

Last System 29

Chapter 29 - Opportunistic Route

"I think I will go with the opportunistic route," I said after finally raising my mana pool stat by... a single level.

From the looks of things, the math behind this new stage was pretty simple.

For every two hundred hits against the stone, I would raise my mana pool by a single level. But what was even worse, I couldn't raise all three of the stats at once by focusing and perfecting those hits!

While it was only a guess of mine, it seemed that I had no other choice but to raise the mana pool to the maximum before I could even begin working on the mana flow. And only once I would max out the flow I could start improving the density.

In other words, assuming there would be no further hardships, I had to hit the stone pillar a whopping one hundred eighty thousand times!

Or rather, I would have to do it that many times without taking my bonus to the growth nor the endurance and willpower effect on my training.

'But still,' I thought, 'even if I account for all the potential bonuses, I was unable to bring that number below twenty thousand hits!'

In other words, even if I were to keep training, in the same manner I did so far, I would long lose my patience before reaching any satisfactory result!

'It's great that one can train his way to the peak for free, but why would I waste my time doing that if I can speed this process up?' I thought.

"What do you mean?" Mia asked, raising her head from the grass.

The measly four hundred attacks I had to execute against the stone took me quite a while. As it was her turn to rest, Mia simply laid out directly on the grass, amusing herself by watching training.

"I'm going to make some money," I replied, raising my hand to wipe the sweat off my forehead.

"Are you sure?" Mia asked, pulling herself up on her arms. "Don't you need to train now to impress the elder?" she asked as a hint of worry appeared in her eyes.

It was a strange, new feeling for me. To have a cute girl like that worry about my decisions... not because of her own benefit in it, but for my own sake!

"It's only a day," I replied, sending the girl a soft smile. "I can sacrifice that."

Once I made my decision, I didn't waste even a single second of my time. After clearing the sweat off my body, I moved towards the campsite only to start packing all the ingredients and utensils that we had.

"Then, I'm coming with you!" Mia resolutely said, jumping up and quickly running to help me out.

"Thanks," I said before sending her a quick glance. "But as soon as I'm done setting up the stall, you will go back," I announced.

"Huh?" Mia leaned her head. "Why?"

"My aim for today is to obtain funds to buy spirit stones, or if possible, pills," I explained the idea. "But while they could prove advantageous to me, you still need to reach the Qi gathering stage," I pointed out while lifting the cauldron after attaching the bag with cut potatoes to my belt.

"I don't care," Mia replied, grabbing the two pails of ketchup and following after me. "Even if you want to lift me from slavery, I'm still your slave," she added in a voice that wouldn't accept any critique. "I'm going to help you for as long as necessary," she added, raising her chin up.

'Do you take pride in being my slave or something?' I thought, stopping myself from shaking my head. The fact that I didn't understand how Mia thought didn't mean I had any right to disrespect it.

The rest of our journey went in complete silence. From my end, I didn't want to start the topic again, worried that I would somehow cross Mia's bottom line. As for why Mia herself was silent?

I could only guess.

"Where do you want to set the stall?" the girl asked once we reached the marketplace.

"Could you guide me to the auction hall?" I asked as a small smirk made its way up my lips.

"Huh?" Mia shrugged. "Are you going to sell the fries in the auction hall?" she asked, leaning her head to the side.

Unknowingly, this cute gesture of hers almost made me drop my stuff just to grab myself by the chest. That was the effect Mia's actions had on my poor heart.

"Not in the auction hall," I replied with a small smile. "Right beside it," I added.

In the end, Mia decided not to comment on my decision. Whether she didn't want to annoy me or saw nothing wrong with it, I couldn't tell.

"Here we are," she said after just a few more minutes of walking, stopping at the doorstep of a massive building.

Its front consisted of an impressive colonnade, each of its pieces being a masterpiece of sculpting job rather than a simple column. And behind all the statues that decorated its entrance, one could see the massive metal gate leading inside the building proper.

"Okay, that will be enough," I said, putting down the portable fireplace and cauldron right over it. Then, I turned my head to the girl. "Mia, I know you won't like it, but I really need you to go train now," I said, biting my lips.

"Why?" Mia instantly opposed my decision. "Won't I be of help here?" she asked in a pleading tone.

"Mia, listen..." I scrambled my brain to come up with a proper excuse. "Right now, you are still a slave. If one of that young master's people will come and see you, it will only spell trouble," I said, holding back the guilty feeling that welled up in my soul.

"If you say so... then I will follow your order... MASTER," Mia uttered, clearly dissatisfied with my decision. She then turned around on her heel, harumphed, and walked back in the direction of the sect.

'I really don't know how to act around her,' I thought, shaking my head over how powerless I was in a relationship like that.

But there was no time to waste. Quite a lot of time passed ever since the elder left the garden, leaving me with one and a half-day before his return.

And there was a lot that I had to do today!

I kneeled down and sparked a fire underneath the cauldron. After waiting for just a bit, the oil started to boil, allowing me to throw a fistful of raw fries inside. I then stood up and shouted,

"Fries!"

"Only here and only today!"

"Get yourself some fries that you won't find anywhere else!"