

Chapter 6 – Ambush

Andy checked the map and left the cemetery for the energy station. They tried to route through parks and quiet areas in order not to arouse attention. The fight and serious explosion in the HLOFPAH (Headquarters of Lows Foundation for Peace and Humanity) should be a big event and right now a lot of police and security should be around in the area. The more time they spent, the worrier they were as they had lost communication since the attack. Now they finally could see that the big truck was just ahead, they hastened their footsteps towards the truck.

Just at this moment, Andy suddenly had some 'intuition' of an imminent peril just like what he often could 'see' in the battlefield. He instantly stopped and wanted to warn his team, but at the same time gunshots were fired from the direction where the truck had parked. Without a second thought, he pushed down Fanies who was always beside him and they rolled to the underside of a big truck on the side. He then noticed that Vincent had already been shot down. Anson was swift enough not to get shot and he was taking cover under another truck. Andy then quickly took out his special whip from his outfit and it briskly stretched out to catch the wound young man and pulled him to their side. Andy examined Vincent's wound while Fanies immediately returned fire. He found two shots on Vincent's leg. It was not lethal, but bleeding without break could still kill him. Anson was also returning fire, but by now Andy watched that they were kind of being sieged. Shooting did not just come from the truck, but from other two directions where there was a small jungle. They got better weapons and had knocked down two enemies, but it did not seem slow down the firepower.

Andy had several ideas in mind to sally out, but he thought the only chance was to take back the control of their truck. It was rather obvious that his two men on the truck had been eliminated or they should have used the high tech weapon in the truck to launch an assault. The operation code of the truck was highly encrypted and he gambled that his men would not say anything to their enemies even they were to be tortured and killed.

Andy finished wrapping up Vincent's wound to keep it from excessive bleeding and signaled Vincent to remote start the truck. Vincent took out a remote control and punched in special sequences to activate the truck. When he found that it was still under his control, he excitingly nodded his head. Andy relaxed slightly because he was afraid the control could be sabotage by the enemy when they were not able to use it. Now if they could get back the truck, they could break the siege. But he was still worry to find some enemy hidden in the truck. But he was pretty certain that he had no other option because the enemies were narrowing down the siege. Their ammunition also could not hold long.

Andy instructed Vincent to suddenly start the truck and 'drive' it towards their shelter. The enemies would lose cover and they then could be neutralized easily. It was difficult to suddenly start and drive a vehicle if you were on board.

Using a remote controller was a different matter and posted some difficulty. At this moment, he could naturally associate some thinking with Sue, an insurmountable driver saving his life just about an hour ago. Thinking of Sue gave Vincent confidence and it was like Sue sitting beside him. The big truck suddenly started and made a horrible screeching. The deployment exposed the position of several snipers who were then instantly eliminated by Anson's fire. Fanies and Andy also fired densely to gain additional cover. The big truck moved towards them, but the enemy had launched a bazooka from the jungle, trying to destroy the truck and not to allow it from falling back to its master. Vincent was able to turn the truck at the last moment and the weapon hit the ground not far away from their position, producing a lot of smoke and dust and dropping down the visibility to almost nothing. Vincent had to stop using the remote control. At this moment, an engineering vane dashed into the parking area and this obviously distracted the enemies.

"Sue has come to our rescue! Sue has come!" Vincent shouted out with excitement, though in the smoke he could not really recognize the vane. It was just a telepathic feel.

Andy made up the mind very quickly. He took Vincent on his back and darted through the blurred front, and ran toward their truck. Fanies was tightly behind Andy and fired at random to give cover. Anson then followed. However, the enemy was determined not to allow them any chance and a second bazooka was fired, not striking at the truck, but directly at them.

Andy understood that the enemies would rather kill them if they were not able to take captive. It was almost impossible to make an escape.

Andy looked back for his woman for the last time and Fanies looked into his eyes too. In one instant, numerous frames of memories flashed back their mind, like kid time playing in the corn field, staying late for starry nights on the roof, riding on prairies, trips to the dry desert, studying hard in libraries, training in army, life and death fighting, romances and that day.

Andy had stretched out his hands backward for Fanies and it was so natural for Fanies to reach out for him too. Andy knew very well that Fanies would not hesitate to die with him and even die for him, but he had vowed to protect her no matter what. Andy's stalwart body turned a half circle and drained up his strength to throw Fanies towards the truck and when his hand was off hers, he noticed the despairing face of Fanies and it stung painfully. But he saw Fanies was now beside the truck and Vincent had opened a door for her. He was peaceful in his mind and he showed a satisfied smile.

In a time shorter than seconds, the bazooka was just in front of the brave man. Andy never gave up and he used to fight until he died. He had already stretched out his whip to tie onto a handle on the truck and then he triggered the powerful spring system to retrieve the whip, thus moving him and Vincent rapidly towards the truck. Strange enough, the bazooka did not explode or moved. An unknown force froze his motion in air. Vincent exclaimed again to rejoice for Sue's telepathic power. Anson detonated a few smoke packs and meanwhile, he and Andy quickly ran towards the truck.

Fanies was inside the truck and she quickly, but carefully, moved to the

driver chamber. Luckily, she found no enemy. She put her palm onto the scanner for recognition and then keyed in special codes to activate the weapon system of the truck. From the mirror, she could see the squirming bazooka floating in the air and it looked strangely weird. She heard a voice from Sue hasting her to drive away because her telepathic control was about to get loose. The truck finally moved and the bazooka hit a fuel tank and a few explosions took place just behind them. However, the enemies did not give up and in a few seconds, they launched a targeting missile from somewhere. This was a fatal attack. But, since the high tech weapon system of the truck had already been initiated, a short range anti-missile happened to fire automatically to intercept and destroy the missile, but the heat and rumble were still unbearable. Without hesitation, Fannies fired back with heavy munitions, and they finally broke out. The vane that suddenly intruded also left from the other side.

Chapter 7 – Lows Corporation

Sue and Little Guy did not leave Washington after they parted with Andy. Sue thought that too much had happened in one night and they were allowed not a single moment to think. The auto-destruction of HLOFPAH was not likely initiated to offend them, rather it was set to deal with the intrusion of those mysterious militants with massive firearms. It was really amazed that HLOFPAH had telepathic protection and high tech force shield as well, and they were even so determined to blow up everything in order not to make compromise to a powerful enemy. It had to be a place hiding the most valuable secret, or otherwise what else was more and valuable and expensive than the whole HLOFPAH. Only Lows knew the answer.

Lows Corporation had been underestimated, especially for its determination to keep the core secret in the HLOFPAH. The ferocious invaders should be very surprised to find the strange force shield that could effectively protect such a huge area. However, those militants were awesome for their terrible 'blue-flame' weapon that was so destructive and horrifying. Would they crash into the arriving police and security force? Sue and Little Guy therefore went back to see what had happened next.

When they were close to the area, they found the whole district surrounded by crowds coming from the neighboring 'Hearted Communities' and supporters of LOFPAH. Everyone was saying that there was a terrorist attack, but no one was very sure about that simply because none could go near the entrance of the building. Numerous police cars were blockading and concealing the area. Sue and Little Guy jostled in the crowd and finally got to the front. Other than local police force, there were agents from Home Land Security and FBI. To their surprise, an engineering team was moving the fake power company vane out of the building. The vane should have been auto-destructed. They heard Vincent report this setting to Andy.

There were several guards of the HLOFPAH being questioned by the investigators. Sue and Little Guy were very surprised about where they were when they came into the Foundation Plaza and the building.

A unit of sleuthhounds just arrived and joint the investigation for leads. This made Sue and Little Guy feel worried because those trained dogs could trace their track. One of those hounds especially made them uncomfortable and disturbing. It was obviously a wolf and not a hound. Even with such a long distance, they could still see its green eyes and feel the scanning it was making everywhere. Its master was unusual too. He wore no uniform and he was a blind

man. His motion was slow, but it looked like he could see and move freely.

The engineering technicians finally moved the car down the stairs and the platform. A Home Land Security agent tried to operate the vane, but with no success and therefore had to order a tow truck to move it away for further investigation. Sue told Little Guy that they should take back the vane for Andy or otherwise it would finally trace back to Andy's unit and expose their secret operation. Sue and Little Guy therefore retreated from the crowd and waited at a quiet corner outside the area for the tow truck. Only with a little effort, though using some telepathy, they easily took back the vane and as Sue had driven the car and known the activation code, they drove the vane back to the energy station and happened to come to Andy's rescue at the right time.

Andy lost two men who stayed in the truck for back up and monitoring. There was no obvious clue of what had happened to them because he found no trace of a fight or struggling. It was difficult to imagine these two men could be conquered so easily when they resided in such a powerful vehicle with very advanced weapon systems. While Andy was examining the truck, Fanies did a simple surgery on Vincent, removed the bullet on his thigh and gave him some painkillers. She then came to sit besides Andy who was in a deep thought of all the events.

Vincent was happy to see Sue again. He said there might be some video recording on the vane. He initiated the recording and a timed self-destruction and hoped that it could be broadcasted back to the big truck, though it failed. Now that they had the vane back and the recording might tell what happened next or even the identity of those mysterious militants. The recording was intact in the vane.

From the recording, they watched that some 'shadows' came into the hall after the force field had been neutralized. In a moment, the 'shadows' turned into several real human forms, but their bodies were still surrounded by a layer of bluish shine

Those intruders stepped forward and spoke a few sentences using a language they could not understand. The language computer and database could not interpret any words. However, from the tone and their posture, the militants appeared to demand for something and likely gave a threat. There was no answer or action of any kind from the 'hall' and while the militant guy was reiterating. Then, the same kind of alarm for warning a self-destruction was reverberated and the lighting of the hall turned all red and blinking. The intruders then activated again their camouflage and disappeared quickly. Then, after a while, it was the arrival of a crowd of police and FBI agents.

"This is the most unbelievable adapting camouflage built into such a neat outfit!" Vincent exclaimed and then asked, "Where were all those people in the HLOFHAP? I bet that they had brought away the 'core secret' or otherwise they wouldn't like to blow up everything."

This was exactly the question in every one's mind.

Fanies was more concerned about the present attack because two of their men were 'lost'. She elaborated and raised questions, "Those militants ambushing us were from a different group because they had very ordinary

weapons and equipment. Who were they and why they did that? Did they capture our men?”

No one could answer.

Andy told Sue that in the meantime he would leave LOFPAH aside and concentrate on finding his two peers, though there appeared to have a common thread for the two matters. His way was simple and it was just waiting for the enemy to find him. Because the enemies did not get what they wanted from him, they surely would make another attempt. He found some tracking device deployed on the underside of his truck and this assured him of someone still being interested in his movement. Sue and Little Guy said goodbye again and before they left, Sue gave Vince a thread of prayer beads. She also taught him a simple chant and said turning the beads and reciting the incantation would reduce the pain of his wound.

Andy turned to watch the Satellite recording of the area in that night, but it was too cloudy and much interference to get a good picture quality. Scientists warned that the comet ‘Dark Stone’ had emitted a lot of strange ‘electromagnetic’ waves that were supposed to affect the weather and communication of the globe for a while. Was this the sign of another ‘Messenger’ coming to this world, as said by Sue? Andy and Fannies turned on the TV and tried to see what the news was saying, including the reaction of the government. The report was disappointing as usual. Everything was blamed on terrorism.

Since they were kids, the term of terrorism had been kind of being abused, especially gradually by the government because there were very special laws dealing with terrorism business and they were just too convenient to bypass regular legal procedures. The United States were almighty because of her super high tech weapons and huge military, but ironically terrorism attack had never stopped. It then became too ‘daily’ for ordinary people to concern. Everyone was numbed with terrorism and no one had any interest to understand because the problem was tied up with history, geography, religion, culture and many other branches of social sciences. It was merely taking too much effort to reward the work. The value system turned ‘technical’ and moved farther away from humanity. And, the society was flooded with electronic entertainment and ‘short cuts’ to ‘success’ were advertised everywhere to lure the teens. Because of lack of public interest, news had long lost its ticket value in the US TV, which had been featured with entertainment profiling, reality TV, foul play of national politics and story-telling type of advertisement. There was still democracy and freedom in US. While people still liked freedom, they likely forgot how to live a democratic life and lost the wisdom to manipulate good democracy leading the government to play an effective role. If the government did not border them for their freedom of entertainment, people did not really want to know what the government had been doing. Or, was it constitutional? The social value was weird.

After the loss of significance of major news media, Internet news became a chief source of information for the small fraction of people who still concerned. But the credibility of Internet news was another problem. Even for the most intelligent reader, it was still a difficult and a time consuming job to validate the information. Then, who had the time? Who were interested? Those who worried

were only helpless! Internet news and forum had a lot of sayings and analysis about the attack of HLOFPAH. One version was very unique, indicating that the attack was in fact an internal clash between Lows and his founding partners. The reports had prolifically elaborated the cause and end with information from many reports done by different agencies in the US and other countries. Andy believed some information was classified and he wondered how the author could secure such sources.

Lows Corporation was used to be a medical company and it was still a medical company now. However, between now and then, it had been a multi-sector corporation having business in many fields of high tech, like nano-robotics, space transport, non-fossil fuel and security. Not long after the establishment of Lows Foundation for Peace and Humanity, the founders of the company started to have some dispute on the deployment of huge earnings for the operation of LOFPAH. Lows finally settled the difference by allowing the NanoRobots Division, who took the biggest opposition, to become independent in financial status. Several years later, NanoRobots and Space Transporter left the Corporation as a spin-off, effectively reducing the size of the company by one third and the revenue by one sixth. Allowing spin-off did not appear to be a good strategy and only acted to start a chain of disintegrating reactions. About ten years ago, the most influential and apparently the most loyal division, Security Force, also announced to detach from the parent company. Dr. Ellearto was head of this division and he was supposed to be Lows's best friend. They grew up in the same town and attended the same high school.

It would be surprising to find Lows Corporation having a division possessing an army, but the establishment of Security Force had a very strong historical background of need. Not long after Lows Corporation became one of the biggest medical companies, the company became involved into charity business and then into rescue operation world wide, firstly only with monetary contribution and then incentives for employees to participate in person. Ellearto headed the rescue operation himself. Before joining Lows Corporation, he had been a medical doctor in the military for years and had seen enough of those suffering caused by wars and armed conflicts worldwide.

Rescue operation was a dangerous business anywhere and lethal in the third world in those days because tribal and religious conflicts were very bloody. Ellearto lost many employees there. It beat the morale badly. Lows and Ellearto then set up a small division to start research and production of a new generation of special personal outfit to protect rescue personnel. They also devised more protective armored vehicles and transporters. This branch of operation was the primordial form of Security Force. These products happened to be very useful to police forces and security companies. The small division received a lot of orders and it grew rapidly. Unfortunately, even with better protection, rescue operation was still threatened and jeopardized by unfriendly fires. Ellearto then assembled teams of well trained and paid security guards to protect rescue convoys and bases. Ellearto's son then died in one of the operation in Sudan, Africa. Perhaps fueled by this personal loss, Ellearto brought out the idea of full-scale armed protection for rescue activities. A specially trained army force, supported by the

revenue of the division, was then built up to protect the convoy in rescue operation. They were also the security force of the whole corporation, guarding the different central laboratories and offices. The division also started to develop non-fatal assault weapons, advanced scanners for mines and explosives, and short range anti-missiles. All these products were hot buys in the security and anti-terrorism markets. A few years later, it was then rational for the division to enter the security business market by itself in the US and worldwide. After a big success in Sudan operation, called the Capital Mission, some cities in the third world even contract out the police business to Security Force and because of this, the division became more powerful day by day. As a whole, Lows Corporation was not just a civil corporation anymore. It looked like it had its own mercenary army.

In the very early days when the prestige of Lows Corporation and its Security Force rose quickly in the third world, super powers like US started to feel very nervous and uncomfortable. The US government censured Lows Corporation for its ambition in the third world and charged its taking advantage of the third world to conduct its armament and a secret agenda. Lows was under critical pressure from US to 'correct' the development of his 'medical' and high tech company. Lows would bow to no one. He announced to move out of US while he was increasing his 'investment' in the humanistic service in the US. Much money was used to launch a huge propaganda against the US government in the public TV broadcasting.

Lows opposed hardly to the US pressure, but it did not mean that he had not worried about the off track development of Security Force, which was originally formed only to support rescue operation. Attrition between Elleario and Lows was doomed to take place. There were lots of 'rumors' about the broken friendship and some foul plays. Nobody could affirm anything, but the fact was that about ten years ago Security Force became independent 'upon Lows's consent'. There were two opposite views in the public world, one being Lows's losing control and Lows Corporation was shattering and on the fall, and the other being the appraisal of Lows's super intelligence of political management. Shedding off the armed force division could eliminate the pretext used by super powers to condemn Lows Corporation. And, if the spin-off divisions were all still loyal to Lows, then whether they were officially in the Corporation was in fact not important. Eventually, it was still the medical division earning the biggest chump of money.

Andy's perspective, after seeing the attack and the defense in HLOFHAP, was that the two sides were almost equivalent in terms of high tech equipment. He had not heard of those armaments, even as prototypes, regardless of his unrivaled military and combating experience in the US marine. The equivalency in weapon technology could be a kind of circumstantial evidence that they were more or less related in some way. The aggressor might look mystical, but this was because they intentionally commit to hide themselves in a 'cloaking' outfit. On the contrary, LOFHAP was very public, yet it concealed no less mystery. Then, it was only merely an outpost of Lows Corporation. There were numerous reports and studies on the historical development of Lows Corporation, but none

could explain accurately how a medical company could evolve so quickly into a multi-sector high tech corporation. Money, in almost limitless supply, clearly played an important role. How about the telepathy, and who else knew telepathic power was protecting the premises of the Corporation, especially the HLOFHAP? And, where did this power come from? Who was exercising it?

Sue and Little Guy found the carving in the HLOFPAH very much alike the secret sutra of their ancient origin that was robbed away one hundred years ago. This sutra had been a core for them to learn telepathy and this was likely a smoking gun for Lows's telepathic capacity, supposing he was the one to deploy the telepathic force in HLOFPAH.

Andy was returning home to his farm. On one hand, he could get backup more quickly, but he could also risk the exposure of their secret base. If the enemies were in fact interested in tracking down their base and not him, it would no doubt cause a catastrophe since they were so frightfully powerful.