

Last System 192

Chapter 192 - The Tournament Is About To Begin

Mia marched off through the sect grounds and towards the arena where the tournament would take place.

There was still over an hour before the event proper would start. Yet, just in case some trouble would come her way as she approached the place, Mia decided to end her training sooner and move in ahead of time.

Looking at her group, one could spot a massive difference between Mia herself and the rest of her group.

'I don't think we can win, but we should be able to get our hands on some resources anyway,' Mia thought, barely able to hold her excitement down.

Outside of all the real-life factors and motivators, the tournament presented a chance for her.

A chance to prove that Arthur-sourced way of training was better than what they taught at the sect.

On the other hand, Mia's team...

Their faces were all sunk. Not a single one of them dared to return the stares that they received from the people all over the place.

They were in the inner ring of the sect. The normal disciples like them could enter this area only due to the ongoing tournament, as the only area in this location of the sect was located within its inner ring.

'They look like they lost before the event even started,' Mia thought as she looked back at the rest of her group.

They were determined to do their best... They just didn't see much chance of winning anything.

'I guess they believe in the difference between them and the sponsored disciples,' she thought, tightening her fists.

The coming tournament wouldn't be decided by their strength. It would be decided by their morale.

"Guys, lift your heads up," Mia reprimanded the rest of her group in a hushed voice. "The way you present yourself influences the way you feel. If you act like losers even before the fight, you will only have yourself to blame if we lose," she added with a poorly concealed hint of scorn in her voice.

"We are not going to win this; you should be aware of that," Sander bit back, his eyes filling with displeasure.

He could be demotivated about the coming trail, but that didn't give anyone the right to call him out on that!

"Just look around," Mia said as she rolled her eyes. "Do you see anyone who would look at you the way people look at us in the outer area of the sect?" Mia asked, pointing out a strange phenomena.

In the inner ring of the sect, a place where only the inner disciples and elders were normally allowed to, there was no sign of the usual discrimination against the normal disciples.

Even though the difference between them and the inners was far greater than it was between normies and sponsored disciples, there wasn't any sort of displeasure brought by their mere presence.

'Or maybe the people here are just better at hiding it?' Mia thought, unwilling to ignore such an opportunity.

Still, it wasn't a topic that she had to be even remotely concerned about. The only reason why she was in the inner ring of the sect was the tournament.

Once it would be over, she would leave this place not to return before another tournament would start.

"We are here," Mia muttered a few moments. They finally arrived at the doorstep of the arena, allowing the girl to take the very first look at the place.

'Woah,' she moaned in her mind, stunned by sight. She didn't allow her emotions to show on her face, worried about uprooting the already poor morale of her group...

But it was hard not to get stunned by sight.

The arena itself appeared to be a singular building as massive as the entire Skyladder sect. It rose for several tens of meters high into the sky, cutting away an oval-shaped piece of land behind its high walls.

On the other hand, the entrance for the participants led directly underground. Just staring at the darkened entrance to the tunnel made Mia feel humbled.

"So you are really taking part in the tournament," a slightly familiar voice forced the girl to shake her amazement off and focus her attention on its source.

"Respectable elder," she greeted, respectfully clasping her hands and bending her back a little.

It was the man who caught her when she had just advanced to the fifth rank of cultivation.

"Don't bother with the formalities," the man shook his head, dismissing Mia's humble attitude. "So those are the people you are participating with?" he asked, turning his head to the rest of Mia's group.

"That's right," Mia nodded her head. She then turned around and introduced each of her companions by name and rank.

"They are still in the third level?" the man asked, his eyebrows rising in surprise. "Do they have, like, a great hidden talent?" he asked, puzzled by something that Mia couldn't put her finger on.

"Huh?" she muttered in surprise. "And why would that be?" she asked.

Yet, instead of answering, the elder only smiled and raised his hand as if to defend himself.

"Don't worry, I understand," he muttered silently with a knowing smile. "I won't ask about your ace cards right before you might need to reveal them," he added, explaining just how did he misunderstand the situation.

'Doesn't he realize how hard it is to reach higher levels without the cultivation resources?' Mia thought, trying to figure out just what the hell was wrong with that man's way of thinking.

"Anyway, it seems that the rest of the participants are starting to gather," the man pointed out before Mia could find any words to fix the elder's misunderstanding. "It would be bad if they saw us together. I don't want any rumors to start about me being unfair by supporting your group," he added, turning around on his heel.

"Elder, I don't think there is anything you can do that would make others believe the fight to be unfair," Mia muttered, shaking her head as a feeling of powerlessness took over her mind.

"I know, I know," the elder replied with a small chuckle, grinning from ear to ear. "But you never know what people might think. It's my responsibility as an elder of this sect to not give them any basis for the rumors to start," he said, refusing to turn his face back to the girl.

Instead, the man raised his hand and waved it at Mia's group. "Good luck!" he shouted before leaving for the official entrance to the arena.

'Is he that clueless about our situation?' Mia asked herself, unable to figure out that man's behavior. 'Or is he just trying to taunt me here?'

Mia attempted to consider all the possible options. As the elder of the sect, this man holds a significant influence. And in her current situation, Mia was desperate to use every last chance that fate offered her.

'If I can get us into that man's favor... I don't give a shit about any rumors that it would potentially start,' she thought.

But she wasn't given any time to rest even after the elder left.

Just like he said a few moments before, other parties finally started to arrive at the arena. As the entrance tunnel for the participants was pretty narrow, Mia shook her head and pushed her group forward, unwilling to let their competitors find them in such an enclosed and dark area.

'It's better to be safe than sorry,' she thought, hurrying everyone up past the tunnel and all the way into the waiting room.

Yet, even though her escape towards the waiting room was successful, the tournament still would take a while to start. In other words, now she was stuck with the people that would compete with her during the tournament!

And it didn't take long for them to show their true colors.

"Just look at the bugs that came here!"

"This is going to be fun!"

"I can't wait to smear the faces of some normies on the ground!"

Not a single word was directed right at them. But every last one of those unwitting remarks was aimed at putting them down.

"Don't listen to those conceited idiots," Mia muttered as she brought her group together. "Guys, you saw that man from before," she added as a plan finally formed in her head.

"What about him?" Veila asked as she looked around. The look on her face only showed how uncomfortable she was.

She wasn't restless because of the flat-out vocal bullying. To that, every normie disciple was long used to. Veila was anxious because the situation proved the guess that everyone had about the coming tournament.

They would be ganged up against.

"He is an elder from the inner ring of the sect," Mia explained what she already figured out a long time ago.

This was the only possible explanation behind the man's ignorance about the affairs of normal disciples. That is the only explanation that made any sense whatsoever.

But also an explanation that brought along some disastrous and mind-shattering implications behind it.

"And what's so great about it?" Sander asked.

This time, he didn't appear anxious. He could clearly see that Mia was hinting at something and was just too curious about what was going in the girl's head to bother with the prospect of getting beaten up soon.

"He doesn't seem to have a clue about our situation. That's why, seeing how they are obviously going to gang on us," she muttered, glancing over to the other participants.

Then, Mia's lips curved up. A rush of hot blood struck her face as her eyes widened in devious excitement.

"Why don't we give him something to get really interested in, given how he has no idea how much hate there is between normal disciples and sponsored ones?"