

Last System 167

Chapter 167 - Finding Time

'I need to get stronger,' I thought as I rushed through the thicker part of the forest.

This one thought prevailed in my mind throughout the night, throughout sleep, and morning.

Sure, several hours spent in that improved amplification array brought some magnificent results, finally bringing me to a peak of my current level...

But that wasn't enough.

A thousand and sixty-three points of general cultivation separated me from filling the quota.

It sounded like a lot... But in reality, it was only slightly above a tenth of my current progress. And judging by the nearly three thousand points, I gained within just a few hours of training...

I could very well breakthrough today.

'There,' I thought, forcing all my thoughts aside when a movement attracted my attention.

I didn't waste even a second, instantly angling my direction.

From the magnitude of changes that the movement brought to its surroundings, I judged it to be a relatively weak monster. Something I could deal with swiftly and for a very little reward.

But the sect didn't differentiate between a spiritual core of a powerful monster and that of a weak one. Or rather, the monsters that I could hunt right now were all within the boundaries of a single rank.

'Maybe that powerful monster from before could count as more,' I thought as I took my bow from my back and nocked an arrow on its string.

There was no point using my spear for a monster of this size and grade.

I let the string of my bow go, sending the arrow in the direction of the monster.

All kinds of plants went into a flurry when the monster attempted to dodge my arrow.

But it was futile.

'I really need to test that theory out,' I thought, already projecting the next use of formations.

The formation stones that made up the array in which I trained were no different from the simple stones I could pick from literally any spot in the forest.

The only difference they bore was that they were all cut into a nice shape and then polished, making the array look far more expensive than it actually was worth.

And I already had several ideas about what else could I do since I now had any number of formation stones at hand.

But all of it had to wait. Because right now, I had to focus on the hunt.

In the short span of the first few hours of the hunt, I managed to hunt nearly four times the number of monsters that I would usually hunt.

'This is going to piss Lucius off,' I thought, already thinking about the plan that I hatched in the morning.

The reason why I couldn't really learn formations or practice setting up a new one was simple.

I lacked the daylight. And the reason why I lacked the daylight was because of our daily hunting.

In other words, the simplest way to get more time for myself was to finish off the hunting way before the end of the day!

Soon, my haul pouch filled up to the brim. Pushing any more stones inside would risk breaking it. They were used to bringing in only a few stones at once; we would use a different kind when going to submit our quotas to the sect.

'I guess it's the time now,' I thought as I broke apart the stones of the small monster I pinned to the ground with my spear a moment earlier before hiding them away in my storage ring. 'I better not be late, or Lucius will find another way to chastise me,' I thought grimly.

Ever since I figured out that Lucius wanted to press me harder than necessary, my look at him changed.

Not because his wishes were necessarily bad. In the end, the more I hunted, the more stones I could leave for myself while satisfying his wish to improve the standing of the contractors. And the stronger I got, the sooner I would reach the breaking point of the contract, freeing the both of us from the contract.

But whether this plan of mine would work... I could only wait and see.

I moved back to the clearing in a careful manner, wary about my pouch breaking apart and spilling the precious stones all over the forest.

'It's better to be just a little bit slower than to waste ages just trying to pick them up from the undergrowth,' I thought, keeping the bottom of the pouch secure in my hand.

"What took you so long today?" Lucius asked the second I entered our usual meeting place. "Don't tell me you found another trail," he added, his face tensing up a little.

'If he is scared of this monster as well...' I thought, only to shake my head. 'No. I shouldn't think about it right now,' I thought before detaching the pouch from my belt and throwing it towards my companion.

"This is my haul for today," I explained shortly, giving Lucius some time to make his own assumptions.

Lucius grabbed the pouch. Even before he opened it, his face brightened, proving that he was satisfied with how weighty it was.

"That's a great improvement," he said with a gentle smile plastered all over his lips. "If you keep it up..."

"That's all I'm going to hunt for today," I intervened before Lucius could go too far in his own assumptions.

"Huh?" Lucius raised his eyes on me, not sure how to interpret my words.

"I'm going back to train now," I said before reaching out with my hand. "I will only use half of those stones, so it will be still more than I need to fill the quota," I added.

I couldn't let him open his mouth about the pseudo-responsibility that contractors had to improve their standing. That was the only reason why I brought up the topic in the first place.

"My stones, please," I added after waiting for a moment for Lucius to respond.

Yet, he still didn't say a word.

The moment stretched nearly to infinity. Lucius' expression sank and then darkened before he finally brought the small bag with the stones back to my hand.

"If you are going to train, then don't waste your fucking time!" he shouted as he turned around, clearly unhappy.

"Think about it like that," I shouted over before he could leave the clearing. "The more I train, the stronger I will get. And the stronger I will get..." I took a small moment to take a breath... Or rather, to see whether Lucius would bother to wait for me to finish.

"The more I will be able to hunt in a single day!"