

Dungeon S 1021

Chapter 1021 Giving Tinda A Cover

The System teleported Shu and Sandy a distance away from the supposed hideout. The two looked around, but there was seemingly nothing except for the white desert sand in the area. Sandy immediately created a makeshift shelter to cover Shu as he shrunk in size so that they would not be detected that easily through the enemies' constant observation.

"Thank you for the shelter, otherwise I would dread working in such 'sunny' conditions." Shu thanked her as he started to sink his roots into the desert. While his roots burrowed into the desert, he quickly felt the magic pulsating through the hideout. He knew had to be careful now, else he might accidentally trigger one of the traps as he approached the basement of the hideout. For a kingdom with little to no mages, the monsters including Jin were taken aback by the amount of magical 'stuff' happening in the hatchery. Thus, one would conclude that their leader Saberteeth had been concentrating all his kingdom's mages into one particular area.

Meanwhile Sandy sent her magic through Shu, increasing his affinity for sand, thus allowing his roots to become more invasive in nature, sliding through the thick layers of soil, granite and sand. Although it helped Shu, the Sand Witch was quite amazed at how efficient the treant was in manipulating his powers.

When she transferred her magic into Shu, the elder treant was doing the same and she could clearly visualise how the roots were digging and zig zagging closer to the hideout's basement within minutes. At that point, Shu informed Sandy that they were approaching the hideout and she started to use the split ends of the roots as magic detectors to sift through if there was any weakness in the construction of the tunnels so she could break open one of the walls without alerting their enemies.

To their surprise, the basement was filled with holes, making them both hesitate as they presumed this to be some sort of trap. Nevertheless, even after double and triple checking, they found nothing. And that led them to the conclusion that the mages were not as skilled as Tinda was expecting them to be.

Granted, the basement was filled with a variety of magic detectors and traps, but those were concentrated towards gates and intersections of the basement rather than filling up the entire place. In terms of trapcraft, they were rather primitive in their selection of spells.

Regardless, the duo began to break one of the stone bricks and with a sleeve in between the walls, Shu's roots finally reached towards the guards Tinda had knocked out. The feeler roots crawled through the legs and as unsightly as one could describe, penetrated through their rectum because it was the easiest route for invasive control. There the roots planted a seed closest to the cauda equina, one of the largest portions of the human's nervous system before the feeler tree roots withdrew and grabbed hold of the guards' waist.

The seed was filled with magic, instantly grew to invade and infect the nervous system, propagating within its host, allowing Shu to control the entire body. There, Tinda who was still working on breaking the magic barrier saw the two guards moving unsteady. However, she could see the roots attached at the back of their legs, indicating that Shu was already using his magic to control them.

"To control someone from such a distance is a first for me as well. Normally, I only control those within my vicinity." Shu said over the System Channel as he continued to concentrate in regulating the mana while Sandy began picking up the white desert sand and analysing it with her powers. She thought it could be worthwhile to retrieve a few samples and check if there were any difference in terms of the quality and possibly adding it into her repertoire.

At the same time, she was also getting a feel of the entire hatchery hideout. She was scouting the other eggs and the monsters. The Drow's objective had been to get the egg, therefore she had ignored those as distractions. Sandy considered using the sand to place a few of her own traps to cause a distraction while also possibly grabbing a few eggs, especially since these humans regarded them as rather vital if they put them in such a highly secured area.

A few minutes after they gained complete control over guards, her astute senses allowed Tinda to hear footsteps from afar and she quickly informed Shu.

"Aye, don't worry about it. You can leave the acting to me." Shu chuckled as he started talking through the guards using their original voices. "But what about you? Are you going to kneel there and be an eyesore? If yes, I will have to improvise the acting by bringing these two goons further forward."

"You do not have to worry about me. If you do not know, we Drows are fantastic in making sure we won't be detected." Tinda grinned with her lips curled. Her words were not empty as Shu could see her disappearing and blending into the hideout like a chameleon waiting for its prey.

"Also, a little special bonus for you, since I knocked them out to find the egg." Tinda sent the information she had taken from the guards and passing it to Shu via the System.

"I was thinking of making them shoot the guard leader but welp, that works too I guess," Shu said through Guard A before moving, getting the two guards to lock their swords and staff together as if they were in some fight. He then activated their mana circuits so it was as if they could channel their own mana although it was actually Shu prompting them to do so.

"Hey! What's the big idea of not reporting back! We have not heard from you two in the past two minutes! Have you forgotten what I said about reporting every five minutes?!" The Guard Leader shouted from afar while bringing a small squad of guards with him. They were armed to the teeth, ready to strike at the moment's notice. Some even thought that there was fighting involved when they felt the violent mana circulating in the air.

But it turns out that the two guards were merely having a spite against each other when they both acknowledged their Guard Leader immediately.

"Ah! Sorry Boss! But nothing ever happens around here. I challenged him to see who could last the longest without fainting." Guard A spoke out as he leaned forward and discharge more magical powers out into his sword.

"Don't think of using the excuse that you talked to Boss if you lose! We've bet on the next meal, so if you lose you better pay up!" Guard B added and the Guard Leader just shook his head.

He could feel the intensity of the mana flowing out through them and could not stop prematurely as it would release an unneeded explosion. Apparently, it was not the first time he had to deal with goons

such as them but he knew that guarding a basement could be extremely boring. Every member of the guards behind him knew especially how terribly dull it was to guard the lowest of all basements.

To be honest, the Guard Leader preferred seeing them engaged in some stupid betting activity over them being asleep. But still, Saberteeth had assigned him as the Guard Leader so he had to act tough.

"Like hell if I care that any of you loses! What you do to pass your time is up to you. You can jerk off to each other for all I care, but if you miss out on reporting back to me, you both will have one whole month to compete on who can clean the latrines the best! This is the only warning for you two. Also if your stupid competition releases an accidental explosion, you are staying in this basement guard duty forever!" The Guard Leader shouted at them before walking off as the two guards apologised and continued to put their strengths between each other.

"Heh. Nice save there." Tinda whispered.

"You should thank the stars that the two guards disliked each other rather openly. I still feel it was a little disgusting to dig their memories a little further but that helped a lot." Shu sniggered as he continued the act but at the same time slowly siphoned their energies away.

As for Tinda, she was very close to breaking through the magical barrier.

Chapter 1022 Got the Egg!

"...I got it." Tinda whispered with a wide grin as she broke through the final layer of the magic barrier protecting the egg. With a quick puff, she loosened her neck muscles a little before reaching for the door, only to sense that the physical lock was also emitting a source of strange energy. It appeared that the lock was magically imbued to make sure that it could only be opened with the appropriate key.

Shu controlling the guards noticed her hesitating and could not help but laugh at the drow. "I thought being Kraft's number one student would mean that you could break into anything? And now a simple magic lock fumbles you? Hahahah!"

"Shush, you big old tree. Why bother breaking the lock when you can go in without going through the lock?" Tinda retorted as she first placed her hand on the door to check for any other magical abnormalities or problems that could occur if she entered forcefully.

To her fortuitous luck, there did not seem to be anything to worry about. Seeing that Shu and Sandy had analysed via the System Channel how the traps had been interlaced at certain points of the hatchery's basement when Tinda pointed them out, she too had realised that the mages hadn't been as scheming as she had initially expected them to be. (Perhaps the influence of a certain foxy had made her assume the worst case scenario in each and every situation.)

Upon a second more thorough check, she confirmed that with the barriers gone, it should now be possible for the System to teleport her into the room to get the egg. However, before the Dark Elf could request the System to do so, the System informed her that the egg had already sent them into the most optimal environment – the Farming Sectors of Pandapolis.

"Haha, sorry dear Tinda. I was unable to restrain myself from competing against you." Sandy informed her in the System Channel. "I have found the properties of this world's white sands to be rather fascinating and made some shocking discoveries upon pouring some magic into it."

At that moment, Tinda could see specks of white sand seeping out of the stone walls and a thumbs up sign formed right in front of her. The Dark Elf presumed that since the Sand Witch was hovering her magic to control the sand, she must have been able to mould it into a shape where it could grab the egg to subsequently teleport it into the System's embrace.

"I thought it was a little strange how the sand managed to create the shelter when we first teleported here faster than I had expected and through a little bit of experimentation, I found out that this white sand is extremely sensitive to magic, allowing it to not just store magic per se, but more importantly help me to manipulate it very easily."

"So, I guess this means the mission is complete?" Tinda scratched her head wondering if all her effort breaking these magical barriers had been rendered moot. It seemed that even without the lead fox's training, Jin himself had gathered a variable set of monsters that could perform wonders for him.

"You could say that. I've also taken the liberty to snatch all the other eggs from this hatchery. All of them have been swapped out with chicken eggs who had received cosmetic inscriptions in case the Guards checked up on them. Hehe!" Sandy boasted while the white sand in front of the Dark Elf returned back into the wall, leaving no trace of evidence behind.

"Won't they know that those eggs are fake? I am actually surprised they do not have observation magic to check on those eggs constantly." Tinda sighed as she shook her head looking at the far end of the basement tunnels.

"Kraft made you too sensitive and overly paranoid. Relax, girl. Even if they notice, not like they can do much after the deed has already been done."

Shu still controlled the guards as he verified the extent of how precise he could command them from his distance. After all, it's not every day he got the opportunity to grab some random humans and turn them into his playthings.

So before they went back to how they were, he made them perform more refined movements such as twirling the sword and doing quick step movements.

Suddenly Jin chimed into their System Channel and congratulated them on a job well done. "You do not need to stay there any further. While confronting Saberteeth would be a boon for the Nine Oceans Phoenix, we should –"

"Boss, I think you should let Nine Oceans Phoenix have her revenge." Shu interrupted Jin know how his nature was to not be going around poking the hornet's nest further. However, this had to be done from the monster's perspective.

"It's true that we have achieved what we've come to do, but look at it this way. You've technically allowed their capital to be destroyed, robbing them of their livelihood. They are bound to come hunting any monsters relentlessly to make up for the loss and will likely try to hunt any other phoenixes without any prejudice."

"Besides, now that we know that they are doing such evil stuff, all the more reason they should join us. If not, the repercussions might turn into a tidal wave down the line. You eventually plan to gain full control over the Northern Region, don't you? Turning Saberteeth into our ally will allow us to have the chance to get against the Demon Rats and should allow you to unite the captured Southerners, making them work hand in hand with us, despite the destruction you've caused." Tinda added in. Jin was left speechless. Somehow Kraft had managed to indoctrinate his own beliefs into the Dark Elves. This was exactly what the dungeon supplier would have expected to come from the Original Bellator.

"Especially when it comes to their leader. The fact that he seems to have congregated all the mages into this hatchery as his pet project, only serves to show further that he only keeps the elites of the elites in this place. Just think about how much it would help our own research lab if we take this place over. Not to mention, with the System's control, they will do much better taking care of our own foody monsters with their explicit knowledge."

"And you have a ton of Southerners being imported in by the System, well the more innocent ones. Even if the leader is a shitty leader, it's best to have a leader that they are familiar with. That will improve their morale a whole lot. And if you influence their leader, the people would sway along with them. The Templars are a good example. We thought them to be a cult not to be trifled with but in the end, they did a hell lot of good for the Northerners~" Sandy commented and stated that Jin's System had always been about second chances. "At the very worst, you could simply tell the System to get rid of their souls. It's as simple as that."

"And with the egg safely tucked in our possession, there are really not many risks involved in this revenge scheme. Even better if you get to save the Nine Oceans Phoenix if it found itself incapable of fighting against Saberteeth." Tinda added as the System opened a portal for her to jump in when she found that the coast was clear. "Thus this gives you the leverage to let the Nine Oceans Phoenix join you...now that you have two of the kids in your possession."

"You make it sound like I am an evil overlord who is blackmailing her." Jin smiled bitterly.

"It's all for the good of the rising Panda Empire." The Drow replied as she returned back to her training camp, cutting off any communications.

"I can be around to deal with the killing blow since this white desert is my territory now that I learn how to use them more effectively," Sandy added and Jin sighed. There were no doubts that even if Jin did not let Sandy participate in the battle, the System would already implant the capturing module into the Nine Oceans Phoenix some way or the other considering that the Phoenix was in its instance.

After all, considering the System aversion to outsiders, it let the mother monster to come in without any complaints. But as insurance, Jin nodded his head to the matter and decided to tell the Nine Oceans Phoenix about the whole ordeal.

Chapter 1023 Calm Down!

"Nine Oceans Phoenix, we found the culprit." Jin teleported back to the Luxury Recovery Instance to relay the good news. However, instead of being happy about it, the mother bird's wings spread out wide in a threatening manner. To the dungeon supplier, it seemed like she was hurrying him to tell her everything or risk dying.

Jin had tolerated her antics initially, because he understood that she must have been emotional about suddenly seeing her chick in such critical condition. Now that some time had passed, he expected his guest to show him the proper amount of respect, so with a far more authoritative voice, he told her to calm down.

"TELL ME!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix screeched impatiently and began to release her magical aura. Ironically she had been unaware that all this time the one at the mercy of the other party had been none other than her. In an instant, she found herself pinned down by the giant Titan Knight and out of seemingly nowhere many monsters had emerged with their weapons out. She intended to increase the output of her magical powers, but discovered that they were being drained consistently.

"As I said, calm yourself down! I'm treating you with courtesy, so I expect you to reciprocate. Do not make me use excessive force against you!" Jin chided her and the Lady Phoenix struggled a little more, before admitting that there was nothing else she could do. Only then did the Titan Knight release her from his palm hold and the rest of the monsters moved a step back away from her, but none sheathed their weapons.

Honestly, Jin was quite surprised at the show of force from the System. Had it perhaps analysed the Nine Oceans Phoenix to be more of a threat than he himself had realised? In any case, he reminisced about the time when the Banned Emperor Assassin had come to make a mess in his dungeon supplier store during Yang Ling's Gear Box demonstration and the System had not responded this fiercely. Could it be that the System did not imagine the assassin was a major threat as compared to this particular monster?

"You may get up, but slowly." Death Knight Dread Reaver instructed the Nine Oceans Phoenix as he continued to point his sword at the bird while it did as she had been told. It was then she finally had the impression that Jin was really no simple human.

"As I was about to tell you, we've managed to not only find, but also retrieve your other egg. It's currently in one of our hatcheries, under the care of the best monster caretakers I have working for me." Jin stated confidently as he knew that the ones handling the eggs were the penguins and the animal people from the Giant World.

He strongly believed that they were the best ones for the job. After all, Lynn had selected only the best of the best to be allowed to serve food to their customers under her name. (Of course, they were not going to cook the Phoenix Egg or else...the System would not be the only one who would be very pissed.)

"If it's already been done, why are you telling me all this? Are you blackmailing me like that guy who stole my egg?" The Nine Oceans Phoenix questioned, making Jin sigh.

"I won't pretend that I can completely understand how you feel, but I empathise with you not trusting every human who graciously extends their hands to you. I've decided to tell you that we found it

because I promised you I would do that. I've expected you might want to take revenge but if you don't want to do that, then I won't force you to. I can leave that guy alone, but I'm sure sooner or later he will return with a vengeance." Jin explained and the Nine Oceans Phoenix was paralysed by his scolding.

"After what we've done to his capital... well if it was me in his shoes, there's no way I wouldn't take up arms and mercilessly hunt down every single monster responsible for that. As much as I want to believe in the good in people, that is wishful thinking. That's why I ask for your help. Let's end this cycle of hatred by exacting your vengeance against him and start anew. Help me for the greater good while we fulfil our needs and desires." Jin felt the last part was a little too excessive as 'encouragement', but at the same time, he was just being realistic.

Seeing that the monsters around him were nodding in silent agreement, the Nine Oceans Phoenix fluttered her feathers a little before nodding her head.

"While I feel that you have a greater agenda than just taking my dung and children, your words have truth to them. Fine, I will do as my heart desires and after that, I will return the debt of you getting my children back safely." The Nine Oceans Phoenix agreed, but before that, she had a condition of her own.

She wanted to see her unborn child before they left.

Jin naturally acceded to the request and opened the portal to Pandapolis Farming Sectors where the Nine Oceans Phoenix saw how her little baby egg was being pampered with the latest advancement in hatching procedures.

She instantly recognised that the egg was indeed the one which had been stolen by the Southern Capital Leader. She appeared elated that she did not miss the hatching of this one, but Jin could see the fury in her eyes about being separated from her children. "We will provide you with help against the Southern Mages if necessary. After all, you are going to be part of our family soon no matter how temporary that was. I'll let you take care of everything else, but feel free to ask for help should you need it." Jin offered as he opened a portal.

"Are you saying that I am no match to some feeble mages?" The Nine Oceans Phoenix asked.

"I'm merely stating that it would be for the best if you don't let your guard down. No matter what, their leader has taken the liberty to assemble probably every single mage the South had in that one area. It is possible that they are prepared to take you down with the assumption of destroying the hatchery too. For the time being, you should be safe knowing that they are unaware that we've taken back your egg."

"You mean your monsters stole right under their noses?"

"Yeah, and it was not an easy feat for them to do so. All of this was to ensure that you could fight with your full force without any fears that they might use your unborn child as a hostage." Jin bragged even though it was partially a lie since his minions did not have that much of an issue getting the egg back.

"Very well. While I will accept your assistance, I honestly do not think I will need it." The Nine Oceans Phoenix could now feel that her magical powers were coming back. But before Jin allowed her to go, a portal suddenly appeared right beside him and he saw Lynn carrying a large plate of meat with two hands.

"You're not going anywhere until you eat up. I assure you that your strength will double the moment you clear this plate of meat." Lynn said as the animal people caretakers opened the hatchery doors and showed the bird a better view of the Farming Sector while having a spacious area to eat. They even told the Phoenix that the lake right beside the hatchery was drinkable and with a quiet thank you, the Nine Oceans partook in the meat.

"While I will accrue this to your kindness and courtesy but there's something more to the food too, right?" Jin whispered to Lynn.

"How did you know?" Lynn was a bit shocked as she giggled a little to cover her innate expression.

"You could say that my panda senses were tingling. Or rather my acquired foxy senses." Jin replied with glee and subsequently settled himself down. At the very least he knew that the System would have some control on the Phoenix if there were something to go down wrong during their duel.

In the meantime, Sandy and Shu got a better grasp of the environment and numbers and had discussed a few ways to eliminate them should the majestic bird encounter problems.

Having a Plan B never hurts.

Chapter 1024 Attack of the Phoenix

"That's weird, why have I still not been informed about anything? Are they having too much fun with the bird? Well... I did tell them to be as explicit in their torture as possible but having no news now... I expect an excellent analysis report from their findings. Heh." Saberteeth wondered to himself as he watched the sunset sinking into the edges of the White Sands Desert.

He had been expecting a report from the Southern Capital with regards to the torturing of the Nine Oceans Phoenix's chick or any particularly new developments. While patterns had estimated that today it should have reached the point of exhaustion leading it to resurrect into a stronger form, it could be possible the report was delayed due to the chick's resilience.

He yawned, wondering if the new chick down in their basement would be like its sibling putting up some feeble resistance before it goes down. Still, its elder sister though young and had barely alive a few days after hatching, was afraid of death and probably unaware that its resurrecting abilities were its only form of defence without its parents around.

"Heh, if only my father were to see that I, that 'useless bastard' had managed to tame a phoenix.... And soon I will have two at our disposal, which shall become the turning point for us People of the South!" Saberteeth enjoyed his daydream of grandeur. He wandered around the room with a giant grin on his face as he enjoyed the quiet breeze of the White Desert until he suddenly felt a slight disturbance of the mana in the air.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeek!"

A screech so loud that he was able to hear from the small cottage situated a few kilometres away from the hatchery filled the air. Saberteeth immediately grabbed his cape and staff that was hanging at the perch as he went out where he saw the prominent flying figure fly towards the secret location.

'You've finally come, eh? Took you long enough, but don't you worry, everything is ready for you to join your egg.' Saberteeth thought to himself as he ran inside to grab a few ancient looking metal cubes from inside his basement.

He believed that it would take the Nine Ocean's Phoenix quite some time to reach the bottom of the hatchery, but he also did not want to leave his mages alone with the rampaging mother for too long.

At the very most they would suffer a terrifying blow, but if Saberteeth played his cards right, he could capture and control the Phoenix and use her powers to resurrect them again. He would only have to find out how the Phoenix resurrected people, since none of the historical records and texts passed down from the previous generations of Southerners had any mention of that.

Unfortunately, it was hard to tell what parts were accurate and which were heavily exaggerated. Still, more than one record attributed those abilities to the Phoenix, so all Saberteeth would have to do would be to find out how to properly utilise its powers and the full extent of it in time to come.

"Ahhh just thinking about it makes my body get fired up!" Saberteeth muttered to himself as he unlocked the basement to grab the metal cubes.

In the meantime, his mages were indeed having a tough time fending off the terrifying monster. Its appearance came at the worst possible moment, just when they were about to have a shift change. They had let down their guard since the hatchery had arguably more firepower than even the capital.

The Nine Oceans Phoenix had emerged from the skies and had started blasting down torrents of water beams at them. Before they could shield themselves behind magic, some of them already found themselves drowning in burning waters and all that would be left of them would be bits of flesh and bones.

It was the only surprise attack that the Nine Oceans Phoenix could muster as the magical barrier immediately went up to protect the hatchery and the building's defences were initiated. All sorts of defensive spells like Slow, Weaken and Stupidify got used to hinder the Phoenix' advances as the mages began to congregate to pull off a massive spell while still under the protection of the building's magical barrier.

"If such a barrier could stop me, I should stop living as a Nine Oceans Phoenix!" The bird screeched at them as she flew up and with a quick twirl into the skies, the mages saw that the clouds above eventually turned into something more solid. Without any magic circles, the Nine Oceans Phoenix had managed to change the properties of the clouds into orbs of water.

With a flap of her wings, the large orbs of water descended towards the hatchery's magical barrier. Reaching terminal velocity made the orbs of water fall as if they were mini comets crashing into the world's atmospheric barrier. Indeed, the orbs created such a splash that the barriers instantly weakened by 40% and was barely able to hold up against the second wave.

The Nine Oceans Phoenix was shocked that this attack was not enough to deal with the humans, but she felt that her magic powers were still in tip top condition after eating Lynn's plates full with luxurious slabs of meat. She had no idea what it was that the cook had served her but the only word capable of describing the taste would be 'Delicious'.

Her magic was flowing out without any delay, a vast difference compared to a few hours ago when she had needed to concentrate to bring the magic out. It was as if the food had not only turned her stronger temporarily but also allowed her to become a little more sensitive towards mana, which had enabled the Phoenix to use the magic in her surroundings.

At that time, the Southern Mages were finishing the conjuration of a few large scale spells and started throwing it towards the Nine Oceans Phoenix. As the monster was a flying type which dealt with water, the mages believed it was best to use attributes that it was weak to.

"Star Lightning Storm!!!" The mages shouted as they pulled whatever they could simultaneously against their nemesis. Most of them knew what they had signed up for when Saberteeth had recruited them to guard this hatchery. Many of them had been captivated by their greed since their benevolent leader had offered to pay them very generously, while a minority had been genuinely interested in saving the nation upon learning about the Phoenix Egg.

Yet, none of them had expected the Nine Oceans Phoenix to be this ridiculously strong. With Lynn's buff the Nine Oceans Phoenix was agile enough to evade each and every attack the mages threw at it. Even a lightning based magic, which was considered to be the fastest attack possible in every Mages' repertoire had been countered so easily.

But instead of evading every one of the magic attacks, the Nine Ocean Phoenix soon understood that it was not enough to stop them from casting as some were seen to be sacrificing themselves to power the spells up.

And since they were so willing to die, the Nine Oceans Phoenix decided to grant them swift deaths.

She flew up higher into the skies and for once in this entire battle, she stood still momentarily to gain enough mana to decimate the entire hatchery. A spell which she had initially reserved to paralyse the Southern Capital.

"Tidal Sky Wave!!!"

Chapter 1025: Tidal Sky Wave

Everyone in the vicinity looked up to the sky and stopped casting any other spells. The air was extremely still all around the Phoenix... until she released her magic. A few of the mages wanted to escape, but their legs felt heavy, probably aware that no matter how fast they could run there was no way out.

Even the more adept mages who had the capability to open portals to move vast distances felt that their spell casting would be far too slow to grant them any chance of escape, so they did not even bother

trying, for the sky had been transformed into a massive ocean with no end in sight and the Nine Oceans Phoenix brought down the fury of the seas right in the middle of the white deserts.

The torrents of waves gushed down with extreme speeds thanks to gravity and it seemed that the magical defensive barrier the hatchery had employed stood as much of a chance to hold out as a man single handedly trying to stop an oncoming train.

And yet a man appeared at the centre of the hatchery's roof, looking unphased by the massive attack as he released his magical aura and held up a few metal cubes together.

"Have you no care for your own child, oh Mother Phoenix?!" Saberteeth shouted, hoping that the magical waves could be cancelled as they were about to destroy this very important building for his people.

Alas, the Phoenix did not heed the words from the thief who was responsible for her children's disappearance and proceeded to watch the entire hatchery's barrier crumble, making way for the torrential amount of burning water to destroy everything in its path.

No, not everything. The metal cubes Saberteeth held had started glowing brightly, as if in reaction to the monster's magic and created a protective barrier around himself.

While the Southern Leader had the ability and knowledge to use these metal cubes to lessen the damage of the Tidal Sky Wave attack to limit the damage to the hatchery's magical defensive barrier, thereby potentially saving the lives of his men, he strangely chose not to do anything.

The Tidal Sky Wave attack by the Nine Oceans Phoenix therefore literally obliterated his entire platoon of mages and the possibility of their survival was close to none. "Woah, woah, woah! When I heard of your powers, I did not expect you to be this strong!" Saberteeth said as the cubes grew in intensity right in front of him. "I have no idea how you managed to find this place, but how can you be so cruel as to kill off your unborn child?"

"That is none of your concern. I have seen what your people have done to one of my chicks!!! Even if you had yet to kill the other one, my attack should have granted it a swift death reuniting it with their sibling!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix acted in accordance to what Jin had suggested, pretending to believe that her second egg might have been already destroyed by Saberteeth.

"Wow, you managed to find your chick? How did she look? I hope you appreciate the 'care' we've given her?" Saberteeth taunted the giant bird openly and at the same time with quite a bit of spite. He now understood why his city team had not been responding. If the Nine Oceans Phoenix had found out about the state of her chick, it could only mean that the Southern Capital must have suffered the same fate as their hatchery now or even worse. Yet, for the Phoenix to find her chick and now the egg, has she always been bidding her time to locate them in quick succession or someone was helping her? A human?

"But still... to have not a single soul escape to send me a message, not even Leopardo...it's odd." Saberteeth thought to himself. He could not help but feel that something did not add up. Even if the Nine Oceans Phoenix had eradicated the city, how exactly did she learn that she had to come here?

Besides Leopardo only a handful of the interim leader's personal guards knew about the hatchery's existence, and none of them would ever reveal its location, not even under torture, instead they would

all opt to kill themselves. Not that monsters were ever known for torturing people in the first place. No, his instincts were telling Saberteeth that there was something else going on in the shadows. And he did not like it.

It was not particularly hard for the Nine Ocean Phoenix to act enraged. Whenever she remembered the state her firstborn had been in when Jin brought her to see her precious daughter, it was enough to ignite the fury within the phoenix and bring her magic powers forth once more.

"Good. Good. Be furious." Saberteeth thought to himself as he raised the metal cubes right up high and pointed towards the Nine Oceans Phoenix.

"Shit. I have a very bad feeling about this." Jin cursed as he was watching the whole scene play out from a far away dune hill while Sandy and Shu were standing by about a kilometre away from the fight zone.

"Do not move first, we need to find out what that cube does to her before we rush in," Jin ordered his two minions to hold steady before acting, hoping that his gut was wrong and that the Nine Oceans Phoenix could withstand whatever treachery Saberteeth was about to do.

From the look of it, he was doing nothing but raising those metal cubes up on his palms, floating and waiting for the Phoenix to make her next move. Another, even more deadly, Tidal Sky Wave was unleashed since it was the most powerful skill she had at her disposal.

Only this time she circled the clouds around Saberteeth as if she was about to pour her waves into a cylindrical manner with the Southern Leader at the centre of it all. That way he had nowhere to run and considering he was standing still so confidently meant he must have something in his sleeve so it was better to unleash everything she got so that Saberteeth could be taken down indefinitely.

But as the waves gushed towards him, the metal cubes shone even more brightly, seemingly intending to rival the sun as they began to absorb the entirety of the attack. Multiple black holes were created at the Southern Leader's fingertips and the Phoenix was forced to watch the magic being sucked into it.

"HAHAHAH! IT'S WORKING! IT'S ACTUALLY WORKING! YOUR MAGIC IS USELESS AGAINST ME NOW!" Saberteeth shouted hysterically since he had been gambling on this moment and from the joy in his voice his bet had paid off.

"The lives of your chicks were a small price to pay! Getting them for research purposes and using them for the benefit of my country was a nice boon to have. But THIS? THIS IS WHAT I WAS WAITING FOR!"

Saberteeth used his own magic to float even higher as the waves were continuously absorbed into the metal cubes. He had found those cubes in a temple deep in the valleys of the Southern Region. He had roughly deciphered that those cubes were able to channel one's magic into another, although it was not permanent for a fixed duration, yet so far he had never been able to get it to work as described.

Until the day he found the Nine Oceans Phoenix which allowed him to have an inspirational breakthrough in his findings. It could be possible that those metal cubes required a ton of magical energy for it to work and as expected, the first Tidal Sky Wave that hit the cubes had been the key to activate it.

Seeing how her attack which was further strengthened by Lynn's food was easily sucked into oblivion by the metal cubes, the Nine Oceans Phoenix panicked a little and decided to send a third wave of magical

attacks, only this time it was weaker than usual since she felt threatened and did not have the time to prepare as before.

And yet, the cubes were able to take in that copious amount of magical energy while Saberteeth, in turn, took one of the cubes and tapped into its energy reserves. "I told you it was USELESS! The amount of magical energy you have is so rich that I've never felt so invigorated before!!" Saberteeth grinned widely and was about to launch his attack.

Chapter 1026: Surpass One's Limits

"System, please tell me that I'm just hallucinating and those are not black holes sucking all the magic away?" Jin begged despite his own eyes telling him that those tidal waves had literally disappeared into that abyssal crevice of that metal cube.

"From the System's perspective, those cubes have indeed taken the form of black holes and have successfully absorbed all of the Nine Oceans Phoenix's magical energy from its attack. System and User can only pray that the Southern Leader Saberteeth does not also have the capability to tap into those absorbed powers. Should such a turn of events occur, the enemy would become invincible not only against the Nine Oceans Phoenix but also turn into an unprecedented threat for all the monsters in the Southern Region."

"Especially after what we did to his Capital, huh?" Jin continued to stay wary of the ongoing fight. Alas, it appeared that either the System had jinxed them or it had (unfortunately) just correctly listed the worst case scenario. The Southern Mage was hysterically laughing as he utilised the very same powers he had absorbed with the metal cubes and unleashed it against Nine Oceans Phoenix.

With a twist.

He had infused own speciality magic into the torrential tidal waves. Although the Mother Phoenix was still able to fly swiftly to evade those very same torrential waves that she had previously summoned, she quickly realised that the attack continued following her as if it was alive.

This caused her to fly zig zag, up and down, avoiding the waves which tried to enclose her at each opportunity possible, but no matter what it kept following her and even shortened the distance. Because of her exhaustion from casting three Tidal Sky Waves, each with increasing intensity, all the Nine Oceans Phoenix was relying upon at the moment was her tenacity to pull her through and it was getting obvious to the observers that she would not be able to outrun it.

"You think those metal cubes are that game breaking?" Jin asked as he tried formulating a few ideas to tackle the existence of such artefacts.

"Considering how the Phoenix's phenomenal magic could be taken in like a vacuum cleaner, those items must be some sort of artefact left by the Higher Gods and Demons. However, System wishes to note that each item, no matter how strong they seem to be, should have a limit, even if said items were made by the higher beings." The System stated with confidence that those metal cubes had some life span or limited usage.

Even the 'almighty' System had a certain limit to its existence.

"So it's up to us to test out those limits, huh?" Jin thought as he requested the System to bring Peppers back to his side.

"What? Me again? Is it my birthday or something?" Peppers questioned sarcastically after being kicked out of her room and back in her Red Panda Pyjamas. She had been sure that her schedule would be free after Jin had told her to destroy the Southern Capital.

"Didn't you complain earlier that you didn't have enough explosions for the day?" Jin chuckled as he tilted his head towards the fight between the Nine Oceans Phoenix and Saberteeth. Peppers needed some time to understand the situation but the System quickly filled her on by feeding her the necessary information.

"Hmmm...so you basically want me to explode Saberteeth to pieces?" Peppers asked as she summoned her trusty wooden staff again and changed into a more appropriate attire.

"It would be great if it turns out to be that easy. I fear that his metal cubes will absorb your explosion. No, I want you to create an explosion so large that those black holes won't be able to keep up. Either that or create so many multiple explosions that the black holes are not able to absorb everything. Your choice really."

"But that might destroy those metal cubes! Just imagine the magical applications we could do with such an artefact!" Peppers moaned as she saw the black cubes in action again as the Nine Oceans Phoenix threw a desperate counterattack against Saberteeth.

"Are you saying that your magic is so useless that you cannot overcome the black hole of some measly metal cubes?" Kraft, the crafty fox suddenly appeared from nowhere as he whistled at the intense fight between the man and Phoenix. At the same time, he saw the potential of the Southern Leader with his chain magic.

"What?! Of all the people who might demean me, you are the last one I will tolerate it from! I shall oppose you with all my strength!" Peppers yelled as she now swung her staff, hoping to hit Kraft but the Devil was agile enough to avoid the swing and slickly moved to the side. From Jin's perspective, it felt like a family gathering where the older brother had, once again, teasing his younger sister in front of their father who was trying to watch his TV show after a hard working day. It annoyed Jin greatly that he had to keep his calm and asked them to stay focus with the task at hand.

"Guys! Stop playing around! So, Peppers, can you do it?" Jin asked once more. If she was not going to try it out, he would have to think of something more...creative in nature.

"Meh. Why not? As you said, I did not have my fill of explosions for the day. Besides, I will show this crafty fox that my power is unparalleled to some flimsy artefact made by random nonsensical beings who left their things haphazardly for idiots like that Saberteeth to pick up." Peppers proudly claimed as she readied her staff and started chanting.

While Jin's one and only Mage Bellator could have done multiple explosions of epic proportions in an instant, this was one of those days where she hoped she could surpass her best record (And that was still the monstrous explosion in the Giant World.)

Maybe that might be excessive in this instance, especially since if things went wrong she might end up wiping out the entirety of the Southern Region, however, Peppers had something else in mind.

When she cast that spell, she traded the area of effect for the quality of the explosion. With that in mind, she concentrated the density of magic particles in her spell in one specific area aimed to blast Saberteeth's metal cubes into oblivion.

Yet, in order to do this, Peppers needed time to cast. Unfortunately, the Phoenix' fatigue made it impossible for the bird to grant her that time. Saberteeth was getting more confident in his attacks, making them more aggressive as he saw weakness in the monster bird's movement.

Thus, Jin tried to look for Kraft to play the part of a meatshield, but as a fleeting phantom, he was already out of sight, as if he had only shown up to incite and spur Peppers to accept the job. When that was done, he disappeared to complete what he needed to do...or rather, felt like doing.

"Gah! That unreliable fox!" Jin muttered to himself as he entered the System Channel to get the two other monsters who were watching the whole fight scene as well. Sandy, the Sand Witch and Shu, the Magical Treant. However, knowing that those black holes could suck any type of magic into it he asked once more whether they were up to the task to provide support for the Nine Oceans Phoenix so that Peppers have enough time to chant her magic.

And all they responded was just two words.

"Yes, Master."

Chapter 1027 - Sandy and Shu's Support

Sandy did not hesitate when Jin gave the command to assist the Nine Oceans Phoenix. Within an instant, the sand around the broken hatchery suddenly shifted and turned into spikes, moving towards Saberteeth with absolute speed. There were no signs of magic until the very last minute as if the entire backdrop was Sandy's playground.

However, because of the distance between the centre of the hatchery and surrounding sand, Saberteeth was still able to move away fast enough. For a lead mage, he seemed to be quite proficient in evading as well, indicating that the Southerners' prioritised in outdoor survival more than any drowning themselves with old mushy books in libraries.

While it had become obvious that the black hole created by the metal cube had the potential to absorb magic, she wondered what would happen if she merely threw her sand weapons as projectiles. The white sand did require magic to be manipulated and maintain its form, yet said projectiles should still be able to act as a distraction even when dispersed.

The surroundings such as the hatchery had not been taken in at all even though they had been damaged by the initial Tidal Sky Wave. If her theory of the metal cubes absorbing only magic was right, her manipulated white sands could provide sufficient distraction against Saberteeth for the Phoenix to escape the iron jaws of death by the enemies' chain magical power.

In the meantime, Shu had been growing his roots at the hatchery's surrounding. While he did use magic to grow his roots, they were still a part of him, and Shu was able to control the direction of where the roots were moving towards. However, because of the vast distance, it was a tad troublesome to maintain the same amount of strength he usually used to kill his enemies.

Saberteeth was surprised by the sudden attack of weapons in sand form and magically imbued spikes coming towards him. Alas, because of the black holes from his metal cubes, the magic keeping the sand in weapon form weakened significantly before it ever hit him. Still, a few went through before he was able to erect a proper barrier up.

At that moment, he realised that the Nine Oceans Phoenix had friends backing her up and immediately increased his magic output to scan the area. Unfortunately, the magical energies from the Tidal Sky Wave which he had stolen with the ancient metal cubes were disrupting his magic detection preventing him from properly locating the magical sources.

More and more sand projectiles were proving to be an annoyance to Saberteeth as he broke his concentration in capturing the Nine Oceans Phoenix, giving the bird the chance to break out of his continuous pressure to capture her. She also saw a glimpse of the white sand being manipulated and understood that Jin had already sent her some support to go against Saberteeth.

At that moment she became aware of how pathetic she must be, requiring the aid of a human to help in this endeavour. Not only had she failed to exact her revenge properly, but that proclaimed dungeon master who had many extremely powerful monsters on his side had also repeatedly shown her sufficient courtesy. He had saved both her kids and now he provided support to her when there was no need for him to do that.

Jin had even thought about the backlash his actions would have to the monster population while he could have easily sided with his fellow human. Even this chance to eliminate the perpetrator who stole her eggs and exact justice were bestowed by him so that she could have some peace of mind. She suspected he had some personal agenda behind his actions, yet there was undoubtedly still kindness in his actions.

"What are you staring into space?!" Jin shouted as he flew towards the Nine Ocean Phoenix with the aid of his Green Panda Wind Energy and told her to follow him.

However, that shout alone was enough for Saberteeth to track Jin as the support that the Nine Oceans Phoenix was given. "WHAT? A HUMAN?! HOW CAN THIS BE? HOW DARE YOU HELP THEM AFTER ALL THE CRIMES HER KIND HAS COMMITTED?! THEIR BEASTLY INSTINCT TO DESTROY EVERYTHING IN SIGHT THAT WE HAVE PAINSTAKINGLY BUILT?!T" Saberteeth shouted fanatically as he now redirected his chains towards Jin.

However, the dungeon supplier did not react, so the Southern Leader came to the conclusion that since Jin assisted a monster, he had to be a monster himself. A 'human' who Saberteeth will happily rid the world off!

Jin saw metal chains flying along with the Tidal Sky Wave towards him and he instantly engaged the inner Maqi within him. White Panda Ice Energy was released in succession to create gigantic glacier

barriers that blocked the Tidal Sky Waves while the Nine Oceans Phoenix twirl and swirl in the skies towards Jin.

Unfortunately, the chains were manipulated to move around the glacier barriers even as the Tidal Sky Waves crashed into them. Saberteeth laughed as he thought he had the upper hand in this current battle ... until he saw his chains gradually frozen as they tried to move around the barriers.

He did not realise that Jin had reached a higher level of control of his Maqi with his grade up and those glacier barriers were able to protrude a small icicle spike out poking the chains, stopping them from moving. And at the point of contact, the chain's temperature went straight to below zero and further until it froze.

The enemy's Tidal Sky Waves initially burnt the barriers but eventually, it too froze up in the sky, creating a magnificent ice structure in view over the white sandy desert.

Saberteeth realised the human aiding the monster might have noticed the weak point of his black holes. It might be an excellent defensive item but in terms of offense, it was undoubtedly his Achilles Heel. As long as the magic could be overpowered, and not within the range of the black hole, Saberteeth was not able to do anything about it.

Yet, he could not believe this particular human was able to topple the intense magical energies of a Nine Ocean Phoenix since it was considered to be one of the mythical creatures in the Farming World. (Not to mention, it was already a variant!)

Even the Phoenix was bewildered by the show of power even though it was just a defensive act from Jin. But the Dungeon Supplier was already snapping her out of her shock once again and telling her to move to him as soon as possible.

"You are not going anywhere Phoenix!!!" Saberteeth yelled as he tried to levitate himself. But at that moment, roots suddenly appeared right beneath his feet and grabbed him, stopping him from running away. Saberteeth immediately reacted by bringing the black hole towards its roots to break it but he found out that it was not a magical attack. It was an actual living root that was holding him.

While there is some form of magical energy being absorbed, it was too little to constitute a magical attack.

"Hahaha! Suck it! I am using regrowth to keep the root from snapping, a talent of mine rather than a magical spell." Shu boasted loudly from afar even though Saberteeth was unable to hear it.

Simultaneously, Sandy was not letting off her magic attacks and had also resorted in using as little mana as possible. They slowly discovered that maintaining the black hole required magic too and that mana the black hole absorbed was barely sufficient for the black hole to maintain its form and there was nothing for Saberteeth to manipulate.

Still, with most of his minions filled with magic and chi, Jin felt that it was the correct decision to limit their numbers and let Peppers' explosion deal with Saberteeth. If that wouldn't work, he planned to make the Orc and Goblins mechanised platoons fight against the Souther Leader, but for now, it was time to test whether the most drastic solution would also be the best solution. (Though it was mainly

because he did not wish to waste anymore resources on this fight and Peppers had yet to meet her quota for explosions.)

And so with everyone acting as her diversions, Peppers finally had the time to finish casting her spell once the Nine Ocean Phoenix was out of the range.

Chapter 1028: Pepper's Latest Achievement

"Incoming!" Peppers warned her comrades via the System Channel once she finished preparing her spell. An instant cast incantation weaved together with her mega (-or perhaps already giga?) explosion spell was ready to be fired off at any second. The Mage Bellator was not stupid enough to give Saberteeth any time to react to it, for he could have some way to run away.

Still, she had to give Jin and the Phoenix some time so they could slip into the System's portal when she unleashed her sure fire kill attack. She was quite surprised how Jin's magical powers had exponentially increased and Peppers could only deduce that he had kept it as a secret for quite a long time ever since he woke up from his two week long coma.

Upon hearing Peppers' warning, Jin decided to speed up towards the Nine Oceans Phoenix and he grabbed hold on the side of her neck. Confused by this action, the monster bird croaked a little from the sudden chokehold, but Jin needed to come into physical contact with her so that he could quickly summon a portal. Within that split second of him giving Peppers the signal, both the explosion and portal appeared simultaneously and if not for the quick coordination from the System, Jin and the Nine Oceans Phoenix would be caught in the blast.

Saberteeth, on the other hand, being bound by Shu's roots had nowhere to escape and the snap explosion robbed him of any chances to come up with some strategy. Unlike the usual explosions, Peppers did control the radius of this particular explosion, causing it to destruct within the vicinity of the hatchery, disintegrating not just the building above ground but obliterating the basements too.

Although Saberteeth was caught unaware, the metal cubes had an emergency defensive mechanism which would protect their user from being struck by any magic attacks. If the Nine Oceans Phoenix spell strongest could be taken in like sipping water, Peppers was not going to give any concessions on her spell.

However, neither the offensive nor defensive black holes could keep up the absorption of the sustained explosion. Yes, Peppers had not just cast her spell once, but three times! A triple instant cast spell which was already considered an overly complex spell had been cast in a concentrated form. If anything, she would mark it down in her diary as an achievement considering the complexity of the spell and that it was the first time she was doing a controlled explosion.

The black holes tried to absorb as much of the spell as possible but the intensity and quality of the magical power were so dense that the metal cubes were not capable of holding the spell. What's more, they broke from the destructive powers of the spell that had been cast. Following the Southern Leader's body, those metal cubes melted and disappeared from the face of the world by the third explosion spell.

"Lol. Those cubes do not even stand a chance for my-" Peppers commented half way before the mana overload and drawback effects from tapping to the universal mana pool hit her. It caused her to vomit rainbows right at the spot and Jin who knew her condition immediately opened a portal right in front of her to pick her up.

"It's alright, it's alright. I will bring you to the Panda Nurses right now." Jin remarked as he assisted Peppers up. "You did brilliant. Absolutely stunning. Bravo." He did not skimp out on the praises as he saw the explosion from the portal the System created.

The former portal had not brought them back to the dungeon instances, but right beside Shu and Sandy. After all, Jin wanted to see the explosion with his eyes while showing the Nine Ocean Phoenix the capability of his bellators.

Peppers on the other hand was breathing heavily but gave a peace sign with her hands. "I know I am awesome." In truth, the Mage Bellator had never felt more terrible. This was even worse than the Giant World explosion incident and yet she had also never felt as satisfied that she had accomplished something this complex before. Jin carried her up and quickly sent her to the nurses after the explosion subsided. This misadventure had certainly ended with a bang.

The System sent Sandy and Shu back to their respective home instances, allowing them to rest while giving special concession for the Phoenix to return to see her hatchling and injured chick. Jin did not waste any time to see the Nine Oceans Phoenix and was a bit baffled that unlike last time the Phoenix greeted him with her head held low. Filled with gratitude, she had finally decided to join the team with the only condition that her children would be well taken care of.

"I was planning to do that from the start, so sure. What about your other children? I remember that you had more than two eggs." Jin asked and the Phoenix shook her head.

"Oh, you don't have to worry about that. I only lay two eggs. To prevent other monsters from taking my eggs, I took the liberty of caring for their eggs together with mine. They provided protection within the area that I chose to nest in, which allowed me to hide my presence from other predators. In return, their eggs benefit from my magical aura, which would have made them grow up more powerful than their peers. Unfortunately, that monstrous human you just defeated was downright lucky enough to find the nest at a time when I had gone out to hunt."

Jin looked at the colour of several oceans on the egg's surface. If one would take time to look at it closely, there was an illusion of the oceans ever moving on the egg's shell as if it was a magical pearl from the deep sea. "All's well that ends well, though. In fact, you and him might be working together really well."

"Sorry, What?!" The Nine Oceans Phoenix nearly cried out feeling like she got betrayed the moment she signed the agreement. "How would that even be possible, NOBODY could survive that explosion?!"

That was when Jin started to explain the workings of the System and how the people he killed had 'a chance' of becoming his minion. While still a little suspicious, the Nine Oceans Phoenix replied that she would only believe it when she saw Saberteeth in action.

"Speaking of Saberteeth, say now that you've joined us, what should I call you?" Jin asked, telling her that to continue calling her 'Phoenix' seemed a little ...distant.

"Hmm.. Call me Jean then. That was a name given to me by someone I once knew." Jean replied as she reminisced the days of that naïve mage similar to Jin.

"Alright, Jean. Welcome to the family." Jin raised his hand up, wanting to shake her feet but instead, Jean lowered her head below Jin's hand as if a pat would suffice. And with this, a case of monster and human grudge somewhat came to a close.

It was downright comical, how Jin had only wanted to hire some help from a Southerners' mercenary group, which he believed he had sufficient money to pay them, yet given the chain of events he ended up recruiting nearly half a capital worth of mouths to feed due to the explosion Peppers made as well as a horde of flying monsters.

"Now this is the true headache..." Jin shook his head as he couldn't help but question his choice of intervening.

Chapter 1029: Too Many Minions

Meanwhile, the System had placed their latest recruits in the Open World Home Instances on a new Island Instance. Normally, to have that many Southerners and monsters stay in one place would have resulted in a bloodshed and quite possibly the eradication of one of the two sides. Still, since all of them were now under the System's purview, they had no choice but to stay in harmony despite their prejudices against each other.

However, Jin saw this as not necessarily a bad thing. After all, he needed more NPCs and monsters for the upcoming Virtual Network and these additions were very welcoming. If it was impossible to get them to work together, they could easily create a storyline where people would have to choose to side with one side or the other, just like he had done.

"I thought you said you do not have space to keep this many people? And now we have another few thousands in our midst." Jin looked at the consoles of the Dungeon Maker to try and make sense of the current situation. Last he checked he had not done anything to increase his System's capabilities.

"System has – to put it in User's terms - done some New Year cleaning. By optimising some space it was possible to house the current group of monsters and humans captured. The System has already sieved through all those with unwanted behaviours, the extremists' group and put them in storage in case we needed... more ruthless behaviour in our NPCs." The System revealed some half truths in case Jin found out about the System using humans as its backup processing units to run the show. With this cover story, which was not entirely wrong, the System would be able to release them if Jin needed such unruly NPCs. But for now, their minds and bodies were utilised to the best for the System.

"Nevertheless, this is pretty much a makeshift solution. System is once again asking User for support. Please find more ways to increase the processing power to reduce the burden as well as to allow System to expand the servers, allowing us to realise the Virtual Network instance as swiftly as possible." The System reiterated and yet Jin found it even more of a headache.

Sure, he would love to get it done and over with but there were way too many pressing matters at hand. While this particular sidetrack had yielded him some benefits and manpower, the burden of keeping them would definitely backfire. With the new recruits in the thousands, Jin had unofficially become a Mayor with all the people and monsters under his rule.

"While I'd like to rebuild the Southern Capital, the Demon Rats still pose too much of a problem. It seems unwise to invest into a new city when I have trouble brewing up North and the potential for them to come and disturb us." Jin remarked.

"What do you think about us putting these people into Pandapolis for the time being?" Jin asked the System for its recommendations. "This way, they would still be under your jurisdiction, but not require you to uphold this place. We would be able to get certain things working while they learn a new set of skills so that they could rebuild the Southern Capital way faster by themselves?"

"System understands User's rationale but does anticipate the fallout effects of leaving the Southern Capitals in ruins. Without their capital and their leader presumed dead, the Southerners might interpret it as a monster attack and the relationship between the Southerners and monsters might intensify as such. Especially with the explosion that Mage Bellator Peppers has done, it should be quite visible for the surrounding towns to learn about the nature of the attack."

"...So? Why not keep it as is? The whole monster attack thing? Just need to use another strawman though." Jin sat down and started to think that there could actually be a way to turn the situation around.

"What does User mean?" The System queried.

"Instead of placing the blame on the monsters from the South, we turn it into propaganda against the Demon Rats? We let loose a few Southerners who will spread the message that the Demon Rats are the ones responsible? Heck, we could even claim that the Southern Monsters were cooperating with the defence against the Southern Capital?"

"Sound a bit far fetched, don't you think?" Qiu Yue popped by as she overheard the last few conversational exchanges between Jin and the System. "While the idea seems good, don't you think it's a bit weird that the seaport had no sight nor contact with any Demon Rats?"

"That's under the assumption they would come here by boat. What do you think about those aircraft carriers? I mean, while the seaport towns and cities could not have seen any Demon Rats landings but the capital isn't exactly too far away from the coastal regions either. It would be believable that those rats did that. Besides..." Jin opened up his console.

"We have quite a few rats in our Spiral Sewers Instances, don't we?" Jin asked as the System replied to point out the quantity 'a few' was quite inappropriate.

"Oh, so we throw an act?" Qiu Yue questioned and Jin nodded his head.

"With the Monsters and Southerners working under us, it should be easy enough to set up a ...you could say a recovery camp, where some of the monsters are helping to clear the debris of the capital while we have Saberteeth as the de facto leader. Get my drift so far?" Jin said and both the System (figuratively) and Qiu Yue (literally) nodded her head.

"At the same time, we can prepare the construction of the Southern Capital by clearing the place up and reusing the salvage and debris. It couldn't hurt to feed our recycler to continue working non stop." Jin grinned as he remembered the System had increased the Recycler's abilities.

"That is quite true. At the same time, we could influence the rest of the Southern Towns to get ready for war against the Demon Rats." Qiu Yue suggested.

"Assuming they are able to produce the things we need. Else, it's better for them to use our weaponry instead." Jin said but Qiu Yue shook her head.

"That will tip the balance of the Farming World way too much. The East and West will suffer and we might have a North-South alliance against the East and West after this whole Demon Rat thing is over." Qiu Yue cautioned stating that it might be good to interfere with the Farming World as much as they did for the Goblin World. By introducing new technology it could potentially lead to political conflicts in the future.

In the Goblin World such technologies had been introduced and then got taken away, before they came back as their very own Goblin's Illuminati Ironworks.

Jin was lucky that the Goblin World was still peaceful as it is because of the Orc powerhouse and the Goblins acting as the intermediary between the Orcs and Humans but they could not say the same for the Farming World especially when the production of items are potentially different in their world. And unfortunately, that goes the same for the Dungeon World too so while it would be great for Jin to interfere with all the worlds, the headache he has would no doubt increase.

However, the dungeon supplier was too lazy to think that far. "'I'd rather we just do it and get rid of the rats as soon as possible. On that note...we could always control the East and West in the future as well should they try to make an alliance and take out the North or South first. And if that happens, we could potentially have the Farming World at our fingertips and that would no doubt bring greater production to not just the other worlds but our dungeon supplying as an inter world business."

"So as long as we have the end product, that will be fine?" Qiu Yue shrugged and shook her head.

"Guess, the ones supporting you just have to buck up then, but still I have to say that's a goal worth looking forward to."

"That sounds awfully dandy to me. He he!" Jin nodded his head and started to coordinate for a recovery camp at the ruins of the Southern Capital.

"History would remember this as the first day on his rise to become the future Intergalactic Panda Emperor" - Diary of a certain Fox.

Chapter 1030: Disaster Rescue Camp

Qiu Yue spent the next few days placing camps similar to the ones they had set up for the New Adventurer's Town in its initial stages outside the ruins of the Southern Capital. The tactician did not have high hopes about this 'bluff' working effectively, yet the Red Panda Cultivator felt it was still worth

a try. On the off-chance they could trick the Southerners to team up together with the monsters, they might actually gain even more powerful allies against the Demon Rats.

Jin then released all of the 'innocent' Southerners within his System into the camps. While they were crushed to see the destruction of their homes, the System had explained the reasoning behind the total annihilation of the capital.

It was not easy for the Southerners to swallow the truth but with the System controlling them to a certain degree, most of them accepted it unwillingly. Some were rather pleased that the entire capital was destroyed, since it meant they could create a new (and better) city.

Issues such as discrimination against the weak and the survival of the strongest had always been the ongoing theme within the city and for good reasons. It had been the only way to live and survive in this harsh environment against all the monster onslaughts. With Jin having taken control of them and their leaders, they requested their master to use his capabilities (and deep pockets) to help them with that project.

Yet first, they would have to defeat the Rat Demons, and that was the hard part.

It was only a matter of time until the other Southern Cities would send out scouting parties to investigate the source of the large explosion where the Southern Capital used to be. The camps had been set up to show off that the monsters were actually helping the Southerners and Jin needed the two groups to play nice with each other.

Theoretically, all of them were under the System's influence, so controlling them should be easy enough. However, forcing Jin's subjects to do something against their nature required a lot of focus (aka processing capabilities) on the System's part which could be used for more important issues.

In addition, Jin only had so much time on his hands to make sure that the free willed Southerners would agree to come together as a team before he would have to take care of other problems which just kept piling. In a somewhat drastic choice, Jin appointed a person which nobody had expected to lead the entire group.

Silver, cousin of Gold, as well as the current replacement leader of the Jacks by recommendation of the Scholar of the East himself.

Although Silver's understanding of the Southern Region was limited to a few pages of the history books, he had the werejackals under him who were previously mages under the Four Scholars, especially notable people like Yellow, Brown and Grey.

While they now understood the 'true' history for the feud between the Southerners and the Monsters residing in the Southern Region, Yellow and Brown had the capability to intervene in their culture because of the knowledge they once held.

Still, the Jacks were well versed in Jin's way of working things out and thus, with their expertise, they assisted the two groups and made sure that they are working alongside each other. Silver took charge of the matters related to the reconstruction of the Southern Capital as well, assigning manpower (and monster power) to various sites of the former capital, arranging them to prepare for transportation into the System's Recycler.

In the meantime, Yellow and Brown instructed some of the Southerners to go out and spread the propaganda messages as detailed by Jin's initial plan. All the mayors in the surrounding towns were initially sceptical regarding the content of the messages, even though they were mostly delivered by the same scouts that visited them frequently. But both the Werejackal Mages had another plan in mind.

On the third day after the disaster rescue base camp was set up, the first mayors of the arrived. They were promptly welcomed by none other than Saberteeth for an informal meeting in one of the nearest biggest Southern Town, Banning. To ensure the willingness of the Southern Leader Jin had allowed a certain Dungeon Security Director with the help of his new assistant, Nightingale to 'convince' the Southern Mage that it was all for the good of his people.

That meeting alone cleared many doubts and rumours for the mayors of the various towns, especially once Saberteeth presented them with a live Demon Rat they had captured and 'interrogated'. In reality, Kraft had merely brainwashed one of their captured Demon Rat with more... violent methods to make it more responsive to telling the 'truths' it had been fed during its session.

No doubt the mayors made a huge ruckus seeing that their capital turning into ruins but all that empty noises were not going to make much progress. So with all that evidence the mayors ultimately pledged their support, since they understood they had to come together to deal with the danger of more rats attacking them.

However, although the mayors were in favour of fighting against the Demon Rats, they were wary of the alliance between the monsters and the Southerners. The reformed Saberteeth had already warned Jin about the concerns any 'sane' Southerner would have, so with the help of Qiu Yue, they had come up with some contingency plans.

That was where Gold, the Scholar of the East, the Farmer of all Farmers, or the Garden Prince as Weslie had dubbed him. He joined the meeting and promised the mayors that if they pledged help, he would assist them in their agriculture aspects.

Even though the White Desert was not a suitable place to grow crops, it was nevertheless part of the Farming World and with the right fertilisers and seeds, the Southerners would be able to have a decent bounty from nature itself.

Naturally, he took the chance to introduce the secret organisation which was now aiding the reconstruction of the capital, stating that they would provide the necessary food supplies.

That brought a ton of relief to those mayors since they had actually been relying on the capital to feed their people. The little farming that their towns did, was barely enough to sustain themselves and would. Thus, they all followed their leader's example.

Saberteeth was known for being cunning and ruthless in his behaviour and his weird hobbies of collecting eggs for experiments, yet he was still a leader who had improved their situation. Thanks to his 'out of the norms' ways he had brought innovation to the Southerners after the mysterious disappearance of their Southern Scholar. When they had needed him the most, he had disappeared, but the mayors had witnessed Saberteeth pulling them out of the rug before so there was a certain level of trust for him.

Some even queried Gold why the Scholars did not approach or recommend him to be the next Southern Scholar when the old one had somewhat abandoned their duty. The only remark Gold could give them without revealing any details was that he would try his best to find out more about the old Southern Scholar.