

Last System 28

Chapter 28 - I Need To Make A Decision

I stood with Mia in my arms for a long while. Holding her to my chest gave me a feeling of peace. I felt as if this was the exact reason humans were built the way they were so that they could hug each other just like we did now.

But there was a limit to how long the situation could last. Because for every second that I enjoyed Mia's closeness, Mia's smell, Mia's softness, my sense of reason continued to wash away.

"Okay, that will do for now," I forced myself to utter before I gently pushed the girl away. "While I hope it will be only for two more days, can I ask you to change back to your robe?"

As much as I hated seeing Mia in those poor-quality clothes... Standing out in the open in nothing more but my undergarments was quite embarrassing.

Even if I could somehow obtain a spare robe to allow the two of us to wear something nice, I dared not to imagine the consequences if someone saw Mia parading in the disciple robes before ridding her of her slave status.

"Sure," Mia replied, even though I could see some hesitation on her face.

'Did she want the hug to continue for a little longer?' I thought, watching how she took a few steps back before turning around and approaching the training pillar. Yet, when she dropped my robe to the ground and leaned forward to grab her own...

I turned my eyes away.

'So that's what she was hesitant about,' I thought.

"You don't need to look away, you know?" Mia asked with a small chuckle, perfectly aware of the show that she was giving me.

"As I said before," I said, turning around to save myself from the temptation, "you should respect yourself more."

Standing with my back to the girl, I couldn't help but look down towards my own crotch.

Just like I thought and felt before, my undergarments did a pretty measly job at concealing just how hard I was. With that in mind, I dared not to allow any further temptation.

"Here, your robes," Mia said a moment filled with rustling sounds later.

"Thanks," I grabbed the clothes before casting a quick glance towards the plate with food left by the elder. "I'm sorry that I gave away your food to that man," I said, finally getting to the point I thought about way before.

"Don't mind it," Mia said, hiding her smiling lips behind her raised hand. "I know my place and the importance of the elders," she added before sending me a wink.

'Can you stop being so damn adorable?' I thought, rolling my eyes as the girl turned around and approached the food.

With all those thoughts clouding my mind, I approached the training pillar.

'The elder said that I should keep on training like before,' I thought, recalling the words of that strange man. 'Well, I guess I should start by going easy,' I thought before throwing a lousy punch forward.

And so, I immersed myself in training. This was the easiest way for me to forget about all the temptation that refused to leave my memory so far.

This time, however, rather than trying to execute a perfect punch with every swing of my arm, I focused on doing the exact opposite.

All the math behind how many times I had to punch the training stone to bring my stats up was now invalid. That's why, rather than trying my absolute best to throw a perfect punch, I opted to first check the new math.

The method was simple. By continuously hitting the stone without any focus or care, I kept counting up.

Tic.

After exactly one hundred thirty-five punches, my mana pool finally increased by one.

'Taking into account the growth bonus, that should mean around two hundred punches for the first point, huh?' I thought, quickly calculating the requirements for the advancement.

'Status,' I thought, calling forth all five windows of my system. And with the sound of Mia cleaning up the plates after her meal, I finally found some time to analyze its content.

'It seems like both my endurance and my willpower took a hard reset,' I realized, only to bite my lips in annoyance.

According to my previous observations, both endurance and willpower had a massive influence over how quickly I could grow. And while it was great to know that I could now raise them to even a higher number... actually doing so was an entirely different matter altogether.

"Are you done with your training?" Mia asked, approaching me from the back. "Isn't that a little bit too quick?" she quickly added, leaning her head to the side.

"Nah, I'm just thinking over stuff," I replied, quickly shaking my head. "Do you recall that elder saying something about spirit stones and pills?" I asked as an idea appeared in my head.

"Yeah," Mia nodded her head, slowly circling around me. "They are quite useful because one can use them to quickly raise their Qi," she said before a small grin appeared on her lips. "That is, it can save a lot of time that you would otherwise need to spend hitting that stone," she said, pointing at the pillar with a shake of her chin.

"I see..." I replied, quickly calculating the possible options I had.

Right now, I have two days' time to show the best possible results to the elder. One option was to keep on going with my training, hoping that my efforts combined with the bonuses to my growth would satisfy the elder.

But there was another option, one that I had already laid the foundation for. One that I prepared for solely because of my guess how this world looks like and works like.

Yet, before I could come to a decision, Mia suddenly came closer to me, stopping only a single step away.

"Hey, Arthur," she called out, forcing me out of my dilemma. Yet, as soon as I looked at her face, she took the last step that separated us and threw her arms around my neck.

Then, with a speed way greater than I ever saw her hit the training pillar with, she leaned in and left a gentle peck on my cheek.

"Huh?" I managed to mutter, watching how she let go of my neck and took a step back before turning beet red.

"This is my thanks for everything you did for me so far," she said, only to avert her eyes a moment later. "You can look forward to my full gratitude once we get a lodging that only direct disciples are privy for!"