

Last System 354

Chapter 354 Physical Limitations

"Are you fucking kidding me?" A moan of desperate yet powerless disbelief escaped from my lips.

There was only one name that the monster in the sky could bear. And it was worth my reaction.

"A fucking dragon," I whispered, more in awe than I was actually terrified.

And then, the sense of reality struck.

"A dragon?" Mia asked, leaning her head to the side. "What does that mean?"

As if there weren't enough big surprises for today.

"You seriously don't know?" I asked, my right eyebrow rising on its own.

'Assuming this is earth but far later, shouldn't that be common knowledge?' I thought, puzzled by the sudden disparity between my beliefs and reality.

But in the current moment, all I could do was shake my shoulders over the topic.

I had problems far more important and immediate than discovering the truth behind this world.

"It's heading to the city," I observed after staring at the majestic figure of the monster.

'But why?' I asked myself.

There was this sense of urgency... But rather than rushing in to stop the monster from gaining on us, I took a moment to think.

'Why would it move away?' I asked, only to clench my teeth. 'No, that's too vague,' I thought, lowering my eyes to the ground.

"You worry about the reason," Mia suddenly whispered, raising both of her hands to my cheeks. She locked my head in place and looked deeply into my eyes.

Mia then shook her head as a sad smile flashed on her lips.

"I do not know the answer," she admitted, shaking her head.

Her hands moved up and down, gently rubbing my cheeks.

"Maybe it tries to escape the mana of this world?" Mia suggested as she lowered her eyes and put on a thoughtful expression.

Her words struck a chord in my soul.

"That certainly could be a factor," I acknowledged, my focus raising through the roof.

Now that Mia offered a new perspective, I had no trouble breaking through my confusion.

"Wait," I suddenly stopped, my eyes widening. "There are only two options," I claimed, directing my eyes back at Mia's face.

"It either considers us to be its opponents or not," I explained as I shook my head and turned my head in the same direction the dragon was flying.

And then I stopped giving the monster the lead.

I kicked the ground with my mana-infused legs. While we were in a relatively sparse part of the forest, it still allowed me to incorporate my tree-movement skill into my dash.

'This is going to be tough,' I thought, dashing through the vast distances with ease but recovering the lead at a very slow pace.

It wasn't like I couldn't pour more mana into my legs. In fact, I was only using a tiny fraction of my full ability.

But this wasn't a game. I already made the mistake of playing around with the antimana once. And while I survived that event, my respect for this technique grew significantly.

'If I go any faster, my body will fall apart,' I thought, gritting my teeth over the faulty way in which my body was constructed.

From the legs unfit for bipedal races, through remaining bones that long lost their function all the way to the traits that actively made the human body fragile.

There were just way too many things that couldn't be broken.

The limits that people on earth never really had the chance to feel.

Overbearing acceleration. Forces so great that the human brain simply couldn't even begin to comprehend.

And now, those exact forces actively sought to slow my movements down.

The air resistance made all my moves heavy. Raising my hand felt like lifting a massive boulder. Pushing my leg forward was harder than reaching a new record at the gym.

'Tsk,' I couldn't even click my tongue with how it ended up squashed against the back of my throat.

The acceleration itself neared the speed of a bullet.

I only had all the mana reinforcements to thank for keeping my body from simply crumbling apart.

Then, the dragon sped up. Right now, I could no longer catch up to it. Keeping the distance constant was the peak of my ability.

'If we are not a threat to it, it simply ignored us and moved to somewhere it will feel better,' I thought, unable to reveal this realization to Mia.

'But if it felt threatened by our presence,' I thought, raising my eyes towards the distance.

And there it was, far off, near the horizon.

The general shape of the city from the past. The only place that lacked any and all mana in the air.

A perfect environment for the monster using antimana. And the worst battleground for me.

The greatest source of my strength ultimately came from my formations.

Sure, I was strong... But even after everything I went through, my general power level wasn't all that great.

Even though it felt like ages since the last time I checked out my system, I didn't dare to summon it right now.

Not when even a momentary lapse of attention would cost me my life.

In other words, the bulk of my power came from how much I could leverage my own strength over the mana flowing through my formations.

But all the core formations that made up my mage's tower had one requirement. One condition is so common I never really considered the idea of removing it.

They needed at least a trace amount of mana in the air to operate.

Just like with every contraption, my formations couldn't capture all the mana perfectly. Over time and use, they would also deteriorate, leaking more and more mana over time.

Normally, it wouldn't be a problem, as the mana would be contained within a mana-conducting air. As such, the concentration of mana around the formations would naturally draw more of it towards them.

But in a place with no mana in the air, most of my formations would become brittle, succumbing to wear in a matter of seconds!

'We can't fight it in the city,' I thought.

Then, I stopped my dash, coming to a complete stop as quickly as I could.

There was no way for me to catch up with that dragon. Not with Mia in my arms.

"I'm sorry, dear," I apologized while putting the girl down. "This is the only option," I added, gracing Mia with a single, sad smile.

A single tear appeared in Mia's eye.

She quickly raised her hand and wiped it off before turning her shock into a bright smile.

"Go," she said, reaching out with her hands to my head. She then brought it down and leaned forward.

Her lips pressed against my forehead. The sweet fragrance of her breath washed over my face.

"With my blessing, go and win," Mia whispered, pulling both her head and her hands away.

"Go and check on the others," I suggested, soaking the girl's smile into my memory.

If there was anything that I could need before a sudden, decisive battle to the death, it was exactly her encouragement.

"They might be still alive," I added before decisively turning on my heel and rushing ahead.

The limits of my body didn't change.

But this city was just too important.

'I can't let it rampage there. This could become a core for a rebuilt world,' I thought, clenching my teeth before closing my eyes and calming down my mind.

For but a moment, I ran on instinct alone.

And then, I combined my mana with the small amount of antimana I had left.

I missed the opportunity to refuel during the fight with the dragon's previous form.

But it didn't matter.

As soon as my magical engine ignited, I directed its energy evenly throughout my body.

'If my body can't bear it, just use more mana to reinforce it!' I thought, lowkey proud of my own genius, as reckless as it could seem to be.

And without a second thought, I leaped forward.

The sheer force I tore through the air with was enough to clear my path from all the obstacles.

The quirk with the world's physics was that at a certain range, things like durability or integrity simply didn't matter.

And for the first time in a short while, I started to catch up with the dragon again.

I didn't have much time... but I could still make it!