

Last System 239

Chapter 239 - Not Stronger, Better

"That went pretty easy," Sander muttered, looking at the package he was carrying in his hand.

Ever since everyone in their group managed to break through into the fifth stage of cultivation, the day of the distribution was no longer the day of shame.

Right now, it was the day of pride.

"What did you expect?" Mia scoffed before letting out a small giggle. "Receiving those resources is our right," she stated, raising her eyes to the sky. "And now that we know what our rights are, they would have to lose a lot more resources to stop us from making the most out of what we are privy to," she added, her lips curling up.

"That might be true..." Sander replied, a look of hesitation flashing in his eyes. "But am I the only one who thinks that those resources are worth dogshit?"

This was the one problem with what the distribution center provided for the fifth-stage cultivators. Instead of grade two cores that would allow them to cultivate swiftly, they simply used a lot more grade one cores, ones that were too inefficient for Mia's group to use.

"Dogshit or not, we will find a use for them," Mia countered, unwilling to let the bad thoughts take over her mind. She then shook her arms as she lowered her eyes back on the road ahead. "It's not like we are lacking resources anyway. On the contrary, having more of them is always a good thing," she pointed out.

"Right," Sander muttered before angling his eyes towards Veila. "How about your package?" he asked.

Out of their entire group, everyone had already reached the fifth stage. What's more, Sander was pretty damn close to reaching the sixth one.

'If I'm right, he just needs a kick in the butt to breakthrough,' Mia thought, casting a quick glance at the man.

Yet, it was Veila that turned out to have the greatest talent towards cultivation.

Despite starting from the lowest position in the entire group, she was the first to enter the sixth stage of cultivation discounting for Mia.

"It's not bad," Veila replied, lifting the lid of her box and taking a quick look inside. "I think I got two grade two cores?" she added after looking through its content.

"What do you plan to do with it?" Mia asked.

Yet, before her friend could answer, another group appeared on the street.

Mia instantly recognized the leader. It was the same Dirk that appeared as a pretty kind and normal person when she first met him and turned out to be her greatest opposition amongst the disciples.

Over the last week, as she finally had some time to spare, Mia conducted a throughout the investigation that lasted entire five minutes into the matters of the one tournament her group joined so far.

It lasted only five damned minutes. But it was more than enough to discover everything there was about that event.

It was Dirk that was responsible for organizing two additional teams for the tournament back then. In other words, he was the man responsible for their loss of the tournament caused by the overwhelming numbers advantage of the sponsored teams over their own.

And now, he was walking through the streets, eager to bask in the glory and amusement of shaming the normie disciples during the distribution day.

"Look at them, all happy to get some scraps," Mia muttered under her nose, holding back a smirk from taking over her entire face. She then spat below her feet, not stopping her steps even for a second.

The times when she had to be careful around the sponsored disciples were now over. As their group only managed to produce a single disciple to reach the sixth stage with most of the others still lagging behind, unable to enter even the fifth stage...

There was no denying the fact that Mia's methods of growing turned out better than whatever the sect imposed on the sponsored disciples.

'I wonder if they are starting to receive fewer resources, now that they can't even consider themselves equal to us,' Mia thought, walking with a wide smile past the other group.

This was the one good change to the distribution day. From the day of shame, it turned to the day of pride and amusement.

'On that note, I should be thankful that I reached the sixth stage already,' Mia thought, recalling one important piece of information that Arganar passed to her before setting off for some kind of mission two days ago.

Because as it turned out, once one reached the sixth stage... They were no longer considered a normal or sponsored disciple. And with just a single more rank up, Mia would officially step into the group of the sect's inner disciples!

For a moment, the two groups moved past each other. And for that single moment, the atmosphere turned tense.

Mia and her colleagues didn't bother to hide their smiles of superiority as they walked past their former competitors. On the other hand, Dirk, Kathia, and their followers couldn't help but avert their eyes.

Right now, no one in the sect that kept tabs on the matter had any doubt who was stronger and, thus, more important to the sect.

"Right!" Sander suddenly shouted when his face tensed up as an idea struck his mind. "Isn't the intersect tournament just around the corner?" he asked in a voice loud enough for the other group to hear him.

"Around the corner?" Mia asked, raising her brow in surprise. "Isn't it still over three weeks away?" she asked, unable to be bothered to raise her voice.

'There is no point in beating those idiots with words,' she thought, shaking her head over Sander's folly. 'Isn't it better to do it with our actions?' she asked herself as she snuck a quick glance at her friend's face.

"Aren't we the obvious candidates now?" Sander kept teasing the other group, using every last second of them being in the range of his voice. "We managed to outgrow the sponsored disciples despite not having any support from the sect," he added before shaking his head. "I think our participation is already set in stone!"

For the next few moments, no one bothered to comment on Sander's words. Only when Dirk's group left the range of their voices did Mia finally pick the topic up.

"Not exactly," she replied with a deep and exhausted sigh. "The fact that we grew stronger doesn't have much meaning at all," she stated while rolling her eyes.

"Sure, we are stronger than them," Mia added when she noticed Sander's confused stare directed right at the profile of her face. "But who does know about it?" she asked, shaking her head yet again. "Unless we force the sect to see that fact, we are still likely not to take part in the tournament," she added.

"That makes sense," Veila muttered, siding with Mia's opinion on the matter. "For the people used to the old rate of growth, even if they heard about our progress, they are likely to take it as nothing more but a groundless rumor," she pointed out.

This was the one problem with anyone who dared to do things differently from the rest. Even if their results turned out to be greater than when using the traditional means, hardly anyone could accept that fact.

Not because the public, in general, was against the growth of the normie disciples. Not because they were against discovering new, more efficient ways to grow.

The public wouldn't believe in this kind of rumor because it would mean they wasted several years trying to achieve something that could be done in the manner of years!

And admitting to a mistake like that? Admitting to losing several years if not tens of years of their life just like that?

Not a single elder caring about his face would do so!

"Sect won't acknowledge our progress?" Sander asked, a look of genuine surprise appearing on his face. "Why is that?" he asked. "Isn't it in their own damned interest to put out the best disciples for the tournament?" he asked.

For how determined and hardworking cultivator he was, Sander often proved himself to be a pretty straightforward person.

He was a great type of guy to ask if one gained weight as he would honestly give his feedback. But he was also the worst type of person to dissect the fragile and complicated nature of the internal politics of the sect.

"Look, this is just my guess, but hear me out," Mia replied after releasing a deep sigh. "I think there are two aspects at play here. One, someone is clearly meddling with the inner workings of the sect," she stated in a slightly hushed voice, making sure no outsider would be able to casually hear those words.

"And then?" Sander asked, the tense look on his face proving that he was now fully focused.

'In the end, he is aware of his own nature,' Mia thought with satisfaction.

Being a straightforward person wasn't necessarily a bad thing. It just made Sander more inclined to achieve great things in one field... But at the cost of a lot of hardships in actively taking part in another.

Normally, in order to achieve greatness, one would simply have to focus all their strength on the things they were good at. But for Sander, this wasn't enough. And as he was aware of his own drawbacks, he spared no effort to improve on the things that he was bad at!

"Why do you think there is someone..." Sander took a short pause to look around, ensuring he could actually spell some things out, "meddling with the sect?"

"Isn't it obvious?" Mia asked, her good impression of the man quickly dying out. "Since sponsored disciples stop receiving sponsorship the second, they reach the fifth stage, and as you noticed yourself, the sect support for fifth stage disciples is nearly worthless..." Mia prepared a solid foundation before executing the devastating attack with just a single question.

"How come Kathia managed to reach the sixth stage already?" Mia asked before shaking her head. "Unless they are receiving different kinds of support from what we got, someone had to help her," she stated, sure about her words being the truth.

'I only managed to reach my level of growth because of all the help that I received,' Mia thought, not shying away from admitting to the fact. 'That's why I can fucking tell that someone else is helping Kathia out!'

Mia bit down on her lips. Even though she could understand the situation to a degree.. that didn't mean she was comfortable with it.

'With the sponsored disciples, I can deal with,' she thought, bringing her fingers together as she turned her hands into fists. 'But whoever is supporting them might turn out to be a massive pain in the ass.'

"Mia, we trust you," Sander suddenly said, completely out of nowhere.

"Huh?" Mia shrugged, surprised by the sudden change of the topic. "Thank you, I guess?" she replied, not sure what her colleague wanted to say.

"We trust you. And that means you don't need to explain everything to us," Sander stated, raising his eyes to the sky. "All we need you to do is to tell us what we need to do," he added as he brought his eyes down on Mia's eyes.

'And there go all my hopes of Sander improving his scheming skills,' Mia thought, barely holding herself back from releasing a sigh.

"Fine," Mia said, shaking her head as she attempted to hide her disappointment. "Starting today, everyone who reaches the sixth stage will drop everything and start doing all sorts of quests. What's

more, we are going to participate in every internal tournament of the sect that we can find," she stated.

"Is that for the sake of forcing others to acknowledge our growth?" Sander asked, trying to make sure he understood Mia's intentions properly. After all, orders might be damned, but if he didn't understand the intention behind them, he would find it troublesome to fulfill them in a manner that would satisfy Mia! "You want us to prove to the sect that we are stronger than the sponsored disciples, right?" he asked.

"Wrong," Mia shook her head, even though a small smile made an appearance on her lips. "It's not about proving we are stronger," she directly denied Sander's guess.

"It's all about proving that we are better than them!"