

Last System 301

Chapter 301 Gianormous Bear

'Damn, this is tiring,' I thought, taking a step forward.

This was how my life looked right now.

Take one step. Then another. Then one more. And then repeat all those three steps over and over again.

"Are you alright?" Hera asked, throwing a worried glance at my face.

'This little,' I thought, refusing to look at the girl.

Even though she was in a world where she couldn't access any of the energy she could actually use, she ended up holding up way better than me.

'Even assuming that she was on the same level as me,' I thought before lightly shaking my head.

'No, it's outright strange for her to do better than I'm doing!'

Just like with what felt like every tiny element of this world, I couldn't understand it.

The simple math and physics that I was desperate to apply to this world didn't make much more sense than the esoteric texts the locals of this world would use in an attempt to explain its inner workings.

But how could I explain the fact that I was getting tired so quickly, despite reaching practically the pinnacle of how far one could cultivate?

'Maybe it's my accumulated exhaustion mixing with the weakening of my state caused by the corruption?' I thought, desperate to find an answer to this question.

Or rather, desperate to find an excuse for how out of energy I was, an excuse that would be about something else than my accumulated efforts.

'What's the point of cultivating if it doesn't make you stronger in the first place?' I asked myself, gnashing my teeth together and taking another step.

Right now, with Mia on my back, I could only push forward. By going back, we would likely end up too late to save the group that went into the borderlands. And I wouldn't dare to take even a second of rest out in the open, with the danger of a meteor striking somewhere near an all-time high.

"You seriously should take a break," Hera muttered. "I know it's none of my business, but you are reaching your limits," she stated before audibly swallowing her saliva. "And I don't mean the soft limits one can go past to grow. I mean the hard limit stopping your body from collapsing!" she cried out, clearly dissatisfied with my decision to keep on going.

"You actually might be right," I replied before releasing a heavy sigh.

I didn't agree with Hera's words because that was convenient for me. I did so because I was growing increasingly worried that soon, I wouldn't be able to carry Mia around anymore.

'And if I were to collapse only for a monster to appear...' I thought, gritting my teeth.

"Let's take half an hour of rest," I decided, looking around before pointing my hand at a nearby tree. "I will rest on top of it. Can I ask you to watch the surroundings?"

Normally, I would feel bad for pushing the guard duty on a girl, especially with how weak Hera was right now. Without the source of her own power, she could hardly offer any resistance against any enemy.

But her cultivation level, even if she was devoid of mana, remained the same. As such, the changes to her senses and the growth of her perception remained the same.

"Will do," Hera nodded her head only to release a sigh of relief. "Don't forget that you are the only one who can fight and save my people," she stated as she followed me up the tree, I pointed out. "I would rather miss some sleep to guard you than have you lose your consciousness in the middle of the fight," she explained her motives before resting her back against the trunk of the tree.

"That's reasonable," I replied, my muscles already turning soft at the very idea of taking a moment to rest. Yet, it still wasn't the right moment to let myself feel at ease.

Right before reaching the trunk of the tree, I speed up. With just a few steps to gain momentum, I jumped up and managed to get one step out of the tree's trunk before finally moving up.

'Got ya,' I thought when my fingers tightened around one of the tree's lowest branches, allowing me to climb to its relatively hidden insides.

"Call out for me if anything happens or approaches," I ordered from the inside of the tree's crown, already moving small branches and leaves around to make myself a comfortable spot.

With Mia on my back, I could only rest by either sitting, lying on my stomach, or ultimately lying on the side. Sadly, inside a tree's crown, only the backturned position was safe enough for one's sleep.

'I guess beggars can't be choosers,' I thought, recalling a quote from my past life before finding the most comfortable place to sit at.

Then, while allowing my body to relax, I finally moved my attention back to Mia's inner state.

Her heart was still beating, as usual; her breath moved in and out of her lungs. Yet, within the spiritual world of her cultivation, there were no changes at all.

'Is she stuck on something?' I thought, unable to help but worry about the girl.

So far, I assumed that Mia was in her current state because she was forced into a breakthrough by my energy flooding her system. This was the only explanation that I could come up with, the only explanation that gave Mia high hopes of recovering.

Yet, as time went on, I couldn't help but start analyzing other options.

'The worst part of it all is that I don't really know how I can help her,' I thought, tightening my hands into fists.

Then, I relaxed my hands, reprimanding myself for getting emotional.

'I need to rest as much as I can right now,' I thought, reminding myself of the very reason why we stopped. 'And I need my strength to keep protecting her,' I thought, raising my hand and running my fingers down Mia's hair.

Then, I rested my hand on Mia's cheek, immersing myself in the feeling of having her head rested upon my shoulder.

"It will be alright," I whispered to Mia's ear, gently caressing her cheek to calm myself down. "It will be alright," I repeated my words, immersing myself in the feeling.

"ARTHUR!"

I didn't know for how long have I rested when Hera's shout forced me awake.

"From the south," she quickly added to her report, prompting me to react at the top of my speed.

If, instead of elaborating, she jumped to giving the direction of the coming attack...

'Not good,' I thought, grabbing one of the nearby branches and using it to launch myself forward. Kicking against the branch with my legs as well, I made sure to crash into the insides of the tree's crown with my left side, using my very own neck and head to protect Mia's face.

Poof.

As if the top of the tree was made out of some kind of mist, I exploded my way through it, only to instantly recognize just how dire the situation was.

'What the hell is this?' I asked myself, changing my position mid-air to ensure Mia would be separated from the source of the danger with my body at the very least.

"What the hell is this?" Hera muttered, taking a step back with her eyes glued in the same direction as mine.

And the sight was really to kill for. Because a bear the size of a mountain was slowly yet steadily making its way towards us.

'Wait, what?' I thought when the monster somehow managed to close half of the remaining distance in the short moment I took to blink.

And then it dawned upon me.

What I saw was just a monster of a whole other level of being massive. Yet, even with that, my eyes still lied to me. When faced with something so out of any reason, they failed to take perspective into account.

"RUN!" I shouted, grabbing Hera's shoulder and launching myself towards the barrier.

In theory, it was a stupid move to run in the very same direction that the enemy was chasing us towards. Yet, with how insanely quick its moves were, thanks to its size, any attempts at escaping to the sides would likely end up with us being crushed underneath its castle-sized limbs!

"What the hell is this?!" Hera shouted again, unable to stop her eyes from blinking.

"I don't even have a shred of an idea," I replied through my tightened teeth, perfectly aware that despite running at my top speed... The gianormous bear continued to close in on us.

'It's no use,' I thought when the shaking of the ground caused by the monster's steps caught up to us. Only by timing my steps and then jumping right at the perfect time did I manage to avoid getting thrown off by the shockwave that followed the next step of the monster.

'We can run from it,' I thought, firing up all the parts of my mage's tower and raising it up.

"Keep on running!" I shouted, twisting my entire body to the side only to let it spring up and pull Hera forward. I then let go of her hand only to quickly cut the blankets holding Mia to my back and then throw her towards the girl. "Take good care of her!" I shouted, turning on my feet to face the monster.

THUMP.

The earth shook when its massive limb landed right beside me. And then, instead of taking another step, the monster lowered its head while opening its jaws wide.

The rows of its teeth, each the size of a respectable house, reflected the spare light that managed to make its way through the thick treetops.

'I don't have any of that violet energy left to power the engine up,' I thought, tightening my fists as I drove all the mana in my system into my runes, formation, and other parts of Mage's Tower.

Thankfully, the monster ahead had one fault. With its entire body constructed from an actual flesh, it didn't have any of that violet energy either.

"I guess we can only try to duke it out," I muttered, more to myself than to the monster that was about to bite its massive teeth right into me.

The bear's head struck the ground, enclosing me within the prison of its teeth surrounding me from all the sides.

The only way out that didn't include getting myself thorn against those bone-blades of the monster was up, right towards its throat.

The ground shook.

Instead of trying to pinpoint my location and then bite down on me, the bear simply bit down on the ground, instantly making it crumble underneath my feet.

Rather than trying to find and then eliminate me, it was going to swallow me along with my footing!

"As if I would allow that!" I shouted from the bottom of my lungs, releasing the lock of all my powers before unleashing them right into the monster's throat!