

Last System 367

Chapter 367 Mana Evolution

"Do you think this is some sort of a fucking joke!?"

The stranger who dared to force Mia into a situation where she used her strange ability clearly didn't know what was better for him.

"Your life, you mean?" I asked, putting on a cute smile as I leaned over the stranger's face. "Yeah, I do believe it to be a joke," I explained, acting as if my words were the most reasonable in the world.

"Or, to be more precise," I started, straightening my posture and resting my hands on my hips. "Your life became nothing more but an unfunny and old joke the moment you dared to raise your hand against my woman."

'Should I kill him?'

My bravado was nothing more but a mere act.

'If those are the people I'm worried they are... ' I thought while squinting my eyes as I looked down at the man. 'Not only there should be more of them, but I also shouldn't underestimate this group.'

I knew better than to assume a fight with those people would be a breeze. If that were to be the case, Mia wouldn't end up using the ability that she never even said a word about to me.

'In other words, she had her back against the wall,' I thought, my hands tightening into fists.

There were many things that I could forget. I had enough mercy inside me to let go of a lot of things.

However, disturbing Mia in any way or form was akin to touching my reverse scale. And now, I was troubled with only one question.

'Can I afford to let them stay alive so that Mia could take her revenge herself?' I asked myself, scanning the area with my mana sense while focusing my eyes on the man nearby.

'He is healing at a worrying rate,' I noticed. It wasn't something that would snap the situation around in the next few seconds, but I didn't have long to make my decision either.

"Arthy..." Mia's weak voice instantly took over all my focus.

I turned myself on my knee only to see the girl slowly gathering herself up. She supported her head with her hand as if she was under the attack of a relentless migraine.

"What happened?" I rushed forward, landing on my knees and sliding the last few inches on the ground. All to catch Mia right as her body lost its balance, and she fell face-first to the ground.

"Are you alright?" I asked, ditching the worries about the situation. Her health was an absolute priority. 'But I can't forget about them either,' I thought, catching Mia by her shoulders only to take a glance to the back.

'Not much time left,' I thought, agonizing over the situation.

I could either stay and support Mia, hoping to prevent any harm from coming her way. Doing so would open me up for an attack from this potentially powerful group, though.

My other option was to let Mia fend for herself while I would go and deal with all the enemies in the area.

And for but a moment, I froze in place, unable to decide.

"DIE!" the stranger shouted, suddenly bursting forward at lightning speed.

'Huh?' My eyes opened wide while my body reflectively leaned back. I then bent my knees, and once the center of my mass moved behind my knees, I launched myself backward.

'So the second option, it is,' I thought, landing several meters away and gently placing Mia against one of the threes. I then reached out to my chest before deploying all the redundant formations from my mage's tower.

And then, with another swing, I raised my battle stance, deploying all the other formation stones I had left.

"You can rest easy now," I said, raising my hand to caress Mia's cheek.

I still stood well within the field of her own shielding formations. Their protection allowed me this short moment of respite.

Mia then turned her face up a little, only to rub her cheek against my hand. She kept her eyes closed as she soaked the warmth of my palm.

"Return soon," she requested in a weak voice. I could tell the level of her exhaustion from her feeble, fleeting whisper.

"I will be back, dearest," I whispered back and leaned forward. Using my hand, I scooped Mia's hair out of her forehead before pressing my lips against her head.

"Un," Mia uttered a small moan. Her body twitched in reaction to my delicate caress.

"Well then," I muttered and stood up before turning around on my heel. I took a few steps ahead, leaving the sphere of influence of Mia's barrier. "Let's do this!"

I released the valves on my mana, allowing the energy to rush through my body and then to the formations of my mage's tower.

'Huh?' I shook in a small shock when I realized a certain peculiarity.

And no, it wasn't the guy from before rushing at me from a small distance away. That guy didn't matter.

What I couldn't really understand on the spot was how in all hells, my formations booted up all the way to the level they reached when I supplied them with antimana?

'There is no mistaking it,' I thought, stepping out of the way of the stranger's attack.

His movements were insanely slow as if he was moving through a sea of jelly instead of air.

'Ah.' The realization struck me hard.

Now that I found out a little bit more about the potential nature of mana and antimana... I didn't really need both of them to power up my engine.

The true magic lay in mana particles that were at the bottom of their stability. That or the energy was contained within the phenomena of a mana particle switching its state from positive to negative or the reverse.

'It doesn't matter which concept is right,' I thought as I looked down at the man whose attack had just passed by my stomach. 'Because in both scenarios, I can simply use more mana to unlock the full potential of my power!'

As my power grew, the speed at which the world moved continued to slow down. By the time the attacker's fist reached roughly a meter away from me, he had stopped moving at all.

All the leaves in the forest froze in the frame of an impossibly tiny fraction of an instant.

'Is it the influence of raging mana?' I thought, feeling as if I could tear the fabric of the space itself with just the force that filled every last cell of my body. 'It's like every formation stone turned into an engine completely on its own!'

The mana continued to surge through every last bit of my flesh and bones... But for some reason, it didn't burn through my body. Instead, the influx of power quickly took over the task of keeping the whole pool of mana in its unstable state.

It was only an instant, yet it felt like ages... but at a certain point, something clicked.

And my mana reached its full potential, save for the bit that kept it all in its unstable state.

The time picked up its pace... Only to stabilize right back at a speed that made me feel as if I was watching a slide show.