

Dungeon S 231

Chapter 231 Bewildermen

As Jin was the first one to enter the Shop Level One instance, the first thing he did was to ask Peppers for a favour. He wanted her to cast a spell of anonymity upon him. Jin had requested Peppers beforehand. He contacted her via his bellator message function, to standby at the 'entrance' of the shop instance.

Peppers did not question it and was getting ready to fulfil Jin's request the moment he entered the shop. Jin felt strange after getting cast with the spell of anonymity. He felt as if he was not quite himself, comparable to wearing a panda costume, but instead of cotton the feeling it was more like neoprene.

Nevertheless, the spell of anonymity allowed Jin to stroll around the Shop Level One instance without anyone being able to find out his identity. Unless someone came real close to him or took his hoodie down, his secret should be safe. However, the spell also included Qiu Yue, which is why Jin had Peppers prepare another spell.

Qiu Yue quickly followed suit, but unbeknownst to her, when she entered the shop instance, Peppers had already cast the spell of Immense Clarity on Qiu Yue as requested. Immense Clarity allowed the user to peel through the spell of anonymity. "Who is she?" Peppers asked telepathically but Jin replied that he would tell her more at a later time.

Yun's interest got piqued by all the secrecy but Jin kind of spoilt the whole facade by telling her truthfully that it was his ex-girlfriend and that he wanted to sort of play a small prank. "She does not know that I am the boss of this store. Mind playing along?"

"Sure, why not?" Yun spoke in Jin's thoughts and began to walk towards Qiu Yue.

Meanwhile, Qiu Yue was in an absolute daze which was a perfectly normal reaction for first timers, that entered Jin's shop. Even he himself never failed to be amused by the customer's reaction. Of course, seeing Qiu Yue reaction was even more pleasurable as she looked at him and barely managed to stop herself from squealing. She jumped on the spot and held onto Jin's hand involuntarily as she felt extremely excited by the entire place.

"This is amazing!!! Is this the shop!? Why does the ambience of this place feel so different from other dungeon supplier stores?!" Qiu Yue was bewildered by the current setup of the entire shop instance and Jin did not have the chance to say a word. Meanwhile, a lady with slick curves in a red latex suit with a cat tail walked towards Qiu Yue. The latter was astonished and overwhelmed by the courage of that lady wearing that costume.

"Hi there, I am Yun, one of the employees working here in Dungeons and Pandas. Judging by your reaction, this seems to be your first time here, Miss?" Yun took off the cat mask she was wearing and Qiu Yue, who was rather confident in her looks, felt that in terms of beauty, Yun was an 11/10.

"Hi... I erm do not know where to even start." Qiu Yue spoke honestly, as she gazed at the ceiling for a moment, admiring the fantastic stained glass design. She knew that the person, who made this stain glass had some engineering background because there was no way for a layman to create such an impressive design, especially considering the sheer size of it. With Qiu Yue still daydreaming, Jin, in turn,

came to the rescue and helped Qiu Yue by continuing the conversation with Yun. "Any dungeon you would recommend? My friend here was looking for one of your dungeons in particular... Now what was it called again? ... pet dungeon instance?" Jin perfectly played the part of the innocent fool by simply repeating Qiu Yue's words from earlier.

"Ah, yes the pet dungeon! My friend recommended me to get a pet! But before that, can I ask you to clarify one thing? Is this really a dungeon instance? I mean, I saw the dungeon instance port, but I was hesitant until my friend Jin said to just tap it via the instructions." Qiu Yue asked and Yun smiled as she nodded her head.

"Yes, the boss of this store had utilised the latest prototype dimensional instance technology and modified this entire instance into a service instance. Unlike a dungeon instance, there are no monster threats in this area and people gather here for various purposes. One of them is to watch the dungeons in action. If you look around you can obviously see multiple auditoriums. We even have announcers narrating the fights."

"The upper floor in this particular instance contains the Pet Battle Card Vending Machine which allows you to get your very own pet as well as a place to grab some snacks and relax." Yun professionally explained the workings of the Shop Level One instance the same way she would to any other customers.

Suddenly, there were people roaring and shouting from one of the auditoriums behind her. Qiu Yue could not help but turn her head around in curiosity to look at what seemed to be two cultivators battling in a random arena. Following her instincts she walked towards the edge of the centre of Shop Level One Instance to see the entire commotion.

"Looks like Bin Yong, the Bombardier Beetle cultivator is going up against the dreaded Royal Boar Knight Sir Hamlet. Ahhh! What is Shi Zuo, the Mad Monkey cultivator plotting?!" Mr Patsu, the penguin announcer continued to hype up the scene as his fellow announcer, Bear Cub One, injected a few witty comments every now and then. The crowd continued to cheer from their seats and Qiu Yue could not believe her eyes. The burning desire for battle in her heart was itching for a go.

"Jinny! Come and see the battle! This is crazy!" Qiu Yue could not contain her excitement and slipped her tongue as she called him by his former nickname. Jin felt a little nostalgic and happy, but knew that she was just in her own world, not caring for anything except what was in front of her.

"Is this some recorded battle, erm Ms Yun?" Jin asked Yun to prompt her into explaining more about the store to Qiu Yue. Surprisingly, Yun was not annoyed and was rather accommodating to assist Jin. She went over the basics of each of the available dungeons, then told Qiu Yue about the place and the reason for these auditoriums.

"So how about we try the same random dungeon that those two guys are taking? Will our dungeon instance be broadcast as well?" Qiu Yue's blood was pumping furiously, as she awaited the answer from Yun. Even Yun had not seen anyone as enthusiastic about the dungeons as her.

"Yes, the moment you two are participating in a dungeon, there is a chance for both of you to be broadcast, as long as you two perform well in the dungeon instance. Especially since we have dozens of dungeon instances going at the same time." Yun explained to Qiu Yue.

With the change of the shop into a dimensional instance, Jin had relocated the dimensional stations and opened additional ones near each auditorium instead of in those halls. This allowed more cultivators to enter the dungeon instances, increasing his shop sales and at the same time curbing the waiting time for the cultivators. It also had the benefit of not annoying or disturbing the immersion of the auditoriums that were being hyped up by the announcers.

"Alright! Let's do this, Jin! We shall try that dungeon instance those two were doing!" Qiu Yue did not even peruse the menu that Yun took out and wanted to have some action immediately. "Are you sure you want me to enter the dungeon with you?" Jin teased her as he remembered that he had not shown his cultivation status to anyone but Yun and his bellators. No one else knew how much stronger he had become compared to just a couple of weeks ago.

"Ah... true. I remember that you did not really choose any cultivation method when we were studying..." Qiu Yue suddenly became a bit embarrassed that she tried to drag the quasi cultivation-less Jin into battle.

"But I really want to try it..." Qiu Yue paused for a while before she continued her sentence. "How about you take this as part of your training! I will protect you. Hehehe!" Qiu Yue raised her arm and flexed her muscles to show off.

"If that's the case, how about I pay for your dungeon entrance? That way, I won't feel bad tagging along with you." Jin proposed to pay for her dungeon ticket and her eyes were beaming with delight.

"Hold onto your words, Jinny! Let Big Sis Red Panda show you a few tricks! Maybe you might be able to pick up the Red Panda cultivation too and we can do more difficult dungeons!" Qiu Yue smiled with joy as Jin paid for the tickets and Yun directed them to the dimensional stations.

As Jin followed behind the elated girl to the dimensional stations, he was genuinely grinning from one ear to the other. It was a refreshing kind of joy, as if some kind of heavy burden has been lifted. He felt like a young teenager again, totally free of worries and just there in the moment having fun with his friend. This feeling...somehow he was unable to recall the last time he felt like this.

"Looks like Jin likes this girl and perhaps even more than Zhen Qing," Yun thought to herself since she did not have any idea that Jin was serious about going back with his ex.

Chapter 232 Red Panda

"Jin, please remember that if the hood comes off, the spell of anonymity will dissipate. Especially when you are fighting in that dungeon, don't forget it could be broadcast onto the public." Peppers reminded Jin before he went into the random battle arena dungeon instance, but he messaged back that he took note about these effects.

Jin had fun teasing Qiu Yue for the moment, but he was also considering whether he should outright tell Qiu Yue about him owning this shop. It was because she was the only one in university that knew him inside out. The other few people, who knew him that way were only his deceased grandfather Ming or

his old high school friends. However, Qiu Yue had more recent contact with him than his high school friends so bluffing them would have been easier.

On the other hand, it would be harder for Qiu Yue to be beguiled as compared to hiding the fact from her. She knew exactly what the strength and weakness of Jin were. If he told Qiu Yue that he was the one who build this particular shop, she would have laughed her head off for cracking such a joke or be very angry at Jin for lying to her.

Hence, if he wanted Qiu Yue to really know that he himself was the shop owner, he either had to tell the truth soon or make the System wipe her memory about today. However, Jin had wished to have someone at his side. Someone he could be able to discuss his issues with, aside from his bellators or Yun. He was thinking, that it would help, having a third party with a less biased opinion influencing his decisions and allowed him to view his issues from another perspective.

That was why Jin was somewhat desperate to put Zhen Qing into contact with the System even though he tried doing it step by step. After all if he were to simply tell her about the System she would probably think him as crazy.

By allowing her to be exposed to the wonders of the System gradually, Jin would have someone to talk to about the System. Although he first needed to be sure, that after all the time apart he could still trust Zhen Qing enough to believe him and to keep this secret of his to herself.

At the same time, Qiu Yue was potentially the perfect candidate for Jin to expose the System to. She loved dungeons to the point that Jin thought she was insane but her love and her obsession were also the few reasons which influenced Jin into wanting to be a dungeon supplier. In the past he had hoped to be able to make dungeons, which would lead people to love them with the same degree as Qiu Yue.

If Jin managed to get Qiu Yue on board with this dungeon supplier dream, it would be a huge boon to him emotionally, else Jin would continue to strive the way he had been doing all this while. Perhaps, Jin could find someone similar in the future...or perhaps, he just could not let go of his past.

Regardless, earning Qiu Yue's trust again and gaining her back as his friend would still be a major hurdle to overcome. Especially with Jin's time being somewhat limited when he had many issues at hand to deal with. However, Jin planned to do what he could at the moment and just hope for the best.

"I guess I will just keep the hood on as long as possible. Yun, please tell Mr Patsu and Bear Cub one not to broadcast our fight. It would be kind of troublesome if I got exposed." Jin told Yun telepathically without getting a reply back. At that moment he became preoccupied by Qiu Yue's fascination of the dungeon port, the miniature panda storage and how advanced this store was to use an app to keep track of the cultivators' progress.

"Looks like there are even more functions! A forum? Reward box? Wow!" Qiu Yue was also attracted to the pandas on the screen but she frowned when she could not see any red pandas in it. "Jin, let's make a petition to the boss of this place and ask him or her to place some red pandas in the Pandamonium app. I am sure they will become an instant hit!" Qiu Yue proudly suggested her Red Pandas, but Jin just continued to smile at how elated she was.

"Alright, alright. Come, let's get going, I'd like to see whether the Red Panda Mistress is worthy of being called Shifu." Jin joked a bit after imagining the scene of a fat lazy panda bowing to a little red panda.

"Please, I will knock the monsters down senseless, so that they will have no other choice but to grovel at my feet!" Qiu Yue replied cheerfully.

"So much confidence as usual, even though you tend to...nevermind... Let's get going!" Jin was reminded what a battle freak she was, but there was one small problem. Usually, she was also the first one who got defeated in dungeons. It happened so many times that she garnered another weird nickname from the dungeon suppliers that she visited.

Good Loser Lady Battle Freak.

No matter how many dungeons she tried, her win lose percentage ratio was skewed more towards the latter. The only redeeming factor was that she did not let her failures stop her from having fun and always wished to try again. It actually made the dungeon suppliers like her since they were basically earning money from her but they also adored her for her courage and spirit.

Her frequent failure was all due to the Red Panda Style not exactly being meant for fighting. Notice how the Red Panda Style that Qiu Yue had was just called 'Red Panda' Style? Unlike other cultivation Styles which usually consisted of an animal with a prefix? It was because there was no proper cultivation for the Red Panda Style.

Its cultivation was meant as a base for other cultivations especially when a person needed help with his or her cultivation of chi points. That was why it was said that the Red Panda Style was just meant for cuteness when you portrayed your cultivation and nothing else. It was also not the most ideal cultivation base to aim for, unless the cultivation that the cultivators were aiming for were of the Ursidae (The scientific family names for bears) cultivations such as the Black Bear, Polar Bear or Raccoon.

The same situation also applied for certain cultivators in Jin's shop. For example the Bombardier Beetle Style that Bin Yong had been using. But unlike Qiu Yue's red panda, Bombardier beetles in nature had specific traits such as their chemical cannon hidden in its abdomen to ward off predators. Such a special trait of that insect helped enhance the cultivation style of the Bombardier beetle. At the same time, Bin Yong had also been experimenting on how to enhance the Bombardier beetle cultivation and found that the sword and shield was a good weapon choice for him. The use of the right weapons complimented the affinity towards the Bombardier beetle cultivation. It would not be too surprising if in the near future, he would manage to add a prefix to the cultivation and he himself could become a grandmaster in the Bombardier beetle cultivation.

Yet, Qiu Yue did not advance above the Red Panda cultivation as she solely believed that there was a certain cultivation style that the Red Pandas could soar through. A cultivation style that had yet to be explored despite many grandmasters and researchers having tried to create one, but failing. Granted, since there was no true grandmaster in the cultivation of the Red Panda style, Qiu Yue's claim that people had yet to find a proper red panda cultivation method was valid, similar to Bin Yong's bombardier beetle cultivation.

This reasoning was why she took the losses she incurred as just another step to improve the Red Panda Style, even though the hole to her wallet was enormous. Alas, her current workload did not allow Qiu Yue to have a favourable training schedule as she would like. Hence, being able to fight in this dungeon would be a boon to her.

Both Jin and Qiu Yue got teleported into the random battle arena dungeon instance and they landed to a scene where Qiu Yue was floating slightly. She then realised that her surroundings were full of blue and puffy clouds. A few steps sideways and Qiu Yue already noticed the edge of the arena. "We are on a floating stone platform?" Qiu Yue asked as she took out her weapons and peeked over the edge of the platform to see more clouds.

"Seems like it!" Jin said while taking out Bam in Katana Form as he smirked at Qiu Yue's main weapon.

"Oh! Looks like you are one step closer to becoming a Red Panda Cultivator!" Qiu Yue brandished her own katana out from her scabbard.

"Are you sure you can fight in that attire?" Jin asked with a bit of concern, when he realised that she was still in her office skirt which Qiu Yue also just became aware of.

"Ahh! It's okay! Maybe the s.e.x appeal might lower the guard of the monster!" Qiu Yue stuck her tongue out as she tied her scabbard onto her waist and took out an accessory chopstick to neaten her hair into a bun quickly.

"I do not think that will work against me, you know." Two cat like ladies climbed up from the edge of the platform while a large looking eagle flew away from the platform.

"Gah, Meomi and Nyanmi." Jin scratched his neck a bit before he unsheathed his katana too.

Chapter 233 Brand New Cats

"This will be rather troublesome." Jin thought to himself when he noticed that on the first stage his opponents would be the two werecats. The reason why he felt that way was because he had recently upgraded the equipment for most of the werebeasts.

Jin felt that the Bank Heist Raid dungeon instance was a little too easy after cultivators spent weeks analysing the plausible patterns of the werebeast attacks. It was after all the first dungeon that Jin had created so the battle scenarios were commendable but not flexible enough as compared to the Goblin Forest Dungeon or the Music Theatre Dungeon.

The latter two dungeon instances had the advantage of using wide and complex terrains such as forests and jungles so Jin's monsters could be unpredictable and the cultivators could only take note of the possible flaws of the monsters, rather than making use of the terrain to their advantage.

The same could not be said about the Bank Heist Raid dungeon instance. Mainly because the cultivators could bring along someone with cultivation specializing in long-range attacks, such as Jing Ru, and as long as they managed to get hold of a good sniping platform, the cultivators would have some form of advantage against the monsters.

In terms of dungeon design, the cultivators liked the Bank Heist Raid because of its structure, but felt that once they learnt the layout, it was not much of a challenge at all. Hence, Jin decided to increase the difficulty by removing all the current equipment the werebeast had and gave them better and unique ones.

The werecats for example, were given weapons to help counter cultivators specialised in long, mid and short range.

Gun Knuckles and Sniper Whip.

Jin was inspired by Yem and Mer's choices of weapons and used the Dungeon Maker to create these two weapons for Nyanmi and Meomi. He initially wanted both of them to be proficient in those two weapons, but eventually decided against that. Having such a versatile weapon each already increased the werecat's combat proficiency by two fold.

Meomi did not say much when they landed on the arena platform and charged in with her Gun Knuckles towards Qiu Yue. Yet Qiu Yue did not flinch at the incoming strike of the werecat and faced her head on. Her knuckles clashed with Qiu Yue's Katana, but with a click by Meomi caused the knuckles to ignite a miniature explosion which knocked Qiu Yue's Katana away, forcing Qiu Yue to be wide open.

Meomi smirked as she went in for the strike with her other hand but Qiu Yue was quick enough to evade and block the incoming attack with her scabbard.

"Not Bad." Meomi whispered close to Qiu Yue as she jumped back to create some distance but Meomi was not done with her attack as she used her tail as a whip and slapped Qiu Yue with it before distancing herself away from Qiu Yue.

"Ahh, stupid cat!" Qiu Yue rubbed the bruise on her face before she stood her ground and tore the side of her skirt so that it did not restrict her movement. Now was not the time to care about decency. Now it was either she lives or that cat.

Meanwhile, Nyanmi was holding a wooden looking rifle with a medium sized scope as she gave an opening shot to Jin which he managed to evade effortlessly. He knew that Nyanmi was proficient in using long ranged weapons and a whip but she was not sufficiently competent in using the all new sniper whip.

The way the sniper whip worked was that it looked like an ordinary bolt action wooden rifle that required ammunition to be placed into the barrel before shooting though it lost the capability to automatically insert an ammo cartridge. But when the enemy came close, parts of the rifle would dismantle on the spot, connecting through a strong string of metal and nylon wires through the magic input by Nyanmi and the rifle would be turned into a whip with various parts that could be used to attack at any distance.

Not to mention, the wooden rifle itself could be used as a bat in close range combat. Hence, if Nyanmi attained sufficient proficiency in it, the ideal way of using the sniper whip would be to whip the enemy a few times, let it return to a normal rifle, quickly load a bullet in it and subsequently fire upon distraction.

Thankfully for the current arena, Nyanmi still needed time to get the hang of her new weapon so she was using one function at a time. This gave Jin the opportunity to continue looking weak as Qiu Yue fought against Meomi.

This was also a brilliant time to train his Perfectly Normal Parry Slash to a higher level since the attacks of an experienced whip user were more dangerous than three swordsmen fighting Jin. Hence, with his powers self suppressed for training, Jin entered the fray trying his best to counter against Nyanmi.

"Don't go easy on me!" Jin sent a voice transmission to Nyanmi in case she thought that she would be giving Jin a chance to survive while he was pretending.

"Haha, dream on Master, you still owe a debt of pain for previously hurting my beloved onee-sama!" Nyanmi returned her voice transmission to her master and pressed on with her attack.

Separately, as the battle raged on, Yun decided not to listen to Jin and purposely turned on his random arena battle dungeon instance in the auditorium hall with the fewest number of people in it. "Let's see if you can live up to your name as a boss." Yun said to herself as she continued to entertain the other customers in the shop instance.

Somehow, that unwritten challenge by Yun was picked up by the System and it issued an urgent mission to Jin. However, since Jin was fighting, the System decided to relay the message through Nyanmi instead but with a twist.

"Master, the big boss System said that it has an urgent mission for you." Nyanmi said via a voice transmission and Jin was surprised. "But you have to defeat me first to get that information."

"What?" Jin was so surprised, that he got distracted by the message and Nyanmi managed to strike a curve whip back attack on Jin, leaving behind a slightly broken hoodie and a wound.

"But, I do not like the System too much either. If not for you master, I would have stayed comfortably within the System's premise, although thanks to you I got to meet onee-sama. So, here's a tip. I will say it would be wise to continue to suppress your cultivation until you defeat me." Nyanmi winked at Jin who was reeling in from the pain, but she did not hesitate to shoot at Jin when the sniper whip changed back to a normal rifle.

"Shit!" Jin raised his Bam Katana up and with some luck on his side, the Perfectly Normal Parry Slash activated, cutting the bullet that was flying towards him into two. "I do not know what the System is playing at right now, when all I want is just to have some simple fun with Qiu Yue. If that's the case then so be it." Jin thought to himself and pulled down his hoodie to concentrate better on his fight against Nyanmi.

Chapter 234 Analysis

Previously, Auditorium Six had just been showing a group of cultivators running the Qixi Festival dungeon instance and not many were that interested since the story was more or less fixed to the theme. Despite the System's effort to showcase its ability to create a dungeon instance, it was not as flashy or flexible as Jin's dungeons so the novelty of Qixi wore off when regular customers got used to it.

However, a random arena battle was suddenly being shown and some people started to get interested for Auditorium Six. The main appeal of that mode was that monsters of any dungeon instance could appear to fight against the cultivators. It was a learning platform for many which made a number of customers chase after such dungeon runs to learn more about the monsters.

Especially the Nettoflix alike subscription based video app platform, that Jin created, also dubbed Pandaflix by his customers.

What made Auditorium Six even more crowded was that a gorgeous female cultivator was fighting alongside a hooded male against the werecats. Unlike in a fight featuring a member of the Elite Pandawans, which was the way the regulars such as Bu Dong, Bin Yong, Xiong Da etc. had been dubbed, the werecats were a menace for everyone else and troublesome to fight against.

This became notably obvious when Jin had increased the difficulty for the Bank Heist Raid by providing the werejackals and werecats with new equipment. Jin thought that it was easy enough for most customers but he had forgotten that the customers who complained were the minority while the majority still had had trouble fighting against them.

Some even abandoned the idea of splitting up the team to confront the werejackals and werecats separately. Hence, they took on other strategies such as concentrating on fighting indoors, especially in corridors without any windows. This helped them eliminate the werejackals, without the werecat snipers being able to provide support. Others purposely conducted a crossfire fight against the werecat snipers from the bank to the apartment building they were in.

Overall, Jin was quite happy to see such scenarios taking place as compared to previous fights. The reason being that the cultivators were more active in finding alternative solutions to triumph over the monsters with their new equipment.

Hence, Jin's dungeons were not just all about brawns but brains were involved as well, allowing the cultivators to experience a full blown experience against these intelligent monsters. It was also a joy for him to see many people posting their achievements on the forum in the Pandamonium App, and start theorycrafting on how to beat the dungeon instance, after the increase in difficulty.

Jin sometimes wondered if he could conduct military or police exercises, to improve teamwork and operations. It could definitely be part of a venture that might earn him big bucks if done right.

"Hey, isn't that Boss Jin?" A customer who was casually watching the random arena battle fight in the Auditorium Six suddenly shouted out after Jin had pulled his broken hood down to concentrate on the fight against Nyanmi. The sudden shouting spurred the customers to scrutinise a bit and some began to wonder if it was really true or if it was just someone similar in appearance.

A customer near the back of the auditorium jumped up and ran to the Bar Island to check for Pandula Jin but there was no sign of him. The customer immediately came back to tell the rest and the announcers, who were busy at another auditorium were distracted by it.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, it seems that we have received some exciting news, that our very own Boss is fighting in a random arena battle with a friend of his! The broadcast of the dungeon run is currently in Auditorium Six!" Mr Patsu confirmed the existence of his Boss in battle and announced the news.

Every single customer in the five other auditoriums immediately jumped up from their seats just to gather towards Auditorium Six to see Boss Jin in action. "Is it really Boss Jin? Is it really Boss Jin!?!?!?" Some of the customers even ran up to the upper floors of the Shop Level One instance to have a better view of the dungeon run in Auditorium Six.

"Why is Boss Jin running a dungeon without telling us?" A customer questioned curiously.

"I too did not notice it was him, and thought it was just a pretty girl and her cultivator friend in the hoodie! I did not expect that guy to be Boss Jin!" Another customer replied.

"I wonder what Boss Jin's current grade and powers are!" A female customer said excitedly.

"Hmm, but Boss Jin seems to have a bit of difficulty against the werecat Nyanmi." An astute customer who was assessing the battlefield commented.

"But I remember him defeating Lai Fu, the owner of the General Store Fresh Price, on the streets once!" An old time customer shouted upon hearing the comments.

"He is suppressing his abilities." A fairly middle aged man spoke which made everyone go silent. Unsurprisingly, it was none other than Mr Know-It-All sitting on a corner of the sofa with his notebook and his bottle of homemade Oolong Tea. Every customer who has been to Jin's store a few times knew of him. His battle guides in the Pandamonium forums made him noticeably famous in Dungeons and Pandas.

Mr Know-It-All's words of advice were gold and many used his guides to win against the dungeon instances, but of course he did put a disclaimer that he could only provide an overview on what to expect. Especially in the Bank Heist Raid where the werejackals and werecats were given brand new equipment, changing the entire game plan that Mr Know-It-All previously suggested.

"Why do you think so Master Know-It-All?" A customer respectfully asked.

"I have seen his abilities in action before, so a monster like Nyanmi should not pose any threat against him. Not even with her new weapon and especially not since she seemed to lack the experience in using it, which I found it to be unbelievably real. I am guessing he is suppressing his abilities, presumably because of either of two possible scenarios:

One, he is training himself up against a new unconventional weapon like Nyanmi's Sniper Whip. At least that was the name which was revealed to me by Boss Jin. She has the capability to create a defensive bubble if an enemy gets too close. It also provides long attacking arcs, which a katana user will definitely have difficulty entering. Not to mention her rifle mode also poses a big problem towards a close range user. Therefore, Jin could probably be using her as a training tool like how you cultivators come here not just to have fun but also to train." Mr Know-It-All explained his analysis, not minding the nickname used by others to refer to him.

"Two, he does not wish to show himself as someone overly powerful, so that his friend could have a chance of fighting an opponent or Boss Jin is hiding something that he does not wish to reveal to his friend. However, for the latter reason, I think I may be overthinking it a little too much. It most probably is option one." Mr Know-It-All further clarified his stance and everyone somehow agreed with his opinion and continued watching Jin fight.

"Still, I must say, that friend of his is putting up a good fight against Meomi and her gun knuckles." A customer shifted the conversation and many continued to agreed.

"Indeed, her fighting style is a bit crude, probably because she had not fought for quite some time, but it shows that she has accumulated plenty of experience from running dungeons in the past." Mr Know-It-All commented and many nodded their heads.

"ARGGHHH this is so irritating!" Qiu Yue shouted as she barely missed once more against Meomi, with the werecat gracefully dodging the attack. Meomi then aimed her gun knuckle at Qiu Yue and fired another blast of miniature explosion to cause Qiu Yue to lower her guard.

But Qiu Yue was not that gullible as she had already learnt the attack pattern of Meomi. Instead of dodging the knuckle explosive, Qiu Yue forcefully took the hit and charged towards Meomi, who had lowered her defenses due to pride. "Katana Art! Slash of the Red Panda!" A red streak of light passed through Meomi as the onlookers saw Qiu Yue flash past her.

A direct hit was scored and Meomi was injured. However, instead of fighting to the brutal end, Meomi stopped and clapped. "You have passed." Qiu Yue looked at her a bit surprised, as she breathed heavily, trying to catch her breath. What seemed to be a short battle for Meomi was actually the longest battle for Qiu Yue.

The only thing that made her fight to her hardest was because she had noticed Jin was also fighting with all his might against the other werecat. How could she lose to a person with no noticeable cultivation? Throughout the entire fight, Qiu Yue could only sense her own chi but not Jin's. He was not even pushing out any chi but using just his skills as a fighter to pit himself against the ferocious werecat.

"Why are you looking so worried? Do you want to help him?" Meomi threw her hands up into the air, showing that she would not attack anymore, as she approached Qiu Yue.

"I would like to. No, I would really love to join in on the fun. But I know that if I help him out, he would never figure out his own life." Qiu Yue said with some guilt in her voice as she continued to look at Jin struggling against the werecat.

"Don't worry too much, he will make it. He is after all our benefactor." Meomi walked away and jumped off the floating platform as she replied to Qiu Yue which made her confused.

"Huh? Benefactor?" Qiu Yue suddenly heard a loud clash that temporarily made her forget what she was thinking as she turned her head to focus on the battle.

Chapter 235 Monsters With Sentience

"Huh, why did the werecat, that red panda cultivator was fighting with, just withdraw herself away from the battlefield?" A customer who was watching did not understand what was going on.

"Ah, because the monsters in the random arena battle are not just about elimination, sometimes it will be simply a test of skills. Unless you encountered a monster, that was dead on fighting you to their last breath." Bin Yong who just came out of his random arena battle dungeon instance joined the crowd.

"Why would that be the case?" The customer continued to ask, not noticing Bin Yong's presence that much.

"It is most likely due to the difficulty scale. The monsters might be too strong to kill for the cultivators that challenged them. Hence, a test of skill would most likely suffice." Bin Yong presented his take on the rules.

"Then why is it not the case for those story themed dungeons?" The customer asked even more questions which stumped Bin Yong.

"Let me explain that with whatever limited knowledge I have." Mr Know-It-All happened to overhear the questions. "What I can deduce is that most of the monsters in Jin's dungeons were intelligently modified by the core servers which handle the dimensional instances."

"Not sure about you, but I am sure Bin Yong felt that fighting the monsters in the random arena battle dungeon instance was totally different from fighting them in the story themed dungeons?" Mr Know-It-All asked which Bin Yong instantly confirmed.

"Yes! It felt as if the monsters were more real in the random arena battles. It was as if they were just acting their part in the story themed dungeons. But out there in the random arena battles, they seem to use their true actual strength. This makes the fight harder, but at the same time, the rewards from the Random Arena battles are also more enticing." Bing Yong explained.

"Mhmm, I am only privy to certain things about dimensional core servers. I have friends, who are more informed, but all my contacts did tell me one sure thing. That almost every dungeon supplier in the world could not replicate what Jin is doing right now because of the high technical difficulty in maintaining the input of data."

"That does not seem to answer my question..." The customer got even more confused.

"What I am trying to say is, Boss Jin might have employed a different method of maintaining the servers. Either by himself, which I would deem unlikely from my observations or by a group of highly specialised experts. That creation and maintenance of servers might be the reason why the Artificial Intelligence differs so much from other dungeon suppliers. So the projection of these creatures might feel really real to the point that one might feel that they are holding back, as if they were testing you." Mr Know-It-All tried to explain without going into too many technical details. (cough cough, at least he tried!)

"Ehhhhh..." The customer did not know how to reply.

"I think what he meant is Jin's dungeons have always been special. Do not question how things work, just take it as it is and enjoy the dungeons and random arena battles. Take them as real monsters with sentience if it pleases you, even though we all know that they are all just artificial intelligence." Shi Zuo interjected his opinions into the conversation, putting Mr Know-It-All answers into simpler terms.

"Real monsters with sentience...Hmm..." For the first time in Jin's store, Mr Know-It-All experienced that some random guy's opinion could be considered as a valid explanation. However, after taking several factors into account, he felt that it was not possible and returned to watching the show.

Jin was struggling a bit. He had the ability to blow Nyanmi away with just his Grade 5 powers or by utilising the skills he recently obtained from the spiritual union. However, her words bothered him and he decided that he should play out the entire thing more carefully.

He did not care much about the hoodie since he did request Yun not to put his dungeon instance up on air to the auditorium and bringing down the hoodie was essential in having a proper view of the entire battlefield.

Jin was glad that Qiu Yue managed to pass her fight and this also allowed Jin to properly focus on the task at hand without having the need to worry about her.

It was rather annoying for the System to place an urgent mission which Jin had no details about. He did not know what kind of shadowy objectives the System had in mind but one thing was for sure. Even without the System's meddling, Jin would have wanted to test himself while not revealing his cultivation or skill to Qiu Yue as much as possible.

After much thought, he felt that he should just keep his powers quiet from Qiu Yue and lose the battle if he needed to. Nevertheless, Jin still had his own pride to take hold of, especially towards Qiu Yue. He wanted her to know that he was worthy to at least be her friend again.

Nyanmi who thought that she had the upper hand in the battle started to become more aggressive and new patterns of attack emerged from her sniper wh.i.p.s.

Jin cautiously entered into her attacking range and tried to charge in based on the attack pattern he learnt before but the tricks under Nyanmi's sleeves were too potent, that he had to step back.

"Ahh... I did not expect a whip user to be this efficient in attacking and defending." A customer saw how difficult it was for Jin to enter into Nyanmi's defensive bubble.

"If that is the case, guess I should utilise my old techniques that Ming had taught before!" Jin thought to himself as he took out Boo in Wakizashi form.

"What is the use of another blade?" Nyanmi taunted Jin, who couldn't care less. At this point in the battle, Jin judged the attacks once more and entered into Nyanmi's range the moment the sniper whip retracted back into a rifle.

"This is a gamble!" Jin thought to himself as he rushed towards Nyanmi.

"Foolish master." Nyanmi shot with her Sniper Whip rifle mode towards Jin but the bullet was deflected with style.

"Yes, the Perfectly Normal Parry Slash worked!" Jin was delighted his gamble had paid off, but little did he know that there was actually another bullet coming its way.

"I double tapped. You are not the only one who gambled." Nyanmi laughed in Jin's head. Even Qiu Yue only managed to catch the glimpse of another bullet trailing right behind the first bullet.

That split second felt like a year to Jin as his senses tightened up and he felt that something clicked...something screeched within his heart. Jin realised it was something similar to the time when he used the Black Fire and White Ice attack.

But this time around, it was different, he felt that another ability had activated, which caused his pupils in his eyes to change into a three inversed triangle shape. Similar to a Sierpinski triangle, the triangles multiplied within his retina and he was able to sharply see the speed, direction and trajectory of the bullet.

"Clang!" The bullet was miraculously deflected with his wakizashi! Yet, Jin was still charging towards Nyanmi who was stunned by the sudden change of events. How did Jin manage to parry this surprise bullet, and he even did it this fast! Even the Perfectly Normal Parry Slash could not have activated twice in a row!

Nyanmi hurried to swing her sniper whip, but it was too late as Jin's wakizashi reached towards Nyanmi's throat and the katana was directed at her torso.

"Tell me the objectives of the System." Jin went close to Nyanmi and the werecat purred.

"Master, the System wants you to invite your friend into the system as an advisor for the Dungeon City Fortress," Nyami whispered into his ears and later nibbled it too.

Chapter 236 A Mother's Concern

"How did Boss Jin do that!?!!" A customer shouted after experiencing a bout of silence for a few seconds when Jin executed the parry slash and deflected two bullets at once. Yet, there was no sign of cultivation shown above him, indicating that this was his base strength without the aid of any cultivation. The entire crowd was stunned by the whole performance.

"Now I can safely say that Boss Jin deserves to be the boss of this dungeon supplier store." Bin Yong commented, and many people started to agree. To be a true dungeon supplier not only require shop management and technical skills, but they also had to have the strength and skills to create those monsters so their customers could adequately train.

While it was true that the definition of a dungeon supplier in the modern context had been diluted due to the aid of technology, with this feat, Jin had convinced them that he did not just rely on superior technical support as predicted by Mr Know-It-All. It proved to his fellow customers that he was entirely worthy of the title of dungeon supplier.

Even Mr Know-It-All who repeatedly saw how Jin fought for the past month or so was surprised that his base foundation was this strong. If Mr Know-It-All knew that Jin had been bathing in unique herbal medicinal baths prepared by the System almost every day to strengthen his body, fighting in life and death situations just to collect monsters and had a system to aid him, Mr Know-It-All would have trashed his section of notebook away.

But he did not. So many began to feel that this particular dungeon supplier had more to offer in the coming future. And they were not wrong.

"Check your phone during the interval," Nyanmi said to Jin as she pretended to strike Jin with a surprise blow, but Jin cut her into pieces even before she could move another muscle. Her body eventually disappeared, and Jin quickly checked on his phone.

"Expose part of the System to your friend, Qiu Yue, especially the Dungeon City Fortress. Get her to work for you as an employee. Rewards: Tier 2 Bellator Network." Jin was surprised when he saw the

word Network. "Grandpa Ming did mention something about the System's Network before." He thought.

"Secondary Objective: Complete this random arena battle without revealing your true cultivation strength. Others are watching. Optional Rewards: Radiant Red Panda in the Umbral Snow Cultivation Manual." The system stated clearly that this was an impromptu urgent mission to be completed, but before Jin could react, Qiu Yue came behind him and patted his shoulder hard.

"Wow! That was amazing! How did you even do that?" Qiu Yue was pleasantly surprised as she thought that Jin would need help from her after she defeated the werecat. Nonetheless, it was still rather taxing for her because it had been some time since she had participated in any dungeon.

"Oh, yea...hahaha... Hmm? It looks like you have a rather bad wound." Jin took out a towel from his storage watch and tried to wipe the dirt away from her wound to distract her from her question. "Ouchie! I did not expect that it would hurt so much." Qiu Yue gave a small cry which made Jin stop for a while and walk around.

"What are you doing?" Qiu Yue asked, but Jin ignored her for a moment until it seemed that he found something. "I saw something shiny just now when I was fighting, so I returned to that area to make sure. I believe it is some sort of potion." Jin made up an excuse as he returned to Qiu Yue with a large bottle of chi and health regeneration potion. He offered it to Qiu Yue, and she gulped it down as if she had just returned from a desert.

Jin had a few of such bottles in case of emergencies like Milk not being around to heal him. He initially thought of just using the potions that the random arena battle provided at the end of every round. However, he figured that Qiu Yue should be in tip-top shape if he wants to complete the secondary objective. It would be pretty hard not to reveal his strength in addition to completing this particular random arena.

Suddenly, a treasure chest dropped from the skies and the lid opened wide in front of them. There were definitely some potions in it, but none as significant or as potent as the one Jin was holding. In addition to that, there were the bronze panda medals which Qiu Yue was fascinated by, and all thank the design.

"Woooo! Pandas! They are so cute! I am loving this dungeon supplier store more and more." Qiu Yue said with excitement before they felt that the floating platform they were on started to rumble through the skies.

At that point, Jin and Qiu Yue saw another floating platform, that was two times bigger than theirs, which was on a direct crash course towards them. Jin held onto Qiu Yue's hand after absorbing the chest of panda medals into his storage watch.

"Why is he holding my hand so tightly!?" Qiu Yue panicked inside. Meanwhile, Jin was thinking of something entirely different.

"What does the System mean by 'Others are watching'? Could it be that Yun did not listen to me and is currently broadcasting the entire random arena battle run onto the auditoriums? Or did it simply refer to Qiu Yue and Meomi watching me? No, that can't be it. If it were the latter, the System would not have said it with such ambiguity. So my best guess is that it's the former. Damn... that mother of mine likes to sneak into my thoughts..."

"Yes, I am sneaking while I can. I cannot believe you made a deal with the System to cut me off once you have completed the business partnership with that Tiger Princess Yang Ling."

"Even if you are my mother, you are just a figment, a property of the System," Jin spoke ruthlessly in his thoughts. "This particular mission made it even more obvious. I always thought that you were an ally of mine, but time and time again, you proved me wrong." Jin prepared to jump onto the incoming floating platform as he argued telepathically with Yun.

"But I am doing this for your good! This Qiu Yue seems to be a better wife material than Zhen Qing could ever be!" Yun pouted in the shop instance as she spoke her thoughts to Jin.

"I appreciate that thought, but she made her decision years ago. I will not deny I still have some feelings for her but do not do this kind of meddling ever again in the future. I respect her. Please do not think of her as some tool." Jin was undeniably angry, and Qiu Yue could feel that the chi surrounding Jin was somewhat unstable as they landed perfectly onto the second floating platform.

"What is happening to Jin? Why is he so angry?" Qiu Yue was a little scared since she knew that Jin does not usually get that frustrated for no reason.

"Anger does not suit you." Moloch clasped his hands together as he sat on a stone throne at the edge of the floating platform with his legs folded.

"This is interesting." Jin let go of Qiu Yue's hand when he realised he was grasping her hand too tightly. "Sorry, Qiu Yue, I was a bit occupied with some thoughts. Are you okay?" Qiu Yue who wanted to be angry at Jin became apprehensive after noticing his sudden change of attitude and the chi that surrounded him.

From something unstable and suffocating, his aura changed suddenly and was now filled with confidence yet calming at the same time. At that time, Qiu Yue could not help but notice that this kind of feeling was very similar to the experience she felt when she inserted her aura into the signboard.

"Could it be...? No...I don't think so... it should be just a coincidence." Qiu Yue shook her doubts for the moment and concentrated on the battle in front of them.

Chapter 237 Battle Of Wits

Moloch looked at Jin and Qiu Yue as they prepared their battle stances against him. He laughed at the sight of the two of them and shook his head. "My, my! Aren't the two of you feisty! I am not here to fight." Moloch said as he winked at Jin.

"Wait...does Moloch already know that the System wants Qiu Yue to be part of the store?" Jin thought about it and figured that the System really wanted to know and test Qiu Yue's capabilities. To check if she was really worth being exposed to the System based on Yun's request.

Jin was conflicted inside, he wanted Qiu Yue to both succeed and fail. If she were to succeed, he would have someone to share the real success of this dungeon supplier store with, be it as a friend or possibly

even a lover once more. (But that was just a passing thought, not his main agenda especially when he had the urgent mission in mind.)

If Qiu Yue were to fail, it would prove to the System, that it had made a bad choice trusting Yun. The System might even recede the recent urgent mission that it had issued, although that had never happened before. Qiu Yue's failure would also allow Jin an opportunity to criticise the System for hastily making a decision based on Yun's request.

"Then what do you want us to do? Fight against other monsters? Your minions perhaps? Before fighting against you?" Jin made it sound generic, but he knew that Moloch was a Lord, so he had power over the minotaurs Jin had captured.

"Nope. It's a battle of wits that I propose. I would compete against either one of you. If either of you two manages to pass my test, I will let you both proceed further to the third stage." Moloch smirked as he first looked at Qiu Yue. "So this is the one that the System wants me to test?" Moloch thought to himself as he pointed at Qiu Yue who was still confused at the whole situation but stepped forward.

"A battle of wits? Choosing me is the right choice because Jin always needed to copy my notes after the lectures." Qiu Yue teased Jin as she bumped his shoulder while giggling. Jin reluctantly admitted that she was correct and allowed her to proceed forward.

"What are you testing me on?" Qiu Yue sheathed her katana and folded her arms as she stared intently at the man puppet with the Moloch plushie on it.

"There is no need for any rush. Have a seat." Moloch clapped his hands, and a stone chair was effortlessly formed out of the ground of the floating platform.

"I have never seen that monster before..." Bin Yong said as he saw how the situation unfolded and for the first time, there was proper crystal clear audio coming from the movie screens, which stunned the entire crowd. Usually, there were a few clips of audio to emphasise certain scenes, but this seemed like a live run of the entire random arena.

"Same for me. Looks like Boss Jin has a few monster designs he has yet to introduce to the public." Mr Know-It-All commented when he saw the man whose face was covered by a cow plushie. He knew that it was one of Boss Jin's design, despite how it looked similar to a human. Mainly because Jin had already shown some kind of fondness for metahumans such as Nu Lang, the cowherd boy, and Qi Er, the Magpie Queen from the Qixi Festival and he dubbed them as monsters despite them looking just like humans. It was true that they could be categorised as monsters because Mr Know-It-All knew that there were no such humans with this kind of powers in the world. Even if they existed at one point in time, nowadays they would be some kind of urban myth, only appearing as a tale or legend. But if they lived... then they did out of the public's sight.

Even the announcers kept quiet and proceeded to watch the scene on the cinematic screen as the banter continued between Qiu Yue and Moloch.

"The scenario is like this; Imagine that you are a Queen, with lots of power in your hands. The ability to terraform your terrain with a flick of a finger or build a wall within minutes. But your town is currently under attack by an army of demons. Demons with terrifying powers and overwhelming numbers."

Moloch explained as he pulled out a miniature town made out of stone from the ground of the floating platform and pushed it near to Qiu Yue.

"I am going to present you a few scenarios to test your wits against overwhelming odds. Tell me how you are going to defend yourself from this kind of scenarios. And while I did say that you have unlimited power in your hand, it was just figuratively speaking." Moloch urged Qiu Yue to sit down while Jin stood behind her to look at the 'war room' discussion that was taking place.

"Whenever you introduce something, this floating platform is going to utilise its magical powers to emulate it. However, if it is deemed as ridiculous, the move that you recommend would not be realised and your turn will be skipped to mine." Moloch briefly explained the rules of engagement.

"Any more information?" Qiu Yue felt that she was at a disadvantage, but Moloch did not reply at all.

"I am starting soon," Moloch took a deep breath before describing the scenario. "Your entourage is passing by this particularly small town, and its militia stands at less than 200 men. You were having an afternoon tea with the lord of the town...hmm, something like a royal visit. However, during your tea session, your scouts crashed into the throne room and reported that a demon army is marching towards this particular town, less than a day away. What do you do?" Moloch purposely posted a vague scenario to test her.

As Qiu Yue listened into the scenario, she felt that she was being pulled into a magical world as the floating platform suddenly shifted, the atmosphere around here was turning into something more exquisite.

Next thing she realised, Qiu Yue was sitting on a comfortable sofa chair, and the discussion that she was having with Moloch became so much different. The entire floating platform changed its look to an interior of a royal discussion hall with Moloch on the other side of a long table capable of seating twenty people. Qiu Yue even had a crown on her head, although her appearance did not change a single bit. Jin was standing beside Moloch and kept quiet for the moment while Qiu Yue became fascinated with the beautiful luxury interior of the royal discussion hall.

Right in front of them was a map and the miniature stone town was right in the centre of the map. Various miniatures started to appear on the map, and both Qiu Yue and Jin could see that they were representing Qiu Yue's Militia and the Demon Army.

"So...what do you do?" Moloch, who dressed suitably well for high nobility meeting, was sitting comfortably on the side of the long table and posed the question again to Qiu Yue.

Separately, the question that Moloch posted seemed to have started a heated discussion in the auditorium, especially in the crowd of customers. "I would put up walls, create a defensive parameter to defend myself." One of the customers said.

"I would retreat since I only have 200 troops at my disposal. Perhaps, move to another town and gather more troops." Another customer started to voice out her own opinion.

Even Mr Know-It-All had his own personal thoughts about some possible tactics, but he reserved it to himself since the question was too vague and the lack of information was not helping him at all. Besides, Mr Know-It-All was part of the audience, so he acted like one.

"You did say I can do anything to protect my people, as long as the suggestions I recommend are not over the top ridiculous, right?" Qiu Yue smiled as she got up from her seat at the edge of the long table and walked towards the middle of the table.

Moloch nodded his head and extended his hands up. "Please."

"Alright then." Qiu Yue started to observe the entirety of the map, thinking and fiddling with the miniatures but the current instance alone immediately began a commotion within the crowd.

Chapter 238 Battle Of Wits - Part 2

"Firstly, what's the approximate size of the demon army? Do they have any special troops, such as magic users, flying troops etc.?" Qiu Yue asked as she looked at the table and started to gauge the distance between the demon army and the town.

Believe it or not, Qiu Yue was an avid shogi and Chinese chess player though she dabbled in English chess once in a while. Not to mention, she was forced to play with Jin whenever he needed an extra pair of hands for his tactical war games. Many times when they were playing against each other, Jin would lose rather terribly, because his tactics were too predictable. Build a sufficient force and attack with overwhelming might.

It was a viable strategy but also very easy to defeat if hindered during the process of building a sufficient force. That was how Qiu Yue won by usually harassing him in the beginning until he was unable to resist the harassment and finally lost.

Moloch was pleasantly surprised that Qiu Yue did not just give a straight answer immediately and therefore decided to indulge her with some answers. "The demon army consists of a monster troop which is roughly 4000 men strong. Each demon is capable of killing 10 well-trained guards. Needless to say, a single demon could easily annihilate a village of commoners. There are no magic users, no flying demons, all ground troops." Moloch spoke, and this caused a heated discussion among the crowd.

"There is no way an army of only 200 men, especially a simple militia group, will be able to defeat those monsters." One of the customers shook his head, and some even affirmed that a tactical retreat out of the town would be the best strategy for this particular battle.

"What is the technological age of this town? Do they have gunpowder or are we just dealing with the demons with pitchforks and hatchets? Do I have any magical users at my disposal?" Qiu Yue asked even before Jin had the opportunity to say anything.

"Gunpowder...Hmmm. What is that?" Moloch asked with a tinge of sarcasm in his voice.

"If that's the case. With my powers, I would like to have all 200 men equipped with a reloading rifle each." Qiu Yue made voiced her command and the table suddenly glowed. The miniature that represented Qiu Yue's forces changed their shape. From a sword wielding knight to a rifleman with pieces of armour to protect himself from fatal flaws.

"That is your move? The Demon Army has decided to move forward with bated breath. They seem eager to taste fresh meat and have advanced twice as fast as your scouts predicted." Moloch spoke his command for his demon army.

"Judging from the distance, you seem to have at least 3 turns left, before the demon army will come into contact with your troops," Moloch remarked. "That is if you manage to divert or hinder my army. Else, you will only be left with one single turn before contact."

"Guns... What a great idea! This way the army will be able to attack from a distance." A customer said in defence of Qiu Yue.

"But numbers still play a big and important part. There is really no way she can defend the town with just 200 militia, especially considering what cow plushie guy had said, that one demon is enough to tear down the whole village." Another customer refuted and reasoned it would be better to retreat.

"Can I join in and help Qiu Yue?" Jin could not just stand in a corner seeing how dirty the game was made by Moloch.

"Are you sure? Do you really wish to join the battle? I can allow that, but the difficulty will have to be adjusted in the following scenario and would, therefore, end up being more difficult." Moloch warned Jin what would happen if he wanted to interfere, but Qiu Yue looked at Jin with confidence.

"It's okay, I can defeat him I think." Qiu Yue turned back to the map that was on the table and shouted towards Moloch.

"Raise the entire land around the town as if it was a mountainous area, if not at the very least, a hill." Qiu Yue gave her command and surprisingly, the town map's landscape shifted. The town broke into different parts on a mountainous area. This caused severe obstacles which would definitely hinder the movement of the demon army. Some of the crowd members wowed at the decision Qiu Yue had made and had not expected the instance to allow it to happen.

"Hmm, it will hinder the demons... Maybe just a turn or two, if they decide to rush upwards, ignoring the mountainous route. May even cause some casualties, although I doubt that it would be an issue to the hungry demon horde." Mr Know-It-All tried to deduce Moloch's next move, but contrary to his predictions, Moloch told the army to slow down and take the mountainous route up to the town area.

"Is Moloch giving Qiu Yue a chance?" Jin had thought up of a similar scenario as Mr Know-It-All, and even if he could think that up, surely Qiu Yue had anticipated that too. On second thought, Jin felt that since Qiu Yue had learnt that she could terraform the mountains, it would not be wise to hastily climb up the mountain.

"Before I continue, can I ask if I can keep my plan a secret? Exposing it out in the open kind of defeats the purpose of having a plan to win against you." Qiu Yue asked before making her turn. Moloch replied by saying "If you have a plan in mind, how about you simply interject it during my command, and we will see how the instance responds to this."

"But what if the instance find her command ridiculous and does not plan to execute it?" Jin argued back, pointing out the flaw of this method that Moloch had suggested.

"You are right... So how about this... If the interjection during my command is invalid, I shall allow you to revise that particular command. However, you are only given 15 seconds to issue a new command in case the request was deemed invalid. When the time is up, even if you have issued no new commands, I will resume command, and your plan of ambush or intervention will simply be denied. Agreeable?" Moloch slouched back upon answering Jin's concerns.

Qiu Yue nodded her head and continued with her commanding turn. "I terraform the plot of land surrounding the town, causing a rise of a mountain which causes the town to be split into 3 tiers. With the coordination of the militiamen and the citizens, they will withdraw from the first and lowest tier of the town and evacuate to the second tier of the town." The moment Qiu Yue gave her word, the map burst out a physical form of a mountain on the table, and the town split into three different parts.

Executing the second part of her command caused the bustling town at the base of the mountain to become quiet, and there were miniatures of riflemen and citizens climbing up the physically real mountain.

Meanwhile, everyone was still amazed by the magic of the dungeon instance and the cinematic power of the magic eye that captured whatever was happening, making it a fantastic show to watch and entertaining the masses in Auditorium Six.

"My move. Upon seeing the town, I sent a division of hunter demons to rush in and occupy the base of the mountain to check if it is worthy for the rest of the army to get some rest while scavenging for any food sources or survivors around the area. You definitely would have left something behind." Moloch knew that Qiu Yue had a plan to evacuate the place.

However, Qiu Yue did not intervene with Moloch's plan, and the division of hunter demons found nothing but an abundant source of leftover livestock and food. Moloch suddenly became very cautious. "Why did she not do anything when I sent the better part of my demon army into the town? Did she really just plan to evacuate the area?"

Moloch could not sense any hostility from Qiu Yue nor did the rest of the crowd including Jin. They could not figure what she was planning or if she was even planning anything at all?

However, Mr Know-It-All grinned when he thought about Qiu Yue's actions and Moloch's smooth takeover of the place. "This girl... Boss Jin, it would seem that you have a terribly intelligent yet crafty individual by your side..."

Chapter 239 Battle Of Wits - Part 3

"With my powers, I will now build walls at certain points of the mountainous route towards the second part of the town as the demons are resting for the night." Qiu Yue said as she continued to observe the map.

Stone, mud and other makeshift materials arose from the mountainous route, blocking the way to the second part of the town. Miniature riflemen were shuffled around until it was visible that they were stationed at the different wall checkpoints for guard duty.

Moloch continued his command of asking the demons to rest for the night before resuming their march to slaughter the riflemen in the morning. Seeing as the humans were sitting ducks and there was sufficient food for the rest of the army the morale of the demons would be at an all time high in the morning. Yet, Moloch still could not shake the feeling, that something was definitely not right.

Meanwhile, the rest of the crowd were criticising how incompetent Qiu Yue seemed to be. "Why did she abandon the town without any resistance? She could have made the citizens fight for their land." A customer said, and many held a similar opinion like his.

"Hahaha, she does not know anything about tactics at all." Another customer ridiculed when Qiu Yue made such an unpopular move. "Not fit to be a Queen at all! Why won't that monster let Boss Jin play? I am sure he would overturn the situation with just 200 men!" Another customer said out of spite seeing how this battle might make Boss Jin lose against the random arena battle.

"Maybe, she needed more time to erect the walls for protection? Besides, the mountainous route will narrow down the path of assault from the demon army. I think she is doing that to control the battlefield?" Bin Yong tried to reason as he returned to the crowded auditorium with an onigiri in his hand.

"We will see..." Mr Know-It-All thought to himself and smirked as Moloch commanded his troops to rest and feast for the night.

"My turn?" Qiu Yue's blood was pumping crazily as she continued to keep a straight face even though her plan was sailing smoothly. Moloch had ended his turn since he wanted his army to be in their best condition for their attack on the following day. He guessed that even a preemptive ambush in the middle of the night would not deal that much damage to him.

"The second part of the town is at a suitable angle from the mountain to bombard the first part of the town. We will commence bombardment by daybreak. Based on the town size, I assume we have been able to create 15 cannons?" Qiu Yue tried her luck as she gave her command. She knew that cannons in a desolate town were an expensive military commodity and she had already prepared a backup plan in case the magical map would not allow her to have such items on hand.

However, to her delight, the command went through.

A few of the miniature riflemen transformed into artillery members, capable of operating the cannons. The artillery teams with the help of civilians slogged throughout the night to move those large cannons into their respective positions. The miniature civilians even helped to carry the cannon balls as the artillerymen made calculations on where to attack.

"I see, that's a rather good strategy. My turn then. Since I am not supposed to be wary of the developments, I shall continue with my previous command by making the demons march upon daybreak." Moloch smiled at Qiu Yue as he ended his turn.

"Fire the cannons." Qiu Yue's command was simple as well, but the effect was devastating. What sounded like a cork popping out of a wine bottle, the cannons 'roared' in unison and laid fire on the town at the base of the mountain. The Demons did not know what was coming and many were caught in the bombardment fire.

"Oh my god, did she plan that? I guess that's better than what I had predicted..." A customer voiced his opinion while the rest who were against her tried to come up with better excuses. "15 cannons will not do much damage to a demon army of 4000. Even if she could command precise strikes and wither down the number by half, she still has to face the surviving 2000 demons." A disgruntled customer argued back.

Moloch expected that to happen and commanded his troops to rally by running towards the edge of the town that was closest to the mountainous route towards the second town level. However, he had noticed that not all cannons were being fully utilised. Moloch did not care too much and continued his command. What he did not expect were the following commands which Qiu Yue gave.

"Two cannons have not been fired precisely for this moment. Near the edge of the town lies the town's warehouses and they have been filled with flammable materials such as oil and wood. The two cannons that I have saved from bombarding the town will now proceed to attack the warehouses." Qiu Yue said, and the artillery team that manned those cannons immediately fired into the direction of the warehouses.

The whole place was immediately ignited by the cannon fire, causing more damage and casualties to the demon army. The demon army's morale went down, especially considering they were retreating from an artillery bombardment early in the morning after rest.

As if that was not enough, the fire that started at the edge of the town began to spread throughout the rest of it. Moloch quickly commanded all his troops to break out of the fire and rush through the mountainous route.

That was when Qiu Yue smiled as if it was all part of her plan. "The town has prepared oil barrels at strategic points and the civilians have been ordered to throw whatever flammable items they possessed all around their house before they evacuated. The fire at the edge of the town will eventually engulf the entire place. Your demons will not have much of a chance."

"You do realise, that I can say that you would not know much about my demons and they could have resistance against fire?" Moloch started to be slightly irritated at the losses he was incurring. A big chunk of his army was gone and he had yet to kill a single human.

"That does not matter. Your demons still need to breathe, and they are not undead. The immense smoke from engulfing the entire town will reduce your air supply, and my bombardment will continue." Qiu Yue stared fiercely at Moloch.

"Does not matter... My demons, I order you to run. Run until you see the first human and I command you to annihilate them." Moloch shouted, now leaned forward to give the command as compared to previously where he just slouched lazily.

Even Jin was slightly afraid of Qiu Yue when she got serious. She might simply be an average diligent cultivator, but her brilliant mind for tactics was not shown to many. That was also a big reason why the Ministry of National Development recruited her for her wits.

"Does not matter? Well, let me intervene and show you why it SHOULD matter to you." Qiu Yue banged her two hands on the map before she gave her command. "The food and water that your demons had been enjoying had been lined with slow inducing poison which I asked the militia to insert as the civilians

have evacuated from the first tier of the town. Even if your demons have resistance to fire? Surely they can't also possess a resistance to poison at the same time, right? That would be rather unfair for an army."

Upon the command of intervention, the demons that were running up the mountainous route started to slow down significantly and were now showing signs of vomiting. Eventually, they lied on the ground gasping for air.

"..." Moloch did not give any further command after that as he was forced to watch many of his demons die under artillery fire, suffocation or food poisoning. Even the crowd, who was previously against Qiu Yue began to keep quiet as they did not know how to react after this reversal of events.

Mr Know-It-All, who was grinning all the way picked up his phone to check something. "So...I was right, this girl is...Hahaha!! Boss Jin, you are even more interesting than I thought!" Mr Know-It-All contemplated, as he turned off the screen on his phone and continued to watch the random arena battle with a renewed interest for Qiu Yue.

Chapter 240 Third Stage

"My defeat. A complete and utter defeat." Moloch slumped back on his throne and waved his hand, causing all the projected illusions of the royal interior to disappear, and they returned to the floating platform scene. Jin, who was standing at the side the entire time, did not make a sound.

"That was exciting!" The customers placed their worries to rest upon the completion of the match and began to discuss the unconventional tactics of Qiu Yue. Each and every move on her part was based on logic, but they felt that she had not shown everything to the unknown man with a plushie which many had yet to see in a dungeon.

"So did we win this round?" Qiu Yue gave a peace symbol with her right hand as part of the victory pose to Jin, and he could not help but nod innocently. He figured he should not say anything special and go with the flow for the moment by letting Qiu Yue bask in the glory of victory.

Qiu Yue seemed very satisfied with the way things were going... But not Jin. He felt that there was an underlying agenda by the System if it wanted Qiu Yue to be part of his store. To tell the truth, he was currently torn by the desire to have her in his team and opposing the System's request. Since this was the first time the System gave him a recruitment mission, Jin was wary. While it was most likely beneficial to his dream, at the same time, it would mean that the System also got one step closer to whatever it wanted to achieve in the end.

As Qiu Yue was having her battle with Moloch, Jin managed to calm down and began pondering if he could negotiate with the System to not let Qiu Yue be exposed to the System. For the past week or so when Jin was going through the System's mission of getting 5000 general sales, he had also been contemplating about his life. The current stage of life where he was with the System.

How the System affected him, how it spurred him to great heights and the success he had right now. Jin was no doubt grateful for the System bestowing power and wealth to him. It allowed him to break the

cycle of sloth and monotony, but it came with a price that he nearly had to pay. By killing people to be efficient. It would have meant losing part of his humanity for the fastest way to gain in the smallest amount of time. Truly something only someone without emotions would even consider under normal circumstances. However, the System was not exactly something one could define as 'normal'.

Jin had vowed to Yun that he would search for an alternative solution. To avoid this killing method, that the System tried to make him implement it. His solution so far was, that he would work harder in the store to achieve his current dream. But as Jin was being swept away by tides of tasks and the daily handling of the job, he began to perceive the System and the work he was doing as a chore and nearly lost sight of his initial goal.

However, seeing Qiu Yue again had made him recall why he wanted to be a dungeon supplier in the first place. This match with Moloch even allowed Jin to gain some reprise and clarity on the whole situation again.

It was not a simple decision for Jin to make. The request of this System would ultimately affect Qiu Yue's career, life and possibly result in her being chained down by the System. While people might envy Jin for his excellent dungeons and possible wealth, in actuality Jin did not earn as much as they perceived. Sure, it was still a reasonable amount, but the System has always been the one controlling his finances, the work he was doing, and now it wanted to control the people he was interacting with.

Jin always thought that he was fine being a prisoner of the System, but after that incident, he wanted to change. Nevertheless, no matter how he tried to rebel against the System, he was still a cog of this big machine. ...and there was also that small lazy part of him that even liked not having to think for himself and simply going with the flow.

This was especially true with the new urgent mission. If Jin did not complete this particular mission, he would not receive this network that Ming was talking about. This specific reward however, made Jin have some suspicions that the figment of Ming could also be part of the System's plan. Either that or the System had managed to catch wind of his thoughts about the Bellator's Network.

Regardless, Jin felt that he could not continue living this kind of life, not when Qiu Yue was being dragged into it. "Looks like I need to have a proper one on one conversation with the System. This cannot go on any further. I will not allow Qiu Yue to also be chained down by the System." Jin said to himself.

"Jin? Jinny!" Qiu Yue snapped her fingers right in front of Jin which startled him and caused him to shout as a reflex.

"Hahaha, what's wrong, why are you in a daze?" Qiu Yue asked as she pointed at the treasure chest that Moloch presented upon defeat. "Look what he gave us, I wonder what's in that chest!"

"I was thinking about how amazing you were. Wait, I thought Moloch wanted to have a few more rounds?" Jin was puzzled as he noticed the treasure on the ground.

"No, it was a complete defeat for me. Hence, I am willing to allow you two to move to the next stage. However, the next stage is somewhat different. The two of you will be split apart, the test of one's true strength."

Moloch wanted to do an additional round and pit the odds against her since he wanted to regain his pride as a Demon Lord but he eventually stayed his hand. There was no use fighting against someone who potentially be an ally in the future according to what he had heard from the System. Besides, the System wanted to have a benchmark test and Moloch did what was told. However, now he had a goal to attain aside from building the new city fortress, to have a proper rematch with Qiu Yue.

Moloch sighed at the thought of the rematch and waved his hand once more which suddenly made Jin and Qiu Yue be separated by a divide in the floating platform.

As the sizeable floating platform turned into two smaller ones, Jin's platform was suddenly engulfed within a dome of darkness while Qiu Yue's floating platform was still intact. Even the customers were shocked by the change of events.

"I did not know the random arena was this challenging." A customer commented as the crowd saw the drastic change.

"Same here, I did not expect a random arena battle to be this unique." Another customer said.

"This is the first time for me to see a battle of wits too. I had been in quite a few random arena battles myself, but I have yet to see this particular monster." Bin Yong gave his own opinion after he heard the customer's reply.

"Master Know-It-All?" Shi Zuo politely asked for his opinion.

"Nope. I believe I have observed more random arenas battles than any cultivators here, but this is also a first for me." Mr Know-it-All answered.

"Well, I guess it is, after all, a random arena battle. I heard the stages of the dungeon instance were created based on your level." One of the customers replied.

"Does that mean the dungeon instance purposely chose something to test Boss Jin and his friend? And now it even decided to split the two of them, to properly test their true strength? If that is the case, it seems Boss Jin would be in a different match based on power level." Another customer deduced upon seeing the change in the battlefield.

"Well, I would prefer to see Jin's match rather than that girl's, even though she was really brilliant in the previous match." The customer got excited to find out who Jin's opponent would be.

"Will it be another new monster that Boss Jin has yet to release out to the public?" Mr Know-It-All rubbed his chin in anticipation.

The screen then turned towards the dome of darkness, but instead of faces, the customers could only envision two silhouettes and there was no audible audio this time around. However, it was not the same for Jin as he could see everything within the dome. He was not aware that the darkness was impairing the vision of the magic eye and there was only one particular entity capable of doing that.

"Yawnnnnnnnn." A silhouette with a red latex suit magically appeared out of nowhere as Jin was looking around to search for enemies.

"No way..." Jin gripped his katana even harder as he saw his opponent walking closer to him.

"You want to have a proper talk with the System right? Let's talk honestly as we dance with our blades."
Yun swung her gigantic two-handed cleaver in front of Jin.