

Coffee Addict

Chapter 23 – Defending The Plantation

“Judging by the combat armour, there were two dead enemy fighters in the elevator. Mercifully there were no dead plantation cops with them. Michelle pulled off one of the dead men’s masks to reveal a caucasian face with a well-trimmed beard. Once again, their assailants might call anywhere on the globe their home. Jess chivvied everyone into the elevator.”

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The evacuation was underway, though Maria wasn’t sure of her feelings about that. The authorities in the form of Mateo Rodriguez had decided to go through the school registers and evacuate the kids first; and their parents of course. There had already been arguments about whether grandparents were included in the great emptying of the village; assorted aunts and uncles definitely weren’t. To Maria it looked like a shambles, especially as it wasn’t compulsory.

Out of the Muisca Brats, Alfonso’s parents had decided to stay put, as had Greta’s. Tilly’s folks had actually been keen to get out of the village after her mum had been bitten by a large rat creature. Luckily the rat creatures didn’t seem to pass on any nasty diseases. Maria’s mother was happy to leave, but said she’d miss all her friends at the plantation. Military vehicles from Bogotá were being used to take them to safety. It was going to be like the refugee convoys Maria remembered seeing on the TV news; a few of the vehicles had serious looking weapons.

“There are no allocated seats.....Get on any of the buses.” Said a uniformed soldier.

One suitcase per person hadn’t pleased her mum, but it was better than hearing giant rats clawing at the door every night. Tilly was about to get on a different bus to the one Maria and her mum were queueing to use.

“I see Tilly.....Can we get on that bus, mum ?” Asked Maria.

“The queue is longer for that bus.” Said her mum.

“Please, I won’t pester you for anything else.” Said Maria.

“You know you will.....Come on then, we’ll get on that bus.” Said her mum.

Their cases were heavy and they were leaving behind a home they both loved. Neither of them were in a good mood, as they joined the bus to temporary accommodation in Manizales. Some of the buses were going to other towns, but Maria was glad they were going to Manizales, her mum had friends there.

“Tilly.....Save me a seat.” Yelled Maria.

“I will.” Shouted Tilly.

The buses were long single deck vehicles, painted in army camouflage. The queue looked long, but they were soon at the front, their cases being taken off them to store in a baggage hold. With luck, they’d see their belongings again when they reached Manizales. As for the rest of their worldly possessions ? If the trouble dragged on, they’d arrange for them to be boxed up and sent to them. That was a last resort; the village really did feel like home. Her mum found seats she liked and Maria sat next to her. Tilly was waving furiously at her, from a seat closer to the front of the bus.

“Alright, go and sit with Tilly.” Said her mum.

“Thanks mum.”

Why did travelling with her mum make her feel like a toddler ? There was no reason for it, but it happened every time; even when going on holiday. She'd go back to her mum of course, but it would be nice to chat to Tilly for a while. Maria flopped down in the seat next to Tilly.

"Been a weird day." Said Maria.

"I say that at least twenty times a day." Said Tilly.

Travelling by plane would have been nice, but the closest airstrip that could accommodate a passenger jet was at Manizales. That was a logistical problem that even Mateo Rodriguez couldn't cure. Her mum and her had decided to get on the bus with the shortest queue and see where they ended up.

"Please get in your seats, we're about to leave." Someone yelled.

The convoy was quite long and from what Maria remembered they'd be getting off first at the Manizales bus station. After that it was all a mystery and they had no idea how good or bad the temporary accommodation might be. After seeing the huge rats, her mum was happy to live just about anywhere.

"So, Alfonso's folks decided to stay in the village ?" Asked Tilly.

"Yes, I just hope they don't regret that." Said Maria. "They've obviously never come across a victim of the creatures late at night."

"But we have." Said Tilly.

"Yes, we have.....Not that my mum took any convincing to leave." Said Maria.

The idea was that if any of the creatures decided to attack the convoy, or get in their way, it would be at the beginning of their journey; close to the village. A positive thought was that nothing had attacked the empty vehicles on the way in. Refreshments were provided on the bus, as were toilet facilities. There'd be no stopping until they were quite some way from the village. The convoy came to a stop about at about seventy miles along the main dual carriageway that would take them all the way to Manizales. The driver came on the internal speakers.

"A large wolf creature is crossing the road quite some way ahead." Said the driver. "Hopefully he'll soon be out of our way. We'll wait here until he's gone."

No one had told the huge wolf creature about getting out of their way. At first it seemed happy to dig about in the ground and sniff the air. Then it obviously noticed them. It didn't charge them, it sort of sauntered towards them; like the school bully coming get claim their lunch money. It was huge, but that now went without saying. A monster of a wolf that had to weigh over a ton. It stopped close to the convoy; close enough for Maria to see its sharp teeth and claws.

"Shit.....Why aren't they firing at it ?" Asked Tilly.

"They're not easy to kill." Said Maria. "The army guys are probably hoping it wanders off."

That might have worked, if one or two people in the leading coach hadn't started yelling for the soldiers to kill the brute. They were impressively vocal. Others took up a kind of chant for the creature to be killed, that sounded like something from a football match.

"Kill it, kill the monster.....Kill it, kill the monster....Kill it, kill the monster." It went on and on.

The huge wolf probably just heard the voices of one of its favourite foods, people. It moved a little closer and looked to be examining the humans through the coach windows.

"They need to kill it !" Shouted Maria.

Two male passengers armed with what looked like kitchen knives, were trying to open the coach doors.

"Please.....Keep calm and stay in your seats." Yelled the driver.

The two men never did get out of the coach, which probably kept them alive. The wolf creature began to snarl, which Maria assumed was a cue for the soldiers. The large weapons on the backs of a few of the vehicles began to fire. Incendiary rounds of some kind, they were making the creature shriek, while setting fire to its fur.

"That's it, burn the fucker." Someone shouted.

The shooting continued until the brute moved away. Slowly at first, but it picked up speed and vanished towards a small wood not that far away. They hadn't killed it, but seeing it run away gave rise to a lot of cheering. Maria's final image of the beast was as a huge ball of flame as its fur became an inferno.

"Maybe we do stand a chance against these things." Said Tilly.

"Maybe." Said Maria.

With luck the huge wolf would be found one day, dead from its injuries. The bus driver talked on his radio for a while, before the bus began to move again.

"We're on our way." Shouted the driver. "Please be seated.....For your own safety."

Her mum still looked scared and she was waving at her. Maria hugged Tilly, before going back to sit with her mum. She squeezed her mum's hand.

"It's alright mum, the soldiers made it run away." Said Maria.

"Do you think it will come back?" Asked her mum.

"No mum, I'm sure it won't bother us again."

Not that one, but there might be others further along the road. Not that Maria was going to say that to her mum.

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They went into the underground chamber fast and furious, like the marines. David had been killed and there was a need to prove that didn't scare them, even if it did. Jaimie ended up at the front of the group, his supergun in his hand.

"Yeah.....You bastards." Yelled Jaimie.

Jess was as well armed as Jaimie, but she wasn't feeling particularly courageous, or confident. The hissing noise should have given it away of course, they'd found where the huge snake creatures were housed. If there was one thing that pressed her anxiety buttons, it was snakes.

"Shoot them.....Now !" Shouted Michelle.

Jess never did work out how many snakes there were, she just fired at anything that hissed and slithered. She knew she'd killed one, but she might have wounded a few others. Michelle was the best shot out of the group, she seemed to hit and kill every snake she aimed at. Jaimie did quite well, until a snake gave him a bit of nip on his gun arm. It took a while and a few reloads to leave every snake dead. Jaimie's wound looked painful, but minor. Ana was the worry; she had a deep bite in her shoulder, that was still bleeding. Michelle took over as leader, which no one seemed to object to.

"Jaimie and I will cover the door." Said Michelle. "The rest of you look after Ana.....Stop that wound bleeding."

They were all scared; they had already lost David and Ana's wound looked dreadful. To top that, no one was sure if the snakes had venom in their bites. Jess decided to forget everything else, apart from Ana's awful wound. Luckily there was light in the chamber, more than enough to dress a wound by.

"Crap, that is a bad bite." Said Julian.

"I can deal with it.....Won't take me long." Said Jess.

There had been medics with them, but they were still up on the surface somewhere. Jess had dressed a few wounds in her time. As she used the contents of her pack to clean and dress the wound, Michelle and Jaimie were deciding what to do next. Jess was happy to go along with whatever they decided, to a point. Ana winced.

"Sorry, I have to get the dirt out." Said Jess.

"I know.....Do you think its bite was poisonous ?" Asked Ana.

"Being honest; I hope not, but I can't be sure." Said Jess. "We need to get you back to the village as soon as possible. The soldiers from Bogotá brought a proper doctor with them."

Michelle was saying much the same thing to Jaimie. No one was a coward, but they'd lost David and Ana was badly hurt. The most sensible thing seemed to be to fight their way out of the base and return to the village.

"We'll never learn who runs this place." Said Jaimie.

"Let the army deal with that." Said Michelle. "We have a position for this building and some pictures. They can either come here on the ground, or bomb it from the air. Personally, I don't care which."

"Nor do I.....Sounds a good plan." Said Jess.

"Yeah, let's get out of this place." Said Julian.

"We might never know who the enemy are." Said Jaimie.

"I don't care.....We leave or I'm scared that I'll die in this shit hole." Said Ana.

"Fine.....We'll leave as soon as Jess has finished bandaging your wounds." Said Jaimie.

"I need another ten minutes, tops." Said Jess.

There was no way Jess was going to hurry dressing the wound, Ana might start bleeding again before they reached their vehicles. Once she was happy the running repairs on Ana were as good as she could manage with what was in her pack, she said Ana was ready to move.

"Back by the corridors we came by, no deviations, no exploring." Said Jaimie.

"Are we still leaving David where he fell ?" Asked Julian.

"Yes, sadly we are." Said Jaimie.

They passed David's body on the way out and it didn't look as though anything had interfered with him. The trudge back to the elevator seemed longer than when they arrived where David had died. Not surprising, they'd been confident and eager to explore until that dreadful moment. Ana used the hand connected to her good arm, to press the elevator button. Everyone seemed relieved when the whirring noise started up.

"It's on the way down.....Be ready for anything." Said Michelle.

Judging by the combat armour, there were two dead enemy fighters in the elevator. Mercifully there were no dead plantation cops with them. Michelle pulled off one of the dead men's masks to reveal a caucasian face with a well-trimmed beard. Once again, their assailants might call anywhere on the globe their home. Jess chivvied everyone into the elevator.

"Let's get this done.....I dread to think what we'll find on the surface." Said Jess.

What they found was Jorge, still managing to stand on his own two feet, while firing an assault rifle. He briefly pointed the rifle in their direction, before lowering it.

"I thought.....I thought you must all be dead." Said Jorge.

"I think if we'd stayed down there.....It's hell in the lower levels." Said Michelle.

Jorge fired his assault rifle into the nearby bushes and someone yelled. While they'd been underground he'd obviously gained a lot of experience on fighting their enemy.

"Anything down there to say where these guys came from ?" Asked Jorge.

"Probably, but we didn't find any of it." Said Ana.

It was as if Jorge hadn't noticed up until that point. He was looking them over, as they spread out to give the enemy a harder target.

"Where's David ?" Asked Jorge.

"David didn't make it." Said Jess. "As Michelle said; it's hell down there."

"Crap." Said Jorge. "We need to get out of here and call in an air strike."

Jess thought he was being a bit optimistic. The air force would need time to run a bombing mission through several departments and probably get permission at the highest level. If an air strike arrived, it was likely to arrive the following morning.

"Are the vehicles in one piece ?" Asked Jaimie.

"They were when I left them." Said Jorge.

"Round everyone up.....We're going back to the village." Said Jaimie

It took a while to get everyone to their vehicles and not everyone was going home. His buddies had seen one retired cop killed and another was presumed dead. The pocket howitzers had killed a lot of enemy soldiers though; the weapons really ripped them apart. It was getting dark by the time they came off the rough farm road and onto the main road home.

"I called in a position for the fake farm to Mateo's people." Said Jaimie. "What happens now is up to them and Bogotá."

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Yoon learned the fact that there came a time when what might be thought of as looting, became using what you could find to survive. Valeria probably had a couple of cracked ribs and despite the optimistic broadcasts on V-Boom; no one seemed to be arriving to help them. As far as Yoon could tell, they were the last two humans in the street. There were huge rats of course, those things were everywhere. Yoon had lost her enthusiasm to stay in Kate's apartment after killing a 'big one,' a truly huge wolf creature. Everything from now on would be an anti-climax.

"How's it looking, will it get us to the where the army are ?" Asked Valeria.

Yoon had helped Valeria to pack, but they weren't loading up the four door Hyundai until they were certain it was running well. It was quite an elderly car; families had gone off in all the cars that might be considered new(ish) and roadworthy. The Hyundai had belonged to woman ten doors away, who was either ignoring her doorbell, or dead. Neither of them wanted to break into the house to find out which.

"It ran well when I drove it around the block." Said Yoon. "Glad I drove that way, it's worse there, much worse. We're definitely doing the right thing by leaving."

About two thirds of a tank full of gas and the car didn't run hot, or do anything alarming when Yoon had taken it right round a very large block. Valeria knew the woman who'd owned the car, of course she did; Valeria knew everyone. Magda had owned the Hyundai for years and Valeria never remembered her getting it serviced, or cleaning it out that much. She's liked burgers from Café Loco; the floor was covered with the boxes and wrappers.

"We could look for a newer vehicle, but it isn't far to the perimeter defences." Said Yoon.

"According to the kids who run V-Boom." Said Valeria.

There was that, they were relying on V-Boom for all there information and it did seem to be run by a gang of permanently upbeat students. Still, it was better than having no local news.

"Do I load up Magda's car, or are we looking for something newer ?" Asked Yoon.

"Oh, not more bashing rats and looking in garages." Said Valeria. "Get our bags in the Hyundai and I vote for taking our chances."

"After seeing the streets a mile, or two away, I agree." Said Yoon.

"How bad was it?" Asked Valeria.

"Quite a few dead left to decay on the sidewalk." Said Yoon. "A few houses that are burned to the ground. We really do need to get to where the army are located."

Like holidays with her parents, most of the time went in deciding what to pack and loading up the family car. Yoon had all their bags in the Hyundai in a matter of minutes.

"I'll miss my house.....I love the garden." Said Valeria.

"You might be returning to it, one day." Said Yoon.

"No, I've got a feeling. One way or another, there'll be nothing to come back to."

The radio in Magda's car was already tuned to V-Boom, of course it was; everyone listened to V-Boom. It was hard to reconcile the students' cheery words with what Yoon had seen, not that far away. She was driving, as Valeria was still one huge massive ache, according to her.

"I'll go past Café Loco." Said Yoon. "I really hope it's still there. I'll stop to buy two coffees to go if it is."

"That'd be great." Said Valeria.

Café Loco had been damaged, as had the building next to it. Not the kind of damage that meant sending for the demolition contractor, but it would be expensive to repair. Of course, the military might decide to bomb the entire village out of existence.

"Oh, the entire frontage has gone." Said Valeria.

"It can be repaired." Said Yoon. "Everything can be rebuilt."

"You sound like those kids on V-Boom." Said Valeria.

The road that would take them directly to the plantation's defences was blocked by rubble. There was one of the huge mole type creatures part buried by the rubble. The creature looked to have been dead for a while, though a few huge rats had found bits of it to chew at. Tempting to stop and deal with them, but there'd always be more giant rats.

"Try two streets further down Main Street." Said Valeria.

That was the right way, there was even a hand painted sign, pointing down the road. According to the sign they needed to drive slowly when approaching the defence perimeter. Yoon brought their speed down to about fifteen miles per hour.

"No one seems to be clearing the dead creatures away." Said Valeria.

"I'd bet a year's salary that Luke is still taking samples from most of them." Said Yoon. "It's what he does."

There were dead creatures everywhere, some big and some truly huge. They'd all been pushed away to one side by some means, to keep the road open. By the time their borrowed Hyundai arrived at the gates to the defended area, they were already opening. The Hyundai coughed a little as it went through the gates, but it didn't stop; it hadn't let them down.

"I want a decent coffee." Said Yoon. "What's the first thing you want to do?"

"See a doctor and find out if my ribs really are broken." Said Valeria.

That kind of killed what could have been a happy moment.

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Luke Walsh had arrived at the dead dinosaur creature with a professional quality camera and a lot of bags, tubes and cartons to hold samples. It was the big one, maybe the high point of his career. Whoever was messing about with good old Mother Nature, had created their own dinosaur. If he could discover how and why they'd done it, he'd be able to name his own salary in several big pharma companies. He could probably get a corner office on the top floor. Not that Luke was naturally greedy, but there was Walter to think of. As he got older he'd need more care and when

Luke and his wife were gone, his son would need a good hefty bank balance, purely to survive. First though Luke sent a text to Lidia Fernandez, thanking her for sending him the location of the dead beast. She'd also sent him a few amazing pictures of the dead brute.

'Thanks Lidia, it's truly huge.....Biggest of the creatures yet.'

There'd be no question of moving the carcass, or even incinerating it. Luke hated to do it, but the body of the amazing dinosaur creature would be left to rot away in the open. It seemed like an insult to whoever had created the amazing creature. That said, it was probably the same creature who'd killed Gabi Alvarez.

'Especially loved the pictures.' He sent to Lidia.

The never go anywhere alone rules were still in place and one of the cops on loan from Bogotá had been keen to see a real live dinosaur, even if it was actually dead. The poor guy had been doing door to door enquiries for days and probably needed a change to save himself from going mad. Sebastian was the guy's name; he'd been paired with Lidia for a while. Seb had his phone out and looking awkward. Luke knew what question was coming next.

"It's alright Seb; take all the picture you want." Said Luke.

"Brilliant.....otherwise my mum will never believe me." Said Seb. "A dinosaur, we've got an actual dead dinosaur near the village."

"A dinosaur created in a lab somewhere, but it is huge." Said Luke.

"Is it a copy of a real dinosaur ?" Asked Seb.

Luke remembered that Sebastian liked to be called Sebastian, but it was too late now. In his mind, Luke had the cop carved in stone as a Seb.

"No, the thick bones on the shoulders and the sides of its head; they're unique." Said Luke. "This is someone's idea of the perfect dinosaur. It's someone's ego trip."

"Wow.....My mum will love these pics." Said Seb.

While Seb used his phone, Luke used the laboratory camera to take around fifty high definition images. It was impossible to get the carcass back to the village, so the roadside pictures would have to do. After the pictures it was a question of getting samples from remains that had been quietly decomposing for several days. Just sticking needles into the brute's hide was pretty difficult.

"This thing has skin like reinforced leather armour." Said Luke.

"The ultimate fighting creature." Said Seb. "I really hope we never have to face a pack of these things."

Luke resorted to digging a military dagger into the creature; and inserting a hypodermic into the wound to get fluid samples. An awful way to do it, everything would be contaminated by now. Better than nothing though and that had become the name of the game. Any samples he could collect, were better than nothing.

"Help me roll it on its side." Said Luke. "I can then dig into it and get some of its gastro intestinal fluids."

"What ? Roll it where ?" Asked Seb.

It was a joke, a silly joke really. Worth it to see the look on Seb's face.

"Just one of my jokes." Said Luke. "If we team up a few times, you'll get used to them."

Luke dug into where he estimated the creature had an abdomen. A thick green ichor came out, which he didn't recognise at all. The dead dinosaur should have been in a sterile lab somewhere, not by the side of a road in the farmlands. He collected some of the green fluid, labelling the container simply 'abdomen.'

"Wow, is that supposed to be green ?" Asked Seb.

The liquid also had the smell of something that had been rotting for a while.

"I honestly have no idea." Said Luke.

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Ana was in the treatment tent, with half a dozen nurses making sure she was pain free and well looked after. It didn't look as though the snake had venom in its bite, which was really good news. After cleaning up and getting a decent meal, the rest of the team who'd attacked the enemy base at the fake farm, had sort of gravitated to the fence that surrounded the defended area for refugees from the village. Specifically they'd headed for the section of fence facing north, where any trouble was expected to arrive. Mateo Rodriguez was there too, in his heavily armed and armoured mobile command centre. He was picking up news from Bogotá and didn't seem to mind sharing it. Jaimie wanted to get home, but wondered if there was still a home to go to.

"An airstrike on the fake farm has been approved." Said Mateo.

"Great news, do we have a time for that?" Asked Jess.

"No, but I'm sure it will be sooner rather than later." Said Captain Sánchez.

The village had been attacked again, but there had been close to two days without any creatures being seen in the area. Many of those still in their homes had taken the opportunity to gather up their essentials and loved ones, and come to the defended area. According to Sánchez they'd all arrived with horrific stories of the dead being left in the streets. Rats had been mentioned by many, huge rat creatures who attacked people on sight. Some had arrived on foot, looking scared and talking about being hungry for days.

"Who the hell is sending these creatures?" Asked Michelle.

"I have no idea and I suspect Bogotá doesn't know either." Said Mateo. "Now....I hate to chuck you all out, but I need those not actually supposed to be here.....To leave my command vehicle."

"Sorry.....We'll get out of your hair." Said Jaimie. "Before I go, have any of the patrols mentioned my plantation?"

"The patrols are getting fewer." Said Sánchez. "We're getting data from US satellites and as of about six hours ago, your plantation looks fairly intact."

"Thanks, that's good news." Said Jaimie.

Fairly intact to a satellite hurtling around the globe wasn't that reassuring, but at least someone had taken the trouble to point one of its cameras in that direction. Jaimie was getting like everyone else, speaking the mantra several times a day.

"Everything can be fixed.....Everything can be rebuilt." Jaimie said, as he left the command vehicle.

He looked north, through the chain link fence and the electrified fence beyond it. He'd tried to get into one of the gun positions above the fence, but they were expecting trouble and kept shooing him away. It was frustrating, but the soldiers sent by Bogotá knew what they were doing.

"Anyone fancy coffee in the mess tent?" Asked Michelle. "It is free."

"Yeah, why not.....Can't see much here and can't do much." Said Julian.

Julian was healing well, though as he said for comic effect, he'd probably never play the bagpipes again. Jaimie dreaded them all getting together over a coffee, the conversation was certain to drift back to the death of David Sullivan. It couldn't be helped though; his people from Canada needed closure. It all began as soon as they were seated with a pot of truly awful coffee. Actually, it began after the ritual of slagging off local coffee.

"The plantation grows great coffee beans." Said Jess. "I know those beans make wonderful coffee.....So why does everywhere except Café Loco, end up with this flavourless crap?"

"I heard Howard imports his coffee." Said Julian.

"Wow, the local chamber of commerce will string him up." Said Jaimie.

When the comment came, it came out of left field; often the best way to deal with such things.

"I hope someone has been in contact with David's family." Said Jess. "Does anyone know for sure that they have?"

"Left in an underground enemy complex, that'd make for a hell of a conversation." Said Jaimie.

"Jaimie, really !!" Said Jess.

"No point in glossing it over, his family will need to know the truth." Said Jaimie.

"If it was my husband, I'd want to know everything." Said Michelle. "Warts and all."

Jaimie hadn't noticed that Sánchez had come for a coffee, he could move quietly for a big guy. He'd obviously been listening to their conversation.

"Mateo Rodriguez called his wife as soon as he knew what had happened." Said Sánchez. "David Sullivan was survived by a wife and two young children."

"Crap." Said Michelle. "Tessera Coffee wanted to move him to Vietnam. He only stayed here because he cared what happened to his people. I hope his family get looked after."

"Bound to." Said Jaimie. "There must be some kind death in service insurance, there always is."

"David was a great guy." Said Jess.

"Yeah, one of the best." Said Michelle.

It could have become a bit too sombre, but Jaimie noticed Sánchez was looking at a device he'd placed on the table. A red light on it was flashing and a screen had come to life.

"Looks like we've got some action." Said Sánchez. "The guys on the north fence have seen something huge heading our way."

"How huge ?" Asked Michelle.

"Let's go and find out." Said Jaimie.

By the time they were at the northern fence, the sound of heavy weapons fire had begun. None of the soldiers would allow them into a gun position, to see what was going on. Mateo was now refusing to let them enter his mobile command centre. It was crazy, all that action yet not being able to see it.

"Not all the gun positions have weapons installed." Said Julian. "Come on, they're too busy to chuck us out of an empty gun position."

The position wasn't bad, but the angle of the fence left a lot to be desired. They arrived in the gun position just in time to see a massive wolf creature die from heavy weapons fire.

"Yeah, the soldiers from Bogotá don't piss about." Said Jaimie.

Another massive wolf was coming in from their right. Jaimie was tempted to use his borrowed supergun on it, but the heavy weapons were already tearing it apart. It all looked so easy once the soldiers had the right weapons for the job.

"I'm not wasting pocket howitzer ammunition." Said Michelle. "The fence defences are tearing these things apart."

"Look, one of the huge mole creatures has decided to join in." Said Julian. "I bet the heavy weapons don't kill that as easily."

It was like a small hill, come to life and imbued with a purpose. It ignored the heavy weapons damage, the way a human might ignore gnat bites. Jaimie saw Michelle aiming her supergun at the brute, as was Jess. He decided to hold back for now. If the mole creature looked likely to reach the fence, Jaimie would use his borrowed pocket howitzer.

"Shit, that thing is big." Said Julian. "Like someone woke up some kind of mythical giant."

"Enough supergun hits and it'll die." Said Yoon.

No one had noticed her; they were too busy watching the mole creature work its way slowly towards the fence. Yoon took time to load her own supergun, before she looked at the mountain of a creature coming their way.

“Come on, let’s get this done.” Said Yoon.

The creature was some distance away, but the supergun round made it give off a kind of scream. It slowed down with every hit from Yoon’s gun and the superguns being used by Michelle and Jess. It still managed to get quite close to the fence before rolling onto its right side and dying. No more sounds, not more struggling to move forward, Jaimie felt it safe to assume the beast was dead.

“I don’t believe it, we did it.....We fucking killed it.” Yelled Michelle.

All the guns fell silent, which meant there were no more monster creatures attempting to breach the fence. A runner arrived from Mateo and for one awful moment Jaimie thought they were going to be kicked out of the gun position.

“Mateo Rodriguez sends his compliments, excellent shooting.” Said the runner. “He thought you’d like to know that aerial bombardment of the fake farm has just commenced.”

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