

# ONE LAST SYSTEM

## Chapter 7 - Bloodied Knuckles

"One!"

Hit.

"More!"

Hit.

"Time!"

Hit.

When the last attack from the series struck the stones, I allowed my arms to just hang down by my side. It was at least a few hours since Terio left me all alone in the clearing. He claimed he would come back soon, but I was starting to believe that it was all a scam.

'Maybe it's some kind of bullying?' I thought, falling down on my bottom. The soft grass of the garden hampered my fall like some kind of a divine pillow.

'Well, it's not like I'm not enjoying this.'

Ever since my senior brother left, I managed to confirm a few things.

Every hit against the stone would contribute to the growth of my body's purification number. From the looks of things, it didn't matter whether I used all my force for the attack or, just like Terio suggested, simply patted the stone on its... well, on any side of it.

But there was one massive difference between using all my strength and just pretending to train. For a light hit, only the skin purification statistic would be affected. When I used all my strength, focused all my mind on executing a perfect strike, literally put all of myself into it, all five of the body purification elements would raise!

"Maybe that's their way of duping newbies in?" I muttered, realizing where the problem lay.

The most important factor of this varied depth of training was that all types of purification... were disconnected.

Due to how hard it was to maintain a perfect focus with every hit, my core purification significantly lagged behind. Right now, I managed to reach forty-three points in both skin and flesh purification, forty points in bone purification, twenty-eight in innards, and only nine in core purification.

What's more, the higher the status became, the harder it was to raise it even further. Thankfully, it was easy to keep up with the demand, as I managed to figure out the precise formula behind my growth.

For every level of purification, one had to strike the stone the corresponding amount of times. That's why, in order to raise my core purification to the tenth level, I had to smash that damned pillar nine times.

It only sounded pretty easy on paper, as repeating the same, perfect strike over and over again wasn't something that I was capable of doing. If it was about figuring out the patterns, it was easy. Sadly, physical education was the subject I was pretty bad at, making it hard to keep up.

But there was one good thing that was crucial to understanding the formula. It appeared that both my willpower and my endurance affected the growth rate of everything else. On this point, I could only guess, but it seemed like every point of willpower increased my training efficiency by ten percent. On that

note, I have yet to figure out the effects of endurance, although I was quite sure that its current level doubled the results of my training.

"End of the break," I muttered, rising from the ground and taking the position against the stone once again. Even though I continued to hit it for just a few hours by now, I could feel how each strike turned better, requiring less effort.

I had no idea whether I was simply learning how to punch someone's lights out or if it was the effect of slowly purifying my body.

Hit. Hit. Hit. Hit.

Alternating my hands, I continued to smash against the stone. Thinking about this, I recalled that striking it for the first time didn't cause any pain. Recalling that recent memory made me quite confused as to whether I should laugh at my stupidity or cry because of it.

Right now, my fists were a bloody mess. There was hardly any skin left on my knuckles. There were even times when my blood would make my attacks slip on the stone, fucking my stance and messing with my focus.

Hit. Hit. Hit. Hit.

Strike with the right, follow with the left. Strike with the right, follow with the left.

This was the simplest possible training I could imagine. I had no idea how in the world striking a pillar would purify my body. Yet, who I was to question it? Just a foreigner to this world, desperately trying to make some sense of it.

Hit. Hit. Tic. Hit. Hit. Tic.

I felt either my endurance or my willpower raising. Or maybe it was the purification level? Frankly speaking, I couldn't dare less. Whichever that was, I still had a long way to go. And with how Terio was still nowhere to be seen, I didn't really have anything better to do than to continue my training.

Hit. Hit. Hic... A sudden hiccup broke my momentum and immersion.

I looked down at my hands only to realize that they were fully covered in my own blood. As soon as I took notice, a wave of pain suddenly overwhelmed my mind.

'Did my focus dull the pain?' I thought as I fell down on my ass. For some reason, seeing my hands all bloody like that made my motivation vanish.

Yeah, seeing the numbers of my status rise was nice and pushed me to see them increase even further... But I couldn't forget that it wasn't some kind of game. Here, in the real world, grinding numbers had their own repercussions.

"Just what am I doing," I whispered. I couldn't even hide my face in my palms due to how bloody they were. 'I guess changing the world doesn't change how the people are,' I thought, finally accepting the fact that I was bullied. If that was not the case, why would my so-called 'senior brother' leave me to train to the point where any further use of my hands could cause permanent damage to them?

For a moment, I could do nothing but breathe heavily while trying to ignore the stinging itch of my exposed and mistreated flesh.

'Status,' I muttered under my nose, seeking refuge in the increased numbers. But just as the windows appeared before my eyes, I finally heard footsteps.

"ARTHUR!" Terio screamed in panic, jumping into the clearing. The distress on his face and fat drops of sweat trickling down his forehead told me that something had happened. "The fuck is wrong with you?!" he screamed out before his eyes moved on my hands. "For the love of heavens, why did you train so hard?" he asked in a devastated voice, falling to his knees and reaching to his pockets.

He whipped out some kind of bottle, bit on the cork that enclosed it only to splash its content all over my bloodied hands.

'FUCK!' I screamed out in pain, unprepared for its sudden explosion. "What was that for?!" shaken off from my daze, I looked at my vicious senior brother with fury.

"Keep them still," he ordered in a stern voice, wrapping some kind of delicate cloth around my bloodied knuckles. "Why did you train so hard? Just why?" he asked, clearly trying to shift the blame for his own lateness on me.

"You told me to train until you come back," I replied, oozing the words through my tightened teeth.

"What?" Terio looked at me, shocked all over. "Don't you know that it's impossible to enter a private garden while someone is training inside?"

#### BODY STATUS WINDOW

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- Name: Arthur (Fian) Pendragon
- Age: 17
- Status: Exhausted
- Hidden Status: Mentally exhausted
- Body Status: Mortal
- Hidden Body Status: Apostle

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#### PROGRESS STATUS WINDOW

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- Body status: Mortal
- Growth status: Body Purification
- Body status modifier:

- Endurance:58/100

- Willpower:15/100

Body Purification:180/300

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- Skin Purification:47/100

- Flesh purification:47/100

- Bone purification:43/100

- Innards purification:32/100

- Core purification:11/100

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Objective status window:

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