

## Dungeon S 681

### Chapter 681 Consequences of the Portal Device

Jin did meet up with Ke Loong though the latter came rather late, nearly prompting Jin to cancel the meeting. Ironically Jin continued to be blissfully unaware about how many people were dying to meet up with Sea Mesh's CEO while he was one of the only few who dared to consider cancelling a meeting with him.

"Sorry, Jin! I was caught in traffic!" Ke Loong was immediately caught lying by the System as it informed the Dungeon Supplier that the roads leading to them were less than crowded at this point in time. Regardless, Jin ignored what he assumed was only a white lie and welcomed him to the Restaurant Instance at the first class carriage.

"Ahh, any new additions on the menu? If not, I'd like the same old Tonkatsu Curry Rice." Ke Loong asked the penguin waiter who subsequently introduced a few new items for Ke Loong to test out. Eventually, he ordered everything new as well as the Tonkatsu Curry Rice.

"You sure you can finish everything?" Jin queried with an amused look on his face.

"Oh come on, don't underestimate me. I had a suspicion that I was going to eat here tonight, and have already prepared my stomach for the delicious food. You can never stop me from enjoying all your delicacies in this lifetime!" Ke Loong gloated on about his superiorly capable stomach, able to stuff lots of food without ending up round as people. (Jin obviously saw that the CEO was already in denial with regards to the 'non existing' roundness he had at the front.)

While waiting for the food, they naturally jumped into the topic of the portal instance. Ke Loong informed him that he had already acquired a number of empty shophouses, outlets or storefronts to facilitate the portal instances. "The places are a little small, but otherwise they should be good to go." Ke Loong showed him some blueprints as well as some pictures taken from their interior before bringing up one interesting topic.

"Recently, I had the privilege to be invited to a high class private Christmas party and found myself talking with a few ministers from the central government, particularly the Minister of Transport." When Ke Loong mentioned the minister, Jin had already braced himself for the inevitable. He had thought about his dungeon store or to maybe improve the travel for his potential customers. Never had it cross his mind that his portals could impede the current national transport system.

Unlike what his customers have considered, Jin had been too busy with other stuff, happy to let others handle this matter. Needless to say, it did not dawn on him about the implications of having a major portal travel network on a national level. Sure, if done right, China could possibly save lots of money or even redevelop its current transportation, cementing its capability to be the world's best industrial partner for manufacturing.

However, at the same time, such redevelopment would definitely reduce manual labour or disrupting jobs like drivers and delivery couriers in the long term scenario starting with the transportation industry. While all these consequences were suddenly flying around in the dungeon supplier's head, he let Ke Loong finish his statement.

"I hinted at our collaboration with the Minister of Transport, and he was rather fascinated by what he discovered. The minister was so intrigued that he immediately called over a few secretaries from the other ministry to take a look at our project." Ke Loong seemed very excited to reveal such news to Jin. However, the dungeon supplier did not share his enthusiasm for the government wishing to interfere in this private company's undertaking.

It was true that Jin had allowed Ke Loong to his own devices in order to further develop, manufacture and promote the portal devices but he had never thought that the government had eyes on the current situation. It should have been years into the future, until the concept would be proven to be effective, so how come it felt like yet another obstacle had appeared above his shoulders.

"The very next day, the secretaries from various ministries as well as a few in-house experts had come to visit us to take a look at the portal device. I personally demonstrated the portal teleporting, and their expressions were priceless. Of course, a few of the experts remained sceptical despite trying it themselves. They thought that this was just a developing prototype." Ke Loong did show a bit of anger at their distrust since he wanted to show off the power and the extent of the portal device.

"That is why I had ordered two portal devices to be connected from Shenzhen and all the way to Germany where we manufacture the devices. Unfortunately, we cannot activate any of the devices unless permitted by your researchers who hold the activation keys to it. Obviously, they did not allow such a test without Head Researcher Ayse's prior permission. So, I had no choice but to tell the government people that it was still under construction and undergoing some quality checks." Ke Loong sighed.

"Yes, and I've already heard that 'someone' had tried to steal the keys from their rooms or even indirectly coerce them for it." Jin's response was filled with anger and yet at the same time, restraint. He had just been informed about this crucial detail the CEO has seemingly 'forgotten' to tell him.

Yet, Ke Loong laughed loudly at the accusations. He decided to play it cool: "Forgive me, but at the time I had been thinking that if we can get the activation keys for the devices, I could have shown the government people how the portal devices work making them provide us with a much bigger budget. Heck, maybe they would have even offered to assist us in promoting the devices!"

"And if the government has a grip of it, they will then be able to try and develop into something portable for their troops. Please don't treat me as an idiot. I am not as naïve as you might think." Jin stated with a firm voice. He was thankful that there was the failsafe step to ensure that the devices could not be activated without his permission.

"But that is why you are naïve." Ke Loong's happy-go-lucky expression suddenly turned dead serious. "Like I said in the phone call. I know your arrangement with Tiger Lord Yuan Ba. If you do not give me the activation codes, you can say goodbye to the portal devices that you want to possess."

"Heh! You seem to forget which one of us owns the real bargaining chips. Without me, you are sitting on a huge pile of expensive metal. Unless you find a way to activate it, you will be lucky if those inactive portal devices will be worth salvaging." Jin challenged Ke Loong.

"You sure you want to offend me?" Ke Loong threatened Jin as if he had a trump card waiting under his sleeve. "I am Sea Mesh's CEO. I have a major influence over public figures. You have nothing but this odd

tree mall. If need be, I can demand your assassination right now or even burn this mall down." Ke Loong's true colours seemed to be finally out, and Jin sighed, regretting having considered his business partner as a decent person.

Ke Loong was sure he was winning the conversation but decided to reveal his 'so called' trump card for greater effect. He threw down multiple photos of Lynn and Qiu Yue walking the same route. It seemed as if he had discovered the Sub System User's old homes and families. Without a word, the Sea Mesh CEO leaned back and shrugged his shoulders.

Jin understood the meaning of his actions.

If Ke Loong ever wished the death of his employees and their relatives, such a thing was most likely only one phone call away. It was that simple.

The silence continued to permeate throughout the room for some time.

Seeing Jin still unresponsive after a dozen seconds after his open threat, Ke Loong decided to open his mouth once more. This was enough stick for the day, and now it was time for the bait to reel Jin into his control.

However, the moment he moved his mouth, he suddenly felt that something was seriously wrong. The air in the room had gotten heavy with the intent of murder... and it was not coming from Jin at all.

## **Chapter 682 Threats and Promises - Part 1**

Even without much combat experience, Sea Mesh's CEO could feel that something sharp was merely a millimetre away from his neck. It never moved away as he tried to swallow down his fear. Not just aimed at his neck, it felt like there was something pointy and sharp all around his body and away from his peripheral vision.

Was he overthinking things? Overreacting since Jin had been able to defeat a Triad Boss? Yet the dungeon supplier before him continued to drink his sip of tea without a care in the world. There were no visible weapons, and he was over an arm's length away with nothing but a cup in his hands.

However, his body was denying his logical reasoning. There was something or things around him, waiting for him to make one wrong move, say one wrong word. Beads of cold sweat profusely went down his body, and the perspiration made his heartbeat even more palpable in that silent room.

It wasn't until Jin stared into Ke Loong's eyes.

"You must think I am new to this," Jin stated calmly. "I could have easily reached some sort of compromise with you. I did respect you and your company and would have been willing to comply with your demands. You could have easily just asked me for permission to activate the two portals between Germany and China for you to gain additional funding and support. Sure I would have added some conditions in it as well considering both of us are businessmen. And here I thought that we can do something to be beneficial for us both and eventually to the public too."

"But for some reason, you decided to be greedy. From the first time I met you, I knew you were ambitious. Still, you always had that scent of caution around you. You made me believe that entrepreneurs of the new and old could come together and get rich together. Yet, for some reason, after mass manufacturing all of these portal devices, you seem to have changed your opinion. You decided you would prefer to keep everything for yourself, and if not for the failsafe device, I don't even want to imagine what kind of atrocious contracts and promises you would have made. Still, I was not angry...we were tolerant." Jin said, and for some reason, Ke Loong thought he heard wrongly.

"We...?" That one spoken word suddenly made the intent of murder even more explicit. He could feel as if the blades around him were already touching him even though he could not see anything. However, the intent was so heavy, he could hardly breathe another word out.

"Yes, We. We thought of trying to work with outsiders, trust other people aside from the ones that were contracted under us. Heck, we've overlooked so many things you did. Trying to reverse engineer the cosmetic inscriptions, trying to headhunt our people. Your only saving grace so far was that you had yet to cross that final line. But that went down the drain when you showed us those photos." Jin replied solemnly.

Jin snapped his fingers, and suddenly a giant mirror appeared right behind him, allowing Ke Loong to see what it was that he felt behind him. Several Minotaurs who worked under Qiu Yue and Moloch had their weapons pointed at Ke Loong, all just waiting for the command to act.

At the same time, dozens of those penguin NPC waiters stood on their shoulders with their weapons at the ready. Those exact penguin waiters who had been so courteous in their mannerism and playful with the customers were filled with the same bloodlust aimed at cutting Ke Loong down.

"If you think any of this is fake, feel free to test your theory. They are dying for you to do something stupid." At this time, their Penguin Waiter entered from the side of the first class carriage and placed the food they had ordered on the table. Faminished from all the meetings in the afternoon, Jin did not hesitate to start his dinner.

"I thought you'd at least be smart enough not to wield your threats in other people's home. It was rather rude and arrogant of you to do so." Jin berated the other, and right now Ke Loong could not deny any of those allegations.

"Psst, don't forget to add that 'eternal pain is not impossible'. My experience tells me he is just one threat away from soiling his pants." Kraft's chi transmission advised him. The old foxy man sat in the corner, filming the entire process. He was quite proud of Jin to have asked him to stay on standby in case Ke Loong decided to do something funny.

After being on the receiving end of the subtle blackmailing from the Police Captain, Jin had begun to review his outside contacts and promised himself to act warier against them. While they were great allies to have in times of need, the dungeon supplier had learnt his lesson that they would ultimately wish to fulfil their own agendas too. No merchant or businessman would be kind to one of its own.

After all, theirs was a dog eat dog world.

Sea Mesh's CEO did not feel like testing his luck. He had no doubt that any abrupt movements or just the attempt to release any chi would leave him in small pieces. But instead of retaliating, Ke Loong started giggling, which turned into a peal of innocent laughter.

Jin gave them a sign to not act yet, and somehow this laughter suddenly loosened the heavy atmosphere. Nevertheless, the Minotaurs and Penguins did not drop their guard. They had a job to do, and they would be ready if the situation demanded it.

"Excellent! Truly excellent! When Mr Know-It-All told me to test you every once in a while, I certainly did not expect that you might have been prepared to this degree. Guess I should not make the test so obvious." Ke Loong laughed heartily as he slowly stretched out his hand on the table. Only now did Jin notice that his last finger was missing his distant phalange.

"This finger was cut to make an eternal pact to my master and comrades, including Mr Know-It-All." Ke Loong admitted that he had lied to Jin. He even revealed that most of the things publicly known about him were not true.

"Why are you showing me this?" Jin asked with a confused look. Ke Loong just continued to smile, yet it started to deform into a sickening grin.

"Cut the tip of your finger and offer it to me. That way, we shall be considered equals. I swear to you on the life of my master and my comrades that I shall become your ally for days to come no matter what." Ke Loong said with a shocking amount of determination and Jin furrowed his brows at that idea.

"That is my pledge and promise to you, Jin."

"You sure?"

"Yes."

Jin summoned out Bam in katana form and without hesitation, cut off his entire last finger. Now it was Ke Loong's turn to be in disbelief. Despite the emanating pain he was feeling, Jin did not allow himself to flinch as he presented his bleeding severed finger to the other.

## **Chapter 683 Threat and Promises - Part 2**

It took some time for Ke Loong to process what has just happened. Only then did he slowly start to realise what exactly was wrong with the whole situation... "My gosh. I cannot believe I had been tricked twice in a row. I totally forgot that we are still in a dungeon instance."

"I did ask for your clarification. It's your own fault for not realising where we are." Jin gave him a grin as he wiped his bleeding hand with a towel and let the internal legendary inscription do its job of slowly regrowing the lost finger. (Although the feeling of recovery was just as painful and strange as before, at least this time it was slightly tolerable.)

"I guess you did place me in such a precarious circumstance that it fizzled my train of thought. Still, a promise is a promise. It's not like we actually need your finger for anything. It's all about the conviction

to actually sacrifice a part of yourself, and you have more than proven yourself worthy. Do you wish for a blood pact or something similar as proof of my promise?" Ke Loong asked, and Kraft took the opportunity in the shadows to 'quietly' shout in Jin's mind.

"Contract! Now! I've already prepared it for you and asked the system to place it in your storage watch when you did that badass yakuza shit. Though it makes me wonder, is his master or organisation part of the Yakuza?" Kraft's thoughts were intensely loud in Jin's head, making him look as if he had a sudden migraine.

"What's wrong?" Ke Loong asked as a sign of concern.

"Nothing, I thought the pain was dulling, but instead, there was a sharp sting afterwards." Jin lied as he looked at his hand, but Ke Loong laughed at his statement.

"Hahah! Well, now I know that you really did your part in an attempt to sacrifice your finger. The pain will go off soon enough... But considering that you seem to be already recovering by whatever dungeon owner rights that you have, I seriously envy you." Ke Loon replied while Jin took the opportunity to take out the contract from his storage watch.

"What? You already have a blood contract ready for me?" Ke Loong questioned as he received the letter with two hands and started reading. At the same time, the minotaurs and penguins quietly retracted from the scene, and other fellow penguin waiters came in to clear up the mess, including replacing the meals with new, piping hot ones.

"I see. This is an interesting contract. No wonder Mr Know-It-All believes in you so much despite the limited interaction." Ke Loong stated, and Jin who did not read it commented that it should be quite a fair one, considering what Ke Loong was capable of.

"Quite true. Very well." Ke Loong agreed. He took out his pen and pricked his finger for blood. After which, the Sea Mesh CEO signed it and requested Jin to give him a copy whenever he was able to. Only when Jin was verifying the contract did he learn what Kraft had come up with.

It was not the usual sort of contract forcing the other party to pledge their services to the System. Instead, it was a promise that Jin and Ke Loong were to be treated as equal business partners.

Although the previous contract profit still stayed intact, subsequent contracts created would be made to benefit both Jin and Sea Mesh. If any of the companies ever stated to face difficulties, they would have to help each other in their times of need.

There did not seem to be any no hidden clause, no double meanings or anything that might change the way either party operated. The only limitation was not to question nor probe into each other's way of doing businesses unless it was for research or regulatory purposes. And even then it required informing the other party beforehand.

Jin was initially surprised by Kraft's contract, but when he thought carefully about it, it was still a major compromise for Sea Mesh's CEO considering that the current Dungeons and Pandas was still young and developing.

Usually, major companies would buy, absorb or take full control of minor potential companies. In this contract, they were established as equal partners for life. Though some might say it might eventually

stifle the future potential growth of Dungeons and Pandas, what Jin needed now was an assurance that he could grow safely. (Especially when the latter could possibly develop into a threat to other businesses.)

Even though Sea Mesh was not by any means a multi national company at the moment, being locally recognised as a national company brought credibility to Dungeons and Pandas, and that would prove to have many implications for Jin's expansion.

Not to mention, Jin believed that it could provide a reliable front for all the experimental stuff he had been doing in his store. Along with the clauses in the contract, Jin now recognised that Kraft had protected the dungeon supplier's long term interests. Thus, he too signed with the blood from his severed finger (which was placed at the side) and completed the contract.

However, with Kraft in the picture, Jin knew that while this may seem fair, a devil's contract would always entail some unsaid parts. Although the agreement did not state anything about being in the service of the System, offering a blood contract meant that both Jin and Ke Loong's fate were intertwined as one.

Using that as the loophole logic of most blood pacts and contracts, it allowed the System to have partial surveillance of Ke Loong without him knowing. It was like a Trojan horse, forcefully entering Ke Loong's fate lines without being in control.

"There's no need to control him. Knowing what he has is more than enough." Kraft thought to himself as he returned back to his room and started to preview what an interesting backstory Ke Loong had.

Still, what he was most concerned about was the identity of Mr Know-It-All. Was he a foe who had sent them the CEO as a sign of mutual trust or an agent of destruction who had done so to make them less wary of him?

"Well! That's one way to start the new year." Ke Loong laughed as he clapped his hands and already felt famished from all the food staring back at him.

"A gross understatement. Please partake in whatever you wish to eat, today's meal is on me for the poor behaviour. I sincerely believed that you were going to blackmail me." Jin offered, and Ke Loong shook his head.

"I honestly wished to see what kind of person you really were. The previous times that I met with you were mostly a façade and the manufactured portal devices if needed, can be written off as liabilities, something I can afford to lose. While Mr Know-It-All did mention that you are still growing as a person and asked me to give you a chance or two, the business world is not as kind as he believes." Ke Loong was more than satisfied with Jin's response in the impromptu test.

"I wanted to see if you have the determination, the resolution to be a decent boss for the future and most importantly if you cared for your workers. I hate bosses who treat their workers like dirt and shit for their own benefits. I detest those people with all my being. If you had cracked under pressure to take my offer, I would have immediately sent word to annihilate you and redirect your workers to people who appreciate them more." Ke Loong said as he gorged himself with food. Jin only smiled at this.

Even if Mr Know-It-All's end goal was to harm Jin, the dungeon supplier was at least thankful that he had introduced a mentor for him to learn from.

## **Chapter 684 Clan Enterprises**

"So, about what you said initially, was it true? Do you still plan to show various ministries the portal." Jin asked, and as they both continued to enjoy the meals.

"You do know that giving it to the military is the fastest way to earn money, right? China's budget expenditure for defence is still one of the highest in the world and given the vast amount of territory we have to cover, this will, without a doubt, benefit the Chinese military." Ke Loong argued while Jin began to wonder if this was another test.

"No, no, no. No more tests. After that intense murderous intent from I don't even know what, I am inclined to believe you have some serious tricks under your sleeve and I definitely do not plan to reencounter them." Ke Loong stated assuring Jin that he would be honest and forward with the dungeon supplier as much as he could.

"If that is the case, then yes. Of course, I would love to make more money, but not this way. My researchers who I employed do this for the good of the people and not for death and destruction." (Ayse would be rolling on the floor laughing if she watched Jin saying this.)

"If we use it for medical purposes, for disaster evacuation or rescue purposes, then it would be my greatest pleasure to share it with the world. However, we both know that the world is different shades of grey, not a true black and white." Jin stopped to take a drink, and after he had emptied his glass, Ke Loong offered to pour more for him.

"As much as possible, I want to keep it off the hands of the government though we can sell to them at a lower price for those purposes I had mentioned. Sure, I am not naive to believe they won't try to replicate. It's in our blood to do so, but on the other hand, I'd like to see them try deciphering it. I have faith in my researcher's products that they won't be cracked that easily...at least for another five years or so." Jin replied with slight hesitation.

"Heh! Let's have a bet, shall we? If they really fail to make the very same top quality standard that we have, I will treat you to a grand meal with no limits." Ke Loong offered, and Jin laughed at that.

"How about we take it up a notch? Let's agree to broaden it to include all of each other's employees as well." Jin challenged Ke Loong to another level who gladly accepted the bet. (If only he knew how many 'employees' Jin had and would have in the future...)

"Anyways, am I correct to assume that the demonstration you've promised them will be to use us for the upcoming 'training exercise' up north?" Jin tried to link the dots together.

"Yeah, I believe that's my bad. While I knew that they would be interested in it, I did not expect them to order us to use it for 'that' situation or in any case, for operational use." Ke Loong grumbled.



"What's really happening up north? I hardly have any details on it, even though I've been 'asked' to help out." Jin tried to probe yet Ke Loong shrugged his shoulders while chewing.

"All I know is that it could possibly be a giant monster horde, like those sudden ones around the world recently. Not sure why it is happening that way. I heard some rumours, mainly attributing it to climate change. Others go wilder and have some conspiracy theories that some terrorist organisation must be handling the monsters." Ke Loong told him what he knew.

"Whatever the case, I did not have much care for all this, until those idiots in the government decided to use us. But it's not wise to go against them, especially since allowing them to use it means more business interaction with them."

"Which also means a bulk load of money." Jin sighed.

"Unfortunately, that is true. Given how all the ministers up there are from the various Royal Clans, having extra contact with them equates to more very lucrative opportunities for us."

"Do you mean to join one of them in the future?" Jin wanted to know his new ally's modus operandi if possible.

"Join them? Hell no! Have you ever interacted with those pretentious swine? They pretend like they don't think each one of their clans is the best of the best, and you can clearly see it in their eyes that they plan to use you till the day your foot is two steps into the graveyard. They do not know how much shit and effort we have to go through to get where we are right now." Ke Loong banged his fist on the table to show his defiance.

"Hahaha, I'm glad you think so. That makes two of us." Jin raised his cup in honour of Ke Loong's words.

"Really? Last I heard, you were quite mushy with the Royal Zodiac Tigers." Sea Mesh's CEO hinted at the honorary clan member title that Jin had been awarded with.

"Haha. Me disliking them does not mean I won't use whatever chance I can get to benefit." Jin replied without any pause making Ke Loong realise that the young man had what it took to become a successful businessman.

"Good. Good. I like that attitude of yours. They might be our rivals in business, but that does not mean we cannot earn favours from them. Then if you are not joining them, what are you trying to achieve?" Ke Loong's curiosity about Jin's ambition peaked.

"Earn a sufficient level of reputation to become the number one dungeon supplier in China. After that... probably the best one in the world. Who knows, maybe with enough clout, I can even start a clan enterprise of my own."

"Big dreams. Big dreams. But creating a brand new clan is considered suicidal these days. Starting one is not an issue but making it famous takes a hell of a lot of effort. And once you are famous... well, no one likes to share their pie." Ke Loong seemed to advise against it.

"But there are other successful clans out there, right? Like the infamous Fivecents company by the Cat Clan. All I need to do is be something similar, and my best chances for that is to have a specialised

tradecraft." Jin wanted to use his dungeon supplying skills as the trademark speciality of his clan enterprise.

If possible, he would like to rebuild what his ancestors had done and reached their former glory. Even if it could not be done in his lifetime, though Jin believed it should be possible with the aid of the System, he would at least lay a foundation and pass it to those willing to go that extra mile.

"If that is the case, I suggest you look into creating a brand new company to handle all your miscellaneous stuff while promoting Dungeons and Pandas. Right now, you seem to have a bit of everything going for you, but it is too scattered to my liking. There is not much organisation structure within it." Ke Loong was honest in his criticism.

"So you're telling me to create a parent company so that if I expand later, it will be easier to handle all the various groups?"

"Something like that. But yes, it would be the best way to go forward if your ultimate goal is to create a Clan Enterprise. With the tree mall, you can create this particular parent company, and it would be easy to associate with you in the future."

Suddenly the System interjected into the conversation with a name.

"Panda Inc."

## **Chapter 685 Panda Inc**

"Panda...Inc?" Jin accidentally blurted out, and Ke Loong sniggered at the name.

"Sounds too generic. That is so unlike you Jin. Get something more bombastic or more eye catching, especially for the younger generations. Besides, getting another name will also be easier to identify. There's already loads of panda named companies in the world." Ke Loong suggested and to prove his point, he did a quick search and it revealed various company names such as Panda Express, Panda Logistics, Panda Trash Recycling.

"In my opinion, you could just go with Pandamonium Inc. Not only is the name not taken yet, but it sounds grand, mysterious and let's not forget that you have an established base of customers already using that app. On top of that, you easily set it up to look that it belongs to the clan who's actually backing you."

"That's a rather good idea, but I'll stick to just my store for now. I have too much on my plate to create a new company." Jin admitted with a heavy heart.

"But, you liked the idea of Pandamonium, right?" Ke Loong asked, and Jin nodded his head.

"Well, then inform me if you change your mind and need help setting it up... because as the first act of our partnership, I've taken the liberty and bought the right to the name Pandamonium Inc." Ke Loong was already typing furiously on his phone to tell his secretary to secure the new company name as soon

as possible. Jin was surprised by the gesture and thanked him for it. Ke Loong merely said it was recompensation for the sudden test he made Jin took.

"I'll happily pass on to you when you feel ready unless you decide on something else. Sooo, what are we going to do about that police and military movement? From what I know, they plan to make at least 50% of the police force in Shenzhen participate. All their best people from the various districts and on top of that the bulk of the military. That will be at least a few thousand people using the teleportation device." Ke Loong explained the scenario. "Not to mention, we need to place an exit portal device too."

"Don't they have border guards along with their city's police as well? If they need to involve police and the national guard from another state, then it clearly means that the threat is more severe than we were led to believe." Jin deduced the need to use their portal devices.

"Besides, it does not make any real sense that they want to use our portals when they have only seen you using it once. Seriously, what would they have done without this technology? It's kind of hard to believe that they put so much trust in us." Jin complained.

Ke Loong took out his smartphone again to give his partner the full picture. Aside from the live demonstration, he also showed him videos of groups of his research people doing experiments with the portal devices.

The experiment proved a steady increase in the number of people being teleported to know the extended usage of the portal device and those people knew what they were getting into. (Ke Loong fail to mention, there was huge compensation if an accident happened to them during the research.)

Nonetheless, the video showed that they were very successful in transporting a massive amount of people and also included the use of portals to move large objects without a hinge. Jin obviously knew all of this since it was already proven by the Orc-Goblin War, but he pretended to be amazed by it.

Regardless, The last part of the experiment was what amazed the officials the most. "You are right, they don't just need it as an easy way to transport people. What they really want to use it for in this demonstration is to bring in the tanks and other transports via the portal." Ke Loong wrapped up the video viewing and subsequently showed him another document on his phone.

"It will save them a lot of trouble and most importantly allow them to do this in secret without the public finding out what's really going on. Besides, Shenzhen is also the home of the elite leopard tank divisions. They cannot exactly move those armoured tanks through the cities. Otherwise, they might as well go directly to all those reporters and secret informers admitting what something big was going on." Ke Loong was a bit hesitant at first, but the more he spoke, the more he shared than what he might have supposed to. However, since they were now equal partners, he believed Jin had a right to know all of that as well.

"Still, it is not much of a time sensitive issue considering they gave you a deadline for it. Else, you will be crawling to me for the activation key, or I don't know, sending a massive gang of triad members to my store." Jin replied, and Ke Loong laughed.

"Yeah. Right now, the most crucial part for them is to get their vehicles and supplies safe and sound to the target location. Needless to say, such a big 'secret' operation also presents a stressful amount of logistical hell to them and us."

"They should be happy as long as we can technically teleport them from their base to the place they want to reinforce, right? Why then bother coming to the Tree Mall if they want secrecy on their part? Why use my dungeon as a poor excuse for a training exercise. Ever since I learned about their hidden plot, this part did not make any sense to me."

"Ah, that is most likely because of me. I told them that the police and military groups should convene here to use the portals. It's meant to be another layer to prevent detection and a way to attract more people to know about this place. Basically, if those buff guys know that a superbly good dungeon supplier exists here, all the more they would want to come here to train, don't you agree?" Ke Loong had pure intentions to send some business Jin's way. After all, if he prospers, Sea Mesh's CEO would indirectly rise up the ranks too.

"Hmm, if that's the case...I think we should split things up." Jin decided as he too did not want too much attention from the media once this particular thing kicked in.

"How so?"

"I suggest procuring large container trucks that will host the Portal instance and send a few of those trucks to various military bases or police quarters. That way they can send their tanks, trucks, vans or whatever to the location they need. We can also send the trucks up north and not have to be on site to oversee the devices."

"Ahh! I see! That is indeed a good idea, and with the dungeon instances, you can regulate the portal devices without being on site. Also, I am assuming you will be remotely operating those instances?" Ke Loong asked with an agenda in mind. He knew that remote operation of dungeon instances was made possible at least with his Sea Mesh dungeon instance technology.

But upon learning that Jin had superior tech than his, Ke Loong could not help but get curious about the capability of the dungeon instances this particular supplier could do. He once had his Chief Engineer Bo Ze personally make a field trip with a group of instance technologists to experience Jin's instances.

They were beyond shocked. Words were not able to come out of their mouths. Their instance technologists and even Bo Ze were crunching the numbers hard. If it was hardware, they already had the latest in the world, and yet they could not achieve such realism.

Thus they concluded that Jin had a personal team of technologists that were capable of creating an instance engine which could be optimised so bloody well that it created such realism to life. Some of the instance technologists even commented that they could possibly be in the world's first real time alternate reality.

"Hmm, that should not be a problem, but I apologise in advance if I say that when I create those portal instances, I will need some secrecy on my part. Also please make sure to tell them that this is a mid range portable prototype and if they ask, no I do not plan to make them long range any time soon." Jin kindly asked for permission to keep his copyrighted technology to himself, despite knowing that Ke Loong had already boasted on the 'China to Germany' portal advertising gimmick.

While Ke Loong did not mind, he did feel a slight bit of pity that he could not see the creation of the dungeon instance. "Whatever it is, I believe we have somehow solved a part of the problem. All that's left is to coordinate with the police and military. But do not worry about that, I will let my human

resource team assign some people to do that for us. You just concentrate on getting those trucks, unless you need me to procure them too?"

"You do not have to worry. I'll have my own sources getting those trucks. On my side, I see if I can get hold of Tiger Lord Yuan Ba to discuss on the intricacies since he personally requested this from me too." Jin smiled, and they eventually agreed to get it down by the end of next week since Jin said that he would be swamped for the next few days.

While Ke Loong did query about it, Jin could only reveal that he would give the Sea Mesh company some special privileges in that particular instance he was about to 'create'. Jin was tight lipped about any other information regarding that, even after Ke Loong tried to give some monetary incentives.

"Sigh, very well. Sometimes I do enjoy the surprises you throw out, so I shall be looking forward to it." Ke Loong smiled as they continued their dinner.

## **Chapter 686 Within His DNA**

For the first time in a long while, Jin took the conscious effort to cultivate in the night while sleeping. Unsurprisingly, he returned to the same icy cold mountain peak where the Black Tortoise of the North was still lurking in the valley.

The surprising thing, however, was that he was alone. Ming was nowhere to be seen. Still, Jin gave his encounter with the Tortoise another shot, but this time around, he would attempt a different approach.

While both the Tortoise and Jin were willing to battle, the latter sat down on a short ledge and continued to observe it from afar. Unlike the Tiger of the West, the Tortoise's tail did not outright attack him. Confused that he wasn't outright aggressive this time around, the Serpent continued to be wary of the Astral Panda Cultivator's existence and stared at him wildly.

They continued their subtle eye staring contest for some time until the Serpent finally understood Jin's intention and was the first to lower its guard. Though it approached Jin cautiously, the Astral Panda Cultivator instinctively went on guard despite the constant reminder to remain calm.

This was possibly a chance to learn a little more about this particular Cardinal Demon. Worst case scenario? He gets bitten and returns to the real conscious world. However, at times like this, Jin wondered if the cultivation he's using create such vivid phantasms or if it was merely his uncontrollable imagination that came to haunt him in his dream.

There were even times he questioned whether everything he went through was actually real.

Was his subconscious filled with demons of the System's past or did he outright turn insane whenever he was asleep, especially since everything felt so real to him.

The pain and discomfort he felt during the whole process, the yearning of a true mentor and maybe to a certain extent, his grandfather... Were all his fears, desires and dreams manifested into something tangible for him to face every time he sleeps?

"You still tend to overthink stuff, though at this point you are not entirely away from the truth." Ming, who was suddenly standing at the side of the ledge beside Jin, sighed.

"Why not just ask your gramps here?" He teased Jin as he placed his hand out for the Serpent, and it allowed him to pat him.

"Then tear another page out of your diary and throw it into the mouth of the Tortoise?" Jin practically shot an arrow into Ming's feelings.

"Hmm, that is yet another valid point. Fine, I will give you the answer you are searching for. All these manifestations that you see, feel and touch are all embedded in your genes. The monsters, demons...even the places you experience in your sleep are all deep seated memories passed down from all the previous Panda Clan members that had been part of the System."

"So, all those self realisation processes, the hunt against the Tiger of the West and even my existence, are part of your DNA, made real through the cultivation I created and your thinking process. That is why you feel that everything is familiar to a certain extent."

"That is why, you never felt like the System is with you whenever you are alone here in your... 'dreams'. The only things you can rely on are your powers and your grasp of reality...in other words, your perception. Besides, this is your mental plane, so your needs can actually manifest in your perceived reality in this never ending dream. For example, when you needed water during the Tiger Hunt, did water appear? Nope. But your subconscious still left you with a way to get water, from the bamboo shoots."

"Then does that mean the dream that I had about this girl with blue hair, or someone's attempt to kill me in a taxi ride, have happened to someone else? What about the time I was chained up, filled with hatred and anger. Are those memories of my ancestors?" Jin queried as he vividly remembered specific dream sequences that did not make sense and yet created a deep impression in him.

"I don't think those..." Ming's expression changed as if this was the first time he heard of those. He was the one who created the Astral Panda cultivation, and during the period his spirit embodied with Jin, he never saw any of those memories that Jin had mentioned. (Even though he was the Ultimate Stalker.)

Was it an unintended side effect?

Ming knew that this Astral Panda Cultivation Manual was barely a completed prototype with not much testing when he passed it to the System. A totally experimental style especially with the merging of Chi and Mana together.

However, he believed that with the inclusion of the System, it should have been able to weed out all the potential problems of the manual before giving the book to Jin.

"Hmm. Unfortunately, I do not have the means to test your Astral Panda Cultivation. What you experienced might be something to do with the explosive growth of your personal cultivation, and that could be an unexpected side effect. Do tell me if you experience such a scenario without me in the dream. I will make sure to personally appear in every subconscious moment of yours." Ming reassured Jin as the Serpent now slowly moved its head towards Jin.

As both the hunter and the hunted came to the conclusion that the other party did not mean any harm, for the time being, they cautiously proceeded with a more hands on inspection.

The Serpent hissed with its tongue scanning the area around Jin while the latter raised his hand. Slowly caressing the scales of the Serpent, the panda cultivator could feel the quiet, silent wrath pulsating through its body.

Jin noticed that feeling was something similar to what he had felt for the past few days before Rei's speech to take a notch down. "So, all along, the turtle is also another manifestation of my current feelings. Being stuck in between mountains of obstacles and too stubborn to move." He thought to himself as he tried to recall if there was any correlation to the White Tiger he had fought.

"Interesting, so instead of fighting this one, you decided to become friends with it?" Ming commented on the limited interaction between the two of them, and Jin nodded his head.

"Perhaps. Also, I still don't understand the concept of controlling my powers in this subconscious plane. Sometimes, I have a limited amount of Maqi flowing in me, and other times, I come out empty."

"I am as frustrated as this Tortoise as I don't know when my powers will be working and when not. So, for now, my goal is to learn how to control myself, and hopefully, the ability to exert my powers fully." Jin explained and Ming tapped his back for figuring out that it was not his grandfather that disallowed his powers to work.

It was himself.

"Still, you do know that this itself is supposed to be a test? You eventually will have to defeat this big shell in order to advance your cultivation." Ming reminded Jin as he became a fleeting voice and disappeared from Jin's side.

"It's fine. With the Tortoise of the North not being a threat for now, I can focus on gathering my thoughts properly." Jin said out loud before sitting down and changed to the very same sleeping cultivation stance.

With a deep breath, he searched for his Dantian Core and slowly but surely, Jin came to understand the teachings written in the manual. The Astral Panda Cultivator then began to trace both his chi and mana circuits in an orderly manner in order to awaken his core.

### **Chapter 687 First War Room Briefing - Part 1**

Cultivating within his cultivation stance had resulted in Jin feeling more refreshed than ever, and to his surprise, he discovered the black sludge had taken on a new form.

A very fortunate discovery since he had forgotten about the side effects and had been cultivating in his bedroom. (Though technically, his entire house was controlled by the System which could remove the sludge as easily as it did in the Dungeon Maker room.)

Instead of the sludge floating around and above him, he found crystals strewn around near his feet. Obviously, Jin did not poop out crystals while he was cultivating but instead, the floating black sludge slowly solidified into 30 cm crystals before they dropped out of the 'atmosphere' and fell all around Jin.

The System was delighted considering that storing the black sludge was a pain in the ass, though it did not complain about this to Jin in order to keep its almighty status intact. In the meantime, as Jin was observing one of the sludge crystals, the System reported to its User that Qiu Yue had already completed the defensive plans for the Dungeon City Fortress.

"Although some of the domes have yet to be completed, 90% of the defences are already installed and operational. The remaining 10% are considered emergency placements and the Orcs are working double-time to ensure they'll be ready in time." The System stated as it recommended User to contact Qiu Yue and Moloch for a last final meeting before deciding the time to drop the curtain for this new city.

When Jin called for the meeting to be held in the conference briefing room, he was instead asked by Qiu Yue to come into the Dungeon City Fortress. He was teleported by the System based on the Sub System User's coordinates. When he reached the location as specified by Qiu Yue, he realised that there was already a war table set up right in front of him.

With a cursory look, he saw goblins operating the radio controls at the corners while some of the Orcs were moving leftover heavy equipment into the room. Maps of the Dungeon City Fortress were pinned on an electronic whiteboard, and he saw Nubwort using a stylus to draw some circles on the board to indicate certain information to his subordinates.

"Ah...a proper war room." Jin said to himself, and the 'important' leaders started to convene right in front of the war table. Qiu Yue, Moloch, Nubwort and the Goblin Trio were present in the meeting along with Half Ghoul Lord Derek. Even Duke Wolte came in, followed by Dark Elf Leader Drex and Dark Templar Zerg.

"Greetings everyone, I apologise for my lacking attire, as I thought this would be an informal meeting or debriefing." Jin had noticed how everyone else was already decked in their armour or combat outfit.

"No worries. I was the one who called you here on short notice after all."

Qiu Yue chimed in as she was flipping a few documents on a clipboard before asking the Sub System to enter it into its database. Soon, holographic screen consoles appeared in front of everyone as if it was some sci-fi briefing.

"Hahaha! This is much easier to read than that ...power point presentation that Jin once showed us." Ayse came in late to the meeting.

"Please, your briefing on the Lost Tech was even more boring." Kraft suddenly emerged from the shadows into the war room and quickly dodged an incoming projectile. The goblins at the corner rolled their eyes as they called for an orc engineer to look at the damage done on the radio set. Ayse eyed the Devil one more time before returning to the table.

"I hope you're not all waiting for me." Hou Fei was teleported in by the System, and Jin bowed slightly in respect for him. A few followed suit, but the older man casually dismissed the formalities. "This is not



my stage but your colleague's. Let's all hear what she has to say. I will comment afterwards." Hou Fei nodded his head in acknowledgement towards Qiu Yue to let her officially begin.

Unbeknownst to Jin, the girl had been in constant contact with Hou Fei despite the appearance, and she had sought quite a bit of advice from the real expert. As Qiu Yue began to brief the defences, she efficiently explained the rough layout of the plans that still had to be executed before the war started.

"Fortunately for us, Baphomet had managed to link up with some of his demon friends. He was able to obtain some information on King Baal's movement. It appears that Lord Moloch was right. The King had been busy mobilising a colossal size army and he continued to wait for our Dungeon Core barrier to run out to begin the siege. Compared to the Rats we fought, this will be a thousand times harder, and I am not exaggerating." Qiu Yue started her report.

"Yeah, Baph reported that all the demons are dying for a fight. They haven't had a betrayal for quite some time, and all of them want Moloch's head in order to get King Baal's approval. There's quite a generous bounty on it. Even I felt a bit tempted considering we are somewhat immortals right now." Wolte chipped in.

"Assuming King Baal is using his usual tactics, he will swarm us with pawns first before sending the big guys down," Moloch commented ignoring the crude joke of his fellow demon.

"So eradicate all the lousy peeps, and when the elite defenders are out, the senior demons will come to play?" Kraft never really liked this particular tactic especially since it's too troublesome for him and not to mention, annoyingly dull.

"Moloch knows how the Demon Nobles work, seeing as he also enjoys using this tactic. They love to do the commanding and send their minions to take care of the dirty fighting since it gives them the satisfaction of leading a group. Unless they perceive that their unit is close to being decimated, they usually don't act. Besides, coming in at the darkest hour means they gain more glory from the other demons. It's a vicious cycle." Wolte commented on the tactic.

"But considering that the one who betrayed him is a person that had fought beside him before, I would not be surprised if he used a rush tactic to get us down all at once." Moloch continued.

"Still, we have to remember that their main objective will be the Dungeon Core, with revenge only being an added bonus. It's too bad we cannot teleport the core to our world. At most, we can try to shift it around the city during their attack with the aid of the System. But moving it outside the designated area will make the entire city which we painstakingly built, crumble." Qiu Yue sighed, and Moloch agreed. What's worse if they were to remove the core it would be rendered almost as useless as Wolte's partial core.

"Hey at least, my core has some good effects! Not entirely a useless one!" Duke Wolte barked back, and Jin ordered the three of them to settle down.

"Therefore Jin, I suggest that if you want to promote the Dungeon City Fortress, now is the best time. We only have approximately five days before we have to drop the Dungeon Core Newbie Barrier to still get the needed bonus protection." Qiu Yue recommended getting as many cultivators on board as possible.

There would be a hell of a fight waiting for them.

### **Chapter 688 Three Tier Rewards**

"Am I correct to assume that you have already thought up how to best utilise them?" Jin asked as he had no idea what Qiu Yue had in store for the cultivators. It also seemed more and more as if he was the only one who had been left out from the loop. Qiu Yue controlled everyone's holographic console and synchronised the presentation that she was giving.

"While Moloch and Wolte had given us some information on the degree of the scale, it still does not prepare us to fight against such overwhelming numbers. That is why we will need the cultivators to enter into action, as they present themselves as undying mercenaries fighting for a cause. The best way to entice them is naturally... rewards." Qiu Yue stated and switched the presentation to the already prepared list of rewards based on Jin's previous rewards list from the Goblin Raid and the Santa Raid.

The only raid that didn't have an explicit reward list had been the Salamander Lord's Keep Instance. In a way, it provided vital information about how the cultivators behaved in regards to the raid instances. More importantly, they could infringe on the frequency of re-entering a raid based on the redeemed prizes.

Last time they were given panda medals instead of raid points, which resulted in a certain amount of interest for various groups of cultivators. Although the rewards were lesser, earning the panda medals was practically like making extra money. Only the veteran cultivators who were aware of how Jin's dungeons and stores worked found it the most beneficial to play.

As for customers like Xiong Da, the experience of the raid was good enough on its own. He did not care too much about the 'medals' at hand (seeing as he still had 'unlimited' access). Thus, Qiu Yue's modified list of rewards tried to account for all these different types of customers.

Instead of just points, Qiu Yue had created a three-tiered reward system based on the type of points the cultivators could get by fighting the demon army. She made it more like a game to urge the customers to do more than defending against the incoming waves of demon pawns by introducing bronze, silver and gold credits.

The System had near-total surveillance of the battlefield, so it would have no problem roughly gauging the kind of demons and monsters that were more powerful and assign them values in silver and gold credits.

Based on the length of duration the cultivators stayed in battle, the System would also reward additional silver and gold credits as the effort they had placed in.

Jin was impressed by the reward tier system as it included various items ranging from vouchers, digital pet cosmetics to the mini-game rewards. (Not to mention, limited edition plushies and at the moment, Xiong Da had to be the only person who had collected everything. By now he must have a whole storeroom dedicated to it.)

But what was striking was the higher gold tier, where the rewards were still placed as '???. Qiu Yue mentioned that it was still something in progress and it would be based on Jin's development of the Squads.

"Ah shit, I nearly placed that on the backburner. System, how does the optimisation of the Squads function based on the cultivator's testing look?" Jin asked, and the invisible elephant in the room had reported that the data was useful enough.

"After making several adjustments, the squad function had improved, but System recommends not to use it in a 'real-world' setting as of yet. It would be better if the Pandawans or selected few cultivators continue to provide additional data for the System to further perfect it."

"Damn, and here I thought we would have additional help from the System, guess that was wishful thinking on my end." Qiu Yue grumbled as she had to think of something else to replace the higher gold tiers.

"Will the absence of squads affect your plans?" Jin queried, and the Red Panda Cultivator shook her head.

"I did not take that into account, seeing that it was still in an experimental state."

"That is why I am here." Hou Fei said and waved his hands to everyone around the war table. "Despite how I may look, I'm actually a general in our world...so I will be actually sending in my troops to reinforce this Dungeon City Fortress."

"Huh, don't they need you up north?" Jin was in disbelief that Hou Fei was actually sending his troops for this particular defence operation.

"With regards to that, I'll talk to you later on the issue. For now, know that we have elite soldiers from the Royal Battalions fighting together with the cultivators. That should boost our numbers by nearly a thousand more." Hou Fei proudly claimed, and everyone was taken back at such the numbers.

Sure, Jin might have more than a thousand customers in a day's work, but definitely not at one time. By having an addition thousand more soldiers equate to nearly another 10% more troops in the field.

"I wanted to have even more enter, but considering the crowd as well as accommodations around the place, it would be quite hard unless Jin could provide some form of camping. Other than that, we are using Qiu Yue's idea of promoting the dungeon early as a form of cover."

"But people could get suspicious with the sudden influx of people," Drex commented, and the others reluctantly agreed. It was not normal to have that many people at the Tree Mall unless its the weekend.

"They might. Still, it's a good enough cover, and this will artificially boost the crowd numbers to attract attention. I will get Kiyu to prepare some coverage on this to entice even more people to enter." Kraft noted in the conversation and Jin appreciated the follow-up.

"Heh, but how elite can they be? We have fought against human cultivators and we orcs seem to have our strength restricted by the System to sometimes allow those cultivators to win." Nubwort commented, and Hou Fei laughed.

"Then that's good! This will be a wake-up call for all of them before they encounter the foes up north." Hou Fei replied with a wide smile. Jin could safely assume that Hou Fei planned to make them have a warm-up fight before entering the north, indicating that the threat could be as potent as Ke Loong had previously predicted.

"Regarding the accommodations, I think we'll be able to assist in some way. However, I am in no way allowing them to stay for free." Jin said, and the Panda Clan Remnant nodded his head with glee.

"If that's the case, I've already preallocated a few buildings for your soldiers to stay in." Qiu Yue flipped a few files from one holographic console to another, allowing Hou Fei to preview the accommodations in the Sea Domes.

"So you are just waiting for approval from the big boss?" Hou Fei looked at the files and saw how the buildings were well furnished with facilities.

"Nah. Even if he did not suggest or approve it, I would have found a way to do so, some way or another. Hehe!" Qiu Yue replied with a grin on her face.

## **Chapter 689 First War Room Briefing – Part 2**

"How many are we expecting from the Royal Snake Battalions? Also, we can accommodate that 1000 over soldiers if need be." Qiu Yue queried, and Hou Fei was already shaking his head.

"Those thousand-odd soldiers stayed in Shenzhen, so accommodation for them is not an issue. However, if you were to take care of it...maybe another 4000 more? I do not wish to employ any extra, and that is more or less the maximum number of people I am willing to bring out. I can use the excuse of the 'North', but any more than that and the Royal Clan Heads will question my motives and make some investigation... Anyways, money is not an issue, you can credit me first, and those future weapons that I bring in will be at a discounted price."

"Hmm, Jin you okay with that? Or do you need money urgently for any upgrades?" Qiu Yue asked, but everyone knew how Jin spent money like drinking water.

"We are definitely getting more stuff from Hou Fei for the upcoming war against the Demon Rats, I say we take up his offer," Jin responded, and Hou Fei thanked his master for the renewed business.

"If that is the case, I will start making preparations to deploy the full number. Weapons wise... I will tell them to use their own stuff. Though I suppose letting them rent or buy them from your weapon store should be okay with you. Will that be sufficient?" Hou Fei needed clarification, and Qiu Yue had confirmed that the rooms would be ready by tomorrow.

"Fantastic. Sorry that I am unable to bring out any new weapons other than the ones I have purchased beforehand for you guys. The Dongguan-Huizhou intervention has my hands tight right now." Hou Fei kept emphasising it as if it would be an important issue for the monsters to take note in the future.

"It's fine. As long as Qiu Yue and Nubwort are okay with it, we can assign your troops to handle those artilleries." Jin suggested, but Hou Fei shook his head.

"Don't bother. They are too used to our modern high tech stuff. Letting them use those old artilleries will have the opposite effect and actually slow the rate of fire. In my opinion, it's best we leave it to the Orcs who must have already trained hard for it." Hou Fei replied while looking towards the direction of Nubwort.

"Indeed, I have trained them to be able to reach record reloading time as challenged by Hou Fei. Furthermore, I have achieved great results by adding in a goblin mage to take care of the dust in the artillery barrel so that we can handle repeated firing without too much interruption." Nubwort explained proudly.

"I believe they will be in a load of pain when they first teleport into the cave." Moloch chuckled when he recalled how vigorous the practices were that General Nubwort had made them go through.

"I have double checked the Fortress Golems and made a few adjustments to the firmware within the golems. They should respond better with the interfaces the System had tinkered with. We have also been hard at work to design a battery pack that could last half an hour longer," reported Ayse when it seemed like it was going to be a round table discussion of the developments for the city's defence.

"Amura Rei had also provided some good tips in the calibration of the joints allowing the golems to move 10% faster. It's a quick 30 minute fix, so I had already appointed the engineers to work around the clock to modify the existing golems. We also have a surplus of golems in stock, ready for replacement during the battle."

"Sorry to interrupt but before we go any further. Do I understand it correctly, that we are going to bring the fight to the Demon Army at the cave entrance to the shoreline?" Jin asked, and the group nodded their heads.

"We have prepared a major floating bridge that will lead to the currently empty floating platform. There are a number of prefabricated defences in place so as to impede the progress of the foot soldiers." Qiu Yue said as she switched the holographic console and revealed a forest-like terrain on the platform.

"Huh, trees and hilltops. I see, so we are not clashing with them outright." Jin commented as he zoomed out. From this bird's-eye view, it was clearly visible that the trees in the forests were systematically placed in an orderly fashion. Together with the hills, they were of great strategic value for their defending side."

"Only a fool would give up his advantage to fight on the enemies terms!" Nubwort took over. He explained how more clay statues had been created and hidden within the trees and bushes. (Some were literally embedded in the trees!) He also added that these trees were made from offshoots of Shu, the Sakura Tree Treant, stating that they have some hidden properties to hinder the enemy.

"In addition, we have placed mechanical traps at numerous locations and demarcated them with the System's aid. So, the traps won't be activated unless they are triggered by the enemies. Lastly, we are constructing mobile forts with the help of Sandy to be placed in the floating platform. The map will be updated in the coming days."

"To add on, the Wyvern Goblin Knights Battalion commanded by me will monitor the skies. We are unfortunately not enough to establish air superiority, but our anti air defences should be able to make

up most of our downfall." Wyrstriker stated while also showing the upgrades the Wyvern knights had been put through. It was nearly short of modifying the wyverns biological make up.

The Wyvern Goblin Knights had been equipped with mobile rocket boosters based on Ayse's Lost Tech, so they did not emit ignition. Instead, the boosters used air pressure as a way to increase their speed.

At the same time, the Wyvern Goblin Knights were equipped with the very same rune weapons that the Orcs were using except theirs was more advanced to cover the demand of versatility. Their lances could be changed to a variety of ranged weapons such as a sniper rifle, an RPG rocket or heavy machine gun ideal for dogfights. Because of this, the Wyverns themselves were equipped with a neck bracelet that held a different assortment of ammunition.

Thus, each and every Wyvern Knight was developed akin to a WW2 fighter plane. (Or perhaps even more capable than that!)

In fact, Wyrstriker felt that such a comparison was an understatement, especially when he was pushing the limits of his Knights to the extreme. It was to the point that Nubwort felt his hellish training for his foot soldiers was a walk in the park.

Wyrstriker made them perform day and night training of dive bombs, sharp curves, intense dogfights that lasted for more than half an hour with live firing as well as the handling of G force from the rocket boosters

Knowing that Jin did not have many air units to pit against the demon army, Wyrstriker felt that he needed his Wyvern Goblin Knights to become one of the decisive factors against the rumoured Dragon Devils which Moloch spoke highly off.

The Spear Goblin not only wanted to lift that worry off the ground forces but to make the demons acknowledge the Wyvern Knights as the true rulers of the skies. (or dungeon ceiling..?)

### **Chapter 690 First War Room Briefing - Final**

"They will either try to kill us all and if that does not seem to work, opting to directly rush for the Dungeon Core is an option for them. We have a second contingency plan for exactly that kind of situation." Qiu Yue continued.

At that point in time, Moloch could not help but get a broad grin on his face and take over: "The System has not only finished analysing the aura of Wolte's broken Dungeon Core but also able to replicate and emit a similar magical signature. This way, we're able to place a fake Dungeon Core in every non essential floating platform. Meanwhile, we'll be hiding the real one underwater and suppressing its own signal, forcing them to split up their armies."

"But knowing King Baal, he will eventually realise what we're doing and split the sea open to get back the Dungeon Core, even though it means little to him."

"Still, that lesson will come at a heavy price." Commander Zieg of the Dark Templars commented. "All the demons we kill will essentially become our backbone against those pesky rats in the Farming World."

Thus, the Dark Templars will place their life to cut down as many recruits as possible for the next upcoming war."

Wolte added that Zieg and the Dark Templars were able to learn how to operate the Sherman Tanks built from Hou Fei's blueprints. But unlike the one used in the Goblin World, the current iteration of Sherman Tanks was vastly improved by Ayse with the aid of Lost Tech. And she wasn't the only one who had been tinkering with these vehicles. As the Lead Researcher, Ayse had ordered Weslie, the inventor of Steam Tech, to use her past designs to readjust the barrels and firepower output.

In fact, they believed the new version of Sherman Tanks were as powerful as the modern Leopard Tanks that Hou Fei's troops were using. Thus, Ayse decided to change the name of the tank for dramatic effect to Sherman Tank EX... However, the Dark Templars had no interest in following her example and called them Shermies instead. (Especially when Wolte demanded them to treat their tanks as their wives or husbands.)

"Will the domes break apart if King Baal really does split open the sea?" Jin could not fathom the cost of repairing the domes and the buildings on them. "What if he used some world wrecking magic and destroyed everything that we had built so far?"

"That is where the emergency barrier comes in." Moloch offered, but Jin was not convinced.

"That might work one time, but what if he's able to cast it more than once? How can we prevent that? Judging from how Moloch had been describing him, I believe he'll be hell bent on getting it before deciding to destroy everything else. It will be folly for us to make him invade the underwater domes." Jin commented, and everyone fell silent for a while. To an extent, Qiu Yue had been optimistic that it would not devolve into such a scenario. Still, Jin did not share such sentiments, especially after his minion's encounter with Queen Mab.

"To be honest, it was - erm - a little hard to plan the defences if we need to take in all sorts of encounters. At some point, we have to make plans for what we can reasonably expect to deal with..." Qiu Yue tried to make an excuse on the spot, but she could see that Jin was not too pleased with the answer.

"Never mind. We still have five days, right?" Jin asked for clarification and Moloch nodded his head. "Make a makeshift fortress dome and place it at the highest floating platform. Rig it in a way that if our defences fail us, the platform will automatically explode and smash into our city's ocean surface." Jin said but suddenly stop in his tracks.

"No wait, devise a method to manually activate the detonation if needed just in case of something unforeseen happens. Like you know, some bat shit crazy elite jumps straight for the dungeon core, skipping every defence we have in place. Also, station the Deep Ones and Mr Derpy on sea patrol duty and we'll let time decide what will happen." Jin commanded.

"I see..." Kraft got where this was going after hearing Jin's suggestion. "By doing that, you're distracting King Baal from the underwater cities, and instead he'll assume that all you have are the floating platforms. So, he'll most likely either create a path straight to the dome defence platform. Or perhaps destroy the rest of the floating platforms and drop them into the sea for a massive amount of land to

reach the dome. In that case, might I suggest to have more of these failsafe devices to increase our chances that he might not catch onto it."

"Maybe, he has some pesky giant that will drag the dome to the shore for him." Ayse theorised, and both Demon Lords thought about it for a second to see if it was probable.

"You guys get the idea, and we will use that emergency barrier on magic spells that focus on destroying our cities in the sea. Ayse, prepare a sort of floatation device for the Fortress Golems so they can still work if they drop down into the ocean. If need be, drag Rei and Weslie into the picture."

"That's rather demanding, but I like the idea of reducing our losses. Don't want our golems to be mere deadweights once out of their guard posts. I will get to it." Ayse waved her hand, and she was teleported out of the war room. After she left, Half Ghoul Lord Derek wished to add his opinion into the whole defence operation.

"While I do agree that Jin's idea is fantastic in cutting losses, we cannot discount the preparations that Qiu Yue did for the Sea City Domes. It's best to prepare for the worst of the worst. If Jin's plan is insufficient in delaying the army to retreat, because realistically speaking, we cannot defeat them all, I will like to suggest one more contingency plan...or rather the backup of all backups."

"Then I believe you already have a suggestion in mind?" Jin queried with much curiosity. He too knew his plan could only buy his defenders that much time.

"I assume all of us must be aware that Mr Derpy is a fragment of a God in their world. However, I doubt anyone has ever seen how powerful he was exactly, and that made me curious about his abilities. He never had the chance to showcase his powers to the fullest at almost every junction. But as part of the third contingency plan and Jin's introduction of Mr Derpy as part of the sea patrol, I can safely say we should continue with Qiu Yue's defence plan with the aid of Mr Derpy."

"You've been able to get a grasp of his powers?" Qiu Yue asked as she tried pressing for it and yet he did not wish to divulge any information on it.

"I happened to have a glimpse of knowledge, and when I confronted him with it, he made me sign a pact not to reveal anything. However, that can't stop me from recommending him for the third contingency plan. All I can ask is for you all to trust him." Derek pleaded, and Jin was not too comfortable with it. Leaving everything to an unknown variable left a bad taste in his mouth since there was enough of it on the current table.

"Does User wish for the System to enforce the Loyalty order on Derek to make him tell you everything? As of now, the Monster App remained censored at the request of the monster." The System spoke out loud for everyone to hear as if it was a reminder of who was in charge of the area.

It however made Jin stunned for a moment before he shook his head.

"We all have some secrets of our own. Even I sometimes kept things from my colleagues or minions. It would be hypocritical for me to demand you to be completely transparent while I wasn't. So, I say it's fair game. Fine, I will leave the third contingency plan to you, Derek. Please do not disappoint any of us. Qiu Yue, please work in what I've designed and help Derek revise the third contingency later. Please get



back to me afterwards. For now, dismissed." Jin said, and everyone quickly returned to do their respective work except for Hou Fei who had been waiting to speak with the dungeon supplier.