

Last System 270

Chapter 270 Storm Begins

I ran forward as if there was no tomorrow.

Swing on the branch, pull my legs up to avoid a bush that I failed to notice before...

My road through the thicker parts of the forest was closer to dance than a normal manner of traveling. A dance consisting of several intricate moves, each allowing me to skip over a different difficulty for normal walking.

A huge rock in the way? I would either jump above it or angle my path around it.

A set of trees too close together for me to squeeze through? I would either angle my path upwards so I could squeeze through the part where the trees were thinner. And if I didn't have that much momentum built up, I would simply run around the obstacle only to pick up the speed a second later.

'I've got a bad feeling about this,' I thought as I neared the place where the strange, violet meteorite crashed into the forest.

There was something extremely wrong with this situation. Its location, timing, and circumstances made me feel as if there was something insanely important yet something that I failed to see.

As more and more doubts and hesitations continued to build up in my soul, there was only one thing that I could do about it.

And it was to gnash my teeth and push forward. Because no one has ever achieved anything just by sitting down on their ass!

I continued to run.

Despite how near the crash site of the meteor appeared to be when it fell down, it turned out to crash a considerable distance away from my position.

'Given how it appeared to direct itself right at me, shouldn't it land somewhere closer?' I thought, only to shake my head and dismiss the topic before I would waste any time on analyzing it.

'I don't have the time for that,' I told myself, ditching the topic for later.

Once I knew whether this world was a planet just like earth, once I learned more about the great physics of this world, I could think about it.

But right now, it wasn't the time to think. It was the time to gather the materials to think through at a later date!

Yet, as every step of mine brought me closer and closer to the site of the disaster, the oppressive aura that I felt only continued to grow. Yet, even when I finally neared the actual scene of the event, this aura was nowhere as strong as I expected it to be.

It felt as if I was chasing after a big bottle of coke, only to suddenly realize it was nothing more but a small can.

'Just how strong that thing is,' I thought, swallowing down a gulp of saliva.

There was only one explanation for the uneven growth of the aura. It was something that exceeded my knowledge about mana and magic in general. Something that either worked according to different principles or had nothing to do with magic, to begin with.

Otherwise, there was no other explanation for this non-linear growth of the intensity of the aura as I neared the crash site.

I then shook my head and did the one reasonable thing that I could before the fight.

Way in advance, before I could even see the place, I raised all my formations, deployed all my arrays, and prepared all my formation stones to turn them into guardians and bolt-launchers.

And then, I raised my Mage's Tower.

In an instant, all my formations, wardens, formation stones, and arrays turned into a single entity, governed by the central spell.

'I guess I will do with two formations less,' I thought after scanning the entire scene with a quick glance.

I now had exactly fifty-two formations included in my mage's tower. Even though this number used to be a bit bigger, ever since I made it a point to refine my formations and make them as specialized as possible, I got rid of all the failed ones.

And with just a single swing of my arm, two of the less useful formations fell apart, allowing the stones that made it up to return to my direct possession.

"Those might turn really useful," I muttered to myself, already dividing the stones in my mind into groups.

And then, with my focus at its highest and my preparation at its finest, I pushed forward, finally stepping into the location where the disaster occurred.

But it was even stranger than before.

No, it wasn't the sight of monsters' insides splattered all over the place that put me off.

It was a complete lack of secondary damage that I would associate with the crashing of a meteor.

The forest didn't burn. In fact, there were maybe only two small bushes that caught fire.

There was no trail nor a crater left by the meteor, making it seem as it never actually crashed into the area.

And right there, in the middle of the bloody carnage, stood a monster.

This time, I had no doubts calling it that. Because I would alternate calling my opponents beast, monsters, and just plain out animals, they ultimately still were all animals that ended up absorbing enough mana to become my target.

But the thing that was currently surrounded by the bloodied remains of the monsters that were unlucky to be near the site when the meteor came crashing down...

If anything could define the word monster, it was the thing roughly a hundred paces in front of me.

It was a massive blob of violet. From a distance, it looked like a weird, levitating pufferfish, with its roundish body covered in spikes in a constant state of flux.

'Just what the hell is this?' I thought, lowering my center of weight.

Even though I have yet to see this monster act, the scene of carnage all around it was enough of a reason for me to get wary.

'Still, this aura...' I thought, refusing to take another step closer to the monster, opting to give it the initiative instead. 'How can it feel so foreign yet so familiar at the same time?'

It took only a moment for the monster to finally take notice of my appearance. It rapidly turned around, proving that there was some front and back to this entity at the very least.

"UuuRugh," it squeezed out a strange sound from its insides, only for two of its spikes to suddenly explode outwards.

'Wardens,' I thought, pushing two sets of three evolved wardens to stop the attack.

This was the upper limit of mine. Even if this monster could overcome three guardians with a single attack of its spike, it would still slow the offense down enough for me to run away.

The attack came... And it collapsed. The spikes of the monster failed to destroy even the first warden in each of the lines.

Sure, they put a massive dent in the amount of energy that made up the frontal guardians... But that was it.

No shield was cracked. No stone shattered. Only the amount of mana that each of those half-autonomous objects possessed suddenly decreased by roughly a half!

'How the hell...?' I took a few steps back in shock. 'How the hell is this supposed to work?!'

It didn't make any sense. I didn't see my mana crashing with the mana of that monster's attack, something that would explain the result of our first clash.

Rather than that, it was as if the mana behind the monster's attack and my guardian's barrier... simply vanished from this world as if it was never there, to begin with.

"Still..." I muttered to myself, taking a few steps forward to regain the ground that I gave up in the moment of shock. "Was that all?" I asked out loud, looking over at the monster in the distance.

Was it shocked that its attack failed? Or maybe it wasn't capable of experiencing emotions like that?

But there was still one thing that puzzled me to no end.

That attack... It was slow. So slow that I could easily dodge it without involving even the tiniest bit of my magical power!

But if this attack was so slow, how could it bring so much devastation? How come all the monsters whose corpses I could see dirtying the area all around this strange being came to be if most of those monsters were even faster than me?

'Was it a bluff?' I thought, instantly sending in more mana to reinforce my guardians before raising a few more of them.

There was nothing wrong with being overly cautious. But I wasn't going to win this fight just by defending.

Whatever this thing was, I could analyze it once it was nothing more but a corpse awaiting to rot away!

"So this was your attack," I said, raising my spear before painting a half-circle with its blade in the air while holding it upright at all times.

As the blade of my spear moved from the left to the right in a revealing manner, a set of bolt-launchers appeared in the area marked by the blade.

'It most likely wanted to bait me with that attack,' I thought. 'Bait me into believing that's all it can do,' I thought, squinting my eyes.

I then added several aiming stones before hiding several shatter stones behind the bolt launchers.

'Let's hope this will be enough,' I thought, raising my eyes on the monster only for a small smile to creep up on my lips.

"Now, it's my turn."