

Last System 464

Chapter 464 Escalation

"Damn," Daniel cursed while tapping his hand against the back of his device. "I can't reach the intelligence again."

"Device broke or...?" Alice inquired, following her superior outside of their box office.

"This is the first time anyone activated a blue alarm," Daniel pointed out, raising a piece of cloth from his neck to his mouth to keep his face free of ever-present sand. "Just deploying all the equipment will take a while. Setting it all up will take some more. Right now, the line is simply too busy."

Daniel sighed and hid the device back in one of his pockets.

The two of them marched out through the empty dunes, heading towards the main camp some distance away.

Roughly halfway over, one of the company's heavy-duty cars arrived.

"Sir, everything's a mess!" a young soldier reported, jumping out of the car while passing over a set of documents at the same time. "We pulled back two sectors according to the procedure. In two minutes, the arrays should activate," he then went through all the critical points while opening the doors to the executives.

"Send someone for the rest of the staff at the HQ," Daniel quickly ordered. "In a few minutes, that building will become a frontline."

For now, Daniel was quite happy to give a lot of lands.

This was a desert, after all. And even if the raiders managed to achieve their objectives... Nothing could stop Daniel from swooping right back in to reclaim what was his.

'I wonder what they are aiming for,' Daniel thought as he sat down in the back of the car, thinking in silence while the soldier drove him toward the main camp.

"Okay, I more or less get it now," Daniel muttered a moment later, once he finished the lecture on the report.

"How bad is it?" Alice asked, opening her mouth for the first time since they got to the car.

"Sir, we are about to..." the soldier attempted to report right as the girl spoke.

"Great, drop us out," Daniel spoke back to the driver before turning his eyes toward the girl. "It's getting ugly in a hurry," he then revealed honestly.

"Ugh..." Alice squirmed a little. She then clutched at a small token hanging on her wrist.

'A memento of a family, perhaps?' Daniel thought in a momentary daze.

"Sir, we are here," the soldier hurried them up.

There was no time for sentiments or melancholy on a battlefield.

"Report back to your unit. We need all the hands we can get now!" Daniel ordered as soon as he rushed to escape from the car.

Given the success of an artillery raid that penetrated deep behind the defense lines, Daniel had no wish to remain in one of the bombardment's primary targets for long.

"Sir, the array is about to boot up," a new soldier approached right away, saluting to the top of his hat as he reported.

"Good," Daniel nodded his head before pushing the doors to the nearby building open. "Track the bastards down and then let the boys do the rest."

There was no urgency in Daniel's tone.

Simply, because there was no reason for him to worry.

The ongoing attack would barely sting the conglomerate, assuming it wouldn't go unnoticed at all.

'There is something weird about this raid,' Daniel thought as he stepped into the local command center and looked around.

The men were trained well.

They managed to bring out most of the updated equipment. They were now busy with the finishing touches while another unit already started to link up various techs to the network.

"We are up!" Someone shouted from deeper within the hall.

A projector embedded into the very middle of the floor of the room lit up. The lights within the room died down, and central illumination was replaced by nothing more than the control lights on the tech.

And in this sudden darkness, a huge map started to float right above the projector.

Everyone's eyes lunged toward one of the marked spots on the projected map.

"Prepare the counterbattery attack," Daniel shouted an order, unfreezing his body as he bolted forward, to the central spot of the commander.

"Three packets, send it away," Daniel developed his order into the next one as soon as he saw the icons of the local battery appear on the map.

'Time to test the heck out of this integrated system,' Daniel thought, his eyes flaring up a little when a parabolic, dotted line appeared on the map, connecting the location of the artillery with the red marks portraying the detected enemy unit.

"Three packets, away," the leader in charge of the artillery reported a mere second later.

Everyone in the room held their breath.

For the first time in history, the ancient tech of the organization so openly affected the development of the events. And now, everyone was quite curious to see the effects.

'They know it will be devastating,' Daniel thought, connecting to the local access point of the network and manipulating the settings a bit.

A new screen appeared in the room, this time displaying the direct image of the target. It came from a mix of two satellites and four ground observation units that combined their feeds into multi-angle projection but also enriched it with specific information about every element on the screen.

"Impact in three, two, one..." the artillery commander counted down.

All the screens turned dark. It was a simple measure against damaging the lenses. And while it cut off the moment of the very impact, no one was going to throw away billions worth of equipment just for a single frame of an epic moment saved on a video?

It was far cheaper to manufacture something even more majestic if it was for the sake of propaganda!

The screens turned back... only for the feed to return after a literal second.

"Hit confirmed," the soldier spoke, while everyone glanced at the sight of destruction.

'So they used hovers after all,' Daniel thought after observing the scene of absolute devastation for a second.

He knew the characteristics of the anti-battery fire. He knew the characteristics of the shells the battery used.

But what he saw in the picture, could only appear as a result of several hover engines turning unstable and going off.

A scene akin to a nuclear plant meltdown... just with an extremely condensed area.

"And so the Earth received another scar that won't heal for millennia to come," Daniel muttered, his face taking on a slightly darker tone.

The area devastated by the bombardment was no larger than a single football field. It was a random spot in the middle of the biggest desert in the whole damn world.

And yet, it would remain lethally toxic for tens of times more than human civilization existed!

"Guys, don't get distracted," Daniel then called out after shaking off the mixed feelings he had about the success of their first response. "Send a patrol to the nearest intelligence quarters. I want all the other enemy units located and taken down!" Daniel then screamed out.

"Sir!" One of the soldiers called out, ignoring the order Daniel just gave. "A call," the man notified while pushing out his hand with a private calling device of the new network. "And you need to take it."

There was something strange in the soldier's expression.

Daniel ignored the procedure and reached out, taking the device and bringing it to his ear.

"Three separate launches confirmed," the voice from the device whispered to Daniel's ear.

"Activation of the black alarm confirmed."