

Last System 114

Chapter 114 - Teach Me

"You should still rest," the pathfinder criticized me the second I stood up from my earlier spot.

"The smell is too good," I countered, sitting down by the fireplace on which a huge chunk of the monster from before was grilling. I still had my hands wrapped against the middle of my torso, trying to somehow squeeze the pain out of my ribs.

"That's good to know," the man turned his attention back to rolling the handle of his makeshift grill-stand.

The day was already well into the middle of its usual course. The fight with the best happened very early into the morning. As such, it took me nearly half the day before I could actually stand up and move around a little.

"How are you feeling?" the pathfinder asked without taking his eyes off the meat. His voice was blank, devoid of any emotions. Yet, I could somehow tell that he was concerned about me.

Was it some early form of friendship? Or was it a simple courtesy without any deeper meaning?

I released a deep sigh.

'It's not like he would tell me even if I asked,' I thought before nodding my head.

"It still hurts, but I'm better," I reported. "I should be able to start moving soon," I added, perfectly aware of how anxious the man was to start moving again.

For a moment, only the cracking of the fire and the sizzling of fat falling into it filled the air. Then, the pathfinder angled his head to throw me a peculiar look.

"I only saved you because I won't get paid if I don't bring you alive to your destination," he barked, for some reason unsatisfied with the current atmosphere.

'What a tsundere you are,' I thought, the corners of my lips lifting a little.

"Yes, yes, I understand," I goaded in a low voice, trying to keep the provocativeness of my voice to the minimum.

"No, you do not understand," the pathfinder's voice turned cold. I glanced over at his face, only to see how damn serious he was.

"You didn't bother to help me for any of the reasons that I might imagine," I sighed in response. "It was just a business decision. I told you," I lowered my head, pretending to be saddened. "I understand."

"No, you don't," the pathfinder insisted, turning his eyes back towards the meat. "Even though there was no need for that, you helped me out," he said, insisting on the point that he brought up before.

"But what you need to understand is that once you become a contractor, your overseer won't lift a finger to help you," he added, finally explaining what his entire attitude was all about.

"Won't it be a problem if I die on him?" I asked, genuinely surprised by the notion. "I mean, he is called overseer for a reason, isn't he?" I added.

"He will only care about filling his own quota," the pathfinder shook his head. But instead of explaining, he stood up and took a closer look at the meat.

Its outer layer was already covered in nice, crispy skin. Yet, given how chunky the piece was, I myself couldn't tell whether the insides were properly roasted already.

The pathfinder had no doubts like that. He pulled out a simple, wooden square from his storage ring before raising the stick with the meat on it from the fire and slamming it down on the simple plate. He then whipped out a massive knife before cutting the thing in half.

"Here, you need to eat to regain your strength," he said, passing one of the halves to me.

"Thanks," I had no qualms about accepting the food. Even though I was a cultivator now, I still had to sleep, eat and shit. This part of my life didn't change at all.

"If you remember, I mentioned that the contractor's job is an annoyance for few," the pathfinder muttered a few moments later, once nearly half of his portion was already gone in the man's stomach.

"Hmph?" With my teeth sunk deeply into the meat, I could only mutter some sounds.

"That's exactly what this job is for the overseers," the pathfinder said before gnawing at the meat and tearing apart a huge chunk out of it and swallowing it whole. "The overseers are mostly sourced from the problematic disciples that are about to enter the inner court of the sect," my companion explained. "For them, this role is nothing but a rehabilitative job, a task they need to fulfill before they are given any chance at progressing," the man explained.

"But how does this connect with their unwillingness to help me out in need?" I asked, unable to figure out how the pathfinder brought out one thing only to talk about something entirely else.

"Their objective is to bring you all the way up to the Core Expansion stage so that you can join the inner court along with your overseer," the pathfinder explained. "Filling the quota is the task allowing them to keep up the process. But the second your overseer gets dissatisfied with your rate of progress, your ability to help him or literally anything else..." the man shook his head.

He then raised his finger to his throat only to slide it from one side to the other.

This gesture didn't require any further explanation.

"What would happen if I were to kill my overseer, then?" I asked.

For a moment, the pathfinder was speechless. My suggestion, or rather, question, rendered him unable to reply for a moment.

"Hahaha," he laughed out, genuinely amused. "If you are discovered, you are dead," he replied, shaking his head as he continued to laugh.

"And what about the situation you implied?" I asked, leaning my head to the side, only to instantly regret it over the pain that exploded in my chest again.

And here I thought I was about to forget about it.

"You are a smart one, aren't you?" the pathfinder stopped laughing but kept up his smile. "Who could blame you if your overseer got too cocky and died on his mission?" he asked, raising his head to look at the slowly darkening sky.

Even though the day was still far from over, the amount of daylight would now consistently decrease over time.

"The hunting place you will be working on can be pretty dangerous areas, after all," he added. "But that's enough of talking for today," he said before taking the last bite of his chunk of meat and throwing the bone away. "I will let you off for today. Rather than walking, it will be better if you properly rest," he said.

"How about letting me cultivate instead?" I asked cheekily. If I was going to waste time on just resting, then reinforcing my strength appeared to be a more time-efficient option.

For a second, the pathfinder threw a strange look at me, only to shake his head and rub his finger against his storage ring. He then swung open the bag with the formation stones, once again proving his mastery in setting it up.

"Fine, do it your way," he dismissed me.

I quickly finished the food and walked towards the array. Just like before, the second I stepped inside, the mana rushed into my every orifice, doing its utmost to equal the uneven density of it.

"This is just a random thought... but could you please lend me a spear for a moment?" I asked, looking over at the pathfinder.

"Huh?" he shrugged, surprised by my request. "What for?" he asked.

"It's just... I grew used to tra... cultivating while practicing," I said, raising my fist to my eyes.

"Even if it's just the simplest strike, most basic attack," I muttered before raising my eyes at the man.

This time, I wasn't going to give up on this opportunity. Even if it meant going through the hell of pain.

"Teach me," I requested.