

## Last System 462

### Chapter 462 The Day Before

A massive wheel of the mining machine spun without a single stop. The buckets mounted on the wheel bit into the earth like the teeth of some sort of monster, scrapping huge chunks of sand, earth, and stone alike.

"A pinnacle of human engineering, huh?" Damian scoffed, rolling his eyes before moving them away from the window of his cubicle office.

Out in the desert, there wasn't any proper building material that could be used to construct proper lodgings for the workers. There wasn't anything to build the operation headquarters either. And the cost of hauling all the building materials from hundreds of kilometers away or even from across the ocean...

It didn't make any financial sense.

And so, one of the highest executives of the LCA conglomerate was stuck in a simple shipping container.

It wasn't cheap, it was literally free as it was used to transport all the equipment on the site in the first place. With hundreds of them lying around, it only made sense to use them to construct makeshift lodges.

A huge, fully metal box. Out in the scorching sun of the middle of the desert.

The only thing that saved Damian from melting into a puddle of rotting flesh was the extensive use of the modern AC system.

'It would be far cheaper to just get normal materials and build proper housing here, than constantly paying some insane money for keeping those things running,' Damian thought as he glanced over at one of the two units mounted at the top of his box.

"Sir, we've reached the chamber," Damian's secretary reported from behind her own desk.

She was Damian's personal assistant, the manager of all those who worked under him. And it was her extremely high position on the corporate ladder that gave her enough guts to throw away the official executive attire in favor of some fancy, light clothing that only pretended to hide anything.

"And?" Damian asked, turning his eyes back to the massive excavator.

It was a considerable distance away, yet the noise of its operation easily reached Damian's box.

"Another dud," Alice, Damian's assistant, replied before following it with a sigh. "That makes it the fifth miss," she then added as she stretched herself back on her chair.

The girl reached out to a nearby bucket filled with iced water and towels floating inside. She grabbed one piece before slapping it down on her face, taking a breath of the cold, water-filtered air.

"That means we only have seven more to go at worst," Damian countered the massive drop in the mood that the report brought.

Only seven more to go. Only by putting it in this way, one could ignore the true scale of the effort that had to be put into this operation.

"At least we should be able to dig out some of the stashes," Alice muttered from underneath her wet towel.

"And spend two more weeks and a few million just for that?" Damian countered. He then shook his head. "We should be able to reinvent most of the stuff that's buried over there within a year or two. We are moving to the next spot."

Once again, a simple order that massively understated the scale of the operation hidden behind it. To move the massive excavator a single meter required some ungodly amount of fuel, even in the best of terrains.

And out here, in the empty endlessness of the biggest desert on the planet?

Daniel didn't even want to think about the costs of reaching the next point of interest.

**Beep.**

A single, short signal rang within the box. And a single, red dot appeared on the side of Alice's satelitary phone.

"Headquarters?" Damian asked, turning his eyes towards the girl's desk, only for his eyes to move over to the two sweet mounds of flesh that the girl's clothes didn't even pretend to hide.

"Most likely," Alice replied, lazily pulling the towel down from her face before reaching out for the phone's receiver.

"I knew they had people on the inside of this operation, but to openly acknowledge that by calling the second we ourselves got the news?" Damian muttered under his nose, turning his eyes away from Alice's breasts as he focused on inwardly cursing his situation while preparing for an earful from his theoretical superiors.

"Damian..." Alice muttered a moment later.

Damian knew something was wrong even before he turned his eyes to look at her suddenly frozen face.

For Alice to call him by his name... The importance of the topic had to be several grades above something as silly as the fake headquarters trying to ascertain their dominance over one of the two founders of the entire conglomerate!

"Speak," Damian ordered sharply.

Alice shook her head and focused on the voice coming through the receiver. She then glanced over at Damian's face.

"The mil base detected a huge detachment of the black rock guys heading our way," the girl obediently reported. "They are passing by the first automated sentry point as we speak."

Damian pulled his eyebrows together, weirded out by the news.

"Huge..." he muttered as he sank in his thoughts for a second. "How huge?" he asked, raising his eyes back to the girl's face.

"One hundred and fifty mercs," Alice reported right away. "Along with five tanks, fifteen IFVs, two choppers, and ten sand-hovers," she then listed out an impressive set of heavy equipment.

"Tanks, choppers, and IFVs I could discount..." Damian quickly analyzed the situation. 'But the hovers?'

There was nothing wrong with the last-age type of equipment. It still packed a lot of punch for its price.

But the presence of the hovers meant that the situation turned ugly in a hurry. It was a technology still in development. In theory, only the LCA should have access to it, but in the world where money reigned supreme, it was no wonder others already obtained some pieces and reverse-engineered them for their own purposes.

Still, for a technology that leaped for around a hundred years above the current technological level of civilization, the cost of a single vehicle was mind-boggling. And the cost for a whooping ten of them?

"Run it through the intel," Damian quickly ordered upon realizing that he was too much out of the loop to be able to give a sound judgment.

"I already did," Alice replied right away.

'Ten hovers,' Daniel thought while waiting for the message back from the information center of the conglomerate. 'Just what could drive them so desperate to take over this empty site?'