

Dungeon S 1011

Chapter 1011: Retreating His Forces

"Pull back. I want all troops to pull back right now."

Jin announced via the System Channel in a solemn way. The humanoids inside the Dungeon Maker War Room were just mildly surprised after the scenes they had just watched. While Gold was a Scholar of the East who was meant to protect the people from the Farming World, he could not not condone the Southerners' actions.

As for the monsters on the field, they were completely shocked. Some monsters like the Devil Dragons were still preparing to sortie out while others like Mr Derpy and Lord Wolte had just been warming up so far.

"I repeat. With immediate effect, every monster on the battlefield is to pull back. Those getting ready to join us, stay where you are. Wyrstriker, get your company of Goblin Wyvern Knights to protect the backline as they retreat. The System has set up one big portal for all of you to go through. Ayse and Keyrin focus your magic near the base and strike any flying monsters who come too close for the moment and await further orders. Forneus, return back to Spiky's airbase at the top and rendezvous with me. I will need you and your mount to fly me over. I plan to personally have a chat with the Nine Ocean Phoenix." Jin elaborated and after some slight hesitation, they started to comply.

Qiu Yue, who had not been present in the Dungeon Maker, was just as confused by the orders, but she did not question the Big Boss. She immediately assisted in opening a larger portal via the temporal regulator and the goblin support unit began packing their stuff to return to the Dungeon Instances. Wyrstriker also retreated back to the defensive lines and did not stretch any further than he was supposed to.

As for Spiky, the Southerners could consider themselves lucky that the Altered Transforming Spider had been benevolent enough to shed off its long legs before he went away. Nevertheless, because it was merely a ditched part of the spider, the high ground became as flimsy as a dead skin and if the archers stayed there for too long, they would undoubtedly fall to their death when the flying monsters came to their vicinity and destroy it.

Forneus, who had been raring for a good fight just sighed at the wasted opportunity. Fortunately, he knew that unlike the Demonopolis Army where he had to stay on standby on a regular basis, Jin would provide him the excitement with the upcoming fight with the Demon Rats. Besides, with the new augmentation, it seemed as if he might have strained himself a little too much magic and retreating would allow his mana circuits an opportunity for solace.

But for now, the order only required him to bring Jin to the Nine Ocean's Phoenix for a talk and that did not mean he could not 'defend' himself. Thus, Forneus bent the rules a little and killed anything in his path back to the airbase and he did so by going a big round while waiting for the airbase to clear up.

However, this retreat had a significant impact against the current tide of battle. The Zurging Queen realised that the aerial forces were retreating and through the eyes of her scouts, she also noticed that the special combatants were moving away too for some reason. Blinded by her rage, she did not even question it and just took the opportunity to order her children to attack full force.

On the other hand, the Nine Oceans Phoenix wondered if this was part of some scheme by those humans. Yet, she did not bother to voice her opinion in the matter since the Zurgling Queen's kids' rampage should reveal everything. In her opinion, it was better to have those monsters have the brunt of a major attack and instead of some of their more valuable allies.

In the meantime, the Southern Soldiers were devastated by the change of attitude from their monstrous allies. That sudden retreat caused them to panic for a moment as they understood that without the weremice the gaps in their defence line would not be covered. And without the Wyvern Riders' interference, the archers proved unable to deal with vast number of Winged Monsters who dove straight towards the Southern Capital's fortress walls.

"What is the meaning of this?! I thought we had a deal!" Leopardo questioned loudly, enraged that the special organisation had reneged on their 'deal'.

Meomi, who had stayed behind for a while longer, zoomed towards Leopardo with murderous intent. Her climbing gear allowed her to reach speeds she could not have achieved herself but Leopardo's instincts kicked in and allowed him to block her attack with his shield.

However, it was not without difficulty. For the first time in a while, there was someone smaller than him who had been able to knock himself backwards. And not only that, Meomi followed up the attack despite the knockback impact against the shield by using the climbing gear as an anchor with the wires attached to the ground.

Her attacks turned out to be fiercer than Leopardo expected for someone who had failed to complete the Sacred Trial of the Citadel's Stairs. He did not know that Meomi had a hidden trait which she had been keeping well even among her friends and Jin.

Advanced Catzerker Fury.

Because of the intense fight she was in with the Demon Rats, Meomi had somehow managed to break through the limits of the Catzerker Fury upgrade card and had managed to manifest it as a superior werecat ability. With it she became capable of fighting stronger, and faster as time went by. The only problem was that once she started it, she was not allowed to stop as the drawback since the drawback would cause her bones and muscle to be weary, exhausted and potentially break upon a moment's rest.

Since the activation of her Advanced Catzerker Fury trait she had been fighting both winged monsters and Zurglings simultaneously making her ascend beyond her base stats and fight with twice her capabilities she had possessed when she had entered the city. It was therefore only to be expected that her the current onslaught of attacks made it hard for even a competent veteran spearman like Leopardo to find an opening.

The Southern Soldiers were used to quick decision, and it was not hard to tell that Meomi and the other monsters must have betrayed the Southerners, so they went forth to protect the interim leader of the capital. Yet, this only fuelled Meomi's Catzerker Fury even further the moment they were killed by the werecat.

"Our master might not have told us the reason for his decision, but my instincts are telling me that you must have done something awful to warrant such a drastic move! Calling us monsters? The only

monster I see is you!" Meomi shouted as she slid her gunblade along the piercing spear strike from Leopardo.

Compared to Wyrstriker and Nubwort's training in spearmanship, Meomi scoffed at this Interim's leader's way of the spear. She too had asked for training against spears since the Demon Rats had been using it frequently as a means of attack though she did not expect to use it against a human so soon. (Without to her knowledge, the System had already upgraded some of her iterations in the Bank Heist Dungeon Instance with her improved knowledge against spear users.)

"Meomi! What are you doing?!" Nightingale tried to block her crazed friend, but Meomi was too far gone to stop for her former housemaid. If she ended up getting in the way, all the werecat had to do was kill her, to explain later. After all, it was not the end for Nightingale if she died by her claws.

For now, Meomi believed that if she did not bring down Leopardo now, the chance to do so in the future would be harder, if not impossible.

Chapter 1012: Parley

Jin hastily carried his System Rider Belt on his shoulder as he arrived at the air base. Around him, everyone was hurrying to return back to their Dungeon Home Instances before Spiky was transported out of the Southern Capital. Some queried why can't the all mighty System could not teleport all of them at once including the altered transforming spider but not many know that the System still had its limitations at the moment.

In the meantime, Qiu Yue saw Jin and gave him an upward head nod, her way of asking him what the hell happened. "The Southerners are borderline scums. Let the wheel of fate continue as it has, especially since we've interfered quite a bit and anything more would not be proper justice for the mistreated monsters fighting to kill the Southerners." Jin briefly told her as he equipped his System Rider belt and beckoned Forneus to fetch him up.

"What are you going to do? Force your way into the thick of that horde and try to talk to the Nine Ocean's Phoenix? Do you think you can convince her? She might not even want to listen to you, since you're a human." Qiu Yue replied.

"We got to try first, right? Else we'll never know if they are willing to listen. Besides, I think I have the charms of a being a monster person instead of a people person." Jin grinned as he saw Forneus flying towards the edge of Spiky's Air Base. Jin then activated his Green Panda Wind energy and sped towards Forneus. By aligning himself to the edge of the base, Forneus was ready to receive his master who jumped on top of the large mechanised Devil Dragon.

"Because almost every human you meet would like to either use you and kill you, less the few of us that are on your side." Qiu Yue shook her head and assisted with the evacuation.

After which, the Devil Dragon Leader informed his mount to get ready to activate the boosters, allowing him to tear through the horde if necessary. In the meantime, the System relayed the message of Meomi disobeying the orders by fighting against Leopardo.

"Let her have her share of fun for now. We can reprimand her later for it. Once the defensive line breaks and the Zurglings come pouring in, she won't have any choice but to retreat." Jin said as he held tightly onto Forneus' dragon. (There was surprisingly a solid metallic handle at the side of the dragon's saddle.)

The Winged Monster Horde had already experienced how strong the Metal Devil Dragon could be, so instead of facing it, most did their best to evade him as much as possible. Hence, this gave Forneus an easier time charging through the ranks of the Winged Horde and towards their actual target.

Meanwhile, the Nine Ocean Phoenix was not staying idle. Although not happy about the cowardice of her fellow monsters, she understood that they were too afraid to die pointlessly, so she conjured a sphere of foaming water right in front of her, sparkling in pattern as if it was a reflection of the oceans. The Phoenix understood that she would be the primary target and thus, she released a stream of energised magical blast of the seas right towards Forneus.

"Heh! I am raring to use this arm ever since I got it, and this seems to be the perfect time!" Forneus shouted as he raised that barrel arm of his and started to focus his magic into it. Simultaneously, his Devil Dragon was not moving an inch away from the blast zone and too prepared his own Dragon's breath in case his master failed. (In actual fact, the Dragon was just as competitive as his master and was just itching to shoot at something strong instead of picking on weak minions.)

While his dragon was accumulating for the blast of fire, Forneus already shot out his blast of energy beam towards the Phoenix to counter the water beam that it shot out. The Devil Dragon Leader thought he would have the upper hand in terms of elemental attribute, after all, his energy beam was a blast of energy, able to evaporate any conjured water.

Unfortunately, it turned out that the water beam was a monstrosity of its own, able to withstand the blast of beam energy and continuously streamed towards the incoming Devil Dragon. That was when Forneus' ride smirked and sent out its prepared dragon blast against the attack, proving to his rider that he had much more to learn.

"Gah! Just because you've been augmented way more than me does not give you the right to- Urgh! FINE! You win this time, Carbon!" Forneus grumbled as he let go of his energy barrel arm and instead sent his mana to boost the Dragon's power.

In the meantime, Jin also did the same by using his Maqi to ensure that they would have the upper end. This caused the stream of dragon breath to be more deadly and destructive, allowing it to compete with the Nine Ocean Phoenix's attack.

Soon, an explosion ensued after both the Dragon's Breath and Water Beam reached a certain threshold that caused the energy to disperse into the air because of its incompatibility. However, that gave the Devil Dragon the chance to swoop in.

The Nine Ocean Phoenix was not able to react much after that extended use of her attack. She did not expect someone could be more formidable than her on the humans' side. But instead of a charge, the Metallic Devil Dragon stopped right in front of the Phoenix even though its breath was still charging and its eyes were glaring at all the other winged monsters at her side including the Zurgling Queen.

"Hold your claws and fangs! I'm not here to kill any of you, so please don't give me a reason. My name is Jin and I've come here before you, because there are certain things I wish to discuss with you. All I ask is

that you listen to me." Jin said as he raised up both his hands to show that he was not holding any weapons. (Even though the System Rider Driver Belt was technically a weapon.)

"You're more than welcome to send out your minions to attack the Southern Capital without any further interference from my side. As you might have already noticed, I've ordered my friends to retreat as a sign of goodwill before coming here. Since you all seem to be the leaders of the hordes, I'd like all of your attention, especially yours truly, Lady Phoenix."

"What makes you think we are willing to parley with a human?! And even though you might not be holding a weapon, that strange dragon of yours is intimidating us with his attack as we speak!" The Zurgling Queen argued and she made a very valid point. Her Elite Zurglings under her command immediately formed a perimeter along the cliffs, armed with spiked projectiles, awaiting the order to strike if this ...emissary proved to be as dangerous and scheming as the Southerners.

However, all the monsters in the vicinity knew that the humans do not usually have such magical powers except a minority. And even among those minority, even fewer were able to exert and portray such powers. After all, in their opinion, the wild had always been a constant struggle for monsters and only the strongest survive. Those monsters that had been tamed could not be as ferocious as those who bare their fangs on a daily basis.

"Apologies. As another sign of trust, I will get him to stand down. Forneus, do you mind telling your body to not attack them?" Jin asked politely and even without Forneus' approval, Carbon looked straight up and shot his dragon breath upwards, scaring a few of the winged monsters even as they tried to surround Jin from the back.

They all believed that this was an olive branch of trust being handed to them to show that all Jin wanted to do was talk. But all of them did not know that Jin had previously requested the Devil Dragon to be on standby to act as the first bargaining chip in the negotiations to prove that they were really only here to negotiate.

Seeing Jin as the ones protecting the Southerners had indeed abandoned them, and this human even allowed the others to continue with the assault against the Southern Capital, the Phoenix slowly nodded her head. "Speak, but none of us will promise to accede any of your demands. Also, who knows what you will do since you dared to betray them. What makes you think your words would be worthy."

But even with Jin's request being accepted, that prompted a few of the Winged Monsters to turn around and proceed towards the rather undefended capital.

"Thank you, Lady Phoenix for your patience and hopefully your understanding after you hear my side of the story. First, I'd like you to know that originally my people had agreed to the Southerners because we needed their help and it seemed that your monster horde was about to attack them without just cause. ...until we found out that you are no ordinary Phoenix." Jin said as he placed his hands down.

"And with however short amount of time we have to find out about the truth, we now know that you're not just some savage monsters wanting to have a bite at the humans here as they have claimed. No, we've come to learn that you have an agenda, something more important than killing these humans for sport or food." Jin risked it all as he said the next sentence with zeal.

"You've come here to take back your kids!"

Chapter 1013: Deep Mistrust

"Do not bother listening to this human! Their kind are all perpetual liars." The Zurling Queen cried in defiance, advising the Nine Oceans Phoenix to not waste a moment of time listening to Jin.

"I do understand the mistrust you have towards us humans, and I do not deny that I have indirectly hurt you by commanding my monsters to kill your children, but let me show you that not all of us are the same," Jin said as he opened a portal. "I hope that they also believe in actions speaking louder than words. This might possibly be the only way to get their attention."

When he finished his sentence, swarms of Zurglings started to sprout out of the large portal on the ground, surprising the Zurgling Queen. While they did not have names per se, she recognised each and every Zurgling as they all had her unique scent on them. Like little puppies, all of them began to wag their deformed tails in delight towards seeing their mother.

And even though they still recognised her as their mother, her attempts at controlling them to come back failed. Her commands were not effective unlike her other children, it was as if they were all independent Zurglings.

'How...? I saw them getting killed? I FELT it! Like a string spun from my own thread, I've felt it snap! And yet they are standing here, all much happier than when they served me?!' The Zurgling Queen thought to herself as she saw a few of them take the initiative to climb on her and play on her back. By normal Zurgling standards, only the favoured few were able to gain that honour and yet all these Zurglings were doing it as if it was something natural, completely against their supposedly subservient nature.

"What did you do to them?" Zurgling Queen asked with a heightened alert since that human they were talking to was certainly not someone ordinary if he could change her children that much.

"Not much. I possess a sort of 'ability', allowing me to bring back those slain by me or my comrades." Jin said as he looked at the Nine Oceans Phoenix. "However, I also have another ability allowing me to capture those who agree to come with me willingly. That includes your little chick too." He immediately raised his phone up and a holographic projector presented them images of the Nine Oceans Phoenix's little baby barely alive after the torture it went through. Seeing her child in such a miserable state had naturally enraged the Nine Oceans Phoenix until she saw another portal appearing, wide enough to allow her through.

"My reaction was the same as yours, Lady Phoenix, which is exactly why I've broken all ties with those scheming bastards. One of my comrades managed to rescue him... or is it a her? Sorry, I've yet to ask the gender of your baby, either way, it's in intensive care right now. My team of healers are doing their best to heal your baby as much as they can. Be my guest and come have a look for yourselves." Jin used his hand as if to direct the Nine Oceans Phoenix into the portal.

Although her instincts cried for her to rush through the portal, she herself was still a bit hesitant whether it could be a trap. The human in front of her might have knowledge of the baby and utilised to coax her. For all she knew, there were hundreds of hunters waiting to bring her down the moment she

stepped into the portal. Or perhaps worse, the humans could be using the baby as a hostage to blackmail and threaten her. Therefore if she were to be wary, the Phoenix needed to have sufficient strength before going into such a portal.

Since it all sounded too good to be true, the Nine Oceans Phoenix coated herself with magical energies that made any monsters around her feel completely intimidated by her powers. Aside from the Zurgling Queen they all distanced themselves from her and not wanting to get burnt by the water waves that produced an intense bout of heat.

She looked down at the Zurgling Queen who had always been a strong proponent of her actions and started to break down as she noticed her confidante begin to embrace the independent Zurglings in her multiple pair of arms. She sensed no devious magical energies from the Zurglings that Jin had summoned and the Queen appeared genuinely relieved finding out that her children were still alive.

"I do not blame you if you do not trust me. Fire up as much as you want before going in, I assure you that this is not a trap." Jin said as he told Forneus to move away from the portal to give the Phoenix some space to move forth.

"Aye, I do not blame you for being suspicious about my master. But your kid is in good hands compared to those bastards that were the ones responsible for its current condition." Forneus saw the images on the holographic projector and already asked Jin via the System Channel whether the culprits had been served with justice.

"I burnt their corpses and the System did not even need my input. It had taken the initiative to throw their souls away like a dirtied sock into the trash bin." Jin replied via the System Channel and Forneus nodded his head with approval.

"It looks like both you and the System have some morals. I thought you would be catching every single soul regardless of good or bad." Forneus spoke via the System Channel as the both of them watched the Phoenix mother pluck her courage and venture into the unknown.

"System finds it a waste that the soul would be cast off instead of being reused. If recycled, it could be of some value to our 'secret organisation'." The System remarked casually as it made sure that the current Luxury Recovery Instance had been expanded wide enough for the Nine Oceans Phoenix to enter without any problems. (It was already making a big exception allowing it inside the instance, instead of isolating the big creature first.)

When the mother saw her baby chick in bandages, she was heartbroken, yet at the same time, she was relieved to see the Panda NPC Nurses extend their healing magical capabilities to keep the baby chick's vitals stable. She was especially thankful for Milk since the Priestess exuded the most potent healing magic.

"Forneus, hold the fort here while I speak with the mother." Jin ordered, then jumped into the portal before the System closed it. When he came in, the dungeon supplier came just in time to see the mother's beak lightly caressing the wounded chick. This was the first time that mother and child met since she had missed it hatching.

Unfortunately, instead of a happy first meeting, the mother was forced to heal it to the best of her abilities too. Jin then requested the Panda Nurses and Milk to back off for the moment, to allow the Mother Phoenix to enjoy some alone time.

As the healers moved out of the room, the Nine Oceans Phoenix stared at Jin with eyes of vengeance.

"I've already gotten rid of the ones to torture your first chick. Right now one of my comrades is looking for the main perpetrator responsible for stealing your eggs in the first place. So far, he has not been found yet, but he seems to be holding your other egg. Once we catch him, I can allow you to get your revenge."

"Why are you going to such lengths? Helping my baby chick and even offering to sell out the one responsible? Aren't you a human too?" The Nine Oceans Phoenix asked and Jin found it difficult to answer that particular question.

"Indeed I'm a human. I could have used a spell to make myself look like a monster, but I wanted to be honest with you. You're not the only one to mistrust other humans. I wanted to believe them that you were the bad ones, but I've learned a valuable lesson that it's good to trust, but better to check. Besides, monster lives matter too, don't they? Well hmm, now that I said it out loud, it does sound a little hypocritical of me..." Jin mumbled the last sentence and the Nine Oceans Phoenix did not really understand until Jin requested the System to 'advertise' his friendliness to the monsters he had captured.

However, that actually made the Nine Oceans Phoenix even more confused as she thought those images were about to pop out and harm her kid. She even used her wings to cover her chick which made Jin stop the flood of images.

"Look, I don't expect you to trust me blindly from one moment to the next, but I hope that I've proven to you, that I at least don't mean you nor your chick any harm. In fact, I can help you right now. If you allow me to." Jin asked in a straightforward manner.

"You do seem nice, but you humans are always scheming! Surely, your 'help' is not for free and you will want something in return. Or do you claim you've helped us from the goodness of your heart?" The Nine Oceans Phoenix asked and Jin nodded his head in silence.

"Indeed, I want to offer you the chance to lead a better life. Not just you, but all those monsters that you've gathered shall gain that opportunity if they wish."

Chapter 1014: Peppers in Doubt

"We will undoubtedly refuse!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix declared without a moment's hesitation.

"Yeah, I expected as much." Jin sighed since the Phoenix had reacted just as he had feared. "I'd probably do the same if someone offered me something like this. It does sound too good to be true, doesn't it. However, I just want you to fully hear me out while we rescue your other egg. And if you don't mind,

please pass that message on." Jin decided not to say anymore as he believed that it might be best to try again once he had reunited the entire family.

Without any clues or direction to look at, she had no other choice but to pass all that frustration into protecting the one kid she had gotten back that was now right in front of her.

"We will take care of your baby and make sure that it will recover. Meanwhile, you should return to the frontlines else the othe-"

"Why should I leave my child with you?!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix spread her wings as a threat to Jin, agitated that he had asked her to leave her precious child. "After what you've just proposed, you might be as scheming as the person who holds my other egg! You may have put it in a nice way, but you just want to use us as well!"

"Please be rational, Lady Phoenix! I've just asked you to come because you are the lead-"

"I do not give a damn about that horde! All that matters is that my child is with me! I'll stay here until she is awake again!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix screeched.

"She huh..." Jin finally learned the identity of the Phoenix and maybe because it's a female, she was more protective of it. Who knew what law of the jungle they had to obey if they birthed a female chick.

Nevertheless, this Nine Ocean Phoenix was becoming a bother by making things overly complicated which caused Jin to literally scratch his head.

If he went out, asking to lead the horde, the winged monsters and the Zurgling Queen would most likely assume that the Phoenix mother had been killed or captured.

On the other hand, if he didn't move out, the winged monsters and the humans would just have a bloody battle on each side. Alas, harmony would be the most preferable solution, since that would ensure the most allies gather to deal with the Demon Rats, yet it seemed that fate had decreed that for once Jin would have to settle for one side or the other.

This was merely the capital and there were other Southerners in various towns, but he could most definitely forget hiring anyone from Southern Star. Manpower wise, the humans could be in the thousands which would be a boon fighting the semi mechanised demon rats. Still, Jin decided to clear his hand from the Southerners and fully assist the monsters from the monster horde.

They were stronger, they hit harder and certainly the harder choice to endeavour. Jin could have killed all of them and made them his allies by capturing them. Then he could have easily gotten humans on board to his side, but he could not just turn off his consciousness.

Although he was aware that not every single person there was guilty, the problem was the general mentality of the Southerners, that had allowed them to do such horrible things to the Nine Ocean Phoenix's chicks and other monsters.

"This is just a headache, you just have to make the hardest choice in life, eh Jin?" He thought to himself as he opened the portal once more and subsequently landed on Carbon. A number of the winged monsters were looking at him as if they were waiting for their leader to return.

"Your Leader, the Nine Ocean Phoenix has seen the terrible state her child is in, and decided to stay with it until the chick recovers from the human's brutality. I know some of you must have doubts or suspect that I am bluffing, so I am going to do something that I would never have thought possible to prove to you that I'm indeed on your side." Jin spoke as he called up Peppers by his side.

"Yo, Boss. What do you want?" Peppers asked as she was raring for a fight when she came out of the portal. It had been quite some time since she was allowed to create havoc instead of having to play a supportive role.

"You see that capital over there? I want you to blast it to kingdom come." Jin said and Peppers who instinctively said yes to anything containing the word blast, immediately jerked in her reactions and looked at Jin.

"Could you please repeat that? You want me to...?" Peppers asked for another confirmation in case she had heard wrongly the first.

"Gather your power and erase that city from the map. Whenever you're ready." Jin spoke it out loudly and clearly so that the monsters could hear his orders too.

"You're aware that if I do that, the System might not have the capability to capture all of them, right? I mean perhaps 30-40% of whoever is still in there. Anything more would be lost due to the overflow of souls. This is not like the Giant World where those peeps were just mindless monsters wanting to fill their stomach with a meal of meaty animal folk." Peppers cautioned the dungeon supplier.

"We might be forced to act as the bad guys in the future for certain worlds. It's probably for the best to pick that act up as soon as we can to learn and acclimatise to it." Jin sighed and if they were not surrounded by monsters, he would have most likely also dropped his shoulders in defeat.

"Those WORDS!" Kraft came out from nowhere once again and hugged Jin. "I've been longing for you to say those for a very long time!!!"

"Huh, what?!" Jin did not expect Kraft to appear to intervene and turn such a delicate situation even worse. Did the crafty fox really have to appear when he was about to make a choice which would undoubtedly lead to many sleepless nights? (Yes, yes he DID!)

"Alright, Peps! Since this is a historic moment, let us help lessen the guilt of our reborn Master. There's no need to kill them all in one go. In succession would be fine as well, right? Then again they're indeed human scum worse than trash, so nobody would blame you if you wanted to show us a 10 on the Pepper's scale." Kraft suggested as he lifted Jin up and twirled him around the Devil Dragon's back.

Meanwhile the monsters (and Forneus) were speechless at the weird scene they were having to watch.

"Well, if you say so." Peppers shrugged her shoulders upon Kraft's comment and raised her staff. "Yo, Queen! Get your little kids out of the area or don't blame me for turning them into!"

The Zurgling Queen scoffed at that command, thinking she had to take orders from a human. "I shall merely do it because you are aiding us! But as soon as we see any indication that you might betray us, we will come after you no matter how powerful you are."

"Hah! You can keep those words to yourself." Peppers did not really have much qualms now knowing that Jin gave that command with decisiveness despite it coming a little as a whim. She had already double checked since the mage bellator wanted to make sure Jin was aware of the potential consequences.

"Then without further ado." Peppers waved her staff in a circular motion as Jin's monsters were already in full retreat.

Chapter 1015 Escaping From The Catzerker

"By the way, hope you do not mind me if I borrow some of that sizzling electrical energy!" Peppers merely informed Ayse and Keyrin via the System Channel as she absorbed the thundercloud's mana into her staff. The roaring thunder got crackled louder whenever the lightning bolts zapped Pepper's weapon but instead of being charred, its mana twirled around the staff as if it was dancing before it turned into a raw form of magic essence.

The two Thunder Magic Users felt that there was no need to maintain the domination of the skies any longer, so they gave Peppers everything she wanted before retreating. This way, her cast time was also reduced significantly to prepare for the best skill in her repertoire.

Also, with electrical energy to play with, she realised she could do another variation of her explosion as a wide magical circle once again hovered above the Southern Capital. The rainbow coloured circle slowly turned from purplish blue from all the mana absorbed from the clouds and the Southerners could already feel an ominous feeling emanating from it.

While all of these were happening, most of Jin's monsters had already retreated, leaving Meomi the only one within the capital still battling against Leopardo. Since she had failed to kill him with her initial attack, more and more soldiers had come in to protect their interim leader.

With the mysterious organisation abandoning them to the inevitable monster horde attack, at the very least they had to buy their interim leader enough time to lead the elites into retreat. However, Meomi was unwilling to let her slippery prey escape. Each time the soldiers intervene and guard Leopardo to run away from the current situation, Meomi easily slashes them away because of her Catzerker Fury trait.

This ensued a cat and mouse game with Leopardo running away from the walls of the Southern Capital and into the town where he thought he would have space to run and hide. Unfortunately, he had not accounted for Meomi being a werecat and his smell was extremely nauseating for Meomi making it impossible for her to lose him.

With her automated climbing gear, she continued to chase Leopardo relentlessly and exchanged a few blows before his guards and mercenaries came in to intervene. "You are just wasting your time running away! And Nightingale, I did not expect you to protect such a wussy!"

Meomi shouted as she saw her former maid running beside Leopardo.

Nightingale was still bleeding from Meomi's previous attack, yet she was bound by duty and had sworn an Oath when she enrolled into this particular mercenary organisation.

There was some magic at play making it impossible for her to defy Leopardo's orders to protect him. She could only hope Leopardo and his remaining few guards could outrun Meomi. Although that was a wish that would not come through given her mobility and even if they could, that ominous magical circle hovering above their heads would not give them a chance to leave properly.

"Do not fall for her words." Leopardo smirked as he made a right turn and revealed a narrow back street alley with a mage maintaining a portal for their leader. "Nightingale, follow me! I have many questions about this secret organisation that you so eagerly vouched for. As for the rest, guard me with your lives! Your death won't be forgotten, you honourable soldiers!" Leopardo shouted as he grabbed Nightingale's cape and pulled her along forcefully.

The guards obeyed their interim leader's orders without question and felt prideful that they were given such a task to perform. Upon his orders, they formed a tight formation at the front while some parkoured and took to the roofs so that Meomi would not have any space to move forward easily even with her automated climbing gear.

But they underestimated the werecat with her Catterker Fury burning brightly through the past fights. As if her whole body was burning with red chi when the guards saw her, they realised their so called tight defence was nothing but a small little stone on the path. She screeched as she shot her climbing gear's anchor head to the far end of the backstreet alley and with the boost of the air crystal, Meomi charged through the multiple defensive lines like a razor cutting the thick bushes.

The mage realised that there was nothing stopping the attacker from coming through and decided to end the spell but a shot suddenly came through and burst his mouth before he could start the incantation to close the portal. Meomi's gunblade was working as intended and she zoomed past the guards and into the portal. Just in time before it closed due to the lack of mana maintaining it with the mage's death.

On the other side of the portal, she found herself in a wide spacious hall with marble tiling and well decorated walls(And also many heavily armed guards pointing the weapons at her!) Yet despite all of those, she could still the familiar sounds of despair fighting from a distance. In order to prevent her Catterker Fury from dissipating, her body already moved to the nearest guard and killed him effortlessly while trying to assimilate the information around her.

It was only with the fourth kill did she realise she actually was in the heart of the Southern Capital's Citadel. "So, it's a diversion portal huh? Quite a clever method." Meomi mumbled as she concentrated on her nose, only to realise that the nauseating sense had disappeared in the far corner, indicating that there could be another mage that teleported him away.

"Argh! So irritating!" Meomi cursed as she proceeded to fight against all the heavily armed guards as a way to cool herself down before the last call for the retreat was enforced by the System.

Meanwhile, Leopardo was laughing to himself that his plan to escape had seemingly worked splendidly. He had indeed gone into another portal and was now lying low in an out of reach hideout in the Southern Region.

'To think there would be a group of sentient monsters willing to help us. How foolish I was to accept their help.' He thought to himself. 'But never again. The only good monster is a DEAD monster.' Leopardo unceremoniously kicked Nightingale into her guts, causing her to throw up.

"See what you did? What kind of help have you brought?! The whole capital is in shambles and perhaps gone! I cannot believe your leader Bison had naïve enough to trust them. Guess my intentions to have him killed by the Demon Rats could not be achieved." Leopardo said as he delighted in Nightingale's suffering.

"Now tell me everything about them and their weakness." Leopardo ordered as he pulled a dagger out. "And do not even think of lying to me or I will cut your limbs off."

That was when Nightingale saw the real Southern Stars leader right in front of her. That he was far from being as magnanimous as he had always seemed when she had grown up training in his organisation. Back when she had been recruited into Southern Stars because of the Demon Rat situation, she had believed that their leader had taken pity on them. Especially since, they had fed her, had clothed her and had provided her shelter. All she needed to do had been to learn and hone her fighting skills to the best of ability, so she could fulfil missions and bring back coins.

And even with limited interactions with Leopardo, he had always portrayed himself as a reliable leader and not a man being induced by madness like the one she was facing right now. Could that be the reason why Meomi had so desperately tried to kill him? Because she had seen through him?

"Ouf!" Another kick to the gut since she was not responding to her leader in time, followed a punch to the face while he pulled her by the hair.

"SPEAK!" Leopardo shouted as he felt he had lost everything he had built and the anger in him could not be quelled even with the information the Nightingale was about to provide. He needed a punching bag to vent his anger and Nightingale as the former housemaid of the crazy cat lady seemed to be the perfect candidate.

"Meomi.... Save me." Nightingale whispered as she suffered even more blows, unable to retaliate. She scorned the tattoo of the three stars that was disabling her from even trying to fight back. Each time she willed herself to defy the leader of the Southern Stars, her hands and legs instantly went numb.

But just as she was about to black out, she heard a voice...

A very sinister one.

Chapter 1016 Great Protector Extraordinaire

"Dear me. Looks like you're in quite the bind. Should I send over your BFF? But who knows how long that will take... Well, I suppose I could lend you a helping hand if you so wish." The sinister voice whispered as he giggled without restraint.

Nightingale was unaware who exactly was calling out to her but she believed it had something to do with the secret organisation that Meomi was part of. Feeling helpless, she did not hesitate a single moment to ask the sinister voice for help.

"Please, I don't know who, but make that monster stop!" Nightingale shouted loudly not caring about offending Leopardo. However, because of her defiance, Leopardo was even tougher in his abuse. He utilised more strength in his kicks which sent Nightingale flying to the side of the wall.

The former maid spat out blood from the impact, feeling that something inside of her had snapped, most likely her ribs piercing into her lungs or her stomach rupturing from the strain. Her sight was getting hazy and she was barely at the edge of her consciousness.

"You dare to liken me to those traitorous beasts, who YOU brought to us?! Oh don't worry, it will all stop in a moment!" Leopardo yelled as he walked even closer to her and raised his right arm which he had used something similar to a magic spell to create. A parting gift from Saberteeth when he told Leopardo to 'take care' of the capital and with his brand new temporary arm, he was about to smash her face in.

"Tsk, ts, ts. I may be an advocate of true gender equality who has no qualms battling a girl in a fair fight, but this? Forcing her to endure your abuse, preventing her from defending or retaliating? How would you like to be in such a situation?" The sinister voice was echoing around the hideout. While Nightingale could only recognise it as the voice who had spoken to her just now, Leopardo was far more familiar with it.

He remembered that voice all too clear and to be honest, he had yet to overcome that trauma about his memories being ripped out forcibly. It was at that moment he suddenly heard a crack. In the next instant, he felt an excruciating pain in his arm, since it had been twisted to the point where an aspiring acrobat would feel jealous.

As if that was not enough he found his legs suddenly sinking down as he was being swallowed by the ground. Some magical quicksand was biting into his armoured boots and binding him.

"IMPOSSIBLE! How did you even find us? I should have sensed your presence! No matter how faint the magical aura was!" Leopardo asked as he tried to pull his dagger out with his remaining hand while tolerating his pain.

Alas, Kraft was not leaving him with the smallest speck of hope. A black fox appeared on the interim leader's shoulder and a second later, his entire left arm disappeared. There was no pain until he saw the fox jump out and away from the dark magical quicksand with his entire arm in its mouth. Leopardo suddenly experienced a series of phantom pain pulsating through his nerves as the fox started biting on the left arm and munching it away as if it was an afternoon tea snack.

"Where should I begin to tell you about my awesomeness?" Kraft asked in an overly dramatic fashion as he came out of a portal, raising out his arms with confidence and style. "You see, you signed something quite important. A pact with me. Although the contents are vague, not to mention quite useless in this current situation because of your people's wrongdoings, the important bit can be summed up as you basically signing over your life to me!"

He pulled out a piece of paper with a tinge of blood at the bottom right corner of the contract and came close enough to show it to Leopardo. The interim leader realised that was the blood that Kraft had

forced out of his finger. He was about to curse his captor for forcing him into signing it, but the crafty fox already continued his grand spiel.

"But even without this fail safe, your little Southern Star Ninja could have easily led me to you. While she didn't exactly sign a full cloused contract, she is still considered a part time employee with all the benefits such a job entails. Most prominently getting rescued by a roguishly handsome fellow." Kraft sauntered towards the injured Nightingale and tended to her wounds.

"A normal human without any magical power whatsoever and yet she was doing her best to ride the tide to survive. To die as a punching bag without any means of retaliating is worse than getting toyed with by a predator. At least prey gets a chance to bare their fangs out when cornered, no matter how blunt such an effort might be." The crafty fox spoke as he placed his hand underneath Nightingale's chin to have a closer look at her while pushing her hair behind her ears.

"But worry not. I, Great Protector Extraordinaire of all fair and good, shall save you from your imminent death." He winked at Nightingale who was struggling to keep her breath steady and was unsure if all of this was real or she was hallucinating due to blood loss.

"Thankfully, you are not too stubborn for your own good. Jin should learn a little from you, though he is gradually changing to someone who understands that he cannot protect everyone and yet is selfless enough to protect people who matter." He smiled once more before turning his head towards Leopardo.

"As for you," Kraft carefully placed her head down, turning it towards the sinking Leopardo.

"O how enjoyable it is to see fools like you be. Unable to understand even the most basic things. Fine, as a parting gift I can answer your burning curiosity..."

Without any hands to even resist what the sly fox was about to do, Kraft walked on top of the quicksand without any trouble and put his hand through the chain mail and picked up Leopardo's pendant. "This useless crap can only detect magic up to a certain calibre." He then lowered his chi presence and suddenly the pendant started blinking and vibrating crazily.

"However, once I get an output higher than what it could detect." The pendant started to vibrate so much that it stopped vibrating and darkness enveloped the entire crystal on the pendant. "It's such a useless magical detector and the funny thing is I am not even using magic. Well, explaining the difference between magic is chi to you sounds too bothersome." He threw the pendant into the quicksand and it melted.

"Instead, I shall show you a performance that you will never forget. Hmm, perhaps you will once you are dead." Kraft chuckled but Leopardo had no idea what the man in the long coat was saying. Even resisting was futile when he had no arms and his legs were trapped, not to mention the series of pain was starting to emit through his legs as well.

"You see, I'm not much of a healer, so to save the little bird, I need some extra parts. In other words, I got to use you. And judging from the amount of battle experience your body went through, I would say you alone would suffice in saving her." Kraft explained as he walked away from the quicksand to have a glance at the dying Nightingale.

"Though... she might probably be disgusted that I used your body so let's keep a secret, shall we?" Kraft winked at him as he once again raised his hands up and dark chi began to flow out and surround the entire hideout.

"Good thing, dead men tell no tale... unless you are Derek that is. Hahaha!" He smiled as he tried to imitate the very same spell Derek used to siphon and drain energy from his opponents.

Chapter 1017 Vassel

Before Leopardo was allowed to process the insane mumblings of the mad man that put him through all this pain, his head was grabbed once more. His heart immediately clenched tight as if it knew what was coming in the next few seconds. With a twirl of dark chi in the surroundings, the interim leader of the Southern Capital felt a tugging sensation throughout his body. At first, he thought his blood would be drained since the man in the long coat claimed he was going to heal Nightingale.

But soon, he realised that it was more than just his blood, he felt his life force was being absorbed right into the palm of the devil. "Ah, such vitality. As much as you are a warrior, you knew how to enjoy life too. Compared to what your employees eat on a daily basis, you have outlived them by a hundred times more. Oh little Nightingale, you'll be getting more than you deserve and trust me, you will need it for the days to come. Hehehe!" Kraft said as he used his chi to maintain the life force on his palm and slowly walked to the barely unconscious little ninja.

"Infused will be memories, techniques, experience and so much more. Unfortunately, you're getting the whole package, so there will also be undesirable things such as a distaste for monsters and the absolute discrimination against them. But have no worries, a little one on one session with me should ensure that you will be making friends with monsters in no time!" He giggled as he was looking forward to her contribution under him.

The fox leader had wanted to get himself a secretary for some time now. Qui Yue, the little Red Panda Cutie, had been a promising candidate on his radar, but after getting to know her, he had decided against putting her in between himself and Jin. Ayse had been another one on his mind, especially with her feistiness, but as Jin's Head Researcher she had more than enough on her plate.

He could have easily chosen one of the Foxes like Kiyu for that role, given their capabilities, but they were neither pure and innocent. Not like this girl right in front of him. While her fighting skills needed some brushing up, she had the potential to do so much more especially when he browsed through her memories and saw that her brilliant current battle experience had been gathered in a short span of time. Now that the System and Jin had announced to the world that the Royal Panda Clan was still alive, it's time for the Fox Clan as its trusty vassal to grow in strength too.

"Only unlike that young Panda Master, who's willing to take people randomly and sometimes incessantly just for his dungeon instance, I'm a little more refined. Although I got to say his batch of 'clan members' has subsequently grown to be a fine group of people. Enemies turned friends? That's like the classic going from black to white!" Kraft snickered as he inserted the lifeforce into Nightingale while putting in a bit of foxy chi in the mix to make her his.

"Original Bellator Kraft, while it is commendable that you are building up your own clan once again. Please be sure to do so within reason. The System still does not have sufficient processing capabilities to keep everything together."

"Yes, yes, now quickly go get that titan brain or something. It sucks that you're giving us such a handicap. Like seriously, you should have done limitations like this for the past generations. That way, those Users wouldn't have ended up too drunk in power, you dork." Kraft complained and that rendered the System speechless for a moment.

"The Users under the System required that amount of power to stay alive during that period of time. It was a necessity for them."

"You mean just as necessary as them going around, doing stupid things because they had an awesome power backing them up?" Kraft shook his head since he had more than a few faces popping up in his mind the moment he talked about it.

"The System will take your suggestion into consideration and review its protocols upon the passing of the current User." The System stated and Kraft's gave a sarcastic expression of being horrified.

"You are putting a death flag in his life story! So evil of you! And to think I might be considered a bad person! Perhaps you are the antagonist this whole time!" Kraft exaggerated as he continued to treat Nightingale while Leopardo was convinced the person who was taking his life was completely insane. He could not believe his life would end just like this.

"Oh no, no, no. You're not allowed to leave us so fast! This time, I will have myself a fantastic time learning all about the insane stuff you guys have been doing behind the people's back. The quick glimpse previously has already revealed that you are the hypocrite type who just acts like a goody-two-shoes." Kraft smirked as he wielded his dark chi with another hand and did a telekinetic chi slap at Leopardo.

But as he did that, the entire hideout suddenly shook and the tremor did not stop until a few seconds later. Kraft knew that there was no way his slap could have done and there was only one other explanation for this unnatural tremor. "Peppers already got her spell out?" Kraft asked the System for the coordinates to this particular hideout.

The System instantly showed the distance away from the Southern Capital in a holographic screen in front of Kraft which made him chuckle. "Oh, Peppers... so much for holding back, eh?"

"System is now processing all those who have been killed and putting them in various overflow stacks to ensure that User will eventually keep control of the Zurglings." The System stated.

"Why the need for so much micromanaging? Just put the Queen under our control and let her handle the revived brood. Say, now that you mention it, I got quite curious when Jin told me his army numbered around eight thousand-odd? You see, cause last I recalled, the number of monsters we captured should be way much more than that." Kraft pointed out as he leisurely deciphered Leopardo's brain while at the same time healing Nightingale. Although he had to multitask, the latter was already almost done and he just wanted to make sure she would make an awesome servant.

"That number corresponds to the number of sentient monsters who are able to think for themselves and don't need to be commanded by the System. Monsters and animals once possessed by the Bone

Spirits and Zurglings were not counted in. So are the livestock which had been captured in the Giant World. Also, System has been starting to make sure that the quality of the monsters captured would be of a certain standard following the newly revised protocol. Anything that falls short of the revised standard will be thrown away."

" HAHAAHAHA! 'Thrown away'? Haha! Please, you might be able to bluff Jin with the amount of trust you've regained in this short amount of time, but you don't have to do that to me. I know what happens to those people that are killed and 'discarded'. Instead of buying more items that could expand your processing capabilities, you use them as vessels." Kraft snorted that the System did not deny such allegations.

"And do not think I did not notice. While the official number for your processing capabilities still stays the same, you actually have a backup System that is crunching the numbers at the backend. And those monsters and people you discarded have been used for that particular backup System" Kraft pointed out.

"The current User has worthy ambitions that are worth pursuing but System also realised that it will be impossible to achieve his dreams without any underhand methods. As the System has said before, this is the real chance to grow and return to former glory and thus we will do whatever it takes to make sure it will be possible if not in this then in the next generation."

"As such, let the true burden of his glory be borne to the elders while at the same time correct the wrongs that we did." Kraft grinned gently. He had uncovered all the information he needed from Leopardo before sapping out the last of his lifeforce.

His 'sacrifice' would allow him to serve the System...in a different way.

Chapter 1018 Forced Advertising

"HA HA HA!" Peppers was a hundred and ten percent satisfied with the results as she watched the entire Southern Capital go up in smoke. (More than just smoke actually, but she was laughing so hard at the end result, she could not notice anything else other than that.)

Compared to her previous experience of destroying hectares of lands in the Giant World, this could merely be counted as a warm-up exercise of her magic. The Mage Bellator even felt that she had barely scratched the surface of her daily quota of explosions.

'She did really come a long way from vomiting rainbows on my shirt.' Jin thought since this was the first time he saw her still standing and even able to jump around with joy without any fatigue after using her big spells. The dungeon supplier then eyed the monster hordes at the corner of his eyes to see a mix of expressions.

The Zurgling Queen was surprised, yet felt satisfied that the Southern Capital had been demolished. Still, she couldn't help but feel a bit regretful to see the home of her grandmother reduced to rubble, but it was better than allowing those pesky humans to stay in her ancestor's abode.

However one of the monsters with the ability to speak voiced out a rather intellectual concern. "Won't this escalate the hunt against us?"

Jin had been waiting for someone to raise such a concern and he was more than happy to address it. He was aware that despite his grand gesture, many could not help but mistrust him with the Phoenix gone, fearing this could just be some giant conspiracy, so he had to make his stand clear. The Panda Cultivator had to convince them that he was indeed there to provide them with an opportunity for a better life. (But of course, not everything was a bed of roses.)

"Once again, my name is Xie Jin! Where I come from I'm a so-called dungeon supplier. You can think of me as a sort of Monster Master. This means that I govern over monsters who work for me. They earn their keep by doing hard work, but in return, I provide them with great food, a suitable shelter to stay and the opportunity to not only better themselves but also their living conditions even further. You've seen that I have many elite monsters during the unfortunate show of force against you guys. While I regret that our first meeting started out negatively because of that misunderstanding, I assure you that I fight for monsters and humans as long as they do good."

"And before you raise any concerns, yes, I accept all kinds of monsters, not just ones as powerful as your leaders. As long as you are willing to fight or use your talents for the greater good, you'll have a place in my dungeons. Not to mention, you'll get a chance to kill as many humans as you want to the best of your ability in arena like battles, because they will be there trying to kill you too." Jin said and immediately realised that this was not exactly the best advertising quote he could have used.

He coughed once in slight embarrassment before he changed his tone. "Now I'm sure all of you are asking yourself how exactly it will benefit you to join me if you're going to lose all your benefits once you're dead. So I am going to tell you a huge secret - I have the powers to resurrect monsters. So if you end up killed, I'll make sure that you'll be alive and kicking in no time at all."

"If you doubt my master and think he is bluffing, how about one of you come and kill me? I won't lie and pretend that dying doesn't hurt, but if it's to dispel the doubts, I'll happily endure that bit of pain. You should be aware after seeing that explosion or watching the power my buddy Carbon showed, that we could have just chosen to slaughter you and forced you to join us. However, Master Jin is not that kind of person. He's allowed you to choose whether you want to continue your life or change it for the better." Forneus chimed in.

He could see the monster hesitating about that offer, but he didn't blame him. Jin and the System defied common sense like they had done during the Pandapolis Raid. It had been one of the best and worst fights Forneus had ever had. He had never expected such resistance from a new city and his firm belief that the Demon Army had been one of the strongest armies in the Dungeon World had been deeply shaken. Fortunately, now that he had joined Jin, more fights were waiting for him like the one against the Demon Rats and a possible clash against the Church of the Afterlife in the near future.

"Will my kids be free from my twisted tyranny? Just like how free these babies are?" The Zurgling Queen asked with an anxious heart. Zurgling Queens used powerful pheromones to keep full control over the Zurglings they've spawned, but her control was more than that.

Her grandmother might have been doting on her granddaughter to let her go before she was caught in the crossfire, but her mother was not that kind. Her mother had tried to fight the humans on her own, but failing over and over again, turned her to be more and more desperate.

Losing hope, she had eventually sacrificed herself to place an ancient curse on her daughter to make all the Zurglings obey her unconditionally. This had allowed the Zurgling Princess to control them like extensions of herself, instead of sending them out and hoping for the best.

Alas, the price she had to pay was that she got burdened by hearing the thoughts of her Zurglings at all times. For example, in this battle alone, she had felt hundreds of them express their fear, felt their pain as well as the agony of dying. If not for her vengeance against the Southerners, she would not have tolerated all these whispers that were edging her close to insanity.

However, Jin shook his head solemnly as part of his reply.

"They happened to be like this because of the circumstances. I can only assure you that we will help you to the best of our abilities." Jin was not making any promises because he had no idea what the Zurgling Queen was suffering from. Still, the Zurglings that had been liberated from her control were telling her something else. They were encouraging her to join Jin and give it a try. Unbeknownst to the Queen, her desire for vengeance had similarly been plaguing them and they had never felt such relief when they were killed and reborn as Jin's subordinates.

She trusted the words of her children more than this human. The Zurgling Queen decided to be the first to openly join Jin without waiting for Forneus, demonstrating that Jin indeed had the power to 'resurrect' monsters. Slowly but surely, more and more monsters voluntarily decided to join Jin too. After all, the law of the jungle compelled them to follow the strongest creature. Whoever could destroy the entire Southern Capital was not a person or monster to be trifled with. Whether his words and promises were true was another matter entirely.

Jin opened a portal wide enough for those Winged Monsters to enter and felt that this could be the battalion he was searching for. With their capability to fly, everything else could be arranged especially after their discovery that the new System Augmentation Process could potentially make his life easier. The headache on how to fight the Mecha World was getting lesser and perhaps Kraft's constant insistence to act as the 'evil' party of that world so that the two major factions could set aside their differences and unite as one was getting more and more possible.

Also, by defeating their Mechas, he could haul those damaged Mechas back for some reverse engineering and possibly come back to use it against them. As for the pilots that were captured, they could ultimately be used for the Supa Robo Wars and therefore expand that particular part of his dungeon instances. Not to mention, having Mechas would provide some nice and interesting end game content for the Virtual Reality Network he envisioned.

But right now, all he was focusing on was to get as many of these Winged Monsters on his side as possible. His dungeon plans would come into fruition later.

Chapter 1019 Nothing's Ever The Right Choice

'Did I really make the right choice?' Jin thought to himself as he observed more and more monsters entering the portal after one of them struck down Forneus, who then got revived right in front of them. As happy as he was about the increase of his own flying monster horde, the sight of the Southern Capital in shambles weighed heavily on his mind.

Although they might have evacuated most if not all of the civilians, there had been many innocents within the city, no matter how badly he tried to convince himself that they all deserved this punishment for their savage way.

And yet, this also taught Jin that with just one word he could kill as easily as he could protect. The dungeon supplier had once thought that he could protect everyone given the sheer limitless capabilities of his System, but in the end he had to acknowledge that their powers were finite. No matter how hard he tried, death and destruction would follow his trails.

However, he knew one thing.

He would do whatever he needed to do to protect his new family (of monsters). As long as they worked hard for him, Jin would do what he could to allow them to live life to the fullest. While the System had tried to make him embrace this dog-eat-dog world mentality rather early in their budding relationship, which had led to a deep feud between the two parties, he now felt like he could slightly understand the System's action, as it had done what it deemed necessary to ensure the survival of the declining Panda Clan for the next generation.

This System that he possessed had blood on it since the time of its inception. Therefore, all Jin could do was to minimise the bloodshed while climbing to the top. And if he analysed it logically, he had technically saved the Southern Region from a protracted war by annihilating the humans quickly. The death toll would have undoubtedly been way higher on both sides and the fight between the monsters and humans would still go on, even if he had sided and saved the humans. Unfortunately, the truth of the matter was that the greed of humans was neverending unlike monsters who mostly just rampaged when they did not have enough food or someone threatened their territory.

"Snap out of it, Jin. You did make the right choice. These monsters will serve you with more loyalty than these Southerners ever could." Jin told himself and slapped both of his cheeks to wake himself up. At that moment, he asked Forneus if he could do a fly by to the capital.

"Why? Searching for survivors? You've seen it yourself. Even if she held back unless it was someone like King Baal, nobody else could survive such an explosion." Forneus wondered, but he merely shrugged his shoulders and told Carbon, his Metal Devil Dragon, to move forth.

"No, I going to ask the System to take some pictures and make an analysis of this burnt area. It will provide a good reference if I ever want to feature a dungeon instance with a ruined capital. And if not, it could become its own area for the Virtual Network. We should be able to make it a big event and at the end of it the former capital would turn out like this. What do you think?"

"Wow, Boss. You can be pretty sick in your brain at times, don't you know that?" Forneus shook his head in disbelief. He never really looked back on any battlefields after he was done with them. This was the first time he heard someone wanting to revisit the war scene just because of some reference.

"The deed is already done, might as well make the most of it..." Jin shrugged his shoulders as he requested the System to analyse the area while he made Peppers prepare to do a Deep Scan of the area. His Mage Bellator agreed rather readily since she was also interested in looking at the ruins. However, her interest was more regarding finding ways to improve the quality of her explosions. Checking out the epicentre was not enough in her opinion.

Although she usually had the System to tell her how well she had done in the training room she had bought with her System points, there were discrepancies in this particular spell she had used. Not only would the current environment affected the explosion quality, Peppers had also borrowed lightning based mana via Keyrin and Ayse before mixing it with her own magical powers.

"Heh...if we someday visit a world filled with magical combat idiots like her, she would most likely become the queen of those combat idiots in a heartbeat," Forneus remarked and although Peppers did not turn around, only staring at the far end of the ruined capital.

"There are people with far more dangerous magic than me. Not just in my own world, but also the Gods and Demons that Jin has yet to encounter. Have you seen the images from the System, how arrogantly the Godly Representative held himself? With a flick of his wrist, he had conjured barriers that denied chi, mana and every other thing from the outside coming through." The Mage Bellator commented.

"To the naked eye, not everyone could notice it but the more astute in magic or chi will recognise that no simple fellow could break that barrier apart...well perhaps Zeru could if he gave it his all. Maybe Kraft as well if he really wanted to or Rex." Peppers added and started to mumble more names in her list of exceptions as she started to take notes on the irregularities of the mana in the atmosphere because of her explosion.

"You mean we should not go against them?" Jin asked, now interested in the conversation.

"If you were to put them in your game, they would unquestionably be end game content. And I am not talking about you being able to beat them on your own but those World Bosses where multiple guilds would have to unite to take them on. Still, right now you are not on their radar, yet fate flickers like the candle's light on a windy night. Who knows how things might change for you in the days to come. Maybe you'll have to mingle with them soon enough."I

"It sounds like you've clashed with them before." Forneus asked, continuing to feign ignorance even though he was a Demon from the Demon Plane, venturing out to the Dungeon World because of the prospects of a 'quieter' life.

"Let's just say I got a chance to see them in action first hand, so I can safely say, they are definitely stronger than you, Demon. You would not stand the chance as you are now. Despite the upgrade we've given you, it should be a far cry from your former form as one of the Greater Demon Nobles, Forneus." Peppers answered and her words stung him bad.

"Ouch. So you actually do know about me." Forneus but Jin was lost in the conversation and yet he did not wish to interrupt it.

"Of course, they don't call me the Fiery Demonic Queen Sage for nothing. I've acted as the encyclopaedia of the System for a reason. I even know quite a few things that the System does not know because of the Universal Mana Pool that I'm connected to. You may not know it but the worlds no

matter how vastly different they are, are not much more than pieces of paper in a book. Well, one giant book." Peppers explained with pride.

"But didn't you admit that you're still not all-knowing." Jin interrupted and Peppers felt like throwing a fireball at her master.

"Because I could not be bothered to check. If I concentrate really hard, I could get to the bottom of things. And the System wanted me to do that for you initially, but that was just too boring. I only want to explode stuff!"

"Is that why the System gave you to me as a Bellator so quickly?" Jin tried to remember back the days when he first got the bellators.

"Maybe. Anyways, I am picking up a few heat signatures in the ruined capital. Do you wish to save them?" Peppers asked as she started to charge her magical staff as a way to kill them quickly as mercy.

"Your magic was not strong enough to kill every single one of them?" Forneus could not help but tease the Mage Bellator, who just harrumphed and looked away, as if could not give two hoots about his opinion.

"Go ahead. Let the System judge them and if they are worthy to be resurrected, the System would do as such." Jin believed that was the best way for these survivors who were stuck in the rubbles of this ruined capital.

Chapter 1020 The Hatchery - Part 1

While Peppers and the System were busy analysing the debris from the skies, (and bringing a swift death to the remaining survivors) Jin received a call from Narris, the Drow who had been investigating the location of the second and final egg that the Southern Leader Saberteeth had stolen.

"Any updates?" Jin had learned to ditch the pleasantries when interacting with the Dark Elves since they did not like them and found them to be a waste of time, especially the younger ones.

He suspected that it might be Kraft's indoctrination at work, but he believed if he asked too many questions about it, Kraft might want to make him experience what the Dark Elves had gone through. "If the monthly mind torture was not enough, just say so!" Jin assumed that would be what Kraft would say if he was there.

"Yes, the information from Tinda has proven to be useful. I've found the exact hideout location and discovered that the Nine Oceans Phoenix egg is not the only one there." Narris said that and that made Jin furrow his brows.

"Elaborate."

"Despite their seeming reliance on harvesting monster parts, they somehow have a highly advanced magic operated hatchery with lots of monster eggs and even pregnant monsters in the vicinity. However, it was not hard to find the Nine Oceans Phoenix's egg because of its unnatural magic

signature. Unsurprisingly they've hidden it at the deepest basement level of the building and it's the most secured area." Narris replied as it was no brainer that the Southerners would want the best protection for their prized egg.

"Can I assume you've rescued the egg already or are in the midst of doing so?" Jin asked but the dark elf's tone indicated a negative.

"There is one final barrier I'll have to bypass if I want to reach that egg and it looks very complicated. It will require some time for me to crack the barrier. It looks to be the work of multiple mages who have overlaid protective spells, reinforcing this particular barrier. While each layer of the barrier should be easy enough to crack, the stacks simply make it cumbersome for a stealthy entry. Also, time is of the essence..." Narris reported as she continued to be aware of her surroundings in case more guards started to come down and query why there were no reports. (That would be because she had knocked the surrounding guards out cold.)

"In other words, you want us to create a distraction? Or do you need more help in breaking the barriers down?"

"Preferably both. I figure that if they have such a troublesome barrier, there has to be some very troublesome anti theft mechanism within the room to deter thieves from escaping with their most prized possession. Worst case, they might rather see the egg destroyed than it falling into someone else's hands."

"If that's the case... Narris, kill those two guards. We will replace them with our 'guards' and perform an act."

"I'm afraid that's not possible. I've noticed that a lot of them have an explosive attached to their necks. Sick bastards. If their heart rate stops completely it will trigger the explosion and it will alert the mage leader in charge. Going in with a portal is not possible as well. There are sensory traps everywhere and triggering one will cause the same thing to happen."

"What kind of facility is that? Isn't it just a hatchery?! At that rate, I could also use that place as a reference for my Phantom Thief Gentlebear Dungeon Instance!" Jin could not fathom how paranoid their leader was to put up so many safeguards. At this time, Peppers started to listen into the conversation since she heard the word magic again and again. Even Jin was a little taken aback by the troubles the Night Fox have with removing the barrier. (She was after all the star student of Kraft's and thus there's a certain calibre attached to such a title.)

"They probably had enough break-ins to warrant such an extensive array of traps and sensors." Narris knew how sensitive mother monsters could be for their young and all these security setups would deter anyone to brute force their way through.

"If that's the case...let me get our experts' opinion," Jin said and invited Shu and Sandy into the conversation and gave them a brief summary of the area.

"Even if we know all these, how can we help Narris?" Sandy queried.

"Yeah, won't it better to brute force the way through? Do a quick and yet forceful spatial opening into the room and grab the egg before going off." Shu commented and Sandy agreed.

"As Narris said, we don't know what sort of defensive protocol that would activate. A self destruct mechanism is possible and if we fail to retrieve the egg we can forget about Nine Oceans Phoenix coming to our side." Jin reiterated. "And must everything be brute force? If I wanted brute force, I would have called in the Mr Derpy instead."

"Then? What do you want us to do?" Shu could not think of anything great.

"According to Narris, it's in the basement, so no matter how sophisticated their tunnels are, they should be prone to wear and tear... which also means a way for both of you to get your act together." Peppers who observed the conversation, said and that plan alone made the three in the conversation curious.

"Knowing Kraft, he taught you spycraft, right? Do you have the depths and location of where you are right now?" Peppers asked and Narris nodded her head which the System immediately extracted information from her head.

"Come to think of it, isn't this some telecommunication magic, how could she ever communicate with us without activating some trap?" Shu asked out of the blue which caused Narris to chuckle

"Ask the System." Narris' answer was short and sweet while stating the obvious.

"Great, now that the System has the exact location, please teleport Shu at least a kilometre away from the hatchery and push the roots through. If you need Sandy to move the earth, you two can coordinate. Most importantly, once you reach the basement, use Sandy's powers to slit an opening through the stones and with Narris' detection skills, avoid the traps and take control of the two guards with your roots." Peppers was the first to propose the plan, and Jin allowed her to lead.

"I see what you are getting at. You want me to use my roots as the puppet strings for those guards while Narris continues to decode the magic?" Shu concluded with delight. It had been some time since he performed something delicate.

"I will do what I can to help him." Sandy got the rough picture of the whole situation and the Dark Elf nodded her head. A plan that has some tact in it which Narris did not expect the little girl whose head was only filled with explosions has more things to come up with.

"Great. And if everything goes to plan, we might actually have a show to watch. But remember, securing the Nine Oceans Phoenix's egg is the number one priority." Jin thanked them as the System had already teleported Shu and Sandy near the hideout.