

## Last System 417

Chapter 417 All That Effort... And For What?

The sun was slowly starting to set over the horizon. The last arrays of its warm rays made the entire world bask in a slightly reddish, thoughtful hue.

It was a perfect time to sit down and look up, enjoying the last warmth of the day while immersing oneself in the beauty of the late evening.

And yet, instead of doing any of that, I was currently busying myself collecting random pebbles from the ground while turning my brain into an engineering calculator.

'If I use this rune, then the radius would become unstable...'

'Adding that rune could make it easier to pull out...'

'Damn, I forgot about this dependency...'

There were many thoughts that went through my head while I was busy collecting the stones for my new, single-use formation. And even more of them appeared when I started to carve those stones out.

"I'm done!" I finally uttered a massive moan of relief, falling back to the ground on my ass. I then closed my eyes and took a deep breath.

A sense of satisfaction spread throughout my soul and then exploded out into my mind and body.

"Do I even want to know what you were dabbling in?" Mia asked with a small smirk as squatted down by my side while making sure to pull on her dress over her knees.

We weren't in a private place yet, after all. Yet, for the sake of said private place, I just wasted nearly twice as much time as all the cultivators around us.

"You don't need to know," I said, taking one more breath before opening my eyes and basking in the beauty of the evening for a second. I then stood up and grabbed the stones I carved.

With all of them in my fist, I moved to the spot I'd already selected for what would become our lodging for the night.

"Because you will see it right now," I said while throwing a glance over my shoulder.

I turned my eyes back toward my target. My fingers tightened over the nine stones I imprinted with intricate designs.

"Go," I then muttered, throwing the stones forward and allowing them to arrange themselves in the air before falling to the ground.

Eight of the stones arranged themselves into a perfect hexagon, with the one remaining ending up right in the dead center of the figure.

"What's this?" Mia asked, raising up on her feet and approaching my side while throwing curious glances over my shoulder.

"An effect of my stubbornness," I replied with a grin before pushing a huge chunk of mana toward the newly-established formation.

The stones lit up, unable to hold all the mana I infused them with.

POOF!

The central stone suddenly sank to the ground, forced by the runes imprinted upon all the other stones.

The central stone disappeared deep into the ground, making it impossible for anyone to see it. Yet, as not only its creator but also the one in charge of the formation, I could still perfectly feel its presence and thus location.

'That should be deep enough,' I thought, before sending the second burst of mana into the outer stones.

Roughly ten percent of all the runes on the stones were imprinted in an extremely shallow manner. This was the most time-consuming part of the entire process of carving them out. Yet, at the same time, it was the only solution I managed to come up with that would save me the effort of carving fifty times more stones to achieve the same effect.

The stones turned red. The shallow runes then burned out, unable to hold even more mana that I infused into them. And as some of the circuits broke, the remaining runes naturally formed a slightly different formation.

A formation that could finally make use of all the other runes that were formerly redundant.

Ching!

As if a stone struck a metal plate, a loud noise filled the entire plain. And then, the ground sank a little before a small pillar of light rose from where the central stone sank to the ground.

'Did it work?' I thought, turning my mana vision towards the ground.

And just like I hoped, I could see a hexagonal barrier deployed roughly a meter underground.

"Now, this is what I was working on," I proudly mentioned while approaching the pillar of light.

I grasped the handle of the formation projected by the central stone. And with a single whisk of mana, I changed the hexagonal barrier at the bottom into just half of its full size.

'Let's go!' I encouraged myself, pulling on the handle with all the strength I developed since coming to this world.

And just like that, all the ground stuck within the hexagon of the formation and the barrier at its bottom... rose up.

As there was nothing above the ground stopping it, the earth that I pulled up with my barrier quickly started to fall to the sides, forming a small mound over the edge of the hexagon.

And just like that, what the cultivators who only possessed a fraction of my strength did with just a fair bit of physical effort, I achieved with only an hour of hard thinking and another hour of tinkering with the pebbles.

"Woah," Mia uttered a small moan of surprise when I excavated a huge chunk of earth with a single pull of my hand. "That's awesome..." she praised my efforts first, "but why?" she then asked.

A smile crept up to my lips.

"Why did I waste so much time on something I could do far faster just by digging with my hands?" I asked, turning around to take a look at Mia's lovely face. "Isn't it obvious?" I then asked, as if puzzled how she could miss the entire point of my endeavor.

"I wouldn't ask if I knew the answer," Mia pouted a little, crossing her arms on her chest.

"I knew that if I were to dig manually, you wouldn't be able to stand by the side and do nothing," I said with a small, cheeky smile. "So..." I turned my attention back to the half-hexagon worth of a hole in the ground before grasping the formation's handle and then turning it around.

"And I would rather work hard for an hour or two than let you dirty your hands with something so unnecessary," I revealed before pulling on the handle once again, excavating the second part of the earth from the hole that for the next night, we would call home.