

Dungeon S 371

Chapter 371 Empire Building Sub System

"You drunk yet?" Jin asked Qiu Yue who was sitting at the side of the couch fiddling with her phone when he individually aided the rest back to their respective rooms.

"I picked my poison well. Have you forgotten that between us, I was the who could hold my liquor, you were always the one I had to take care of." Qiu Yue teased Jin as she already had taken a cup of Black Ivory coffee from the kitchen's coffee maker. (Yun had purposely placed one there as she found it irritating to keep going back to the store to have one made.)

"That was a long time ago... How's the interface so far? Are you getting familiar with it?" Jin was a bit embarrassed as he tried to change the subject. He asked as he sat on the floor, eating the leftovers. He was surprised they were still piping hot and then remembered Yun saying something about the coffee table having a time stasis function courtesy of the System.

It paused the physical and chemical process that was ongoing on the coffee table until the food left the area. That was also why all of their food stored within the cabinets were never rotten or spoiled. Lynn also used that particular function to prepare cooked food in advance and kept it in their kitchen storage when there were lesser customers. She also used it to evaluate her penguin disciples when Lynn was not around to examine their food.

"Very simple...very intuitive. It is really as easy as playing a computer game. Just that I did not expect it to be something like augmented reality. Can you see it?" Qiu Yue was reading the manual given by the Empire Building Sub System from her revamped phone by the System. As she pressed a particular app in her phone, the System screens would pop up for Qiu Yue to preview. Jin and the others who were affected by the System would be able to recognise what Qiu Yue was doing. However, everyone else like King Sol, all he would see was Qiu Yue making weird hand gestures in the air as if she was practising casting some magical spells while holding on to a thin metallic block of an artefact.

"Hahaha, and apparently, it is giving me a lump sum of dungeon dollars as a bonus which is not affiliated to your account although I also have access to that one. I must say, you are not a very thrifty person at all as compared to the person I knew you as back then." Qiu Yue told Jin as she swiped her augmented screen towards Jin for him to see.

"Well, business and real life are different, you know. At the very least, I am still getting a small- *cough* ahem, VERY SMMMMALLLLL cut out of every dungeon instance I sold, and they are all in the bank." Jin purposely emphasised the pathetic sales percentage he was given by the System back when he first started the shop. It never increased but the business accounts checked out in case of any audits. He figured there had to be some ex Panda clan member who could do such brilliant bookkeeping under the System's care.

"User will have a major increase in percentage when he reaches Dungeon Supplier Rank 4, up to 5% of the cut." The System noted and Jin wondered if it was a coincidence of the System improving his quality of life whenever he brought up a particular issue.

"Do you actually have a plan on the benefits I get from ranking up or do you implement whatever I say as the improvement for the ranking?" Jin wanted to know and the System acknowledged his reply.

"Indeed, some of the ranks' rewards are based on User's desires and complaints as a way to improve the User's relationship with the System. This is because the System accommodates differently for each and every user it encounters. System must have a flexible ranking system to fit the user's situation and especially since he is contributing to it. However, System has fixed milestones pegged to certain ranks as a default reward. The rest of the ranking system is based on the User's needs. If you wish to change your rewards, do not hesitate to ask and the System shall implement it when fulfilling the requirement." The System stated and Jin for the first time realised that was how it was being done.

"So, do I enjoy such benefits as well?" Qiu Yue asked and the System answered that the Sub Systems worked differently from the Main System. Whenever Jin levelled up, the rest would too but the rewards were more or less narrowed for the Sub System Users. For Lynn, it would be unlocking various cuisine recipes or food materials. Qiu Yue would have the opportunity to unlock certain quality of life functions that would make her Empire Building smoother.

"Oh well, that is better than nothing. Anyways, Jin, come and take a look what Peppers has prepared beforehand. It was preloaded into the Sub System before I acquired it. Apparently, it is also one of the rewards that the System bestowed to me for doing such a seemingly excellent (according to the System's rating) job in managing the Goblin Orc relations and the War." Qiu Yue said with a hint of pride as she beckoned Jin to the couch while she grabbed her cup of coffee from the table. "It had analysed what Peppers created and used Mooogle Maps along with other famous GPS apps to give me a model predicting of how the city will turn out to be in the future."

"Then isn't Peppers initial work is for nought?" Jin examined at the map carefully on the console while Qiu Yue sneakily cuddled Jin up as she sipped her coffee. Jin was concentrating on the map so much, he did not even notice it since Qiu Yue was also explaining to him the details of the city model map.

"No I wouldn't say that. What Peppers did was to allocate the regions like industry, agriculture, housing and surprisingly even tourism into the city model. The Sub System then added roads, transportation, the electrical and sewage system into it based on the hundreds of cities it analysed. It even recommended a swap of few regions but also stated the advantages of Pepper's decision and left it to us to decide how we wish to proceed." Qiu Yue pointed out while holding her cup and Jin instinctively pulled Qiu Yue closer as if it was the old times. (She snuggled a bit tighter when given the opportunity!)

"I see, then what about defence wise? I mean we will be facing strong oppression from that particular dungeon's world demon army. Don't we at least need walls or anything?" Jin asked to see if there was a difference in opinion with Qiu Yue.

"Hmm, Modern cities do not have walls, and I think putting a wall up would not make too much of a difference if what you previously mentioned before is true. Besides, we already have a magical barrier to protect us from those crazy ass earth shattering spells. And why make the city a stronghold fortress when we can make each and every building THE stronghold. Get my drift? Capeesh?" Qiu Yue was laughing when she said that and Jin realised he had not even considered that at all. He had been wanting to construct a city akin to old medieval ways rather than modern ones even though his city was meant to be modernised.

"That is awesome but I have some more questions. For one, I thought you said you are going to hire some building planning experts to alleviate the city building problem?" Jin asked and Qiu Yue replied that she initially did not know what to expect from the Sub System.

"I was actually waiting to take a look at the Sub System first before I start the hiring process. The recruitment drive is not done yet so my final choices can still differ a little. Hmm, maybe I just hire a small team as perhaps consultant? I do not know how much help they can offer but I believe no matter what, their experience should be helpful. Additionally, we let them take this back home as valuable lessons. We can accumulate more favours that way." Qiu Yue deduced and Jin began to remember why he chose this girl for the job. Decisive, kind hearted and yet a little sly.

"But aside from Peppers and the System's input, don't you also have any input of your own?" Jin asked.

"Hmm, Regions wise I have no qualms and they make perfect sense. In fact, what they did, might actually bring out the optimal growth for city. I am more concerned about the cost of building the cities. The Sub System did allow me to have a look at the markets and buy things at the basic prices. I mean, we do have access to discounts and stuff by buying a lot so we should be able to get by with the money I received on my account. But I am also looking for alternatives." Qiu Yue explained and showed her Empire account to Jin. "Not to mention, one of the other rewards from the System was actually an Investments Mode...I erm bought the Orcs and Goblin's Central Banks through a little bit of negotiation between King Sol and the new Orc King Frost Echo."

"Holy shit. And considering their economy is still pretty immature, you stand to earn lots if you apply even the simplest concepts such as bonds and mortgages into their banking system...well if they did not have such a concept in the first place." Jin became so excited about the current issue and his amazement at her feats that Qiu Yue felt it oozing out of Jin. She felt rather aroused and wondered if it was the exotic alcohol that played a part even though she still felt sober.

"Oh no, I want him so badly now..." Qiu Yue thought as she playfully pushed herself closer to Jin and touched his abdomen. She was surprised to feel the results of his training. No more flabby tummy like he had back in university and even his arms were well toned. "I checked, they do not have such concepts and if I implement them, I can definitely earn back a decent sum." Qiu Yue leaned her head on Jin.

"Sleepy? Looks like the coffee isn't working on you. We can continue this tomorrow if you want." Jin asked as he could feel the heaviness of her head on his right arm. Qiu Yue gently shook her head.

"I just want to be right beside you. Let me...hold you a while longer." She pushed herself even closer to Jin and whispered into his ears. Knowing he was vulnerable and there was no one in the living room, Qiu Yue went ahead and nibbled on his ears before looking right into his eyes.

Jin was not that oblivious and knew what was going on. He went on to grab Qiu Yue by the waist and brought her onto his laps. Their breathing became heavier but soon after it was synchronised. The stare between the two were intense and without any word, Qiu Yue's face inched towards Jin's with every second passed.

"MASTER! MASTER! MASTER!!!!" Mr Patsu suddenly barged in from a portal on the side of the living room and ran in with bated breath. Jin turned his head to hear what was the commotion but Qiu Yue was extremely annoyed by the change of circumstances. She was not giving up even though Jin released

his hands from her and quickly hugged Jin tightly while showing a pouty face at the incoming penguin NPC. However, Mr Patsu did not care for anything else but the news he was about to relay.

"There is an emergency! A group of gangsters has entered our shop! They are trashing the place for no reason! Another Jin told them to stop and instead, they assaulted him! He is currently holding them off but because you are split up, his powers are limited! Some of the cultivators tried to help but he told them not to interfere." Mr Patsu was panting heavily after he spoke and quickly turned on the TV. The System immediately switched the channel to the CCTVs. "16 in total and they are not low grades at all. At least Grade 4 or 5!" Mr Patsu exclaimed.

"User, while unfortunate, given the situation you are required to return to the shop. Wear the Panda Mask and find a way to merge back with Another Jin. Do you require further assistance from the bellators?" The System asked as it opened a portal.

"I will help you with this, let the others rest." Pei appeared visible to all from the blessing bracelet and whistled as she put on her Fox Mask. Tsu and Kai responded to her call and stood right beside her waiting for her commands. As Jin got up from the sofa while apologising to Qiu Yue, she stopped him forcefully.

"You two. Stay. I will be the one go. It would be awkward if your real identity is accidentally revealed by the gangsters." Qiu Yue said as she took her katana out and her Red Panda Mask.

"But your grade, it's too dangerous to -" Jin wanted to stop her, but Qiu Yue placed a finger at his mouth before he could finish his sentence.

"Let me show off a little to my new Boss. You won't believe how strong I can be with this all New Sub System." Qiu Yue said as she picked up Jin's phone. "You will support me right, System? Since it's within the premise in the name of self defence." Qiu Yue commented as she walked towards to the portal.

"As a showcase, the System shall provide the appropriate funds for Sub User Qiu Yue to impress User." The System replied openly before switching to a private transmission. "As compensation for interrupting a potential mating session, Sub User is permitted to go all out. The System will bear all costs incurred." Qiu Yue heard the System and grinned widely with her eyebrows furrowed with anger under the Red Panda Mask as she threw Jin's phone back at him.

"Well, expect this to get expensive. Because I have plentiful amount of frustration to vent on these goons to 'coincidentally' disturb my happy time." Qiu Yue replied as she walked into the portal.

Chapter 372 Money is Power

"Why are you just defending? Scared to take on the whole lot of us? Huh!!?" The Ruby Rat gangster taunted as he slammed his war hammer hard on Another Jin's sword. If not for the sturdiness and quality of his sword, Bam, Another Jin would have suffered the blow directly.

He had been trying to defuse the situation when they first entered as calm as he could be. But those Ruby Rat gangsters were playing real rough. Kicking chairs down, whacking the machines with their

weapons and trying to turn over the couches yet Another Jin did not make any move at all. What he did was instruct the other cultivators to remain calm and not make a move against them. Besides, he already called the police via the System's communication channel and the police dispatcher notified him that they would reach in ten.

Unfortunately, Another Jin was unaware that the Ruby Rats had blockaded off the Tiangong Shopping District's main roads leading to Jin's store. Even if the police managed to handle them, it would still take some time to reach Jin's store. In a way, it was a reasonably small yet organised operation controlled by the lackeys of Ong, one of the Ruby Rat's leaders who finally received bail to come out.

The cultivators who were currently in Jin's store were extremely furious by the gangsters' acts of vandalism and wanted to retaliate. However, many of them understood that if they went against such a big crowd, they might not only get injured but also suffer some unnecessary trouble afterwards.

They believed that was why Boss Jin was the only one that remained silent and composed even when the gangsters began to wreck the area. One of them even had the audacity to pee at the couch. Some of the cultivators tried to shout back at the Ruby Rat gangsters for their ruthless tactics but the gangsters warned them to shut up, else they would regret it. Yet, one of the cultivators' words were so spiteful that the gangsters figured why they should tolerate these much insults, what more could go wrong with assaulting the customers?

Besides, they also wanted Jin to react so they could have the excuse to attack him all at once. These acts of vandalism were indeed a statement against Jin, but the Ruby Rats would typically not be stupid enough to attack the bystanders without any reasons. They would be humiliated among the various triads for being so effeminate to initiate the attack on innocents. What's more, was that the cultivators themselves were filming everything. If the Ruby Rats were to attack the innocents indiscriminately, they would lose all face if a video of them doing so got leaked out.

"Stop. You can do what you want to the store, but don't you ever dare hurt my customers." Another Jin moved forward to protect the low level cultivator who said those spiteful words and stared at the gangster intently. "Don't expect any mercy if you do!"

"Hahahaha! Oh no, we have angered the mighty Boss! I am scared! Mercy! Oh Mercy!" The lackey dramatised his actions before he attempted to sucker punch Another Jin who managed to block it easily. The cultivators saw that and felt offended as they drew their weapons for Jin.

"Stop! Do not engage them. Step backwards. Otherwise, I will prohibit anyone who interferes, from entering this shop." Another Jin ordered and the cultivators reluctantly complied but still had their weapons at the ready.

The gangster attempted to punch him once more but Another Jin kept evading with ease. Seeing that one was not enough, more of the lackeys entered the fray and fought against him. Another Jin noticed that even though the attacks themselves were crude, the coordination between them was there. They knew how to fight as a team. But no matter the case, Another Jin remained on the defensive and refused to throw blows unless it was needed to protect himself.

"System, is 'five more minutes' seriously that long?" Another Jin complained as the gangsters began to use techniques against him and if the police did not reach in time, Jin probably needed to disturb the Original Jin.

"It's past nine minutes. The police seem to be caught up with some other incident." The System replied.

"Shit, call Jin. I cannot handle this alone." Another Jin said as he caught a blade with his two bare hands and attempted to throw the sword away.

A few bullets whizzed through the air as Another Jin managed to climb over the bar in time to avoid them. "System, are they all focused on me?" He took a deep breather as he could hear the reloading sound of a pistol with live ammunition.

"Yes, as planned, activating barrier to enclose them so the customers won't get injured." The System reported and replied that the Original Jin was not coming.

"What?! Why? Is he asleep or something?!" Another Jin reactively lowered his head when he heard guns firing at him once more before two shadows climbed over the bar in order to surprise ambush the unfortunate Another Jin.

Suddenly, a portal appeared right in front of Another Jin and it surprised the two gangsters. A scabbard flew across to the right, stunning the gangster while a katana was thrown towards the gangster on the left. The scabbard hit the gangster on his throat causing him to grasp for air but the other was being stabbed into his abdomen. Qiu Yue jumped towards the one on the right and grabbed the sword's hilt. She then turned the handle and pulled it out effortlessly from his stomach.

"Yo, thanks for holding on. Jin managed to get in touch with ehh Detective Xue Ping. She said we could use any force necessary to subdue the gangsters and will handle the aftermath as soon as she arrives on to the scene. Of course, she instructed us, to limit ourselves to minimal casualties if possible." Qiu Yue informed him with her Red Panda Mask on and Another Jin noticed she was wearing the same armoured clothes she had on for the Goblin Bet. "IF possible." Qiu Yue reiterated.

"Who is this fucking masked lady? You too wussy to fight yourself? Does the mighty Boss Jin need a girl to fight for him?" The Ruby Rat Leader, Yang scoffed at the hiding Boss.

"More like, he cannot be bothered to fight with garbage like you. Haven't you noticed? All he did was just playing the fool to buy time for the police to come. " Qiu Yue shouted loudly as she beheaded the choking gangster with a stroke. (So much for minimal casualties...)

"Well, where's your precious police when you need them?" Yang countered in a condescending tone while signalling the other gangsters who were controlling their anger to attack after witnessing their comrades being cut down by that Red Panda Masked Girl.

"No need. I am the sheriff of the day in this store." Qiu Yue leapt over the bar counter with ease and moved towards the gangster mob. The ongoing scene stupefied Another Jin. He knew that Qiu Yue was going to duel with the gangsters to the death but luckily they would no longer face any repercussion as Detective Xue Ping authorised it. However, he did not remember Qiu Yue being this agile nor powerful enough to cut down two Grade four cultivators without breaking a sweat.

"It's one of the rewards bestowed to her. Using Money to exchange for a temporary boost of attributes. In User's terms, she could be classified as a 'Pay to Win' cultivator." The System explained to Another Jin who was looking at the whole scene with bewilderment. The System also further elaborated that Qiu Yue had boosted her body limits to the maximum by paying the System to power her up. She even bought certain traits such as acrobatics and a set of martial arts techniques to deal with these goons.

"So she literally has the power of money in her hands...how much did she spent?" Another Jin saw how she effortlessly dispatched another three Grade 4 gangsters to the netherworld by beheading them in two slashes. Not a single blood was spilt from the body until the heads hit the floor and human fountains of blood slightly terrified the remaining gangsters.

"'Craploads'. Those attribute boosts and traits are, however limited and temporary. Limited as in the amount of attributes points were capped to a certain value due to the constraint of her body and cultivation. Sub User Qiu Yue's maximum limit is currently at Grade 9. By the end of the hour, she will return to normal and the strain of the increase in attributes will kick in. System has already informed Original Jin to take care of her as she will potentially experience extensive muscular pains throughout her body for pushing it to the limit in an instant without prior training." The System stated that Qiu Yue had decided to go all out to test the capabilities to the highest power ceiling available.

Despite being afraid, the crowd who were behind the force barrier cheered for the Red Panda masked girl which they had never seen before in the store. Regardless, it brought them satisfaction that the gangsters were punished the old fashion way. Two gangsters revealed their Grade Six cultivations in an attempt to intimidate her but Qiu Yue did not give two hoots about them. She efficiently sent them to the afterlife even before they had the chance to use any attack.

At this point, Yang became intimidated and panic stricken by her intervention. No one had informed them, that this Store had someone like her guarding it. That Red Panda masked girl must be some powerful sword user and certainly more trained compared to them. At the very least, she should be a Grade Ten to slaughter them without a hitch.

He immediately went to his knees to beg for forgiveness and the rest who were still alive joined him to prostrate in front of her. Qiu Yue, on the contrary stomped her feet at Yang's head. "Huh? I thought someone was acting so high and mighty. Now tell me, why should I stop my policing?" Qiu Yue said as she 'gently' pressed her other boot down until the floor began to crack at the pressure. Yang nearly peed himself, as this time would be his head rolling along the floor if he did not give a satisfying answer.

"The Ruby Rat Boss! De Tian! He wanted us to teach the Boss here a lesson for messing with us. If we could kill him, he assured us that we would be rich! We did not expect such an amazing martial expert such as your esteemed self to be under the employment of Jin...no I mean Big Boss Jin!!" Yang answered hastily as he attempted to curry favour to Qiu Yue, hoping she would spare his life with the praises he made.

But as quick as he could correct his form of address for Jin, he saw Qiu Yue's katana stabbed through the ground with only one centimetre away from him. Any nearer, Yang would have lost his nose.

"Our main objective was to simply harass him! That is all! We have gone overboard! PLEASE! We will reflect on our mistakes! Please release us, and we will promise not to bother the Great Almighty Lady Boss ever again!" Yang cried out loud. He knew that he just needed to turn her attention towards him a

bit longer. Once she dropped her guard, his fellow lackeys would perform a team sneak attack on her. A common tactic they practice throughout the years.

"Heh, I could let you leave. But the thing is...you not only successfully harassed us. You destroyed properties worth thousands of Yuan, vandalised my workplace, attempted to assault our valued customers. In a way, it prevented my Boss from earning his income, which indirectly affects my bonus too. Additionally, you offended me verbally too, so being the Sheriff of the day. I think the judgement should pretty clear." Qiu Yue said as she lifted her fist and was about to kill him with a single punch until the police entered the scene.

"Stop! This is the police! We will take over from here. Any further action will be taken as obstruction of the police!" Detective Xue Ping hurriedly entered the shop with Gupta, Abdul and Deng Long only to be halted by some invisible force. Another Jin then pulled the force barrier down and the policemen began to cuff the rest of the gangsters who were obedient enough to not struggle against it. Xue Ping saw the carnage that was left over and was relieved that she at least succeeded to reach before everyone present was killed.

Qiu Yue held her fist and slammed it on the ground to scare Yang once again before she walked back towards the Bar. "I leave the rest to you then. Good Luck, my dear Imposter Jin!" Qiu Yue said as she left with a portal even though Xue Ping kept telling her to not run away.

"Your employee?" Xue Ping asked as she demanded the entire account of the incident. Another Jin complied and gave the necessary details as well as the CCTV details from his bar counter.

"For that Red Panda Girl...she is like a fixer of some sort. I am afraid you have to catch her yourself if you want information. Otherwise, I am taking the responsibility of her being my champion for the 'duel' that you authorised." Another Jin replied.

After taking the accounts of everyone, Jin's story corresponded with the other testimonies and the customers even told the police they were willing to be his witnesses if needed. Other cops began to arrive and they took the gangsters back to the police station. Another Jin apologised to the customers for the inconvenience and provided them each with a one gold panda medal as a compensation package. Most were elated and thanked Jin before they went to the various shop instances to do some stress relief shopping. (To his surprise, many were not distraught by the killings as he had expected but he did affirm them that if they needed any psychological help, do not hesitate to ask the police or him.)

After the entire incident, Xue Ping was the only one who stayed back as she put her badge down on the table and she discussed what had really happened with Another Jin.

"As a friend, I have some bad news for you. I am afraid it is something I can only inform you about without taking any action about it."

Chapter 373 Police Partnership

"In that case, I suppose it would be appropriate to discuss it in a more private place. Our new High Class Option in the Restaurant Instance should be the perfect place." Another Jin suggested as he informed the System to contact Original Jin to meet Xue Ping.

After Operation Pompeii, Lynn had created another train car to accommodate more private or special occasions. She had received feedback that some of the cultivators were willing to pay extra for a more comfortable, luxurious and intimate setting. Jin had casually reviewed the proposal and gave her the go ahead, though he emphasised that the service instance was ultimately hers to take control.

Xue Ping acknowledged and headed in first as Another Jin excused himself, stating that he needed to tend to a few things. However, the moment she entered, Xue Ping already saw Original Jin waiting for her as if he had been doing that for a very long time. "I erm...weren't you just..erm..nevermind." Xue Ping guessed he just teleported to the place while she had to wait a while for the train to arrive at the platform.

"Would you like something to drink? It's on the house since you helped us resolve that previous ruckus." Jin asked as he placed the menu in front of her. Meanwhile, he took a closer look into the interior decoration of the place. It did feel grand with what Lynn had done to the place.

She created a couple of rooms within the train car, each with its own national theme. The one they currently stayed in featured a Traditional Japanese Theme (Washitsu). The traditional Koto (Zither) and Shamisen (Three string instrument) were being played in the background contributed to the feeling of serene tranquillity within the tatami room.

The sliding doors were there to cover the view of the train and at the opposing side, to allow waiters to enter and serve them. Even the penguins' outfits fit the theme room they served as they saw a penguin with a kimono wearing a traditional hair ornament (Kanzashi) entering from the side. It was truly a testament to all the effort Lynn put into designing it.

"I will get the usual, Black Ivory with additional milk and sugar. Thanks." Xue Ping answered and the penguin bowed to acknowledge the order before waddling away. Xue Ping sighed before looking at Jin who was already enjoying a cup of hot Japanese tea. "The harassment was just the start. From what we heard, Ruby Rat Boss, Wo De Tian had appointed Ong to be the one overlooking these erm 'activities' according to our sources."

"...Wait, Ong? Wasn't he killed back then...?" Only when Jin saw the expression on Xue Ping's face did he realise what had happened. "His boss paid to resurrect him? That Ong is such a big shot for the boss to be concerned about him?" Jin was baffled as he had no explicit knowledge of the Ruby Rats' organisational hierarchy nor what position Ong exactly had. All he knew was that he had been a pain in the ass to fight against and would be harder in the future.

Like video game villains, they would only get stronger with their hatred and desire for revenge. Either that or he was bound to have his boss, or Big Brother trying to take revenge for him, the next time they met. Jin could already see Ong laughing at him the moment they meet again. (That typical an eye for an eye, 'I will return my debt' kind of scenario was already playing through Jin's head.)

"Yes, and it's not just that. Your sudden sales tactics in recent days not only plummeted their sales but even managed to affect their stocks to a certain extent." Xue Ping said as she showed Jin the Ruby Rat's entertainment industry stocks.

"Wait, this is a bit too far fetched. To be frank, I am just one small dungeon supplier store. While I may be successful on an individual level, King's Monster is a franchise. There should be no way their stocks can plummet just because we got some new customers!" Jin rebutted. Luckily as things might have gotten heated up, the penguin waitress entered to bring in Xue Ping's order which allowed Jin to calm down a bit.

"True, it is not you that their shares dropped drastically. It is indirectly because of you. Take a look at this article here." Xue Ping swiped her phone to the right, seemingly prepared for Jin's reply. He read the article with an intense focus which he then found out it was regarding Sea Mesh and their cooperation.

The company whose CEO he made a deal with to create the remote portal device had made an official declaration. In the article, it was reported that by the end of the year, they would be developing a prototype of a Dungeon Instance Remote Portal Device in exclusive partnership with Dungeons and Pandas. Suffice to say, various major dungeon suppliers had been vying for a partnership spot with Sea Mesh for a very long time.

Some had even offered millions of Yuan for their research budgets but yet, none had managed to secure that spot... Until Dungeons and Pandas that is. A newly opened startup supplier store in Tiangong Shopping District which was rumoured to boast many exceptionally high quality and realistic dungeons. The article stated that many cultivators who went once, never bother to enter another dungeon supplier store again.

"Oh my god, so Ke Loong advertised my shop as he fits... Maybe he genuinely had good intentions despite what is happening because of it." Jin had been unaware that his partnership with Ke Loong would be this impactful so soon.

"Take a look at where that article appeared. People's Daily Newspaper. They are also the ones to publish the infamous Cultivation Monthly. And it seems congratulations are in order. Your store received a full six page coverage in their latest issue." Xue Ping took out a copy of it and showed it to Jin.

He noticed that his Panda billboard was at the corner of the front page. When he briefly went through it, the reporter was very detailed and had information on almost every instance available before the Goblin Raid instances. There were even pictures taken of familiar Pandawans fighting on the Big Screen of his shop instances. The reporter never failed to mention about the service instances like the Emerald Mountain Hot Spring, Panda Muscles and the Reservoir of Deep Fishing too. He even told the readers to watch out for more updates on this supplier.

"You stole the spotlight from any other store. I am sure you roughly understand now why De Tian is doing this to you and where this conversation is heading? While you may have been an annoyance before, you have suddenly become more than a thorn by his side. And someone of his stature will do anything in his position to crush you before you develop into even more of a threat to his business." Xue Ping explained, with a tone of sadness.

"The police will naturally try our best to do what we can in order to prevent chaos and havoc in the district, but we fear things like today may repeat. Even worse, they might escalate to the point where a street war could occur. We do not want such a catastrophe to happen, nor do we wish this kind of infamous reputation to blemish our district. And since you are in this district, you are partially responsible for this incident." Xue Ping commented. Jin did not like the way the conversation was going one bit. It was as if there was a particular motive behind those words.

"I am obviously oblivious to all this. Heck, I did not even know where that reporter got all his information from. I am simply trying to make a living here. Would you be so kind as to explain what you are implying?" Jin decided to act innocent and see what Xue Ping was getting at. She sighed and took out a stack of papers from her storage ring, before passing them over. Jin took a quick glance at the papers and slammed them on the table.

"NEVER! This is out of the question!" Jin summoned his Panda Black fire at his fingertips and burnt that stack of papers right in front of her. Even as the fire burnt the last bit of the documents, Jin continued to hold on to it and crushed the reminding ashes in front of her. "I will NOT sell my shop to the Ruby Rats. If you are colluding with them, I ask you to pick up your badge, take your coffee and kindly leave. You are still welcome to join us for dungeons but this conversation is over." Jin answered in a stern voice and he threw the ashes to the side as if to indicate he would do anything to protect this particular shop with his life.

Xue Ping smirked at the dedication and determination against the Ruby Rat Triad. "We figured as much. Then how about this?" Xue Ping took another stack of papers and placed it on the table. "Please. At least take a closer look at this before you even consider about burning it. I had to offer you the easiest solution, even though it would have been a surprise if you had actually accepted." Xue Ping pleaded to Jin and he could see that her hands were slightly shaking when she placed the papers down.

Despite his anger, he decided to give Xue Ping one last chance as he looked at the new set of papers. He read through it once, but since a lot of it was written in legal terms, he would need Xiong Da to help him not overlook anything. "This is...?" Jin was a lot more interested in this particular contract.

"In short, you will allow us to officially conduct police training in your dungeons. In exchange for your services, you will become one of our authorised training partners and enjoy every advantage, which includes" Xue Ping pointed at her badge, half indicating that he could potentially be approved for the use of lethal action in the name of self defence.

"...if you get my drift. We will also definitely pay a certain monetary sum from our budget but do not expect a lot of profit. However, in return..." Xue Ping smiled and let Jin figure out part of the benefits.

"In return, you will have policemen stationed here. If any gangsters decide to trash this place again, we will have the right to protect ourselves without any major consequences?" Jin tried to guess, but Xue Ping laughed heartily.

"Well, not quite, but something like that. At the very least, the police will be able to respond in time. Should they mess with our fellow officers, we have valid reasons to take action against not just the goons but the Ruby Rat Triad as a whole, giving us the possible jurisdiction to stomp their building." Xue Ping commented and this suddenly gave Jin a bright idea.

"Say...this Tiangong shopping district...it is not owned by any Triad or Royal Zodiac Clans, right?" Jin asked and Xue Ping furrowed her eyebrows at where his question was going.

"While the Royal Zodiac Tigers partially own this particular region of Shenzhen, the Tiangong District itself is directly under Grandma Yuan's protection. In a way, she has some district influence that may overrule the local police once in a while unless Central Police Station decides to step in. If you are wondering, the Ruby Rats operate under their own influence circle, so do not even think of venturing into their territory. The police there works for them too. Have you forgotten your last stint? Please don't make us arrest you again. If you are apprehended again, it won't be as easy as paying your bail. I am sure they have made preparations to detain you a lot longer if not worse." Xue Ping warned him, but she answered Jin more than he needed to know and he thanked her for the information.

"Would you mind coming back soon? Let me go through this with Xiong Da and I will get back to you... say in about two days? Don't be surprised if there are changes or disagreements with the contract." Jin said as he extended his hand towards Xue Ping.

"We understand, I will liaise with the HR department and our lawyer. I shall accompany her two days later to assess any changes to the contract. See you then. Oh and eh about the damage...those Ruby Rats gangsters had done a lot, but I am afraid there is not much we can do. Of course, we will fine the remaining culprits heavily. However, if we are unable to collect bail from the gang members, which is very likely given the nature of the gang, we won't be able to aid you with those damages. You can try with the city council and maybe have them assess you for the amount of compensation. Alternatively, if you have insurance..." Xue Ping said but Jin stopped her. She sighed a little before she returned the handshake.

"I will handle that. It's a small matter. Have a good morning detective. Thank you for coming in the middle of the night." Jin said and asked the penguins to teleport her out directly to the main entrance in order for her to avoid Another Jin.

"A contract with the army and now the police. I had always wondered how to best contact them. But it seems like the Ruby Rat managed to help me out, without them knowing it. And if I play things correctly... I might be able to earn some unexpected allies and reinforcements for my Dungeon City Fortress." Jin thought to himself.

"And of course, more money. System must warn User, the budget indicated by the contract from the police is rather whimsical. System advises User to push for more profit." The System complained.

"Sometimes, it's not just about the money. Sometimes...it's more about the relations we can gain from this partnership." Jin replied as he continued to read the details of the contract and messaged Xiong Da with regards to it.

"Speaking of relations, I need to ask Qiu Yue when we can expect the Goblin army to be up and running," Jin noted mentally as he wondered how Qiu Yue was faring after the fight.

"User probably needs to give Sub System User Qiu Yue a day or two to rest after her power up. System also estimates the goblins require a similar amount of time to prepare everything. After time conversion that is. Given their situation, it could also take longer. User can consider putting up the Deep One Dungeons in the meantime to increase revenue." The System suggested and Jin acknowledged the idea.

"We have won a war not too long ago, yet not much seems to have changed. The work is never ending." Jin bitterly laughed to himself.

Chapter 374 That Insidious Boss

"Feeling better?" Yun came into Qiu Yue's room to check on her condition now that Another Jin held the fort for her at the storefront. Many of the customers were sulking that Jin was back since Yun was a matured beauty to behold.

Another Jin warned them not to have any funny ideas, her 'husband' was one that should not be trifled with. One of the customers even teased Another Jin whether she was attached to him and he threw a 'lucky panda paw' (one of the possible items to redeem. Naturally not made from real pandas) at the customer, making them all laugh when the customer got a paw mark all over his face.

"Nope. I wish. Still feeling very bad and sore. The System could have warned me before hand instead of telling me after I applied the attribute boost." Qiu Yue answered even though she had difficulty talking as it meant inhaling and exhaling more rapidly, causing her muscles to contract and expand more which worsened the pain.

It was to a point she felt eating was such a chore that she rather starve. Milk had to cast a low level modified paralysation spell so her nerves would be numb, allowing her to chew and drink food normally. By using her broken soul, Yun also learnt that spell temporarily from the System and took over Milk's job who was supposed to manage the Recovery Instance later in the morning. (Currently still sleeping soundly from all the drinks Pepper forced into her after attending to Qiu Yue with a major headache.)

"Here, try to get up. The food was made by Lynn with much love. Oh and if you need a hangover concoction, just hook her up via the System Channel. I found it very sweet to drink and made my head clear even though I did not need it. " Yun said as she took a letter out her storage ring and placed it on the tray.

"She also asked me to hand you this envelope. It's from her too." Yun said as she cast the low level paralysation spell slightly below her neck area before assisting her to get up in an upright position. "You know, you could just order medicine from the System, morphine and stuff would probably solve your aching problems," Yun suggested as she pushed a bed tray to her side and sat beside her to aid her with the feeding. Qiu Yue shook her head and reminded Yun that she still had alcohol content in her body, taking those medications might cause even more side effects.

"And I can roughly guess the contents. You can leave it closed, I will open it up when I am much better." Qiu Yue replied with many regrets as she opened her mouth slowly due to the pain she had despite the paralysation spell. Yun inserted a scoop of congee into her mouth and Qiu Yue slowly chewed it. "There's actually a faint fragrance of cinnamon in the porridge and it tasted good too. At this rate, I am probably gonna owe her a lot more for providing me food."

"That is your own problem to settle. But at the very least you also now know what are the consequences of straining yourself to the limit. Better to experiment with it now during peacetime instead of using it in

a dire situation and become more of a burden to Jin. If I am not wrong, the cultivation manual which Jin gave you previously should have something to do with this particular boost too. You can give it a look again while you are resting. With the Sub System, you should be able to read it now without a problem." Yun replied as she blew the spoon filled with hot congee to cool it down.

"Now that you mention it. I remember something about boosting up attributes and it kind of make sense thinking back. You are right, I should go take a look when I have the chance...but for now, just let me slack." Qiu Yue answered lazily as she swallowed the mouthful of congee.

"And remember to call your parents. They have been leaving you missed calls and messages for the past hour or so. Sorry that I peeked into it a little on the lock screen. They seemed worried that you skipped work or something." Yun apologised but spoke with concern even though her role as the mother was not exactly fulfilled for Jin.

"Ah yea...I still have to deal with my shitty boss...Can I get Jin to handle him? ... Or perhaps Kraft?" Qiu Yue looked up and saw the date on the digital clock. It would be roughly another day or two before her Boss should fly back according to the flight plans arranged by the company. "I think he is still there. Otherwise, he would have probably bothered my parents by now."

"You are correct. He is still there." Kraft appeared out of nowhere as usual. "And judging from his credit card bill transactions, he has been quite busy ...entertaining himself. I wonder what his wife might say if she would find out."

"Heh, I doubt his wife is that daring because... he is the sole breadwinner and she is not exactly the most vocal kind of person. Even if she knew, she'd probably try to tolerate it. Actually, I kinda pity her a little for choosing that no good bastard." Qiu Yue commented as Yun stuffed another scoop into her mouth.

"Then how about we provide her with some happiness so she does not need to stay miserable for any longer. What shall it be? Instant Death? Or Scandal?" Kraft sat at the end of her bed as he swiped out an augmented reality screen in front of him to check a few things on her boss, Shao Wai.

"From what I see, he has at the very least multiple trust accounts and insurances to his wife's name. I presume he is also doing this to avoid tax and judging from the records, it should be more than enough to get his housewife to live off the insurance money until she reaches 60. With a bit of investment and without an over the top luxurious lifestyle, she could have enough for the rest of her life. That is, of course, IF he dies. Scandal, on the other hand...I truly wonder if she is going to play the role of a 'supporting wife' and be willing to 'overlook her husband's unfortunate lapse in judgement' or have enough guts to break up and demand alimony from him." Kraft said as his eyes were stuck to the screen.

"Though I can safely say, death will be much better. His 'good image' will live on, she will be pitied to lose such a 'loving and caring husband' and the wife can move on with a large sum of money in her hands." Kraft concluded which made Yun frown at him.

"Are you doing this behind Jin's back? Do you have his approval?" Yun asked as she shoved another scoop of porridge into Qiu Yue's mouth before she could make a sound.

"Technically speaking, we bellators serve both Sub System Users and System Users. It is not wrong to fulfil Qiu Yue's wishes if she has any. That's all I am saying." Kraft shrugged his shoulders and gave a pretentious smile at Yun.

"You, on the other hand, are basically Jin's personal guardian and not the Sub System Users so I can understand why you would be concerned about his permission," Kraft remarked. "But rest assured, it can be done quietly and none of it will backfire at Jin at all, if you are that concerned."

"Yeah, I might be serving Jin but I have my own agendas too." Qiu Yue chimed in after she chewed her food.

"That does not mean...nevermind. But if it backfires, I am holding Qiu Yue responsible. If the System can abandon Ming, stripping a Sub Users of their powers will definitely not be a problem." Yun warned Qiu Yue indirectly as she spoke to Kraft about the matter.

"Guess, that means that we will rid the world of a scumbag soon. Alright, Yun off you go, even I can handle feeding. I am sure your customers will be happy seeing you instead of our master greeting me. Let me discuss the details with her." Kraft suggested as he opened the augmented virtual screen in front of Qiu Yue and took over the feeding from Yun.

When a sly little red panda and a devious old fox come together, the amount of vile, wicked ideas was too many to count from. They began by tracing by his movements and if there was any sort of routine he took despite the nature of his trip.

Qiu Yue also chipped in and told Kraft about the past experiences she had with him so that he might have a better understanding of Shao Wai. Jin might have tickled his bones with the extensive military operation, but this particular escapade finally scratched a few itches he had for some time.

Within the next few minutes, more information about Shao Wai popped up at the tip of Kraft's finger, all thanks to his hacking ability. They found out that he was going to a private yacht party to vent some steam after he clinched the final deal with his contractors. (Supposedly, Qiu Yue's job.)

"So you wish to finish him off before he reaches the party, during the party or after the party?" Kraft gave options for Qiu Yue to choose and she decided the first one.

"Let's give him the loving, hardworking husband image. A scandal and murder do not bore well for the wife." Qiu Yue chose without any hesitation.

"An accident then." Kraft began to run a few computations on the augmented reality screen and while waiting, he asked Qiu Yue one last time.

"Are you sure? You will be taking a life away."

"I just killed several gangsters without prejudice, what's another and one who is a greedy, hypocritical pervert? Just do it." Qiu Yue replied with affirmation.

"Very well, I will spare you the details, but it would be done soon. He would no longer bother you or his wife. Now eat your congee." Kraft asked one of his fox Evon to enter the room. Its presence alone made Qiu Yue went into a daze as she chewed food. She no longer felt any pain as compared to the low level paralysation spell.

Kraft surprisingly continued to feed Qiu Yue until the bowl was squeaky clean. "Oh and eh, let's just say someone made an anonymous donation to the colleague, Yi San, you spoke of to Jin. She should not

have any problems supporting her child for the next few years." He then cleared up the place and let Qiu Yue rest properly.

Chapter 375 An Adventure with Ming?

Come afternoon, Another Jin was replaced by Yun for her work shift. After Jin reunited and became whole again, he decided to take the time to meditate and cultivate instead of preparing the Deep One Dungeon as suggested by the System.

All the preparations for the war and store enhancements had made him neglect his cultivation for far too long. If not for the lucky break he had for not fighting with Orc King Hamu and his Avatar of Shaitan, Diabolos, Jin might have incurred injuries which would have hampered and slowed the progress of creating the Goblin Raid instances.

Right now, he figured it would be best if he managed to increase his grade, especially with the incoming threat of Ruby Rats looming around. Sure, he had the bellators by his side to assist him in an emergency but his bellators were also pegged to his grade.

While they seemed to be a lot more powerful than what a regular Grade 7 should be, it would be best if he could increase his own strength and not have to depend on others to fight for him. Also, although the System occasionally allowed the bellators to overcome the fundamental barrier of grade limits, he was not sure if there were any consequences to it if he went overboard.

Jin did ask the System with regards to that, but the System gave him such a vague answer, that Jin figured either the System did not know or never dared to venture that far before. In any case, Jin had created a room in the Dungeon Maker that simulated the sleeping capsule, just bigger and wider so that Jin could be in a cultivation stance rather than being squeezed inside the capsule.

Instead of a tight capsule, Jin now has a room with the ability to absorb all the sludge he produced during his cultivation. That way, he would not bother the penguins in the Hot Spring Instance nor destroy his house with the massive sludge output. (However, he did miss the Hot Spring medicinal bath, it was very refreshing.)

Another capability Jin wished to utilise was the extreme time dilation he experienced in the sleeping capsule. It was a little expensive getting the room up (The System seemed quite happy to increase Jin's loan yet again.) but Jin figured it was worth the price. Spending money to improve was by no means a bad idea. Nevertheless, he bargained with the System as usual for a lower price since it would receive the sludge byproducts from Jin for its own research purposes. (Though Jin believed the System had already taken into account of Jin's consistent bargaining.)

"Wake me up by force if there is a need. Otherwise, I trust the Sub System Users and Yun to handle the store for now," Jin instructed the System as he had already assigned Yun to hand over the police contract with the possible amendments to Xiong Da. It also included a note, that Jin would have time to go over it in the evening with the lawyer, which he estimated to be some time after he exits his cultivation mode.

When Jin entered into his cultivation stance, he was abruptly forced into his subconscious state and Ming was already there waiting for at the side of the cabin with an item in hand. "What are you staring at me for? Let's go!" Ming told him as he threw the backpack towards Jin.

"Wait, what are we doing?" Jin asked as he caught the backpack and nearly fell from doing so. Despite its relatively small size, it was rather heavy. Ming warned Jin not to open it for now.

"Why, we are off to an adventure. You could say a little grandfather and grandson adventure. Your state of subconsciousness has expanded quite a lot recently with your vigorous use of splitting yourself into many mini Jins." Ming beckoned Jin to follow him immediately.

"Many Jins, you mean." Jin retorted but got hit by Ming's scabbard. (The loving 'fist' of a grandpa)

"Bleargh, you are mini to me no matter how big you have grown." Ming scoffed before he cleared his throat and explained to Jin what exactly was happening. "I have created ...you could say my very own dungeon instance in your expanded state of mind which I must say I am quite proud of the end product! Hahahah!" Ming shamelessly praised himself.

"But it comes with many restrictions attached. Firstly, during your stay here, you are unable to use your cultivation powers nor techniques relating to your cultivation powers. You will be relying solely on your skill to fight and your current strength. This is to test not only your body and endurance but also your wits. I have my own set of monsters and trust me. You will die to them. Many times. Many many times!" Ming laughed loudly as he finished the last sentence.

"But if I die in my own subconscious state, doesn't that mean I will d- Ow!" Jin got hit by the scabbard once more.

"I am not done talking, stop interrupting," Ming said as they began to walk down the mudded forest road.

"Unlike fictional books where you dying in your subconscious state would leave you brain dead, you dying here is nothing. Think of it as normal Dungeon Instance if you wish. You dying for real would help nobody, and heck you think I would be that kind of stupid to do that? I rather die than being that stupid...but I am also too handsome to die yet again...Hahahaha!" Grandpa was getting so absurd that Jin began to feel that his eyes were rolling to the back of his skull.

"Anyways! Since I am the one controlling this particular 'instance' you are relatively safe. BUT! You will still feel the pain of death. We wouldn't want to let you be complacent if dying had no consequence. Let's try the first leg of the journey first and see how you fare." Ming explained and even though Jin had the fear of his scabbard hitting his head again, he decided to speak up.

"How did you know that I wanted to train with you even though I had no ways of contacting you? I mean, I haven't been here for a long time, and I didn't make my intentions known to Kraft. This was really a rather impromptu decision on my end." Jin asked and Ming sniggered.

"I am your grandfather, you remember? The one who bloody raised you up for nearly 20 over years. Of course, I had the intuition that you wanted a good solid training the next time you entered. Your state of mind expanding at such a rapid pace only proved that you were busy training in other ways." Ming explained while he took out his hiking stick from nowhere.

"And that stupid fox is withholding the occasional IMPORTANT tidbits of information from me again! I swear he does that on purpose just to get back at me. How can anyone be so petty only for getting locked up for a while?" Ming rambled on as if he had never talked to someone for ages.

"Besides, I actually have nothing better to do after that crafty fox went away with you. So I decided to spend my time creating this adventure plane in your state of the subconscious so that I can train you up and show you that your grandfather is not that bad of a Dungeon Supplier himself. Heh! Maybe you can copy some ideas and monsters from this and use it as your own! What a great gift, right? Hahahahaha!" Ming laughter echoed through the bamboo forest.

"Create monsters of my own? Can the System even do that? I thought it was all about capturing monsters?" Jin was surprised and really wondered if he could do such a thing.

"Why not? Where do you think modern dungeon suppliers got their monsters from?" Ming stopped and looked Jin in the eyes.

"From imagination," Jin answered without thinking about it.

"Correct. Where better place to get a monster but from your subconscious state? Unlike you, Traditional Dungeon Suppliers do not have a System, so they use their imagination and experience to create and enhance their monsters up. Sure, live monsters are definitely better subjects since they have a will of their own, but imaginary monsters aren't necessarily that bad." Ming suddenly became wise towards Jin.

"They were the ones that can bring awe and fear to the ones facing them. With the System's consistent collection of data from the monsters in the past months, I believe it has the capability to create a monster of its own. Will it be perfect? Who knows. One thing is for sure. Unlike real monsters who can restrain themselves, the system's own monsters will try their best to always meet or even overcome the expectations of your cultivators." Ming continued to walk and chat with Jin.

"Oh...sounds like the NPCs and even those robot Savants. They are driven with some sort of artificial intelligence." Jin said as he enjoyed the scenery of the bamboo forest down the hill.

"I heard you also received my rewards?" Ming asked and Jin nodded. "Ah, that will aid the System in utilising the flaws of an individual cultivator's style when controlling that monster." Jin heard that and realised that Ming's intention was not to teach the cultivators directly but rather giving the manuals so the System takes advantage of their cultivation style's inherent weakness. Crush them mercilessly and they will have to come back for more to beat it. Subsequently, they could earn bragging rights from it. That meant extra moolah. Jin's thinking was the other way round, get beaten up so they can learn and improve on their style's weakness. But eventually, its all for the extra moolah, just different approach. However, he felt that his grandfather had a point.

"I had never thought of that before. You are such a genius." Jin praised his grandfather as they laughed together.

"In the meantime, I heard rumours that someone created some major military defensive operation from a crafty little fox. Care to tell me more?" Ming asked and Jin immediately recounted the grand scheme of things for him. Ming did ask a few questions but largely it was Jin explaining the whole operation in detail.

He even boasted to Ming about the way his monsters created the defences and such. Ming remained quiet as he kept a mental note of all the flaws in Jin's explanations. It was a bad habit as a General but he figured if Jin was going to fight against an army again, he might need those tips. For now, he listened to his grandson ramble about how proud he was for his monsters, bellators and even the Panda Remnant he met.

It had been a long time since he had shared a close heart to heart talk with his grandson.

Chapter 376 The White Monster

"Hahaha so you managed to meet up with Hou Fei? How is that rascal doing?" Ming asked as he pulled up Jin before he got swept away by a fast rapids river. They had travelled through the first portion of the vast bamboo forest where the clear path became a rocky one, and eventually, they reached a rapid river crossing.

With no cultivation powers at his disposal, Jin was not able to safely jump across the wide river nor perform the glorious water walking technique through his chi powers. Jin had to sink himself into the river and use his scabbard as support when needed while resisting the rapids with all his might so that he would not fall and flow along with the current.

Even if he did, he used his scabbard to get a foothold against the riverbed and continued trying. The odd thing was, the river did not seem to end as far he could see. Ming confirmed that it was indeed never ending and told Jin he could attempt swimming as long as he did not mind getting hit by the rocks along the way. However, Jin was already doing so badly at the start, Ming feared that he would die an accidental death in the river but thankfully Jin managed to cross it with only some minor injuries.

"He...is ...doing ...huff fine." Jin answered his worried looking grandfather as he tried to catch his breath the moment he came out of the water.

"Watch out not to lose your backpack or sword. Otherwise, you practically guarantee your demise. " Ming warned Jin before they continued walking. Jin had not felt so powerless for a very long time. He remembered the days he was struggling with Ming's training, but this was way more intense than anything he ever remembered. Even though he did not show it, the hike was starting to take a toll on his body. Especially the small yet heavy backpack was becoming more and more of a burden. Jin hoped whatever was inside was worth it.

"We are reaching our camp soon. So hurry up, I want to reach it before the sun sets." Ming decided not to waste his energy talking and gave Jin the breather he needed as they continue to enter the other part of the bamboo forest.

After what seemed like hours to Jin, they finally reached the designated camp spot where there were already two sets of camping equipment prepared at the side of a bamboo tree. Ming passed one to him and told him to set the basha tent up.

Jin roughly remembered how and got onto it as Ming prepared the campfire and food for the two of them. He was previously talking to Ming so vividly that he had forgotten that this was part of the

training process, so he decided to keep quiet and make the tent as instructed even if he was still half dead from the river crossing. Using the camping equipment, Ming began to boil some water and used it to heat up the packet rations that came with the camping set.

Eventually, Jin completed setting up the Basha tent and went towards the campfire for his dinner.

"Tiring, isn't it? Without your cultivation powers." Ming asked as he passed the packet ration all heated up for Jin to eat. He checked the ration labels and realised it was ...macaroni with meat and vegetable fillings in the packet. Jin reluctantly opened it and ate, but it somehow tasted good even though he clearly remembered it being terrible.

"Tiredness and hunger can make any food taste great," Ming lectured his grandson after seeing his surprised expression, while he also chewed on his packet ration. At this point, Jin asked if there is an objective to this particular leg of the journey.

"Oh, don't you worry that much. When it comes, it comes. Just be carefree for now and rest up." Ming answered with a gleeful tone which made Jin extremely suspicious of his expression. Not to mention, his anxiety was hitting maximum values.

"You mean it could come anytime?" Jin asked as he gobbled his entire ration packet in case he would jinx himself for saying it out loud. True enough, Jin suddenly heard a growling from the back which made Jin stop all his movements and slowly reach for his sheath at the side of him.

"Well, what do you know? What impeccable timing." Ming sniggered as a shadow immediately pounced towards Jin sitting location, but Jin was able to safely use the scabbard to block the bite from the monster right in front of him.

White, furry, blue eyes and with a very large angry mouth. That was the first thing Jin saw as he tried to identify the white monstrosity which then it finally clicked what creature Jin was facing.

It looked exactly like the mythical White Tiger of the West from the legends. (西方白虎 Xi Fang Bai Hu/Byakko). The moment Jin removed his scabbard away from the White Tiger's jaws, he spat out the macaroni that he had still been chewing into the tiger's mouth and somehow it managed to choke the tiger momentarily, allowing Jin to kick himself away from the White Tiger. (He wished his kick was strong enough to knock the White Tiger of the West away)

"What the shit?!" Jin exclaimed as he swallowed the rest of his food down and even calmly took his flask that was hanging at his waist and drank it.

"You do not look as surprised as I had imagined of the tiger. Should now really be the time for you to enjoy your food?" Ming complained as he laid back and decided to watch the show from a tree branch.

"What can I say, I kind of expected that from you. Besides, better to die without an empty stomach." Jin joked as the White Tiger prowled around the prey which had angered him. Jin honestly did not know what to do about this situation. He read books about the White Tiger of the West and the praises of magnificent strength and prowess it possessed. How could a human with no cultivation powers suppose to beat a monster of such legend? "I think even at Grade 7, the chances of surviving this without my bellators would be low." Jin thought to himself as he gripped onto his katana hard.

"Oh yeah, I forgot to mention this earlier, but one of the restrictions forbids you to change your weapons. Bam is in permanent Katana form and Boo in your wakizashi form. But that should be about it. Good luck with your new friend." Ming commented as the White Tiger noticed the distraction in Jin's face (Hope and optimism had begun leaving his body) and went to charge it with its claws at the front. Jin tried to evade at the very last second before he -

Yeah, Jin died. The tiger got him.

With just a single charge, the tiger's paws literally swiped away Jin's head before he could make a move, causing it to roll beside the fire pit. Jin was not used to his new body without cultivation, nor did he have access to his Inverse Eyes that would allow him to predict the movement of the White Tiger correctly.

"Oh well, I kinda expected him to die the moment White Tiger appeared. At least he did exceed my expectations a little bit." Ming grinned as he snapped his fingers, causing the entire scene to change right in front of their eyes.

"UWWWOOOO!!" Jin suffered a violent shake from his consciousness and realised he was being swept away along the river with Ming strolling along the side.

"Good wake up call?" Ming shouted to ask Jin who was struggling to swim across the river. Jin did not say a word and tried his best to get out of the river as he once did and Ming offered his hand once more to pull him out.

"What are the chances of me killing the White Tiger?" Jin panted for air as he lay down at the side of the river and Ming sat beside him for company.

"Honestly? None. I mean you can always hope for it to have a sudden heart attack, but otherwise 10/10 times it will decimate you in a direct confrontation. But you can figure it out, can't you? I mean right now, you kind of know where it appears." Ming tried to console him.

"Will it come for me no matter what?" Jin asked as all he had was a blank in his mind.

"Who knows? I just leave it to you. Oh and no matter what, do not open that backpack. I will be waiting for you on the other end of the bamboo forest." Ming reminded him as he continued to stroll through the forest.

"Fuck...that means I will have to fight it at least a few times to learn the tiger's attack pattern. And I don't even know if he has any magical abilities." Jin cursed as he thought to himself how impossible this task is.

"Just a tip as an exchange for telling me the juicy story about your recent life activities. The forest is your ally if you know how to use it. Cheers!" Ming had decided to help him out a bit via a private long range transmission before he became uncontactable. Jin sighed as he stood up and looked at the immense bamboo forest right in front of him.

Jin tried to summon his chi from within to confirm that he really did not have any cultivation ability within him. True enough, he felt nothing was happening. Even when he tried to cultivate, no chi was being circulated around him.

"Guess that means I have to fight one on one against this monster of Legend." Jin sighed as he went into the bamboo forest with his backpack. He knew the chance of him dying in the second round was extremely high since nothing much has changed but he needed to seek for any advantages and check the surroundings as Ming suggested before the White Tiger finds him once more.

"If Ming was being cryptic, he could mean that was when the tiger will appear but if he was blatant with his clues...then that was quite a useless clue." Jin thought to himself as he took out his shirt to squeeze whatever water remained in there so it would be more comfortable to run around with it.

He assumed both the worst and the best. By being optimistic and if Jin was not mistaken, he probably had a few more hours before the White Tiger would appear to hunt him down. Perhaps, he might never encounter the White Tiger until he is ready to fight! But one thing was for sure. Hiding would not give him any advantage at all since he was now a vulnerable prey instead of the venerable hunter. The worst? The tiger can appear at any time, anywhere. But as he ventured around the bamboo forest for half an hour, Jin realised something stupid.

He did not know where he was going as he was blindly walking around without any useful landmarks. That was when he tried to crack his brain to remember what Ming had taught him about woodland survival. He figured that was what Ming wanted him to do in the first place.

Setting up Basha tent, hiking through the forest and now leaving him alone in the bamboo forest with just his sword and that damned backpack. Jin had been surrounded with tremendous help ever since he received the System and while he did have close encounters with various monsters or even enemies in the real world, there was not much of a real threat with the System protecting him.

Jin guessed Ming wanted him to fend for himself so that Jin could push himself to the limit. It was definitely not impossible to defeat the White Tiger just...a matter of how (but also when).

"ARGGGHH! No matter how I think, I still cannot see myself defeating the beast!!" Jin shouted out loud while scratching his head after brainstorming for some time. A few birds flew away from the sudden anger outburst he made.

Very soon afterwards, he heard some rumbling noises from afar. Only then did Jin realise how much he fucked up. So, he quickly climbed up the largest bamboo he could find and as high as his strength permitted, hoping the White Tiger would not sniff him out that soon after his blunder. But as 'promising' as the plan sounded, the bamboo bent and broke from his weight causing Jin to suffer a terrible fall. That was when he heard a low growl emanating from behind him.

Jin scanned the area in a panicked state as he struggled after biting his tongue in order to tolerate the pain from fall. (Else he would be giving away his location away from shouting once more.) But it was too late when he felt something sticky dropping on to him.

As if the tiger had the intelligence of a human, Jin could swear it smirked at him before aiming for Jin's neck. The prey had lost its consciousness once more.

Jin received an unpleasant awakening by the splashing of water on his face though this time, he also hit a boulder sieve which allowed him to stop being carried further down the river. Jin got up and observed the surroundings to make sure it was the right part of the bamboo forest he was moving to. (There was no more Ming to beckon him forward.)

Jin sighed as he knew he'd have to go through the entire process all over again. In the meantime, he carefully touched his neck since there was still the lingering edgy pain from the White Tiger's bite. The more he traced his neck along with the pain, Jin believed that he could feel some indentations being left at his throat. However, it was just the phantom pain he was experiencing from his past death.

"Urgh, I'm certain it's purposely aiming for my head. Now it feels all sore." Jin grumbled as he looked at the bamboo forest with fear instilled into him. "I need to make some progress or else, this nightmare will only repeat over and over," Jin told himself as he sliced a large bamboo down.

There were no marks or signs to indicate where he went and he needed something to mark whether he had been at a location before. Hence, Jin cut the bamboo into pieces. He found some long leaf bushes and a bunch of bright, colourful flowers.

After which he tied the bamboo 'cups' to hold a flower or two and placed it on bamboo branch nodes around his height. That way Jin would know if he was going in circles. If he deviated from a straight path, he would change the colour of the flower. Sadly, he was not able to place any items in his backpack.

Though Ming repeatedly told him not to open it up, curiosity made his fingers feel rather itchy, but the backpack would not budge under any circumstances. After trying for five minutes, Jin gave up the attempt and used his shirt as a temporary knapsack to hold the marking items. There were some inconveniences, but Jin managed to handle it well enough...until he found something out of the norm.

From a glance, it appeared he had encountered an abandoned Chinese temple inside the forest. Jin knew there was a chance the White Tiger might be in there, but he had to find out for sure. If there were any useful items inside or if Jin could create an advantage using this particular Chinese temple, it would be foolish to ignore it.

He placed the items he was using as markers down, wore his shirt and carried his backpack around in case of thieves. Jin read enough books with stupid protagonists who suddenly found the items they were supposed to deliver stolen only because they did not pay enough attention or simply left them in someone else's care. However, Jin could sympathise with them because he also found it very tempting to leave the backpack alone for a short while so that he could survey the area and be faster and stealthier at the same time.

He first went around the temple, checking for any openings to avoid entering from the front door and noticed some broken windows and even holes in the walls. Vines, plants and insects were also plentiful indicating the temple had been abandoned for quite a long time.

The metal, presumably copper, used for the temple's pillar supports turned rusty and had a greenish mould, but otherwise, it looked sturdy enough. He had feared entering the temple may have been a trap and he had no desire to experience being crushed under it. If it was on the verge of collapsing, he wanted to take the time to notice it. Before long, he found an unlocked backdoor and decided to enter

with his wakizashi unsheathed. (He wanted to bring Bam out but holding the long katana indoors for close quarters defence might not be very feasible.)

The door creaked loudly due to the rusty hinges so Jin opened it only enough for him to enter and he purposely kept the door open by putting a rock he found near the temple grounds. The appliances and the design of the room revealed that Jin entered the kitchen. The first thing he did was to look for any potential kitchen equipment such as knives being left around.

He figured it would be better to have more weapons on him in case he needed them. To his surprise, he found choppers, knives, cutting boards, pots and even useable plates. He tried checking the containers in the kitchen too, but most of them were filled with rodents which did give him quite a scare when opening them.

However, there was one thing that made him very happy. At first, he was unsure, but the smell of it was very familiar. So he decided to take a spoonful and place it in a pan. After which, he went back to the temple grounds to find a few dry sticks to practice the bushcraft Ming taught him. It took him some time to get it right and the dry sticks eventually lit up. That was when he poured the liquid on to the burning fire.

"Yes!!" Jin raised his fist up as a sign of achievement. The fire burned brighter and fiercer from the liquid. Jin had miraculously found a container urn full of cooking oil. Now, this was a game changer. With this, he could try to turn the temple grounds into a hunting ground. Jin got extremely excited about the increased prospect of him surviving the White Tiger's onslaught, but he reminded himself to remain calm and continued to check on the rest of the temple to make sure it was indeed free from any other predators.

"This temple is huge! It does not look that big from the outside even after scouting the outside perimeters for a round!" Jin was curious if this was some magic at work since he got the perception that it was small from the outside, but it appeared far more spacious on the inside. When he reached the main hall, a giant statue greeted him. Jin was relieved to find no one there but Bodhisattva himself.

He took some time admiring the dusty broken statue before bowing three times as an apology in advance. "I am sorry Venerable Buddha. I desperately want to survive this time around." Jin placed his hands together and offered a small prayer of gratitude. After which, he went to scavenge the cabinets in the main hall to find anything that could be used against the White Tiger.

"Candles...matchsticks! This will be very useful. Okay, incense paper...joss sticks..." Jin spoke to himself as he found a bountiful amount of prayer supplies in the cabinets. They were naturally dusty and the offering papers had already turned yellow, but they were definitely still usable. What was even more delightful was that he found more bottles of oil.

He was thankful they used those to fuel the oil pot for followers to lit their joss sticks. After which, he checked the other rooms in the temple and incidentally found a bunk room which he had no qualms raiding. There was not much except for books, a few miniature statues for meditation purposes, a few sets of praying beads and even sets of monk clothes in different sizes.

"Nothing much...wait...if there are books...Perhaps I can find something useful on the White Tiger!" Jin suddenly got an epiphany and decided it should be worth it to spend some time to check if there were any books on such a legendary monster.

He was not expecting much but if what Ming said was true, that the forest might be his ally, the temple should have something to do pertaining to that issue. Besides, who in the right mind would put a temple in the middle of a bamboo forest for no reason? For the serenity of the mind with a White Tiger as its hunting grounds? Impossible.

Unfortunately, the more Jin searched for such a book, the more reality disappointed him...until he accidentally fiddled with a cupboard in the bunk room when he found a part of a folded monk's attire stuck to it. Jin tried to pull on it but to no avail.

He became slightly suspicious.

Therefore, he took his wakizashi and placed it at the corner where the attire got stuck and used what little strength he had to rip it open. To his surprise, he found a classic revolver with six ruby jewel coated bullets. Even more peculiar was that the revolver had an insignia of the Yin Yang circle on the handle. Jin picked it up and inspected the barrel cylinder to find another six more of those jewel looking bullets in it.

Jin felt reassured that this temple was indeed the ally he was looking for. He first unloaded the revolver and checked whether its trigger and hammer of the revolver were still in working condition.

Click Click

Those sounds seemed heavenly to Jin's ears after he pressed on the trigger. He hastily loaded up the bullets and stuffed them behind his pants. Thankfully, his backpack at the very least had visible side pockets which he used to place the remaining Ruby bullets for the time being. After which, he closed the door of the bunk and ransacked the entire place. He was not going to leave any stone unturned before he moved on.

It was hard work and Jin's haul was amazing. He found a second revolver only this one was filled with Aquamarine jewel bullets instead as well as a priest staff. He initially thought it was just an ordinary priest staff which it turned out to be something similar to a sword cane. A Sword Staff perhaps? Jin tried to pull it when he saw the staff consisted of attachments. The good thing was that the sword was still in good condition and it could prove useful.

What was more surprising was the book he managed to find hidden under rolls of bed sheets as it was exactly the thing he had been wishing for when he first saw the revolver. It was a Demon Exorcist Manual. Jin looked at the book with whatever little sunlight left shining through the bunk room. After some quick flipping, he got stuck on a page depicting an image of a familiar looking enemy. The whole section was dedicated to the White Tiger of the West. To these 'monks' the White Tiger was just another Demon instead of a legendary monster.

Most legends were created from some form of truth and in their eyes, the White Tiger was merely another sort of demon instead of the legendary protector Jin knew him as. It would prove very useful since it listed the potential weakness of the White Tiger.

The words in the manual were cursive and in traditional form, making it hard for Jin to decipher the entire text in a glance. But he learned that the White Tiger hated fire and the Ruby Jewel coated bullets that he had found were being referred to as Origin Ruby Fire Bullets in the book. Jin truly struck gold with all that persistent raiding. The manual said that the Ruby Fire bullets were extremely effective against the White Tiger. However, it was recommended to use the bullets wisely since a White Tiger could temporarily raise its resistance after repeated attacks.

"So...use fire until he becomes immune to fire and after which utilise the ruby jewel bullets and it should be a near instant kill." Jin thought to himself as he flipped through the books and saw that the Azure Dragon of the East (東方青龍 Dong Fang Qing Long/Seiryuu), the Vermillion Phoenix of the South (南方朱雀 Nan Fang Zhu Que/ Suzaku) and the Black Turtle of the North (北方玄武 Bei Fang Xuan Wu/Genbu) were listed in the book too. He decided to keep the book for future references in a Demon Exorcist sling bag which he had scavenged and was filled with various tools like a compass, a water flask etc. He also found a belt with a holster that allowed him to keep the revolver, which made it easier to carry it around.

"Now, time to prepare some traps for that stupid oversized cat!" Jin rubbed his nose in anticipation as he carried the pieces of equipment to the main temple hall.

Chapter 378 White Monster - Part 3

It took Jin hours as he strained his eyes and body to prepare everything under cover of darkness. As he placed the traps, he already planned for the next trap should one failed or the other was skipped.

Jin did not rummage through the abandoned temple for fun, and with the experience of a Dungeon Maker, the generation and execution of ideas was smooth which lead him to believe that he was successful creating the traps to the best of his abilities. However, all this could not have been done if not for the partial moonlight shining through the forest to illuminate the place, else Jin doubted he could do anything until the next day.

He was not very sure if he was going to make it through this particular 'life', but at the very least, he had marked the locations from the entrance of the bamboo forest via the river and remembered specific landmarks to reach this particular temple again.

Though one thing was still uncertain. Jin had no idea, if his death would result in elements of the forest being reset through something like a Time Reversal or if things would continue as if he was going through Reincarnation. There were pros and cons for both possibilities and Jin would only learn this if he could somehow survive this particular round against the White Tiger.

The former would be a hassle since he would have to find the particular temple again. All his previous work with marking the route would be pointless. If Ming was extra mean, he could even make the temple move to a different place each time he died since this was his 'dungeon instance'.

Jin hoped that at the very least, the items would not be shuffled around so that he could be more efficient in searching and preparing the traps again. Meanwhile, the latter of reincarnation meant that

whatever damage he inflicted onto the White Tiger, stayed on the White Tiger. That way, the Tiger could potentially be worn out from all injuries, permitting Jin to go for a smooth final kill strike.

But that was assuming the White Tiger did not have any regeneration trait. The bad thing about reincarnation was also that the items and traps would have been used against the White Tiger and it might be hard for Jin to find those items again in this desolate bamboo forest. Even worse was the possibility if the White Tiger was intelligent enough to remember his tricks and forcing Jin to invent new traps every time he fought against the White Beast.

Therefore, Jin could only pray that he manages to kill the White Tiger without dying so that he would not need to worry any of those unnecessary random thoughts. Right now, all of those did not matter. Tired and hungry from all the preparation Jin, the only consolation he could give himself was that he was still 'alive' for so long and that the White Tiger had not found him yet.

"It will be stupid to fight in the darkness." Jin thought to himself as he went back to the Temple's bunk room and barricaded both the door and windows with bed frames before using the chance to sleep somewhat peacefully so he could recover from the fatigue he accrued.

When Jin woke up the next day, he slowly removed the bed frame and tactfully checked his surroundings before heading to the Temple backyard. He remembered seeing a well when he was scouting and required some water after being thirsty the entire night.

Along the way, Jin plucked a few leaves from the bamboo trees that contained droplets of morning dew so that he could suck on it to quench his thirst temporarily. After which, he reached the backyard only to find the well in poor shabby condition. The well's handle was broken and the rope rotten with the passage of time. Jin sighed as he took a pebble and threw it down the well to check if there were any sounds of water since he was unable to determine the depth of the well.

If not, it would be a waste of effort trying to reach the bottom only to find out that there was nothing. Conservation of his strength was his utmost priority before the fight against the White Tiger of the West.

To his expectations, the pebble hit rock bottom without a single sound of water splashing as he heard the pebble rolled and echoed back loudly. No doubt, Jin cursed a little.

However, a part of him felt like exploring that well too since he now knew this temple was not an ordinary one at all. But on second thought, Jin should focus getting ready to fight the White Tiger before his body got any weaker. "Perhaps, I can escape into this well, if things take a turn for the worse." Jin laughed at himself before surveying the area, desperate to quench his thirst.

Only then, it struck him. There was actually water all around him since he was after all in a BAMBOO forest. Jin had nearly forgotten about that as he quickly went towards a bunch of bamboo trees and cut them at the side.

Without question, water was slowly dripping down in abundance that Jin brought it up above his mouth and drank it greedily. After a tree or two, he saw a few ripe bamboo shoots for the picking. "Better to go in with a stomach filled than a hungry one," Jin told himself again happily as he dug them out from the soil, rubbed the dirt away and proceeded to eat them raw.

It was a little hard to bite and chew through the raw, fresh shoots so he used his Wakizashi to cut them into smaller pieces and had an easier time eating while enjoying the scenery for the moment. Jin remembered how terribly busy he was for the past few weeks and appreciated this gentle pace even though he was still on a constant lookout for the White Tiger.

Upon finishing one last bamboo shoot, Jin grabbed another bamboo tree and drank it posthaste since he needed more water to clean his palate due to his eating habits. But if other people were to notice Jin's way of eating in the forest, they might say that he was on his way to becoming a true 'Panda' cultivator.

Wiping his mouth from all the juicy bamboo water and crunchy bamboo shoots, Jin felt a lot more energised to fight against the White Tiger. Yet before that, he double checked the traps and familiarised himself with the temple grounds once more by practising where the traps were. (It would be a shame if Jin died by his very own trap.)

When he felt he was ready, the weather suddenly turned for the worse almost immediately, as if the forest itself wanted Jin to lose. Dark clouds covered the skies, and a heavy gale blew through the forest and the abandoned temple. Still, Jin did not hesitate as he went to the abandoned temple and took a small portable gong, whacking it as hard as he could in the open temple grounds.

The sound of the gong echoed throughout the forest and in no time, the White Tiger appeared with a hunger that only consuming Jin could satiate it. He gulped his saliva in as he moved towards the gong which was now attached in front of Jin's chest, acting as an improvised armour. After which, Jin lighted up the stick he used to whack the gong. It was wrapped with straps of cloth and doused in oil in advance which startled the White Tiger a little.

GONNGG GONNGG* Jin hit the gong with his burning, hot wooden stick while holding his katana on the other hand. "Come! What are you waiting for, you oversized cat?! Let's get this over and done with! At the end of this one of us will have a meal for the night... and I shall enjoy some juicy thigh meat!" Jin shouted, provoking the White Tiger to the best of his ability.

Needless to say, the White Tiger of the West took the bait and went forward. However, being the king of the forest, the White Tiger had no previous experience nor encountered the sort of traps that Jin made.

Multiple small depressions were dug around the temple grounds, similar to a porthole on the road which he spent all night creating with the tools he found in the temple hall. Within those depressions, he carved sharp bamboo stakes and stuck them in there. After which, he used the large prayer papers to cover the small depressions and masked it with some dirt and soil. Jin purposely left a small colourful edge of the prayer paper to remind and mark that there was a trap there.

Tigers did not have the colour vision like humans so he was betting on the same applying for the White Tiger of the West. True enough, as the tiger was charging forward, it accidentally stepped into a depression and the stakes pierced him. Jin who had seen this coming was already taking advantage of the White Tiger's stumble to attack it.

However, unlike its paws, the fur of the White Tiger was similar to strands of metal. Bam in Katana form did not break nor slice the creature, causing it to only clash with the strands but hence Jin's slash did not connect.

Despite that, Jin was quick to react as he had prepared for something like this to happen. After all the White Tiger of the West was infamous for possessing and wielding the element of Metal, one of the Five basic Elements noted in China. That was why the Demon Monk Exorcists' manual recommended Fire as the overcoming element against the White Tiger.

Jin whacked the gong on his chest as hard as he could, momentarily stunning the White Tiger, allowing him a second try by piercing the tiger with his Katana. What's more was that Jin had purposely heated his katana under the influence of oil and charcoal stones he had found in the Temple kitchen oven.

While he was checking on his traps, Jin began heated his katana in the combination of oil and charcoal stones so that it could potentially be able to inflict some damage with the element of fire (Heat) before it cooled back to normal room temperature.

The White Tiger growled in pain and used his body to perform a slight twirl to slam against Jin with it, spiralling him towards the temple doors which was more than tens of metres away. Instead of running towards his prey, the White Tiger removed his paw away from the trap and performed a very terrifying leap towards Jin in order to avoid the other possible traps on the ground.

Jin tried to recover as fast as he could, but the pain was almost paralysing him from doing anything. "Ah, if only I could just die, this would all be over..." Part of Jin felt that way, but the other half of him knew that it would never end unless he quit his state of meditation and never cultivate again. Fortunately, the tiger slammed him at towards a favourable place, where Jin was right beside a trap trigger. Hence, he took his wakizashi out and pointed at the direction of the leaping tiger.

The White Tiger did not care about a single blade edge pointed at it. It was after all the embodiment of metal. Its metallic steel fur would no doubt block the attack and the White Tiger would make sure that he chewed on the bones of this insolent prey till they break into many pieces.

"Heh, sucker. This is the hardest trap I have for you in store." Jin smiled as he slammed his wakizashi down as hard as he could on the trigger rope, causing the trap to activate. With no time to run away from the impending pounce, Jin hoped that the trap would do the trick.

And it did.

A Buddhist prayer urn filled with incense ashes swung from within the temple and smashed onto the white tiger as it was about to strike Jin. The Urn broke into pieces upon contact which caused the tiger to be knocked down and the ashes created a cloud of billowing smoke, allowing the powdery residue of incense sticks to hide Jin's next move as he took the chance... to run into the temple the moment he noticed the tiger fell to the ground.

The tiger tried to growl but it coughed from the inhalation of incense ash. Not to mention the foreign object that hit it gave it a very terrible headache in return. The White Tiger took some time to recover from the daze and naturally moved back to get away from the ash cloud that irritated its breathing and vision.

But what the tiger did not expect was that the wooden steps leading to the temple door were booby trapped too. Jin had noticed the shoddy condition of the wooden temple steps after years of abandonment but still decided to utilise the temple as much as he and time could permit.

He placed more of those sharpened bamboo stakes and stuck them deep to the ground with much difficulty. (as he had to ensure that the steps did not look like it was being meddled by him since Jin was not sure how smart the White Tiger was.)

In the attempt to tamper the wooden steps, Jin guessed that he did the trap to the point that it looked like a normal hand pressure was sufficient to break it. To make things even more complicated, he poured some oil on the wooden steps to make sure they were slippery enough. The trap was not designed to kill but to hinder the White Tiger's movement while Jin prepared the next upcoming trap in the main temple. (But if it did kill the tiger, that would definitely be a bonus.)

Without question, the tiger who visually handicapped from the incense ashes and driven by instinct, made it fall into that trap which it could have normally avoided given its acute perception. The wooden platforms broke upon the White Tiger's backward steps, and some of the bamboo stakes managed to partially pierce into the tibial muscles of the hind legs.

"Time for Phase 2..." Jin covered his face with a wrapped cloth that was hanging on his neck so he would not inhale the ashes and used all his strength to close the front temple doors and locked it with a large wooden security bar.

Chapter 379 White Monster - Final

There was no mistake, the White Tiger of the West was undeniably furious. It let out an angry roar that made Jin shivered all over. The slope did not injure it as much as Jin had hoped, but it did plenty considering that the tiger would be agitated. When he heard it banging on the doors, he prayed that everything in the next few minutes would go as planned.

The wooden security bar cracked after its first strike and Jin could feel the murderous gaze through the slight opening it created. Right now, it was no longer merely about acquiring some food. The White Tiger was going to kill him to quench its frustration that a tiny existence had not only dared to fight against it but was even able to injure the supreme being, the undisrupted ruler of this serene bamboo forest.

In the meantime, his adrenaline rush was short lived. Unlike when he had cultivation, the injuries Jin incurred from the knockback began to hurt. However, Jin knew he had to bear with the excruciating pain even though he felt that his lower back could give out at any moment if he continued to fight against the white monster.

"Heh, it's too late for regrets. It's kill or be killed again." Jin repeated this phrase in his head like a mantra. It helped to reduce his anxiety and to keep himself sane by reminding himself why he was still enduring in this fight. The Tiger's gaze disappeared but within a flash, the entire door splintered open. Once again, Jin saw the majestic figure that stood at the gates of the once sacred ground.

The White Tiger roared once more as a challenge, only this time Jin stood unwavering, holding his wakizashi pointing at his enemy with foolish courage and a lotus glass lamp lantern burning quietly on his hand. The white beast found the smell of the temple hall a little unsettling but it cared more about the prey in front of it. As long as he had the opportunity to strike a proper swipe against his cunning

prey, he did not mind the wounds inflicted nor this particular disturbing unnatural place of rotten wood, broken stones and rusty metal.

Learning from the mistakes of the past, the tiger did not charge immediately nor decided to pounce. Instead, it began to prowl around the great hall even though Jin remained at the centre of the hall armed with that puny metal poking stick and a small glowing spark. The White Tiger was naturally afraid of the fire yet at the same time fascinated with it. Because whenever there was a twinkle of burning light, it meant that food was around.

But even so, it felt that Jin needed to try harder to scare it with a more substantial source of fire. Not only that, the White Tiger being an intelligent sentient being, it was looking out for those weird surprises this nasty prey had prepared. However, it seemed unable to find any kind of trap.

The only thing it noticed was that the ground was covered with some sort of liquid, but his prey was standing there a little soaked as well so the White Tiger believed there should not be any harm about it. Yet, it did not stop lurking. The White Tiger of the West wanted to instil fear to that weird monkey looking prey and at the same time, trying to adapt itself to the injuries it incurred.

Yes, unfortunately, the weird monkey's long metal stick was still stuck in his lower right shoulder blade. It was a little painful to move about but the White Tiger did not bother too much for now since it had no means to remove it. Additionally, the injury it received recently from falling into the steps was not drastic enough to hinder its movement. But unlike other creatures who would cower soon after receiving such injuries, the White Tiger relished in the hunt for such a troublesome creature.

Seeing that the White Tiger was taking its time, Jin also understood what it was doing. Psychologically speaking, it was wearing Jin out from the constant vigilance. Jin also noticed that the White's movements appeared a bit clumsy at first probably due to the injuries it had suffered... until the recent round of prowling where its movements seemed more fluid. But a half intelligent monster was easier to trick than a simple one.

Knowing that right beside his feet was the Priest Staff with a sword blade hidden inside, Jin purposely threw his wakizashi at the White Tiger, aiming to provoke him. But before doing so, he changed into a crouching position so that Jin had a more natural reach towards the Priest Staff. The White Tiger dodged it immediately and went for the counter attack just as Jin suspected. That was when he used the staff to block the tiger's advance with one hand.

Needlessly to say, the block was futile as the tiger had its mouth chewing at the staff and injuring Jin's left hand. However, he did not panic and instead Jin took the chance to thrash the lotus glass lamp at the White Tiger's face. The oil splattered all around its face and the glass pieces forced the tiger to close its eyes. Jin then pulled the sword blade from the side of the staff and used whatever strength he had left to plunge it in the throat area.

As compared to the Katana Jin used previously, the sword from the Priest staff slid into the Tiger's neck quite smoothly, without any resistance. The White Tiger in retaliation bit at Jin's hand which he was using to block with the priest staff and tore it off immediately.

"ARGFGGGHHHHHHHHHHHHHH, FUUU- " Jin attempted to convert all the pain he was experiencing and focused it as strength to drag the priest sword closer to him, leading to an open wound at the Tiger's throat. (Too bad, it did not hit the vital arteries)

This attack forced the White Tiger to fall back a little before Jin had the chance to stab it again with the Priest Sword Blade. But it indirectly gave Jin the needed space to move backwards a little too to grab onto a rope which he prepared beforehand. Jin, with his head starting to get heavy, from the loss of his left arm (especially with the substantial amount of blood loss), pulled the rope, resulting one of the temple's burning torch stands to drop onto the floor.

The burning torch was the ignition tool to set alight the entire main hall since Jin had consciously soaked the pillars, ground and even himself to be on fire. Stupid idea but Jin had to risk everything. For an intelligent being like the White Tiger, Jin could not risk making it think that the whole hall was a trap. (although, he still felt a little weird that the tiger was able to walk normally on a ground filled with oil while Jin had to jump, slide and wiggle with his injuries through the oil soaked ground to reach the centre of the temple hall to use his trap.)

The fire spread wildly in all directions and like a circus show, everything turned into flames almost immediately. The Tiger now staggered by the wound on the throat was trapped in the burning temple halls. It figured this was the last ditch attempt by the monkey and grinned. The stupid monkey would surely die from anger if it knew that as long as it tolerated the fire long enough, it would be only the monkey dying, not him.

Hence, the tiger decided to walk towards the monkey despite the burning hall. As long as the White Tiger had a meal, it would have the opportunity to recover its wounds sufficiently before the fire could finish him off. Jin, on the other hand, was not moving anymore as he felt exceptionally frail. His arm torn off, probably a few broken rib bones and the fire was quickly coming towards them.

"Ah...its really do or die now. C'mon kitty...quick...do your move." Jin whispered with a very faint breath as he tried to keep himself conscious to the best of his abilities.

The White Tiger moved towards Jin with relief while he observed the monkey not being able to do anything else but to bleed to his demise quietly. Part of him wanted to keep its distance in case the crafty monkey had some last surprise, yet the situation and its own pride as the king of the region did not allow him to watch a prey die like that. Especially when it made him sustained that many injuries.

Because of the wound at its neck, the White Tiger did not have the strength to bite. So it decided to go for the most tender, delicate part of his prey, the abdominal area. Hence, the White Tiger used its paw to move the gong Jin was using as an improvised armour away from his abdominal area. But as it to pull the gong away to feast on the dying prey's stomach, it realised that Jin's hand was hiding beneath the cymbal with a short, curved metal stick.

"BANG BANG BANG!" The rounds were mercilessly fired from the revolver Jin had found. "I was hoping to do the fire resistance bit first as recommended by the manual, then follow up with the Origin Ruby Fire bullets. But with the circumstances at hand, let's just hope that it will be enough or the reverse order is also fine." The bullets went through the White Tiger's neck area, the mandible and its torso. With every bullet that exited out of the tiger's body, a jet stream of fire followed out of the White Tiger's body.

The White tiger immediately fell onto Jin's body, which he yelled in pain yet again. But he did not believe this White tiger will die just like that.

Jin moved his hand around to ensure that the revolver's barrel was aiming at the Tiger's body before he fired another two more shots. Another two jetstreams of fire flew out of the body once more and Jin could see the eyes of the White Tiger dropped a tear of regret before it slowly turned lifeless.

He did it.

Jin finally killed the White Tiger, but he was stuck under the spiritless corpse of the beast and had no strength to pull himself through. "Ahhh..I guess I will try again next time round." Jin smiled to himself as he pulled the gun out between the beast corpse and his body. He then took a breather before putting it at his head. The last bullet was for himself since he'd rather die a quick death rather than a slow suffocating one in this fiery pit.

"I hope the flames do you well, White Tiger. You have been a pain in the ass and a blast too." Jin muttered as he took the courage to pull the trigger on the revolver. "BANG!" A Jetstream of flames appeared from the other side of his skull.

...And he came back awake to the Dungeon Maker's cultivation room with the sludge not being sucked in by the system but whirling around him. Even while a little surprised, he returned back to the real world from the meditation as he felt an extraordinary amount of chi being circulated around him via the sludge. That was when he looked down to realise that his body was more toned than ever and his chi circuits felt very refreshed.

"Congratulations User, you have advanced to Grade 8 in less than a day. Although total time compression achieved within this cultivation room was approximately three months." The System stated and was especially delighted with Jin's new progression.

"White Tiger of the West huh...maybe...just maybe I can make you more than just a figment of my imagination. I look forward to you paying off the arm you took from me." Jin thought to himself as he lay down on the ground with relief after the constant exasperation.

Chapter 380 Black Sludge

"Eh System...why are you not absorbing the sludge? I thought it is important for your research?" Jin asked as he saw a vast amount of sludge swirling above him.

"The System has already accumulated more than 600 litres of sludge from the User's body. It could be considered a miracle that User is still alive and well. What puzzles the System is your ability to produce sludge. Generally, Cultivation removes impurities from the body, but the User's ability to do so is somehow fundamentally different. The exact reason for this is still being investigated." The System stated as Yun entered with a Grade 8 Reward Box at the command the System, only to be frightened by the swirling sludge above her.

"System why are you not sucking this sludge away?" Yun asked in a slightly disgusted tone. She still vividly remembered how much trouble this sludge gave her back when Jin cultivated in his house before it was controlled by the System. Even the plumbers she had called, was overwhelmed by the massive amount of sludge which clogged the house's utilities. They had to return to their workshop to bring some heavy duty equipment in order to remove the sludge.

"System is unable to. System tried to vacuum the sludge but it continues to swirl above User ever since User had achieved Grade 8." The System replied promptly and thanked Yun for coming quickly. "A likely reason based on what the System had analysed was due to the excessively high amount of User's chi stored in the sludge. Previous samples did not have such property." The System added which made Jin curious.

"Chi in the sludge?" Jin reiterated. If what the System was telling is true, there should be a way for him to interact with the sludge. He promptly tried out if he could command the swirling sludge in front of him. True enough, at his behest, the black sludge turned into a rotating sphere around Jin's fingertips.

...Just a very big...massive, vastly large sphere.

"Huh, I did not think this would actually work. It somehow feels like it's reacting to me naturally." Jin remarked and the System stated that it was not mentioned within Jin's cultivation manual. There was no explanation for why Jin seemed to be able to control his sludge. It was something out of the norm, and at this point, both the System and Jin could only suspect that the spiritual union had something to do with it.

"But wait, he had been producing this sludge thing ever since he started cultivating the Nineteen Astral Lazy Panda form. I honestly do not think it has something to do with the spiritual union part... Well, maybe not entirely." Yun commented and the System paused for a while before concurring.

"Well there is nothing to gain from wondering where it came from, we should focus more on what it is able to do. Shouldn't we start with some experiments to find out more about it?" Colonel Ayse appeared out of the blue and closely watched Jin holding onto the sphere.

Without a proper place to run the labs, Jin and Qiu Yue had temporarily placed Ayse and the Humanoid Researchers in one of the rooms of the Dungeon Maker instead of the World of Sanctum instance. There were experiments and sensitive equipment that required the interference of the System to prevent anything from going awry. Her knowledge for the past war operations was much appreciated and the results encouraged Jin to value her highly. Even the Cultivation room had received some minor input from Ayse allowing the System to improve the suction of the sludge.

"Erm...that sounds reasonable. I hope you don't plan to try anything life threatening." Jin replied as he subconsciously thought of the White Tiger of the West when he mentioned 'life threatening'. Suddenly the sludge sphere at the tips of his fingers started to restructure themselves and in the blink of an eye turned into the shape of tiger. The sludge even had a step further and changed its colour from black to white in order to portray Jin's image of the White Tiger of the West.

"Woah woah woah?! What was that? HOW did you do that? Quick, tell me everything you just did, so that we can record and investigate this properly." Ayse's desire to study Jin's new ability flared up.

Meanwhile, Yun continued to be surprised to see a live white tiger appear out of nowhere. Not caring for all the eyes on it, the tiger started licking its paws. When it turned its head towards Jin, it quietly lowered its stance and seemingly bowed towards him. Jin was also shocked as the tiger did all of these actions by its own volition. He slowly tried to touch the fur.

"The fur...the menacing blue eyes... even its size...it's all the same," Jin whispered to himself, and the girls looked at him curiously as they also tried to touch the docile white tiger that was in front of them. Unlike its affection to Jin, the White Tiger did not seem to enjoy the ladies' touch a single bit. After it tolerating for a few strokes, the White Tiger got up and distanced itself from the girls.

"What do you mean 'the same'? Have you seen this Tiger before?" Yun had caught what he said and asked Jin about it.

"Yeah, fiction books hahaha. I guess I accidentally thought about it." Jin replied with a half truth as he decided to try something else. Just as before, the white tiger's silhouette began to change, turning into a human. The figure was none other than Yun. But in contrast with the beast, the details on the Yun look alike sludge were not as implicit as the White Tiger.

"Hmmm...from what I can deduce, just a mere inference." Ayse looked as she began to touch the Yun look alike sludge form. "This sludge bends at the will of the user and is probably using the user...erm I'm starting to sound like the System. Jin, I mean. Anyways. It seems to use Jin's memories to replicate what Jin had seen. From what I deduced from his answer, it also seems to have the same 'feel'. That's two of the five senses down. We do not know if the sludge could replicate what Jin had heard, tasted or smelled before. Maybe, it's not just the five senses and perhaps a sixth sense could be at play too? Who knows? "

"That is why this Yun although imperfect, looks more or less like her but ...you see here Jin? It's too hard." Ayse demonstrated while squeezing the shoulders of the sludge in Yun form. Ayse then picked Jin's hand, pushed it towards Yun's shoulders and later guided his hand down to her waist. She even assisted him to squeeze it. "Feel, how soft and flabby is it?" Ayse teased Yun.

Almost immediately, the chest and waist of the sludge in Yun form took shape and Ayse nodded her head with glee. Her deductions were correct but it left Jin very embarrassed though Yun was indifferent to his actions. "You just had to let her do that?" Yun glared at him momentarily and Jin quickly apologised, which made Ayse laugh hysterically.

"Now, I wonder how resistant this particular sludge is. Looks will not matter if it does not prove to be durable in a fight. Let's test it out!" Ayse asked the System for a blunt club and it obliged. She swiftly gave a good swing towards the sludge and it blocked almost instantly. From its hands, it formed a large cleaver and proceeded to attack the unprepared Ayse ...until Jin controlled it to stop without any words or actions but by involuntarily wishing for her to stay unharmed. Picking up on this, the Yun Sludge Clone redirected her attack to avoid fatal injury.

"Ow ow ow. Guess that's another mystery solved. You can control it without the need for words or hand signals. It should be like a perfect servant for you." Ayse concluded as Yun walked towards her and healed her abdominal wounds inflicted by the sludge.

"Even the fighting style is exactly what I saw Yun executed," Jin said out loud as he walked closer to the sludge. It turned back to a rotary sphere but he also noticed that the chi within it had reduced. "I wonder if I can produce more of this?" Jin went into half of his cultivation stance, a standing posture to recover his chi even faster from his main dantian.

True enough, his upper chest began to sweat out a small amount of sludge and it joined the rotary sphere. Jin was amazed by it and tried to keep it in his storage ring, which worked perfectly. "Do you mind giving me a part of it to study later, Master?" Ayse now all fit from Yun's healing asked Jin.

"No, I don't mind. Whether it listens to you or not is another thing. But I believe there is a lot of potential in this new power. I hope you don't mind coming up with a list of experiments or questions so I can try to learn more about it based on your possible theories?" Jin asked as he gave Ayse the first official task for the researchers of the 'Dungeon Lab'. He also provided her with a sample after filling some in a container.

"It will definitely keep me and my team a little occupied. Besides we are getting a little frustrated from only having to redesign the Sandroku Golems. This will be a good brainteaser for the team. I will study your sludge later, to see if I can find other uses." Ayse explained. A sudden thought occurred to Jin. Something very important too.

"Do you mind spending some time looking at Mechataur, too? Maybe find some way to collaborate with Niu Lang, the pilot, and get Mechataur up and running again." Jin ordered Ayse.

"More mechs? You think I am what? A Mech designer?" Ayse asked reluctantly as she folded her hands. She seemed way more interested in researching the sludge compared to the robots.

"Mech designer? With your explicit knowledge of lost tech, it would be more accurate to refer to you as an inventor of mass killing weapons. I can only safely entrust the task to such a genius as yourself to accomplish this crucially vital task!" Jin tried to praise her and though it seemed a bit over the top towards the end, Ayse surprisingly took the hook, line and sinker. She happily went off and told Jin not to forget about building a proper lab for her and her 'slaves'. (Jin did make sure that the Elves received equal treatment as Ayse although she always seemed to 'conveniently' forget that they were now standing on the same platform together.)

"Anyways...it seems we dragged the topic a little, here is your reward box for Grade 8." Yun presented it to him as she had already removed the Griffin seal from the box. Jin opened it up and became flabbergasted from the revelation of the box's contents.

"These are..." Jin picked them up and held them in his hands. It was the exact colour and design of what he had used in his state of subconsciousness. The Origin Ruby Fire bullets. There was no revolver but rather a Colt 1911 pistol with the very same Ying Yang sign. Jin noticed that a manual was in it too, along with a few maps.

"...Your grandfather was a Monster Slayer, but to be more particularly, a demon exorcist." Yun elaborated as she knelt down and looked over the contents. Jin promptly looked at Yun at dismay. Did she suddenly regain her memories?

"Oh...card." Jin got all worked up for nothing when he realised she was reading it from a card which came from none other than Grandma Yuan. Yun passed the card to him and informed him that he

should contact Grandma Yuan soon as stated on the card when Yun consolidated the contents of this box for Jin.

"But aren't monsters more or less controlled in the wild by the army??" Jin asked and the System stated that monsters and demons were different.

"How are they different? Aren't demons just a sub category of monsters? Like the demon rats that we are going to fight against." Jin asked as he looked at the manuals and maps.

"I think it is best to look for Grandma Yuan for the answers. She would provide you in the right direction. Besides, you need to look for her for a few things regarding the Rats too right?" Yun intervened and Jin remembered.

"But before you get going, Xiong Da arrived not too long ago. I passed him the stuff but he thinks it would be better if you meet him for some clarification about the police contract. He is currently in the redemption store and It looks like he isn't running away anytime soon." Yun said as she reminded him to upgrade the monster's equipment now that he is of a higher Grade.

"Come to think of it... Fighting the White Tiger of the West is a stress reliever compared to the piling amount of work that I have!" Jin thought to himself as he asked Yun to notify Xiong Da that he would meet up with him soon.

But first Jin was dying to get into the shower.