

Last System 278

Chapter 278 Turning Point (1.3)

Half an hour earlier

Not used to moving as fast as I did, I failed to change my direction in time. As a result, I crashed right through a thick, old tree.

'Fuck,' I cursed under my breath, ignoring the annoyance of the pain as I ejected myself from the tree back on the path.

The sun has yet to turn violet. In theory, that should mean there was still some time.

'But what if it happens in a different way? What if it will be faster? Slower? Bigger? Smaller?' I asked question after question, forcing my very own self to realize just how futile my thoughts were.

Knowing nothing about this entire phenomenon and its source, I couldn't really expect it to abide by what I expected it to do!

'Fuck!' I nearly couldn't hold my voice back when sinking in my own thoughts proved to be disastrous as I once again crashed into another tree.

There wasn't even a second for me to lose my focus in a forest as thick as the one surrounding me. Not now, not when I was pumping way more energy into my moves, making them far more powerful than ever before.

'I'm still not used to it,' I thought, gnashing my teeth when I somewhat forcefully hugged the tree and exchanged a passionate kiss with its bark.

'But what's even worse,' I thought, spitting some woodworms that were unlucky enough to get in my mouth. 'I'm still not fast enough.'

The pressure from the incoming attack continued to grow at a steady pace, quickly reaching the levels that I felt before the previous attack.

I could feel desperation welling up in my soul.

There was no way in hell for me to get to Mia in time at the current rate! And I wasn't someone who would count on a lucky shot of the meteor missing her location.

I lived too long in a world where my life was the sum of the circumstances that I had no influence over. I had enough of a world where I was powerless to change something.

If there was anything that I wanted to change about myself in this new life of mine, then it was the degree of influence that I have over the things that matter.

'There is no time for excuses anymore,' I thought, gritting my teeth as I picked up my pace.

The feeling that the incoming attack gave me was exactly the same as it was before. The process in which it developed from just a distant echo to a powerful force looming over my soul was the same. The speed at which this evolution changed remained the same as well.

Faced with so many similarities, I couldn't help but assume them to be the norm. It was a fallacy that I was perfectly aware of, but I had no brain or emotional power left to deal with it in any other way than discarding all the thoughts about it.

Yet, even though I was aware of how false my assumptions over this event could be... My soul still trembled with terror when I was forced to realize the obvious.

At the current rate, even if I would sprint the rest of the distance out, I would be at least an hour too late to the scene. And it was a result that I couldn't accept.

'This experiment failing doesn't help either,' I thought, looking down at my hands, where I still kept trying to merge the two energies together.

Just a fewteen minutes ago, I still naively thought that I could force them to merge by using only the tiniest amounts of my real mana and the energy that I obtained from the battlefield.

I have learned from my mistakes since then. Outside of the energy that I dedicated to my legs, all my mana was currently hard at work, trying to push the tiniest part I could create into a part of the violet energy of equal size and power.

But even that wasn't enough. And as it turned out, after a single moment later, not even using that violet energy to push from the other side helped!

'Is this resistance going to go to infinity?' I thought, swallowing down my saliva as I analyzed the option.

Yet, I wasn't given any time to think the matters through. Before I could even think of another word, I realized that the sky around me had started to darken.

'It's too late,' I thought, grinding my sprint to a halt.

The time appeared to slow down for me, conveniently giving me a greater window to despair over my powerlessness.

'Fuck it,' I thought, losing a certain element of my reason. 'Let's go all-in,' I decided, pulling all the mana that my cultivation had to offer before funneling it all towards the single task.

The task of forcing the two different kinds of energies together.

'At the current rate, I won't even be able to face another monster like the one from before,' I thought, watching how my mana stockpile burned away in the futile effort of combining the two opposite energies.

This was the question that I should've asked myself well in advance.

Could I fight another monster like that?

'Well, fight it... I could,' I thought, while not perfectly but still aware of just how overpowered my current means were. 'But doing so would force me to reveal my entire hand,' I realized.

I then lowered my head and looked at my shoes, taking a short moment to relax my mind.

"It doesn't matter," I muttered under my nose, raising my hands towards the two bits of energy that I tried my utmost to combine, adding the little physical pressure that my body could muster.

This action proved to be either timed perfectly, a necessary step of physical manifestation of my wish, or the one bit of force that finally broke through the restraints.

'Right now, I have two problems,' I thought in the eerie moment when the two forms of energy finally merged, only for all the resistance from before to disappear. This allowed me to fuse a huge chunk of my mana with the foreign energy I scavenged from the battlefield.

'I'm too slow to reach the outpost in time. I'm also too weak to face any resistance after duking it out with another monster,' I thought, feeling how the energy between my hands started to boil.

'The solution to both of those problems is simple, then,' I realized, no longer able to contain the merged energy between my hands.

"I just need to get stronger," I voiced out in a crazed tone, allowing the explosive energy between my hands to enter the pathways I created by cultivating.

The sky finally started to darken up as a violet hue infused into the normally blue sky.

'It's starting,' I thought, my mind detaching from reality when the wave of pure and overwhelming energy rushed into every last pore of my body.

This energy was too much, even for me.

It was so clear it first cleansed all of my mana paths, only to burn them out a second later.

'It's like touching the sun!' I exclaimed in my thoughts, only to bend in half and fall to my knees.

I managed to support myself right in time, a second before my face would bury itself into the dirt.

Overwhelming torture of having my insides burned out mixed with an extreme sense of power... that somehow came accompanied by a feeling of complete powerlessness.

Despite how contradictory those two feelings were, I somehow managed to feel them both at once.

Then it finally happened.

It felt as if someone pulled down a blanket that covered my consciousness, finally granting me the right to truly see and feel what was around me.

For the tiniest of the moment, I could feel the delicate vibration of the air. The resonance of the mana. The chirping of the bird's several miles away.

All of those experiences painted a picture of the world around me, a picture I didn't need my eyes to see and marvel at. Or rather, a picture that my eyes would never be good enough to fully comprehend with just sight alone.

Yet, despite how liberating this feeling was, this 'blanket removal' also meant exposing my true self to the world around me...

And right now, there was one predominant element of my surroundings.

The pure mana that merging of the two different energies somehow created. And that pure mana now rushed to burn through my true self.

'Tic!' my system reacted to the situation, barfing out a plethora of alerts in every corner of my vision. Yet, a quick scan of their content proved that they were all talking about the same, just with different words.

'Detected pure mana,' the message announced. 'The energy is too potent for the system to handle,' the information continued, causing a cold sweat to appear all over my back. 'System Corruption increases.'

As if the situation wasn't bad enough already, now my system was acting up!

But just as I was about to open my status to check what the heck was going on, I noticed it.

The meteor, the source of the dread I was feeling right now, appeared right in the furthest part of the sky that my eyes could still see.

A second later, it was nearing the position directly over my head. And a single second later, it already flew right above me, heading in the very same direction that I was running towards.

'FUCK!' I screamed out, forcing all the thoughts about the torture I was undergoing aside.

If I was in a hurry before, then right now, I ran out of time.

'Corruption aside,' I thought, bending my knees as I instantly directed both my body and my eyes in the direction of the outpost in the distance. 'Can I use this energy to get to the town faster?'

It was a simple thought. But one that I couldn't entertain for long.

I was out of time already. That's why, instead of thinking the matters through, I simply did what I envisioned.

I directed the same pure energy that was currently burning through my insides towards my legs. And then, without as much as a second thought, I jumped.

The scenery around me changed. The forest disappeared as if I was transported to another world. Yet, after taking a quick look around me and noticing the cloudy peaks of the clouds all around, I was forced to realize what situation I found myself in.

A quick look in the distance revealed the outline of the city. And with how quickly I was going, I could see how the town continued to grow in my eyes as I flew towards it at a breakneck speed.

'How the hell am I supposed to survive the fall?' I thought, desperation filling my soul once again. But then, I realized another problem.

"Rather than worrying about what will happen once I land," I muttered to myself as I inspected my internal state. "I should actually focus on not dying to this energy first!"