

Last System 465

Chapter 465 No Turning Back

If the blue alarm meant a massive shock would sweep across the earth over the introduction of all sorts of new technology, the black alarm...

It would suffice to say there was only one step above this grade. And right now, save for the most drastic and permanent measures, all was a fair game.

"Authorize Black Alarm," Daniel echoed the voice in the device with a whisper on his own.

Daniel closed his eyes.

For a single second, he cut himself off from all the chatter that filled the command center.

"Time for a slugfest, huh?" he thought, enjoying the last possible moment of peace.

"Three launches detected!" one of the soldiers passed over the report that brought forth the black alarm.

"Open up the silos in the colony," Daniel ordered.

A new set of windows appeared only to float through the middle of the room. It displayed a sight from half a continent away.

The image consisted of a few barn-like buildings and a set of twenty massive, iron caps set in two rows across a huge field.

And in a mere few seconds, after Daniel gave out his order, half of those caps started to open.

"ETA of the first strike, four minutes fifty seconds!" More details about the situation sounded right as the data on the screens updated, showcasing the live feed of the approaching missile.

"Chance to intercept?" Daniel asked the room.

"Mid-range, seventy-three percent," Alice replied from an area below Daniel's stand. "We can crack it open in close range, a hundred percent," the girl quickly came up with a less usual and more efficient answer.

"Calculate the zone, fast!" Daniel gave his next orders before moving his eyes back to the multiple screens displayed in the middle of the room.

"What's the diplomacy status?" Daniel asked, counting down the seconds he was actively wasting by waiting.

"BlackRock doesn't respond. Our embassy in the states is bouncing against their procedures," someone else quickly brought up a status report from the diplomacy bureau.

'Shit, do we really have to go all in?' Daniel hesitated.

The moment he decided on the defense that Alice suggested, Daniel lost his ability to go back. Because the only surefire way of neutralizing the nuke meant remotely firing it off somewhere else.

And the moment the first atomic shroom appears in the sky, the entire world will quickly follow suit.

"Still no answer," one of the soldiers reported. "Sir, if we don't shoot before neutralizing the incoming missiles, we won't be able to do it anymore."

The blast from a near nuclear discharge would likely damage some parts of the equipment. Be it its mechanical parts or circuits controlling it, the second it happened, launching anything meant suicide.

After all, only a madman would dare to operate precision military equipment where every last element of it could instantly fail.

Daniel took a deep breath.

'They are right. If we want to fire, we need to fire now,' he thought, tensing up his fingers over the railing nearby.

"Clear the permissions for the central AI to take over targeting," Daniel muttered in a grave voice.

An AI-controlled strike.

An event that even he, a member of the lost civilization, and one of the two surviving leaders of Atlantis, shivered at the thought of what would happen now.

'Not even back in the last two ages did anyone dare to commit this sin,' Daniel thought, closing his eyes, unable to watch how soldiers obediently followed the procedure behind the order.

First, the central AI of the entire conglomerate would consume every last byte of data that went through any and all centers of commands of the frontier. Then, all of the organization's response to the attack and missile raid would aim towards what the AI would deem most vital targets.

An AI whose power exceeded that of humanity's entire brainpower by a factor of seven.

Something so intelligent it reached far beyond the limits within which the human brain operated.

"Calculating rapid response program," one of the soldiers reported the status of the operation.

Ting!

All the lights within the commanding center turned dark violet.

The AI swiftly took control of the entire system. Then, it projected the calculated response upon the main projector, allowing everyone to gaze upon its creation.

"That's..." Daniel gulped his saliva down as he analyzed the red marks scattered all over the upper half of the continent.

It was the most obvious form of a retaliatory strike. A textbook example of how to execute this kind of counter-battery fire.

But still, it would only involve conventional weapons.

Weapons exceeding the current level of humanity's designs by at least two or three centuries, but a conventional weapon nevertheless.

"I need to confirm it," the soldier on the manual control over the command center's systems called out, forgoing the procedure in favor of quick communication.

Not a single other soul dared to raise their voice in such a critical moment.

"Sir, should I?" the soldier asked, glancing between the projections and Daniel's face.

'This is really going to hurt them,' Daniel thought, biting down on his lips.

As the seconds counted down the impact of the nearest nuke continued to decrease. Upon reaching the three minutes mark, they turned red.

A sign that in thirty seconds, shooting them down would commence.

"Confirm the order, fire upon the targets!" Daniel shouted his order, not daring to waste even a single more of the precious seconds he had before it would be all over.

"Launch sequence installed!" A choir of voices followed, each reporting the next step of the designated fire order.

"Charging the load!" the artillery crew arrived at the last step.

Their leader gulped a mouthful of saliva down.

"Fire..." he then whispered while pressing down a simple-looking, red button.

Flashes appeared at the open entrances of ten out of the twenty tubes. Within a single instant, the electromagnetic mechanism ejected the rockets into the sky.

"One through ten away," a soldier reported.

"Climbing to the second phase... Three, two, one..."

"Second phase achieved!"

The screens showcased how the fuselage of the missiles moved around. Already in the thinner part of the atmosphere, the gears turned on the rockets only for their tails to explode with fire when the conventional engine altered their path.

"Cracking the nukes in five, four, three..." Another soldier started another countdown.

"Brace, brace, brace," a robotic voice of the automated response system filled the room.

"Cracking commenced!" Alice screamed out.

Everyone tensed up, bracing themselves against whatever they could grab a hold on to.

For three unrelenting seconds, everyone waited.

Waited for the shockwave to reach them.

Because they could see the slightly altered image of the explosion on the screens.

ROAAAAR!

The glass of the windows moaned while the winds of the distant explosion soared through the skies.

For a few terrifying seconds, everyone could only hear the roaring of the powerful winds.

And then, everything calmed down.

"Tracking resumed!" the reports returned right away.

"We did it..." Alice muttered as she raised her eyes from her tablet to the main screen.

"Next strike coming in two minutes!" Another report filled the room.

'Right, we will have to go through this hell two more times,' Daniel thought, clenching his fingers as he looked at the screens.

"Hey, Alice, we have yet to take care of the mobile force of the invaders, right?" he muttered as a certain thought entered his brain. "Those that forced us to evacuate the HQ, you know?"

"Yeah," Alice nodded her head, shaking the storm of her hair around. "What about them?"

"Could you crack one of the nukes right above their heads?" Daniel asked with a dark expression on his face.

Alice looked at her boss' face for a second. She then heaved a deep sigh before turning her head back towards her own console and quickly running Daniel's request through the aiming system of the cracking array.

"Will do," she said right as her fingers danced only for her thumb to heavily fall upon the 'enter' key.

"Keep me updated on the global reaction," Daniel then requested, not allowing himself even a second of mental rest. "There is no way no one has noticed it yet!"

The soldiers hurried back to their jobs, checking different arrays of scanning equipment and reading through the notes sent over from all the other decision centers of the conglomerate.

"There is no response yet," one of the soldiers soon reported.

'Strange...' Daniel thought, pulling his eyebrows together. "That doesn't seem right!"

In the current age, detecting a nuclear discharge would happen the second a nuke went off. And every major country already had to get the news.

And yet...

Not a single of the established powers bothered to comment on the event!

Daniel squinted his eyes for one last time before raising them back towards the screens.

They went through the first out of the total of three shockwaves that they would suffer. But now, everyone's attention centered on just a single one of all the windows floating in the room.

A screen that showcased the flight of their response to this barbaric and unprovoked attack!