

Last System 111

Chapter 111 - Contractor

"What your job is all about, huh?" the pathfinder muttered, averting his eyes. His usually stoic and emotionless face turned into an ugly grimace as if he bit on something sour. "Fine," he said, turning around and starting to move.

He clearly wasn't going to waste time on just talking if we could as well walk while doing so.

"A contractor's job... It isn't really a job. It's a role in the sect, one that's a great opportunity for some, dangerous duty for others, and annoying punishment for few," the pathfinder started. "It ultimately all boils down to one fact. You will be hunting monsters in the danger zones to provide resources for the sect," he said, shrugging his shoulders and turning silent.

'Great, that explains basically nothing,' I thought, rolling my eyes. While I never knew the details, there were only two things that I could guess that this contractor job was about.

It was either production or service. A production, as if in providing raw material, or service as in craftsmanship or in simpler terms, turning the raw material into a finished product.

This was the basic outline of the economy stuck in this kind of pseudo-medieval period. That's why my initial guess was all the time on some kind of production job, as the service-ones were usually reserved for highly skilled and respected individuals.

The last option could be discounted just due to the changes to the pathfinder's mimic whenever he spoke about the topic or even mentioned in it the passing.

"You will be assigned to an Overseer. It will be someone with strength great enough to protect you while you gain materials to grow in the easy areas, your teacher while you go into the deeper, more dangerous zones, and your partner once you reach the core lands," the pathfinder picked up the discussion roughly one or two kilometers later.

"Would you mind explaining the division that you mentioned at the beginning?" I asked. "This one about it being an opportunity, duty, and annoyance?"

The pathfinder glanced at me over his shoulder, keeping himself in the usual distance of a few steps ahead.

"For you, it's an opportunity. After you fill the periodical quotas, you will be able to split the obtained materials and resources with your Overseer fifty-fifty," the pathfinder said. "With just the spiritual cores of the monsters alone, you should be able to cultivate far faster than by using the amplification array," he explained.

'So that's how the sects obtain all their resources,' I finally realized.

It was always a wonder to me how organizations as huge as main sects could provide for all their disciples. Sure, the skyladder sect could live off the benefits of grooming disciples for the higher sects... but could the Tuxi sect do that as well?

But that didn't make much sense.

Even if one could go up the chain all the way to the highest possible entity, each of the places along the way using this system to provide for those below them...

There still had to be some means of obtaining the resources directly from the world. Given the usage of those resources, they couldn't be just redistributed over and over again.

In other words, someone had to pick up the slack and infuse this entire chain of self-adoration and support with the spirit stones, monster's blood, and all kinds of others stuff.

And it wouldn't be surprising if this kind of thing was necessary every step along the way!

"For me, this really seems like a great opportunity," I mumbled, more to myself than to the pathfinder.

'It won't be good if I just keep silently soaking the knowledge,' I thought. 'I need to keep the conversation going,' I realized, swallowing a gulp of saliva.

I was never a smooth talker. Maybe that's how it seemed to those who played the RPG sessions under me... But it was far easier to just write elaborate stuff rather than to talk about it live.

"But a duty? An annoyance?" I asked, just throwing my question into the air and hoping that my guide would pick it up.

"There is another side of the contractor's role, one that's often called a leverage for the contractors and sponsorship for the other side," the pathfinder muttered, his voice turning even colder than usual.

"Leverage?" I asked, my mind spinning at its fastest speed. If I could come up with the answer just from those hints, I could likely score some brownie points for intelligence with this man.

And even though I only knew him for a few days, I could tell that he was someone who rewarded one's own initiative and qualities.

'What would they need leverage on the contractors for?' I thought. This was the first question I had to pose. A question that was fairly easy to answer.

'As I'm not really bound within their structures, they need to stop me from just going rouge, ignoring the quotas, and taking all that I hunt for myself,' I thought. 'But what about the sponsorship, then?'

"By sponsorship..." I whispered, rubbing my chin as I thought. "Does that mean that once I fill a certain global quota, I can get rid of my contractor status and have my resources for further growth ensured?" I suggested.

"That certainly would be a great system, wouldn't it?" the pathfinder laughed out, clearly amused with my idea. "But no, it's nothing as generous," he added, his tone reverting back to its old, cold vibe. "By sponsorship, I meant that there is a person you care about, for whom you are a lifeline," he explained.

'Mia,' the name instantly appeared in my head.

"What do you mean by lifeline?" I asked instead.

The pathfinder sighed heavily.

"From the moment you become a contractor, meaning, from the moment you are picked as one, those who recommend you will also pick your benefactor," the pathfinder said, stopping in his tracks.

That alone was proof of how heavy the emotions associated with this topic were for him.

"Someone to benefit from it," I muttered, trying to push the man a little.

Now that I got so close to understanding at least this part of my situation,[?] my excitement was getting slightly better for me.

"That's right," the man nodded his head before starting to move his legs again. "Right now, whoever you care for the most, will become a sponsored student of the Tuxi sect. Meaning, all the resources they will receive for their cultivation, are solely dependent on whether or not you fill your quotas," the pathfinder explained.

"Isn't... Wouldn't it be better to become a normal disciple, then?" I asked. From what Vaner, that damned bastard, told me about his sect, wasn't that place pretty meritocratic? With Mia's foundations and talent, she could easily obtain all the resources she needed just with her effort alone!

"That's the thing, son," the pathfinder put on a sad smile. "Tuxi is a strictly meritocratic sect. But their sponsored class..." he shook his head. "If you enter the sect and be treated as an elite, then suddenly losing that status down the line can be pretty damn hard!"

That I could understand even without any further explanation. Whether or not the so-called elite status came with any real benefits or not, the moment some students were treated even slightly better than the others, the conflict would brew.

And this conflict would turn pretty damn disadvantageous to one if they were to lose the status they never wanted in the first place!

"So if I don't want M... my beneficiary to go through the hell of bullying, I better work hard and don't miss my quotas, right?" I asked with a heavy sigh.

This scheme was devious, even for my earthly standards!

"That's right," the pathfinder nodded his head, turning silent once again.

"So then, what about that anno..." I was about to ask when the man suddenly raised his hand, signaling me to shut the fuck up.

From a man of a few words like my guide, every curse, every signal, and every advice were far heavier than normal.

"We will talk later; there is a monster on the path," he whispered softly, pulling out an elegant, slightly decorated spear from his storage ring.

"I guess it's time for me to put my abilities to use, then?" I asked silently.

The pathfinder looked at me as if I was some kind of idiot.

"Sure," he added, his face taking on a silly look. "If you really want to die before your dear one can become the sponsored student, that is!"

