

## Ice Age 351

### Chapter 351: The Collapse of Liang Yue

In her fury, Liang Yue kicked down the wooden plank blocking the door!

The two people inside were startled; Wu Chengyu, who was involved in sordid behavior on the bed, whipped around, his face paling at the sight of Liang Yue.

"Ms. Liang! What are you doing here?"

Liang Yue's eyes fell on the blank-faced woman next to him and the half-eaten meal on the table. Instantly, everything became clear.

Her mind went blank with rage and shock, leaving her unsure of what to even think.

Her student—the one she had fought to protect in this apocalyptic world—had used the precious food she brought them for something like this?

Wu Chengyu froze, not expecting Liang Yue's sudden arrival.

After a moment, he gritted his teeth. Since things were already at this point, he decided he might as well lay it all out. Liang Yue had a soft heart, and maybe she'd forgive him.

"Ms. Liang, I'm a young man, and I have needs. I hope you understand."

"Besides, I didn't force her—it was her own choice. Right? Say something!"

He patted the woman's face.

The woman stared blankly at Liang Yue, then nodded numbly.

Even after getting caught, she showed no trace of shame. Survival was her only concern now; morality and dignity had long been cast aside.

Liang Yue's face was expressionless, her mind overwhelmed by shock and anger, making her feel almost paralyzed.

She asked coldly, "Didn't you all say there wasn't enough food?"

"Then how could you waste it like this?"

Wu Chengyu's expression changed slightly.

He couldn't let Liang Yue know where the extra food came from.

Since she left, order among the students had become simple: the strongest ruled. Wu Chengyu, with his height and strength, had gathered a group of tough students to control everyone else.

This allowed him not only to eat well but also to barter extra food for services from the women of Xu Family Town.

Bracing himself, Wu Chengyu shouted at Liang Yue, "Ms. Liang, why don't you just keep giving us food and mind your own business?"

"You're not providing us with enough anyway; we still have to figure out how to survive ourselves. So it doesn't matter how we use the food, does it?"

Liang Yue staggered backward, as if struck by lightning. She pointed at Wu Chengyu, chest heaving, but words failed her.

"Ms. Liang, could you step out? You're kind of getting in the way here!"

Annoyed by the interruption, Wu Chengyu was defiant. He knew Liang Yue too well; her kind-hearted nature wouldn't allow her to let him die, no matter how poorly he acted—after all, he was her student!

Kind Ms. Liang would never abandon her students in an apocalypse, right?

Liang Yue closed her eyes, turned, and rushed outside.

Removing her hat, she let the cold snow blow against her face. But the freezing snow was no match for the chill she felt in her heart.

As Liang Yue left Xu Family Town, Zhang Yi and Fatty Xu were enjoying a meal together on Lu River.

Noticing Liang Yue's devastated expression as she approached, Zhang Yi smirked, his tone slightly mocking. "So, reality's pretty brutal, huh, Ms. Liang?" R

Liang Yue looked up at Zhang Yi, then gave a bleak smile.

"Do you think I'm an absolute fool?"

Then, answering her own question, she said, "Yes. I really am foolish."

Hands in his pockets, Zhang Yi replied calmly, "Don't blame me for exposing the harsh truth. I just thought you deserved to know. What you do now is up to you; I'll respect your choice."

Liang Yue shook her head, her emotions in turmoil, her eyes unfocused.

She brushed past Zhang Yi and Fatty Xu, unsteady on her feet, heading back to the Shelter, longing only for a quiet place to process everything.

Fatty Xu watched her leave, then leaned in, curious. "Boss, what happened with Ms. Liang? What did she see?"

Zhang Yi glanced at him and said flatly, "Her student was exploiting women in Xu Family Town. If he wasn't forcing them, he was trading with food she provided."

Fatty Xu's eyes widened. "Holy sh\*t! That's juicy! Boss, you're no fun. You didn't even let me catch a glimpse of the action."

"That's what you're focused on?"

Zhang Yi chuckled, patting his shoulder. "That woman could've been one of your distant cousins or an aunt, you know."

Fatty Xu scoffed. "My family's mostly dead! Those left are distant relations. I don't care what happens to them."

Zhang Yi gave him an approving thumbs-up. "Way to keep things simple!"

Back in the Shelter, Liang Yue locked herself in her room, utterly lost. She began to wonder if everything she'd done had any meaning.

She had no idea how much time had passed before she heard a knock at her door.

"Liang Yue, are you okay?"

Zhang Yi's concerned voice came from outside.

Quickly composing herself, she sat up, slipped on her slippers, and opened the door.

Zhang Yi noticed her slightly red eyes, as if she had been crying. Not surprising; no teacher would be unaffected by the downfall of a student they had once cherished.

"Sorry," Liang Yue said, "I'm not feeling well today. I'll catch up on work; it won't affect the schedule."

Shaking his head, Zhang Yi reassured her, "No rush. It'll only take a few days to finish the project anyway."

Looking down at her, he added in a gentle tone, "I was just worried about you and came to check in."

This unexpected kindness from Zhang Yi caught Liang Yue off guard.

What was the line from that song?

\*Nothing's scarier than sudden concern from a friend.\*

"I'm fine. Just need some rest," Liang Yue replied.

Zhang Yi glanced into the room and smiled. "Are we going to talk here?"

Realizing, she quickly stepped aside. "Come in and sit down."

Zhang Yi pulled up a chair inside. "I know today was a big blow, but I hope you can look forward. The road ahead is still long."

"If you ever need to talk about your troubles, I'll at least be a good listener."

When a woman's heart is vulnerable, both her emotions and body are open.

Zhang Yi wasn't necessarily interested in love, but he didn't mind if women fell for him.

After all, when a woman becomes emotionally attached, she's often completely devoted.

Though Zhang Yi didn't plan to take advantage of Liang Yue, he did see the opportunity to strengthen their bond, ensuring she would be even more cooperative in the future.

### Chapter 352: Liang Yue's Obsession

At this moment, Liang Yue was feeling vulnerable, craving comfort from someone.

Initially, Lu Keran and Yang Xinxin were the ones supposed to console her, as they were closest to Liang Yue in the shelter. But Yang Xinxin stopped Lu Keran, choosing to leave this opportunity for Zhang Yi.

Only by fully bonding Liang Yue to Zhang Yi could they ensure she would stay in the shelter.

Yang Xinxin's actions considered Zhang Yi's needs, but they were also for Liang Yue's own good.

As expected, Zhang Yi's comfort lifted Liang Yue's spirits a little.

Despite being a martial arts master, she was still a 27-year-old single woman, and deep down, she yearned for a man's comfort.

"Zhang Yi, do you think I'm a hopeless fool?" Liang Yue, sitting on the edge of the bed, gave Zhang Yi a wry smile.

He looked at her for a few seconds, then laughed. "Maybe a little. But," he added, "I believe you have your reasons."

Though he thought she was just plain foolish, he kept that part to himself—no need to be blunt.

Liang Yue lifted her head, gazing at the ceiling, her eyes taking on a distant look.

"I started martial arts when I was three. Even though I'm a woman, I trained as hard as any man!"

“For people like me, the future usually holds two paths: either becoming a star in film or opening a martial arts school to take on students.”

“But I didn’t want to be a pretty face in showbiz, and I didn’t have the resources for that path. And as a woman, opening a school posed a lot of challenges.”

“So, I chose a road that only a few martial artists take—I became a bodyguard.”

Liang Yue began talking about her life.

When a woman shares her past with you, it usually means she trusts you, and you might just have a chance to get closer.

Zhang Yi responded at just the right time, “Then you joined that place and became the best bodyguard in Huaguo?”

At the mention of that time, a slight smile played at the corners of Liang Yue’s mouth.

“Yeah, it was the peak of my life, though also the most grueling.”

“After a few years, Tianqing Academy recruited me as a PE teacher to teach self-defense to the academy’s elite kids.”

“They offered me a salary of 3 million a year! Can you even imagine 3 million?”

She looked at Zhang Yi with a hint of pride. Clearly, she was proud of having earned such a high salary.

Zhang Yi chuckled. “Oh, I can imagine! That’s over twenty years of my salary.”

Liang Yue's smile deepened.

"Sadly, that's all in the past."

When the memory ended, her eyes grew even more vacant.

She fell silent for a while, then spoke slowly, "Then the apocalypse came, and we lost everything."

"Family, friends, identity, reputation, money."

"I have almost nothing left."

"The only thing I still have is my responsibility to protect my students."

"What keeps me going is that small sense of duty."

"I know, with the way you operate, you must think I'm incredibly naive. I've thought about whether I should live a little more selfishly."

"But if I were to abandon my last belief, I wouldn't know why I even exist in this world."

As she spoke, tears began to fall down her cheeks, dripping onto the spotless floor.

Hearing this, Zhang Yi began to understand her a bit better.

Since the apocalypse began, he had seen many people unable to cope with the harsh reality, choosing to end their lives.

For those people, the world had already become hell, and staying alive was nothing but suffering.

Spiritual anguish can be far more painful than physical hardship.

So, in a way, it wasn't so much that Liang Yue was protecting her students; it was more that she was preserving the last bit of faith keeping her going. ↵

Of course, that didn't change Zhang Yi's view of her as foolish. Ideals were one thing, but overthinking life's meaning was another.

Living itself is the purpose.

People live just for the sake of living.

"Maybe you're putting too much pressure on yourself?" Zhang Yi asked, his face filled with concern.

"You were on your own before, but it's different now. We're teammates. We're family."

"Look, everyone in the shelter is an adult who can understand and support you, unlike those ungrateful brats."

As he spoke, Zhang Yi moved closer to Liang Yue and suddenly took her hand.

Liang Yue flinched, unsure how to react.

"If you need something to believe in, let us be that belief from now on."

Liang Yue's face flushed instantly.

Though she was already 27, due to her career, she'd never been in a relationship or even held hands with a man.

And Zhang Yi was reasonably good-looking, too.

Now, with him looking at her so earnestly and holding her hand, her brain seemed to be on the verge of overheating.

“You... you want to be my belief?”

Inwardly, Zhang Yi thought, \*I mean, specifically me—but let’s add ‘us’ to keep you from getting suspicious.\*

Basically, he was asking her to become one of his loyal followers.

“If you’ve lost your beliefs, then make new ones.”

“If you’ve lost your connections, then we can be your bonds.”

“Don’t wear yourself out. It pains me to see you like this.”

Liang Yue’s blood was rushing to her head.

It was the first time a man had said something so boldly sentimental to her, without a hint of shame.

And, though she wouldn’t admit it, his words actually worked!

Her face was so red she looked like she might start bleeding.

Though she didn’t feel that way toward Zhang Yi, this conversation, which felt suspiciously like a confession, greatly improved her impression of him.

“Thank you... I feel a lot better.”

Embarrassed, Liang Yue pulled her hand back, her eyes darting around, unable to meet Zhang Yi’s gaze.

Seeing that the moment had run its course, Zhang Yi stopped there, knowing that pushing too far could backfire.

Going too far in flirting could easily turn him into “Shrimp-head Guy”—that annoying type who makes girls roll their eyes.

He could just picture Liang Yue complaining to the other women: “Oh, girls, you won’t believe what this shrimp-head guy just said...”

That would be the last thing he wanted.

“Feeling better now?” he asked.

After a brief silence, Liang Yue nodded gently.

“Yeah, having someone to talk to really helps. But I’m still disappointed in them.”

Her thoughts returned to Wu Chengyu’s behavior, and she frowned again.

“Maybe they just need to grow up a little more.”

Zhang Yi didn’t comment further on her students.

He knew it wasn’t realistic to expect her to let go of them right away.

But his goal was to slowly weaken their importance in her heart.

This way, if they died one day, she wouldn't be as emotionally devastated.

After a few more words, Zhang Yi left her room.

As he walked down the corridor, he noticed Yang Xinxin in her wheelchair, watching him with a smile.

“Did you win over Teacher Liang, Big Bro?”

#### Chapter 353: Going Out to Find Building Materials

Zhang Yi shrugged after hearing Yang Xinxin's words, smiling as he walked over and said, “That's enough; I'm not really interested in your teacher, Liang.”

Yang Xinxin tilted her head, confused, and asked, “Teacher Liang is quite beautiful; you have no interest? Your standards are so high!”

Zhang Yi stretched lazily and replied, “She is beautiful, but she comes with some troubles. The thing I hate the most is trouble!”

However, after dealing with her troublesome students, Zhang Yi could consider taking their relationship further.

Still, as he often said, he had a nonchalant attitude towards so-called love; it could serve as a spice in life, but life would go on just fine without it.

Zhang Yi approached Yang Xinxin, smiling as he told her about what happened today.

Upon hearing this, Yang Xinxin's face filled with disgust.

“Those guys really are capable of doing such disgusting things!”

Zhang Yi said calmly, “I’ve played the bad cop; now it’s your turn to be the good cop!”

“Make sure Liang Yue gives up completely on those guys, then I can clean them up without worrying about any repercussions.”

Zhang Yi wasn’t afraid of Yang Xinxin betraying him because back at Tianqing Academy, she had killed more students using Hua Hua.

Yang Xinxin smiled slyly, “Alright! I have to help my brother, right?”

She maneuvered her wheelchair towards Liang Yue’s room.

Zhang Yi had no idea what they were discussing, but Liang Yue’s attitude towards those students would definitely change from now on.

No matter how deep the trust or protective instincts were, they would slowly disappear with the accumulation of disappointment.

The next day, Zhang Yi planned to take Lu Keran out to search for building materials to repair the Shelter.

Uncle You asked, “Do you want us to go with you? It wouldn’t be good if we encounter enemies again.”

Zhang Yi shook his head, “No need; bringing Hua Hua is enough. You all stay here to continue building the defense line; someone has to watch over the house.”

He went out with Hua Hua; the abilities of the two—one person and one cat—could perfectly complement each other.

As long as he didn’t encounter opponents of Ling Feng’s caliber, even ordinary small factions or Superhumans wouldn’t pose a threat.

Even if they encountered a strong opponent, escaping would be manageable.

Uncle You didn't insist anymore, agreeing to stay behind and work on the defense line.

Although Zhang Yi wasn't present, Uncle You could still handle the moving work with his brute strength.

Completing half of the defense line today was certain.

It was Lu Keran's first time going out to do something with Zhang Yi, and she was very happy, her excited little face flushed.

Zhang Yi took out a set of West Hill Base combat gear he had confiscated for Lu Keran to change into; it was excellent for both bullet resistance and cold protection.

Originally, Zhang Yi planned to create upgraded combat gear for everyone in the Shelter.

However, the combat gear he wore not only consumed a lot of materials but also took a considerable amount of time to produce.

Lu Keran wouldn't be able to make so many in a short time.

Therefore, Zhang Yi wasn't in a hurry; he let her take her time crafting, prioritizing frontline combat personnel first.

Uncle You's defensive power exceeded that of combat gear, so he didn't need a set of gear.

He wore a confiscated ordinary combat suit, which provided basic defense when not transformed.

Lu Keran donned the white combat gear and even polished the golden sword logo on her chest, flashing an eight-toothed smile at Zhang Yi.

Suddenly, her expression became serious, and she saluted Zhang Yi.

“Private Lu Keran is ready for battle; please give instructions, leader!”

Seeing her playful and cute appearance, Zhang Yi couldn’t help but pinch her nose.

“Little troublemaker!”

Lu Keran stuck out her tongue, “How do I look? After putting on this outfit, I feel so cool!”

Zhang Yi nodded, “Clothes can easily give people the wrong impression, especially for women.”

Lu Keran froze for a moment, then immediately realized Zhang Yi was teasing her and angrily punched his shoulder.

“Alright, alright, let’s set off! The outside environment can’t be trusted; the sooner we go and return, the better!”

Zhang Yi thought for a moment and pulled out a handgun, handing it to Lu Keran.

“You should know how to use this, right?”

Since Lu Keran could craft firearms, she should know how to use them.

Sure enough, Lu Keran’s eyes lit up as she accepted it and tucked it into her side holster.

The two left the Shelter, and Zhang Yi took out a snow vehicle, driving her towards the famous Hongyuan Group factory in the Lu River district.

The West Mountain area and Lu River district were located in the southwest of Tianhai City, slightly farther from the city center, so many industrial enterprises gathered there.

Hongyuan Group was Tianhai City's largest and most famous building materials company.

Not only in Tianhai City but even nationwide, it had a great reputation.

The reason Zhang Yi chose this building materials company was that it was relatively close to West Hill Base.

Moreover, and this was crucial, it was the designated supplier for Dragon Security Company.

Thus, Zhang Yi believed they would surely have the building materials needed for the Shelter.

The vehicle drove away from the Shelter.

Lu Keran turned back to glance at the departing building, hesitating as she bit her lip. After a while, she finally asked her long-standing curiosity.

“Big brother, can you talk to me about yesterday's question now?”

Lu Keran's thoughts were quite straightforward; she had been remembering that matter.

So now that she had the chance, she quickly asked Zhang Yi for his thoughts.

Zhang Yi glanced at her and smiled, asking, “You really dislike the other students, don't you?”

Lu Keran didn't deny it, seriously nodding her head.

"Those guys were way too much with what they did to Xinxin!"

She paused, then continued, "They treated me pretty badly too. To be honest, I don't want to see them and certainly don't want to live with them."

Lu Keran was a top student, having gained admission through her academic performance and professional skills.

Thus, she had a considerable gap in status compared to other students.

When she was in school, she had endured quite a bit of bullying from her classmates.

So naturally, she didn't wish to see those guys living well.

She was straightforward, not foolish.

As Zhang Yi listened to Lu Keran's complaints, a faint smile lingered on his lips.

For a moment, he almost wanted to tell Lu Keran his plan.

That was to leave those people in Xu Family Town and, when conflicts occurred with other factions, intentionally lead others to sacrifice them.

However, considering Lu Keran's blunt personality, she might accidentally let the cat out of the bag.

If Liang Yue found out, it could affect the relationship between the two of them.

He didn't want to drive a wedge between himself and those close to him.

Thus, Zhang Yi decided to change his approach.

#### Chapter 354: Invasion

“Don’t worry, I also really hate those guys. I absolutely won’t let them disturb our comfortable lives!”

“Let those bastards live across the river. With their self-sufficiency skills, it’s only a matter of time before they starve or freeze to death.”

“And who knows, maybe one day when we clash with other forces, they might have an accident!”

Zhang Yi shrugged, “Of course, I promised Liang Yue that I wouldn’t touch them, so it all depends on their luck.”

Lu Keran felt pleased to know Zhang Yi’s attitude.

However, she leaned closer with some concern, “Big brother, Teacher Liang is a very soft-hearted woman! What if they run into danger and Teacher Liang brings them to the Shelter?”

Zhang Yi laughed dismissively.

“It’s the apocalypse now; lives are as worthless as grass. It’s perfectly normal for anyone to die.”

“While I promised Liang Yue to do my best to protect those students...”

“However, if I can’t do it, she should be able to understand.”

Saying this, Zhang Yi suddenly pinched Lu Keran’s nose.

“Then it will depend on how you and Yang Xinxin perform!”

“Your Teacher Liang loves her students very much! If I can’t convince her, you two just need to work a bit harder!”

Lu Keran had a small face, and her nose was tiny, making it nice to pinch.

Her face turned slightly red, “I understand what you mean, big brother! You want me and Xinxin to brainwash Teacher Liang, right?”

A glimmer of amusement flashed in Zhang Yi’s eyes.

A stubborn woman like Liang Yue sought a spiritual refuge in the apocalypse; she needed to protect others to prove her own worth.

And this spiritual refuge was placed on her students.

Perhaps she didn’t love her students as much as she wanted to prove that her existence was meaningful and that she was needed.

“Compared to those unfortunate kids in Xu Family Town, you and Xinxin are undoubtedly favored by Liang Yue.”

“So how to please the teacher and make her love you more doesn’t need me to say much, right?”

Lu Keran certainly understood Zhang Yi’s meaning.

Girls were always adept at acting cute and charming, regardless of their age.

Outside, the snowstorm continued. As February approached, the temperature gradually rose a little but was still cold enough to be deadly.

Lu Keran looked at the desolate white land outside and couldn't help but sigh.

"The Shelter is like paradise, while the outside is hell!"

"It would be better if no one came to disturb us."

She muttered softly.

Zhang Yi blinked, and couldn't help but think about that large force, feeling slightly worried.

"I hope we won't have any conflicts with them before we finish the defensive construction at the Shelter!"

He had already killed people from Chaoyu Base.

This matter was likely hard to conceal since the Followers of the Snow God had witnessed it.

He could only hope that the timing of any conflicts would be delayed.

"As long as I'm well-prepared, I wouldn't fear even if two Chaoyu Bases attacked me together!"

Zhang Yi thought confidently.

After defeating West Hill Base and obtaining all their stockpiled weapons, Zhang Yi's strength was no longer what it used to be.

However, as the saying goes, what you fear will come.

Zhang Yi was currently trying to avoid contact with other forces.

But when he drove to Hongyuan Group's factory, he saw three vehicles parked in the snow from a distance.

“Vehicles?”

Zhang Yi's first reaction was to park the car far away.

Then he took out binoculars and looked in that direction.

What he saw confirmed his suspicions: three oddly shaped vehicles.

Those three vehicles should not be considered snow vehicles but rather modified off-road vehicles turned into battle cars.

In addition to the steel plates and machine guns installed on the body, they also had tracks and skis added below.

However, the steel plates appeared to be thin, seemingly to reduce weight.

“These things don't seem right. Can they even run?” Zhang Yi wondered.

Lu Keran curiously leaned over, “Big brother, what do you see?”

Zhang Yi handed her the binoculars so she could take a look for herself.

After Lu Keran glanced through, she couldn't help but start to rant.

“What the heck is this? It looks so messed up; it almost makes me want to gouge my eyes out!”

Zhang Yi leaned back in his seat, the Dimensional Gate opening directly ahead to prevent any surprise gunfire.

He sighed, "I still underestimated their efficiency. These guys have already invaded from the border towards West Hill Base's territory."

The destruction of West Hill Base had already been discovered by other forces.

They would definitely want to come and take a slice of this big pie.

Within the Lu River district, the most valuable assets were the material factories and machinery equipment plants.

Zhang Yi hesitated.

He didn't want to engage with any forces at the moment.

However, he urgently needed to repair the Shelter.

Thus, he had to go over and find the materials he needed.

"Should I kill them?"

Zhang Yi was conflicted.

At present, he didn't know who had come or what their strength was.

Striking without understanding wouldn't align with his usual style.

Meanwhile, Lu Keran excitedly said, “Big brother, the cost-performance ratio of these modified junk is too low! Although they barely run on snow, their top speed can’t exceed 20 kilometers per hour.” ♦

“Plus, the modifications are too crude, so their fuel consumption is several times that of a snow vehicle.”

“Wow! This means they really are wasteful. They sent out three vehicles at once, which are practically three fuel guzzlers!”

An idea suddenly flashed in Zhang Yi's mind.

“Wait! You said these vehicles consume a lot of fuel, right?”

Lu Keran put down the binoculars, looking disdainful. “Yeah, these off-road vehicles weigh much more than snow vehicles. After being modified, they increased their weight. With such rough modifications, their fuel consumption is at least five times that of our vehicle!”

A gleam of brilliance flickered in Zhang Yi's eyes.

“Initially, West Hill Base wouldn't even use snow vehicles because gasoline was very hard to obtain. But these guys are so extravagant, meaning only one force can afford this!”

Among the Western forces, the one controlling the Tianhai City Baofeng Oil Refinery was Yangsheng Base!

“Is it them? Yangsheng Base is more than 200 kilometers away, almost across the entire Tianhai City.”

“I didn't expect them to come; they really are eager!”

“However, since they control the oil refinery, with ample energy, it indeed makes sense for them to waste like this.”

Zhang Yi confirmed the identity of these people and thought about what to do next.

Since they were already here, it wouldn't make sense to go back empty-handed.

He planned to talk to these people. If he could peacefully take away the materials he needed, that would be the best outcome.

If he couldn't persuade them, he would have to resort to force!

"Keran, a conflict might happen soon. Get yourself mentally prepared!"

Zhang Yi's gaze turned cold as he looked ahead, then drove the snow vehicle forward.

Lu Keran swallowed, her eyes filled with excitement.

To be honest, she was very happy!

Because this might be her first time seeing Zhang Yi in action!

Chapter 355: Yangsheng Base

Outside the Hongyuan Group's materials factory, Zhang Yi drove his vehicle near several modified snow vehicles.

Their arrival had already attracted the attention of the personnel at Yangsheng Base.

As they got closer, five or six people were leaning against their vehicles, aiming their guns at them.

"Stop! This area has already been taken by our Yangsheng Base. Which faction are you from? Go somewhere else!" a man with a long beard shouted.

Zhang Yi remained vigilant, activating his Western Speed ability.

As long as the other party made a move to pull the trigger, he would immediately kill them all!

“Stay in the car and don’t move!”

Zhang Yi could see that the weapons in their hands were all basic firearms, which couldn’t harm his vehicle equipped with Shelter-class bulletproof glass, so he felt safe getting out.

A black tabby cat with its tail held high elegantly followed in Zhang Yi’s footsteps.

Zhang Yi raised his hands gently and said to the people in front of him, “Don’t misunderstand, I mean no harm. I have no objections to you taking this factory first.”

“I just need some materials, and I hope you can make it convenient for me.”

However, when the Yangsheng Base personnel saw his Western Mountain Base-style combat uniform, their expressions grew much more serious.

“Wasn’t it said that the Western Mountain Base had been destroyed?”

“Maybe it’s a remnant; there were so many people at the Western Mountain Base, they couldn’t have all died, right?”

“Thank goodness it’s not from one of the other bases; otherwise, we’d have a bit of a headache.”

“What powerful characters could possibly survive from a destroyed Western Mountain Base?”

“However... that vehicle of his is quite impressive.”

Some had already set their sights on Zhang Yi's snow vehicle.

The ones they were driving were all knockoffs, with poor performance, slow speed, and high fuel consumption.

If Zhang Yi's vehicle was a Rolls Royce, their vehicles could only be considered a blend of Mercedes and Santana.

A cautious person whispered, "Don't act recklessly! Do you really think a person who can drive such a good car at a time like this is just an ordinary character?" 

His eyes were filled with apprehension. "Especially when facing so many of us, he shows no fear at all. This person is definitely not easy to deal with! Notify the captain to come over!"

Immediately, someone contacted the captain inside the factory via the communicator.

At the same time, someone shouted at Zhang Yi, "Let's discuss this when our captain arrives!"

Zhang Yi wore a relaxed smile, but he was very cautious inside.

He looked toward the factory; someone was entering through the skylight using the same method he had before.

"Alright, I can wait," Zhang Yi said, smiling as he took two steps back, keeping his hands in the line of sight of the others.

Of course, if he really wanted to kill, he didn't necessarily need a gun.

It was best if he could negotiate with these people; Zhang Yi also didn't want to make enemies of both Chaoyu and Yangsheng.

After a while, a few people crawled out from the factory.

Leading them was a man with a scruffy black beard.

His combat uniform was also white, but there was a red flame emblem on his shoulder.

This indicated that he was a captain-level figure at Yangsheng Base.

“Even if he’s not a superhuman, he’s definitely a formidable character!” Zhang Yi made a judgment immediately.

The captain of Yangsheng Base, Gao Yuan, saw Zhang Yi, his gaze sharp like that of a hawk.

In the apocalypse, any unfamiliar person you encounter could be an enemy; no one dared to be careless.

However, Gao Yuan saw only one vehicle, two people, and a cat, and he felt somewhat relieved as he was accompanied by a dozen or so subordinates.

“What is your position in the Western Mountain Base?” Gao Yuan asked coldly, while sizing up Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi’s lips curled slightly, “Captain of the Special Forces Team at the Western Mountain Base, Zhang Beihai!”

Zhang Yi didn’t take off his mask, and the other party didn’t know his appearance.

Currently, using the name of the Western Mountain Base was much better than exposing his true identity.

Moreover, the other side only knew that the Western Mountain Base’s stronghold had been destroyed but couldn’t judge whether any remnants of the forces remained.

As the strongest armed force among the Western Mountain Bases, other bases wouldn't be able to act carelessly towards it.

Sure enough, when Gao Yuan heard Zhang Yi's self-introduction, his expression became more serious.

"So it's really the captain of the Western Mountain Base! No wonder you dare to come here with only one person."

"What, are you here to drive us away?"

Gao Yuan thought Zhang Yi had come to expel him, and his demeanor became somewhat unfriendly.

"Don't say I didn't warn you, the headquarters of the Western Mountain Base has been shattered. Your remaining forces are not enough to compete with our Yangsheng Base!"

"So, don't have any dangerous ideas!"

Gao Yuan had already believed what Zhang Yi said.

After all, that combat uniform was standardized by the government at the time, and only they from the Western Mountain Base had it.

It would be too difficult for outsiders to replicate it; no one could imagine who would have such conditions in the apocalypse.

Seeing that the other party believed his fabricated lie, Zhang Yi calmly said, "It's just a materials factory; if the friends from Yangsheng Base like it, you can take as much as you can!"

"However, we also need to take away some materials now. I hope you won't obstruct us!"

After hearing Zhang Yi's words, Gao Yuan's expression was uncertain.

They were ordered to occupy some important resource locations in the Lujiang District, but they hadn't expected to encounter remnants of the Western Mountain Base.

However, Zhang Yi was right; with such a large factory, it would be too difficult to monopolize it.

They didn't even need so many building materials.

After pondering for a moment, Gao Yuan said to Zhang Yi, "Alright. But I'll only give you half an hour!"

Zhang Yi smiled.

It was best if they could come to an agreement; he didn't want to have a conflict with the people on the other side.

After all, he wasn't fond of slaughtering.

Zhang Yi waved to the vehicle behind him, signaling Lu Keran to get down and come with him.

Finding materials required Lu Keran's identification, and Zhang Yi had to keep her by his side to ensure safety.

Gao Yuan made a few gestures to his subordinates, who understood and cleared a path for Zhang Yi.

Lu Keran was both nervous and excited as she hurried to Zhang Yi's side.

For safety reasons, Zhang Yi first pulled her into his arms. This sudden warmth made Lu Keran's heart race, and even in the freezing minus sixty degrees, her cheeks flushed.

“Let’s go.”

Zhang Yi calmly said to Lu Keran.

“But, what about our car? Aren’t we going to put it away?”

Lu Keran was somewhat worried about that snow vehicle, fearing it would be taken by the people of Yangsheng Base.

“It’s fine, they can’t take it.”

Zhang Yi whispered, providing no further explanation.

He would never easily use his abilities in front of others.

A superhuman’s ability was his strong suit, but it also contained his vulnerabilities—ever since he killed Ling Feng, this had become a rule in his heart.

Lu Keran bit her lip and obediently followed Zhang Yi toward the factory.

Hua Hua trotted behind the two, elegantly following in Zhang Yi’s footsteps.

Even while walking in extreme cold, it seemed unaffected.

Just as Zhang Yi and Lu Keran slowly walked toward the factory.

Behind them, Gao Yuan’s narrowed eyes suddenly widened.

His right hand moved with invisible speed into his pocket and then pulled the trigger at Zhang Yi’s back!

## Chapter 356: The Unstoppable War Vehicle

At the moment Gao Yuan made his move, both Zhang Yi and Hua Hua's eyes lit up.

"Watch your back!"

Zhang Yi never trusted his back to strangers.

Although he was facing away from Gao Yuan and the others, his spatial abilities made him highly sensitive to fluctuations in space.

Ever since he absorbed the abilities of Ling Feng and other special forces members, his first sense had also strengthened.

So, while remaining vigilant, the instant the killing intent from those people appeared, Zhang Yi immediately opened a Dimensional Gate behind him.

At the same time, Hua Hua's body puffed up like a balloon, firmly blocking behind Zhang Yi and Lu Keran!

"Da-da-da-da-da!!!"

Bullets from over a dozen people rained down like a storm, all hitting Hua Hua's black fur, which was as hard as steel needles.

After the last battle, Hua Hua had absorbed several superhumans, significantly enhancing its combat strength.

Now, facing these firearms at close range, the attack felt like mere tickles to it.

"What... what is this thing?"

“A monster!”

The personnel from Yangsheng Base were stunned; it was their first encounter with a mutated creature.

Gao Yuan was momentarily taken aback but quickly reacted, drawing his gun and aiming at Hua Hua's eyes!

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

Gao Yuan's draw was very professional, and all three shots were aimed directly at Hua Hua's eyeballs.

He was clearly someone with professional training and high combat proficiency!

“Meow—”

Hua Hua became a bit angry, shaking its head and easily deflecting the bullets!

Zhang Yi did not make a move; instead, he protected Lu Keran in front of him.

He needed to shield Lu Keran while allowing Hua Hua to take the initiative, giving himself a chance to observe these people's combat capabilities, especially whether there were any superhumans among them.

Hua Hua transformed into a five-meter-tall black beast, standing like a living fortress between Zhang Yi and Lu Keran.

All bullets hitting it were harmless.

Even though the weapons used by those people were powerful models, some even loaded with armor-piercing rounds.

They were not facing the early-stage mutated Hua Hua, but the evolved Hua Hua.

“Meow—”

Hua Hua felt little pain but grew irritated, lunging forward and biting off half of a person’s body.

The others snapped back to reality and hurriedly scattered.

Next, they all performed the same action, pulling out a disposable metal syringe and stabbing it fiercely into their bodies!

“Hm?”

Zhang Yi's gaze sharpened. Their actions reminded him of the stimulants he injected while attacking the Western Mountain Base.

It seemed to be some kind of drug that enhanced combat power.

Sure enough, after injecting the drug, strange red patterns quickly appeared on their bodies.

With a roar, Hua Hua charged, its sharp claws extended like shining steel blades.

The individuals swiftly dodged, and it was evident that their speed had increased several times!

Unfortunately for them, they were not facing humans but a feline known for its speed and agility!

In terms of equal size, few could rival feline creatures; perhaps only weasels could contend.

Regular humans, even on drugs, couldn't hope to outrun it.

With a few swipes of its claws, Hua Hua took down three people!

However, Zhang Yi soon discerned the opponents' tactics.

A few were distracting Hua Hua, while Captain Gao Yuan led five people to launch an assault on Zhang Yi!

The five of them opened fire simultaneously at Zhang Yi.

However, Gao Yuan's silver pistol suddenly ignited, and a blazing bullet shot toward Zhang Yi's head!

Is this his ability?

In an instant, that thought flashed through Zhang Yi's mind. Even though it was far away, he sensed the power contained in that bullet the moment it was fired.

For him, unless the attack exceeded the energy capacity he could contain in space, all projectile weapons were meaningless.

"Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" "Whoosh!" "Whoosh!"

All five bullets disappeared three meters in front of Zhang Yi, as if they had never been fired.

"What? You're also a superhuman!"

Gao Yuan immediately realized the situation.

However, he had no time to regret; there was no time to escape.

“Let you see my gun too!”

Zhang Yi raised both hands, and two golden Desert Eagles appeared in the air.

He gently told Lu Keran, “Cover your ears.”

Lu Keran obediently covered her ears and looked up at the calm Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi raised his pistols and fired continuously at the heads of the five men!

“Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!” “Bang!”

As soon as Gao Yuan and the others saw Zhang Yi draw his guns, they instinctively dodged and shot back.

However, even with their combat experience allowing them to avoid the shots, the bullets seemed to lock onto them, tracing a bizarre arc through the air and accurately hitting their foreheads!

All five men, including Captain Gao Yuan, collapsed to the ground.

In the moment of death, their eyes reflected confusion and disbelief.

They were seasoned gunmen, and yet they were shot in the head even while prepared; was this reasonable?

In a sense, precise shooting was a causal skill.

Once Zhang Yi locked onto you, unless your speed could exceed that of a bullet, evasion was futile!

Lu Keran gazed at Zhang Yi's swift elimination of the five gunmen, her eyes brimming with admiration.

Not far away, Hua Hua swiftly finished off its battle, chewing a few of the remaining people and then impatiently spitting them out.

"You forced me to take action!"

Zhang Yi looked at the pile of corpses, letting out a helpless sigh.

"The tree wishes for tranquility, but the wind won't stop. I'm clearly a pacifist, so why do they always force me to kill?"

He wasn't afraid of Yangsheng Base.

But having provoked both Yangsheng Base and Chaoyu Base, if they teamed up to attack, Zhang Yi would have a bit of a headache.

Not because he was afraid, but because it would be troublesome.

However, if killing was necessary, then so be it; if they pushed their luck, he wouldn't be lenient.

Zhang Yi walked over to Gao Yuan, placing his right hand over the bullet hole in his head and began absorbing his abilities.

To his surprise, Gao Yuan's ability was not very strong, even weaker than the captain of the Western Mountain Special Forces.

In Zhang Yi's current state, absorbing his abilities would not be satisfying; it was more like a light snack.

For Zhang Yi, superhumans of this tier seemed little different from ordinary people—he could eliminate them with a wave of his hand.

Lu Keran followed behind Zhang Yi, excitedly exclaiming, “Big Brother, you’re amazing! You took down so many without even getting your clothes dirty!”

Zhang Yi squatted down to search Gao Yuan’s body.

While searching, he said to Lu Keran, “Although I’m not a martial artist, having absorbed so many superhuman powers, I can honestly say I’m quite strong now.”

Even Zhang Yi’s self-proclaimed weak offensive capability far surpassed that of a low-tier superhuman like Gao Yuan.

Lu Keran watched Zhang Yi carefully searching Gao Yuan, curiously asking, “Big Brother, what are you doing?”

“Looking for something.”

After a long search, Zhang Yi finally found what he was looking for in Gao Yuan’s coat pocket.

A disposable metal syringe, through which a dark red potion could be seen.

“Is this the stimulant used by Yangsheng Base? It seems stronger than what Ke’er gave me!”

Judging purely by its effects, this drug was indeed powerful.

It could grant ordinary people incredible strength, almost reaching the level of modified humans from the Western Mountain Base.

Moreover, based on how the people from Yangsheng Base used it, it seemed there were no physical requirements—normal people could use it.

Zhang Yi put the drug away, planning to take it back for Zhou Ke'er to analyze.

This kind of thing could be a lifesaver at a critical moment.

Next, Zhang Yi searched each corpse thoroughly.

Unfortunately, besides the two vials on Gao Yuan, the others only had one each, which had been used up.

Fortunately, two individuals who hadn't had time to use the drug were bitten to death by Hua Hua, giving Zhang Yi two extra vials.

He found nothing particularly valuable on the others.

However, he collected all their communication devices.

Unlike Zhang Yi's phone, they carried satellite phones when going out.

These devices were much heavier than regular phones, resembling bricks, but they had all the functions of a phone and provided better communication quality.

Zhang Yi planned to copy the data from them after returning, using it to analyze intelligence on Yangsheng Base.

Afterward, he stored the body parts in his dimensional space.

Although the conflict had erupted, Yangsheng Base could not ignore the death of a superhuman and over a dozen henchmen, but delaying their discovery of the truth was also helpful.

At the very least, Zhang Yi needed to buy time to fortify the outer walls of the Shelter and the perimeter defenses of Cloud Manor.

After cleaning up the body parts and tidying up the battlefield.

Including the makeshift snow vehicles from Yangsheng Base, he also collected those.

Not that he needed them, but taking them could confuse others.

He cleaned up the bloodstains on the ground, ensuring no one would find evidence of the deadly struggle that occurred here.

Throughout the process, Zhang Yi's actions were calm and unhurried.

Lu Keran began to feel anxious.

"Big Brother, won't anyone come to reinforce them?"

Zhang Yi brushed the snow off his hands and replied calmly, "Yangsheng Base is over two

hundred kilometers away. Even if they have the advantage in numbers and ample fuel resources, crossing such a long distance for combat would require leaving a large force to defend at home."

"This is just a materials factory; they won't concentrate too many troops here. There are plenty of useful resources around."

Of course, Zhang Yi referred to resources valuable to others.

He currently lacked nothing.

“Let’s go find the materials you mentioned. After fixing up the Shelter, we need to prepare for the possible war that may erupt next!”

Zhang Yi spoke lightly.

Before colliding with Yangsheng Base, he had always been cautious, trying to avoid conflict.

But now that both sides had clashed, Zhang Yi felt indifferent.

Life and death should not be taken lightly, but one must act against defiance!

I’ve tolerated enough; if they don’t leave themselves a way out and insist on bringing trouble upon themselves, they can’t blame me.

Lu Keran followed closely behind Zhang Yi.

Zhang Yi didn’t even bother climbing over walls, letting Hua Hua charge through and smash a large hole in the wall.

Then the two entered the materials factory through the opening.

Zhang Yi didn’t know anything about the materials needed to repair the Shelter; after all, he hadn’t studied materials or chemical engineering in college.

So, he followed Lu Keran, who picked out whatever materials she needed, which Zhang Yi then stored in his dimensional space.

He took everything that might be useful, leaving nothing for others.

If the factory hadn't been so large, Zhang Yi would have emptied it entirely without a second thought.

Half an hour later, the two left the factory with their arms full.

Zhang Yi drove the vehicle, and the three of them sped off towards Cloud Manor without looking back.

"The war games are about to begin!"

Zhang Yi blinked and suddenly thought that since they had come this far, he might as well use the imminent enemy to solve the troubles in Xu Family Town.

He glanced at Lu Keran beside him, not revealing his plans.

However, he had an idea in mind about how to attract the enemy's attention to Xu Family Town.

#### Chapter 357: Firepower Defense Line

Zhang Yi and Lu Keran set out on their way back to Cloud Manor.

At this point, Zhang Yi had already realized that several other factions had begun invading the original territory of the West Hill Base.

It was no surprise for him to see Gao Yuan at the material factory.

If all went as expected, he would also discover that other key supply points in the Xishan District and Lu River District were occupied by several major factions.

Zhang Yi's consecutive kills of the people from Chaoyu and Yangsheng Base indicated that war was about to begin!

The only question was when they would realize that the one taking action was Zhang Yi and come to attack.

“In a limited timeframe, we must be fully prepared.”

On the way back, Zhang Yi said to Lu Keran, “Let’s keep today’s encounter with the people from Yangsheng Base a secret for now.”

Lu Keran was taken aback for a moment, then asked curiously, “Why? If everyone doesn’t know danger is approaching, how will they prepare?”

“This is something I only need to keep in mind.”

Zhang Yi said sternly, “I will urge everyone to speed up the construction of the defenses and prevent them from leaving the vicinity of the shelter.”

“But this matter cannot be disclosed for now. I don’t want to cause panic among them, do you understand, Keran?”

“I will tell them when I think it’s appropriate.”

Zhang Yi fixed his gaze on Lu Keran’s eyes, his tone calm but his eyes held an undeniable power.

Lu Keran was silent for less than a second before nodding vigorously.

Although she didn’t know Zhang Yi’s purpose, her heart was with him, and she fully supported whatever he decided to do.

“I understand. After all, you’re doing this for everyone’s sake, right?”

Lu Keran said with a sweet smile.

Zhang Yi smiled back and ruffled her short hair. "It's good that you understand. Big brother is doing this for you and everyone!"

This statement made Lu Keran's heart race a little faster.

Indeed, Zhang Yi had never harmed her.

As long as she followed Zhang Yi's orders, everything would be fine.

Meanwhile, a strange glint flashed in Zhang Yi's eyes as he drove.

The reason for not telling everyone about this news was to keep it from Liang Yue.

Zhang Yi planned to use the hands of the two major factions to deal with those students from Xu Family Town.

Therefore, he needed Liang Yue to believe that danger would not come in the short term.

For safety's sake, the best method was to keep everyone in the dark about the conflict that had already occurred.

When Zhang Yi and Lu Keran returned to the shelter, they saw that the towering ice and snow fortress had already been built up to more than half.

The 10-meter thickness was constructed from two layers of giant ice blocks,

and with the steel frame inside, it was hard to imagine anything could quickly destroy it.

This was merely a defensive measure.

During the construction of the ice and snow walls, Liang Yue and Uncle You had also opened holes in the ice blocks to create shooting ports with steel plates.

Afterward, they could place the large number of captured artillery, heavy machine guns, armored vehicles, cannons, and tanks on top, forming a dense firepower network.

Zhang Yi and Lu Keran got out of the car, and Zhang Yi's face returned to his usual warm smile as he walked over.

Seeing this, Uncle You and Liang Yue inquired, "How was it? Did the material collection go smoothly? Did you encounter any suspicious individuals?"

Zhang Yi replied with a faint smile, "It went very smoothly; there were no obstacles along the way."

"I told you, other factions need time to stabilize their territories. Who has the time to come and seize resources here!"

Lu Keran remained silent, obediently following behind Zhang Yi like a good child.

Zhang Yi noticed Liang Yue's face visibly relaxed.

"That's great! Otherwise, I wouldn't know what to do."

What she referred to was undoubtedly the placement issue of those students.

However, this time, Zhang Yi unusually stated, "Your concerns are not unfounded. Although I think there won't be any danger for now, it's still wise to be prepared."

As he spoke, he glanced at Lu Keran beside him, suddenly leaning in close to Liang Yue, and whispered, "However, Liang Yue, I wouldn't mind letting your students move in here if they encounter danger, but for Xinxin and Keran... I really have no way."

“After all, the conflicts that occurred between them in the past can’t be resolved in just a day or two.”

“Letting them live under the same roof would be unfair to Xinxin and Keran.”

Zhang Yi had to change his tone.

Because he knew in his heart that the crisis in Xu Family Town was approaching fast.

If he continued to promote safety theories, claiming there would be no danger, then in the future, Liang Yue might blame him for it.

So, it was better to shift the focus of the conflict onto the students from Xu Family Town versus Yang Xinxin and Lu Keran.

After all, they were all Liang Yue’s students; a hand is no more than a palm. How could she favor one side over the other?

Sure enough, when Liang Yue heard Zhang Yi’s analysis, she couldn’t help but hesitate.

Deep down, she was definitely closer to Yang Xinxin and Lu Keran.

After all, they were good students, and the three had been getting along very harmoniously these days.

Unlike those guys from Xu Family Town, who only brought her trouble.

“While that’s true, your reasoning makes sense, it’s just...”

Liang Yue had a conflicted look on her face.

At that moment, standing behind Zhang Yi, Lu Keran saw the discreet hand gesture Zhang Yi gave her.

This sweet and simple engineering girl suddenly recalled the plan Zhang Yi had mentioned to her.

Now it was her turn to step up!

Lu Keran stepped forward, looking at Liang Yue with big eyes full of grievance.

“Teacher Liang, why must they move nearby? Whenever Xinxin and I see them, it reminds us of our time at Tianqing Academy.”

“Do you know how cruel they were to us back then?”

Seeing Lu Keran’s aggrieved expression, Liang Yue felt a twinge of guilt.

She had actually been aware of the grouping and exclusion issues among the students back then.

But at that time, she was limited in energy, worn out by the threats from Hua Hua, and really couldn’t focus on those matters.

Looking back now, she hadn’t cared for Yang Xinxin and Lu Keran enough.

Now that she could enter the shelter, it was also thanks to Yang Xinxin and Lu Keran advocating for her.

Given their daily interactions, their bond was certainly much stronger than with other students.

So when she heard Lu Keran’s plaintive plea, Liang Yue felt herself getting torn.

“I don’t want to do this either. If they could be self-reliant and survive in this apocalypse, that would be best.”

“But there are obviously external factors influencing this! If they were harmed right under my nose, I wouldn’t be able to forgive myself.”

### Chapter 358: Satellite Phone

Zhang Yi listened to Liang Yue's words nearby and thought to himself: what Liang Yue needed was a spiritual refuge, a reasonable explanation to let go of those students.

This was Liang Yue; if it were anyone else, Zhang Yi wouldn't have bothered wasting time on her.

However, he couldn't bear to lose this powerful martial arts expert who could also be his teacher in national martial arts!

So Zhang Yi stepped forward to mediate, “Let's not discuss this matter for now. Keran, we need to quickly repair the outer wall of the shelter. You go prepare the materials!”

Zhang Yi changed the subject, not giving Liang Yue the chance to continue her discussion.

If they talked further, the situation might develop in a direction he didn't want to see.

So, he took Lu Keran away while giving Liang Yue a reassuring look.

A warm feeling surged in Liang Yue's heart.

She was incredibly grateful that Zhang Yi understood her predicament.

Zhang Yi and Lu Keran went to the workshop and took out the materials.

“How long will it take to process these materials and repair the shelter?”

Lu Keran replied, "The damaged area of the outer wall is only about a dozen square meters. If we don't consider aesthetics and just focus on reinforcement, it can actually be done in two or three days."

The most troublesome part of repairing the outer wall was making it seamless, ensuring that others wouldn't see any signs of damage.

Zhang Yi waved his hand; he didn't care about the wall's appearance at all.

"I only require it to be sturdy; the rest is irrelevant."

"Got it!"

Lu Keran nodded and went to change into work clothes, preparing to start.

"Can you manage alone?" Zhang Yi asked.

With so many materials, even an adult male would find it somewhat troublesome to operate alone.

Lu Keran blinked and smiled, "Big brother, you all have things to do! Don't worry, I might be a bit slow by myself, but I'll definitely ensure the quality."

Zhang Yi and the other superhumans needed to build the outer defense line, so they wouldn't have time to help her; Lu Keran understood this very well.

Zhang Yi put his hands in his pockets, and several figures flashed through his mind.

He smiled, "I'll call over Yang Siyah and the others to help you."

The other women in the house weren't able to contribute outside, so they might as well lend a hand now.

Lu Keran couldn't help but laugh, "But they're too weak! I'm not sure they can handle this kind of work."

Zhang Yi sighed lightly and pinched her plump little cheek.

"Sometimes don't forget, you're also a girl. If you can do it, why can't they?"

Lu Keran's face turned slightly red as she nodded, "Then... let them help me with moving the materials!"

Zhang Yi nodded, turned, and went to find Yang Siyah and the others.

They had nothing to do at home, so when they heard Zhang Yi's request, Zhou Haimei and Yang Siyah went over to help Lu Keran.

Everyone inside and outside was busy working vigorously.

Zhang Yi estimated that ideally, the outer wall would be repaired in three days, and a solid firepower defense line would be established.

By then, even with a large arsenal at his disposal, he wouldn't be at a disadvantage even if he faced the forces of two bases simultaneously.

Moreover, with Yangsheng and Chaoyu bases at least a hundred kilometers away, their combat effectiveness would be diminished from the long trek.

"Even if it's one against two, the advantage is still in my hands."

Zhang Yi's mood relaxed a bit; at least he wouldn't feel anxious about the impending war.

He walked to Yang Xinxin's room and knocked on the door: "Xinxin, it's me."

“Brother, wait a moment!”

Yang Xinxin's sweet voice came from inside the room.

Only when facing Zhang Yi did she show her obedient and cute side.

The door opened from the inside, and Yang Xinxin, wearing a light beige pure cotton nightgown, looked up at Zhang Yi with innocent eyes.

“Brother, welcome back!”

Zhang Yi smiled and pushed her wheelchair into the room, then turned around to close the door.

“Xinxin, we encountered some interesting things again on this trip.”

Zhang Yi told Yang Xinxin about their encounter with the people from Yangsheng Base and how he killed them all.

Yang Xinxin was more intelligent than Lu Keran and had deeper thoughts, so there was no need to worry about her accidentally leaking anything.

Moreover, Zhang Yi needed Yang Xinxin's help to deal with the students from Xu Family Town.

As expected, after hearing what Zhang Yi said, Yang Xinxin immediately understood why he had come to find her.

“Brother, you've killed people from both Yangsheng and Chaoyu bases in just a few days!”

"Oh dear, they've lost some very important superhumans. In this tense situation, they can't possibly ignore it, right?"

"So they'll be coming to kill us soon!"

Zhang Yi smiled faintly: "I'm not afraid of them; those people aren't my biggest trouble."

At most, it would be like facing the West Hill Base, unable to go out freely for a long time.

However, with the forces of the two major bases, it was impossible for them to break through the defenses and the shelter Zhang Yi had set up.

Yang Xinxin nodded, "Indeed, they don't have the military background like Chen Xinian; they are all insurgents and can't bring in heavy bunker-busting missiles as weapons. So they don't pose much of a threat to the shelter."

"Then can we take this opportunity to get rid of the students from Xu Family Town?"

Yang Xinxin's tone was very calm.

She didn't have any hatred towards those students; after all, she hadn't suffered much at Tianqing Academy.

On the surface, she seemed weak, but in reality, those who had ever attacked her had already been taken care of by Hua Hua.

She just disliked those selfish fools, believing their existence was meaningless.

Now that they had become a problem for Zhang Yi, Yang Xinxin naturally wanted them dead.

Zhang Yi laughed: "We need to use a knife to kill someone; it wouldn't be good for any of us to take action. After all, Liang Yue is still very useful to me."

"Though it's a bit troublesome, it's worth it for her."

After saying this, Zhang Yi took out a signal jammer from the spatial storage and placed it in the corner to connect the power supply.

Then he retrieved the satellite phone from the members of Yangsheng Base he had confiscated and handed it to Yang Xinxin.

"These are the satellite phones of the Yangsheng Base members. Help me analyze whether there is any important information in them."

"After transferring the data, give it back to me; I have a use for it."

Yang Xinxin smiled: "This is easy!"

For a top hacker like her, this kind of work was extremely simple.

She transferred all the data from the satellite phone to her computer and said to Zhang Yi, "Brother, I'll analyze the data carefully and get it sorted out for you afterwards."

Zhang Yi nodded, packed up the satellite phones again, and left Yang Xinxin's room.

Chapter 359: Baofeng Oil Refinery

In the living room, Zhou Ke'er sat at the bar counter, resting her chin on one hand, staring blankly into space, feeling bored.

Just now, Zhang Yi had called Yang Siyah and Zhou Haimei over to help Lu Keran, leaving her behind temporarily.

She knew she must have some special task to fulfill.

“Could it be that Zhang Yi wants to...”

Zhou Ke'er's face gradually turned a shade of red.

At that moment, Zhang Yi approached, calling out, “Ke'er!”

Zhou Ke'er's daydream was interrupted, and feeling a bit embarrassed, she coughed lightly and quickly stood up.

“Zhang Yi.”

Zhang Yi came over and handed her a dark red syringe.

“Do you know what this is?”

Zhou Ke'er took it and held it up to the light, chuckling helplessly, “How could I possibly recognize it at a glance! Where did you get this?”

Zhang Yi rubbed his nose, “Don't worry about that for now. This seems to be a stimulant that can enhance human potential. Help me analyze its components and see what effects it has, as well as any side effects.”

This stimulant was much better than the ones Zhang Yi and the others had used before.

Zhang Yi felt a bit envious.

If he confirmed that the side effects were minimal, he could use it himself during crucial moments.

It would be even better if it could be mass-produced!

Of course, the likelihood of that happening was slim; Zhou Ke'er was a doctor and could identify drugs but found it difficult to manufacture them.

Curious about the substance in her hand, Zhou Ke'er nodded and asked Zhang Yi to give her some time, then took it to her lab for research.

Zhang Yi left the safe house and went outside to help Uncle You and others fortify their defenses.

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In the northern part of Tianhai City, Yangsheng District.

Amidst the vast snowy landscape, a massive oil refinery belched thick smoke skyward from dozens of large pipes.

If the surrounding area was over sixty degrees below zero, the temperature near the refinery was significantly higher.

This dark steel monster stood in the snowfield like a beast capable of spitting fire.

And here was one of the western shelters in Tianhai City, the Yangsheng base.

As the largest oil refinery in Tianhai City, the Baofeng Oil Refinery had a storage capacity of over a million barrels!

After all, before the apocalypse, Tianhai City was an important trading port, making it easier to obtain crude oil.

Their storage also served as a temporary holding facility for crude oil imported from overseas to other regions.

However, after the apocalypse, there was no reason for these resources to be returned.

The oil refinery needed to work.

Crude oil could not be directly applied to machines; it required refining to be transformed into gasoline, diesel, asphalt, lubricants, and other petroleum products.

And these were the greatest assets of the Yangsheng base.

With plenty of energy, they were not worried about consumption issues. They could even trade these refined products with other factions.

At this moment, in a workshop at the Yangsheng base.

Two ragged men were tied up and kneeling on the cold ground.

Both had dark red brands on their faces, shaped like a flame emblem.

They trembled not from the cold but because of the two people looming over them.

One was a man in white combat gear with gold-rimmed glasses and a cold gaze.

The other was a long-haired woman in striking red combat gear, standing out among the others.

The leader of the Yangsheng base, Xiao Honglian, and her deputy, Zhuge Qingtian.

The soldier who brought the prisoners reported, "Leader, of the five who escaped, three were killed, and two were captured. Please give your orders!"

The two men kneeling on the ground immediately bowed their heads in fear.

"I was wrong; please give me another chance!"

"I promise I won't escape again; please don't kill me!"

Xiao Honglian looked down at them with cold indifference.

She was a stunningly beautiful woman, but her large eyes were devoid of humanity.

Looking at the two men kneeling before her was like looking at two pigs.

Oh no, even two pigs would be better than them.

Because if there were still two live pigs, they would certainly be more valuable than these two live men.

Xiao Honglian walked slowly up to them in her red leather boots.

She coldly asked, "Why did you want to escape? Although you have to work here, at least I provide you with food and shelter."

"Do you want to go outside and die?"

The men on the ground trembled even more as Xiao Honglian approached, constantly bowing and begging for mercy.

Her voice became even colder, "Now tell me, where did you plan to escape to?"

The two men instinctively glanced at each other, not daring to speak.

Xiao Honglian's eyes were somewhat mocking.

"Are you trying to go to the territory of the Followers of the Snow God, to support that hypocritical bitch?"

The two men dared not answer anything, only bowing repeatedly, pleading for Xiao Honglian to spare their lives.

This was tantamount to admitting that Xiao Honglian spoke the truth.

Xiao Honglian scoffed, losing interest in continuing the interrogation.

She turned to her deputy Zhuge Qingtian and said, "Haven't you recently developed a new gadget?"

Zhuge Qingtian nodded, "The technical department has developed a collar that can hold a micro-bomb. As long as this is put on the slaves' necks, anyone who tries to escape can be executed immediately!"

Xiao Honglian lazily replied, "Then let me see how it works!"

As her words fell, someone immediately approached with a tray holding two silver collars.

The slaves on the ground were terrified and struggled desperately to escape.

But they were quickly subdued by the surrounding soldiers, who forced the collars onto their necks.

Xiao Honglian took the remote control and mockingly said to the two slaves, "Now I'm giving you a chance. You can escape. If this collar doesn't kill you, you will survive."

“Feel free to pray! After all, it’s a new product, and its effectiveness may not be guaranteed.”

With that, the soldiers beside them cut the ropes binding the two slaves’ hands.

The slaves looked in horror at the remote control in Xiao Honglian’s hand; the explosive collars on their necks felt like two demons, tightly locking their lifelines.

Not daring to delay, they quickly turned and ran toward the workshop exit.

“As long as we run far enough, the signal won’t work!”

With this belief in mind, the two men ran for their lives.

Xiao Honglian watched their retreating figures without hurry, casually asking Zhuge Qingtian beside her.

“What’s the effective range?”

Zhuge Qingtian respectfully replied, “Five kilometers. As long as we notice that the slaves have disappeared, we can detonate it. No slave will be able to escape!”

Xiao Honglian slowly nodded, “Good, let’s wait and see. Let’s see if this new gadget really works!”

Chapter 360: The Chain Reaction of the Superhuman’s Disappearance

After waiting for more than ten minutes, Xiao Honglian lost her patience and pressed the detonation button in her hand.

Then, Zhuge Qingtian took out his communicator to inquire about the results from the soldiers tracking them.

“One detonated successfully; the other misfired,” the soldier reported truthfully.

He looked at the escaping slave and raised his gun.

“Deputy Commander, should we execute him?”

Zhuge Qingtian turned to Xiao Honglian, “Leader?”

Xiao Honglian narrowed her eyes, “How can the technology developed by the technical department be so poor! When will their technology reach even half of what West Hill Base has? That would be enough for me!”

She waved her hand and said, “I, Xiao Honglian, keep my word; let that slave go! I hope he has good luck and successfully escapes to the territory of the Followers of the Snow God.”

“However, everyone involved in this project at the technical department will be locked in a small black room for three days!”

Zhuge Qingtian nodded, “Understood!”

He issued orders to the tracking soldiers, ultimately allowing the surviving slave to escape.

Xiao Honglian’s beautifully arched eyebrows were raised, clearly in a bad mood.

Zhuge Qingtian comforted her, “Leader, our technicians may not be as good as those at West Hill Base, but that’s unavoidable. The professionals in weapon development are all in the military.”

“When the apocalypse first hit, talents were snatched away by them. We can only select people from nearby universities and research institutes.”

Xiao Honglian shot him a glance, her expression still icy.

“For these damned slaves, we’ve worked ourselves to death!”

“If they weren’t always thinking about escaping, how could I waste so much effort on them?”

“That hypocritical woman from the Followers of the Snow God only uses them as bait. Do they really think there are saints in the apocalypse?”

The Followers of the Snow God were the only organization among the major forces in the West that was not based on an official shelter.

Yet, it was the organization with the largest number of followers.

Unlike other forces that rule through military might, their method was to inspire belief through religion.

Rumor had it that the leader of the Followers possessed miraculous powers.

They could heal all human suffering, both physical and mental.

The most critical part was that everyone was equal there, and everyone could receive food and shelter.

There was no discrimination or oppression.

Such rumors had circulated among the major forces in Tianhai City for an unknown period.

This caused civilians in the Yangsheng base to begin to drift away.

But in the apocalypse, people were also an essential resource.

Without a large population, how could labor be conducted?

How could an army be formed to seize territory and resources from other forces?

So Xiao Honglian could not simply sit back and watch this situation unfold.

Her method was to suppress fiercely!

Every civilian at the Yangsheng base had a mark branded on their faces.

This way, even if they escaped, they could be recognized, making it easier to bring them back.

If the Followers of the Snow God dared to harbor any slaves with a flame mark, they would have to risk going to war with the Yangsheng base!

Even so, openly and secretly, the Followers of the Snow God were still absorbing those runaway slaves.

This led to a very tense relationship between the Yangsheng base and the Followers of the Snow God.

And they were unlike the West Hill Base.

The West Hill Base was entirely underground, with no worries about civilians escaping.

The slaves at the Yangsheng base had to produce in the above-ground oil refinery.

No matter how tightly they sealed it off, there would always be those yearning for freedom who were willing to risk their lives to try.

Xiao Honglian turned and walked toward the factory's exit.

Zhuge Qingtian hurriedly followed her, saying, “As long as we can carve out a chunk of meat from West Hill Base’s territory, we can relieve the current pressure.” 嗯

“After all, the root of all problems in the apocalypse is the scarcity of resources.”

Xiao Honglian waved her hand, “But to occupy Lu River District and Xishan District, we must stabilize our rear. Tell the technical department to speed up their research; we must stabilize the functions of these explosive collars.”

“Safety can be set aside for now, but we must ensure they can definitely explode!”

Zhuge Qingtian nodded, mentally noting Xiao Honglian’s instructions.

Suddenly, Xiao Honglian stopped and asked, “In the past few days, how many of the forward units we sent out have returned?”

Zhuge Qingtian replied, “Almost all have returned, and even those who haven’t have sent reports.”

He paused before saying, “Except for the team led by Gaoyuan. They haven’t come back, and there hasn’t been any news.”

Upon hearing Gaoyuan’s name, Xiao Honglian couldn’t help but frown.

Gaoyuan was her cousin and had once been the captain of the Tianhai City armed police.

However, this cousin had a rebellious nature; he wouldn’t listen to anyone in the Yangsheng base except Xiao Honglian.

“That guy is well into adulthood and still going through a rebellious phase!”

At first, Xiao Honglian didn't take Gaoyuan's disappearance seriously. Given his personality, it wasn't surprising for him to act recklessly.

In the apocalypse, countless people had become eccentric; she herself wasn't doing much better.

But suddenly, a strange feeling flashed through her mind.

She felt that things were not so simple.

Xiao Honglian looked at Zhuge Qingtian, "He shouldn't be in any danger, right?"

Zhuge Qingtian adjusted his gold-rimmed glasses.

"Currently, among the five major forces in Tianhai City, if we also consider the unclear remnants of the West Hill Base, the relationships between each are quite delicate."

"Everyone is afraid to start a conflict; even when facing those bastards from the Followers of the Snow God who are recruiting people everywhere, we don't want a major clash."

"So even if Gaoyuan encountered people from other forces, they should give him some face. Unless..."

A cold glint flashed beneath Zhuge Qingtian's glasses:

"They are competing for some particularly precious resource! That's when they might break the tacit agreement and attack!"

Xiao Honglian's gaze sharpened, "All major resource points in Tianhai City have been occupied by our forces. While the remaining resources are undoubtedly important, they aren't worth starting a full-scale conflict over."

“I’m relatively at ease with the other forces; Chaoyu Base wouldn’t take action against us, and Qingpu Base operates under a ‘live and let live’ principle.”

“Then, the only unstable ones are those from the Followers of the Snow God.”

After pondering for a moment, Xiao Honglian cautiously told Zhuge Qingtian, “Continue trying to contact Gaoyuan! We must get in touch with him.”

“If we can’t reach him, it’s highly likely that something has happened.”

Zhuge Qingtian’s expression also turned serious.

No force could bear the cost of losing a superhuman.

Thus, if Gaoyuan encountered trouble, it would mean that a force was willing to go to war with them!

This would have a tremendous impact on the entire Yangsheng base and even the overall balance in Tianhai City!