

Last System 373

Chapter 373 Restarting The Mage's Tower

"A....y..."

"A...r....y..."

"Arty..."

I opened my eyes when I heard Mia's voice calling out my name.

"Arty!" Mia's call forced me awake.

"Mia...?" I muttered in a feeble voice, doing my best to push myself up.

'Huh?' I only had the time to utter a small moan of shock when my body refused to work the way it should.

I attempted to push myself up, prompting myself off the ground with my hands... Sadly, the muscles in my hands refused to cooperate, giving up the second I put any weight on them.

"Arty!" Mia screamed out from the bottom of her lungs when she noticed I finally started to move. And then, as if not aware of my feeble state, she lunged forward, smashing herself right in my chest.

"Ugh..." I released a pained moan when the girl's head pressed against my ribs, squeezing all the air out of my lungs.

"You are alive, you are alive, you are alive!" the girl chanted through her tears, rubbing her face against my chest.

I could feel her body tremble with every word that she said.

"I'm alive," I said, trying to calm the girl down a little.

I was in an extremely bad state. Unable to exert any physical strength, I heavily doubted I could do anything with my mana either.

It meant that even mice could be a threat to me now. In other words, as much as I hated it, right now, I was nothing more but a burden.

"But can you tell me what happened?" I asked in a small voice, trying to assess the situation.

How long was I out? Did Mia have to fight with someone? Or what did happen to me in the first place?

"I saw you get struck with black lightning," Mia explained while hugging herself into my chest. "I really thought you were going to die!" she cried out, her words barely understandable over the degree of her sobbing.

"I see," I whispered in response and hung my head to the back as if I wanted to stare at the sky.

But rather than stars and the moon, all I could see were the treetops of the forest that surrounded us.

"I'm sorry to have made you worry," I apologized while tucking the girl even closer before wrapping my hands around her body and slowly moving from one side to another.

'It feels like I'm lulling a kid to sleep,' I thought while enjoying the fact that it was my hug that finally prompted the girl to relax a little.

"Don't be," Mia said before sniffing and then wiping her tears with the back of her hand. "You came here to save me, didn't you?" she then asked, only for her tears to start streaming down her face again.

"You know you are the most precious thing to me in this entire world," I said without even a moment of hesitation, not caring for how cringy it could sound if anyone were to listen to us. "If I had to choose between this world and you, then this world would be damned," I added before hiding my face in the corner between the girl's shoulder and neck.

"I know," Mia said before releasing a small, shy giggle. "You've told me this enough times already," she added.

Mia then grabbed my shoulders before prompting herself up on them. And before I could tell, she coiled her hands around the back of my head before pushing my face into her bosom.

"But when will you finally learn that it's the same for me?" Mia asked while making use of her breasts to stop me from saying anything.

"hmmhphm," I attempted to say something, only for the girl's sweet flesh to muffle any and all sounds that I attempted to push out of my mouth.

"Do you know what actually happened?" Mia asked once she finally got enough of my face on her boobs. "Like, what was that black lightning and all?"

"So I can talk now?" I asked when Mia finally let go of my head. A small smirk that formed up on my lips had to suffice as proof that I wasn't really serious.

Yet, the question itself actually forced me to take it seriously.

"It's only my guess, but I think it's some sort of ancient force," I attempted to explain. "After I lost consciousness, I appeared in some sort of illusionary world. In there, I saw things I never expected to experience."

I then took a moment to describe the details of the strange festival of lights that I saw in that strange subspace.

"So you think it's an illusion, a vision planted by someone whose strength allows or allowed them to impose the appearance of such vision to the people that fulfill certain criteria?" Mia somehow managed to put my thoughts into order, turning a bunch of observations and guesses into a proper thesis.

"It may have something to do with the very fabric of the space surrounding us," I added my own interpretation of what I saw back then. "And about that black lightning..."

I took a moment to sort my own thoughts.

"It might be some sort of the world's natural defense system," I attempted to guess. "Or maybe it's a spell imposed by some powerful entity, just like you said?"

I shrugged my shoulders.

"To be honest, I don't think it matters," I stated before shaking my head and grabbing Mia by her armpits before pulling her up from my lap.

"Why?" the girl reacted without even a moment of hesitation, wrapping her hands around my neck and refusing to move.

"I should've asked this way earlier, but how long was I out?" I asked, not ceasing my attempts to lift the girl.

"Only a short moment," Mia replied with a confused expression on her face as she finally followed my wish and stood up... Only for her knees to instantly give up and make her fall down right into my arms.

"Fuck," I cursed, letting the girl slide down before gently placing her down on the ground.

My body exploded in pain when I suddenly started moving as if I was all right. But I had no other choice. The people that I killed before the world pulled me into its vision... They could still be around!

"We need to make sure we are safe here," I said as I forcefully kickstarted my cultivation again.

'I don't have any of that anti-mana left,' I quickly realized, only to bite down on my lips.

Right now, I didn't really need it to power up my internal mana engine. Yet, without even a trace amount of the antimana, I simply couldn't kickstart its operations.

'I need to raise my mage's tower,' I thought, instantly spreading my mana awareness as far as I could to inspect the state of my formations.

And just like one could guess, they didn't work. Yet, after focusing on the details for just a short while, I managed to quickly find out the reason.

It wasn't that all my formations and arrays got destroyed. In fact, most of them were fully intact, ready to restart their operation the moment my mana would start flowing through them again.

The culprit behind the breakdown of my formation was actually a set of three formation stones, all of which were a part of the primary formations that served as the organizing unit for all the other formations.

And from what I could see, they were fried. Not burned down, not burned into ashes... but fried.

Just like a device that happened to be short-circuited.

'As long as I replace them...' I thought, mentally rearranging the order of the stones in the primary formations. And then, with a small surge of mana, I put this mental image of mine in place.

The second I connected all the stones again, the mana rushed to fill the void of the formations.

'Wait, I'm making the same mistake that I made before!' I realized right before the entire mage's tower would start operating. And right at this moment, I forcefully put a stop to the flow of the mana within the formations.

'I need to dismantle at least three of them,' I thought, quickly turning my thoughts into actions.

And with the several stones that I recycled from the formations that I dismantled, I quickly whipped out a single, relatively big formation that only had a single purpose.

"There they are!" a voice suddenly came from the deeper part of the forest.

"See?" I asked, throwing Mia a meaningful look before forcing my muscles to cooperate as I stood up.

The fiery pain exploded in my legs, threatening to collapse all my muscles...

But I couldn't care less.

Once I confirmed that my new formation would do a perfect job at reinforcing all the space that my mage's tower operated at, I looked in the direction where the voice came from.

"Let's wrap this up and head back to the city," I said, sparing one last look at the girl before turning my eyes back in the direction of the potential threat. "I..."

THUMP!

Before I could say another word, a monstrous noise shook all the trees in the area.

'A shockwave?' I thought when I observed the moving tops of the trees... Only to feel the ground tremble underneath my feet.

"What the hell is this?" Mia muttered, her eyes opening wide as she realized just how massive a being had to be to cause such an uproar.

Yet, as I caught a glimpse of the monster that caused all of this mess... the corners of my lips suddenly moved up.

"Don't worry," I said, sitting back as a wave of relief surged through my body. "I know it might be hard to believe... but I don't think we do need to fear that dragon!"