

19:28

BEGINNING OF THE END

“BUZZ. BUZZ. BUZZ.”

Hirano slowly opens his eyelids, awakened by a familiar sound. It's the wrist watch alarm going off.

spi

A distinct metallic smell is instilled in the room. Slowly reaching for the watch, a terrible headache kicks in and forces Hirano to grimace, putting their head against the cold stone wall.

“Ugh, fuck..”

Suddenly, the pain was interrupted by someone. Their voice sounded rather high, something like a young adult.

“Lieutenant Hirano? Are you okay?”

Hirano raises his head to see Lance Corporal Aiden Mendoza kneeling in front of him and rummaging through his medical rig, occasionally turning to examine wounds covering the body. Most of them have been bandaged by now.

“Ngh.. I'll be okay, Mendoza. My body is feeling numb at best, but it's nothing surprising at this point. Give me a hand instead..”

Mendoza shortly nods before proposing his hand. Hirano takes it and raises himself upwards, getting back on his feet.

“Right. I'm feeling better now. Eugh.. Say what; how are we doing? Is the rest of the Platoon treated?”

A pause, as the Corpsman looks directly into the ground. Lance Corporal raises his hand to rub the bridge of his nose, nervously sighing.

“I patched up everyone to the best of my ability, s-sir. In regards to the report, you’re probably better to ask the Staff Sergeant about it. I’ve been doing nothing but tending to the poor fellas for the last couple of hours.

Hirano gave a concerned nod to an uncertain answer, passing **Mendoza** and patting him on his back.

Shortly after, he makes a halt in the middle of the storage room.. looking around.

It’s a **poorly-lit** giant storage room filled with racks and crates and some containers in the end. There are emblems of **mining** corporations and **engineering** inventory, now covered by a thick layer of dust, this place was clearly abandoned or kept in storage for years, if not ages.

Proceeding further forward, he made his way towards the triage spot where there was a small amount of medical crates surrounding it, all they managed to find while sitting in this place in terms of medicine.

Shortly after, **Hirano** spots a few marines and **Staff Sergeant Jason Campbell**. Campbell was spitting orders as usual, making the riflemen assist those who weren’t lucky enough to stay as healthy as they did. One of those would be **Corporal Sara Kapsner**, a smartgunner marine. She was covered in several cuts and shrapnel wounds, along with burns covering her arms. Almost everything near the triage was covered with bloody gear and used gauzes. It was a **terrific** sight.

Hirano winced at the picture, rubbing the bridge of his nose. Shortly after, **Campbell** walks up to him and starts speaking with a rather loud voice.

“Sir! I’m glad you’re back up, I’ve been handling triage for our folks. **Mendoza** did a **splendid job, however..**” - Campbell raises his hand and motions it to the darker corner of the room, where were laying a couple of bodybags.

“How much..?” - Hirano said in a low tone, staring towards the corner.

“Four marines **K-I-A**, also four **M-I-A**.”

Hirano gives out an annoyed sigh, leaning on the cold concrete wall. He reaches inside his satchel and pulls out a package of Koorlander Gold, taking out a cigarette and sliding it between his lips. He looks up at **Campbell** and arches an eyebrow.

“Do you have a light, marine?”

“Lieutenant—, yes, I do. One moment, sir.” - says Campbell, taking a lighter off his helmet and proposing it to Lieutenant.

Hirano nods, taking the lighter and proceeding to light his cigarette, giving the lighter back to Campbell, putting his head against the wall.

“I’m sorry, Staff Sergeant. This went wrong; I knew that cramped spaces in the bunker and only a few exits are no good, even though we didn’t know what we can expect down there. ” - He raises a hand to hold onto his cigarette, puffing out a cloud of smoke: “I swear to fucking Jesus Christ, I’m gonna **kill** those motherfucking insurgents myself once we’re out of here. Our men and women didn’t deserve to die like this.”

“That booby trap fucked us up **hard**. I still can’t tell if that CMB Deputy was simply a moron or a suicide attack. The morale isn’t high for the remainder of the forces, but we’ll follow you to hell - not like we can do otherwise, sir.”

“Don’t sweat it, Staffie.. We’ll return back. We **have** to.”

A sudden pause. Hirano throws the cigarette on the ground, stomping it and putting it out.

“Enough. I believe most of ours are ready to go now—, we can’t wait any longer regardless. Tell the others to pull weaponry and ammunition from the bodies. We need to gather as much as we can, form up a stockpile in the center of the room. Get it done.”

Campbell nods, turning to his subordinates. He yells out a series of orders, and grunts slowly start to stand up and gather equipment off the dead, moving it into the central part of the storage room.

Hirano watches as Campbell leaves, staring into the ground afterwards with a bland expression on his face. Exhausted, wounded, and yet forced to carry on.

“Of course all of this **BULLSHIT** has to happen with me and my people. Ugh. Just.. I hate this.” - Hirano sighs yet again, lifting himself off the wall and heading to help the others in gathering items.

19:56

BECAUSE WE ARE THE SAVIOURS

Hirano looks at the stockpile that was formed, as Sergeant Nikita Raztochenko speaks.

“9 HSDPs, 4 High-Explosive Dual-Purposes, 33 Mark Two magazines.. Two M56A2 smartgun drums, an extra one from Kapsner. She’s off to use the VP78. That’s.. all, sir.”

“How the fuck are we gonna make out with that amount of magazines? The damn bunker entrance is a few floors away!” - A female shouts out in the crowd, some unpleasant grumbling and some whispering between each other in annoyance can be heard.

“You can go with the M4A3 if you want, I don’t mind. Do you think we have a fucking *choice*, marine?”

The crowd goes silent.

“**That’s what I thought.** We’ll have to use burst-fire and spend our magazines wisely for retreating. What we have should do the job.”

“YOU HEARD HIM, MARINES! We’ll make fucking do, if you bastards wanna live, then you will damn use those mags like the GOD himself. Don’t waste ‘em.”

Hirano looks at his wrist watch. 20:00.

He nods shortly, motioning towards the Marines and the gate.

“All-fucking-right, killers. It’s time to make it back home. I want both squads on the west and eastern side of the gates, squad sergeants on point. Corpsman, stay in the middle of formation, you’re the only one who knows aside from me how to patch a jarhead. Campbell, go after the Sergeants.”

Campbell starts yelling and pushing marines to take positions, some of them are smiling and grinning like crazy, some of them are terrified from what can happen. After all, it may be their **last day**.

Hirano walks up to the giant gate. It’s the only way out and the only way in, which was covering them from the dangers of the bunker they were initially coming down in. Despite them running away, occasionally marines reported hearing people walking outside, that’s when NCOs made sure everyone stays silent as water. Hirano makes his way towards the control panel, pressing a few buttons and unlocking the safety shutters.

A heavy-duty gate starts loudly rising up, spreading the sound through the entire bunker, waking up whatever is still alive in there.

Second after, Hirano cries out an order: “**MOVE, MOVE, MOVE! DIRECT THROUGH THE HALLWAY!**”

Marines quickly jolt from their places and proceed to push through the dark hallway, lighting their path with flares and flashlights on their weapons. Sounds of many boots thudding proceed to immediately follow the formation.

Unfortunately, a rifleman trips over a corpse in the darkness, his rifle slipping towards Staff Sergeant Sergeant. “**HALT! FOR FUCK SAKE, PARKER, GET UP!**” - Campbell motions to the rifleman with his gun, looking around-

Suddenly, the darkness behind them brightly lit up, as if it caught on fire- Bullets started flying towards the grunts, a mixture of foreign languages, male and females crying out incomprehensible warcries and callouts.

“**FUCK, THEY’RE SHOOTING ME! SHOOT THEM!! SHOOT!! KILL THOSE MOTHERFUCKERS!**” - Parker yells out, unholstering a pistol and shooting towards the direction where bullets were coming from.

“**GOD DAMN IT! POSITIONS, NOW! RETURN FIRE!**” - Hirano orders, quickly

hiding behind the metallic crate. He motions to Raztochenko with his pistol towards Parker.

Raztochenko nods, cautiously kneeling and reaching for Parker, grabbing his uniform and pulling him towards himself. Parker quickly hides behind the stone corner of the hallway, holding onto his bleeding leg that was pierced by a bullet.

“COVER THE SERGEANT, SUPPRESSIVE FIRE ON THE ENEMY!” - yells Campbell, providing aid by shooting his pulse rifle down the hallway.

Marines start returning fire, yet to no avail, the enemy were simply outnumbering them by the amount of bullets and different voices around.

“WE’RE PINNED DOWN! THROW A SMOKE GRENADE AND FOLLOW UP WITH THE HI-EXPLOSIVE, WE NEED TO GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!”

Right after, a Private announces the grenade, and the HSDP goes off in the hallway, filling everything with smoke. Moments later, an explosion rings out, sending shrapnel everywhere and deafening Hirano with how loud it was.

“FUCK— I DON’T HEAR SHIT! ON ME, NOW, TURN TO THE RIGHT- THE STAIRS SHOULD BE THERE!”

Marines jump from their position during the little window of time, rushing through and rotating to the other hallway - at the end of that one was an intersection and exit to the emergency stairs. Hirano motions towards the stairs entrance, running in-

“UP, UP, UP. CLIMB UP, NOW!”

He rushes up by the stairs, looking down- the Platoon follows, though some have already caught some minor wounds, blood dripping down- Unexpectedly, a gunshot can be heard midway their climbing, as Mendoza falls down on the ground-

“MENDOZA IS DOWN! SHIT! GET HIM-” - says Raztochenko, quickly rushing down.

Hirano turns back and looks at Mendoza—.. He squints, seeing as the man pulled out something with a red tip- Only to realize it’s a HEDP grenade. His face gets filled

with annoyance, rage and horror at the same time.

“NO, DO NOT TAKE THAT MAN- HE IS A GONER, MOVE UP, NOW!”

“SIR, BUT WE CANNOT-”

An explosion rings out and explodes the staircase, **Raztochenko** and **Mendoza** being obliterated by the blast.

“FUCK, FUCK, FUCK! YOU STUPID MORON- WE NEED TO GO, NOW. FOLLOW ME!” - cries out Hirano, rushing up the staircase with the remainder of his Platoon.

A minute filled with screams, gunfire and warcries, as the enemy chases them while they’re trying to make their exit. Eventually, they climb up to the entrance floor, as Hirano sees the treasured door.

“THE EXIT, KILLERS! JUST LAST STRETCH, GO-” - Hirano says out, right before an Insurgent walks out in front of them with a grenade launcher. He falls down to the ground immediately, jumping to a corner, as marines start shooting both ways-

However, it was **too late**. The explosion filled the room, giving Lieutenant a concussion. Everything in his eyes turned into fog.. Is it the **end** for them?

Hirano raised a hand in the air, looking as blood dripped down from it. His eyelids were getting once again heavy, as he was slowly fainting..

“I.. I’m–.. This is.. I’m sorry, m-marines.. I did w-what I could..” - he uttered, coughing up **blood**.

During that moment, the bunker door was forced open with a breaching charge. Blinding lights filled the lobby, and hellfire of bullets raining down on the enemy followed shortly after. M56A2 smartguns, pulse rifles, pistols. Everything was thrown on the insurgents who made the Alpha Platoon suffer so hard.

Hirano was quickly dragged outside, as he tried to mutter some words.. The last thing he sees before fainting is **Major Thomas Riesz** chewing on his cigar, looking upon him.

