

## Dungeon S 981

### Chapter 981 Afternoon Tea with Grandma Yuan

"Jin, you are late!" Lynn stuck her tongue out and closed her eyes to express happiness in cheek. While Jin, Yun and Claire had been talking about settling the project proposals and the written documents for them, Lynn had teleported over.

Grandma Yuan, who had just woken up from her afternoon nap, had stumbled upon the Chef in the kitchen as she felt thirsty. Despite grumbling about how the System was inconsiderate for teleporting Lynn into her house without prior notice, she was actually quite glad to see Lynn first. (especially with a hot drink in hand). If not for Lynn's quick new year greeting, Grandma Yuan would already have thought that she was some intruder that came by and was prepared to blast the kitchen along with it.

But now with the tea in her hand, the slight charcoal smell of the roasted tea leaves inside that one fresh cup that had been prepared to perfectly suit her taste pallet. She could feel her soul being at peace and to add on to that bliss, Grandma Yuan was delighted to enjoy the afternoon tea with a small plate of Matcha mochi (rice cake). Although Lynn had solely prepared it for Grandma Yuan, the elderly woman could not bear to eat without any company and thus asked Lynn to join her.

The two women had enjoyed a short chat while waiting for the rest to come in, and they exchanged pieces of information that held dear to their hearts. It was to a point, Lynn could feel where it was leading to and felt a bit uncomfortable hearing it from Grandma Yuan. Yet, Jin and the others' arrival brought her a chance to escape. However, the old veteran cultivator knew what she was thinking.

"Don't you dare use this opportunity run away from the conversation, Lynn darling." Grandma Yuan insisted as she used her chi to hold on to a teaspoon and knocked the fleeing girl's forehead with it.

"Oops!" Lynn said, and the two of them laughed heartily together.

"Did we come at the wrong time?" Claire yawned once more. She would not mind drinking Lynn's creation. The Blue Mountain Coffee had been fantastic, but that rich roasted smell from those Japanese tea leaves was enough to make all three of the newcomers crave some.

"It's not that bad. Are you okay, Claire? You look extremely tire, how are you even standing with those large eye bags under your eyes?" Lynn questioned as she stood up and started to pour some of the roasted tea for the rest of the group. "It's not as great as the first batch of tea, but it should still taste good."

"Maybe, this is why the System finally accepted me as part of you guys. I had to become a Panda first... Hahaha." Claire joked as she thanked Lynn for the tea.

"Woo! That's great news! Congratulations!" Lynn even clapped softly with delight.

"Happy New Year, Grandma Yuan," Jin said before taking the cup of tea while presenting a pair of oranges in front of her.

"No other greetings? How typical of youngsters these days." Grandma Yuan lightly complained as she ignored Jin and continued to drink Lynn's roasted tea.

"I actually do have some news on the progress of the Cultivation Zoo and the JODE advanced training centre." Jin immediately brought out his trump cards because there was no use hiding them (Mostly when those were also the only tricks he had underneath his sleeve).

"Oh?" Grandma Yuan lifted her eyebrows as she slowly placed the teacup down and decided to return the greeting to Jin.

"Happy New Year to you, Instructor Yuan." Yun was the next in line with the new year greetings and similar to Jin, she did not have many fancy words to give to Grandma Yuan as she knew the other never liked them. Unlike Jin, Grandma Yuan quietly accepted the oranges and passed her a red packet.

"Why don't I get one as well?" Jin wondered but decided to keep that thought to himself. It's best not to offend Grandma Yuan. She excused herself and returned to her room for a moment. When she came back, she was holding a small key which she passed to Yun once more instead of Jin. However, her body language was directed to the dungeon supplier as she spoke to Yun.

"This key helps unlock one of the insurance boxes that Ming was supposed to keep in my name. This is not part of Ming's collection but my own. Just open it when you think it's time to do so." Yuan instructed as she placed the key onto Yun's hand and grabbed her palms softly as if she was entrusting something precious to her.

Yun slowly nodded her head in acknowledgement, and the entire group enjoyed a session of tea. The conversation on the table was at first merely an exchange of simple pleasantries, but it slowly turned towards Grandma Yuan's projects and mainly her opinion on the matter.

"Why should it matter what I think of it? All these projects are youngling stuff." Grandma Yuan declined the opportunity to get involved, but Jin insisted that her opinion was VERY important since she had a vast amount of experience. He even went so far to tell her that without her input, these two projects were bound to fail.

She sighed at this blatant attempt of currying her favour and just reminded Jin to go to Shenzhen Cultivation Zoo once more to understand why they are that successful. "I bet you did not ask those guys under you about the results of the training centres, now did you?"

"I mean I read all their reports... but they felt too normal. Although I guess it couldn't hurt hearing it from them personally." Jin replied back.

"If only you wouldn't be too busy you could actually talk to them ." Claire pointed out while yawning once more.

"Alright, alright, System please put that on my agenda." Jin sighed in defeat, yet the System denied the request.

"It has already been part of User's agenda for more than five weeks. Please stop putting things on 'your agenda' if you're not periodically checking up on them. System would also like to remind User that it is NOT your secretary." The System answered rather vehemently despite its deaf tone reply.

"Then I seem to have good news for you. I've planned to invite those four for a steamboat session today. You guys should just stay for dinner. "Grandma Yuan suggested, and Claire looked confused.

"I thought you wanted to keep your night empty. Didn't you tell me you did not want to entertain anyone!" Claire questioned Grandma Yuan before she got hit by the very same teaspoon.

"At this rate, that teaspoon is going to come to m- ow..ow Ow!!!" Jin realised he should not open his mouth to tease the girls as the teaspoon turned and hit not just his forehead, but it flew towards his nose, and Grandma Yuan slammed it hard.

"I did say I PLANNED to invite. However, this reminds me that just like you, they are technically no longer under my care. Jin, you shall therefore have the privilege to call them for tonight's dinner." Grandma Yuan declared.

"I don't mind providing the steamboat dinner. We still have quite a bit of food remaining from yesterday's massive buffets." Suddenly Lynn got red in her face because she realised that using leftover ingredients might be a bit of an insult to Grandma Yuan. Hence, she quickly covered her face (especially her nose for fear of the flying teaspoon) "Ehhh I will get new materials immediately!"

"Hahaha! You don't need to bother my dear Lynn." Grandma Yuan laughed as she looked cheerfully at the dungeon supplier's chef.

"Yesterday's ingredients will do. Those brats who have such a luxury life will not know the difference when it comes to eating commoner's food. In fact, I think they will be delighted to have a steamboat dinner." Grandma Yuan said, and the rest suddenly felt degraded by the comments.

Steamboat dinner was considered commoner's food?! What had they been eating that made the steamboat dinner feel cheap?

"Are you serious? I do not think they are that much different from them! Besides, any food made by Lynn is no commoner's food! Her food is fantastic that it could easily be served to Kings and Queens of the past!" Jin commented in defence of Lynn. (Well, she 'did' serve Kings and Queens of other worlds.) His tone was for once quite aggressive, to the point that it stunned Grandma Yuan. She shook her head and let out a soft laugh.

"My bad. It was a common saying during my time, but it seems to have been mostly forgotten in this day and age. Do forgive me for that, my dear Lynn. I did not want to insult your cooking." Grandma Yuan apologised, and for all of them, this was the first time to see the prideful instructor lower her head. Even Claire was wondering whether the lack of sleep was making her see things.

"Allow me to rephrase my answer. They will learn what a fantastic chef they have in their midst." Grandma Yuan said, and this time it was Lynn who lowered her head with gratitude.

"You are giving me too much credit, Grandma Yuan." She said and immediately stood up. "I will prepare the ingredients!"

"I shall call the four of them then. After all, I have yet to congratulate them for a job well done during the Loopa Ooofpa fight. I heard they were instrumental in the battle." Jin said as he started to call them individually and each one of them who picked up instantly agreed to it the moment they heard they were going to Grandma Yuan's place for dinner.

**Chapter 982 Advanced Training Centre Discussion**

The four demon exorcists were more than punctual, and all of them had come bearing gifts for Grandma Yuan even though simple well wishes would have been fine.

It was initially a little awkward at the table. After all, Jin had not really interacted much with them as their boss and given his personal situation, today was the first time he had the chance to congratulate the four for their promotion. The situation only got more complicated since they were supposed to study under him until all of them became Demon Exorcists, yet they were now an entire Rank above that.

#### Rank 2 Demon Exorcists

Such a rank customarily required at least five years of experience before being considered for such a promotion. To add on, it was a bit of an open secret, but Rank 2 Demon Exorcists were considered as the 'real' juniors of JODE. That was why previously, the Demon Exorcist Organisation had deployed a handful of Rank 2 and 3s to the scene when being asked for reinforcement for the Loopa Ooofpa fight as they did not deem serious. It was only until as the situation unfolds, they rushed to send out the higher ranking Demon Exorcists. (Ultimately those Rank 2's only got to clean up).

It was a major embarrassment of the organisation if not for Grandma Yuan's coverup of the entire situation. (Several administrators and coordinators had to take the blame for ignoring Grandma Yuan's initial request and it was unfortunate for them since many a time the requests for help were over exaggerated.) Thus, awarding the four trainees were one of the hush benefits that Instructor Yuan received even though in her eyes, they were already as good as Rank 2 Exorcists.

Considering that these former trainees had been the ones who had fended off a national emergency alongside Instructor Yuan, they had been awarded highly, and the message behind it was clear enough. Her students were to keep quiet on the matter and let Grandma Yuan earn the glory too, as that was how the JODE upper management was to handle it. While it had been all over the news for the weeks prior to Chinese New Year, only those who were really in the know knew about what had truly happened and how close the country had been to meeting its end.

The dinner preparations were rather peaceful, and Claire had stayed for a bit, but not long after the greetings. She had excused herself, citing that she was utterly exhausted helping Jin and Yun with the proposals. (It also conveniently allowed her to leave this awkward situation). The System had teleported its newest (and currently favourite) addition into the Dungeon Maker for a very, very short nap.

She got to use the very same sleeping pod Jin had used but on the lowest setting in order to not to damage her body through time magic. (Unlike the System who had total control of User, the Sub System modules do not offer sufficient resistance against the side effects of time magic.) Once she had recovered enough from the fatigue of preparing the documents Yun needed, she returned, and Claire had to rub her eyes to check if she was not still dreaming.

Lynn's unique steamboat broth had somehow successfully managed to unite everyone. In fact, the cook appeared more than happy to explain how all the ingredients had been specially curated just for today.

Unlike the day before, where Jin and others had a mini steaming pot in front of them, all of them now shared a large wide pot in the middle of a round table. In addition, the broth had been separated into spicy and non-spicy.

This was to accommodate Grandma Yuan, even though she insisted that she would have been okay eating a bit of spicy stuff. As the dinner passed and stomachs were partially filled, Jin finally brought up the issue of the advanced training centres and asked his employees in-depth about the reports they had handed him.

They were pleasantly surprised that he was able to remember even minor details of their reports though, in actual fact, he just read them thoroughly for the first time while waiting for their arrival.

"I see, but there does not seem to be anything special about your version of the advanced training centre? I thought there would be more... I don't know advanced facilities?" Rong, the Demon Bull Cultivator, questioned as he perused the documents that Yun had made. Although Jin had made some last-minute adjustments based on the reports he read, those improvements had just been minor.

"I don't think that is much of an issue. We should focus on where we can add value to the centre aside from equipment rather than criticising the structure of the centre. With this being a dimensional instance, it can be size adjusted to accommodate more people, right?" Su Zhen, the astute Demon Snake Cultivator, remarked.

"Yeah, with Jin being a dungeon supplier the training programme can be whatever he wants. Just imagine if he places a replica Loopa Ooofpa as one of the training dummies! I think that basically could solve most problems we encountered at the other advanced training centres." Lian, the Demon Fox Cultivator, argued casually as she stole a bunch of meat from the spicy portion of the plate and handed some of it to Grandma Yuan with a sly smile.

"That is honestly not a very bad idea. If we can get him the data, those hordes would really make for an ideal form of stamina training and proper regulation of chi. I nearly lost my breath fighting a bunch of them." Lein, the Qilin Cultivator, commented.

"In my opinion, fighting those monsters yet again should be worse than surviving that so-called Hell Camp," Rong said as he stuffed a mouthful of Enokitake Mushrooms, those long thin-looking mushrooms.

"Then we can just make that be our version of Hell Camp. It could even serve as the main attraction of Jin's Advanced Training Centre. I mean, they want us to be the best of the best training centres, so we should create it as such. 'If you can survive our centre means, you'll be prepared to fight a Loopa Ooofpa' could be our slogan... or something like that." Lian suggested that she could not help but find the Enokitake mushrooms to be delicious once soaked in the non-spicy portion of the steamboat broth.

"Hah! pretty neat slogan, Lian." Jin praised and found it amusingly accurate. Although it might sound a bit elitist, the slogan would be perfect to act as an attraction for his dungeon instances too.

"What about the need to go through other advanced classes or lessons?" Su Zhen asked.

"Let the other advanced training centres handle that. I agree with Lian. We should get our centre to make the current Hell Camp look like a midnight stroll by the beach." Rong now excited about how he could contribute to making a Hell Camp.

"You do know that by proposing that, we have to go through iterations of Jin's Hell Camp to make sure it works properly right?" Su Zhen rebutted.

"As long as it makes me stronger and more useful in battle, I do not mind. I would rather stay alive surviving through hell than go through the regrets those Border Guards suffered." Rong declared as he muttered a few inaudible words before eating another mouthful of mushrooms. Even though his heart was filled with instant guilt at that point of time, his stomach said otherwise. "Big Sis Lynn! More mushrooms please!"

"Hahaha, this is the first time I heard someone ask for more vegetables instead of meat. Sure thing!" Lynn agreed as she went to the 'kitchen' to take it.

"Then it is settled, you'll have to set up a new Hell Camp worthy of its name." Grandma Yuan decided. "But we won't be replacing the ordinary one since that is already a trial of passage for most Demon Exorcists. Instead, we shall create one that will be open to amateur Demon Exorcists as well as the elites."

"Won't that be too harsh?" Lynn, who overheard it sounded concerned.

"Like what Rong had said, the times have changed. If the Banned Emperor dares to pull such a terrorist stunt against us once more, we should better be ready. Besides, in Jin's dungeons, there is always a restart. We cannot guarantee the same in this world." Grandma Yuan's remark seemed to have an inkling of truth hidden within it, and everyone agreed to it.

"Heh, and now with Grandma Yuan's name all over JODE's organisation for killing the Loopa Ooofpa, her backing of this centre would definitely have some credibility to this hell camp," Claire said as she felt a bit reinvigorated from eating Lynn's food. As they always say, sufficient food and sleep are what a tired body needs. "And if you need ideas of how the Hell Camp was previously, I could give you my experience. Although they revised it every five years."

"I swear it's getting easier each time." Grandma Yuan chipped in. "That is why I rather have my students not undergo that."

"Is it really that hard?" Jin asked, not knowing how the Hell Camp feels like, and Claire gave a rough explanation of how it was during her time. She explained how there was forced regimental training and regular punishment whenever the team did not work as one.

"That sounds awfully easy compared to what we went through," Lian remarked, and Claire chuckled a little.

"Of course. What Grandma Yuan and I had given you four is already a modified version of Hell Camp. Back then, I even dubbed it Hell Camp 2.0 but Grandma Yuan kept insisting it was still a bit too easy for you guys." Claire said, and the rest felt a moment of despair as they reminisced what they went through.

"Very well, I will prepare a Hell Camp, eighteen levels deeper than the original one! Please give me your inputs, and I will make the amendments to our centre" Jin announced while nodding his head before banging the wooden table with his hand, and so did everyone else. (Since it is fairly inauspicious to say hell and death during the new year. Knocking on the wooden table was to avoid bad luck.)

"Perhaps they should have renamed it as Yuan's Hell." A certain foxy person said as he watched the group having a delightful dinner from the shadows. "Or perhaps... I should simply interfere with the Hell Camp Dungeon Instance once in a while to show them what is true hell when it is truly up. Ooo like a

special guest! This will be such a fun experience for me, and my Foxes and most importantly, our participants. Hehe." The Foxy person raised his wine cup and took a gulp before disappearing into the shadows.

### **Chapter 983 Meeting With Ke Loong**

The group enjoyed a wonderful dinner at Grandma Yuan's place before all of them returned to their abode with the exception of Jin. He stayed back for a while longer to settle the details for the cultivation zoo and the advanced training centre.

Obviously, Grandma Yuan was complaining about Jin making her do work on the first day of the New Year. It felt an unending rant, but Jin kept quiet and tolerated it, knowing that she was doing so much for him behind his back. Nevertheless, she assisted Jin with some parts of the current proposal since she knew that time was rather precious for the dungeon supplier.

Claire, on the other hand, decided to wash her hands off that proposal after having worked overtime to get it done. She did not want to even think about it for the next few days and would rather relax on a holiday break. To her, the meal was so satisfying that she decided to nap once more at Grandma Yuan's massage chair. (She had been the one who bought it anyway.)

The wisdom of the elderly woman allowed Jin to make some necessary adjustments, but at least he finally knew what to do for both projects to make them successful. (Though he would still like some opinion from Qiu Yue especially from an infrastructure point of view.) At that point, he decided to make a move before he got thrown out for staying too long. While Grandma Yuan usually wore a non-caring face, she still took the effort to smile at the dungeon supplier's progress and even sent him off.

As for Jin, instead of returning back to rest, he teleported to the Panda Street Instance and checked the progress of his store. Compared to earlier in the day, the night scene was teeming with people. Most of them were here for the experience since they heard Jin's store had undergone another revamp, but the majority stayed for the food and to do some window shopping.

"Hmm, I should start thinking of making an event for Valentine's Day too..." Jin thought as he watched families and couples walk through the bamboo forests, checking out the various sculptures of different zodiacs along the path. This was part of the New Year Event where the twelve zodiac sculptures had horoscopes and Feng Shui advice inscribed at the side. It was a side attraction since people loved to check how their luck would be for the year, and there were interesting tidbits on what to take note of with regards to love, work and health.

Of course, being part of the Royal Zodiac Panda Clan, Jin did not miss the opportunity to put a Panda Sculpture out while placing the System's self-generated Feng Shui and horoscope advice on it. Most of the Pandarens thought it was a nice touch to put a Panda Sculpture in the Store Instance and even took photos of that very same Yawning Panda which Jin had used for the Royal Zodiac Duel Challenge.

And as Jin was admiring the Panda Sculpture and thought back to the things that had happened earlier in the day, he heard a voice shouting for his name with lots of heavy panting involved in it. (And people are letting way to let him move through.)

"JINNNNNNNNNNN! I had no idea how to find this place! Couldn't we just meet at the starting point of the Panda Street Instance?!" Ke Loong questioned as he tried to catch his breath as hard as he could.

"But then you would not have had the chance to see the new Panda Streets, would you?" Jin replied with a small smile on his face. "Besides, do you think this place has a starting point?"

"True. However, I ended up getting so distracted because I wanted to go into each and every store. Even the street food smells so good! I would have loved to buy something to eat, but the queues were really long, not to mention your the allocated time!"

"Honestly, you could have just bought something. I've time to spare now and wouldn't have minded waiting a bit for you."

"Oh no, I was not about to take any chances! I'm the CEO of a modestly large company, and yet I have trouble contacting you, much less MEETING you!" Ke Loong made a fuss while Jin merely chuckled and beckoned him to the very same Bamboozled Bar that he brought Kong Rong to. This time, the path to the Bar Instance had been allocated right beside the Panda Sculpture, and after Jin walked outside the normal path, onlookers were watching him and checking if there was some sort of hidden course.

Some tried to follow, but their attempts failed since Jin made a turn near a large rock and disappeared along with his friend. It made those onlookers try to see if they could find the remainder of the hidden path. Almost everyone gave up and returned to where they set foot after failing to find it.

"Now this is more like it!" Ke Loong was astounded by the cosy bar with jazz music in the background played by the baby penguins and pandas at the side. The customers within the bar instantly took a look at the entrance since Ke Loong shouted. The Panda Bartender immediately gave a calm stare, and Ke Loong realised his mistake and nodded his head apologetically before walking in with Jin to an empty table further away from most of the customers.

As if that was not enough, bamboo shoots started to grow around their table and created a barrier to prevent from people hearing what they were about to say, giving Jin and Ke Loong the privacy needed.

"Since you told me you did not get the chance to eat anything, feel free to order anything you want here. It shall be my treat." Jin graciously offered as he pressed on the remote table bell and another Panda Waiter came in, holding onto a tray with a bottle of sparkling water and two glasses.

"Hmm... for a bar, you do serve quite the variety of finger food. Alright, I shall be so shameless to accept your offer. I'd like some steak fries and some fish nuggets then." Ke Loong said, and the Panda Waiter nodded his head while filling the glasses. It looked towards Jin, who just shook his head.

"Water will be fine with me. I am still full from dinner. Thanks." Jin patted his tummy, and as soon as the Panda Waiter had left, the Bamboo Shoots grew back from the ground.

"So, I heard from Kong Rong that you had started some business association thingy....and the fact that you are the mysterious thirteenth Zodiac Clan Master is already making the rounds. No wonder that guy kept asking me to take care of you... But in the end, I can't feel that it was the other way around and you



took care of me." Ke Loong sighed before he gulped down the glass of water. Feeling even more thirsty upon drinking, he took the bottle of sparkling water and poured more of it into his glass. Ke Loong had not expected that water could be this satisfying.

Was it because he had been running around trying to find Jin? Or was this water could be simply this tasty?!

"Ah, so you heard of it." Jin was surprised how fast the news had spread despite today being a holiday.

"In this modern era, information is of utmost importance, especially when making big decisions. This is certainly one of them." Ke Loong spoke in a tone, a good-natured tone like a wise senior giving advise to a junior. He slowly placed the glass down and wiped his sweat away, and Jin could feel that he was still rather anxious.

"Could you please calm down? You are making me nervous just looking at you. Please. Treat me normally as you would a simple boss of a Dungeon Supplier store. There is no need to make such a big fuss even if my secret identity is out." Jin sighed in exasperation, but somehow that prompted Ke Loong to stand up and subsequently kneel right in front of him. Despite his size and slightly unsteady gait, he placed two knees down and prostrated right in front of him.

"Young Master of the Royal Zodiac Panda Clan. As unofficial as that name is or even if you do not acknowledge it, I wish to pledge my eternal allegiance to you. Should you ever accept, Sea Mesh and its other entities will belong to you and the clan." Ke Loong swore solemnly.

## **Chapter 984 Ke Loong's Pledge**

Jin had expected that Ke Loong would want to join his 'illustrious' Panda Clan, especially since Kong Rong had tried to persuade him into accepting his friend. But the way this CEO was acting was too much for Jin to handle.

If anyone had told him that a mighty man like Ke Loong would prostrate in front of him for the chance to work for him rather than demanding certain conditions, Jin would have never believed it. With all the scheming he had to endure from other Royal Zodiacs (especially the Tigers), Jin had nearly lost all faith in dealing with such people.

"Ke Loong, get up, this is unseemly. Other people might not see you right now, but this is totally unnecessary." Jin gathered senses as he tried to bring the CEO up from his knees, which he managed with little effort.

Ke Loong was quite that Jin could actually pick him up from his kneeling stance. To have the strength to pull him up and with technique showed Ke Loong he was indeed skilful. Jin was not wrong in mistrusting others, as the CEO of Sea Mesh was using an Advanced Martial Technique to keep him steady on the ground. While he was indeed genuinely asking to be in his clan, Ke Loong could not help to stay in character, and thus his kneeling had been a form of a test intended to tease his Young Master. (After all the Sea Mesh CEO still had some sense of twisted pride.)

Perhaps it was a tit for tat for making him try to find Jin in his Panda Street Stance but generally, he performed this trick on most people he requested help from. For those businessmen who knew Ke Loong and his style, some would say this was a form of reverse psychology. If the person could not lift him up from his prostrating position, it could be seen as a sign that his request was too much for that person to deal with.

But to Jin, all he had to do was to hold his shoulders and slowly pick the CEO up while maintaining some form of balance. He knew the Ke Loong was more towards the heavier spectrum, but he had no idea he was being tested.

Eventually, the CEO slowly released his technique when he got up and saw that Jin did not bounce when he got a little lighter. Instead, Jin merely shifted his balance naturally to let him stand straight and subsequently poured a cup of water for Ke Loong to drink.

The Sea Mesh CEO was very impressed by Jin's handling since not many were able to carry him up, much less handle him smoothly. Even Kong Rong had difficulty bringing him up normally and required a few tries. This reinforced the fact that Jin was indeed a trained cultivator despite Kong Rong's information on him. (After all, seeing is believing.)

"Instead of prostrating, tell me the reason why you still wish to bet your entire company on me. I did send an email informing you about my decision to stop the portal devices, and my employees should have seen to their deactivation. I shall honour what I said in that mail, and I will pay for the cost of the production incurred already by the end of the month." Jin promised, even though he knew he could pay it even sooner thanks to the funds he would receive by the end of the week for what the Royal Zodiac Tigers had done earlier in the day.

"I am not worried about that, and in fact, I'm okay with your choice of ditching that technology. However, let me also warn you that people will still try to reverse engineer them, especially after they've seen your products in action. Even though I ran a tight ship when it came to the blueprints and held my workers strictly on a need-to-know basis, one of them is bound to spill the beans since everyone wants a piece of your portal device. It's next-level technology, ushering to the age of automation and convenience." Ke Loong turned serious. "Its too enticing for my employees when all they needed was a bag full of cash to open their mouths. There is no such thing as loyalty in this era."

"I know that. It was part of the reason why I wanted things to be done locally, instead of being outsourced to some german factory." Jin said crudely which incidentally offended Ke Loong a little since he had great ties with that German manufacturer. But he understood that Jin might not know the relationship he had and thus Ke Loong explained why he had taken that 'risk'.

"Your what?!" Jin exclaimed, and it nearly shocked the Panda Waiter enough to drop the food and assume a defensive position to guard his master. (And the food at the same time.) "Oh sorry, please just bring in the food."

"Apologies too. Yes, right away master." The Panda Waiter returned its composure and placed the food on the table. Before leaving, it even helped refill their glasses. Ke Loong got a little frightened by the sudden action taken by the Waiter, but Jin reassured him that it is a defensive mechanism inbuilt into the NPCs to ensure the safety of customers in his Panda Street Instance.

"Ah...I did hear something along that line of an advanced AI by Kong Rong. He was raving about it even though I tried to get more information about you... Anyways, as I said, that German factory belongs to my stepbrother. He might be of a different mother, but our brotherhood is tight as fuck." Ke Loong boasted while clenching his fists and Jin was speechless.

"In any case, I actually own nearly half the shares of the factory so by putting me under you, you would have control of that factory too." Ke Loong explained, his eyes were confident that there was nothing to worry about. "In any case, I have not come here to talk with you about the portals. I think that you are not concerned about the portal because of your new invention. Your upcoming Virtual Reality Network!"

"Is that the reason why you've rushed to meet me?"

"YES!!! When Kong Rong told me about it, my brain literally exploded with excitement! Can you imagine the amount of money we could earn by being the very first global distributor of a Virtual Reality Network? This is the stuff you only normally read about in those web novels, but I believe you will actually be able to turn such a fantasy into reality! We will kill all the competition in an instant. And seeing how Kong Rong insisted that he could not say more unless I became a Panda Associate, here I am, stripped of my pride to become yours truly." Ke Loong announced while his arms were wide open and it somehow irked Jin a little.

"Most importantly! The realisation of being on board for making the very first working Virtual Reality Network in the world! That is a goal worth accomplishing in my lifetime! Our names will go down in history!"

Even Jin could understand the indescribable urge of getting the Virtual Network done and with Ke Loong and his connections. This would be the breakthrough Jin needed to expand the network quickly too.

Thus, without any further delay, he brought out the very same contract that they had used on Kong Rong. The only thing was the System made some amendments to it since the CEO had a variety of properties in his name. In the event, Sea Mesh turned bankrupt, there should be no implication of it to Jin. However, the wording was so shrewd that even Ke Loong who was experienced in looking at legal documents, did not pick it up. (The System must have learned a trick or two from analysing Xiong Da's way of writing contracts.)

To him, the CEO would do whatever it took to be rich, famous and accomplished, and Jin definitely had the means to allow him to achieve that.

It was a win-win situation.

Only once he had signed it, did Ke Loong learn that there was so much more waiting for him. His brain repeatedly exploded from the revelation of the System's existence and Jin's explanation during their snacks. (which they eventually called for more.) Ke Loong had already tried to overestimate the possible potential Jin had in his hands, but the System had blown all those out of the window. With proper backing by him, the Sea Mesh CEO already started to spit out ideas which could help Jin.

The discussion subsequently became one of the longest nights that they could ever have with the System taking down all the notes. (Even though The System insisted it is not Jin's secretary.)

## Chapter 985 Yuan Ba's Sudden Visi

Eventually, the discussion dragged to a standstill as the plans they agreed on needed concrete implementation before they could move to the next phase. Thus, they ended their drinking session and returned to their abodes for rest. Jin was happy to call it a day finally. He did not doubt that tomorrow was more than enough to do (mainly because the System told him about the things on his agenda.)

When early morning came, he was abruptly awoken by Yun, because of something he had not predicted. Hu Yuan Ba, had made time and was waiting in his store for the dungeon supplier.

Yun would have gladly thrown him out or left him to rot for a long while, before entertaining him and his entourage after the stunt they had pulled. Still, the Royal Zodiac Tiger's Clan Head had been smart enough to tell her that he had come today in regards to the transfer of territory to Jin.

"What... I thought the Godly Representative said that the territories had already been given out. Why would Yuan Ba come here and in person no less..." Jin yawned as the System automatically activated the showering system for him. (Since the sludge was everywhere in his room.)

"No idea, just go and meet him. We are in your shop so whatever stunt he might want to pull it will be useless. I've already sent them to wait in the Panda Street's Conference Room. Since he's come to give us something, we should not make him wait too long. But since he also has not bothered to inform us beforehand, feel free to take a long shower. A very long one." Yun advised as she left him clothes she had picked for him on a higher shelf.

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"Mr Xie." Yuan Ba had been starting to get a bit impatient, but she immediately turned courteous as he saw Jin come in from the door. His face was still haggard from yesterday's activities, and he was definitely not in the mood to hold any proper meeting. Up till now, Yuan Ba continued to refuse Jin's title of Panda Head Clan despite the Godly Representative's show of approval. Thankfully, the Dungeon Supplier cared little on such formalities and went straight to the point. There was no need to dwell on these courtesies and waste people's time although he has the right to do so, especially now that Yuan Ba was in his territory.

"Morning Clan Head Hu. Apologies for the slight tardiness, what brings you here?" Jin literally took Yun's advice and slept in the shower for some time before coming out to meet Yuan Ba. And now when the dungeon supplier greeted the Tiger Head, he realised that Yuan Ba was truly not the only one waiting for him as Jin took a look at the entourage of people behind Yuan Ba. (In some way, it did benefit Jin as the System reported his staff spent money on snacks and breakfast while waiting for Jin.)

Also, this was the first time Jin saw him without any of his children around and for good reason. Yang Hui and Yang Rong were still recuperating after the overnight resurrection procedure, whereas Yang Ling refused to even see her father after all the work she had put in to try to make Jin have good faith in the Tigers. After her father had broken his promise once again, she had seen him act no better than the Rat Triads and thus refused to take any part of whatever he planned next. While still personally employed

by Yuan Ba, she had immediately recluse herself into her company grounds and ignored any text that came from the family.

"These are the major key people that are working in the territories previously owned by Hu Yang Hui and Hu Yang Rong, both of which you have defeated." Yuan Ba introduced them as they all took a bow as a sign of courtesy towards their new 'boss'.

Most of the time, territories would be given a new slate once transferred. Buildings and equipment were maintained, but the workforce had to be reassigned since the employees were under the defeated clan's payroll.

Yuan Ba declared this to be the 'extra' compensation that the Godly Representative demanded since he argued Jin might require this more than an extra monetary tribute. It did not break any rules, and the value the employees provided was indeed objectively the better compensation.

"It is best you get acquainted with them for you will need their expertise to maintain the factories and industries." Yuan Ba advised, yet Jin could not help but feel that the other party was doing this as part of some schemes while pretending to be friendly. Who wouldn't want exact revenge when they had to give up their territory unwillingly because their failsafe plan had been toppled by a seemingly impossible turn of events?

"Indeed, especially for someone who does not have the knowledge of our field, it's best you-" one of the older key personnel started to chime his opinion, yet stopped as Jin stood up in the conference room.

If Jin refused this particular compensation, he would not have specific expertise to tap on and even with an all-knowing System, there were certain limitations to practical knowledge. (There are definitely some workplace connections which these people that the System would never have.)

"Clan Head Hu, your kindness certainly knows no bounds. I'll be more than happy to accept your generous gift." Jin announced as he walked around the table to show his dominance in the area. He had enough of the Tiger's tricks, and although he was unsure whether the workers were supposed to be used as spies or just slack off when given the opportunity, Jin would not fall for any of them anytime too soon. Still, Yuan Ba did not expect the dungeon supplier to go with the flow and since Jin decided to play into his trap, Yuan Ba was all the more happier. (Especially when he knows that those buildings would be useless to Jin if he did not have the people to work for him.)

Another reason for the usual change of personnel was that no one was stupid enough to allow potential spies to stay in their own territories. So the most Jin could do was to sell away those buildings and land and Yuan Ba had made sure that Jin was given only the most basic of items if he rejected the compensation since the Clan Head had bundled it all as part of the package.

"But before we sign anything of that sort, I do have one minor condition," Jin added and Yuan Ba's eyebrows stoked up.

"Speak, and if it's not absurd, I might consider it." The Tiger Clan Head offered cordially, and his brain was ready to work overtime, waiting to counter anything Jin was about to say.

"Well as their new boss, I would like to have a one-on-one talk with them to see if they would really want to become my employees. At the same time, I'd also like to learn more about the industry from

their perspective. Especially since they already have taken the time to come down here, might as well take the opportunity to familiarise ourselves." Jin stated as he continued to walk around to observe their dressing and their body language.

"Ah." Yuan Ba heaved a sigh of relief and thought he was going to ask for an absurd 'minor' condition like asking for extra monetary tribute. "That can be arranged since most of them are on their holiday breaks and have come here specifically just for you. While it might be a holiday, there is much to be done due to the transfer of ownership, so I'll have to ask you to not spend too much time with them so they could handle the assist with the transfer documents. Besides, I'm sure most of them would prefer to spend some more time with their families as soon as possible." Yuan Ba grinned, and the rest were nodding their heads along.

Their allegiance would still be to the Tigers, and it would not change with a pep talk with Jin. All of them had done brokered business deals and had handled a fair share of shrewd people in their line of work. Not to mention this Jin appeared to be somewhat naive with his friendliness, so those key personnel were basically handling an ant which they could step on.

In fact, some were already thinking of ways to manipulate the dungeon supplier to hopefully gain more favour with the Tiger Clan Head. To them, It was indeed wishful thinking that Jin could convince them to work for him earnestly.

If only they knew how 'convincing' Jin's headhunter could be...

## **Chapter 986 Just A Pep Talk**

"Please enjoy a great meal at our Restaurant Train in our Panda Street Instance while you wait. If you're not feeling peckish the sights my Store Instance has to offer should also keep you busy in the meantime. I'll have my NPCs find you and accompany you to meet me when it is your turn." Jin told his new personnel with a wide smile. Nobody refused, since it seemed a better alternative compared to just sitting around and doing nothing.

"If that is the case, then let's convene this meeting then." Tiger Clan Head Yuan Ba said as he extended his hand towards Jin. "To a more harmonious and memorable working relationship."

"Thank you for being supportive and giving me such a huge crew to support me. I did not expect your generosity and appreciated it a lot." Jin replied as he returned the handshake and Yuan Ba could only scoff inside his heart. Jin was grinning happily too, not because he was naive, but he also had a plan in mind.

They subsequently exchanged some small pleasantries before he got teleported out of the Conference Instance (courtesy of Jin's 'creator rights') and YuanBa left with a satisfied grin on his face as he drove off in his car. "Jin, Jin. You have no idea what you have gotten yourself into. Maybe, I might be able to recoup my yesterday's losses in the future." Yuan Ba thought to himself while he quietly drove back to his mansion.

"Sorry to hold you up while I let the others go off first, Mr...?" Jin questioned the one who was the first and whose statement he had interrupted by standing up in the meeting previously.

"My name is Fa Tai. I'm the overall in charge of the Tiger's Refinery Industries." The middle aged bespectacled man introduced himself. Fa Tai had a small build with a dad body and matching that look he appeared to be balding too.

Jin got the feeling that Fa Tai must have given his all to get into his current position and was very loyal to the Tiger's no matter how one would see it. The fact that he called them the Tiger Refinery Industries with pride only strengthened his belief that this worker had no real intention to recede himself to work for the Pandas.

The dungeon supplier had a small pep talk in mind, but it appeared that would be meaningless. "Then I assume you are the president of the company?" Jin asked, and Fa Tai did not mince his position.

"Of course. I've made millions for Lord Yuan Ba, and if not for him magnanimously handing you the industries, I would not be here talking with you." Fa Tai admitted without holding back. He was sure whatever Jin had planned trying to convince him to change his mind would be a colossal waste of time, so he wanted to keep the conversation as short as possible.

"So you are a man who values his time, Mr Fa Tai. Alright, it seems we do have certain things in common. Please, come to my office for a moment. I just want you to tell me a bit more about your work. A short summary will be fine while I offer you some of my hospitality too."

"There is really no need too. I know about your store. You sure had it easy getting things done compared to us. To me."

"I gave it my all every day and many nights, just to work my way up to the top and you merely had this tree in less than a few months. You honestly think you can handle us. Think again." Fa Tai started to become impatient and showed his true colours since the "compensation" package had surprisingly been accepted. There was no need for any much facade, if not for the condition for that one on one talk, he would have already flown back to his state and enjoyed his holiday break.

"I'm afraid I INSIST that you do me this courtesy." Jin stressed as he still obligingly showed the way to another room, ignoring the harsh tone of the other since he knew that he would soon change his behaviour.

"Fine. Fine." Mr Fa Tai sighed as he followed Jin through the corridors. The dungeon supplier opened one of the doors, and Fa Tai could see that the office had minimum renovation to it. Just a desk with two chairs at each side. Other than that, there was only one cabinet at the corner.

"Have a seat first. I will get you some nice tea." Jin instructed him.

"Please be quick. I have a flight to catch back." Fa Tai called with the 'nicest' possible tone he could bring out before Jin left him at the office.

"Is this a joke? This office doesn't feel like what a boss would have. Only two possible reasons. He is berating me as well, or he does not have money to make a proper office. Well, maybe three. This is a makeshift office. Whatever it is, it is just a quick five minute talk, and I say I will get going." Just as he

was mumbling to himself, he suddenly found that the lights went out. Fa Tai cursed under his breath after being stunned momentarily and tried to take out his phone for some light.

"This is a dungeon instance, right? How can the lights be out?!" Fa Tai questioned out loud as he tried to find the exit. But as he got up, he felt the darkness was crushing him. His gait was unsteady, and the light from his phone merely made things worse. There was no wall in front of him despite knowing that there was supposed to be one just a few metres away.

Thus he tried to move faster but the more he walked, the less certain he became since he had yet to touch any of the walls which should have been only mere meters away from him. Fa Tai could not find anything to grab on and fell to the ground. Furthermore, he accidentally dropped his phone, causing the only source of light that he had to disappear within the surmounting darkness.

"What is this charade, Jin?! I'll complain to Yuan Ba about this nonsense. Release me right now, or your compensation package will be voided! Null!" Fa Tai shouted as he tried to crawl around, looking for something to hold on but even now he felt like the darkness itself was a physical thing, holding onto him, making him very uncomfortable.

It felt invasive to the point that he needed a way out of this. But even with his feeble attempt to portray his cultivation for a source of light energy, it seemed to be eaten, absorbed by the darkness almost immediately.

"Okay! Okay! I am in the wrong! I will tell you what Clan Head Yuan Ba said to me! I promise not to betray you! Just let me out!" Fa Tai begged after he realised that his threats got ignored, but it seemed as if his voice was getting swallowed by the darkness too.

"Oh...no. You're not going anywhere, my little boy." The crude voice and the clinking of boots were heard from afar.

"Please! Help me! I'm willing to pay you! Just tell me your price. All I ask is to let me out of here! I am not that good with darkness, and I have night blindness!" Fa Tai shouted, but a "tsk tsk tsk" reply echoed throughout the entire room as if repeating that particular sound over and over again.

"Please, I'm not interested in your money. Now I've come back from a very long workout, so you, my boy, will be the perfect stress relief." Kraft said as he chuckled a little. It had been a long time since he could torture people and Jin gave him the perfect new year gift he could hope for.

"In the spirit of the new year, allow me to introduce you to a friend of mine, who has been neglected for far too long." Fa Tai was still unable to see anything, but somehow the projection of an evil wide grin like a Cheshire Cat, began to appear in front of him. "You will give me everything that you have inside that jelly brain of yours. Spill every. Single. Secret. Out."

Although only a couple of minutes had passed, to Fa Tai, it felt like years - nay - decades. And if not for the message that more people would come, Kraft would not have minded lengthening his stay to perceived centuries as he played as he infiltrated into the man's brain and heart while playing with his feelings.

And thus, the brainwashing session commences.



## Chapter 987 Brainwashing Session

Just like Fa Tai, each one of Kraft's new victims had had haughty thoughts towards Jin, before Kraft 'convinced' them to think otherwise. Jin, who had survived to tell the tale, knew what a terrible torture each one of them had to go through.

Still, Kraft had merely shown Jin a fraction of the pain and anxiety the key personnel had gone through. He had not had such fun for a long time and took this as an opportunity to refresh his skills and try out new tactics to scare the key personnel.

His methods had varied from plain boring overwhelming darkness to digging out their worst fears and portraying it out for them to relive it over and over again. However, that was just part one. The next phase of brainwashing them was to make them believe they still had hope in that everlasting darkness to cling on.

And that was when he hung the carrot bait up high for them to reach out only to disappoint them by leaving it centimetres away from their maximum extent. "For the despair upon hoping had the greatest effect on their minds, thus making them extremely vulnerable to the effects of seducing the brain to our command" or so he quoted in one of his brainwashing sessions.

"You are lucky that I was only strengthening your resolve back then, not brainwashing you to submit to my command," Kraft pointed from the sidelines to Jin as the dungeon supplier had seen enough for the moment. He left for a moment and came back with a bottle of water and a packet of piping hot waffles.

"Too bad the System rules prevent insubordination of people from my world. If only we could kill and resurrect them, that would be so much easier. I'm sure they all would have preferred that compared to your treatment." Jin said as he folded his arms and saw one of the personnel squirming in the middle of the room. To Jin and Kraft, the room was just as Fa Tai had seen. That relatively empty room with a desk and two chairs and a guy flapping his body like a fish on the floor. But in the personnel's perspective, all they could see was abyssal darkness waiting to swallow them.

"Heh, if the System made it so easy, all you had to do would be to kill each and every one of them and make them our slaves... Well there should be reasons why these rules exist. How lucky you are, that I can still recruit people for you. Besides, the way the System does it uses up its processing capability to handle all of them, so I'm sure it also appreciates my efforts." Kraft replied as he munched on the hot waffles. The blueberry jam inside suited the crispy edges of the waffles, and it melted inside his mouth. "But good on you to think about brainwashing them. I honestly did not expect you to call me to perform such a wonderful activity."

"Meh. I needed the information in their head and making them double crossing the Tiger Head Clan will be so much more fun. I do not understand why Yuan Ba had to keep making schemes to take over me. Is that why the System hates those Zodiac clans so much?" Jin asked as he squatted and saw the man pissing on his pants while begging for mercy still in that fish stance.

"Now you're speaking my language!" Kraft laughed as he swallowed his food with joy. "He thinks you are gullible, a person with strength and possibly wealth, but no wits. To be fair, you DID fall for like ALL of his plots. Like the part where the police did not interfere with the Rat Triad until the very last minute?"

There's no way an honest police force would be allowed to do that. They had pledged their service to help the common folks, and by fencing the place up for the Rat Triad to finish you, it was a dead giveaway. Someone high and mighty is controlling the ropes. Perhaps a deal between the upper echelons of the Rats and Tigers? Who knows. I did not bother to investigate. Luckily, there are still some good fools, sorry I meant people, out there, like the police chief who still had some conscience and closed his eyes to let a few of his policemen assist you." Kraft began to wonder if these key personnel had some information of the said event. Highly unlikely but since he had his toys it was worth a shot to check.

"Now that you say it, I felt that the Tiger Triad members came at such a convenient time. Too much of a coincidence, in my opinion." Jin started to think back to that incident. The way Ku Wai, the Tiger Princess personal bodyguard and vice leader of the Three Eyed Tiger Triad came in to save him felt like it was choreographed. However, it was a possibility that Ku Wai had been used the way Yang Ling had been taken advantage of.

"Have you ever wondered why they gave you that honorary tiger membership? Perhaps, they had colluded, and if you fall, the Tigers will try to protect you as much as possible. So, in the end, you will owe them. You are in their debt because they not only gave you an honorary position but saved your life from the Rat Triad Leader." Kraft said so bluntly that it allowed Jin to ponder further.

"And the Rat Triad could get the district with the Tiger's help, then pay them some commission fee or something? While I felt that is plausible but isn't it a bit too far fetch too?" Jin asked, and Kraft could only shrug his shoulders.

"Your judgement call, mate. While I might be providing you with circumstantial evidence, you can only decide these things yourself. However, there's one thing I might be able to add. The Tiger Princess? She is genuine." Kraft used the paper packet to wipe his mouth before drinking some water to clear his throat.

"She might be 'in the schemes', but generally, her father used her as a pawn as well. Also, I heard Yang Ling tried to warn you before she was taken down by her own people. That will give you an indication that she might be a worthy ally to consider. Heh! Imagine having her as the Tiger Clan Head while under your System's influence! That would be quite an accomplishment!" Kraft added while grinning from one end to another. "And another girl to your harem of potential wives."

Jin rolled his eyes and denied that possibility. "Please, if I recruit her, I would want her for her knowledge and expertise in nanomechanical engineering. Compared to what I studied in school, she's a real deal engineer which could soar our in-house technological capabilities to the skies." He argued as he conjured a waste bin for Kraft to throw his items. After all, he did not like the office to be messy in any way.

"Please! Stop giving excuses." Kraft snorted before snapping his fingers and the nightmare for the Tiger Refinery Industry Manager to fall to his knees.

"Wake up. Who do you think you are? Lying on the floor in the presence of your true master?!" Kraft said as he kicked the guy awake as he did to Fa Tai and the rest before him.

"Sorry! Sorry!" The manager said as he saw Jin and quickly prostrated.

"I expect an audit report of the factories that are under you, do you understand?" Kraft shouted, and the manager nodded his head, banging it on the ground before running out of the room.

"Isn't that a bit too extreme?" Jin asked as he checked the whereabouts of the next participant of Kraft's brainwashing.

"Nah, you got to incite that fear and power abuse in them. You might not really understand it, but those boomer old folks' mindset is totally different from you millennials. You got to work a different angle to get things done. Don't worry, these brainwashes are as effective as they can be. Besides, they had already made a verbal pact to the System at the end of the brainwashing procedure."

"So, no matter what, Original Bellator's Kraft method would ensure loyalty to the Panda Clan compared to the Tiger Clan." The System chimed in.

"And that means willing, productive management that would perform for the betterment of the Panda Clan." Kraft said as he was thinking of the next punishment procedure for the upcoming clueless key personnel.

## **Chapter 988 Requesting Support From Other Regions**

As Kraft continued to convert the Tigers to people loyal to the all new Panda Clan, Jin requested the System to check the situation in the Farming World.

"Everything is all quiet; there are no interferences from the Demon Rats. However, the System has dragged Bellator Peppers to perform a higher Grade Deep Scan as suggested by User. And based on the results, what you were initially afraid of might be plausible based on the section that Peppers scanned." The System reported and stated that Jin's hypothesis that the Rats were plotting something even more sinister by digging through the underground could be correct.

"Then why did you not tell me earlier?" Jin questioned, and the System stated that it would rather have the full scan analysis before sending the report to Jin. What Peppers had scanned was merely a portion of the northern region, and because of the depth of the scan, she was unable to expand the search. Not to mention it took a considerable toll on her body considering this was a new sort of manipulation to her current magic spell. (She probably won't complain if it was an explosion spell.)

"The military leaders have been informed, and they are scrambling to change the plans as we speak. But without Qiu Yue to facilitate certain changes, they were unable to go through with it." The System said, and Jin queried what it had to do with her.

"Sub System Qiu Yue had proposed creating mobile encampments to facilitate attack and defence strategies. While teleporting to and fro would be much easier, the System would not wish to waste resources unnecessarily."

"I thought they wanted to do an all out attack, fighting against the Demon Rats on all fronts?" Jin asked, and the System reported that with the new findings, that would prove to be an insurmountable task.

"We lack the military force, and not everyone is at a 'Nubwort' kind of level. Each and every soldier have their individual level of fighting expertise, and some are better at logistics and crafting instead." The System said as he teleported Jin to the War Room and he saw the usual military leaders like Nubwort and Gold.

"Master Jin." All of them nodded their heads in acknowledgement of his presence.

"I heard from the System about the change in deployment developments, what do we do?" Jin asked as he glanced at the electronic documents on the table which the minions were now familiar in using. Every idea they have, the System would transcribe them and place it on the console for them. Sometimes, the System would even infiltrate their minds and draw or depict the picture/ plan they wished to portray to everyone.

It was a little invasive in nature but rather useful in explaining especially those who were not good with words.

"Master, we actually did not want to bother you since the System said you were busy. We planned to show you the plans once we have most of the things confirmed." Nubwort said with a tinge of anxiety despite being an almighty Orc General. But even the mightiest of generals found this task to be somewhat insurmountable when they used the predictive model and exponentiated the results. Yet, Jin raised his hands to calm him down.

"No worries. I was casually asking the System about the progress of the Farming World military planning. Since I did question how the Rats might be pulling a fast one on us based on the recent choice of deployment they had beset us with."

"As expected of our Master." Moloch complimented, but Jin felt it was a little bit of sarcasm solely because it was from Moloch even though his thoughts were really genuine.

"Yeah, if they have underground sea routes to dig towards the other countries, we might be in deep trouble. We need to inform the other regions about it." Weslie, the Scholar of the West remarked.

"Those people won't listen to us. In fact, they might not believe us. It is too far fetched, and they have their own concerns to deal with." Zieg, the Commander of the Dark Templars said. Being a noble himself from the Eastern Region, he knew how stupid those people in power are and how they worked.

Weslie, on the other hand, wanted to believe otherwise, but her past experience had also shown to her that it would take a lot of explanation and rock solid evidence to change their minds. Why bother to move when the threat is far from their regions? And for the rats to dig hundreds of miles from the Northern Region! That would be nigh impossible to those old fashioned noble minds to wrap around. In terms of technology, the Demon Rats had already outpaced everyone in the Farming World, and it was only Jin and his reinforcements that kept them in check. Should the Demon Rats proceeded forward with their invasion against the other regions, the War Room reckoned that they could easily bring down the capitals in less than a day.

"Even if they believed it, they would say they need to have money to send supplies and soldiers through the Central Ocean and get to us. And if we managed to convince that the threat was real and coming soon, some might say they needed their troops to defend their people instead." Zieg chimed in more of his own opinion and saying what he would do if he had not seen the calamity himself.

"Heh, then I believe they would send a token force instead? But hey, isn't that better than nothing?" Gold asked, and Zieg shrugged his shoulders.

"Not heard about the West and south but their token force probably consist of conscripts or worse, volunteers who sought to improve their lives for a feeble monetary sum from an impromptu recruitment", Zieg replied and with a second thought, shook his head.

"Maybe the northern kids and elderlies proved to be a better soldier than those with their knowledge of using our own crafted weapons. If I say so myself, the Mousefolk that consisted of commoners from Meomi's town had proven to be more formidable a force than any Eastern Knights contingent I knew of. Heck, they might be better than the elites the Eastern Region had in possession." Zieg added, and the rest of the group chuckled a little, knowing that for a fact it is true. "And If I may add, our war tactics are also unconventional, and it would be a burden to those Knights much less a token military force for them to follow our commands strictly. All they know is to fight in a straightforward battle...no wonder the Northern Troops lost so easily..." Zieg whispered to himself the last part and only knew the follies of his tactics until he joined with Jin's army.

"Maybe the Queen in the West could help! I know her personally. Her influence is definitely more than the nobles in the east and should be able to send us more than a token force. Even if they cannot fight effectively, they could help with the logistics and that should be able to lessen the burdens of the System" Weslie said, but Gold held her hand and shook his head.

"She received news that you died. If you return to her this way, she might suspect foul play to your body or thinks that you are an imposter. That is impossible to gain her trust in a short amount of time. Until this incident is over, perhaps." Gold said, and Weslie had nearly forgotten what she had gone through.

"Actually, we can contact the south to help us. My dear friend Nightingale is part of the Southern Stars Organisation. The leader of that organisation holds a high position among their hierarchy of rule. They had also been fighting with us for some time, and since they are more or less after mercenary money, I think it wouldn't be a problem if we provide enough gold." Meomi said as she participated in this war room as a fighter who knew about the Farming World. "More importantly, I saw them how they fought. They clearly preferred our guerrilla tactics more than the usual bashing and the leader who came with this team and decided to compile our ways of fighting."

"That is worth a shot and it seems like a better option than the rest had mentioned. Any objections from the impromptu council?" Jin said, and the rest all looked at Jin with curious eyes.

"Ah, don't worry about money. Tell the Southern Stars they will have it if they fulfil their end of the deal. But, bring Qiu Yue with you when you reach the Southern Region. If she cannot make a bargain profitable for us, I doubt anyone else could." Jin said as he now requested the System to open a communication channel to her.

He knew she might be training hard with the Wolf Foxes, but this was equally important too. In the meantime, Meomi grumbled even though she knew that it was not possible to portal to the Southern Region given that the System hates strangers. Thankfully, the trip to the Southern Region would not be as painful as she thought it could potentially be. She thought that she had to sail for weeks while missing weeks worth of killing rats until Jin stepped in and bestowed a wondrous gift for her mission. He had

commissioned a C130 to be flown via the Bulwark Port and subsequently parachute to the Southern Capital.

"As I said, Once you reach there, call out for Qiu Yue or me. When the negotiations are done, load them up to the C130, and we have our first batch of mercenaries to do some rat termination." Jin said as he opened a portal for Meomi to past through while waiting for the System to send an urgent SMS to Qiu Yue.

## **Chapter 989 Icy Chi**

"THIS JIN!" Qiu Yue said as she squeezed her fist and chi oozed out naturally. The impact of her chi suddenly caused her surroundings to crack and freeze. If one breathed in the air, they could feel that their lungs were dried out and their throats ached for moisture.

At that moment, Tsu walked to her and tapped her shoulders to keep her in check. Only then did the Red Panda Cultivator realise what she was doing and controlled her chi from spilling out of her body.

"Sorry about that. It's just that I wanted to have a full course of intensive training, but the Boss keeps breaking our momentum. It infuriates me quite a bit." Qiu Yue apologised, and Tsu merely nodded his head.

"Your choice, the Farming World seems a big deal too. Especially when Jin's sudden epiphany turned out to be very true. They are not mining for more litoride ore for their steam tech products but rather digging to reach out for other regions." Kai commented as he saw the missive sent by the System. (Technically it was just an SMS.)

"I honestly think you should go help Jin. We can always train more. Besides, you did considerably well, especially for the time you had." Tsu added a compliment.

"Guys, can you two stop it? Both of you are way too different outside of training. It scares me." Qiu Yue said, and the beast children who saw the scene from afar were already giggling.

"What Qiu Yue Big Sis said is true!" Lapp, the grey wolf girl said out loud and Kai immediately sent a mini chi blast towards her. However, she managed to dodged it and in return, unsheathed her sword and released a greyish chi slash towards her mentor.

But for Kai, he did not move and instead took the blast head on. There was no scratch or wound when it hit the Wolf Fox, and Lapp cursed under her breath.

"Remember what we said about cursing?" Tsu reminded Lapp strongly.

"Teacher, why is it Lapp's fault? Qiu Yue Big Sis used it regularly." Tera, the black wolf girl said, and the Wolf Fox Twins immediately looked at Qiu Yue.

"What?! It's not entirely my fault they learned those!" Qiu Yue tried to defend herself from saying explicit curse words. Though it was natural for her to swear, in order to lessen the pain she was going through. Psychologically, it helped a lot and that was why the kids followed too.

"Yea! It's not her fault, damn it!" Lapp said casually without knowing the meaning, but it felt good. Tsu and Kai could only shake their heads and told Qiu Yue to get going.

With a quick goodbye to the rest of the kids, the Red Panda Cultivator immediately teleported to Jin's side with the aid of the System's portal.

"Welcome back, sorry that I - woman what are you doing?!" Jin heard the sound of a portal opening, knowing it was Qiu Yue, but he did not expect a fury of icicle spears directed to his direction. While he could have dodged it, he was more concerned with the work stored in the dungeon console and thus similarly used a Panda White Ice wall magic to block the attacks.

"What am I doing? More like why do you keep bugging me to appear when I'm in training!" Qiu Yue said as she retracted her chi.

However, that show of power was enough to let Jin know that she definitely improved from the last time he saw her. And the jump in improvement was frightening. It felt like the chi she wields had the taste of cold winter winds. The chills of ice creeping forth were obvious even though it paled in comparison to Frost Echo, the Avatar of Shiva.

Her cultivation of the Radiant Red Panda in the Umbral Snow allowed her to possess and control ice with her chi and the higher her grade, the more potent those ice chi powers could be. According to the cultivation manual, it might even be steady enough to use for building materials and withstand regular heat.

While Qiu Yue was a predominantly ice user, it was the direct opposite of Lynn who cultivated the Perfectible Penguin Ruling The Kitchen Hell. However, the Penguin Cultivator had not been fighting in the front lines despite her grade ascensions. Instead, her strength lies in manipulating fire, and she was extremely good at it since her cooking needed it as if it was an essential ingredient.

A difference in a degree of heat could drastically change the taste that she was aiming for. In fact, most chef cultivators were the same as Lynn, apt at controlling fire. But whether they have the strict discipline and talent to do so was another matter. Fire Control does not mean it was restricted to maintaining the fire at the stove but could be used for baking too. Unfortunately, most modern veteran chefs were unable to do that and relied on electric ovens instead. Lynn could not only control the heat in the oven but was able to cook simultaneously at the stove too. Her multi tasking and detailed control over multiple fires made her a top notch chef that not many had noticed yet.

But unlike the kitchens, Lynn continued to rely on her ninja penguins in battle since she believed they were stronger than her. (Though our Dungeon Chef still has some tricks under her sleeve which she has yet to show.)

"Alright, alright. I am sorry. Do not blame Lynn for this, I forced her to tell me because I needed your help urgently and somehow it just so happened I needed you to make it work." Jin lied about Lynn so he would not be accused of revealing where Qiu Yue went.

"Hmmp, I supposed you needed my aid in the days to come, I just did not expect it to be so soon. But judging from the summarised report you sent me, it doesn't bode well, and I guess it's valid you called me urgently." Qiu Yue said, but she didn't know how she could help with the Farming World. Thus she highlighted the advanced training centre until Jin stopped her before she could begin. The Dungeon

Supplier also mentioned how she would be needed later for the negotiations with the Southern Stars, and all Qiu Yue could do was to roll her eyes. As usual, so much work and so little time. (At the very least, the compensation was more than sufficient, especially her red packet money. So, there was not much she could complain about when she had received this much money.)

"While I read and appreciated the war plan that you and the minion leaders wrote up, I actually have something else in mind that I would like you all to consider. For that, I need your Sub System capabilities for the incoming plan that I thought up." Jin said as it has been a long time since he took the initiative to create a comprehensive war plan.

"Now, I am intrigued! To see that you have a plan in mind, it's like seeing a dungeon instance being created on the spot." Qiu Yue laughed.

"What's wrong with that? If not, I have no revenue from my customers and raid instances are the most profitable. Need the moolah to get the Virtual Reality Network working right?" Jin said as he unveiled the plan via the dungeon maker console and she stared blankly at it for a moment.

### **Chapter 990 Real Time Strategy**

"What are you going to do?" Qiu Yue readied her heart as she had no idea what Jin had in mind. The plans in front of her was overwhelming, and she was not taking any information in. She doesn't remember having any terrific powers with her Empire Building Sub System except for making buildings pop up if enough resources were available.

"It might come at an awkward timing, and perhaps a bit old too, but I have yet to compliment you for the decoration you have done for the hotels that hosted the Royal Snake Soldiers. The System told me that you had created them along with the Goblin Clay Masons." Jin said, and Qiu Yue nodded her head, thinking where this communication conversation was going.

"Eh yea, after a while, I learnt how they composed it and created them. Of course, it is a little difficult to get the details like the muscles and stuff. I also helped them create a production line for the defence raid."

"We needed them to run fast, hit hard, and thus the balance of the creation needed me to crunch some numbers without wasting time making them. Still, the clay masons products were stronger because of the effort placed in them." Qiu Yue explained. "You saw how they were more effective against the Demon soldiers compared to the last line of defence we have where those were mass produced."

"Those runes are the same, right? You were able to mass produce them." Jin asked once again, and she nodded her head.

"That one was harder as Jespa was very insistent in making sure certain parameters of the rune stone manufacturing were achieved before she allowed me to produce them. But yes, even our favourite runsmith was stunned her work could be manufactured. It merely takes some ingenuity."



"Which you did, Qiu Yue. And here I am acknowledging how important they were and will be for the upcoming fight." Jin said "Judging from the limited deep scans from the System and Peppers, their numbers are way over the top and they are still creating even more as we speak. What we need is to wither their numbers down for the fight, and we are going to do the same as before right now." Jin explained as he started to expand his dungeon console screen.

"We are going to make havoc in their caves, disrupting their operations and proceed to their undercities. And we need those clay soldiers once more. But this time with some extra help not just from you but your old mates." Jin said, and she was confused.

That was when Jin said that he was going to make a fake 'real time strategy' game for Qiu Yue. He explained how he would want Qiu Yue to contact her old pals and even their contacts and try out this real time strategy game of controlling the Clay Soldiers.

"In short, I am making a mind hive, a LAN gaming dungeon instance so that RTS geniuses like you and your friends can take control of. I briefly talked to Jespa via the System channel, and she said command runes were possible to create and use along with the animate clay runes, a more advanced animate dead, specific to clay models. The System will then pass that control to the Empire Building Sub System. After all, how can you build an empire if you have no control over certain subjects?" Jin smiled, and Qiu Yue was stunned for a moment before she ponders if there were any loopholes to it.

"But how do you replicate the production of these clay soldiers like the way we manage soldiers in those RTS games? I mean we can't exactly teleport clay soldiers one by one in, that will be a strain in the System along for just one player, not to mention a bunch of crazy ass micromanaging assholes and bitches." Qiu Yue said as she was concerned whether the System can take control of it.

"Also, the fog of war, usually we have a constant overview of the fighting ground. Back then, in the Pandapolis fight, it was easy peasy because the city was ours to begin with. Now, amidst the spiralling caves, it is nigh impossible to have it done unless we create a satellite that does what Peppers do every sec, in fact, every mini second of constant deep scanning." Qiu Yue said and Jin was looking towards her without saying a word.

"Wait, what?! You want me to create a satellite?! That is impossible! I don't have the blueprints, and current satellite networks that we have are not cut out of ...oh wait. Did you already-" Qiu Yue squinted her eyes, and Jin was nodding his head at a slow pace.

"You have the satellites and already improved them so that the satellites are possible to do such a feat like constant deep scanning?" Qiu Yue questioned, and he shrugged his shoulders.

"Almost there. It was a project on the sidelines that I had asked the research team to do whenever they are free, which they are never free. Still, they insisted on giving them more work. Anyways, I noticed how useful the satellite was for the Goblin World and the importance of having first hand information." Jin said as this was his plan. He must have something done before getting help from Qiu Yue.

The only issue was how he did it so quickly, and that was because Jin had been using the time dilation room to the maximum, slowing time down drastically. He found out the dungeon supplier does have some innate resistance to the side effects of time magic as he levelled up in his cultivation grades. The System was surprised and increased the room's dilation to its third highest setting.

At that point, people would have slurring problems; the inertia to work was basically a constant. But to Jin, he worked as if there was no tomorrow. And so, he had managed to complete the plan in a short amount of time for Qiu Yue to take a look in.

"However, the satellites are more to track above the ground movement. So in order to overcome that flaw, the System had made contact with the Farming World's spirits of the land, and they were delighted to hear that a super entity could help with their ailing condition." Jin said, causing Qiu Yue to be amazed by the solution.

"So real time tracking of the rats can come true..."

"However, we will put some fog of war for you guys, to make it interesting unless the System deemed it otherwise," Jin explained.

"Then, this production of clay soldiers?"

"Similar to the satellites which are in the process of coming out their first prototype, I took the liberty to look at your clay factories and made a mobile version aka your Factory on wheels," Jin said and told her to improve on the designs if possible.

"So like a command centre, we get troops out. Huh, I guess this RTS cum virtual controlling of the game is really becoming possible."

"Told you so. I mean, we saw how the Pandawans tried to control the squads. They have no sense of leadership in commanding the AI as much as I hoped them to be. I tried reducing the scope by giving the customers a more advanced AI for the Nian Instance but based on statistics, it's not up to my standard. So why bother giving them that many AI soldiers when all I need are those smart friends of yours to play it and control them effectively? I would probably need you to test play it as the alpha version before putting it out as the beta version. This way, the fights would be more organised and to some point, efficient. We can send the cultivators to fight their own wacky style in some other portion of the operation." Jin claimed which Qiu Yue agreed.

While she now had a first hand in real commanding, she knew how hard it was compared to controlling a keyboard and mouse. But those clay soldiers that could move at command would be a better addition to Jin's arsenal than a bunch of cultivators doing their way.

"Then I guess the cultivators would be invading the capital?" Qiu Yue asked.

"More like a distraction for our pros and help to thin the numbers whenever possible. Hahaha." Jin said as he passed Qiu Yue a USB drive and a key to the Mind Hive dungeon instance.

If this goes well, Jin would have an autonomous fighting force to be reckoned.