only one floor but occupied quite a significant area and was surrounded by a fence. Even though it was hurriedly set up, with the resources and level of technology in Belfargos city-state, making such a building in 3 hours wasn't a big deal as long as defensive measures weren't considered. 3-d printing had come far here when compared to Earth.

"ID, please." The robotic guard at the gate halted them.

Even though it already has the information of the two agents in its database, formalities had to be carried out.

Tanner and Holad flashed their communicator at the guard, who scanned it for their identification, then ran a facial recognition on the two before letting them in.

"I just don't get it. If it's already going to run a facial check, why ask for IDs?" Holad questioned with a somewhat grumpy look on his face as he stomped away.

"I heard it has something to do with the universe capital, Arcadia. It seems to be a common practice there to use physical or virtual IDs, so every public security bot is programmed to do the same." Tanner shrugged.

However, Holad shook his head.

"Still doesn't make sense. It seems a bit archaic and redundant."

The two got into the building where they met another robotic guard. This time around, there was no need for verification or the sort. Instead, they were led to the central hall for the meeting.

Inside the central hall were a few other agents of similar rank as Tanner and Holad. After the duo took their seats, they waited for a while until everyone who was meant to be in the meeting had arrived. In total, there were 42 sixth level stellar practitioners and 17 seventh level stellar practitioners present. They were the highest ranking officials present for the raid. Most of them were actually leaders of freelancer organisations rather than government officials.

There was the possibility of more agents being sent for backup, but not so much as Trundel City still had to leave behind some to handle emergency conflicts.

"Welcome everyone." The leader of the meeting and a director from the Desolate Beast Conflict Organisation (DBCO) greeted the attendees.

The DBCO was charged with handling desolate beasts related cases and ensuring the safety of the city in the case of a desolate beast raid. As such, they were the most suitable organisation to handle the current crisis.

There were thirteen directors in the DBCO, two deputy heads and one bureau chief. All directors were at least at the seventh level, the two deputy heads were at the ninth level while the bureau chief is at the tenth level. From this, one could see how powerful the organisation is. Very few factions could survive under the full force of the DBCO. They would have to be a city lord family or a top-class family like the Lester family and the Lin family, whose reach extended outside of Erete. Excluding such forces, and the obvious Oklo Dynasty, the Desolate Beasts Conflict Organisation was capable of taking down almost any force on the planet.

The director of the DBCO who led the meeting was a peak seventh level Apertures Opening stage stellar practitioner. Even though he wasn't at the eighth level yet, he was very close. Also, being an agent of the DBCO meant that his strength couldn't be compared to a regular peak seventh level stellar practitioner. With all these in mind, it wasn't an issue for him to host a meeting with sixteen seventh level stellar practitioners present.

"I won't bore you with the unnecessary details. If you want any of that, you can take a look at the screen in front of you."

On each seat in the hall, there was a screen in front of them fixed into the table. Displayed on the screen were two files: the first was titled 'Current info on the horde', whilst the second has the title 'Information for our possible formation'.

Tanner had already gone through the two files while waiting for the start of the meeting.

The first document was a detailed report on the desolate beasts horde. It included the species of the beasts involved, their levels, numbers, and even danger rating. There was also the best means to combat them in a 1v1 or 1 vs multiple scenario, which would be common in the battle.

As for the second file, it had a map of the terrain right from the gathering point of the beasts until Neon Summer province. There was also a brief report on the weapons and vestiges to be used by the DCBO, which would help the fighters be prepared and coordinated properly with them. Finally, there were a few markings on the map with rough explanations, pointing out that those markings were areas most suitable to tackle the desolate beasts horde while explaining the reason for those conclusions.

"We are gathered here for one reason only, and that is to stop the desolate beast wave right before the borders, eliminate them, and ensure the safety of the city. Hence the name for this mission; Operation Final Line."