

Last System 274

Chapter 274 Drawing Lots

"Gather up in this area," one of the coordinators from the sect shouted the second Mia, and her group appeared on the arena grounds. "Just make sure not to mix in with disciples from other sects. There will be time for integration later!" the man continued to shout his orders, fully unaware how little anyone cared about him.

'Can you just shut up?' Mia thought, pulling back her words.

It was one thing to be annoyed by unnecessary things done by an elder and another thing to openly voice her discontent out.

Even though the aim behind Mia's current actions could seem suicidal, Mia was far detached from this kind of mindset. And just like she was ready to go through any and all struggle necessary to see the Sangakarts focusing their full attention on her rise, she wasn't going to let her head roll for some minor offense.

'I bet Sangakarts would love to see that happen,' Mia thought, looking around the place the second she arrived at the spot the Elder pointed out to her.

It was hard to judge whether she managed to achieve her objective or not. Because how was she supposed to confirm or deny the presence of Sangakarts?

Even now, roughly half an hour before the official part of the tournament would begin, the tribunes were packed to the brim.

'I didn't even know there were this many people in the entire damned sect,' Mia thought, looking around the place as she unknowingly swallowed a gulp of saliva.

This event was incomparable to anything that she saw during the few inner sect tournaments that she took part in.

Sure, the same few elders that oversaw the regular tournaments were heavily engaged in the organization of this tournament as well...

But instead of just those few elders mentioned bearing the role of the entire audience, they were now just a few souls within an ocean of people.

"The arena is packed, isn't it?" Mia muttered, holding back a giggle as she did so.

Back when she first arrived at this place, she thought that this would be the area where she would exact revenge for Arthur. But now?

Now that Jenne came forward to apologize and willingly take any punishment that she was willing to doll out? Now that her greatest personal motivation to fight was over?

What was there to be excited about?

Mia's face soured down when she realized the weight of the truth that she had just noticed.

The only reason why she was participating in the tournament wasn't to take revenge on Jenne. It was to draw Sangakart's attention. But while she was ready for whatever consequences of this action would bring...

"I'm sorry," Mia said, turning her face to the rest of her team. "While for you this entire thing is nothing more but an act of participation in the contest..." the girl stopped her words in the middle of the sentence.

Mia simply got scared.

Scared of judgment. Scared of being left aside, her friends learning the true scope of the ongoing events, scared of them deciding not to partake in the motion, which would likely alert the Sangakarts...

'But still, this is all my personal endeavor,' Mia thought, swallowing a gulp of saliva as she took a deep breath to calm herself down.

'All in all, I have no right to push this burden on them,' Mia decided, opening and then raising her eyes on the faces of the people in her group.

"This entire event is pointless," Mia stated shortly. "I'm here only to kick up a fuss and hope that will be enough to draw the attention of my real enemy," Mia informed, looking sternly into the eyes of her friends.

"Huh?" Sander shrugged as he looked at Mia's uneasy expression. "We knew it all, though?" he added, leaning his head to the side as his expression took after his apparent surprise.

"Huh?" Mia shrugged in turn, unaware of that fact. She then opened her mouth...

Only to move them a little, without even the tiniest sound escaping from her lips.

It took a second for Mia to deal with the shock of the development.

"Say what?" she asked, unable to believe Sander's words.

"We don't know the details," Sander replied while shaking his shoulders, "obviously," he added as he snuck a glance at Mia's face. "But it would take an idiot not to realize that there is something going on," Sander summed up before moving his eyes back towards the arena.

"I personally believe it's those Sangakarts' Jenne mentioned," Veila joined in on the discussion.

"Nah, no way," Sander was quick to reply, proving that this wasn't the first exchange he had with the girl on this topic. "While I can believe that there is a force at play in the shadow of the sect, don't make me believe into a force that penetrates two different sects!"

The argument didn't go anywhere further. Rather than throwing opinions and beliefs at each other, both Sander and Veila looked at Mia.

After all, what was the point of arguing about their guesses if they could ask what was the truth?

"That's the same group," Mia replied after releasing a deep sigh. "I guess my reaction to this name, back at the restaurant, was what clued you in," Mia stated before taking a glance at Veila's face.

"Am I right?"

"That's right!" Veila replied joyously, only to turn her head to Sander. "Did you hear?! You lost the bet!" she rejoiced while Sander's face soured.

"Yeah, yeah," the man only shook his head before pulling out his pouch and passing over a small core to the girl. "Still, I guess I was right with my other belief," he added, looking away from the group and towards the elders gathering at the special lodge at the top of the arena.

"Right about what?" Mia asked, puzzled by the sudden, ambiguous statement. She then followed after Sander's eyes, only to lock her sight on the gathering of the elders.

"Even if I were to lose the main bet, the consequences of being wrong would be too big for me to care about a single core," Sander replied, not moving his eyes even for an inch.

'Just what does he see?' Mia asked herself, straining her eyes to its limits, only to fail to see anything out of the ordinary.

Sure, judging from their moves, the elders were pretty excited. But as the tournament was about to begin, how could they be calm?

Between the organizers and the participants of the tournament, arguably, it was the former that would experience a greater stage fright than the latter.

'They surely are excited...' Mia thought, seeing how the group didn't calm down even after a few moments. A quick glance towards the sun allowed the girl to judge that there was only a few to fewteen minutes left before the official part would begin.

"Is something going on?" Veila asked when she noticed both Mia and Sander having her eyes glued to the spot where the Elders gathered.

"Isn't this quite strange?" Sander asked, refusing to stop looking. "I know this is a big event and all, but what are they all so excited about?" he posed the same question that was going through Mia's mind.

For a few more moments, the three of them continued to look up to the elders' lodge. Meanwhile, the couple within their group couldn't pay anything more attention than they were paying to each other.

"Welcome, everyone, to the quarterly intersect tournament!" one of the elders appeared at the bottom of the arena, right on the stage located in the middle of its open space.

"To abide by our centuries-old tradition, we will start by drawing lots!" the man announced, pointing his hand to the side where a massive, round box was located.

"As usual, the host team will be the first one to draw. And to remind everyone of the rules, if you draw a marker with your name on it, you will move on to the tournament's second round right away. The same privilege goes to the last of the disciples if they have no lots to pull!"

'Those are some... weird rules,' Mia thought, forced to look down at the announcer.

In the end, the reason she was here wasn't to spy on the elders but to make sure that they would pay their utmost attention to her.

Without knowing who was with the Sangakarts and who wasn't affiliated with them, the best Mia could do was to force every last soul present in the arena to look her way.

'Whatever they are doing right now, I need to stop it,' Mia thought before taking a deep breath and then taking a step forward.

"Mia of the Tuxi sect," the girl announced as she approached the platform and pushed her hand into the box before the announcer could actually invite her in.

This breach of the protocol was sure to get her heavily punished later... But for now, it served its purpose.

Because even without looking up, Mia could feel the stares of the elders all glued to the back of her head.

'Now, let's see who I will be up against,' Mia thought, moving her hand in the box for a while before finally grabbing one of the markers and pulling it out. She then looked down at the piece of paper before passing it to the announcer.

"Mia of the Tuxi sect!" the announcer shouted before taking a glance at the marker himself. "She will be dueling with Mark of Blades, Oloan sect!"