

Intermission 1 - It seems to Be Hard on Them as well

'It's damn insane to have us do the work with two that had originally been done by five supervisors.' She, who had originally been the human supervisor, cursed deep, deep down in her mind without showing even the slightest inkling of it on her face or in her emotions.

At the same time, having the reality that they originally ought to have been doing all this until now thrust in front of her made her realize just how much they had forgotten their primary duty while amusing themselves by playing around.

To tell the unvarnished truth, this world should have collapsed by now. The exhaustion of the component called resource, which was the root forming the world and the beings on it, had already reached a level where it would be an understatement to call it too late.

From the start, resources were always decreasing little-by-little. They would continue to decrease at tiny steps over many, many millions of years, and the moment when they would fully run dry would spell the end of a world's lifespan.

However, just like exceptions existed in everything, this rule also had exceptions. Whenever she now thought about that matter, the former human supervisor's thoughts and feelings would nearly get drowned by the wish of wanting to just hold her head and scream on end.

A world that formed the foundation, albeit only as a part, of a universe branching out into infinity. A world that possessed the capability to destroy even the other worlds connected to it as a chain reaction, if it broke down.

A world affecting even that master of hers who controlled all the worlds.

A sheltered world that was set to not perish and was guaranteed a replenishment even before if succumbed to a fatal shortage of resources.

The shock she suffered when she learned that all of this referred to this world was beyond imagination.

Considering it logically, the fact of stationing five supervisors, who all held the same authority, in a single world was weird by all accounts. Normally, even deploying two and not just one supervisor with the same powers as she possessed to one world should already be a luxury.

Deploying multiple supervisors meant that the management of the world in question required that much of a meticulous attention.

'I guess I've been wrong for complaining at master for not having explained all that,' the former human supervisor judged.

After all there wouldn't have been any issues at all, if they had followed their master's advice and requested support early on, if only they had managed the world normally. And yet, they amused themselves by toying around with this world, and cut down the warnings of their master as hindrance to their game and ignored them.

The outcome of that was the world's current state.

Exactly because she now fully understood the extent of their actions, she gritted her teeth and remained silent, using a part of her thoughts for countless processes that would whittle down even her very existence.

"But, this is..."

She, who had been given more than ample ability to manage a fifth of the world, had been grumbling for a good while now. Even when she tried to somehow keep maintaining the world using every trick at her disposal while freely using various exception operations in a corner of her mind that would very likely burn its circuits, every last one of the processes kept failing.

"That means, no matter how much we struggle, it's useless."

The one who quickly threw in the towel was the former beastman supervisor who had been ordered to do the same duty as her.

Maybe he was like this because of the beastmen, whom he had supervised, or maybe the beastmen race became like this because of his character; it was unclear which of both applied here, but he was impulsive, had a shallow thinking, and gave up too quickly.

"We're absolutely lackin' resources here. No matter how much we gloss it over or trick 'round, if it's just the processing, we might be able to somehow keep this goin' even though we're goin' to vomit blood, but we've got no means to deal with the lackin' amount of resources."

The former human supervisor was starting to get pissed off in her mind at the attitude of the former beastman supervisor who deliberately put something she fully knew herself into words, but she immediately switched her thinking, soothing her thoughts which were about to run high.

'Right now it's a waste of thinking time to get angry at his attitude. However, I'm going to convey to him my feelings that he should shut up and work in silence by sending a fitting glance his way.

Seemingly realizing the meaning behind the look turned in his direction for an instant, the former beastman supervisor shrugged his shoulders, and immediately returned to the processing he had been doing so far.

Even without it being purposely spelled out by him, that fact had been plain as day for quite a while now. As long as the current condition went on, the limit would be reached, sooner or later, although even she didn't know when that would be since she currently hadn't the leeway to spare thinking power to calculate the timing.

It wasn't as though there didn't exist a breakthrough solution. Since it was a world labeled for having its resources replenished to begin with, all would be fine as long as they could receive that refill. The preparations for that sake were already finished, and all that was left was for their master to infuse the resources.

As long as their master, who was an almighty being in their eyes, poured resources into this world, fixing the world wouldn't be that much of a problem.

'In that case, the question would be why master hasn't already done so.

When her thinking had reached that part, her expression distorted faintly, as if she had swallowed a bitter pill.

'The reason is obvious. The elven and dragonoid supervisors have already died. Going by the situation, master is hesitating to refill the resources of this world because of the demon supervisor who has likely descended into the lower world.

Even the former human supervisor understood why her master couldn't pour in the resources necessary to save the world in the current situation, where the whereabouts of the demon supervisor were unknown.

There was naturally no other method to resolve this situation but to find out where the demon supervisor was hiding and what he was scheming, and then take him into custody. She had been using a small part of her thought capacity for that mission as well, but in the end there was a decisive discrepancy in faculties between her, who was continuing the work of maintaining the world, and the demon supervisor who was likely using all his power to hide while neglecting that work.

'Now that I recall, the originator of that game we have been playing was him. Assuming that he had already anticipated the current situation back then, I wonder for just what reason he is defying master by abandoning his management domain, and where is he hiding right now with what kind of plans.

As she was brooding about that, the former human supervisor was bothered about it as if feeling an intense headache, which she shouldn't usually feel, just like a normal human.

"Anyway, the highest priority right now is to maintain the status quo."

It was a work that would definitely fail eventually. However, that didn't mean that it wasn't possible to delay the failure into the future as much as possible.

One means was the young human man sent into that world from another by their master who had grieved over this state of affairs. Thanks to getting him, who had a great amount of resources attached to his soul, to aimlessly wander all over the world, his resources had been scattered around, albeit thinly, over a wide area, which had become a help for her work of maintaining the world.

Moreover, she had decided to pick an option which she would likely have never selected under normal circumstances.

"Let's abandon the preservation of the demon territory."

"O-Oi!?! That's..."

The former beastman supervisor obviously became flustered due to the words of the former human supervisor, which she had deliberately voiced out with a cold voice, but his protest was thwarted by her look and further cold words.

"The highest priority is to avoid the destruction of the world. Just think of that. Bearing in mind the conduct of that demon supervisor, there's no need for us to go out of our way to take care of the demon's continent, is there?"

Even she felt sorry for the demons living in that world. If it had been a situation where they had a leeway on the resources, she wouldn't have opted to expressly forsaking them. However, currently they didn't have that leeway, and they couldn't get a replenishment of resources because of the demon supervisor. Moreover, even though she was making full use of her abilities, even going beyond her limits, there were absolutely no signs of the situation improving in any way.

Hence the former human supervisor decided to abandon the maintenance of the demon territory, while having the demons accept it as bad luck that they were managed by such a supervisor. Due to this, the aggregate amount of resources needed for the preservation would decrease, and moreover, it would result in some leeway because she wouldn't have to assign any of her own throughput to the demons any longer.

"If they're detached from our supervision with the supply of resources bein' cut, the demons'll easily go extinct, no matter how tough they might be."

The former beastman supervisor's opinion was reasonable. At this point, it wouldn't be an issue of the race's strength any longer. No matter how much more powerful or sturdier than the other race the demons might be, if they fell out of supervision and were cut off the resources supply, they would definitely perish, whether it might be quickly or slowly.

"I believe that they won't actually perish, though." The former human supervisor muttered while harboring something similar to a strange conviction.

'Assuming that the current situation is within the range of the demon supervisor's forecast, it's not difficult to anticipate that the supply of resources and the ongoing management of the demons under his supervision would be stopped. I'm not sure how much of an attachment towards the demons he holds, but he likely isn't so unprepared that he wouldn't have any countermeasures at hand', she believed.

It could be expected that the current situation came to be precisely because he was weathering this through until a moment needed by him while possessing some countermeasures. But, if asked how he planned to get through the current situation with what methods, the former human supervisor didn't have an answer at hand either.

After all she couldn't come up with any other method than begging for forgiveness while prostrating herself when she found herself in a similar situation.

'Just how is that annoying demon supervisor planning to overcome his predicament?

She had an uncommonly, deep interest in that question, but since now wasn't the time for this, she switched her thinking, and immediately started the work to stop the resource supply for the demon territory.

"I see...? Well, I don't care since they're not directly related to me anyway."

The work itself wasn't anything that difficult or time-consuming. Connecting a path was a fairly difficult task, but her current job was to just destroy existing paths. It would finish without any problems at all. It followed the same logic of it being easy to destroy a road even if it was hard work to build one.

The former human supervisor, who continued to thoroughly and artlessly sever every last path providing the demon territory with resources she could spot, heard the former beastman supervisor's mutterings without actually listening to them.

"However, puttin' aside the stuff he's done, that guy's really amazin'. That's nothin' I could ever imitate, y'know? Why's there so much of a difference between us even though we should be supervisors created by master with the same abilities?"

The dragonoid supervisor had been killed through some kind of technique. No one had watched the final moments of the elven supervisor, but going by the state of affairs and the fact that they couldn't track his response anywhere, they believed that he had been killed in a similar way.

No superiority and inferiority existed between the supervisors. After all it would have been pointless to set it up like that. The five supervisors, who had been dispatched to this world, should have been beings possessing the exact same set of abilities, albeit there might have been slight differences in their experiences and thought capacities.

When she had pondered up to this point, the former human supervisor, who had been working, slowly decelerated her thinking. What started to rear its head in exchange was doubt.

"The demon supervisor being able to kill two of his peers is very likely owed to him attacking the two with a surprise attack or some method close to that. However, would a being, who possessed the absolutely same abilities as himself, really get defeated one-sidedly, without any resistance, by just being taken unaware.

"I'm pretty sure, that guy must have anticipated a long time ago that stuff would turn out like this, and gotten ready in some kinda way. Is it what you call foresight? It's somethin' I can't really imagine, though."

"W-Wait a moment. Prepared a long time ago...?"

He looked mystified at her, who finally stopped her work and inserted those words that sounded like a complaint, after prattling about something that was inconsequential to him.

"That's what he did, aight? I mean, that's nothing you can prepare in a day, is it? Ah, your hands have stopped, y'know? Damn it, it's been you who told me repeatedly that I shoulda move my hands before my mouth, wasn't it?"

Seeing the state of the former human supervisor, the former beastman supervisor began to continue the work she had been doing while laughing and saying, "Can't be helped then."

She grabbed his shoulders in panic, feeling that it would be wrong to allow him to keep it going, while still looking as though she hadn't completely gathered her thoughts yet.

"What is it? It ain't anything difficult. Even I can handle as much, okay? It's just severin' the paths, you see."

"That's...that's not it! Wait a moment!"

"You tellin me to work n' stuff, but I'm already done, okay?"

He smiled at her, unable to understand her point.

While the two supervisors watched, the complete shutdown of the resources supply to the demon territory finished, and in the next instant, all information about the demon territory, which had been managed by them, blacked out.

"Huh? What happened? D-Did I break too much or somethin'?"

While listening to him, who had begun to investigate the current state in a fluster as he would get severely scolded when Giliel came back, she harbored the vague feeling that this was very likely yet another of the circumstances the demon supervisor had foreseen.

'Anyone could have predicted that in a case of a critical drop of resources to maintain the world, the supply being cut off as the very first would be the one to the demon territory which is clearly opposing master.

"A difference in abilities...game...resources shortage...preparations..." The former human supervisor mumbled that array of words.

What was reflected ahead of her line of sight were the circumstances in the lower world, where some kind of abnormality had apparently taken place. The fact of all of the demon territory, which had all its paths severed moments ago, was shown on the images and moreover by the data attached to them.

"Damn it, just what the fuck happened here?"

"The entire demon territory has been isolated from the world."

Even when they tried to examine the barrier, which had suddenly manifested, and its contents, the effort ended up being completely fruitless. The barrier's interior repelled all kinds of interference by them, and not a single piece of information leaked out to the outside from within.

"I've never seen such a tough barrier."

"That means even us cutting off the paths to his territory because a lack of resources was completely within his plans."

Unable to do anything about it, the two supervisors could do no more but to watch it happening. Contrary to the former beastman supervisor who looked dumbfounded, she roughly tore out her long hair while twisting her face in rage.

"That guy had...anticipated it up to this point, and prepared long ago..."

"What preparations? That barrier, you mean?"

"Wrong. No, it's not wrong, but that's just a part of it. That guy has..."

Having given reign to her anger, her fingers pulled out several bundles of hair with all strength. Without even looking at the former beastman supervisor, who reflexively backed off from her because of her behavior, she squeezed out words with a low voice that contained a suppressed trembling.

"He suggested a game to us, and pretended that the chaos resulting from that caused a resource shortage on the world...but in reality, he probably...snatched the resources that would circulate normally, I think."

'He, who has lied to his master and his coworkers, has stolen resources for a very, very long time, all in preparation for this moment. I'm sure he has hoarded them away somewhere so that they won't be found', she assessed. An embezzlement of such an amount of resources that it might very likely trigger the destruction of the world. If he has that many resources, it should be easy to continue maintaining the isolated territory for a while.

With her thoughts having reached that point, she couldn't help but admit her own scandalous foolishness as she had been lured so easily into playing a game to stave off the boredom of a future where she would spend a long time on work, and her own naive impression that there couldn't exist anyone, who would adopt the appalling measure of embezzling the component needed to maintain the world, among those who had been assigned to the role of supervisor.

"For what reason?"

"There's no way that I would fully grasp the extent of his plans. Ask that guy if you want to know his objectives!"

Now that she had thought of all that, the situation had already developed in this shape. Even if she were to try considering his reasons, causes, and goals, they wouldn't be able to do much. She was also fully aware that raising her voice here didn't bear any meaning, but in the end she couldn't stop her voice from taking on a fairly snappy tone.

"For now, get in touch with master and Giliel-sama!"

"S-Sure. What about you?"

"I will devote myself to maintaining the world while using the resources we have freed up just now. Things have already developed to a point where we won't get a turn anymore. We won't have any choice but to obey the orders from above."

Even if they were to pile up shame on top of shame at this point, it wasn't as if they had anything to lose, but still, once she realized that they had been completely deceived, it was impossible for her to think nothing of it. Nevertheless, now that the situation had reached this stage, she completely grasped that it was nothing they could handle by themselves.

While persuading herself that she couldn't take any actions now other than what she could definitely handle, the former human supervisor concentrated her consciousness on the maintenance of the world once again, albeit partially against her own will.