

Last System 240

Chapter 240 - Bother And Determination

Tac. Tac. Tac.

Mia's fingers tapped against the solid wood of her desk as she looked down on the papers stacked all over her workspace.

'This is annoying,' she thought, continuing to tap her fingers at the desk as if to release her pent-up exhaustion.

The delicate sound of the wind bustling on the other side of the window combined with the rhythmic tapping, creating a white noise that only made Mia more aware of how tired she was.

'But I don't have the time to rest,' she thought, shaking her head to focus herself on the task at hand. She then refocused her eyes and looked down at the paper that she was currently working on.

Mia never knew how to read before. But the events of the last few weeks forced her to learn at least the basics of writing. And now, by using a mix of the official letters and marks that she created for her own use, she continued to keep track of every mission and every event that took place within her group.

'If I knew how tiring it would be back then, I would never send everyone to spam the quests like that,' she thought as she grabbed a piece of paper from the pile on the left side of her desk.

The process of her job was simple.

Pick up the quest fulfillment notification, mark it in the line referring to a specific person signed on it, return the notification to the pile on the right.

This kind of thing wouldn't be necessary if there were only five people total in her group. But Mia's attempts at expanding her influence within the sect resulted in an outcome that she didn't expect at all.

'To think that I would turn from a cultivator to a paper-moving bureaucrat,' she thought, tightening her delicate hands over the quill in her hand.

Pick the paper, mark it beside the right name,? put it aside.

Over the last three days, that was how the entirety of Mia's day would look. And it was a consequence of nothing else but her own damn actions.

It's been two weeks since her teammates returned from the first quest she sent them off to fulfill. It's been ten days since every last normie disciple that managed to reach the fifth stage of cultivation thanks to the improved training grounds would repay the favor by fulfilling the sect's missions.

And it's been three days since Mia's life turned into a set of those three mechanical moves.

Pick the paper, place down the mark, put the paper away, repeat.

It was an extremely tedious and boring job, but one that no one else but her could do.

'To think that this is what I get for reaching the pinnacle of the sixth stage,' Mia thought, complaining about her situation while her hands continued to move, while her eyes continued to scan the documents.

Knock.

There was only the minimal pause between the sound of someone striking the doors and the hinges of said doors moaning in a high pitch as the doors opened up.

"You are still here," Sander muttered under his nose as he entered the room.

Mia glanced up at the man. Yet, as her eyes laid on yet another stack of papers in the man's hands, all the energy that she had left in her body appeared to vanish without a trace.

"I am," she admitted to the obvious, hanging her head as low as her neck allowed.

"I hate to break it down to you, but we have two more sets of quests finished," he stated, shaking his hands a little to bring Mia's attention to the papers he was holding.

Mia didn't bother to respond to his words. She only released a small moan when Sander slapped those papers on the left pile on her desk, effectively stealing at least a few more hours away from her life.

"How did the last tournament go?" Mia asked, set on the idea of distracting herself from her current job.

Even though the internal tournament of the sect took place a day before, she had yet to find the time to ask anyone about the results.

"We got the first four places," Sander replied with a small smirk. He then openly laughed out. "It was a pretty easy victory, even though the tournament lasted longer than usual," he added.

"Huh?" Mia shrugged in surprise, happily jumping on the opportunity to think about something different than just moving papers and placing marks. "If it was easy, how come it was longer?" she asked, unable to conform Sander's words with reality.

"Sixth, seventh, and ninth group stalled it," Sander explained as his smirk faded away, replaced with an uneasy smile. "When I asked them about it, they claimed they wanted to train a little bit more," he added, averting his eyes.

"So that's the case..." Mia muttered, falling deep into her thoughts.

In theory, stalling a tournament just to train a little bit more was a good thing. It forced anyone who watched the tournament to see just how the normie disciples trained. As for the benefits of their training, anyone could see them just by looking at the tournament's results.

"How about the rewards?" Mia asked.

"They all donated it to our cause," Sander replied with a small smile, not hesitating even for a second.

This was a small test that Veila came up with. There was no rule that anyone had to donate anything to the group at all. It was something that people would do completely on their own.

Yet, while there was no enforcement of a rule that didn't exist, hardly any people in the normie group would hoard the resources for themselves.

'I don't really think it proves their loyalty to the cause...' Mia hesitated for a second only to swallow her complaints.

There was no point in dampening the people's enthusiasm who believed this test to have any meaning.

"While it's good to hear that we are stomping those tournaments, I don't think it's something that we should be happy about," Mia muttered to herself, forcefully changing the topic. "While it works great for us, it only proves just how weak this sect is," she added.

The only reason she could allow herself such honesty was that they were in the confines of her own lodging. And ever since she decided to enter the next phase of her plan and involve more and more normie disciples in her growth, her house ended up filled with all sorts of formations.

'Perks of being friends with a formation master,' Mia thought to herself when she caught a glance of a formation stone embedded into the wall.

There was only a single formation that covered the room they were currently in. It prevented any and all from spying on whatever was happening inside.

In other words, unless someone was standing inside this relatively empty room, they wouldn't be able to get a single clue as to what was happening here.

"Our people are already training with your four-move sequence," Sander said, his eyes indicating that he couldn't really understand Mia's worry. "As for the sponsored disciples?" he brought up the group that Mia initially belonged to. "Who cares about them?"

This was a pretty simple conflict. Sponsored disciples made it a tradition to bully those who weren't as lucky as them. As such, it was no wonder that Sander and other normie disciples didn't care whether or not the sponsored disciples fell behind.

"That's a shallow way to look at the situation," Mia said, only to shake her head and drop the topic.

She didn't suffer through the years of oppression of the sponsored disciples. In fact, outside of the personal war she had with Dirk and Kathia, she hardly suffered at all during her stay in the sect.

'Well, seeing how set I am to take revenge on Jenne, I can somewhat understand his desire to drag the sponsored disciples through the dirt,' Mia thought as she stole a glance of Sander's face only to lower her eyes on the papers right away.

"Maybe," Sander agreed with Mia's point, even going as far as to deeply nod his head. "But what matters to me is keeping our people on the good side of things," he added.

'Our people,' Mia thought, echoing Sander's words in her mind. 'It's good to see that at least the integration is going as planned,' she thought.

Ever since the first day when she allowed the normie disciples outside of her group to use her investment, her plans were put into motion. And now, roughly three weeks later, those normie disciples were all under her care and following the orders of her initial group.

"On that note," Sander spoke out, "I still can't get over just how simple yet amazing those four moves are," he said, his eyes clouding up a little.

Mia's lips trembled a little as she attempted to stop them from forming a smile.

Given how the four-move sequence was Arthur's invention, Sander's words directly praised her man.

For Mia, there was hardly anything one could say that would bring her more joy and satisfaction.

"While it's nice to hear it, I don't think that's the full picture," Mia spoke in a hushed tone as if she wasn't sure whether to bring this topic up or not. She then raised her eyes and gave Sander an ironic look.

"So you saw it," the man muttered in response, averting his eyes as he did so.

"I can hardly find a single person who practices those moves correctly," Mia stated, now using her normal voice.

Despite how busy she was with the paperwork, Mia still made it a point to train her body for at least an hour or two every day. She made sure to rein her power in to prevent an accidental breakthrough.

Sure, it was easier to just not train at all, but Mia would get restless if she didn't strike a training pillar at least a thousand times a day.

As such, she could see how the normie disciples continued to practice within the improved training grounds. Yet, instead of being satisfied with their progress, she couldn't help but notice how almost every last of the disciples would add their own variations to the four-strokes sequence!

In theory, it wasn't a bad thing as it allowed them to be more versatile in the future, but there was one massive caveat that caused Mia's worry.

"Hardly any of them can execute the sequence properly," Mia stated, looking Sander directly in the eyes. "As such, adding variations and their own input will only reinforce the mistakes they are making," she stated.

"I see," Sander muttered in response, clearly guilty of overseeing this detail. He then raised his head, allowing Mia to see the determination in his eyes. "I will make sure to fix that mistake of theirs," he added, nodding his head.

"I guess everything is on the right track, then," Mia muttered in response. Then, her eyes gravitated towards the piles of paper stacked upon her desk.

"Sigh," Mia slowly released the air from her lungs when the amount of the work left dawned upon her. Yet, instead of going back to work, she pressed her back against the chair as she leaned on it to the back.

"That's right," Sander nodded his head, the muscles of his face relaxing a little.

Now that the report part of their meeting was over, he could finally take a more relaxed approach.

"On the other hand," he suddenly added, his eyes flashing with curiosity, "when are you going to push for the breakthrough?" he asked only to add, "that is if you can tell me."

For a moment, Mia stared at Sander's face while using her legs to keep her chair leaning to the back. She then released yet another sigh as she allowed her chair to once again stand on all four legs.

"Not yet," she stated, not holding back anything. She then reached to one of the drawers in the desks and pulled out a paper different than anything she had on her desk. "If I want to participate in the coming intersect tournament, I can't advance," she stated, pointing a particular line on the paper.

"Only cultivators up to the sixth grade are allowed," Sander mouthed as he read. "So you are going to wait until the tournament concludes?" he asked.

"No," Mia shook her head sideways before putting the paper back into the drawer she picked it up from. "I went to the administrative office to ask about it," she stated, only for her lips to form a small yet vicious smile. "I will be able to participate as long as I'm still on the sixth stage on the day the tournament begins," she claimed.

"So you want to take everyone by surprise?" Sander asked.

After all, despite how quick Mia was to reach the sixth stage, it would be insane to expect her to break through once again so quickly.

That is unless one knew that she could do it at any time she wanted!

"Not really," Mia shook her head as she replied.. Then, the look in her eyes turned cold. "I just want to be strong enough to wipe the floor with Jenne's face!"