

## **Dungeon S 971**

### **Chapter 971 Royal Zodiac Clan Duel Challenge.**

Royal Zodiac Clan Duel Challenge.

A name dull enough that it was easily forgotten. Yet, the simplicity in its name was also a testimony to the straightforwardness of the challenge. A ceremonial duel without any tricks or facades and its sole purpose were to facilitate one condition.

Granting the winner the territory of the loser.

The rules were just as simple as the name implied. The challenger would throw in their animal statue chess piece as a sign of declaration, and the targeted party would have to accept unless they had the backing of another Royal Zodiac Clan willing to block the declaration.

As one of the first ground rules set by the Jade Emperor following the betrayal of the Panda Clan, it was a privilege reserved for direct family members of the Royal Zodiac Clans serving as a sort of legal justification to seize the property of others by betting their own.

With the mass disappearance of the Panda Elders, the Panda Conglomerate had been absorbed bit by bit on a day to day basis. It would not be wrong to claim that the Royal Zodiac Clans influence of today was all based on seizing the Panda Clan's solid foundation. Thus, the System had a vested interest in righting this wrong, by taking things back now that such an opportunity had presented itself.

The Tiger Brothers each had a wooden version of the official Royal Zodiac Statue Piece, which displayed them holding partial territories or industries belonging to the Royal Zodiac Tiger Clan. These official duel pieces had been sanctified in the exact manner that the Jade Emperor had ordained, so the challenge was considered as a type of Heaven's Will.

It took many centuries for the Royal Zodiac Clans to come together once more and sign a treaty agreeing that it was more 'honourable' to negotiate over these regions rather than continue with the 'barbaric' ways of fighting like in the olden days. (They basically were sick of the disorganised mess of acquiring one territory only to lose it the very next week)

Once a challenge was issued, any outside interference was forbidden. Only the challenged party was allowed to change the terms of the duel. Without the backing of a Royal Zodiac Clan, surrender and immediately accept the loss of the duel or fight back and keep their property intact. But those with a Royal Zodiac Clan backing, they not only have the ability to fight back but win the challenger's territory too.

In fact, Yang Rong's action of throwing in his wooden piece was merely an act. As long as Jin refused the younger brother's wish to participate, the fight would become one on one. (Something the younger brother assumed Jin was unaware of)

One might want to pity this poor tiger's father... since he had tried to clean his minor clans and now his children were fighting this dungeon supplier whose powers seem to be a mystery despite constant surveillance... But what Jin did not know was that Yuan Ba had been the one to pull the strings which had led to the current situation!

Jin's new elevated status made it impossible to acquire the Tree Mall through force alone. Any Royal Zodiac Clan that might attempt such a foolish thing out in the open would experience a concentrated strike from the other clans in retaliation... and yet the Tiger Lord had schemed a possible way around it. And that was despite portraying the intention to protect it by having the Tiger Triad flexing its muscles to prevent other underworld triads from being in Jin's territory. (In hindsight toward his scheme, it was as if he was prowling, wanting to keep this Tian Gong district as his own.)

The leading Minor Clan had always showered the Tiger Brothers with gifts and tributes to stay in their favour while paying a reasonable amount of tax, making them one of the regular funders of the Clan. Were it not for them bullying any new blood, they would have been the ideal Minor Clan.

During this year's Clan Meet, Yuan Ba had therefore presented Jin with the opportunity to teach them a lesson in his stead. But given his sons' characters, it had been a given that they would not take it lightly. With his sons agitated enough to protect the Roaring Tigers, it gave the Tiger Clan's Head a justification for their rash actions in front of Jin as well as the other Royal Zodiac Clans.

This way he could continue to play both sides.

Should Jin win, there was no loss on his side since he had no Royal Zodiac Clan backing him, taking his property away (Especially more so when he was the honorary member of the Tiger Clan in his point of view.) At the very most, Yuan Ba would stay impressed and pretend to punish his kids for being insolent trying to fight with the Dungeon Supplier. In some way, it was a twisted kind of bonding session Yuan Ba had presented to his family to get to learn about the dungeon supplier while trying to learn more of Jin's powers.

And in case the Tiger Brothers would win, he would gain possession of the Tree Mall. He would pretend not to keep it and exchange the life debt he owed Jin by offering him a similar deal where he would pay them tribute, only he was more interested in Jin's technology over any amount of cash! That way, he could subtly squeeze Jin even more despite the kindness he shows.

Oh, what joy, it's a win win situation.

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"Do you need my help?" Suddenly Jin heard the question from the open System channel. He recognised the voice immediately as Kong Rong's.

"The System just briefed me about the details of being challenged to a Royal Zodiac Clan Duel Challenge... so I'm guessing you're offering to use your Dragon Clan Statue Chesspiece to help me block the challenge?" Jin queried.

"That's the jist of it. Hu Yuan Ba is not as simple as he may look. The current Tiger Lord is one of the most cunning Tiger Clan Heads that even my grandmother acknowledges. I believe you've been dancing on the palm of his hand ever since you have accepted to massacre his own people." Kong Rong replied.

"While I appreciate the help, if you block it for me, wouldn't you reveal that you've compromised your mission of removing me out of the equation?" Jin questioned.

"Don't worry, I have long since prepared certain contingency plans of my own for such a case. You think I would leave myself vulnerable upon being subjected to such a truth?" Kong Rong answered.

"Actually, Tiny Dragon's help is not required for the fight itself. What the System is about to do might cause trouble for Tiny Dragon more than his current plan." The System suddenly interjected its opinion.

"What do you mean exactly?" Both of them asked continuously, yet while Jin continued to talk in his mind, the two Tiger Brothers had had enough about being ignored. While the elder brother remained calm, the younger brother's temper kicked in.

"Oei! Give us a damn answer. Either fight us now or surrender! I'd suggest you better surrender since you seem to be worried about the incoming hurt and embarrassment! Hahaha!" Yang Rong taunted him into action. If one of his bodyguards would attack them, it would be even better since they would win by default.

"Forgive me, I was just considering whether both your territories would actually be worth it," Jin stated to buy some time while trying to remain calm upon listening to the System's explanation that made Kong Rong go nuts.

"Worth it?! What the hell are you talking about?!" Yang Rong exploded and started to collect his chi into his inner core.

In the meantime, Yang Ling watched all the commotion and decided that the situation would be unfair to Jin. She wanted to throw her own statue piece into the ring to even the odds out, however, when she took a few steps back and prepared for a huge jump, the surrounding bodyguards suddenly tapped on her shoulders and restrained her down. That was when she saw her father's face.

With a glance, she knew that twisted display of cunningness under that stonewalled face.

"You! You PROMISED you would NEVER trick me again! How dare you USE ME LIKE THAT?! How can you do that to your life saviour?! Just like a leopard doesn't change his spots, your stripes never change too!" Yang Ling cried out in defiance.

"JIN GET OUT!!!"

"Sorry my little Tigress, but while that guy saved my life and yours indirectly, I cannot allow you to interfere right now." Yuan Ba said solemnly.

## **Chapter 972 A Chess Piece**

"JIN!!! IT'S A TR-" The Tiger Clan's bodyguards knocked her out by blocking a chi point near her neck as she tried to scream again. Yuan Ba was impressed that his daughter seemed to have seen through what he was plotting.

"It's for the greater good of our clan, my dearest daughter. You might not like it, but one day you should understand that this was my way of taking care of you three." Yuan Ba thought to himself as he stared down the garden once more. The shout had made everyone in the garden look up to see the angry face of the Tiger Clan Head turn into one long smirk.

Yang Hui who had been the only one in the know similarly did not hide his grin anymore while his brother looked shocked as the realisation hit him that everything must have been part of their father's plot. He had never liked being played by their father and his schemes, but right now he was fully focused on dealing with the dungeon supplier who finally seemed to take action... by searching his pockets for something?

"You sure about this? There is no going back if you reveal yourselves this way." Kong Rong warned Jin through the System Channel.

"I've done a bit of thinking, and I believe I should be able to handle the pressures of society now. I'm definitely far from being fully prepared, but whatever happens, I have something to fall back on. My minions and family will stay by my side. Not to mention, I have you too. Heh."

"You make it sound like I am your guardian angel." Kong Rong chuckled and sighed while he looked at his monitor that was receiving the live feed from a drone. "Very well, do as you like. Let me make some arrangements on my side to ensure that you get some backing for the aftermath."

"Thank you, my Senior," Jin said through the System with a quick snicker before looking up towards Yang Rong and Yang Hui, who were still very confident that Jin had no way out of the trap that they created for him.

"Very well, if you so desperately want to bet your territories for a fight with me instead of going against my guards, I shall play along. An eye for an eye." Jin addressed the Tiger Brothers and pulled out a storage ring. In an instant, he summoned out a platinum looking statue in the shape of a Panda. Like the others, it looked as if it was a chess piece and all of them stared at it.

The cuteness of a Panda yawning while having its paws on a bamboo shoot, crystalised with platinum metal. Unlike the wooden tiger chess pieces, even the fur on the Panda was heavily detailed, and a simple form of shading had been applied to give the Panda that sense of realism. Jin later employed some Maqi onto it, and the Panda Statue chess piece could even move its mouth, closing it for a while before it returned to a wide yawning mouth.

Yuan Ba focused his chi into his eyes to see what Jin was holding. A platinum statue piece? It looked to be made from the same material as his own platinum tiger statue piece, yet that was something only Clan Heads were eligible to use. And when he saw Jin applying some chi to make its mouth move, he could not believe it at all.

"What? Impossible! It has to be fake!" Yuan Ba uttered as he leaned forward and grabbed the railing. However, before he could do anything to stop the duel, he saw his two sons had already used their chi to bring up the wooden tiger statues and call upon the heavens to invoke the challenge.

Immediately, two large tiger silhouettes appeared from the statues and burst wide into the skies as if they were going to oversee the match. Jin did the same, and surprisingly a colossal panda silhouette filled the sky. After which, it started fighting the two tigers upon its emergence. Although it was a two on one, the Panda was three times bigger than the two tigers, and it was already overpowering them with its size alone.

"Preposterous!" Yuan Ba's mouth was left wide open when he watched the Panda silhouette suppress the two tigers and call upon the Will of the Heavens, the match had been set between the Royal Zodiac Tiger clans and the Royal Zodiac Panda Clan.

This became all the more clear when an actual representative from the Gods Realm came down to oversee the match between the clans as had been officiated since the olden days.

Derek, who had remained at the sidelines, became quite lively when he saw the large celestial being. He recognised him as one of the gods that had taken his world away. "It appears they do intervene in your world too, master." Derek pointed out, and Jin took extra notice of their judge.

"From what I gather, he might be like a worker ant for the Gods. Then again, this is probably just like an automated clone body. Still, it does have some of the powers of a god, despite it being extremely limited. Probably only to oversee this match." Moloch reasoned as he was a Demon Lord and had a few clashes with such Gods when he was younger.

"Don't do anything rash. You're free to collect data but nothing else. We do not need to complicate things with innocents in the picture." Jin cautioned, causing Derek and Moloch to continue to monitor from afar.

The God that was standing in the middle of the three animal silhouettes was wearing ancient Chinese armour, resembling the depicted form of Er Lang Hu, the War God with three eyes. His black battle armour was adorned with layers of intricate patterns pertaining to the twelve Royal Zodiac.

This Godly Representative had been depicted in the journals of previous Clan Heads. However, Yuan Ba noticed that unlike in those illustrations or descriptions the representative was now also holding onto a feathered fan with the image of bamboo forest and Pandas hiding within it as if indicating that the rumoured thirteenth Royal Zodiac did exist.

"As per the Will of the Heavens, I have acknowledged the authenticity of both sides' chess pieces. I shall bear witness and act as judge over this duel. The challenged Panda Clan has agreed to the addition of another challenger, and in case of his victory, he shall be compensated further due to his handicap." The Godly Representative announced in a booming voice. "All non-participants, move away this moment!"

Jin's minions jumped out of the way as a rectangular barrier rose from the ground. However, not all the Minor Clan cultivators managed to move out of the way in time, and thus the Godly Representative used his Feather Fan to magically move them out of the field. Granted, they did not have a nice landing, but it did the job.

"You may now proceed." The Godly Representative was prompt to get the match started.

"What the hell?! Father! This is not what we agreed on!" Yang Hui shouted when he finally realised the situation he was in. His calm demeanour completely gone, replaced by a scowl on his face. Yang Rong decided to not care and rushed forward.

His chi was all focused, and he was ready to blast forth, but Jin had been waiting for his attack.

## Chapter 973 The Tiger Duellist

Hu Yang Rong did not fully comprehend the implication of this dungeon supplier turning out to really be a Clan Head of the Royal Zodiac Panda Clan. After all, it was a mythical clan that supposedly had perished because of various reasons.

While there were no official records withstanding, some nasty rumours claimed it was because the Jade Emperor had betrayed them. Others stated that the Panda Clan had chosen to split from the Royal Zodiacs to live on their own and over the years had simply declined into non-existence. There were also many similar rumours pointing in that direction, accusing the Panda Clan of going under as a result of inner strife at some point after the defeat of the Banned Emperor, although the exact date varied wildly.

No one was able to learn the exact truth with the exception of the oldest person in each clan as one of the secrets that needed to be passed. Even so, the 'truth' had been distorted quite a number of times throughout the centuries to the point that it had become a myth.

Not to mention, the System's time-reversal had also destroyed certain elements of the Panda Clan's presence in this timeline. Only extraordinary existences like the Royal Zodiac Archivist who had the Dragon Ley Lines to keep her safe from the time manipulation had been exempt from it.

The pressure of a supposedly skewed fight suddenly turning into a serious fight for territory had seemingly overwhelmed the elder brother, yet Yang Rong was less fazed. What mattered to him was that this haughty dungeon supplier had been crazy enough to act as if he owned the place and thereby injured his sponsor, the Roaring Tigers.

"Intermediate Fist Arts, Flying Tiger Burn Strike!" Yang Rong shouted as he came straight for Jin with his fist burning with chi and to a certain extent, passion.

Passion to kill this Panda Young Master in order to keep his property intact. His fist was enveloped in the shape of a Tiger Head moving forth with its open maw, ready to get a bite out of that juicy target.

Still, Jin was not moving a single inch, seemingly prepared to take the hit straight on and thus Yang Rong was readying himself for the next move. That seemingly straightforward punch was just a combo starter where the subsequent hits would be even harder, leading to Advanced and Epic Arts.

It had been the downfall of many who had underestimated the simplicity of the Flying Tiger Burn Strike, only to get destroyed in one fell swoop by the full Arts Combo earning him the nickname of Tiger Duellist.

"Heh, this guy won't even know what hit him." Hao Pai thought as he knew that Jin was not prepared to even block the attack. However, the dungeon supplier did ultimately step backwards. The only problem was that when Jin did, it seemed as if he tripped on to something and fell back, which surprised the Tiger Duellist. As a trained martial artist, he was able to keep sufficient momentum as he tilted his punch downwards before he missed the striking point of his punch. While the strength of the attack would be weakened, it still should not pose too much of a difficulty in maintaining the combo starter.

Suddenly he felt a sharp jab at his nether regions even though there was no visible movement or attack intent coming from Jin. Still, that sharp jab was enough to throw him off balance, and the punch failed to connect. With a wide open opportunity available to him, Jin shamelessly took the chance to summon

a gun out and shoot at the Tiger Duellist. Who says that he had to fight on equal terms with a martial arts artist? All the Godly Representative said was to fight until one surrendered or killed. Besides, the Tiger Brothers were the ones who provoked Jin to bring out whatever he had. (Which obviously, he didn't. Why bother risking showing his enemies all his trump cards when he could hide them?)

Yang Rong could not believe the shrewdness and trickery of the Panda Young Master when he felt the sharp pain through his nether regions. Yet, he barely managed to swirl to the right to avoid getting shot in his head. He then enveloped his body with chi as every other advanced chi Duellist would do when fighting against ranged projectiles.

Yang Hui decided to accept the harsh reality of the current fight and moved into action when he saw Jin continue to fire his pistol nonchalantly at his brother. The dungeon supplier had noticed his efforts and promptly changed his target to Yang Hui instead, giving Yang Rong the respite needed to charge forward again.

The knowledge that Jin was a gun user, made things easy for the Tiger Brothers as they knew most ranged users' offensive powers relied on their weapon and its accuracy. All they had to do was cripple the user before the killing bullets could reach them.

Yang Hui was also a close-quarter combatant, but he used katars to simulate the sweeping strikes of a tiger granting him better reach and more devastating killing power. Using an Advanced Royal Zodiac Tiger Technique, he boosted the strength in his legs for an increase in agility and speed so that the gunshots would not be an issue while moving towards Jin.

With two close combat cultivators closing in on him, Jin merely brought out a second pistol, one that was smaller in size but still packed a punch and continued to shoot to distract the two brothers. For those who were in the know, they could clearly identify the two pistols he was holding as transformations of Bam and Boo. It was only a matter of time until he transformed those two back into swords to fight against them in a close quarters fight.

"Take this, you scumbag!" Yang Rong shouted as he switched his starting attack into a version of the Intermediate Fist Arts, Flying Tiger Burn Strike that utilised his legs. The Tiger Duellist jumped and the chi he possessed turned into Tiger Head now enveloping his right leg. This time Yang Hui was coming in from the side with his own Katar Arts activated too.

"Advanced Katar Arts, Bloody Tiger Fangs!" Yang Hui shouted, and his katars turned into red hot blades going straight for Jin's vital organs. He utilised the way his brother attacked since a person could only evade his kick in a limited amount of ways.

Not to mention, Jin had been cornered into the erected barrier set by the Godly Representative, and there was not much space to run away. Even Yuan Ba could not see any way how Jin could get out of that situation unless he had some way to teleport himself.

However, the Panda Young Master continued to shatter their expectations.

This time around, he did not evade Yang Rong and the kick impacted against his chest. Similarly, Yang Hui managed to pierce his katars into Jin's chest. Yang Rong was so baffled that he did not even continue with his subsequent Arts Combo... until the silhouette of Jin disappeared.

The real Jin was right behind the silhouette they stabbed, and both of them found a gun aiming at their foreheads. With a quick smirk, Jin pulled the trigger on both guns.

\*BANG\* \*BANG\*

## Chapter 974 Metamorph

Both brothers, each only had a split second to try to evade. Yang Hui at least had the benefit of his agility having been boosted previously, but Yang Rong was not that lucky.

The only form of protection he had was the chi he used as pseudo armour, yet the shot was nearly a point blank. He did his best to tilt his head slightly, leading to the bullet blasting his ear off instead of his head. The pain and buzzing sound from the pistol made him stumble backwards to maintain balance and regain a sense of the current situation. The echoing of the aftermath rang in his head, the searing pain of the bullet on his skin might be too much for an average person, but he was a seasoned fighter.

Tolerating it was not an issue for him.

The spectators were all bewildered and racked their brains, trying to figure out how Jin had managed to fool everyone. Even Yuan Ba had never seen such a high-level defensive trick before, despite being exposed to many styles during his life. He had thoroughly researched the Panda Styles to advise his eldest son on what to look out for, and this was never one in the books. (His youngest son had been left out for fear his impulsiveness would reveal the plan too early.)

"Honestly, how did Jin do that? He literally broke off as if he was coming out of a husk and let them target him." Lynn questioned on the System Channel, and his minions all had their theories, yet nobody had a clear answer. The System appeared to have been waiting for anticipation to grow before it finally answered without disturbing Jin.

"According to System's deduction, this was a display of a high level of manipulation of Maqi. User must have created an Astral Projection that looked real enough to fool everyone. Not only that, he maintained the density of his Astral Projection while using his Maqi at the right moment to move away from the attacks." The System explained though Jin's minions questioned how he was able to hold enough Maqi to create such a high-density Astral Projection without letting the opponents know about it.

Yet, the System was a bit off the mark from its deduction. Jin had actually used the very same method he had used previously to create the sharp jab against Yang Rong. All he did was do a slight trip backwards, prompting him to activate his Maqi to create this Astral Projection. And with Green Wind Panda Maqi, he floated back with ease during the tripping, allowing him to hide behind after the attack.

Jin did not stop shooting and with his Inverse Eyes activated, he was able to predict where they were going to land, making it even more difficult for both the Tiger Brothers to evade.



It was then that Yang Rong decided that his conventional method of fighting against their opponent would not be sufficient. Jin had proven to be more than just a simple snobbish young master. He had the necessary skills to back him up, especially when he noticed how accurate his shots were.

Yet, Yang Hui just felt humiliated by Jin. He was aware that from what they knew about Jin, these guns were not his main way of fighting. It was like he was indirectly taunting the Tiger Brothers and telling them that they were only worth bullet shots and not his actual skills.

"I will show you that I am not messing around!" Yang Hui called out as he released his cultivation aura. Two Tigers silhouette like projectiles sprawling out of his body and they rushed towards their prey. Jin was able to move away quick enough and later saw behind the Eldest Brother was a massive Tiger silhouette to portray his Grade 10 and a smaller tiger silhouette beside it to show that he was Grade 11.

Jin now focused on Yang Hui, who had started a metamorphosis process and was gaining stripes on his legs and hands. His teeth turned into fangs, and his eyes were filled with ferocity staring at Jin.

Yang Rong was also sick of dealing with the way too accurate bullets and activated his own chi aura. Despite being the younger brother, he revealed a massive Tiger with two smaller tiger silhouettes, showing that he was actually a grade higher than his elder brother.

"Epic Royal Zodiac Tiger Technique, Steel Fur Skin!" The Tiger Duellist shouted, and he turned all greyish with a shiny matte all over his body. There were faint stripes on him too, indicating that he had metamorphosed as well and with even better control compared to his sibling.

"Steel skin and metamorph ability, huh? This is starting to feel nostalgic fighting with tigers. Let's see if our experimental product is working as we hoped." Jin raised his watch, and a bullet clip was released out from the storage watch. Some of his minions were wondering why he needed to change his pistol clip when Bam and Boo worked via his chi.

"Ooooooh! Looks like we might get another twist in the fight!" Ayse said excitedly since she had recognised what he pulled out. After all, she was the one to create them. "Seriously, I was getting worried if he was too busy to try it out despite meeting such a good target! It's no longer experimental in my eyes! He just failed to approve it!" The last part was said in a pouting voice.

Yang Rong did not bother to evade the bullet shot that Jin shot and just took it straight on.

His Epic Technique was enough to even resist machine guns with high penetrative power much less a chi induced bullet. But something unexpected occurred...

The bullet managed to pierce the Steel Fur Skin even though it was just the tip of it, making Yang Rong feel quite a bit of pain. Accompanied with it was a blast of fire yet it only scorched a portion of the armoured skin which was non-consequential.

At that point, the Tiger Duellist thought that his Steel Fur Skin might not yet have been fully activated, yet Jin's next shot proved otherwise. To make things worse, he had aimed at precisely the same place again, and this time Yang Rong could feel the pain of the bullet within his abdominal area.

Not only that, the blast of fire ensued, this time causing the rest of his insides to burn as the Steel Fur Skin tried to close the hole that Jin had just created. Yang Rong toppled onto the floor, coughing blood, and to a certain degree, puffs of smoke emerged from his mouth too.

But to show weakness immediately after showing his cultivation was truly an insult. The reminding minor clan members were all depending on him to win this fight. Not to mention, his territory was at stake— one which he took great effort to earn it from his father as compared to his other siblings. However, as he tried to stand up, he felt the fiery sensation pulsating through his entire body, as the fire boiled his circulatory systems, paralysing him for a moment.

"Heh, I did not expect this to be so effective. Well done, Ayse. I definitely approve this for further developments." Jin praised her via the System and Ayse gleed very widely.

"I am glad you like the weapon research team's development. It was rather easy to replicate since you had the actual product. We've used your sludge to further improve the firepower. Therefore part of this achievement partially belongs to you as well, master." Ayse said as she saw the System bless her with additional System Points to put the other elemental bullets into development.

The truth of these bullets was that they were Ayse's recreation of the ones Ming had left behind when Jin unlocked the series of inheritance gifts. They had been in the same box as the Anti Demon Manual and given that Jin had used these Ruby Fire Bullets before against an imaginary tiger, he had figured it would be useful against a real metamorphosed tiger too.

After all, the metamorphosis was not too different from demonising oneself to become stronger. Grandma Yuan would be proud if she saw Jin utilise his knowledge of Demon Exorcism in such a way. Naturally, that info came from his two week crash course with Ming when they had their random chats and lectures.

But for now, it's time to put the raging proud tigers down, one bullet at a time.

## **Chapter 975 Tiger Fist Combo Arts**

With his younger brother at the mercy of Jin, Yang Hui jumped in front of his brother and ate the next bullet for him. His fully metamorphosed beast form, unfortunately, had an even higher level of demon affinity, causing him to take extra damage from this shot. The bullet went through his right chest and exited his body cleanly.

And the bullet seemed to add insult to his feeble attempt of him protecting his brother even further by coursing out of his body and ricocheted on to hit Yang Rong's shoulder.

However, the brunt of the Ruby Fire explosion had been reserved for Yang Hui, and it had made a mess of his right lung. Unlike Yang Rong, who had Steel Fur Skin to soften the damage, the explosion was clear for everyone to see as his chest skin ruptured and blood burst out impactfully, causing him to asphyxiate from the gush of blood coming out of his throat.

"Idiot, why did you do that?!" Yang Rong shouted as he desperately tried to use his chi to close his brother's wounds instead of his own. The relationship between the brothers was complicated due to their father's favouritism of his firstborn son. Still, they had gone through thick and thin together, especially during training sessions and there was still a sense of camaraderie instead of familial kinship.

"Can't let the better one of us two die that easily, right? We've barely shown this Panda our fangs, and you are already down on the floor. Father must be disappointed with us." Yang Hui uttered in a weak voice. Jin didn't like to interrupt such a heartfelt moment, but he was not giving them any chance to recuperate. After all, his accumulated work was still at stake.

"Sorry, but you will have to continue this conversation another time," Jin said as he ruthlessly shot another Ruby Fire Bullet aimed between Yang Hui's eyes. Only instead of evading, Yang Rong punched the ground, causing a portion of the garden brick path to disperse and create a temporary distraction as he pulled his brother further back.

Sadly, the arena was limited to prevent the contestants of a duel from running away. Although the Ruby Fire Bullet had been wasted exploding among the brick debris, Jin had more at his disposal. The dungeon supplier continued to fire from afar with Boo first while transforming Bam into a weapon he had seen being used in the Farming World.

A Gunblade.

With three more Ruby Fire Bullets in his Gunblade, he rushed forward the moment the bricks and explosion settled down... only for the Tiger Brothers to have disappeared from his sight.

"Invisibility technique?! Damn, I thought you tigers would fight me from the front after ganging up on me. Didn't think you'd use these nasty tricks." Jin taunted them out loud. He quickly focused his chi into his Inverse Eyes to scan the area, hoping to have a sense where the tiger brothers could have hidden. Any delay in finding them will definitely give them an advantage. Thus, the System also assisted him and true enough, Yang Rong had come close to striking Jin while remaining camouflaged among the environment.

Advanced Tiger Technique, Stalking Saunter of the Tiger was a skill that allowed the Tiger Brothers to blend into the environment for either a quick escape or more often to set up an ambush for their enemies. In this instance, Yang Rong had used it to perform both these actions though it did not take Jin by surprise.

Instead, the muscle memory from Ming's intensive training kicked in, and he tripped sideways. His body somehow managed to 'sense' the impending danger and acted as such to save Jin. The Tiger Duellist was irritated that he could not read Jin's movement yet again as the fall had been too abrupt.

"Who the fuck can be so clumsy in movement and yet still beat us into this state?! What kind of fucked up situation is this?!" Yang Rong wondered as he forcefully twisted his ankle and changed the angle of his punch once more. He was not sure whether Jin had found a way to see him coming despite the camouflage or if he had been just lucky to trip at that exact moment.

All he needed was to get a hit onto Jin's body, alas, there had been no chance to do so, making him extremely furious. Yet, as he missed Jin again, he suddenly felt a stinging cut rising up through his torso area. "What the -? How did I?!" And instantly, the same burning sensation enveloped his entire torso, burning him alive.

This time, the fire was even stronger and more vibrant as he could feel his entire body wriggle in pain despite the Steel Fur enhancement and with valid reason. Jin had further enhanced the Ruby Fire Bullet with his Panda Black Fire and the cut from the Gunblade had made sure it would impact deeply.

To make things worse, the Astral Projection that emerged from his tripping doubled the pain he suffered, allowing it to break the Steel Fur enhancement easily.

Jin did not stop there and did a quick side step and stabbed his blade into Yang Rong. But he found it a little too convenient when he did so, and hence immediately found out that Yang Rong was still battle ready, extremely determined to win the fight.

The Tiger Duellist grabbed on Jin's black blazer despite being engulfed in flames and with his right hand still charged with Chi, he sent it flying towards Jin's stomach.

"Flying Tiger Burning Strike!!!!" Yang Rong Roared as he did not care of the pain he was enduring right. If he didn't use this chance, he was unlikely to get another one.

With his perseverance, the gods seemed to be smiling down upon him, perhaps rewarding his struggle. The Tiger Duellist felt that his punch hit onto something hard and was ready to finally execute his deadly Arts Combo.

Now an explosive sound vibrated through the allocated arena, and Yang Rong did not stop for anything else. "Advanced Fist Arts! Triple Tiger Quartet Strikes!" Yang Rong exclaimed as he slammed his elbow towards Jin's face and the arms now moved lightning fast to execute the Arts Combo. The multiple attacks switched between finger jabs, palm strikes and wholesome punches to ensure that he blocked Jin's major chi points preventing him from any sort of retaliation.

"Epic Fist Arts, Slashes of the White Moon Tiger!" Next, Yang Rong focused chi on his nails, metamorphosing them to claws that were as sharp as steel swords and grabbed Jin up and flipped him. After being tricked once when he hit a dense silhouette of Jin, he now ensured that the other party would not get any chance to substitute himself against the Tiger Duellist. Upon flipping, he sent out his slashes out to cause Jin to be flying to the skies, and because of the impact of the attack, the minor clan members started to cheer loudly.

"Oof! that must hurt," Ayse said as they all saw Jin being pushed against gravity time and time again by the continuous number of slashes. With his last breath, Yang Rong shouted and temporarily, the sky turned black with a full moon out.

The Moon slowly descended and cut Jin at the center, visibly causing him to split into two. "Epic Fist Arts, Moon Descends into the Night." Yang Rong grinned when after he uttered out the Fist Arts name and saw two pieces of Jin falling and bleeding.

Seeing the entire chain of action scenes, his brother slowly came out of the camouflage and showed a victory fist to his brother.

Yuan Ba, who had been watching from the sideline, was delighted by the results. Not to mention he was elated that they emerged relatively safely out of this unexpected fight for territory. Even the Roaring Tigers were clapping their hands, congratulating Yang Rong for having restored the Tiger's honour.

However, the Tiger Duellist noticed something was amiss. While his side of the field was jumping with joy, the other side of the arena was not sad in the least. In fact, it was filled with chuckles. (All of them seem to have been influenced by Kraft's evil way of laughing0)

Only then did he realise that the Godly Representative had yet to say anything about the match being over. He just continued to oversee the arena.

It was too bad that by the time he realised it, it was too late.

## Chapter 976 Decisive Results

\*Schwing Schwing\*

An energised black chi slash flew at breakneck speed across the arena, and Yang Rong barely managed to duck. Yang Hui, on the other hand, had been too injured to move about much. His head fell to the ground and rolled down the broken garden pavement, with a look of shock edged onto his face. His body slowly fell to the ground, and blood from his neck stained the garden soil and brick path.

Meanwhile, the surviving brother placed his arms upwards in a blocking position while ensuring there was sufficient chi to break any follow up attack. However, the force of the next slash was so intense that it broke his chi barrier, causing him to be knocked back.

He was thankful that the impact allowed him to break out from the slash... until he found a sword pointing at his right eyeball. An inch? No, it was even closer. Probably less than a centimetre away. He felt that even blinking could cause him to lose his eyelid, forcing him to hold that involuntary movement.

"How did you manage to survive all the attacks and remain unscathed?" Yang Rong questioned in a barely audible whisper while he was trembling from the fear, focusing his will to not blink at all.

"The next words you utter from that prideful mouth of yours better be 'I surrender'. Anything else or any type of other movement and I will stab you before you can try anything funny." Jin declared decidedly. His tone made it clear that this was a non-negotiable ultimatum.

"Do y- ARGHHH" Yang Rong couldn't help his character and tried acting out in defiance. Alas, Jin had not been joking. There was not the least bit of hesitation when he pushed his sword into his eyes and the sword plunged through the skull and out of it.

Everyone who was at the scene was terrified to see Jin act so cruel and Yuan Ba was holding on to his railings very tightly while enduring the gruesome scene. There was no way for him to interfere in the current fight unless he wished to throw in his platinum tiger chess piece as collateral. He wouldn't do something so risky, at least not before he had figured out Jin's way of fighting. It was just too risky to place a bet on and possibly his entire clan's property.

"I already gave you a chance. You refused it." Jin said to the Tiger Duellist as he took his Gunblade out and shot once more into the very same place he had injured Yang Rong previously. Immediately, the Ruby Fire explosion took effect and the Steel Fur Skin enchantment slowly dissipated.

Just then, the Godly Representative raised his hand to pass judgement as if he had enough of the Panda's master sudden cruelty. Still, to his minions and colleagues, they believed it was justifiable since his one and only territory was at stake.

"The Panda Clan is victorious. The properties of Hu Yang Rong and Hu Yang Hui shall belong to Xie Jin with immediate effect. All profits and expenses shall be borne by the winner as of the coming hour. As the Heavens will it." The Godly Representative then slowly turned to Jin with a sly eye.

"We will communicate with your super entity to transfer the deeds and accounts expenses. The rest of the documents that you need will be human formality and dealt with by the losing party. Extra compensation shall be arranged by the Tiger's Clan Head as he fits and should you find it unsatisfactory, use your Super Entity to contact us. However, we doubt they would do that for they know the harsh punishment that followed through." The Godly Representative sent a transmission, fully implying that it knew about the existence of the System.

"How does he know about you?!" Jin suddenly went on guard as the Godly Representative placed the feathered fan towards his face, and with the ring of a bell ring, the arena disappeared. (Just as he did.)

The remaining Roaring Tigers quickly moved towards the severely injured Yang Rong to check his pulse. Unfortunately, he was already on his last breath, cursing Jin's name and vowing for revenge. Meanwhile, the dungeon supplier picked up his phone once more and it auto dialled to Yuan Ba.

"Shall I continue to clean up?" Jin asked. The question implied that Jin was ready to take on the Tiger Clan Head face to face if there were any more schemes waiting for him.

"You've done enough. I will transfer the full amount of money according to the guest list. Each and every one of them even if you did not clean them up. On top of that, the prize money meant for the Clan Meet will be given to you as promised. By tomorrow." Yuan Ba answered in a straight tone, but Jin could hear a tinge of bitterness and reluctance within his voice.

The Panda Clan Young Master strongly believed that the Tiger Lord might be scheming to get back on him someday.

But at least not today.

"Well then, I hope the next time we meet, it will be under better circumstances. Oh yeah, I nearly forgot, but I wish you a good new year." Jin said as he ended the call and nodded towards Yuan Ba silently.

The Royal Zodiac Tiger Clan Head returned to his office and made the arrangements to fulfil the Godly Representative's directive. There were dire consequences when not following the duel's proceedings and he'd rather lose those territories than suffer the wrath of the Godly Representative.

"Apologies Sir, but do you wish for me to prepare everything to resurrect Young Masters Yang Hui and Yang Rong immediately?" One of his main servants questioned him on the way.

"Later. Send them to the hospitals for checks first. I do not want them to come crying to me that they've become stupid or something like that. Do not disturb me for the rest of the day. Just put my dinner at the door when it is done." Yuan Ba replied with a resigned voice.

"Understood Sir. As for that Panda Clan Young Master, do you need me to get the police to arrest them?" The main servant questioned.

"On what grounds?◆◆◆◆ The Tiger Lord sounded a decade older. "He decided to play my game and revealed himself because he must have someone with high backing. Probably even much higher than me." Just as Yuan Ba opened the door, he saw someone sitting at his guest's chair.

"Good afternoon, Clan Head Yuan Ba." Kong Rong greeted him with a tip of his round hat.

"Awfully rude to not come by the main door?" Yuan Ba asked, as if it was not enough headache for him to deal with the territory exchange, now he had to contend with one of the nation's leading State Agents.

"I tried, but everyone seemed too occupied, so I decided to go by the side gate. Thankfully, one of your servants recognised me and kindly offered me in to have a seat first." Kong Rong said as he removed his hat as a courteous move.

The main servant was shocked to see the first son of the Royal Zodiac Dragon Clan in the seat and quickly asked if he needed tea. Kong Rong kindly refused but thanked him for the offer, while Yuan Ba quietly closed his doors to begin the discussion with Kong Rong.

As for Jin? Without a word, his bodyguards began walking behind him, and they quietly escorted him to the exit of the Tiger Clan's bloodied garden path. The rest of the surviving Roaring Tiger Cultivators kept their heads down as they heard the clobbering of the Pandas' footwear through the paths.

There were no insults, no laughing or anything. Just silence and footsteps shuffling away into the distance. It was as if the massacre they had left behind was not out of spite, but rather just business.

And as their aura diminished with distance, Hao Pai finally took a breather and broke down. He did not cry, but rather fell into despair after taking in the sights of his dead comrades. The people he had sent into their meaningless deaths just to show off.

"I am sorry...I am sorry brothers." Hao Pai mumbled as he stared at a bloodied sword near him. After much consideration, he used his chi to lift the sword up and sent it towards him, stabbing himself.

He knew there was no way of redeeming what had happened.

## **Chapter 977 Protection Ac**

The Tiger Clan Meet might have been primarily for the Royal Zodiac Tiger Clan, but several scouts from the other Royal Zodiac Clans had watched them in case a new power would emerge in the fight between Minor Clans. It was business as usual for most of the scouts, and so was the Tiger Clan who had done the same for the other clan meets.

Admittedly, this time around, they all had been keeping an eye on Jin.

None of them had expected such a particular show of power from him nor his bodyguards which they were unable to find any information about. All of this had frightened most if not all of the scouts that had been watching. (Especially since they saw the bodyguards have the time of their life sending the cultivators of the Minor Clans to the netherworld.) To make things worse, those guards knew that they

were being watched. Sometimes, minions like Nubwort and Drex would purposely put up a show for them to watch.

"If I had known this would happen, I would have just called him to come to our lunch meet instead." Kong Rong mused out loud when he saw Yuan Ba's dejected spirits who sat down on the other side of the office table.

"Well, it's too late for that now. Speak, what do you want?" Yuan Ba did not bother with formality as the paperwork he had to do was of utmost importance. If he didn't clear it fast enough, the Godly Representative would punish him for not abiding by the current situation.

"Fine, I shall be frank then. He might have been an honorary member of your Tiger Clan, but I doubt he wants to retain the title. From this moment onwards, Jin is under my protection. You should know what happens now that he finally revealed himself to be the head of the rumoured 13th Royal Zodiac Clan." Kong Rong clarified and pulled out a few documents, but Yuan Ba stopped him.

"I'm perfectly aware that all Royal Zodiac Clans who are on the brink of failing fall under the Dragon Clan's protection until they manage to stand on their own feet again." Yuan Ba interjected. "But the Royal Zodiac Clan Protection Act should only apply to the existing twelve Royal Zodiac Clans. For you to extend it to Jin... Does that mean the Dragons are willing to accept this rumoured clan's existence?"

"Is there any doubt left after the Godly Representative has shown himself and acknowledged Jin and his clan's existence?" Kong Rong questioned back, and Yuan Ba laid back on his chair stifling a scoff out.

"Since when? How long have you State Agents known about his status before today's revelation?" Yuan Ba tried to learn at least if he was the only one who had been kept in the dark.

"I'm afraid that information is confidential." Kong Rong left the papers he had pulled out. "I will not keep you from doing your paperwork. Please make sure to fax me these papers at a more convenient time within the coming week. Well wishes to you for the new year. Just remember, we are watching." Kong Rong took his suitcase and walked out of the room.

The courtesy call and show of power by Kong Rong was clear enough. At least for the foreseeable future, the Tiger Lord would not meddle with the dungeon supplier's life or trouble him in any way.

Even after the resurrection of his sons, it was his responsibility to stop them from facing him head-on, use their privileges as the Tigers to make his life more difficult or seek nefarious ways to take their revenge against Jin. After all, the State Agents and the Dragon Clan (or Kong Rong specifically) had invoked the Protection Act on Jin's clan. (Unless they decided to wait until the protection act was over...then that is another issue for another day.)

With the declaration by the Godly Representative, there was no room for doubt. The other clans would have to give up their chances of grabbing Jin for their own. Right now, they were forced to watch him grow as either an ally or an enemy that could power grab their territories since the Panda Clan was not included in any treaty or mutual agreement.

That was why Kong Rong had decided to use his clan's might to save Jin from too much trouble with the Protection Act. While Jin had known there would be consequences of revealing himself, he did not know the extent of Kong Rong's power. A trustworthy ally gained over the night of alcohol?



It was possibly the best thing that could happen over the new year!

Kong Rong was technically not wrong to invoke the Protection Act as the Dragon Clan had vowed to keep the Royal Zodiac Clans intact without any one of them losing their privileges or powers. Their job was to maintain the balance between the clans and to act as an internal auditor. If one clan decided to use its wealth and power for the worst, the Dragon Clan would step in and stop them. (After all, they acted as the State Agents of the country and swore to lead it the betterment of their nation.)

One might worry that the Dragon might have too much power in their hands, but most did know that the Jade Emperor had placed measures to ensure that would not happen. It fell to the Heavens to stop the Dragon Clan if they misbehaved badly.

Yes, it was none other than the Godly Representatives.

While they did rampage in Derek's world, turning it into a place void of life and full of zombies, most of them had actual responsibilities to keep the worlds under their care in balance. (At least as much of a balance as the contracts they were bound by required.)

It could also be known that those contracts were similar to a Devil's contract, but their bad stereotypical reputation had made the Demons, be known as evil even though their bargain was the same as the Gods. (Which was not the case with Moloch and Baal once he calmed down.)

It was how one would perceive the Demons and Gods, and in Jin's eyes, he believed there were good and bad ones mixed in their races.

In hindsight, it appeared as if this Godly Representative has deliberately made things easier for Jin. The revelation of the feathered fan with the pictures of a Panda had quickly become the topic between the scouts and the higher echelon of all of the Royal Zodiac Clans.

This, in turn, helped make Kong Rong's work easier who had started to visit the various Clan Heads to inform them that Jin was now under his protection.

"No wonder, the System told me I'd have more work to do due to that stunt it pulled with Jin. To make me work on the first day of Chinese New Year. That boy... seriously, I am starting to think I am making the right decision." Kong Rong thought to himself while grinning. At least the System was courteous enough to teleport him around.

The moment he got out of the Monkey's territory, he was immediately teleported to the next Royal Zodiac Clan's mansion. "But I must say, that revelation was fun. It certainly seems like it was the right choice partnering with him rather than to be against him. After all, to him, this world is a dungeon instance in which he has the ability to mould it for the better...."

His expression turned serious once more when he was greeted by the Clan Head of the Royal Zodiac Rats.

## **Chapter 978 Higher Order of Gods and Demons**

"How did you manage that?!" Lynn asked as she was curious about the sudden turn in events when Yang Rong performed his combo technique against Jin. They were already back at the Tree Mall as the rest returned for the lunch meal provided by the System. Even the minions were curious as it was apparent to everyone that he was suffering the hits.

"Ehh luck? Hahaha- Ow!" Jin lied so blatantly that Lynn hit his shoulder hard. Chi infused kind of hard.

"Tell us properly! Or don't tell us at all!" Lynn pouted as she removed the plate of delicious looking chicken rice in front of Jin. "Else, no lunch for you!"

"Perhaps, I might have an inkling of the technique that he had done, but it seemed modified. So, there are certain portions of the technique which are not clear to me either." Yun said as she was already munching away on the chicken rice. "It had something to do with what Ming taught you, right? It was somebody's substitution technique."

"Okay, okay. I am sorry. I will say!" Jin apologised to Lynn, and he nodded at Yun's conjecture.

"But if it's a body substitution technique, it requires a medium or an item to move away from...unless you used your unique Maqi to create an astral projection thick and sturdy enough to act as a body substitute." Yun deduced, and Jin yet again nodded his head.

"I did not just use the astral projection. It is not that sturdy enough to suffer those hits. I had added a sludge crystal into the mix which was within my pocket, courtesy of the System and thus I used it as a defence mechanism. The System was dying to win this fight. Didn't you guys see the first defence move I made? It was actually testing it out whether the body substitution with astral projection works."

"Oooh! No wonder." Lynn said as she nodded her head in acknowledgement.

"Yeah, the System was betting an all in to win this fight no matter what. Though I wonder if it was against the rules, which was why I turned a little afraid when the Godly Representative sent me a message that I have a super entity." Jin asked out loud and at the same time, querying the System.

"No, the Godly Representative had already known of the System's presence when User brought out the platinum Panda chess piece. It had been used before in fights way before this particular match. The only thing was that it had not been used for centuries. Also, it was the God Realm that created the System, and thus its acknowledgement of our existence was within reasonable means." The System said.

"Does that mean there are other Super Entities around?" Lynn questioned, and the System acknowledged it.

"As for the System to this particular world, we had been bestowed the number two, indicating that there was another super entity before us. Whether there are other similar Super Entities around, the System does not have any idea."

"Can you be created that easily?" Derek asked as he was concerned if they were to challenge the creators of the System.

"No. Upon the System's knowledge, the System had not met any similar entities yet." The System said, and Moloch pulled up his hand.

"I believe the peeps in the Demon Realm could do the same too, to create a super entity like the System, but to my understanding, there are many conditions to be met. It's a once in a blue moon kind of thing." Moloch explained in a summarised form how a Super Entity could be created, and he said that only the higher order of the Demon Realm would be able to perform such a ritual.

"So you mean, the System might have been created for a purpose?" Jin asked.

"Yea, it's possible. Unlike the normal Gods and Demons in their respective planes, the Higher God and Demons are subjected to a shit ton of responsibilities. Things like destiny and stuff are created by them. To them, good and evil is just a perspective and chaos was necessary to keep the balance and equilibrium among the universes. Have you heard from Kraft how people could buy and sell universes? Yeah, they allowed it but to a certain extent too. It is conceivable that we might play a part in their prophecies and such, but that's wishful thinking on my end. It could also be possible that Jin's success is just part of their prophecies, and he might be a prelude in the things to come." Moloch deduced.

"You serious, bro?" Derek asked in a slightly bewildered manner.

"In my opinion, the ones that attacked you are Gods with higher privileges. They are not necessarily Higher Gods. So you will still get your revenge if Jin decides to aid and abate your journey of vengeance. Besides, we have already fought with demons and came out victorious, right? What's a god being to us?" Moloch chuckled.

"You are lucky Baal did not take us as seriously as he liked to. And I believed the crown played a part too. I do not think I was able to win him if not for the crown that took his sanity away from him." Jin recalled how dangerous that fight was.

"Heh, when the push comes to shove, I believe the System will intervene for you." Lynn chuckled, and the rest of his minions somehow nodded their head in agreement. If the System ever felt that Jin was in absolute danger, it would not hesitate to use all its powers to protect him. This was especially true when the System saw leaps and bounds of improvement to its own processes.

As mentioned before, Jin was one of the few who had managed to gain enough capital to increase the System processing capability, allowing it to do more miraculous things. Thus, it would definitely not leave Jin in a lurch.

"Do you think we will ever see these Higher Gods and demons?" Jin asked, and Moloch shrugged his shoulders. (Including his puppet.)

"I have been living for so long that I lost count and I never saw them once in my life. Even when I had been reincarnated and sent to the Dungeon World, I only heard the orders." Moloch replied and teased Jin a little. "If you ever saw one, please give the demons a peek at how they looked!"

"Heard? Orders?" Jin asked which immediately prompted Moloch to scratch his head since he did not know how to explain it without giving too much context.

"Yeah...King Solomon is the part of the Higher Demons and one of the few that are in constant contact with the normal demons. To be able to even receive an order or request from him should be honoured as precious as life itself." Moloch explained and just as Jin was about to ask another question, Yun cleared her throat.

"Jin." Yun suddenly interrupted, and her eyes were staring at the half eaten chicken rice on his plate.

"Eat quickly. We still have to go visit Grandma Yuan." She said while tapping her watch as if to indicate they are on a tight schedule. (Which they are clearly not! Yun just wanted to get it over and done with!)

### **Chapter 979 Its All About The Money**

Jin shut up and concentrated on clearing his plate of roasted chicken rice. Despite this being an easy (and very yummy) task, it felt a little too wasteful to finish it hastily.

The aroma of the rice was soaked with the smell of chicken broth, and a tinge of ginger gave it a distinctive flavour which led to a mouthwatering reaction. The taste was not overbearing, and each bite was complemented with the roasted chicken meat bursting in his mouth. While the taste of food would plateau after a while, this particular dish did not.

Infused with a bit of Penguin Queen's chi cooking in it, each bite maintains its tastiness. (And this was Lynn's leftover cooking for the penguins, which showed that she had improved a long way!) It was neither too oily nor too salty, and one bite led to another and another.

Unfortunately, Yun insisted that they did not have the time to wait around for Jin to enjoy a second serving. As soon as he was done eating, she requested the System to open a portal and hurried Jin once more. Meanwhile, Lynn told them to go ahead first as she still owed Grandma Yuan a cup of brew roasted tea and she needed to make sure she had all the tea brewing items in her storage ring before coming to meet her.

"See you later," Yun said as she got impatient and started to drag Jin into the portal and they reached Grandma Yuan's Demon Exorcist Office. It was just as eerily quiet and empty as one would expect at the start of the new year... except for one particular room from which they heard furious typing.

The door was partially closed, and the lights to that particular office room were off. Yun did not hesitate to walk straight towards while dragging Jin with her. (She literally did not let him off the collar at all! Jin merely resigned to his fate being dragged by Yun.)

When the door opened wide, and Jin recognised the one typing furiously was none other than Claire. The woman in question was yawning away as she nodded her head as an acknowledgement to the two's presence.

"Happy New Year."

"Happy New Year to you too," Yun replied as she searched the side of the walls to locate the light switches. Claire plunged her head into the table as the lights turned on, but thanks to the illumination Jin could see that she was merely hiding within the desk cushion that she was holding on.

"Dim the lights if you want them to be on!" Claire complained as her head was stuck into the cushion, like an ostrich hiding its head in the ground. Seeing that the System's Assistant was refusing to comply, Jin sighed a little and turned the switch knobs so it would not be too glaring for their Sub System Intern.

"Thanks..." Claire said as she slowly reared her head upwards and started sending Yun some angry stares.

"It's your fault to work in the dark, girl." Yun merely snickered not admitting to any wrong. Both of them sat down opposite of Claire's desk. "Do you have what I want?" Yun questioned once more, and there was no reply for a moment but just typing.

The silence ensued for the next minute, and Jin was already contemplating whether he should interfere in this bout of awkwardness. Then suddenly, a loud ping was heard, and more electrical noises ensued. At this point, Jin listened to the fax machine behind him starting to work overtime, printing several documents at once.

"There you go, it's right at the fax machine. Take them out yourselves." Claire answered still grumpy, but she finally heaved out a large sigh and rubbed her sore shoulders, hoping that the pain could be alleviated for the moment.

"Great, all the documents seem to be in order." Yun took a quick glance at the documents and nodded her head. "Is Grandma Yuan at home?"

"She hasn't left the house, but she should be taking a nap. After that raid against the Loopa Ooofpa, she's been taking more naps than usual in a week." Claire informed them. A nap sounded like a wonderful thing in her tired mind, and she would not mind going for one herself. She reached out to her System's phone, but before she could unlock it, there was a 'thud' sound at the left of her desk. Her nose started to tingle, and her body automatically turned to the other side of the desk.

It was a cup of Blue Mountain Coffee, extra thick with two cubes of sugar at the side of the saucer and a mini condiment holder of raw honey beside it. Her body instantly ached for its consumption, but Claire knew this was her reward for getting it done.

"Your favourite, right?" Yun asked, even though she knew the answer already. As the System's assistant, she knew what Claire liked based on her consistent orders via the Sub System.

"Surely, this can't be my only reward." Claire grumbled, yet her expression changed immediately after the first sip of it. "I had done a shit load of work, even sacrificing my sleep for this."

"This is just for you to not fall asleep. If Jin is ok with it, I would be happy to promote you to no longer being just the System Intern." Yun nodded her head, and Claire's eyes were swift as a hawk's when they glared at Jin as if he was a rabbit. He was utterly confused since he did not know what she had done to deserve the System's acknowledgement. As if on cue, the System began to reveal that she finally completed the finances and budgeting for all the major projects that were ongoing.

Not only that, she had secured significant finances from an anonymous investment source that was willing to fund their projects.

"What? And you just accepted without learning who that investor was? Isn't that a little too shady a deal?" Jin questioned, wondering if it would compromise them.

"It's actually a 'partner' that I found when I was playing the Black Stock Market. He messaged me and queried why I was fighting so aggressively through the stocks. Oh, by the way, he was referring to my excessive flipping. I managed millions with the click of a button, but the preparation to do that was enormous." Claire explained with a tired smile.

"He was impressed by the choices I made, although he also disagreed with others. The latter should be obvious after all those were his shadow companies' stock. He was keeping them low and quiet since they were considered spoilt and useless, yet due to my investment flip, he unknowingly earned a bunch of money too."

"So he honestly wanted to know how you flip them? Or did he want to learn from you?" Jin asked, and Claire lazily shook her head when she continued to stir her coffee.

"He acknowledged that as my trade secret when I refused to reveal even though he offered a generous sum of money. It was his local currency but converted into dungeon dollars; it should easily be half a billion. He thought it would be a shame to just let me go, so he decided to invest in me instead. According to the System, the person can only be described as a major player, so I did not want to refuse his new offer. So technically, this investment source is half of the allowance he's giving me. Meanwhile, the other half will be used in investing." Claire smiled weakly once more, but there was happiness in her eyes.

"So, what Claire had been furiously typing was the budget write up for the System's consideration. It was initially done earlier this afternoon, but when I told her that Jin had won the Tiger's territories, she slammed her desk hard." Yun pointed at the table and showed Jin the indentation on both sides of the table. Luckily the table did not break under pressure and the System informed Jin that the table was made from pretty high grade wood.

"Now that we have Yang Rong and Yang Hui's industrial territories, it will significantly lift the burden of our own industries by a whole lot! You might not have known this, but the Tiger Brothers' territory was home to a lot of refining and raw materials industries. With this acquisition, it's very easy for us to gain a reliable source of natural resources. Refined ones too!" Claire said with a higher pitch tone, indicating she was excited for the future of Jin's cities.

(In the meantime, Jin was simply stunned with the amount of money he now has in his possession.)

### **Chapter 980 Yun's Business Proposals**

"Hmmm, I see. Alright, I understand the need to retweak these proposals, but is it really necessary for you guys to get it done today when it's New Years?" Jin browsed through the documents to get at least a superficial level of understanding (he could always ask the System for more in-depth information later on).

He was surprised to find out that Yang Hui and Yang Rong had been bestowed such precious industries by their father. However, on second glance, it became obvious that although these were 'essential' industries, it did not automatically make them profitable.

The refining industries that the Tiger Brothers held were just a pebble on the road compared to major brands, but it was a different story for Jin. The addition of these new industries on Earth meant that neither Pandapolis nor Demonpolis would have to go to any lengths to create these industries. Still, if they needed it, they could always copy-paste the designs or even improve the refining process to create their very own.

While a portion of the Industry Sector had been occupied for military production, Jin wanted to diversify his products for this now-closed city to be more self sufficient in the future. That meant, the automated production of food and refinery of basic raw materials.

Thus, with the newly acquired territories, it gave Jin convenient access to such resources, reducing their reliance on the Black Market for primary resources such as precious metals, oils and even plastics.

Of course, this might lead to a deficiency to this world's balance since Jin would be taking a bunch of resources from his world and use it for other worlds, but in return, he would be using all this for the Virtual Reality Network which he wished to create in the end, so ultimately there should be an equilibrium.

"I've been personally tasked to do it because certain projects have a tendency to lie around rotting when my \*cough\* boss \*cough\* was supposed to be the one who has to do it. Do you know? Like a certain advanced training centre?" Claire yawned despite the rich smell of the Blue Mountain Coffee filling the room.

"Cough! As well as the Cultivation Zoo." Yun added shamelessly as she was holding those two documents and conveniently handed them to Jin.

"Yun felt that you had too much work on your hands as is already. 'Someone' had to help you out, because that stuff is rather urgent." Claire said while pointing to herself.

"For example, the zoo animal imports can only be delayed for that long and Shenzhen Cultivation Zoo already has been complaining about 'temporarily' holding them! I had to keep delaying for you because of the coma you fell into! Those animals need to get in suitable environments to stay active and sane, not just alive! Otherwise, they won't be able to do much for the public when they are out in the open! Remember, these are fairly wild animals that have cultivation potential. They cannot stay in a caged environment for too long." Claire's mood somehow got more energetic when it came to scolding Jin.

She wondered if she accidentally caught the scolding behaviour from Grandma Yuan, but whatever it was, it certainly felt good to criticise Jin, perhaps because he was her boss.

"Do you have any idea about how much work it involved getting them to you?! We had to pay hunters to catch them, pay massive tariffs for the imports to bring them in and also pay the annual licence in advance to keep them. And yet, all these costs had been handled by Grandma Yuan by herself without a single complaint! I was not allowed to complain despite seeing those costs and could only curse under my breath." Claire complained as she drank another gulp of the blue mountain coffee.

"In addition, the JODE board had been pestering us for at least a basic proposal for the advanced training centre. They initially pressed Grandma Yuan for more details even though she declined it, on the ground that 'a good centre cannot be rushed'. The only silver lining was that thanks to your involvement in the National Defence Emergency event and your people defeating the Loopa Ooofpas, they decided to close an eye and gave you a grace extension. For once your disappearance was in your favour as they're all impressed that you managed to win while suffering enormous injuries."

"That is why Yun had volunteered to get it done in your stead. Within those two weeks you were out, she had been fiddling with the Dungeon Maker." Her final gulp of the coffee allowed her to heave out a large sigh of relief as if all she said had been heavily weighed on her chest.

"I had done the basic planning and allocation of the Zoo animals based on the basic design framework you had kept with the System when you made your dungeons. I merely followed it and assigned the creatures as such. Amenities and the required workplaces are all in the documented blueprints. Look through the proposal and see if you are satisfied with it." Yun said as she surprisingly did not dare to face Jin for the first time.

Although the System's Assistant had the upper hand in most matters, using the Dungeon Maker was entirely a separate issue. There were several settings that Jin specifically set so that it would facilitate his style of dungeon creation. Even the System had to 'save' the templates in case Yun made a mess out of it. If that happened, it would be her fault.

So, she was secretly hoping that she did not get such a huge scolding from Jin since he usually was very protective about being the only one to create any dungeon instances and no one is able to have a say in it. (Well, with the exception of customer feedback.)

"Ah, I am not too sure about the Advanced Training Centre blueprint since I am not an expert when it comes to architecture. Claire, can send Qiu Yue the details and tell her it's urgent? I will still take a look after checking on the Cultivation Zoo Proposal first." Jin said as he focused on the Cultivation Zoo since he had already created a foundation for that particular dimensional instance.

It was supposed to be the biggest dimensional instance he had ever created at that point in time since it was meant to be a series of dimensional instances combined as one. But now with the increased processing capability from the System and the success of making the Panda Street Instance, he was considering whether he should change the Cultivation Zoo into one massive dimensional instance. Naturally, that would further push the boundaries of Dungeon Making for the System, but Jin was not the only one improving the way he did his instances.

The System had never stopped fixing and patching itself up, optimising procedures whenever possible so that the dimensional instances would not take as much memory and processing capabilities as it would have three months ago.

And now with the advent of the Virtual Reality Network, the System's backend had been crunching numbers to ensure that even more processes could be shortened, optimised and thus ensuring its processing capabilities could be efficiently used. Fortunately, the Crown of Beyond Depravity did not just give the System additional processing capabilities. It actually sped up its calculations with the help of the Dungeon Cores that the Crown of Beyond Depravity had been created from.

With time, the System managed to break down the Dungeon Cores and based on its analysis of the Pandapolis and Demonpolis Dungeon Cores, it was able to recreate the formerly broken Dungeon Cores as separate processing units and attempted to house the Sub Systems within them. The Users did not know of this 'hardware' upgrade, but the migration of the Sub Systems into these Dungeon Cores had also relieved the System from these modules.

Most importantly, by being housed in these the Dungeon Cores, the Sub Systems finally had the chance to grow on their own. Of course, they would require massive amounts of resources; however, it did mean that they were no longer being restrained by the System because of its limited processing capabilities.



Thus, in the future, it is possible that the Sub System can fully support the Sub System Users as if they are a System User. (Although, it is still considered as an infant at the moment.) With the separation of the Sub Systems, the System could better support Jin's projects and instances, and so it was a boon that they managed to get the Crown of Beyond Depravity.

"The Cultivation Zoo layout is very systematic, and I see no problems in terms of convenience for a multi-layer dungeon instance. Only I think it would be even better if we put all the various environments together. Similar to what I did for the Panda Street Instance." Jin said as he could already envision what was left to do it. A robust transportation module within the Cultivation Zoo instance, possibly just by using the same as with Panda Street Instance.

"But the various environments will clash, won't they?" Yun asked, and Jin winked back as if not to worry much about it. He also wants to keep the various environments intact, letting the animals be in their natural surroundings so that when the cultivators could observe them, they would be more inspired.

"Hmm, fine. Don't take too long making those changes. I do not want Grandma Yuan to use the Zoo as an opportunity to bash you too." Yun warned Jin, and he nodded his head violently.

He suddenly realised why Yun was so focused on these documents. This way, Jin could at least tell Grandma Yuan there was some progress to the projects he was handed by her. Perhaps to Yun, this would prove to be a better New Year greeting than going there with a couple of oranges and asking for a red packet in exchange.

"No wonder you insisted on going to the Tiger's Meet first. It's to give more time for Claire to tidy everything up. Thanks... Yun. You are already one hell of a System Assistant at the start of the New Year." Jin nodded his head once more with gratitude and Yun curled her lips a little and nodded in response too.

"Hey! What about me!?! I want to be acknowledged as a Sub System User!" Claire grumbled that she had done all the work and yet Yun got the credit instead.

"What are you talking about? You are already one." Jin stifled his laugh and asked Claire to check her System phone, and when she opened it, there was already a 'congratulations' sign floating at the centre of the screen.

"Happy New Year once more." Jin smiled towards her as Yun stood aside and opened another portal courtesy of the System. This time, they're ready to meet Grandma Yuan.