

Dungeon S 991

Chapter 991 Review For The New Operation

During the Goblin Orc War, Jin had few allies to defeat the Orcs. The Goblin Army had served as the backbone of that fight while his minions and the cultivators who had believed it to be a Raid Instance had acted as their support. With their combined powers and a bit of luck, they had managed to defeat the Orcs who had been empowered by their Lost Tech. It was the first major victory in Jin's eyes compared to the minor skirmishes he had in the various worlds he travelled to gain companions. It not only makes him learn how gruesomely bloody a war could be but also slowly emboldened him to help the oppressed.

On the other hand, his escapade in the Giant World had primarily been a rescue operation despite it being a heavily coordinated effort among his minions and the cultivators. Nobody on Jin's side had anticipated the sudden interference from the Goblin World's Shaitans, but thanks to their interference they had managed to clear the operation as quickly as possible, saving almost everyone.

As for the defence of Pandapolis, the Demon Army had grown complacent over the years and had wrongfully assumed that they could win everything with numbers alone. Jin's side had benefited from the home ground advantage, and Qiu Yue and Moloch had prepared many nasty surprises, in case things would go wrong. If the Mad King had taken him seriously from the beginning, that battle would have likely had a different ending. Jin had also not forgotten that it was ultimately the arrival of Kraft's entourage at the perfect time which had saved his butt.

Alas, the Demon Rats from the Farming World feared neither men nor monsters.

Under the North and South Scholars, they had raided, murdered, pillaged villages and towns and even exploited the human population. Fortunately, the Spirit of the Lands had agreed to aid the System in its war against the Demon Rats giving Jin a better picture of what was really happening underground.

The dungeon supplier had been baffled by the sheer complexity of the Demon Rats' ingenuity. He had been mentally prepared to find perhaps an outpost or fortress underground, but not various Mega Metropolises. The Demon Rats had sprawled under the seabed, and the tunnels were already half way through to the remaining three continents.

Everyone was under the assumption that the Demon Rats were not ready to take that final step, but in reality... they just could not be bothered under the grand scheme of things.

Upon judging the serious fighting power of the remaining humans and the secret organisation that aided them, the Scholars had teleported the Northern Capital's Floating Castle to the town of Wecha. Only instead of winning in one fell swoop with the Floating Castle, they lost against the otherworldly force that had been aiding the Northerners. It was something out of their prediction despite it taking a portion of their resources to do so. They initially wanted to eradicate the town of Wecha at the very least and leave Bulwark Port alone, but reality did not go as planned.

So just like in previous occasions, the Demon Rats fled as best they could and returned to monitoring the Town of Wecha and Bulwark Port while continuing with their plans.

"They have enough power to kill the Northern Region off, yet they purposely allowed a resistance to form which seemingly keeps their numbers in check. I believe they must be planning the same as us, a four way assault on all four regions, clearing out the entire Farming World of humans at once, so that the Demon Rats will reign as the superior race in this world." Jin expressed his opinions to the System as he prepared the additional strategies for Grand Operation Vermin Fall. While the War Room had been thinking how to beat the Demon Rats on a tactical level, Jin was thinking of the bigger picture.

Some might say that it would be better to have the War Room Leaders to be in the picture, but Jin needed time and resources to confirm his operation plans before revealing it out especially when it involved creating new dungeon instances. Yet, he did not forgo the counsel of his minions and colleagues and continued to communicate with them for their help whenever needed.

"That is entirely possible. However, if they split their forces, it's good for User's plan." The System stated in an attempt to encourage Jin. However, how could 8,000 Minions win against hundreds of thousands if not millions of rats? There would have been a chance if those pests were stupid and dumb following a zealous leader. However, each and every Demon Rats had demonstrated that they were perhaps cowardly, but smart enough to escape and retreat if they faced with overwhelming odds. They would survive, and once their masters came up with a new plan, they would come back and enact revenge. Maybe coward was not the word, but rather, opportunistic in nature.

What's more those Demon Rats were born from a variety of plants and possessed a variety of capabilities. Their knowledge of mining, carpentry, blacksmithing etc. gave them quite the edge. The only silver lining was that the Northern and Southern Scholars had been unable to find Gold's hidden deposit of rare seeds. Otherwise, they might have been even more formidable than ever.

Nevertheless, Gold was troubled and curious about why that was the case. Given the Rats' abilities and above average keen senses, they should have been able to find it. Surely, they would have gone through every crook and nook of the place to look for treasures and yet, his deposit of seeds were left untouched.

Mystery aside, the System found the plants to be of a wondrous find. Gold did not keep just seeds but soil samples too. The purest of forms in case a disaster befall the nation, and they could use the deposit to reestablish their nation. Thus, the System had been working hard to analyse them, trying its best to replicate the magic of the Farming World, but it was to no avail. Somehow, the trick to growing them still lied with the secrets of the Farming World. Not until the System had finally taken the initiative to contact this world's Spirits of the Land.

When presented the chance to do so, the System had added a clause in its negotiation with the Farming World's Spirits of the Land for their knowledge in creating a seed to something in return for killing the rats.

And that clause alone might have been the key factor needed to topple the current predicament that they had. With samples of the soil, seeds and the aid of their Lost Tech, it was finally possible for Jin to fight toe to toe with the Demon Rat's overwhelming numbers. The only other few things he needed would be money and time. He had recently amassed plenty of the former, but he could not influence the latter. And thus that was when the ingenuity of Jin's minions came into play.

"Summon Gold, Weslie, Ayse, Rei. Oh and Kiyu if possible. We are going to do some test runs to make sure they work before we mass produce them." Jin ordered as he began to design some blueprints and notes for the incoming minions.

Chapter 992 Exhibit 9S-2P

In a matter of minutes, the minions Jin had called for assembled in the Dungeon Maker. He was patiently waiting for them at the head of the meeting table, where he was doing some finishing touches on some documents.

"What's the special occasion that needed me to be around?" Kiyu asked while yawning as she stretched a little. The foxy maiden had arrived later than the rest as she had still been sleeping in after a series of deep reconnaissance against the Church of the Afterlife in the Dungeon World.

"Just needed your expertise on a certain topic. It should not take long." Jin answered as he handed out the papers as well as some samples.

"Are those the seeds from Exhibit 9S-2P?" Gold asked since his nose began to start working overtime with a familiar scent in the air.

"Wow, no wonder you are called the Garden Prince." Rei was amazed by Gold's instant identification of the seeds that Jin was holding. To him as a layman, it appeared to be just some ordinary grey looking seeds.

"Garden Prince...?" Gold looked towards Rei and was speechless for a moment. He did not know whether to take it in as a compliment.

"Wait, don't tell me you haven't noticed?" Weslie turned towards Gold who now looked even more confused. "The Orcs and Goblins had been nicknaming all of us to easily identify us from the crowd."

"Then, what are they calling you?" Gold questioned, intrigued and Weslie smiled playfully.

"You're sitting next to the 'Steamy Scientist'! I believed it suits me well!" Weslie answered while putting her tongue out and giving Gold a peace sign, which he literally and instantly placed his head on the table as part of his reply. It was a pun on a few levels, and he admitted that she was pretty enough to be steamy.

"I wish the System would tell me who was the one who started with all those silly nicknames. Yours is so much better than mine." Ayse grumbled a little. "Seriously, would it be too much to ask, to come up with something more creative than 'Lead Researcher'? It's so dull and doesn't place much of an impression on people."

"Still sounds a million times better than 'THAT Golem Engineer from Another World'. Just because they could not handle the fact that I could build better mechs than them." Rei shrugged his shoulders and hoped that in due time someone might give him a better nickname.

"That seems like a ton of fun. I should mingle with the Goblins more often, so I can earn myself a nickname toooooo!" Kiyu snickered since she wanted to join in the fun and the rest chuckled along until Jin cleared his throat.

"You're free to do as you wish in your free time, but I've called you guys here for a reason, remember?" Jin asked, and the rest kept quiet immediately, listening attentively to what Jin had to say.

"Thanks. Gold has correctly guessed the contents of those samples, although they're more commonly known as 'Blank State Seeds' according to his notes. While the details are in the report, Gold, do you mind explaining it in your own words for now?" Jin requested, and Gold's eyes lit up as he was more than happy to do so.

"The Blank State Seeds have been named for their ability to take on any form the one who handles them wishes for. They are usually used by mages, and the most apt comparison might be to liken them to Master's weapons Bam and Boo. However, they are unable to shapeshift once a form has been chosen, and it is a delicate process to form exactly what a mage had in mind."

"With Gold being the Scholar of the East, he was naturally one of the top experts in manipulating these seeds to one's desire." Weslie chipped in. "He and his other disciples have cultivated not just these blank state seeds but many other specialised seeds over the years to make them easier to use for the common folk. In short, they've been working their entire lives to create essential items for the various townsfolk."

"But know that we regulated them so that there is no abuse! That is why we have the Royal Seeds Guild and have a Royal Seed Deposits in each and every castle. How do you think I got those Living Armour Seeds?" Gold stated, and Jin squinted his eyes.

"Hang on, didn't you tell me they were from a merchant or something previously? Those Living Armour Seeds were from that castle's deposit?" Jin queried, and Gold flinched as he had already forgotten about that lie from so long ago.

"Well... I did technically get those living armour seeds from a 'merchant'. During the day he was an honest merchant, but in reality, he was a resistance member working deep undercover. He provided a lot of information being a secret info broker by occasionally giving inaccurate information to the enemy and selling us crucial information." Gold said that there were many a time that merchant was able to save their asses because of the last minute changes in the information he received. However, there were times he had to let it happen since the Rats could get suspicious, especially when the resistance barely managed to run away for quite a number of occasions.

And when the opportunity presented himself, he broke into the castle and undid the seal of the seed deposits. Unfortunately, he got caught and had to fight his way out. He died from his injuries trying to get those seeds for me. This, I swear it's the truth."

"We've hoped to cultivate those Living Armour Seeds that you used for your System Rider and make them into part of our armour. Back then, we thought it would give us a good chance against the Demon Rats. Guess, we were quite lucky that Zeru stole them from us..." Gold sighed as he imagined what would have happened if they had never met Jin.

So what if he had created the resistance group, the Jacks? Compared to their real numbers and grand plan, the Jack's hard earned little victories which were meaningless on the grand scale of things. They had

likely just provided some sport for the military minded Demon Rats and the traitorous Scholars that sat at the top.

But now, it would be different.

He's in the company of Jin and other worlds combined. With their help, they had liberated many towns or as Gold dubbed it in their words, Demon Rats Internment Camps. While the people had no idea what was going on or where Gold had managed to find such help, they finally had some hope that there was a real fighting chance against the Rats. Thus, he solemnly swore that he was not going to let the Demon Rats take over the Farming World.

Therefore, whatever Jin had in mind, he would give his all to accomplish it. For that is the only sole hope that this Farming World has right now.

"Thank you, Gold. So, returning to these Blank State Seeds. The System had managed to contact the Spirits of the Land in the Farming World. Many had ignored our call previously, but for some reason, that has changed. Perhaps, they did not think it could be that dire previously, and now those Demon Rats were more than just a pain in the ass. Anyway, what matters now is that we have a clearer picture of what the Demon Rats are planning." Jin stated.

"We thought that by taking away Weslie, they would have been severely crippled with the loss of a lead scientist. However, our thoughts were a bit too optimistic. Although they had lost one Scholar, the other two are also intelligent enough to keep that circus lot of rats running. Now that we know what we are really up against, we are going to play their game by evening out the odds with these seeds."

"What do you mean? We only have a certain number of these seeds? There is so much we can do with ... Oh wait." Gold stopped as he remembered that Jin had something perfect for this situation. A machine that made the impossible possible. The Lost Tech Counterfeiter!

"Ahh... No wonder you asked me to see if I could improve that feisty machine." Ayse said as she nodded her head happily, giving the sign that it had already been done. "But it will be more furious with its demands after the improvement. I don't know how to describe it, but I feel as if it is starting to have a mind of its own."

"Come now, don't tell me you are not expecting that. I mean you did use a piece of the leftover broken core and an advanced black market motherboard microchip that costs tens of thousands of dungeon dollars." Rei sighed in defeat when he remembered how Ayse dragged him to the Lost Tech Counterfeiter and forced him to fix an interface similar to Mechataur.

Ayse had been surprised by the revamp Mechataur had received through the combined effort of Niu Lang and Rei, so she immediately put their latest scientist cum engineer to good use. (Rei's free time had been severely cut ever since Ayse's demanded improvements on not just the Lost Tech Counterfeiter but every other machine as well.)

"It's fine, we can just place a System Contract Inscription Charm on it, and it should more or less obey," Jin said and the rest looked at him with a surprised look.

"Is there really such a thing?!" The minions queried and the System immediately took over.

Chapter 993 Blank State Seeds

"That won't work, although that is a uniquely interesting idea that the System might consider creating it. Especially for the likes of controlling non to semi sentient lifeforms. It might potentially help with future circumstances" The System stated, and it made Jin think about what it meant for a moment.

"You mean like taking control of the mechas in Rei's World?"

"Affirmative. However, System's Contract so far has been mostly either a 'Kill and Command' or 'Sign and Accede'. There have not been any prior instances where the System was 'forced and ordered'. While such provisions can be accommodated, the System requires some time to make such a command available."

"Do you think it will have an effect on the rats?" Gold questioned, but the System could not provide an accurate answer until they tried it.

"Will there be issues of them resisting the command?" Kiyu started to ponder since she had been in the System the longest in this current group setting. She was aware of where the System Contracts had been coming from. Compared to the ancient times, Jin was the only System User who had been using this technique and relying upon it heavily because of the nature of his job. No one else in the System's History had ever used this particular System Contract Technique to this degree and frequency.

Then again, the System acted as an extension of the wishes of its User. Previous Users who had been familiar with the history of the Panda Clan usually wanted to get stronger to enact revenge, which did not really require travelling to different worlds.

That coupled with the System's policy of not enslaving humans of their world had made it more of a rarity. By resurrecting the opponent it meant that the soul owed a debt to the System, hence the Kill and Command Contract which Jin used in the battle.

As for the Sign and Accede, the opponent had to be willing to submit their life over to the System, and the System would slowly win over the body by corrupting it with its constant privileges. Through Jin, it had successfully won over each and everyone who signed such a contract. Despite the constant hard work, the rewards were copious enough to keep the 'mind slaves' satisfied.

But for a "Forced and Ordered" edict to be issued, Kiyu was afraid that the System would be unable to get the approval of the opponent assuming he/she/it had the willpower to resist it. That may mean consequences to the Kill and Command Contract and whether the System would actually have full control of the monster in the future. In Kiyu's mind, she was worried that the System's opponents might erode the full control slowly without the System noticing it. In the worst case scenario, they might eventually plot to kill Jin.

"The System had no current data on it, but the System had assumption theories in case the edict fails and thus understands Bellator Kiyu's concern." The System reported, and she nodded her head.

"If we are that worried, I highly suggest we use it only on non-sentient lifeforms so that it will be just a form of highly advanced hacking?" Jin suggested, and the rest agreed right on the spot. "Anyways, back

to the Lost Tech Counterfeiter, you've said it'd been improved so do you think we can at least double the production?" He asked the 'Lead Researcher' and 'THAT Golem Engineer from Another World'.

"Double? You wound me with your words, Master. I dare say it can produce things way quicker after absorbing that broken Dungeon Core. I have connected it to the Lost Tech Recycler too so that it could take things straight from it if needed. Obviously, there's a drawback that you won't receive any precious stuff from the recycler since the Counterfeiter will take almost everything. But hey, when we kill those rats, we get random resources anyway. Might as well use them to get the Counterfeiter working."

"That Counterfeiter is a seriously cheat machine." Gold said as he shook his head in dismay. "What are you going to do with that many Blank State Seeds? If I am not wrong, you already have the capability to produce Black Sludge Crystals and create things like the Blank State Seeds, and maybe even more complex than a seed could do."

"Obviously, grow out an army. One that is capable of fighting against the Demon Rats. We fight iron with iron. If this proves out to be effective, we might actually have a shot fighting in the Mecha World rather than just fighting them with sticks and stones." Jin snickered, but the rest could not catch his drift that well.

"What I meant is... forget it. How about I just go direct to the plan? Alright? Okay, so Rei and Weslie. I like you guys create a series of blueprints on semi autonomous machines that are able to fight. Be it a tank, a plane, heck even a mecha robot if the seeds can grow such a thing. Then you show them to Gold who will try to inscribe it into the Blank State Seed, and we grow them."

"Even if that's possible, we don't have the time to grow those complicated structures! Remember how long it took to grow the Living Armour Seeds? In actual fact, it had taken years for the old tree and our Zither Mistress because of the time compression magic which the System used." Gold explained.

"Doesn't that dumb dumb tree get stronger with age? We are actually powering him up further the more we let him grow through the time compression" Ayse noted.

"That may be the case, but the time compression magic has already taken a toll on our cute little girl. She seems to hail from a long living race, so she's become stronger in the same manner as that treant, but I've noticed that her powers are unstable." Kiyu noted as she took a Blank State Seed and played around with it in her fingers. The Butterfly Fox had been checking on the minions periodically to in case the effects of time magic would affect them negatively ever since she found out that the System was abusing time magic a lot. (And with reason.)

"Releasing that pent-up energy to help the plants grow has in turn helped her lessen the strain. Perhaps that is why your System Rider is so powerful. However, from what I've seen, she seems to be doing that unconsciously, and it's not like it's an effective countermeasure in the first place." Kiyu said that the side effect, while positive, might prove to be a bane in the future if left unchecked.

"...Although, the Kraft in me would say, let her grow further and allow her to expend her powers all at once in the Grand Operation. That way, it might solve her problems and provide a huge boost to our overall battle efficacy. Still, you will also run into the risk of potentially killing her... although meh. You could always resurrect her once more. All the more stronger and powerful. It just depends on how you want to use her." Kiyu couldn't help but shrug her shoulders over this possible scenario.

"Don't talk about Ke Mi as if she was a thing!" Weslie complained, but Kiyu could not be bothered to argue back. Her years of fighting experience against all odds had taught her and the other foxes that they were mere pawns on a chessboard. Sure, they may be worth a rook or even a queen, but it did not matter when certain stakes were present.

"I will take your advice into consideration. Thank you, Kiyu." Jin replied although he shared Weslie's dismay. They might be his 'minions', but Jin treated them like family after all. He eventually coughed to stir the conversation back. "It should not be a problem. This part of the preparations for our Grand Operation will only need Shu to handle them."

"The System has been taught how to get these seeds to grow on foreign lands. It's also thanks to Gold and the Jacks' effort and data in creating that agriculture patch in their home instance." Jin added and stated to them that the System had initially tried to replicate the Farming World but failed to do so until it learnt the secrets from the Spirit of the Lands.

"And you know what? That is not all. Those items which we collected from the Demon Rats will be of some use, and we can recycle their troops for ourselves." Jin said with a smirk.

Chapter 994 An Unnamed Farming Instance

Jin opened up a new window to show off a brand new instance with literally nothing but layers of land floating from one corner to another. Not only that, the ground had already been tilted by Panda NPCs and automation to put even the current Pandapolis Farming Sectors, the Werejackal's Mansion Farm and even the New Home Island Instance where the werejackals had an agricultural tower to shame.

"The System had been keeping each and every single item - basically a hoarder though it claims that it is for collection of data purposes- Anyways, the first of each and every single item that had been dropped were kept while the rest were used into the Recycler with the exception of those in our Spiraling Sewers Instance. The Pandarens who were grinding the dungeons would get to keep those items... Although I have the feeling that the System is sneaky enough to at least copy the item before giving the Pandarens access."

"And after our dealings with the Spirits of the Land, the System finally has gained the capability to regrow anything that was from the Farming World. The only caveat is that it's limited to stuff from the Farming World." Jin said as if he was proud that the System gained a new skill but still disappointed that it could only work that much. (#asianparent)

"You mind sharing it?" Gold asked as he too always had the conception that the farming had always worked in such a way until he went to other worlds to have an eye opener.

"As much as the System wishes too, it is not something that could be explained or quantified without speaking potential System language gibberish. As the saying goes 'seeing is believing'." The System reported, and the group continued to browse through the new Farming Instance with awe (since the monitor featured something like Mooogle Street Map with 3D all around view.), Jin continued to explain.

"Therefore, our priority lies in the absolute eradication of the Demon Rats. Once we have achieved that goal, we will have access to a multitude of resources to grow, reducing the reliance on the black market. In fact, we might be able to sell things in the future that could bring us massive profits." Jin told them with glee.

"Like weapons?" Kiyu asked with her hand raised up.

"Hopefully not." Jin did not outright reject that as a possibility after all military spending was always where most of the money could be made.

"Oh..." Rei finally got the overall picture. "So, we create a lot of Blank State Seeds, find some military blueprint designs and let Gold work his magic to grow them in that Instance."

"Ah...but as much as I like to brag that I am the best seed inscriber in the Farming World, I have not had a lot of practice for a while now ...so I'll need some time to brush up. I hope it won't pose too much of a problem since we can make more Blank State Seeds. However, I must warn that there are certain limitations to them. The seed is like a blank CD from your world. I can only add that much to the seed for it to grow. I mean have you seen the stuff the rats drop? There was nothing too complicated. From buckets, to tables and perhaps to a simple wooden house and the last one is pretty much as big as it can get." Gold iterated his concerns.

"Hmm but oddly enough, the Demon Rats did drop ...you know erm your Farming World produces animals." Jin argued.

"Because those seeds are animal seeds. Not Blank State Seeds. Did you not check the animal seeds in my deposit? They are at least four times bigger than the usual seeds?" Gold replied.

"Then just find bigger Blank State Seeds, duh." Kiyu replied with a grin, and Gold shook his head.

"Impossible. I've seen a Giant Blank State Seed only once, and harvesting them had nearly cost me my life. I had to travel far and wide to get them." Gold recounted those bad memories in his head and wondered how he lived so far.

"I can assure you that is the truth. This idiot dragged me to an icy tundra that had a worm as large as Lynn's Restaurant Train and forced me to fight with it until he came out of its belly with those seeds. Without Keyrin and the others helping me that day, we would have probably become worm food in the end." Weslie recalled how terribly one of the encounters was.

"Come on, it wasn't that bad, was it? Didn't we have a lot of fun on the journey there and back?" Gold gleed a little but Weslie smacked his shoulders instead. "Hey! What's that for? You were the one who brought it up."

"Well if you had problems to keep it in check with Keyrin and the others we probably should not bother going that route. In any case, don't worry about that. We'll create blueprints and subsequently break it down once the prototype is working properly. That is where Pandapolis Industries will come into play. Without the need of creating those parts, we only need to wield and assembly it together. We should have enough time for that. I will get Qiu Yue to set up the factories once we have those blueprints ready. But the only issue is soil and fertilisers. We need lots of it so we can continuously push growth." Jin explained.

"Why is that an issue? Aren't we already producing it all with the Counterfeiter?" Ayse queried.

"That problem lies with the System's ability to grow in the spatial dungeon instance. While the Counterfeiter can produce seeds and soil, the Spirit of the Land reported that it required their blessing for optimal results. So, we need soil or at least fertiliser from the Farming World to make it work." The System reported.

"That is where I have another task for you, Gold. While waiting for the prototypes of those semi-autonomous machines' blueprints to work, I need you to travel back to the East to procure sand, soil, fertilisers and other things needed to make the plants grow faster. You are the expert anyways. Budget wise, just tell the System how much you need and it will grant you what you required. Also, remember to- "

"Bargain. Yeah, yeah, Boss. We all know that." Gold cut him off and already teleported to the Farming World. Back at his head, he already had a few contacts in mind and already began pursuing them back in the Eastern Region.

Weslie had actually been doodling out some plans which popped out in her mind, and upon hearing how Jin got those parts to assemble them, Rei made sure it was feasible to manufacture them on a large scale. Ayse returned to the Counterfeiter to check if it was working as intended while Kiyu held onto that Blank State Seed and told Jin she would borrow it for a bit before performing a disappearing act like Kraft.

Jin did not think much into Kiyu's actions as he wanted to return to Qiu Yue to check if she had any opinions about the Mind Hive Dungeon Instance until a thought struck him.

"Oh yeah, I have yet to name this instance... Never mind, its still in the works. Or maybe I should leave it to Shu since he would be the main caretaker of that instance." Jin left a mental note to himself before he disappeared from that meeting room.

995 The Makings of Mind Hive Dungeon Instance

"How is it?" Jin questioned Qiu Yue, who was brooding over the Mind Hive Dungeon Instance.

"All you did was give me a list of weapons with which to equip them! That's all! We can hand them a lance and call them a lancer, but that doesn't change the fact that they are still ultimately clay soldiers. They will still be vulnerable! I mean we can slap on some armour etc, for higher levels but there is no complexity to this 'game' at all." Qiu Yue remarked with a slight fit of anger. "Isn't there anything else at our disposal?"

"That is why I have this." Jin showed her a Blank State Seed and gave her a brief summary of what had been discussed. (He sincerely hoped the conversation would pacify her temper a little.)

"So we have tanks and planes which can be controlled by these clay soldiers?! Is that even possible??" Qiu Yue questioned, and Jin told her that it would not really be the clay soldiers commandeering them,

but the vehicles would be semi autonomous or at least that was what he had proposed. With Rei on the team, they could create a semi AI which he featured in his Gunndam manga.

"Shoot, I totally forgot about the movie thing. ...Then again, if there is no news of Rei complaining that should mean he is doing fine. Hopefully. Hahha! Oh well, I'll just ask him after the whole Grand Operation is over." Jin thought to himself while Qiu Yue pondered on the semi autonomous machines that he had proposed.

"If that is the case, then perhaps it is possible to make a game out of it. However, there is no collecting of resources or whatsoever." Qiu Yue criticised his plans once more.

"Oops... forgot about that too." Jin did not really think much about the plan nor put a lot of effort into it considering he had wanted Qiu Yue to take reins over the project. Upon laying the groundworks, Jin merely thrust the entire project to her.

While flattered that he put so much trust in her, Qiu Yue was simultaneously pissed at how half baked Jin's notes and plans had been for the game. No difference in stats, no special abilities or anything. With all the resources they had at their disposal, they could make something remarkably fun and powerful. Instead, Jin had scribbled some combinations like 'clay soldier + lance = lancer' and had called it a day.

During his short term absence, Qiu Yue had already put in as much effort into this 'game' as Jin had done for his Nian Instance. At least Jin's idea in regards to those semi autonomous machines sounded like a promising addition.

"Though I have to say it's rather funny. You rely on trees to grow your metal parts so that you can put them all together." Qiu Yue found it a bit ridiculous, but as long as it worked, she would be happy. "Well, now that we hcolourome variety with our 'units' I have some ideas about the resource gathering part."

"Get the System to make tickets. Digital Tickets. Earning them will require some effort such as killing the rats. Oh and make them give out varying amounts. It should be easy to color code some rats and give them some visual effects to make them into like higher-tier enemy units. The more rats they kill, the more tickets they can earn since there are no resource collection points. The players can then use those tickets to purchase stronger units like those machines you talked about."

"How about doubling our mobile encampments as collection points too? That way, we can allow them to gain a stable but slow income of tickets to purchase those clay soldiers even though they are readily available. Maybe even add a 10% refund of tickets after their units die? So in the event that their force gets wiped from a surprise attack, at least they can still recover." Jin suggested.

"Hmm, not a very bad idea. Considering we want them to keep going down and attack the cities, giving them an option to build more additional mobile encampments as defensive positions to protect the place will be good. Should we cap the amount of units they can have at any one time?" Qiu Yue asked.

"Nah, we need all the help we can get. Besides, who knows how many million rats are down there? It'd be dumb to limit them to like 20 clay soldiers. The more the merrier." Jin replied. "Also, based on the number of rats and outposts they've cleared, they should earn reputation points, and we can use your ladder redemption reward again. Or we could go with a limited reward store."

"Heh! And what if they still lose after all that? Should we add more monetary possibilities like pay to win units?" Qiu Yue asked.

"Nah, that would make it seem like the other units are not worth it. However, we can easily offer cosmetics. We can colour their clay soldiers with paint, and we can also add stuff like Zodiac costumes. But we definitely will have to offer a Panda option. Just imagine a bunch of clay soldier in Panda outfits stomp through the rats. Hahah!" Jin suggested enthusiastically, and Qiu Yue believed it was a good idea. "However, I have to remind you that this is a beta version of sorts. Especially since I am not sure how are we going to charge them to play the game."

"Hmm. Maybe charge the customers as to how those local LAN gaming shops charges? Or something similar to an Arcade game try? After all, they are commanding the troops and not going into battle with these stone soldiers." Qiu Yue suggested.

"Then I suggest we go by Arcade tries more than charging a local LAN gaming fee. After all, the 'graphics' would be so much more realistic." Jin replied.

"Well, that finally sounds like a decent plan. I will iron out the details. By the way, are you planning to make this a Raid as well? If anyone asks, we can call it"

"Why, of course! Similar to the Pandapolis Defence, I am going to advertise this very early. We can even promote it as a sort of cross play feature. Like a general could summon his friends as squad leaders for the clay soldiers. And will stick to a certain timeline. I was thinking of putting this in lieu with Valentine's day." Jin thought it would grant those people who were single on that day a good activity. "That way, those singles and couples have a place to play. Hahaha.

"You and your fantasies. What couple do you think would want to have where they fight in a war?!" This time around, Qiu Yue really smacked Jin's head.

"Love is war, isn't it?!" Jin argued back as he rubbed his head to soothe it.

"That's meant as an expression, not reality!" Qiu Yue let out a sigh while shaking her head.

"Alright, calm down. I was merely kidding. We can start before Valentine's Day. Otherwise, people like Bing Yong and Xiong Da will likely complain." Jin gave in, but he wondered if that would really be the case.

"How did I even get together with this guy in the first place?" Qiu Yue mumbled to herself before talking back to Jin. "You better have a romantic option for the actual couples other than the raid!"

"Do you think Cupid costumes will do the trick?" Jin joked, but Qiu Yue gave him a strong glare. "Fine, fine. I've already planned something for Valentine's Day, besides this Grand Operation will definitely not end in a day. I suspect it will at least last a couple of weeks. Or maybe months."

"Well, I have some concepts in mind on how to make the mobile encampments, but I need you to finance them." Qiu Yue returned to the topic at hand.

"I thought you needed resources too? Now it's just money?" Jin queried while he checked his phone on the accounts which Claire had tidied.

"Hmm, you could say that I've received a modest upgrade. I guess the System has learned a lot from your bargaining and has shared that kind of bargain ability with my Sub System. Now it's able to get the stuff I need as long as I put money in. I don't have to worry much about materials. It can choose the best ones available at the best price." Qiu Yue boasted with a grin.

"We currently have enough to spend. Just have your Sub System hand over the receipt to the System or perhaps directly to Claire. By the way, I never got a chance to ask. How are the Wolf Foxes, Tsu and Kai as trainers?"

"Not too bad, I guess. My only gripe would be that it's scary how different they behave during and outside the training. So far the beast kids have managed to endure their strict training regiment, but that only means the Wolf Foxes are going to give them even more hell. Surely you didn't just ask me because you were concerned?"

"I admit I may have had another reason for doing it." Jin sat down properly beside her and asked Qiu Yue more about their training regime. It looked like he had found some trainers to get inspiration from for the Advanced Training Centre's Hell Course.

As if handling one job wasn't tough enough, the inheritor of the Panda Clan had to manage many outlets, all while saving other worlds. Apparently, aiming for the number one dungeon supplier was not as easy as it sounded!

Chapter 996 Negotiations With the Southern Stars

Suddenly Qiu Yue's watch started beeping. It was informing her that Meomi was calling via the System's Channel.

"Lady Boss Qiu! I have reached the Southern Region's Capital with Nightingale and the others. She's asked for some time to readjust back to the ground after that C130 flight and parachuting down! Hehehe! Are you free to meet us soon?" Meomi asked as she held her former housemaid Nightingale by the shoulders.

The rest of her squad from Southern Star had enjoyed that novel experience and most of them were still high on the adrenaline rush. Some even said that they would not mind experiencing such a feeling again.

"I shall report to the Grandmaster and inform him about your arrival. Enjoy the sights of our Southern Capital." Nightingale's leader said as he waved them goodbye before disappearing into the shadows outside the gates of the Southern Capital which Meomi could feel their presence slowly fading away.

Before she blinked they had seemingly fused with the shadows and when she had opened her eyes again, there was nothing but walls along the Southern Capital. She checked around the area in search of a trick door but was unable to find one. She scratched her head wondering if they really had a skill to blend with the shadows and escape.

"You, your friends and your ninja-esque skills." She muttered to Nightingale but her former maid was unable to reply as she still felt like vomiting with every step. Meomi hoped that it wouldn't leave a

lasting trauma, especially since they could be flying back. (After all, it was cheaper to the System than teleporting a larger group.)

"Meomi, I will join you in a little while. Jin just gave me a new task and I'm going to be a bit busy with it. Give me another call when you are about to meet their leader or if something urgent happens." Qiu Yue replied even though she saw Jin giving her the go ahead to help Meomi on the spot. It was after all Jin who had asked Meomi to get Qiu Yue to accompany her with the negotiations.

"Sure Lady Boss Qiu! See you later, I shall accompany Nightingale for some sight seeing first before they contact us." Meomi said as she started dragging her friend to the gates of the Southern Capital. (The guards were a little wary but eventually, they got through with Nightingale's credentials.)

"You sure know how to make use of me when I'm gone. Perhaps I've been doing things wrong. Instead of chasing after you, I should have shown you the cold shoulder." Qiu Yue teased Jin and the dungeon supplier sighed with his eyes rolling upwards.

"Please. If you don't want to do that job, I can go instead. I just know that you are better at negotiating deals for me." Jin grumbled.

"Oh if our mighty Boss puts it that way, I shall give it my best." She chuckled a little. "To be honest I'm more impressed with the Southern Stars compared to their western counterpart. What was their organisation called again? Western Skies or something. Their adventurers could only do jackshit, despite me being in command of the Farming World for a period of time. Some of them even actively chose to ignore some of my commands and rightfully suffered for it. Nightingale and her people on the other hand were observant, detailed and disciplined. Each one of them is as competent as their leader." Qiu Yue was promoting the Southern Region's main guilds and with valid reasons.

"They even had the balls to proactively clear a few poorly manned caves and mind you when I say poorly manned, I'm just referring to them being outnumbered 10 to 1 instead of 50 to 1. Meanwhile, the western guys could barely handle minor skirmish when they were outnumbered 5 to 1. Southern Skies seem to actually appreciate this golden opportunity to earn lots of cash while gaining experience not just for their veterans but fresh recruits too." Qiu Yue remarked.

"We should be able to offer them 1,000 Gold Coins per week without placing any burden on ourselves. When we employed their group of four, we agreed on 49 gold coins per week for the next three months. So you can work out the math. At most I'm willing to pay them 2,500 Gold Coins per week and that is assuming they hand over their entire organisation numbers." Jin declared as he once again rechecked the sums on his phone app to make sure he did not allocate a wrong budget.

Qiu Yue was a bit surprised why he suddenly acted so stingy. Given the current exchange rate of Dungeon Dollars to Farming World Coins, 1 DD equalled 125 bronze coins (=1.25 Gold coins). And to put things to perspective, 3 bronze coins was enough to purchase a decent meal.

For Nightingale and her group, 7 gold coins per day meant each of them was earning about 175 coins per day. This generous payment was most likely also the reason why they dared to risk their lives so eagerly. Getting more than 100 bronze coins a day was considered a luxury or as they put it when being offered the deal they 'struck gold'.

While the Southern Stars guild would take a commission fee since it was responsible for feeding all their numbers, especially in times when some of them were unable to get work, it was ultimately a lump sum leaving more than enough for the group.

"Fine, I guess you have your own reasons why you want to limit it. Depending on the size of their organisation it might be difficult to get them all, but I will do my best." Qiu Yue and Jin nodded at each other.

"Their current weaponry is unlikely to hold a candle against the main group of Demon Rats. I've received reports from Meomi that during one of the confrontations the Southern Star members' weapons broke and they had to resort to fighting with the Demon Rats' leftover weapons. Well, they only used those as blunt force weapons since they were unable to figure out how to operate them properly. Meomi was smart enough to allow the current group to keep these new weapons for now, so they could brandish it to their leader."

"I see that you already laid the groundwork." Qiu Yue was happy since this would ease up the negotiations and with it, she would be able to squeeze the life out of the leader. "So basically we are limiting their pay, because we'll be the ones to outfit them with our own weapons. Well, if nothing else works, a show of force should help sweeten the deal."

"You sure you are stronger than their leader?" Jin doubted her for a moment before he got whacked on the head with an even more forceful impact. He could have dodged it easily given his rigorous training but he allowed himself to be hit to judge her strength.

"Strong enough for you?" Qiu Yue asked as she did not hold back and infused her icy chi into the punch.

"It's definitely cooling," Jin answered as he tried to tolerate the pain, but it only got worse. He eventually realised it was the freezing ice that was more painful. It literally started to give him a brain freeze until he was forced to use Black Panda Fire to slowly remove the ice by warming the surroundings as well as channeling his chi towards his head. (Else he could be bald if he haphazardly tried to remove it!) Yet the casual remark nearly prompted Qiu Yue to give him another punch, only this time Jin did dodge.

"I yield! You win! You win! Go do your brute force method!" Jin shouted as he furthered the distance upon dodging. Fortunately, Meomi's call saved the dungeon supplier's skin from being frozen once more.

"Hmph! Consider yourself lucky that I did not use the full effect of my ice chi!" Qiu Yue harrumphed and stuck her tongue out before teleporting away.

"Full effects?" Jin queried and the System informed him that there was actually a second part to the ice attack. It's just that the Red Panda Cultivator did not use it. Jin shuddered at the thought of what might have happened next.

"System, please record her fight for me if she started any. I wanna see if she turns any of them into ice cubes."

Chapter 997 The Southern Capital

The Southern Capital.

Unlike the other three regions that had an abundance of sun and rain, the harsh environment did not allow the inhabitants to become farmers or build many fantastic looking cities. The South had extended periods of dry seasons for most of the year and instead of a winter, it merely got colder in the second half of the year.

The winter desert season as they had dubbed it was just as harsh as winter and the winds blew along with the white sand all around them. There was little rain, so each Oasis became a precious hub for life around it. Ironically the skies were full with imposing grey clouds yet while it rarely rained, it often thundered.

The Southerners had been forced to adapt and improvise a lot for their survival ever since the first group of people set foot into this abyssal sandpit of white death. It was practically a miracle that they had somehow persevered long enough to create a long lasting civilisation.

Nevertheless, the completely hostile environment was surprisingly suitable for one thing:

The growth of monsters.

The rate of monsters growing in the South was considered to be the most rapid and problematic. The first wave of settlers who had tried to establish a foothold in this area, quickly got beset by waves of monsters that eventually wiped the entire group away.

The next group of settlers found the ruins of their predecessors and learned about what had happened from a torn diary by the expedition leader. Their short stay had been enough to convince themselves about the reality of the monster plight. Luckily they had managed to fend off the first waves of monsters with few casualties before they sailed back to report to their respective homelands.

The retrieved diary spoke about precious metals, gold and artefacts which had apparently been found not too far away from their original location. Thus, the third expedition had been manned by a company of soldiers to protect the new wave of settlers. With the prospects of getting rich, many had flocked to join the expedition, hoping to earn a good buck for their families back home.

They also managed to last longer than the first group, but they had been unprepared for the harshness of winter in that new land. A number also succumbed to diseases unknown to them they caught from the cold while some died from the lack of proper medical care from frostbites and winter related injuries. Even those from the North who were more prepared for the cold than the others had trouble settling down.

However, the greed of mankind would always be a big motivator, no matter the world especially when the torn diary entry turned true. It caused a significant ruckus among the other three regions and more people sailed to settle there. But the talk of gold also allured the unfavourable types with the majority being runaways, stowaways or even villains that needed to get out of the world's view. That did not mean they were not

One day, someone decided to make a proper kingdom in the Southern Region despite the perpetual dangers. That person was a charismatic military man, who had successfully convinced many groups to join in. With his training, he commanded his armies to handle the hordes of monsters.

After killing the monsters these new southerners started to survive the harsh environment by stripping them for their meat and using their materials to create more weapons, armour and even buildings.

That was why there was a difference in terms of strength and abilities of the guilds between the Western Skies and the Southern Stars. To the latter, scouting and killing was part of their daily job and their long term survival depended on those skills. Even when they turned old and frail, the Southern elderlies were probably two to three times stronger than the average healthy men in the Eastern or Western regions.

Qiu Yue teleported to a secluded corner after Meomi gave her the signal that nobody could see them. The Red Panda Cultivator found herself at awe by the design of the Southern Capital. Unlike the cold metal look which the Northern Capital had, the Southern Capital was an abomination of a city. For example, the Capital Walls were made from monster parts which Meomi told her came from the bones of the giant snake. Between the pillars (aka the bones), other monster parts were mixed, matched and subsequently defused to become something as hard as stone or maybe even stronger than that. But no matter what, they still looked like a white washed stone wall from afar until one decided to have a closer inspection on them.

"Look over there. Nightingale told me she slew a golem with her squad and they decided it would be strong enough to put it on the wall. Around here it's considered an honour if your kill can be used to protect the general populace." Meomi added that she had even seen Nightingale's name inscribed on the stone of the golem.

"But that's not the best part of the Southern Capital's wall. Do you see that particularly unique design at the front gates of the Southern Citadel? A Legendary Monster Beetle had invaded the Farming World in the past. It was a terror for all Four Regions. I was a kid, but I do remember the sounds of its wings when it had ravaged the Northern Region, after it came from the West..."

"So I am guessing the Southerners were the only ones who managed to down it?" Qiu Yue asked as they walked towards the Citadel Gates.

"According to my father, the Southerners had prepared an ambush for it since the beetle had ravaged the corps of the rest of the Farming World. Although the other three regions had sent elite troops as reinforcement for the Southern Region, they ultimately only got to enjoy the show." Meomi recalled vaguely and felt a bit nostalgic that it was a story her father told her.

"I am surprised, your father did not sugar coat the truth and claimed that the Northern Region played a major role in the fight."

"Hah! He was never the kind who would do such things. In fact, he was the one who made contact with the Southerners to warn them of this eventuality. He thought they would not treat his words seriously since he had just been a mere lordling in the Northern Region. To his surprise, they contacted him back, thanking him for the warning and asked if we could send some reinforcements just in case. Although the

South is the hardest place to plant a crop, we are nearly the next in line to take that trophy title. And despite all the losses my father managed to convince the Northern King."

"I guess he reasoned that it's better to send the troops there and have a bloody battle with the Legendary Beetle than having it come here again and destroy your hard earned crops." Qiu Yue said and Meomi merely shrugged her shoulders.

"I did not really care what his reasons were. To be honest, I was too small to even bother about it that much. I only remembered all of this because Nightingale had been reminiscing the past with me. Without her, I would probably not have thought about sort of information." Meomi commented as she showed the guards at the citadel gates the badge of the Southern Stars which Nightingale loaned her.

"Come now! Do you really have to call it information? Can't you just say they were your precious memories?" Qiu Yue tried to make a joke but Meomi got serious.

"These 'memories' ...have all been sullied by the Demon Rats. I don't wish to recall them until each and every Demon Rat is dead." Meomi stated but they suddenly felt an imposing presence from a distance. As they raised their eyes up beyond the sight of steep stairs, they saw a group of well armoured men and women standing with their hands folded as if they were waiting for their arrival.

"Well said, friend of Nightingale. I suppose the one beside you is the emissary for that secret organisation which Nightingale spoke of." The man spoke and Meomi nodded her head while for some reason, Qiu Yue noticed that her hands were turning into claws.

"Don't tell me a show of power will be necessary to even speak to them..." Qiu Yue sighed at such a possibility but with each passing second, it became more likely.

Chapter 998 The Odd Trial of Royal Stairs

"Hold your claws, little girl. I have no qualms with you." The one who seemed to be in charge spoke as he walked down the stairs with grandiose and strength. Even without chi, his figure was imposing enough for the rest of the guards around to bow down as a sign of respect. They then lifted their swords and shields in salute the moment he passed them.

"Name's Leopardo. I am the current Grandmaster of the Southern Stars and also the interim leader for the Southern Region at the moment."

Qiu Yue noticed his physical features intently since they were unique compared to his counterparts. His braided hair was flowing down his shoulders and his unbelievably tanned dark skin showed that unlike the leader's of their world he was not just sitting in some office all day.

The apparent loss of his right arm and scars all over his body were testimony that he must have been a veteran warrior who had participated in multiple battles. But most importantly, it seemed as if he was able to walk with his eyes closed even though Qiu Yue had a hunch that he still had at least some of his eyesight left.

"Pleasure to meet you, Mr Leopardo. You may call me Qiu Yue and I do indeed represent the boss of our secret organisation." Qiu Yue returned the greeting and Leopardo nodded his head. "Please excuse the behaviour of Meomi, I shall see that she does not insult you in any way in the future." The Red Panda Cultivator added as she placed her hand on Meomi's head and forced her to bow apologetically.

"So far, I heard many great things about your organisation, especially the recompensation that you have given our scouting party. Not to mention the amount of spectacular inventions which my comrades have brought back. I do understand that they were on loan?" Leopardo asked.

"Yes, they are. It is just a taste of what your Southern Stars can obtain if they work with us. We have a myriad of items which can increase your fighting capabilities. You provide us with manpower and solid fighters, we will bestow them with weapons that can keep for life." Qiu Yue explained and Leopardo was intrigued enough that he beckoned them to climb the stairs and follow him to the meeting chambers.

However, the moment the two tried to walk on the stairs, they felt as if someone had placed a heavy chain on their legs. They suddenly felt sluggish while being restraint without anything physical holding them on.

Seeing as nobody attacked them, it didn't appear to be a trap, but more a test of sorts. As she looked up top, she saw that the guards were holding their breaths to stop themselves from smirking at their situation.

"I see. Apparently, we have not managed to leave a strong impression on the leader of this nation yet nor in the eyes of a grandmaster." Qiu Yue sighed and let go of Meomi as the latter transformed into her werecat form. Both girls began to traverse across the steps. However, with each step it felt as if the number of chains and their weight kept increasing.

"Brute force does not solve everything, little girl." Leopardo offered one last piece of advice while waiting for the huge bronze Southern Citadel's gates to open. "You have five minutes to reach the gates before my guards change their shifts and officially close them."

"You are kidding me, right? 'Brute force does not solve everything'? Your entire nation was built upon brute force!" Meomi cursed as she used every ounce of strength to move to the next step.

"But that does not mean you have to work at it alone, Baka Neko." Qiu Yue smiled as she stopped and took a deep breath. The next moment she walked on the steps as if nothing was affecting her. While passing her, she picked up the struggling werecat and dragged her along by pulling her tail.

"Ow! What are you doing! Stop it!" Meomi complained but she realised she was being pulled up the stairs which finally made Leopardo turn and eyed them from the corner of his sights.

"This is punishment for being a naughty cat. So bear with it until the top of the steps." Qiu Yue replied as she continued to pull Meomi's tail while moving up the stairs. That was when the guards at the side of the long steep stairs immediately moved to block them from moving any higher.

"What in the hell are you thinking right now, Leader of the Southern Region." Qiu Yue stopped before getting close to the first guard blocking their way. "Is this a test of some sort or your way of greeting your visitors after you complimented them."

"That's why I said we should have fought him at the start and not listen to his bull crap," Meomi said and Leopardo could only snicker.

"Like I said, the gates are opened for five minutes," Leopardo said once more before descending into the depths of the Southern Citadel.

"Then you know what, forget it. We don't need their help." Qiu Yue decided it was a waste of time and shouted goodbye. The guards were baffled by her behaviour as they always thought that these guests were dying to ask for help.

"Tell that arrogant boss of yours, we will get by without his help. He would only lose out on the amount of gold we are giving him and the thrill of hunting." Qiu Yue said as she walked downwards now without her chi activated. Compared to climbing up, it was so much easier to walk down the stairs.

"Why are you doing this? Don't we need the manpower against them?" Meomi asked while rubbing her tail.

"Well, yeah. We do. But there is no need to bow our heads this low to get it. They already heard from the reports that we are awesome. They just want more proof to see such awesomeness from us. It's their loss really." Qiu Yue replied but as the both of them tried to walk out of the Citadel Gates, only to be barred by the gate guards at the front with spears blocking their way.

"No one disrespects our leader in this way. Get back to the stairs and climb or we will skewer you."

"I am starting to notice a recurring theme. Is that how you and Master Jin gain attention? By walking away." Meomi grinned and her claws were wide and ready to strike.

"Well, people somehow felt offended that we just walked away. You could say it's some form of reverse psychology. Like you are not worth my time and thus they wanted to prove the opposite. However, Jin did not feel this way. He felt that such issues were really not worth his time at all. After all, you know how busy a panda he is despite being a lazy one." Qiu Yue said as she beckoned Meomi to come with her instead.

"What? We are going to try the stairs again?!" Meomi questioned but instead, she saw Qiu Yue sitting at the middle of the stairs.

"No. What are you talking about? We are going to have a tea break right here and now since they do not want to let us go. Or maybe until they got sick of us." Qiu Yue said as she conjured out a bottle of coke and two bags of photo chips.

Chapter 999 A Variant Monster

When Meomi saw the chips, she immediately chose the sweet and sour ones and her claws turned into hands. Judging by the way she opened the bag of chips with her hands, she might as well have used her claws.

Thus, the two members of this secret organisation baffled the Citadel Guards by their audacity to have a snack break in the middle of their sacred stairs trial. No one in their right mind would have done that and quite likely these two were the first to be this shameless.

Alas, the trial stated that unless the challengers of the trial came into physical contact with the guards, the challengers were not to be harmed during the trial period. Somehow Qiu Yue had a feeling things would go this way and so they took their time to eat the chips while also enjoying the sight of the grey skies and scenery the Inner Citadel had to offer. Even if they were to brandish their swords and spears, Qiu Yue believed that the two of them could take them on all of them easily despite the odd difficulty of the Trial for Meomi.

Although the guards were boiling inside that this group did not take their trial seriously, they were forced to tolerate this shameless behaviour. Once the five minutes were up, the inner gates were indeed shut off while the guards stance changed.

"Looks like we failed your trial. Can we go now?!" Qiu Yue shouted at the front gates guards as they reluctantly opened the outer gates.

"Do you think we will get assassinated?" Meomi asked as she licked her fingers.

"What? For sitting right here? That would have to be the silliest reason to get assassinated. Death to you for sitting at the stairs!" Qiu Yue joked as she threw her own bag with half eaten chips into her storage ring while swiping her hands a little before standing up.

"Meh, they are southerners. As long as money exchanges hands they would do it. And you never know how these guards might say things like 'I will kill you for disrespecting our leader! kind of stuff', ya know?" Meomi argued before she asked whether she could finish that pack of chips. It appeared that munching on food kept the werecat's temper in check. As they walked by the Citadel guards, both of the girls could clearly feel the anger emanating from the guards but Qiu Yue still cheekily waved goodbye to them.

Just as they walked further into the streets and Qiu Yue informed Meomi about some of the plans that Jin had in store for the Grand Operation, until the werecat felt a familiar presence behind her. As she turned her head casually, she felt that familiar presence turns into a sharp pointed aura of bloodlust, aiming at her and only her.

"Oh hey, Nightingale." Meomi waved at her with caution, only to realise that the crowd around them started to thin out slowly with people in black cloaks starting to close off their perimeter.

"Guess you are spot on with the assassination part?" Qiu Yue sighed as she picked up Meomi's bag of chips and took a bite out of the last piece. "But to send your housemaid to kill you, isn't that a little too much a task for that little bird friend of yours? Also, was that intuition or did you know they would try to assassinate us?"

"Hmph... a mix of both? Nightingale did seem to mention something about their Stairs Trial being sacred. Sorry I wasn't listening too carefully. From what I can recall it had to do something along the lines of losers will all eventually die. Still, she hoped I would clear the trial. But judging from the thinning of the crowd, she is not alone, probably sent to track us down instead. I have full confidence she won't pull the blade on me. To you, not sure."

"Heh, she might be commanded to do both! Then you won't be in for a surprise since she can catch you off guards because of your relationship. Not to mention, we are foreigners and they expect the foreigners to complete the trial without giving any information on it? That's kind of rude on their part. Considering how much we had taken care of them, that is outright insulting." Qiu Yue said as the crowd in that particular street finally disappeared.

Only the Southern Stars Mercenaries were left as well as the offenders. It was as if they knew what would happen to them, so they immediately scattered. Even the shopkeepers and merchants in the vicinity walked away from their stores and left without seemingly caring for their wares. They'd rather keep their lives intact than getting implicated for a possible crime.

"Leader Leopardo was amused by the way you handled the trial," Nightingale informed them with a disgruntled tone. She honestly thought that Meomi could clear the trial easily.

"Is this supposed to be a way to entice us to try again? Because if it is, I'm totally not interested." Qiu Yue replied and suddenly there was a bit of chuckling at the back of a street alley.

"I can see how 'slightly' different they are from normal people. Especially the representative from this secret organisation you spoke of." He lowered his black cloak and showed himself.

"Oh, you want to talk to me now? I thought you won't bother since we've miserably failed your trial." Qiu Yue pointed out sharply.

"So you'd rather fight this cripple instead of my guards?" Leonardo questioned which she nodded her head nonchalantly.

"From what I gather from your culture, fighting seems to be part of your way of life. So, why should I bother myself with the weakest when I can directly fight with the strongest? Also please, let's not pretend you are a cripple. You may have lost an arm, but you seem to still be quite active." Qiu Yue commented before using her chi to judge her opponent. "Probably need some warming up though."

"Fine, I won't pretend, however, if you think you can take me you might have overestimated yourself, Lady Qiu Yue. Aren't you afraid of death?" Leopardo asked as he unsheathed his sword. Akin to his name, there was a leopard monster carved on his crossguard.

"No, I don't think so. Perhaps you should be afraid of me who isn't afraid of death." Qiu Yue now picked up her Ice Katana from her storage ring and most of them were surprised that her sword magically appeared from thin air while not sensing any magic powers.

"Hahaha! Such bravado. Now I am more interested in you. But apologies Lady Qiu Yue, it seems the trial I intend for you is more ...difficult than the fight against me. Especially now that I know you wish to fight the strongest of them all." Leopardo said while putting down his weapon. Qiu Yue noticed that suddenly more cloaked figures appeared through the shadows.

"Infighting among yourselves?" Qiu Yue deduced and Leopardo burst out in laughter.

"Your imagination is something else. No, but that was a good guess." Leopardo said as the winds in the air changed a little. The cold dry breeze slowly became warm. Not only that, there were distant screeches from afar and Qiu Yue sighed.

"Oh... You have some top class monsters coming your way." Qiu Yue asked and Leopardo nodded his way with a grin.

"Is there any better way to learn about our allies? My reports have stated that you were able to defend the Town of Wecha within minutes." Leopardo was betting, hoping that this mysterious organisation would be able to help his people the same way they did for Wecha.

"You seem awfully sure that we are going to help you? Do you think that we are philanthropic in nature?" Qiu Yue's words, however, were different from her actions as she quickly jumped towards the high ground to check up on the incoming monsters. She immediately requested for the Sub System or the System to give her whatever information they had of whatever was causing these. All she knew was that she never really encountered any animalistic life forms other than the Demon Rats in the Northern Region.

At that point, she also relayed the view to the Farming World Scholars in hopes that they knew something too but she did not expect for Gold to suddenly scream and shout through the System Intercoms.

"Unbelievable!!!! Is that really- *cough*" Gold cleared his throat due to the excitement. "Is that really THE Phoenix!?! The Seven Oceans Phoenix?!!" Gold exclaimed and the System instantly verified that what Qiu Yue saw was indeed it. The Bird monster with the colour hue of seven oceans combined. Its majestic feathers were blooming with magic and it brought the taste of sea into the dry white desert.

"Wait a minute...so that phoenix is the one whose dung you were so excited about previously?" Qiu Yue asked and Gold was beyond delight.

"How dare you degrade such a miracle fertiliser? With enough of it, it would be a breeze to literally grow those plants that Jin wants me to inscribe! The plants, like the Phoenix, will rise up almost instantly!" Gold was giddied from the exhilarating sight of seeing the Phoenix...until the System apologised via the System Channel.

"Upon closer inspection, what Sub System User Qiu Yue saw is not exactly the Seven Oceans Phoenix, but apparently a variant. The Seven Oceans Phoenix should only have seven tails, yet this particular individual has nine." The System corrected itself. "But judging from its magical powers, it is no doubt the signature energy of the Seven Oceans Phoenix although it is many times stronger. Thus, the System shall name it the Nine Oceans Phoenix for easier reference."

"So what? It's like a legendary class monster or something? I don't even know the power grade of this particular monster. Is it normal for such a monster to appear in the Southern Capital? I recalled Gold saying that it's aversion to humans makes it hard to find. Isn't that the reason it's crap is so rare?" Qiu Yue" questioned only then Meomi turned to Leopardo.

"Did any of your men capture that monster's chicks or something? Maybe an egg? Or did you kill any monster at all recently which might have had any relation to it?" Meomi shouted and that caused Leopardo to squint his eyes.

"We do not keep track of most of the monster slain because it's our daily source of food. I can, however, get my man to trace it, assuming we verified what monster that is. All we know is that my mages found a

giant source of energy coming towards the capital. And we've already begun evacuating the citizens." Leopardo said. "With your help, we might be able to stop it."

"So time is of the essence and you still opted to conduct that stupid trial thing before outright asking us for help? What are you? Sick in the head or something?" Qiu Yue shook her head. Her interrogating tone made the black cloaks take their weapons out immediately and they pointed them at Qiu Yue for saying something so offensive to their leader.

"You are right, that's my fault. It was meant as a measure of strength. You've passed the moment you managed to walk up the stairs with ease. While your companion Meomi did not satisfy such a condition, I would say that not many could even walk the first few steps up. So she's considered above average and perhaps on par with our rookies in the Southern Stars." Leopardo exclaimed.

"Nevertheless, it seems that the both of you know what sort of monster that is, judging by the way you've asked if we capture its younglings." Leopardo commented and Qiu Yue did not hesitate to tell them.

"A variant of the Seven Oceans Phoenix? Nine Oceans Phoenix?" Leopardo repeated and his eyes left his usual look of confidence. It seemed as if he understood the actual severity of the problem at hand now that he had identified the monster.

"That is our conjecture but until it releases its attacks, we won't know whether it's a variant or another creature entirely." Qiu Yue added.

"Save our capital and I promise you, you shall gain the South's favour. We shall consider your proposal to the best of our ability." Leopardo requested of her.

"Huh? Just 'consider'? You're asking us to help you take down a possibly Legendary creature and yet you still continue to be on the pedestal even when asking us for that kind of help, eh? That's rather arrogant of you... Sorry, but I believe we will manage just fine without your help. Who knows how many lives it might cost to help you. If that Nine Oceans Phoenix ever comes to disturb us in the North, we shall deal with it then." Qiu Yue answered as she requested a portal right in front of her, seeing that the black cloaks were ready to cut them into pieces.

It was not until Leopardo lifted his hand up.

"Please wait, you misunderstood me. I can only promise you that it will be 'consider' because I am not the leader of the Southern Region for I am but an interim one. When our real leader is back from his expedition, only then can he make that choice. It's not for me to decide but him." Leopardo explained.

"But I can promise you at least this. As one of the biggest mercenary guilds in the Southern Region, should you be able to avert this crisis with us. We will lend you our aid and that I can guarantee."

"For free?" Qiu Yue asked shamelessly and Leopardo felt a major dilemma. Bargaining even at death's door? This Lady was a true blue businesswoman.

"Forgive me, but I have many mouths to feed too. We can negotiate a favourable deal for your side, but only upon clearing this particular threat?" Leopardo was trying to be realistic as the coffers would definitely be drained from the extended campaign. They might be rich and have one of the largest networks of mercenaries but their families still needed to eat.

"No, that doesn't sound good enough.." Qiu Yue did not hesitate to move out into the portal whilst grabbing Meomi. They teleported away, leaving Leopardo and his Southern Star comrades in a lurch. Nightingale was shocked as she did not expect such an answer by Meomi and her superior. But seeing the negotiations had broken down, the Southerners could only do what had been trained their entire life for.

To fight.

Chapter 1000 Miracle

Qiu Yue teleported back to the Dungeon Maker, where she was greeted by the sight of Jin who just stared at her through squinted eyes. Next to him was Gold who had hastily returned from his trip to the Eastern Region with bags of soil and fertiliser and the Scholar was sharing Jin's expression when looking at Qiu Yue.

"Am I that pretty that you all have to stare at me with such ferocious looking eyes as if you will devour me the moment I made a move forward?" Qiu Yue cracked a small joke and Meomi just sighed.

"What were you thinking to abandon the Southerners just like that?!" Gold questioned the Red Panda Cultivator, making Jin focus his attention towards him.

"Interesting, I thought your first reaction would be something more like, 'Let's go find where that Nine Oceans Phoenix has been pooping! I want all that fertiliser for myself!' " Jin's impression of the Scholar lightened the mood.

"Well, my heart is stirring and it would be a lie if I told you I don't want that miracle dung, but-"

"But just like Jin here, you care about the people of your world first and foremost. Don't worry I still have plans to help them. However, I want to do it in a way that will guarantee that we can keep the Phoenix all to ourselves." Qiu Yue interrupted and they all could see Gold's eyes practically scream 'WANT!!!!'. This was the first time the Werejackal Leader had desired something so badly and coincidentally it would be for the betterment of Jin's agriculture ecosystem in the future.

Since the Phoenix equalled unlimited high quality shit all year round, it would have most likely been put on the System's to-capture eventually, but since the one flying towards the Southern Capital had a variant mutation, it meant its value was far greater than an ordinary one. For all they knew this one's poop could have the potential to be superior to the fertiliser Jin had gotten before as part of the System Rewards.

The Panda Cultivator was not the kind of guy who would travel around different worlds specifically to catch a monster unless the System put out a mission for him. So far there had not been a specific need for it, but if they had to protect the Southerners, they might as well be getting the Phoenix out of it.

"Fine, but was it really necessary to outright refuse them in such a manner? We could have used their help in capturing it." Gold argued as he placed all the soil and fertiliser bags down and swiped any possible dirt and dust from his body.

The System assisted him with a cleansing magical spell so that Gold would not dirty the Dungeon Maker interior. (Otherwise, that would be even more of a waste of resources cleaning the place up.)

"Perhaps, but our plan might have us clash with them. Besides that Phoenix is not the only one coming up to trash the Southern Capital. I had to return since we would not be able to deal with its company without reinforcements." Qiu Yue informed him and the System pulled up a bird's eye view imagery of the Southern Capital courtesy of the Orc Pilots who were currently flying the C-130 overhead. After which, pictures of the incoming Nine Oceans Phoenix popped out on the Dungeon Maker's console.

"Hahah... this feels like another major déjà vu..." Jin muttered under his breath as he saw what Qiu Yue had meant. There was a giant flock of winged monsters coming towards the Southern Capital and the Nine Oceans Phoenix appeared to be their ringleader. The odd thing was that their group looked as if their 'creator' had basically taken some land animals and slapped some wings on top of them.

Among the variety of monsters, there were Winged Bears, Winged Elk, Winged Lions and even Winged Worms with lots of sharp and pointy teeth. Surrounding them there were smaller animals which the C130 imagery caught such as Winged Monkeys, Winged Racoons and even Winged Mutated Humans.

"Oh... that's really bad. Instead of a land attack, the Southerners are facing an unprecedented series of flying monsters. And judging from their current fortifications, their defences are rather primitive when it comes to monsters with wings." Gold shared his knowledge about the South.

Jin placed his hand on his chin and started to ponder on what to do. "Hmm... I see. Correct me if I'm wrong, but our air strike force should, unfortunately, be our weakest link, correct? Let's get Wyrstriker here for his opinion."

"Also, I have to apologise. Initially, I thought you left because you were just a natural in tsundere-ing people." Jin bowed his head but his comment made Qiu Yue pout.

"Tsundere-ing people? Only you could come up with such a term, Jin... As your tactician, it's a given that I know the composition of our forces! If it had been a simple monster horde, I wouldn't have left, but stayed and negotiated for more in the first place. I would have upped the stakes just enough so they would have to agree, but end up regretting having promised us that much while we cleared the threat effortlessly." Qiu Yue clarified.

"Master, you called?" Wyrstriker answered the summon and Jin was happy to conveniently excuse himself by giving the goblin leader a short debrief on the new situation.

"Oh... This is indeed a problem. While our aerial forces have significantly improved after the Pandapolis Defence, especially thanks to the addition of Marquis Forneus and his Dragon Devils, this might still be too much for us. We do not have enough anti-air defences against all of them. Even if we did, this is not an isolated dungeon where we can push them into one corner and annihilate them. They have the oceans and mountains to flee to when they feel threatened and we don't have the manpower to chase after all of them." Wyrstriker gave his analysis.

"I'm relieved you did not say that we did not have the strength and capability to chase them." Jin chuckled a little and Wyrstrike scoffed.

"Of course! My Goblin Wyvern Knights have been utilising our best technology that Ayse had created to date! It's impossible for us to fail to catch any monster at our speed! In fact, General Forneus had to bow down in front of Ayse when he requested his dragons to be outfitted with the same technology as us! However, the designs had to be modified and testing is currently underway to ensure that the dragons can handle the drag and inertia force." Wyrstriker informed Jin.

Wyrstriker still vividly remembered how he and his wyvern had to get used to such a boost in speed, making both the pilot and rider vomit because they could not handle the G force. Fortunately, it had not taken long for him and his team to get accustomed and afterwards the natural instinct of the wyvern was able to make adjustments that no plane would be able to. That included emergency stopping and swift turns.

Engineer Rei was in charge of collating all the data and it was his responsibility to check if he could use it to convert it into an AI data core for the golems too. (However, that project was a low priority and would only be completed at some point in the future.)

"Any ideas on how to make up for it, Big Boss? I have a few things in mind, yet not a concrete plan on how to solve the overall problem. By the way, Meomi did bring up an interesting possibility during our exchange with the Southern Stars." Qiu Yue mentioned the prospect of the Southerners having abducted the Pheonix' child.

"That would certainly explain why such a creature would fly towards them and with an army no less. Since the Southerners do not have any arid land to farm properly, a tamed Seven Oceans Phoenix, or in this case, the offspring of that Nine Oceans Phoenix would be something they would definitely try to get their hands on. Who knows with all the magical properties it's said to have, they could perhaps finally create their own farmlands." Jin theorised.

This possibility was another reason why Qiu Yue had not offered to outright help the Southerners, since she would be abetting the Southern Stars' kidnapping of the Phoenix's child.

"That sounds quite plausible. Did you happen to sense any minor changes in expressions or body language on Leopardo or his underlings when you've asked them about it?" Jin addressed Meomi who unfortunately could not fully remember.

"System shall help you."

Some consoles immediately appeared in front of the group. They activated and various screens replayed Meomi's point of view of what happened mere minutes ago, allowing the System to use its terrifying analysis. From the few twitches in their facial expressions to unconscious movement of their feet and hands, it was able to pinpoint a few black cloaks who seemed to have some knowledge or understanding towards Meomi's sudden outburst.

"This is amazing..." Jin exclaimed as he was still in awe when he saw the System strike out many of the various cloaked men who appeared to be blissfully unaware about such a reality as it eliminated all but a select few.

"Of course, the body language shows more truth than words could ever portray. It's a matter of discerning." The System stated and further narrowed the suspect to two. "However, this method of

prediction does have its flaws, yet the probability that they have some deeper understanding of the particular matter is at 96.74%."

"Are we gonna bag them? And then at the same time try our best to help them?" Meomi asked, but Qiu Yue had something even more sinister in mind.

"How about instead of releasing it we just capture the child of the Phoenix for ourselves and use it to bait the Nine Oceans Phoenix? That way we could probably easily divert them away from the Southern Capital and it should be easier to control the Phoenix if we can tame its child." Qiu Yue suggested and the rest were shocked by her methodology.

"It's logical enough, although it really is quite ruthless. In fact, will it make us any better than them if we act in such a way?" Jin wondered which made Qiu Yue shake her head and shrug her shoulders.

"We are planning to make it submit to the System, right? Unless we can convince it to willingly do so, we might have to kill the Nine Oceans Phoenix first. It would be easier to slay its chick who could try to reason with its parent to willingly submit, thus sparing us from a difficult fight. Either way we would be able to allow parent and child to live together without any worries, right?" Qiu Yue argued and Jin was forced to admit she was right.

"You know better than anyone that we aren't running a charity here. There is always the chance that the Nine Oceans Phoenix' poop won't be able to act as a good fertiliser since it's a variant. Getting its child will double our chances of getting something good out of this whole episode, although we can always use the parent for its fighting capabilities. In the best case scenario, we will end up with two sources of fertiliser. That way we could potentially even sell off some excess on the Black Market."

"As much as I hate it, what Qiu Yue says makes sense." Gold sighed as he continued to look at the constant imagery from the C130's live feed.

"However all these assumptions are under the condition that the Southerners have actually captured it and it's still alive. Even if we find its child, the chances of its parent just agreeing to submit are considerably low. I don't think we will be able to avoid a fight to be honest. Our aerial troops are not sufficient against that horde. The Southerners may be able to hold it for a short time, but we do not know the full fighting potential of the Nine Oceans Phoenix, especially if it's fighting to protect its young. Even if Jin and the System could manipulate the Spirit of the Land, given their names the skies might be outside of their jurisdiction entirely."

"Scholar Gold is correct." The System confirmed that line of thought. Meanwhile, Jin who had been thinking overdrive suddenly had an epiphany which could help them.

"System, remember you kept pestering me about that monster fusion function?" Jin queried and the System acknowledged the function's presence.

"However, System understands that User does not wish to use it?"

"Is it possible to alter it and just make a temporary fusion? You know a sort of strengthening similar to the cards we use to equip our people?" Jin queried yet the System and the people around him could not make heads or tails to his line of questioning. "The Dragon Devils need bigger air boosters but we need

to make them, right? I was thinking about expediting the process by putting a few air boosters together, add a few sludge crystals or sludge liquid and fuse all of them."

"Does User wish to augment the monsters by fusing them with non sentient objects? The monster fusion function is primarily meant for fusing two sentient monsters together, yet the proposed concept would not be too far fetched and the System can give it a try. Given that User wishes for the end result to become a form of temporary augmentation, the sludge crystals used to power the fusion should not be too many. In fact, one sludge crystal or a vial of the sludge liquid should be able to power twenty over temporary augmentations. However, do note that those items will be destroyed in the process once the augmentation period passes."

The System recomputed its calculations and tweaked the function for Jin's idea to be plausible. After all, as an almighty super entity wasn't it the System's job to create miracles like that?

"How long is the augmentation period?" Jin asked, hoping it would not be something absurdly small like five minutes, but something ranging multiple hours at least, in case the fight will end up prolonged.

"Given the power of the sludge, at least a week. That is assuming the monster does not die before that. Any resurrection will return them to their former state." The System reported and it seemed there was hope.

"Alright, we shall hold an emergency war council meeting, this time with all the aerial squadrons as well as any monsters who can fly, including our dear Mr Derpy. We don't have time to dilly dally." Jin ordered and immediately a request to convene in the Indoor Stadium Instance for the briefing was sent to the various monsters.

Jin stood at the podium and started to address his minions as if he was a professor holding a lecture. "Sorry for the impromptu call, but we have an(other) urgent situation on our hands." The dungeon supplier briefed everyone about Qiu Yue's visit to the Southern Capital and started to explain the rationale of this sudden mission that they had to go through.

Although the primary objective was capturing the Phoenixes to increase their farming and combat prospects, all of the minions knew that Jin was interfering because he wanted to protect as many people in the Southern Capital as possible.

On the surface, Jin did so to gain as much extra reinforcements as possible for the fight against the Demon Rats, yet it was not like he was overly reliant on the Southerners. Without his weaponry the Southern Region's warriors would be unable to beat most of his monsters, unless they were at a grunt level like the zombies. According to the System they were also less valuable than his world's cultivators who would be causing some havoc once he started his Grand Operation.

In essence, Jin was not cruel enough to turn a blind eye to the Southerner's plight. Otherwise he could just force teleport the Nine Oceans Phoenix into a dungeon instance and fight it with all his minion's might, not caring for the level of destruction the flying monster horde would cause to the Southern Capital.

"Thus, we are going to a batch experiment of fusion augmentation with the Lord Forneus and his Devil Dragons to see how effective the fusion is. If the experiment fails, we will compensate you." Jin announced but he could hear the minions chuckle away.

"You can compensate us by simply bringing us back to life to fight again!" Forneus called out as he was excited for the aerial combat already. While it would not be the same as having a rematch with Wyrstriker, they had already thought of a system to compete against each other, by counting their kills (individually and with their groups).

'If that is successful, it could help in making our own Gunndams. Perhaps we could just strengthen our golems to achieve such a result. That would also mean more mobility for us, especially the monsters.' Rei thought to himself as he listened in on the briefing. He had not realised how busy the days could be assisting the dungeon supplier. Suddenly being dragged in and out of meetings disrupting his daily routine appeared to be the norm under Jin.

"First of all, we need more time to prepare our defensive operation. Ayse, Keyrin, I need both of you to stall their aerial force with your lightning strikes. Go wild." Jin instructed them. The Head Researcher took off her coat and started cracking her knuckles while Keyrin nodded in acknowledgement.

"I believe this warrants some overtime pay! Don't worry our research team accepts your sludge, be it in crystal or liquid form! Gold may have his miracle dung from that Phoenix but to us researchers your sludge is just as miraculous. It's the goddamn holy grail! Or you could increase our budget to compensate them from leading me away from work." Ayse smiled before teleporting away.

"From what I saw, your team will probably be glad to get a break from your bossy ways," Jin mumbled to himself before, but decided to humour her request. It was not like he lacked the sludge.

He shifted his gaze upwards to the ceiling of the indoor stadium. "Spiky, I'd like you to also accompany them to the Southern Capital for me. If some of those flying monsters manage to outmanoeuvre the lightning strikes and come too close to the capital you could catch them in your web."

"Mousefolks, please get those automated climbing gear from the Research Team's Armoury and protect Spiky while slaughtering those winged monsters. Show them how deadly being small and flightless can be. Pippy, if you can, go with Meomi to inform the Southerners that we will reinforce their borders so that they won't interfere or attack you."

"Ooohh! You mean those automated gear like the 'Attack of the Giants' Manga Peppers showed us?! I thought it was just gossip talk when Peppers boasted that the Weapons Research Team was doing it for fun." Pippy asked and Jin nodded his head and the Mousefolk brothers were extremely excited.

"Yes, Master! We will follow your orders!" Pippy added as he called upon his brother and a few older Mousefolks to get the gear ready first.

"HMmmmmMmMMmm." Spiky, the Altered Transforming Spider hounded with joy that he finally got to be deployed in a real battle. Its first major appearance was supposed to be during the Pandapolis Raid when it stayed on standby to protect the Iron Fortress housing the Dungeon Core. But no one went that close to it and even with the threat of the mass teleportation, Spiky was not called for the fight.

"Spiky said he is delighted that he could finally be of use." Weslie translated for Jin since he had no idea what Spiky had said. "He also said not to worry, his web can be used as support for the Mousefolks as he can selectively insert magic in his web to make it sticky."

"Nice. Okay but I need you to do something else too." Jin later elaborated to Spiky while the rest were listening in. Spiky was once even more joyous for being further involved in his new master's plan since his powers could be put to good use. The plan Jin had shared with it, would challenge him to transform into something vastly more complicated than he would usually do. Even Weslie was awed at the scale of Jin's thinking.

"Qiu Yue. Do you still have those artillery and sentry guns blueprints?" Jin took a breather and drank some water.

"Aye aye, Boss. With that kind of deployment in mind, I cannot disappoint you, can I?" Qiu Yue chuckled as she too teleported away back to her room to prepare her Sub System for the fight.

"Finally, Narris, Tinda. I heard from Drex himself that you two are the stealthiest and erm...most discreet amongst you Dark Elves. He told me that your abilities improved further ever since your help during the Salamander Keep mission." Jin was about to compliment them more but Narris stopped him in his tracks.

"Tell us our targets and we will get to it." Narris requested since both of them were supposed to be training for the Demopolis Police Raids before they got plucked out of the intensive training programme by Drex to meet Jin's demands.

As Jin told them their part in his plans, the two listened closely, but they were a little uncomfortable since they were missing out on Kraft's training regime. They might be the best at the moment, but if they did not participate in the latest iteration of Hell Training by their foxy de facto leader, they would be easily replaced.

However, Tinda took this break from the programme as a welcoming experience. There were certain things that she would like to try before heading back into the programme and this was the best opportunity to do so, especially when it came to extracting information.

"Alright. Find those two dark cloaks. We only have limited information on them. Get them to reveal the location of the Nine Ocean Phoenix's chick and retrieve it. With the incoming monsters, the heaviest defence should be focused around the caged Phoenix and the threat of its parent. You may take anything from the Research Team Armoury even the automated climbing gear. There are human sized ones aside from the ones we made for the Mousefolks." Jin replied and the both instantly disappeared from where they were sitting as if they were an illusion all along.

"Alright, I've covered the important stuff. Wyrstiker, deploy as soon as your platoon gets ready to go. Forneus, please bring your entire company of dragons into the Dungeon Maker. The System has already enlarged it enough for all of your men to squeeze in and receive the augmentation under a controlled environment. In the meantime, prep the rest of your Dragonlites for battle." Jin instructed and the entire group started to leave. Eventually, he was left with only Mr Derpy and Duke Wolte who were sitting eagerly in their seats looking at him with 'teary' eyes that he had overlooked them... again...

"Oh stop it you two. I have a super duper perfect part for the both of you to play." Jin smirked as he checked his phone for a moment to make sure he had the materials ready.

After Jin talked to Derpy and Wolte, he opened a portal in order to return to his Dungeon Maker. However, before he could step into it, a deft hand came out of nowhere grabbing him by his shoulder and pulled him into another instance. He recognised that feeling instantly as his vision disappeared and turned into a sort of blindness.

"Time for another dose of mind torture." Kraft announced pridefully. Although Jin was unable to see it, he could picture his jailer grinning devilishly. Judging by his tone the Original Bellator must have prepared something special for today's session.

"You know for as much 'fun' these sessions are, it's kind of a huge inconvenience right now..." Jin pointed out, yet he could feel that he was strapped onto a chair, only this time with chains that felt like a ton of iron balls pulling him down.

"Have you ever met an enemy who cares for your opinion and postpones his attack to a time when it's more convenient for you? In my experience right now when your mind is disturbed is the best time to launch a sneaky mind attack. Anyway, I naturally know that you're firing up to go out there. However, you seem to have forgotten that time flows slowly in this instance. Hours in here are merely minutes out there. So I won't keep you here for long... objectively speaking that is." Kraft's Cheshire cat grin got even wider.

"Alright. Not like I can do much to change your mind in this position in the first place. Let's just get this over with. Mind at least telling me what you're going to put me through this time around?" Jin queried, but instead of answering him, Kraft placed his hand on Jin's head.

As a result, Jin started to feel omnipotent, seeing things in his mind that he would be unable to without any System assistance.

"For today, I've decided to show you the effects your work has left throughout the realms or well, let's just call them worlds. These ripples caused waves and if you are not careful they might turn into a huge tide which might bite you in your butt." Kraft told him as he placed his other hand on Jin's head. The images in Jin's mind got even more intense.

"What you can see before you is all the information I've gathered which the System has collated without you knowing. It should show you that you have more people spying on you than you have realised."

"Let's start with the world you've interfered with the most." Kraft tuned the images in Jin's head and it headed to Jin's Home World. Earth.

As an 'ignorant' dungeon supplier who only cared about honing his craft by making fantastic dungeon instances (with a 'hobby' of saving worlds), Jin had actually changed Shenzhen's dungeon instance industry and it was starting to affect the whole nation. Various dungeon suppliers had come either openly or in secret to look into Jin's dungeons and the suppliers with disposable profits had already begun to emulate his dungeons.

However, they were unable to achieve the same realism he offered. To compensate they had to resort to putting more money into their dungeon servers. The suppliers had even requested their technicians to see if they could tweak it as much as possible to reach Jin's standard. On the flipside, Sea Mesh was simultaneously pushing hard to research better servers even though they were supposedly partners with Jin. For the time being, Ayse fed them with 'wrong' information periodically, so as to hinder their research efforts

Next, Kraft concentrated on the cultivators' side. Jin's dungeons had rekindled a fairly good portion of Shenzhen's people back into cultivation. Not too long ago it was treated mostly as a hobby for the younger crowd or as a necessity to further one's work prospects but those who had experienced his dungeons realised that it could be gruesomely satisfying.

It didn't hurt that Jin served a little of everything, making dungeon running easier with all the things in one major hub. From clothes to weapons, Jin had covered all necessary aspects and as if that was not enough, there were mini games that involved the dungeon instance.

From the Pet Card games to the Supa Robot Wars. Those were things he had just added to for fun and had planned to recommission once they were no longer actively played, but to his surprise it had become an instant hit and an increasing number of people played them (some even more than the dungeon instances, earning Jin a tiny steady profit).

Naturally, the System would never ignore a potential cash cow for too long, so it had noted that it was about time for Jin to create a new expansion pack to keep the hype going. Alas, the problem was that Jin neither had the time nor necessary the brains to do so. It had been easy to create a solid foundation but it was not as easy to build on that foundation of content.

Fortunately Jin had capable people under him, so he had given the Pet Card Game to his Arcade Instance Storekeepers to create the next expansion. As of now, they were in the midst of completing it and offering the proposal to Jin soon.

"Ahh.. okay, I will take note of that."

Other than that, the dungeon supplier had inadvertently increased the quality of life of at least those near his district. The Central Business District people and employees from Hua Wee Phone campuses always visited Jin's Tree Mall for its food and free bus rides. These led them to eat not only healthier tasty food but allowed them to wait without any queue especially in Lynn's restaurant. The only problem was the cost which Jin thought it would be an issue until Lynn presented him with the volumes of orders coming in via the Pandafull Delivery.

The promise of hot food upon delivery at Lynn and her penguins' quality had made it immensely popular and many major delivery services had begun inquiring about Jin's delivery system. Yet, none of them was able to get any information despite generous bribes towards Jin's Farming World employees.

Some even got ambushed with the assailants planning to kidnap them, but with the Farming World Humans each armed with a Battle Horse cultivation style, such ambushes did not work well. (The System would mark them down, for Kraft and his minions to make them disappear in a way that did not create any suspicion.)

Speaking of quality of life, the increase in cultivation inadvertently led them to work more efficiently, completing what they needed without feeling too tired despite the constant overtime they clocked. That led them to abuse of the active nightlife and what could be a better place to go to than a famous big store that's open 24 hours with awesome food and activities?

That's right! Jin's Dungeons and Pandas.

"You see how your little wimps and wants to create new service and dungeon instances have changed people's lives for the better? At the same time, you've made them dependent on us." Kraft chuckled. "This kind of subtle brainwashing is a masterclass project in progress. As expected of my student. Now let's change the pace a little and move to the next world."

"We are not going to watch how the Zodiac Clans react to Kong Rong's declaration of protecting our Panda Clan?" Jin asked and Kraft flicked his ears.

"That can wait for another day." Kraft answered with some annoyance. He was still a bit annoyed that the Top State Agent had beaten him to the punch when it came to protecting Jin. "That bastard...trying to one up me." He whispered to himself.

In a split second, Kraft forcefully changed the imagery in Jin's mind to the Goblin World. For the first time in decades, the three races who had been solitary in their ways had begun to change since they now had something in common. The Dungeon Cave in the New Adventurer's Town was the talk of the many cities of their respective kingdoms.

The town had never truly stopped growing and was on the cusp of becoming a city if only Jin allowed it. For the time being, he had instructed Zhi Nu, who had somehow been elected as the mayor of the New Adventurer's Town, to stop any additional major construction. His rationale was that if the town were to grow into a city, proper foundation and sanitation was needed first and they currently had other priorities. Yet, this did not stop the growth of the New Adventurer's Town since more and more aspiring adventurers started to flock in, each of them setting up tents since the taverns were full.

These camps had developed into a minor slum, something Zhi Nu could not stand, so she had taken the initiative to take matters into her own hands. With some assistance from the System, she had forced the adventurers and experienced workers who had built the town to develop their own temporary houses with strict rules to guarantee proper sanitation.

Recently, the Dark Foxes aka the Dark Elves had been forced to decrease the number of their usual patrols. Kraft had instructed all of them to attend his training camp, but that did not mean they didn't whip up a certain trusting type of police force to keep the place enforced in their absence. At all times, there would at least be one Dark Fox available to split up the occasional tavern brawl between the adventurers.

All of this could be attributed to the 'never ending caves'. As Jin lacked the time to properly manage this side project, the System had modelled the subsequent floors to behave to the dungeon model of the Spiral Sewers Instance. Loot became a little more sparse but the value and quantity per drop had increased, making it more dangerous for the adventurers to venture further down.

The number of casualties had increased and the Dungeon Cave had spawned something like a memorial wall to those who had fallen. While they undoubtedly offered unimaginable riches, the risk of dying was too real.

The profession of an adventurer which used to be regarded as someone who did odd jobs to get by, was nowadays respected. Those who had returned from lower levels of the dungeon were being treated like heroes.

Yet, that did not deter the adventurers as the money was worth it.

However, Zhi Nu couldn't allow everyone under her to die left and right, other that would result in a lack of proper talents. So, she had posted 'employment bounties' for gathering materials for crafters and agricultural experts too. Those were mostly found on the safer floors, allowing young adventurers to gather experience and they got rewarded with sufficient coin to survive. At the same time, she also ensured that the economy was not inflated with too much money, otherwise, not just the New Adventurer Town would suffer but their entire world. That was why she still allowed bartering and occasionally sent those bartered goods to the System to replicate them for the Dungeon Cave.

And that was when she started to see a race that was rarely seen. The Elves.

With the advent of the Dark Elves coming out to keep the peace, the Elves were actually shocked to see they managed to blend in well with the people around without any discrimination. And thus, the Elven Kingdom allowed a small group of adventurers wannabes to try living in that town.

Zhi Nu had allowed them in, but only if they did not discriminate against the Dark Elves or any other races. That was the only condition they had to abide by or they would be immediately kicked out of the town. Should they refuse to leave, it would be death by sword.

It was a weird condition, but the influential powers she held were surprisingly strong especially since the Goblin King and Orc King were often seen accompanying her for meals. Even the Human King who was known to be a recluse had started to send official letters to ask if Zhi Nu could accompany him for meals. Zhi Nu had taken the chance to get the three Kings to meet with each other to discuss various issues.

"That should be enough about the Adventurer's Town. Let's look at the Orc and Goblin Kingdom for a change. Because you magnanimously allowed the monsters to return to their homes, despite the System's recommendation, we've gathered a ton of information giving us greater insight about how these places have changed." Kraft said.

The majority of the Orcs were reeling from the loss of the recent war, yet their new King had been working tirelessly to provide aid to the masses. Getting work and therefore coin through his efforts was the best way for him to earn their hearts and trust. To be able to do that, however, Frost Echo had been borrowing money from the System despite constant warnings from Cross, his Goblin Spymaster who insisted they had to make the Orc's economy flourish on their own.

In the course of this, the budget which had been prepared for the military was repurposed to improve the agriculture of the country, allowing them to grow their own crops, while the System sells them foodstuff to get through certain periods when needed.

Some of the Orc Merchants who worked in the New Adventurer's Town had also been providing massive discounts to their Orc counterparts, providing them with supplies needed to survive through famine or the deadly winters.

Not only that, through the New Adventurer's Town, Zhi Nu had been giving them work such as building roads from their orc cities to the new town. And that also allowed them to establish outposts to protect adventurers and merchants from the threats of wildlife.

These slow but steady changes had gradually influenced the Orc's perspective but that did not mean there were no dissenters. As the spymaster Cross was in charge of disposing them and subsequently putting them into the System's care for some reeducation. Nevertheless, he did not do it himself for such risky operations. No, several Orcs and even Goblins like Flame Ripper had assisted with the culling of these 'potential terrorists'.

Speaking of Goblins, the Goblin City flourished similarly through the trade with various other races. The Goblin Crafters who had been working for Jin brought back their knowledge which they shared in the city. Especially the need for mechanisation. Soon, those Goblin Crafters who returned for good built a guild named the Illuminati Ironworks or I.I for short to facilitate the modernisation of the city. (Obviously, 'someone' had suggested that name for them for the laughs, yet the goblins loved it.) Some of the Orcs were also in the Illuminati Ironworks which they would do cross city assistance to rebuild their civilisation.

If the Lost Tech were anything but an indication of an advanced society, they believed they could get there too.

"I could go over the Giant World, but honestly, there is not much left there but a wasteland after Peppers' explosive magic." Kraft decided to skip that part. "Still, I have to admit Mother Nature sure is scary. Despite Peppers' magic, plants and animals have started growing back once more.

The System had observed the area on an occasional basis and has noticed there are now more varied species in the area. It was as if the animals or monsters saw the big explosion and got curious about it. Now that area is like a jungle wasteland and it has become a survival of the fittest."

"Wow...okay. I totally didn't expect that." Jin admitted.

"As for the Farming World... I really cannot be bothered to even glimpse at it. We've been focusing on those stupid Rats for so long, that I've had enough of them. Skipping that part too." Kraft yawned during his 'torturing' session.

"How about the Mecha World and eh Zombie World?" Jin asked. "Oh nearly forgot Derpy's home, the Fishing World."

"Oh those? I did not look through them too much, because honestly, your effect on those worlds is minimal in the grand scheme of things for now. Everyone is still a zombie as far as I'm aware and there are treasures and resources to pick aplenty. We might get to raid them if we need some extra moolah. You've already experienced it first hand how crazy those hordes can be."

"Well, yeah. If what Derek said was true and all of them have turned into zombies, we are talking about probably a couple of billions of zombies or at least hundreds of millions.." Jin managed to say out loud

despite being chained down and paralysed from the body downwards. "However, aren't you concerned that you might have overlooked some survivors in that area that might not have been turned?"

"While I cannot outright strike out such a possibility, I also don't plan to look into it. In case your guess is correct, then those survivors have somehow made it this far, so they won't need your help. We are not obligated to save them in any way shape or form. If we show ourselves, they might just turn hostile or be all cunning, planning to backstab us, wanting everything for themselves." Kraft argued, sounding like someone who had watched enough zombie movies to know what might await them. "Should you create a base in that world, we can make them work for us. I have no qualms with that."

"Moving on to more interesting stuff. Rei's makeshift spaceship. The fact that he can make it work with the assistance of the Orcs and Goblins means he is quite a talented engineer despite him claiming otherwise. I'm quite tempted to get into his brain and see what else he has hidden in his nogging."

"Come on, don't do that... although maybe you should. So far he has kept his part of the bargain. We should at least find his family and make sure they are fine." Jin commented.

"You mean, check out if they've already become casualties in the ongoing war between the United Federation and Xeon Union? I still think providing them with a common enemy would be the best way to stop them from fighting each other." Kraft sighed, but agreed to look for Rei's family's location to the best of his abilities...that is after he probed his brain.

"As for the Fishing World... I would not recommend you to go there again. Although we call him Derpy, the Shadow Dagen is the manifestation of power from an actual God, who is quite pissed that someone stole what belonged to him. Although the loss of power probably is just minimal, it's about the principal of things."

"Anyway, last but not least we have the Dungeon World." Kraft giggled.

"I was actually worried you might have forgotten about it. Especially since your entire skulk of foxes is handling the Demopolis." Jin teased and suddenly the images flashed a little faster.

"I do not have to tell you much about Pandapolis since it's still a ghost town despite your promises of opening it up."

"I did not promise to open it up, alright? The shield came down and the Demons attacked us. That's all. Besides, the repair works are still ongoing as far as I know. The only sectors that are active are the industry and agriculture sector."

"Yeah, but the business sector is empty and so are the entertainment areas. Even your industry sector is not fully set up for the city. Almost half of it is for military purposes which kind of defeats the purpose of a diversified industrial sector." Kraft yawned as if he wanted to go to the Demopolis part as quickly as possible. "Your hotels are still closed too. It took a HELL of an effort constructing those series of aquatic domes and yet they gather dust."

"Well, with most of the efforts concentrating towards the Farming World... Alright, I will take note of it and will decrease the military portion when I open up Pandapolis. So, how's the progress in Demopolis?" Jin questioned and yet another flash of images came into his mind.

"Glad you asked! Big Brother Rex has been busy. Very very busy settling the Demopolis policies. I am glad that you set up a secret meeting between him and Xiong Da." Kraft nodded his head in acknowledgement.

"I thought it would be fun for Xiong Da to make laws for a 'virtual' kingdom. In fact, we are actually paying him quite a bit to do so, since it's time he could spend otherwise. Sure most of it is just an increase in terms of his store credit (plus a custom made Hippo and Egret plushie), but still, I shudder when thinking about how much we would have to pay otherwise. Not to mention he is already giving us the deep friend discount. It surely helps that he seems to have had a wish to dabble in national policies but had found it too troublesome and not profitable enough to actually pursue that desire. He seems to have enjoyed talking with Rex about it." Jin said.

"In any case, my other foxes all have problems piling on top of their heads and doing their best to deal with them. The healthcare was terribly under budget and education was a privilege reserved for the spawns of the rich demons. The transportation system was nearly nonexistent and people had to use magic to travel far distances or walk by foot. Supplies were scarce in certain parts of the cities because of it. All these problems led to crime lords which Tsu and Kai had been rotating to find out more about."

"I thought they had the beast kids to take care of? That intensive training camp?" Jin queried.

"Oh, that's what the training camp is for. To get those kids to learn how to play detective and teach them to properly scout. They've used cosmetic inscriptions to make them look taller and older. Oh and trust me, those beast kids are good at acting. So good that they are naturals at extracting information. And when it comes to running away, boy were they excellent at it. Now the Wolf Twins only have to train their combat skills up and you have your first batch of next generation spies." Kraft nodded his head with approval.

"Then I presume that the Demopolis police raids are coming closer and closer?" Jin asked and Kraft merely shrugged his shoulders.

"The Drows have asked for better equipment. They were especially interested in the kind to increase their mobility, so I have implemented the latest Gearbox Suits into our training exercises, courtesy of Yang Ling who left a sample in the suitcase she was carrying on our table while visiting you. I took the liberty to copy its designs before putting it back. Lynn nearly scolded me for being this sneaky."

"I doubt she would scold you for that. Be honest, you must have gotten caught stealing part of her breakfast too right?"

"Tsk, how could I resist? Do you think YOU could have resisted?" Kraft fiddled with his fingers and Jin's olfactory senses recalled Lynn's cooking on that day and he inadvertently drooled.

"As for the Church of the Afterlife, we've scouted them and came to the conclusion that the extent of their reach is rather creepy. If you think the Northern and Southern Scholars are a pain in the ass, dealing with an entire world religion is worse. I bet you would prefer straight forward enemies like Baal. In any case, for the time being, there is no reason to worry about them too much. Until we get our own Panda religion up and running, they're merely keeping an eye on us."

"Other than that. I say you did a good job growing up. A bit slow though. But you are doing a good job nevertheless." Kraft praised as he let go of Jin.

"That did not feel very torturous. More like you send me on a tour down memory lane. I do admit the overload of information was slightly painful but after that, I could cope with it. You getting soft, Kraft?" Jin provoked.

"Oh? Here I thought I would be nice for a change and give you some minor encouragement, but this is how you treat me? Are you turning a masochist? Is that why those girls in your harem are not satisfying you enough?" Kraft sent a wave of dark chi into Jin and immediately he started to struggle.

"You see, this technique was merely part one. After showing someone all their good memories or all of their accomplishments from any point in their life, the real torture begins by showing them slight deviations of what they had just seen. 'What if' scenarios in which certain things turn out differently. What if me and my skulk had not arrived just in time during your fight with King Baal? What if the Rat Triad Leader De Tian had bested you in combat? What if you had never gotten the System? It will bombard your brain until you will no longer be able to tell reality from fiction!" Kraft devilishly explained the 'real beauty' of his technique.

"And don't worry. I won't ruin your face or your mind that badly. After all, a certain somebody still needs you." Kraft peered into the self made darkness, grinning. Smirking.

"I think a 1,000 of those scenarios sounds quite good." He whispered with a satisfied look on his face.