

Last System 325

Chapter 325 Not Yet

Vaner emerged from the borderlands roughly two days later.

His disposition was entirely different. Yet, if one were to look at him from a distance, all they would see would be a refugee in ragged robes.

In those short two days, the landscape on the outside changed beyond any of Vaner's expectations.

'For the world to go to shit so quickly...' Vaner hesitated right when he climbed to the top of a small hill that gave him a nice vantage point over the area.

The formerly green hills that separated the Skyladder sect from the borderlands were now all charred, proving that some sort of a great fire took place there.

Yet, even though most of the obstacles disappeared from the landscape, its hilly nature made it impossible for the now free Royal to spot any signs of civilization.

"I hope someone survived," Vaner muttered, although the sight before his eyes didn't look promising at all.

Still, he harbored his hope close to his heart. Because the Skyladder sect was pivotal in his plans for the future.

'Seeing how everything played out, I should assume the sect is already flattened,' Vaner thought, clicking his tongue as he picked up the pace.

Nothing good would come from just standing in place. If he wanted to see what was left of the sect, his best bet was to just return.

Despite his earlier struggle to regain his techniques, Vaner skied through the land instead of walking on it like a normal human would.

'I still need to pay attention to the flow of the energy, huh?' Vaner thought, annoyed by the amount of focus he had to dedicate just to control his spiritual energy.

The trick to using his techniques with this new, strange power was to reverse its natural flow.

And right now, instead of heading for the sect, Vaner directed his leaps into one of the places he was extremely familiar with.

It took him two more hours to slide through the land towards the general area of his spot.

A familiar tree. A small pond at the bottom of a long, swirling ravine. A depression in the ground leads to a vast system of caves.

All the waypoints were there. Yet, when Vaner reached the oasis in the middle of the sea of grass, he stopped.

'What the hell?' he thought, surprised to the end of his wits.

Because of the natural flow of the energy in the place... drastically changed.

Back in the past, this oasis used to be the preferred spot for Vaner to cultivate at. It was his refugee in which he refined his cultivation over and over again.

The usual flow that Vaner enjoyed for long hours was now nowhere to be felt, replaced by a thin aura that Vaner could barely feel.

And what was even worse, he had to constantly expand his energy to just be on this side of the borderlands.

The seal that limited his cultivation was now all gone. It was a limitation he could break at any moment, established more for his convenience rather than with the intention of shackling him in.

Yet, now that it was gone, Vaner continued to bleed energy just for the privilege of being on this side of the borderlands.

'What could've happened to it?' Vaner thought, refusing to just accept the disappearance of his cultivation spot.

Now, more than ever, he had to take some time to regain strength.

Over the last two days in the borderlands, Vaner trained. He trained hard to reverse his energy-related habits.

To a degree limited by how little time he had, Vaner managed to revert the changes that the ritual caused. And while he still had to pay a lot of attention to do it, he was now able to use most of his techniques.

Still, those two days of hard and near-constant training left him exhausted.

'No, it couldn't just disappear,' Vaner decided, refusing to accept any other possibility.

He then looked around, even though his eyes wouldn't help him at all.

Even a royal like Vaner still retained some of those human-like reflexes.

"I guess I have no other choice but to walk around," Vaner muttered, hanging his head in disappointment.

For a former royal like him to be reduced to such a state, searching around for a good spot like some peasant or fledgling cultivator...

Thankfully, Vaner's dilemma didn't last long.

Not because of some dumb luck. Relying on it was the domain of losers and naive kids.

Vaner mapped out the flow of energy all around the oasis mere days after he discovered the spot. It was something he considered necessary in order to secure the place from the outside influence.

Both the formation stones and formation flags were still in place, perfectly matching the flow of energy... that didn't exist anymore.

But the fact that it changed didn't mean it disappeared.

'I remember this place being barren,' Vaner thought when he stumbled into a massive area where the grass just happened to grow shorter.

Maybe it was a different sort of glass. Maybe it was the former lack of spiritual energy in the air. But the undergrowth that merely vegetated until recently now thrived in the new situation.

Because the flow of natural spiritual energy somehow ended gathering here, combining all the local flows into a single point.

A point that moved at an insanely slow rate, but a point that never rested in one place.

"It's being pushed?" Vaner noticed with surprise.

It had never happened before. Yet, that was the new reality of this changing world.

The hotspots for cultivation turned mobile and were set on traveling the continent!

"Well, whatever," Vaner spat on the ground before sitting right in the path of the sweet spot of the location.

'Let's see if I'm right,' he thought, perfectly aware of the craziness of what he was about to do.

"Who doesn't dare, doesn't win!" Vaner shouted, encouraging himself.

And then, he opened up his cultivation, sucking on the spiritual energy from the rich congregation of smaller flows.

The familiar mana rushed in, filling his cultivation at a worrying rate.

For a source located within the zero zone, this place brought enough energy to make the sources on the other side of the borderlands proud!

'What the hell?!' Vaner panicked, squeezing and compressing the energy he obtained from the ritual.

Clashing the two energies together, especially right inside his body, would be a madman's feat. But there was a way to cheese out the qualities of both the energies.

'I did it before, so I can do it now!' Vaner thought, recalling the moment when he became a royal in the past.

This was the one hurdle that one had to both discover and then pass through. One ceiling that most cultivators would end up powerless against.

Comprehending the two opposing forces.

'And now, I know far more than before!' Vaner rejoiced, only to put the rest of his attention into controlling the forces within his body.

His earlier struggle came from the very simple fact that he never before had to fully rely on that weird power. And now that his original source of strength returned, Vaner was ready.

"To the moon, baby!" he screamed out in elation, his eyes taking an unhinged look.

And then, Vaner squeezed both of his energies, forming two flows within his body.

There was only one distinction between the one consisting of the spiritual force and the other made up of that strange mana.

They circulated... in opposing directions.

What's more, there was only a single point where both the path came close, and it was right at Vaner's solar plexus.

And after a worryingly long moment, both of the flows stabilized, entering a peaceful state of coexistence.

"I did it..." Vaner muttered, his body slumping down to the point he had to rest his arms on his knees.

The aftermath of the breakthrough left Vaner exhausted beyond any means. Even though the flow of his energies had now stabilized, his body was still in no state to move.

"And here I am, powerless and wasting time again," Vaner muttered, sending a longing look in the direction he believed the Skyladder's sect to be.

It would take him a considerable amount of time to recover from his exhaustion. But by the time he would be ready, not even the monsters falling from the sky would be an opponent for him!

"I guess I have no other choice but to wait," Vaner muttered, gritting his teeth in dissatisfaction.

He had to get stronger before attempting to carve out a piece of a continent for himself. But doing so also meant wasting a lot of time, time that the monsters from another world would surely use to devastate the lands Vaner wished to rule.

"Or maybe I should just move on and ignore my state?" Vaner muttered, only for a smile to appear on his lips.

"I guess I can't rest now," he whispered, more to himself than to anyone else. He then bit his lip and tensed his muscles, forcing his body up.

The energy rushing in his veins constantly projected onto his wounds, mending them with each passing second. But the exhaustion was deeply rooted into Vaner's flesh. And with every second of intense healing, this exhaustion only continued to grow.

"I know I shouldn't..." Vaner grit his teeth before taking a huge step forward. "But I can't rest easy, not yet," he spoke just to encourage his own efforts.

And then, the look in his eyes stelled up.

"Not before I apologize, at the very least."