

Ascension of the Sylvan Cosmos.

#Chapter 21. [Woodcrafter]'s Potential. - Read Ascension of the Sylvan Cosmos. Chapter 21. [Woodcrafter]'s Potential.

Chapter 21. [Woodcrafter]'s Potential.

After dealing with <Enchanted Growth>, Liu Shu turned her eyes toward <Woodcrafter>. While this skill seemed basic, similar to Enchanted Growth, Liu Shu could feel that it could become something really interesting.

However, Liu Shu first needed to know what materials she could use to create these. The first one that came to mind was herself. 'The System said that I could use myself. Should I try creating something with that?'

Flor appeared by her side, asking. "Liu Shu, what are you doing? I feel a strange aura coming from you." Of course, there would be no answer for Flor. Communication was impossible.

However, Liu Shu had an idea. With her <World Tree Eye>, she quickly spotted a relatively thick branch around 7 meters away. First, she used the nature of [Willow Strike] to send one of her branches and coil around it, tugging at it and throwing it at her body.

Flor curiously followed Liu Shu's movements and suddenly saw the branch stop mid-air.

Now entirely focused on the branch floating before her trunk, Liu Shu began using Anima Energy and Aether Mana to shape it. Since she didn't know about weapons or anything similar, she transformed it into the only weapon she had seen until now: a set of claws.

The wood began changing shapes as if it were dough, following Liu Shu's will. Flor, stunned by this, looked on with fascination.

Liu Shu worked on it slowly, molding the wood to her will, and hours passed.

Her Aether Mana and Anime Energy consumption was quite strong, but eventually, she managed to morph the entire stick into an almost perfect replica of a Thornstride claw. Moreover, it was rose-fairy-sized so that they could wear it.

After that, the claw fell, and a notification popped in Liu Shu's mind.

[You've created a <Wooden Thornstride Claw Level 1 (Unranked)>. You've gained 1 Proficiency.]

Liu Shu looked at the message for a few seconds and asked in her mind, confused. 'Unranked?'

[System Hint: Items that don't qualify to be ranked as F- or Basic Rank are classified as Unranked.]

Our little tree became speechless, feeling dumbfounded for the first time. 'All of that effort for one unranked item?'

Her gaze moved toward the ternary essences, and she saw her Aether Mana and Anima Energy had been reduced to half.

'...'

Flor approached the claws that had fallen to the ground and picked them up with interest.

[Thornstride Wooden Claw Level 1 (Unranked)]

Physique +1

System Note: The first item created by Tianlian Liu Shu is a very weak weapon that can only help F Rank creatures from Level 1 to 3 at most. It is nothing but an accessory for higher levels and not a weapon that should be taken seriously.

Flor's lips twitched as she read the System Note. 'Ruthless.'

Still, Flor didn't linger on the note and thought about why Liu Shu showed her this. After all, the young World Tree probably had something in mind when she showed her this. 'Does she want to create weapons for us? But... Why claws?'

Looking at them, while the size was different, they were undoubtedly Thornstride claws. It is a four-digit claw, with the second from the right being much longer and with a powerful hook.

Other than that, the others were serrated and could grab onto the bark and cut really efficiently, a claw specialized for cutting trees.

Flor looked between the four-meter-tall willow tree and the claw a few times, pondering. 'It would be nice if the system note helped...'

Looking at it again, Flor was stunned to find the note had changed.

System Note: Tianlian Liu Shu's first item. It is a very weak weapon that can only help F-rank creatures from Level 1 to 3 at most. It is nothing but an accessory for higher levels and not a weapon that should be taken seriously. It was created with the intention of helping the creatures that took care of her. Still, because Tianlian Liu Shu lacked knowledge about weapons and materials, this was the best she could come up with.

Flor's eyes widened, and she suddenly remembered something she had heard from the city people while she was exploring. Her lips arched as she laughed. "World Trees... They truly are the little darlings of the World."

Knowing what Liu Shu wanted to tell her, Flor smiled. "Wait a moment, Liu Shu. I'll carry over a few things that you will love."

Then, she turned around and called Clavel. "Clavel! Take with you ten Rose Fairies and get the stack of items we saved in that place."

Clavel tilted her head. "We'll change its hiding spot? However, Chief- Ah! I mean, Queen, where will we store them?"

Flor pointed at the floor by Liu Shu's side. "Over there. Just give it all to Liu Shu. I'll create a small treasury there and allow Liu Shu to swallow it as she grows. We can create something to drop our findings inside while also leaving an opening for us to enter should we ever need them."

Clavel didn't ask why and nodded. They realized how much importance Flor gave Liu Shu. She was like a protective guardian to her, always thinking about her needs.

In Clavel's memory, while Flor had been quite protective of their previous "home trees," it never reached the current point. Of course, the Rose Fairies weren't stupid enough not to notice that Flor's sudden increase in strength had something to do with Liu Shu. Hence, nobody complained and followed orders enthusiastically.

Even the oldest fairies, who were a bit reluctant about leaving their previous Level 16 Home Tree behind, didn't say anything and worked like the others.

Flor saw Clavel leaving with Amapola and called the rest to work on excavating the ground. The way to do it was using pressurized Wind Aether Mana.

With it, they would be able to blow the dirt away without hurting the roots of any plant creature. Before that, they used their excellent botanic skills to move all the flowers from that spot.

Liu Shu looked from the side as the Rose Fairies expertly used their Mana to dig up flowers and move them while another group used a bit of the extract prepared for her to plant them back in other nearby places.

She couldn't understand, as Liu Shu's instinct as a tree was to take as much space and sunlight as possible to grow tall, strong, and healthy. For Liu Shu, any other flora that wasn't under her indirect or direct control was actually competition.

While it didn't seem like so, plants were brutal in the battle for survival. They grew taller to absorb more sunlight and block others, absorbed the earth's nutrients from other plants and made them wither, forced the surrounding energy into them, and did not take into account other smaller plants... The battle for survival in the plant world was ruthless.

That was one reason tall and powerful trees usually had no other similar-sized vegetation surrounding them. Much smaller plants didn't take much resources so that they could survive, but between two large plants that were close enough, only one of them survived.

As with everything, there were exceptions, but that was the usual rule.

Either way, returning to the Rose Fairies' actions, Liu Shu could see that they had advanced quite a lot. 'Hm? How much time passed?'

She could feel that a few hours had gone by, but she had been quite dazed, thinking about other things, making her not notice. 'Oh? So that's how my roots are!'

There was a hole around 4 meters deep, and from side to side of the hole, Liu Shu's roots could be seen. They were very different from other plants, though.

Even the Rose Fairies couldn't help but pause to look at them.

The World Tree's roots were brown colored but filled with neon-like blue lights and a pulse. The feeling of life coming from them was unlike any other plant. Moreover, there was an almost unnoticeable mist roiling around them.

One Rose Fairy asked Flor. "Queen, what is this mist? It makes me feel quite comfortable."

Flor looked at it for a long while and approached. After touching it, her red eyes flashed with surprise. "This... It is Aether Mana and Anima Energy Mist. Look at your regeneration."

The Rose Fairies opened their system and saw a small increase in energy regeneration when standing near the mist, making a few of them exclaim.

"Liu Shu is so amazing!"

"Not only are her fruits delicious and give so many benefits, but even her presence is mystical."

"Right? I'm glad Clavel found her! Living with her, our next generations might finally find a forever home!"

Rose fairies were nomads, but not by choice. Rose Fairies inherently enjoyed cultivating gardens, immersing themselves in the nurturing process akin to diligent bees. They found fulfillment in pollinating flora and nurturing their growth.

It didn't take too long to create their future vault where they would store their precious belongings.

After one and a half weeks, it was done.

Clavel's group also transported all the treasures from all their hiding spots and stored them in the new vault, which was seven meters deep from the surface, with around 240 cubic meters after the two meters of cover that would go on top of it.

Liu Shu had been fascinated all this time, using her energy to create flowers and help them as much as she could. They came in handy, as each fairy had an extra 50 of each ternary essence after eating them.

Flor could've helped more, but she didn't. It was a good way to practice Aether Mana's control. She wouldn't be silly enough to give up this opportunity in exchange for speeding up the process.

Right now, they were at war, but with her newfound increase in strength, Flor was actually not nervous.

Liu Shu suddenly received a notification.

[Space that can be used as storage detected. Do you wish to envelop it with your <Woodcrafter> skill and make it yours? Yes or no?]

Our girl was suddenly at a loss. 'What should I do? They built it with so much effort... Can I take it just like that?'

Liu Shu was about to say no, but Flor suddenly approached. "Liu Shu, do you like it? We've built this for you so that you can store things in it. Our things are inside as well, but you can use them at will. For more essential items, we'll make ours in another place. Don't worry."

'...'

Liu Shu looked at Flor deeply, making the Rose Fairy Queen actually feel her gaze enveloping her figure. However, even with such pressure, Flor felt comfortable, as if Liu Shu was giving her a hug.

She laughed a bit and flew forward, gently hugging Liu Shu's trunk. "I'm glad you like it, Liu Shu."

Without further ado, the World Tree's aura underwent a change as she answered, her tone more dignified than ever before. 'Make it mine.'

Chapter 22. Assimilating The Vault.

'Make it mine.'

With Tianlian Liu Shu's acceptance, an intense, draining sensation overcame her.

WHOOSH!

A wind of energies enveloped the place, making every Rose Fairy exclaim as they flew away to safety and looked on with curiosity and wonder at what their new Tree friend was doing.

Liu Shu's mind activity took a hit as her <World Tree Eye> became utterly unusable together with other ongoing functions. Then, her other skills stopped working, like <Nature's Gift>. Of course, this didn't mean that the berries she had started growing would wilt. Instead, it just meant that they would need to grow at a normal pace.

'W-Why am I so dizzy?'

Our Level 3 World Tree looked at her ternary essences and got a scare.

They were decreasing at a rate of almost one every five seconds. While it didn't sound as much, that was 720 of her Aether Mana and Anima Energy per hour! Her current regeneration didn't even reach a tenth of that number.

Liu Shu exclaimed. 'W-Wait, system! Stop. Take energy slower! What are you doing!?'

However, as much as she asked for it, the system didn't reply.

'What to do!? What should I do!?'

After panicking for a few moments, Liu Shu endured the mind ache and tried to do something about it. 'My energy is leaking from my roots, so I need to cut off the energy flow toward those places. Quick!'

Using the energy control she had been learning during the past few days, Liu Shu's every cell became active as they tried to move things in a direction that didn't mean her death or something worse.

Meanwhile, outside, the Rose Fairies became mesmerized as the tree's roots began coiling around the vault they built. The beautiful neon-blue veined roots moved as if they had a mind of their own, enveloping the entire excavated area in a beautiful shade of browns and blues.

After 10 minutes, each of her energies had lowered by around 120 points without including Phoer. This has been the thing that had calmed Liu Shu quickly, that her <Phoer Body Shards> weren't being consumed. Still, if Aether Mana or Anima Energy reached 0, it would mean trouble, more so if the assimilation of the vault kept sucking after that. It would probably start affecting her Phoer Body Shards.

Flor looked at what was happening and then frowned. 'This... So much energy? How are her reserves doing?'

Looking over and using her system, she saw they had been considerably reduced. Moreover, as she looked on, she saw that the spending pace was absurdly quick.

Flor's face became severe. 'Is this a constant decrease or a one-time thing?'

The Rose Fairy Queen didn't take long to realize the problem. 'What's going on? Is she too young to control her energies? Or has she done something that she shouldn't have?'

After 30 minutes more, with incredible efforts, Liu Shu managed to close a few of her energy pathways by compressing her roots, decelerating the speed at which the energy left her body.

That added to her own energy control and reduced the 720/hour to around 220/hour.

Even then, it was too much. After all, Liu Shu's Aether Mana and Anima Energy regeneration were much lower than that.

One hour passed and then another. Slowly but surely, Liu Shu learned new ways to manipulate her internal energies and quickly reduced her energy expenditure.

Her Aether Mana hit 400/1013, and her energy consumption was still at 50/hour. Liu Shu's exact Aether Mana regeneration was 36.5, so she needed to slice that 50 per hour more before she could relax her nerves.

With her mind aching like crazy

One day passed, and her Aether Mana Shards hit 150/1013.

By now, all the Rose Fairies had noticed Liu Shu's strangeness.

Looking at the vault, which was partially covered by Liu Shu's roots, they couldn't help but worry. By now, Liu Shu had only managed to surround the floor and one of the walls with her roots. At this pace, she would run out of mana before she could complete it.

"Queen, will she be alright?"

Flor answered flatly. "I don't know. We just need to wait and believe."

Inside, she was thinking that it should be impossible for a World Tree to die this way. However, her worries weren't alleviated.

Thankfully, she had a revelation by the time Liu Shu's Aether Mana, her lowest energy reserve, hit 112 units. 'I have been trying to control the energy pouring into the vault all this time. Still, after thinking about it, why didn't I just control the place where I stored this energy, the <World Tree Heart>?'

After thinking for a second, she let go of all the control she had gathered until now, instantly skyrocketing her use to the original 720/hour.

The Rose Fairies looked on, horrified, as the strong energy surge they had seen at first happened again.

Flor became nervous and flew to Liu Shu's side. "Little one, don't give up. You can do it! Come on, dear. Gain control again!"

Of course, Liu Shu was still unable to communicate and was too focused on herself to hear anything else. Hence, she didn't hear Flor's pleas.

Thankfully for Flor, this surge in energy wasn't because Liu Shu gave up.

With 110 Aether Mana Shards left, this meant she would last around 9 minutes more at most. However, unlike the first time, her proficiency at gaining control over the energy surge increased exponentially.

After one minute, it was reduced to 650, after another minute, 520. The number kept getting lower, and the time she had to work with increased as she lowered her consumption.

It didn't take five minutes to understand the way her <World Tree Heart> innately worked. 'I see... So this is where this is made... Hm... So, if I stop this, what happens?'

Her success was much better during the first five minutes than with her previous method. Although the consumption had been reduced to around 150/hour, it was still too much.

However, now that she had fixed it at 150 with her <World Tree Heart>, she started combining her previous method, blocking and controlling energy from flowing through her roots.

Naturally, consciously stopping something similar to a heartbeat would usually be impossible. Still, World Trees and other creatures of their stature had natural control over their processes, allowing them to stop things at will.

Combining both methods, her consumption went from 150 down to 30 in a matter of ten more minutes.

When Liu Shu felt the strain disappear, she couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Right as she managed to deal with that, her young and undeveloped mind felt the tension leaving her body, and her consciousness was swallowed by darkness in what would be her first relatively long sleep.

Outside, the Rose Fairies finally let out a sigh of relief when they saw the Aether Mana Shards stop dropping after reaching 27/1013 and the Anima Energy Shards stop at around 68/1044.

This was a situation where they couldn't help even if they wanted to, so they were extremely worried during the ordeal.

Now, seeing that it had ended, many of them fell to the ground on their backs.

Clavel commented while looking at the sky with a tired expression, fear still lingering in her voice. "Queen, should we avoid building things by her side in the future?"

The rest of the Rose Fairies felt their lips twitch. 'Why are you asking about obvious things?'

Still, to their surprise, Flor shook her head. "We should've done so since the beginning. Our ignorance had placed her at risk. However, Liu Shu seems to have mastered an unknown method of controlling her energy use output. So, from now on, she shouldn't have any problems if we do something similar."

Clavel smiled wryly. "We almost messed up, huh."

Amapola looked at the now very slowly moving roots and asked. "How long will it take for her to wake up?"

As close as they were to nature, it wasn't hard to realize that all of Liu Shu's functions had stopped working as her aura focused on the vault. Many of the high-level fairies understood that Liu Shu had probably fallen unconscious.

Flor approached again and gently caressed Liu Shu's relatively smooth bark. "Who knows? The only thing we will be recklessly like before. Trees can fall asleep for a really long time, so let's focus on strengthening this place and planting a few other fruit trees around here to feed ourselves."

A few of the fairies blinked and looked at Flor. Flor smiled and nodded. "It's time we settle down or at least work for it. Liu Shu will become our forever home."

Many fairies shot to the sky and cheered. This was the first time Flor had spoken about it to everyone so clearly. The already affectionate eyes of the fairies when looking at Liu Shu became even more gentle, and then they all started diligently attending to her surroundings.

Flor never forgot to use her <Royal Pollination> on Liu Shu. Even if it gave a bit less experience than normal pollination for now, the royal one gave extra benefits that Flor believed were worth it.

Weeks passed, and her mind reawakened precisely two months after Liu Shu fell asleep. Each month had 30 days, while years had 360 days, with 12 months each year.

'Woah... that was a long and nice sleep~. Hehe.' Liu Shu was about to open her <World Tree Eye> when the system bombarded her with alerts.

[Congratulations! You've assimilated the first construct. You've unlocked the City Planning]

[Congratulations! You now have a <Inventory> where you can store, retrieve, and manipulate items by spending small amounts of Anima Energy.]

[You've managed to assimilate your first construct before Level 5 as a World Tree. You gain 150 Sylvanium Shards, Etherium Shards, Celestium Shards, Ascendium Shards, and Cognium Shards.]

[System Hint: You can mix 100 Shards to create one Ore. For example: 100 Sylvanium Shards can fuse and become 1 Sylvanium Ore.]

[You've assimilated <Basic Vault>. You can name all your constructs from now on. You can also choose to give them a basic tag. Would you like to choose one?]

Liu Shu looked at the several messages with a stunned expression. 'A tag? What's that for?'

[System Hint: A tag will name all your constructs by default. For example, if you choose Arboreal, the vault will be renamed to <Arboreal Vault>. Creatures that inspect it with the system will see the name.]

Liu Shu pondered as her reawakened mind spun what name to choose. 'But... I don't know many words. Can you give me a list, System?'

[...]

[System Hint: Here are ten from which you can choose.]

[1.- Arboreal

2.- Woody

3.- Sappy

4.- Branching

5.- Foliated

6.- Leafy

7.- Timbered

8.- Lignified

9.- Trunked

10.- Canopying]

Liu Shu pondered and considered her options. After around two hours of slow thinking, she came to a conclusion. 'Lignified! I like that the most.'

[Will you choose <Lignified> as a tag? You can change it later.]

'Yeah.'

[Congratulations! You've assimilated <Lignified Vault>! After assimilating it, you've gained 390,000 Proficiency points in <Woodcrafter>!]

[Woodcrafter has Leveled Up!]

[Woodcrafter has Leveled Up!]

[Woodcrafter has Leveled Up!]

[Woodcrafter has Leveled Up!]

<Woodcrafter (E- Rank Level 5 [1000/486,000])>

Liu Shu exclaimed. 'Wow!'

Author Note: Hello, dear~. I have a Patreon page! I'm uploading the art of the novel, which has 45+ completed images, 110+ sketches, and 15+ chapters compared to the daily. Moreover, it is for both [Heaven, Earth, Me] and [Ascension of the Sylvan cosmos]! Also, there is ZERO AI art. All the art I've uploaded has been hand-drawn.

Much love and hugs,
Mortrexo.

Chapter 23. A Quest? Communicating With Flor For The First Time.

Liu Shu was happy that one of her skills made such a giant leap. However, the system's messages had not yet been finished, as one very strange but important one appeared before her.

[Quest Received: Clear the nearby surroundings and build a safe town for human-sized creatures.

Completion Conditions: Create or assimilate 10 <Basic House>, 1 <Basic Well>, 1 <Basic Farmland>, 1 <Basic Inn>, 1 <Basic Town Hall>, 1 <Basic Defensive Fence>, 2 <Basic Defense Building>.

Rewards: Sylvanium Shards [50], Etherium Shards [50], Ascendium Shards [50], Celestium Shards [50], Cognium Shards [50].]

Liu Shu looked at it in confusion. 'Quest? So... Something I need to do?'

She didn't receive a system hint like usual, so she stopped caring about it. 'Well, I know what each of those things is, but...' Liu Shu would've been frowning if she had a face. 'How do I build them?'

Although it was a question in her mind, she didn't bother thinking about it too deeply. 'Well, let's see what happened around me while I was taking a nap~. <World Tree Eye> open!'

The world around her was suddenly illuminated, and everything appeared in her mind. The first thing she realized was... 'Oh! I'm taller!'

And taller she was. Our Liu Shu had achieved breaking through the 5-meter-tall! Seeing this, Liu Shu realized that she could also grow taller without needing to <Level Up>.

Moreover, she could see that a strange wooden door with beautiful neon-blue veins was lying horizontally by her side, probably heading into the ground. Her <World Tree Eye>

expanded and crossed it, looking inside. After all, that door was made from her roots. It was only normal for her to be able to see through.

'Oh! So many things!'

[Do you want to open your inventory?]

'Hm? The inventory I got earlier is this thing?'

Without any hurry, Liu Shu observed the vault. While it was made out of wood, it had a beautiful aesthetic as her energy veins covered its entirety. Moreover, because it was underground, it should've been dark. However, thanks to the glowing blue veins, there was light, illuminating everything in a mesmerizing manner.

After looking around for a while, Liu Shu nodded. 'Yes? I want to open the inventory!'

A page appeared in her mind, showing a list of items. 'Oh!'

Liu Shu exclaimed in wonder, reading through them. 'They have nice names... Even though I don't know what they are for, their names are nice! Oh! There are even a few of those shards I just received!'

And with that, Liu Shu was satisfied and closed the inventory.

I mean, she is a tree. What did you expect? For her to start investigating the effects and crafting super-optimized items?

'Now... Open system window!'

The system window unfolded in her mind, and Liu Shu received another surprise. 'A few skills have grown in level! So nice~.' Liu Shu paused and thought. 'I should sleep more often. There are so many good things after waking up... Hm?'

Name: Tianlian Liu Shu

Titles:

<Awakened>: A title that's gained when a tree gains sapience and evolves, gaining human-like intelligence.

<World Tree>: A tree that can grow to be an overlord, admired by many, hated by some.

Hidden titles: [9]

Race: World Tree.

Energy Method: Basic World Energy Gathering (Gathers experience points*Level per day.)

Level: 3 [0/1110]

Aether Mana Shards: 1013/1013 (+36,5/Hour)

Phoer Body Shards: 1499/1499 (+54/Hour)

Anima Energy Shards: 1044/1044 (+37,6/Hour)

Attributes: Aether 27 (21+6), Physique 37 (27+10), Anima 29 (24+5), Willpower 30 (30), Destiny 300 (300)

Affinity Percentage: Aether Resonance (25), Physique Refinement (35), Anima Affinity (20)

Resistance Percentage: Aether Resistance (31), Physique Resistance (37), Spiritual Resistance (32), Mental Resistance (35)

Talents:

<Enchanted Growth (E+ Rank level 1 [400/18000])>

<Woodcrafter (E- Rank Level 5 [1000/486000])>

<Nature's Gift (F Rank level 4 [10/9300])>

<Willow Strike (F- Rank level MAX)>

<Willow Strike Barrage (F Rank level 2 [620/1200])>

Passive Skills:

<World Tree Heart (A Rank Level 1 [0/589900])>

<World Tree Eye (C Rank level 1 [1620/144000])>

<World Tree Wisdom (SSS Rank Level Max.)>

<Charm of the Seedling (F Rank Level 5 [1000/18000])>:

Accumulated Experience: 722

Currency: Sylvanium Shards [150], Etherium Shards [150], Ascendium Shards [150], Celestium Shards [150], Cognium Shards [150].

Inventory [Lignified Vault (Basic Construct)]: Saplingwood (F- Rank [8Kg]), Drizzlewood (F- Rank [12Kg]), Sproutheart (F Rank [2kg]), Woodbreak Sword (F Rank [Broken]), Basic Phoeer Berry (F- Rank [123]), Basic...

Her "eyes" moved and landed on the system's last line.

Accumulated Experience: 722.

Liu Shu was instantly flabbergasted. 'WOW!'

The other things she had received until now were good, but as a Tree, she wasn't that excited about them. After all, she couldn't grow taller with them.

But with this? Liu Shu was a happy tree!

Happy enough for the Rose Fairies to notice that she had woken up.

'How did I gather so much experience, though?'

The answer was with Flor. It had been around 60 days since Liu Shu leveled up, meaning she had been giving Liu Shu 9 Experience Points per day. Then, Liu Shu's World Energy Gathering worked without needing Liu Shu to do anything, and the experience it provided daily was 3 points.

Adding the remaining 2 Experience points from her Level Up, Liu Shu had accumulated 722.

As she observed the system page, she realized that <Willow Strike> was at max level. Right after she looked at it, a message popped up.

[<Willow Strike> has reached the maximum level. Do you want to spend 15 Experience to increase its tier?]

Liu Shu nodded, reducing her experience to 707.

[<Willow Strike (F- Rank)> has Tiered Up to <Willow Strike (F Rank)!]

<Willow Strike (F Rank level 1 [0/200])>: The World Tree is from a willow family, with characteristic long but thin branches. She can use Aether Mana to move them and strike a target. Range 20 meters.

'Oh? The range increased! Really nice~.'

At this moment, she saw Flor approaching with a smile. "Good morning, Liu Shu. I hope you had a nice rest."

Liu Shu answered her back in her head in a cheerful manner. 'Good morning, Flor!'

Then, the Rose Fairy Queen looked at the floor door leading to the vault and laughed. "I didn't expect it to become such an ordeal. Are you all right, Liu Shu?"

Liu Shu tried to convey her feelings, and it worked surprisingly well. Of course, as always, she took her time.

After around 20 minutes of asking, Flor felt a wave of energy hit her, conveying a simple emotion that told her to relax. This surprised both of them. Liu Shu blinked. 'When did my energy control become so sharp?'

Flor tilted her head. "Liu Shu, did you gain a skill to control your energy?"

Liu Shu tried again, sending an energy wave that conveyed a negative to her answer. This time, Liu Shu spent more concentration, making her answer relatively quick.

Flor actually understood, making her feel ecstatic. "Although it is limited. With this simple method, we can finally properly communicate!"

The usually elegant and calm Rose Fairy Queen couldn't help but giggle as she flew around the tree. Speaking of the tree. Her trunk had "matured" quite nicely.

While the female shape specific to World Trees was still not too noticeable, now you didn't need to be drunk to discern it. If someone stepped close enough, they would be able to see the budding figure of a woman slowly coming out of the gently twisting trunk.

Her branches were still willow-like, thick and long, dropping around her as hairs of a woman would.

Her bark was still brown, with very dim blue undertones from the energy moving inside her body.

Flor wanted to ask Liu Shu questions now that they could communicate somewhat. However, she couldn't think of anything. "Hm... Liu Shu, do you like the plant food we prepare for you?"

Although communication was possible, from Flor's point of view, it was honestly not a pleasant sensation. After asking, the tree before her would go silent as if she was appreciating something extremely profound about her question.

Of course, Flor knew that Trees were usually slow in thinking, so she didn't mind and waited. In the meantime, Flor spoke with other fairies and warned them about it. "I've managed to communicate with Liu Shu, albeit poorly. Tell the others."

One of them nodded enthusiastically and flew around, telling the news to others. Flor also moved toward one of Liu Shu's branches and began using a specialized brush made out of the hairs of a bear-type creature.

These bears would often rub against trees to scratch their back, and at the same time, they would clean the trees they scratched against. That was why many trees that had consciousness just ignored those bears. Some even bothered, throwing them fruit or something.

Regardless, with the brush hand-made by Flor, she began cleaning the branches. Flor was not alone at this, as there were fairies attending Liu Shu almost 24/7. Our young tree just didn't realize because she ignored all of them.

Before the Fairies arrived, there were bugs and such as well. So, in Liu Shu's mind, the inhabitants around her just changed from bugs to fairies.

As a tree, Liu Shu could not be judgmental of certain types of creatures unless they were people who attacked them first.

Naturally, there were races that Liu Shu disliked because they were too brazen, but all in all, relationships in the wild weren't as simple as they sounded.

After a while, Flor felt the affirmation coming from Tianlian Liu Shu about her question and nodded. She laughed a bit. 'Honestly, I should ask more questions about her origins, etc. But I don't want to go back and forth in a yes or no answer type of question.'

Flor pondered and remembered that before Liu Shu went into a deep sleep, she had built that strange claw. "Liu Shu, what were you trying to gift me with the claws? Weapons? Do you want to make me a weapon?"

On the other hand, Liu Shu, who had been pondering how to communicate about this, cheered. 'Finally, Flor speaks about something I want. She is not the deepest root in the groove for how fast she speaks and answers. Hehehe~.'

After some deliberation, Liu Shu finally expressed her desire to help by creating tools and weapons for the Rose Fairies. Liu Shu's only reason for doing an active movement to help like this one was that this group of red-headed small women was highly attentive to her.

She liked them, and she would be sad if they all died suddenly. However, it wasn't to the point of letting her roots starve.

Flor heard the affirmation and smiled. "That's good to know. Well, let me tell you a bit about weapon designs."

After around 3 hours of "talking," Flor and Liu Shu would soon begin a weapon-building factory.

Chapter 24. Ignatia Appears Again.

Flor has recently gained a problem. She had talked with Liu Shu about creating weapons and such, but she didn't know how to do it.

Of course, it wasn't like Flor didn't know some basic facts about it. Flor was someone who had roamed near cities for a few years while traveling to unlock her Level 10.

So, if someone asked who knew the most among all Rose Fairies, it was her. Not even the older fairies could compare since all of them just stayed in the forest all their lives living in the group.

That's why most of those older fairies were weakened Level 7s or 8s. Remember that as creatures aged, their ternary essences slowly dwindled. There was a limit, but natural death came as soon as they could not support the body's functions.

Anyway, regarding the creation of weapons, Flor was clueless. 'I said I would help, but how? If I knew how to create weapons, I would've equipped the Rose fairies with them.'

Amapola arrived, and Flor saw a few burn injuries on her. Her eyes scanned her Phoeer reserves, and they were actually down a third. "What happened?"

Amapola sighed. "Queen, the ant queen wants to speak with you. We told her that you were busy, and she got slightly aggressive. These wounds are her warning."

Flor snorted. "Lately, everyone thinks that they can come and go in my territory as they please!"

She flew forward, using her skills, and quickly flashed through the sky toward where the chaos was occurring.

Meanwhile, on the other side, the Ant Queen smiled indifferently. "Little dolls, how about you make way? I want to talk with your leader, not fight her. If not, I would've carried a few more of my children."

Clavel looked at the nearly 200 ants behind her, and the corner of her eye twitched. 'There are more?'

Because the regeneration of the ternary essences was slow, swarming high-level creatures was quite a successful way to hunt stronger enemies. For ants, which could multiply quickly, it was a very intuitive and easy way to do so.

Clavel spoke. "Queen Ignatia, our Queen is unable to come and meet you. If you wait a bit, she will naturally come."

Ignatia hummed. "You also call her Queen? I remember that previously, you little dolls called her chief or leader. What changed?"

A gust of wind lifted the fallen leaves of the forest as Flor arrived. Ignatia and Flor exchanged glances, and Flor answered. "I changed."

Ignatia laughed. "Oh? The weakest of the above Level 10s has actually gained a bit of strength?"

Flor shook her head. "Ignatia. Don't provoke, you can't win."

Ignatia's lips arched. "Even when we outnumber you? While I admit your flying ability is annoying, it is not something I haven't prepared against."

However, Flor just said. "Ignatia.... You can't win."

Ignatia paused. In the past, even when Flor was provoked, she always opted to tell her that fighting was not worth it for both sides. However, today has changed.

Ignatia laughed, her voluptuous body moving with it. "Hey, you are quite funny, Flor. Even if you've become Level 11, could you please not underestimate me?"

Flor sighed and asked. "Why have you come."

Ignatia snorted. "Well, I also dislike getting entangled in pointless word battles." Then, she smirked. "Let me see that tree."

"I refuse."

The rejection came in a record time as Flor utterly slammed her wish into the ground and immolated it with two words.

Ignatia asked, speechless. "Can you at least think about it?"

Flor snorted. "No. That tree is completely out of limits for strange people. Especially someone like you."

The Ant Queen didn't know how to react to such a blunt answer. Negotiation would usually ensue until they reached a common ground, but with a flat-out refusal, there was no way Ignatia could slowly negotiate.

What was worse was that the Ant Queen saw Flor turning around as if their conversation had ended!

"Wait, wait, wait! Flor!"

Flor turned around in confusion. "Anything else?"

Ignatia stomped the ground, making her ample bosom jiggle. "Many! Why did you flat-out reject me!? I have something that you will probably like!"

Flor didn't immediately dismiss her and listened this time. "Ho? For example?"

Ignatia smiled and called one of the one-meter-tall ants at the back. Then, she threw the pouch that had been hanging on the ant's pincers at Flor. While they were competitors, and some might even call them enemies, Ignatia knew Flor's character. So, she wasn't afraid of being robbed. "Look at those."

Flor used her Aether Mana to catch the pouch, which was almost as big as herself and looked inside. Her eyebrows rose a few notches, showing satisfaction. Ignatia grinned. "What do you say? Is that enough to let me see that tree of yours?"

Flor wanted to disagree, but if she really continued refusing, Ignatia would probably be angry. She didn't want another enemy with the Thornstrides constantly lurking around. "Wait for a second. I need to ask." Before leaving, she stopped because she remembered something. "By the way, it will take a while. Trees are quite slow thinkers."

Ignatia's eyes flashed. 'Oh? So the tree is the real chief?' Without showing her surprise, she grinned. "Sure, take your time."

Flor returned to Liu Shu's side and asked. "Liu Shu, there is a powerful person that wants to see you. She doesn't have bad intentions, so there shouldn't be any problems."

Liu Shu was looking at her system when she heard Flor's voice. 'Another little friend similar to Flor?'

Liu Shu looked at Flor's stats just to remember the difference between them.

Aether Mana Shards: 12432/12432

Phoer Body Shards: 3612/3612

Anima Energy Shards: 5845/5845

Then, Tianlian Liu Shu looked at her own.

Aether Mana Shards: 1013/1013

Phoer Body Shards: 1499/1499

Anima Energy Shards: 1044/1044

'Another Flor... It would be very dangerous.'

Looking back at Flor, who had, at some point, sat down on one of her branches while swinging her legs, Liu Shu sent a message conveying affirming thoughts.

Flor understood and smiled. "Hm? You've finished? Good. Tell me what you think about it."

Liu Shu asked herself if she trusted Flor enough to bring another of that caliber near her trunk. After thinking for a while, she decided that she did. So, she sent the message back to her, conveying another type of affirmation, one that was heavier in meaning, as if telling her. "I trust you."

Flor understood and laughed, hugging Liu Shu's thick and relatively smooth trunk. "Thank you for trusting me, little one."

Ignatia waited for around one hour before she saw Flor coming over. "Well, how was it?"

Flor commented. "You can go, but leave those 200 ants that you carried over far away."

Ignatia snorted and dragged out her tone as she walked forward. "Sure ~."

They walked inside and entered the grove where Liu Shu was. While walking, Ignatia also realized how many fairies were waiting at the side. After all, unlike her own race, fairies couldn't reproduce as easily.

After walking through the peaceful grove, Ignatia arrived at an open space. There was nothing around the tree other than some vegetation.

Even then, the place didn't feel dull. Ignatia looked around with a smile. "There are so many good things... Hm?"

Her eyes landed on the relatively tall tree, and her mind and heart raced. "Wow! Look at her trunk's shape. It's so pretty. Why is she like that? It looks like the very vague silhouette of a woman's body!"

Flor rolled her eyes and told her. "Go on. Didn't you want to tell her something? Or at least, check something?"

Liu Shu saw Flor arrive with an extremely tall person. For her, who was used to seeing the 20-centimeter-tall flying people, seeing the explosive Ignatia was a hit to the mind. 'Wow, she is so... Big.'

[<Charm of the Seedling> has attracted a <Fire Ant Queen Level 11>. Proficiency increased by 110.]

This skill was always triggered when a new being approached her, so Liu Shu wasn't surprised at the sudden flux of proficiency points.

Ignatia smiled and stopped about five meters away from Liu Shu. "Well, hello, little one. I wanted to ask if it was okay if my children and I moved in nearby."

Flor blinked and looked at her with confusion. "Why? Did something happen to your nest?"

Since the Rose Fairy Queen knew the true race of Liu Shu, she didn't stop her from moving in. World Trees was a gathering of people from everywhere. They were a symbol of protection, strength, and wisdom in those countries.

So, stopping someone from taking shelter nearby was okay with Flor. Not only that, she expected more creatures to appear that managed to be lucky enough to be by Liu Shu's side as she grew exponentially taller and stronger.

Ignatia had recently learned that Liu Shu usually took a while to answer, so she decided to answer Flor first. "There is nothing wrong with my nest. I just wanted to move closer to one of my previously abandoned nests. I'll probably need to fight off the rogue ants that went there later."

Flor smirked. "What if there is another Ant Queen in that nest?"

Ignatia smiled. "I'll kill her."

Flor paused, sensing intense killing intent coming from Ignatia. "Ho? So aggressive?"

Ignatia snorted. "There can only be one Ant Queen, and that's me."

Suddenly, the Ant Queen felt a strange aura envelope her, giving her the feeling that someone or something was eagerly welcoming them. Ignatia grinned. "Thank you, Lady Tree~."

Liu Shu and Flor looked at the tall woman's retreating back with interest. "Well, she is gone. Now, what are you going to do?"

Liu Shu planned to see her improved fruit-making in action, so she did so. First, she used the same 200 points of Aether Mana and Anima energy to activate the skill. Then, she used it across her branches.

The beautiful willow was suddenly swallowed in an explosion of flowers that covered her entire canopy.

Liu Shu was stunned. 'I created 1000 flowers!'

Previously, she could create around one flower per mana point. Now, she could do five without problems. She had created 250 flowers of each of the berries. Then, Liu Shu used her enhancing ability to make those flowers bloom.

Flor watched from the side with a smile, relishing in the creature that, at just Level 3, could manipulate the energies in such a manner. It was honestly unthinkable for someone like herself.

If she didn't have the advantage of having ten times her Aether Mana pool, Liu Shu would probably be able to outclass her mana usage-wise already.

Finally, after Liu Shu happily reactivated <Enchanted Growth> and the other actions she had placed on hold because of the assimilation of the <Lignified Vault>, Liu Shu turned her eyes toward the things that she wanted to create. Equipment!

Chapter 25. Trying to build something? Flor's peculiar encounter.

Liu Shu looked into the <Lignified Vault> and searched for the things Flor left there. 'So many materials~. Which one should I choose?'

Of course, the thing that appeared when analyzing a material with the system wasn't a full description of every detail. If one just needed the system to know everything about the material, there wouldn't be science studies and similar.

What appeared was that the person analyzing could understand. For example, when Liu Shu analyzed one of her fallen branches that Flor had stored, this message appeared.

[World Tree Branch <D+ Rank Sylvanium (Level 3)>: A branch from a very young and weak World Tree. It is valuable, but it can only be used for low-level crafts. Its elasticity and sturdiness are its biggest qualities, and it can add all-rounder stats to anything crafted by it. As a branch from a World Tree, it has incredible energy conductivity, making it more useful to create weapons that aid channeling energies.]

Liu Shu pouted as she read the description. 'I'm not weak! You are weak! Stupid system.'

[...]

Either way, she decided to start making the weapon, and then she realized she had forgotten something really important. '... Flor hasn't told me yet how to do it.'

Liu Shu stopped in her tracks, her entire body starting to sulk. 'I wanted to create a weapon...'

Flor looked at Liu Shu's mood change from cheerful to sulking, and her eyebrow twitched, somehow knowing why. 'Did she remember? I tried using Ignatia as a distraction, but it seems that it didn't work.'

While Flor thought of that, she suddenly felt Liu Shu's energy clinging around her, like a child asking for their toy. Flor almost burst into laughter. '...Why is she so cute?'

She passed her fair hand through her lush red hair, and her jewel-like red eyes focused on Liu Shu. 'What do I do with this little one?' After interacting with Liu Shu for a while, Flor came to know how young Liu Shu's mind was.

It really felt like she was talking to a Rose Fairy child. 'Hm... How do I distract her?'

Flor thought about it while Liu Shu's energy spread all over her body. In her mind, Liu Shu was calling her. 'Flor, listen. I want to learn. I want to learn. Flor. Flor. Flor!'

With her newfound energy control, one of the branches that was limp by the side moved clumsily and wrapped around her. Flor couldn't hold back anymore and burst into laughter, flying toward her and giving her a tight hug. "Ah! Why are you so adorable, Liu Shu!?"

Liu Shu looked at the 45-centimeter-tall fairy who was hugging her and felt happy. 'Hehe, Flor and the rest of the little friends are also cute~.'

Flor clapped and said. "Okay. Liu Shu, want to fight something? You haven't fought anything of substance since you leveled up, right?"

However, Liu Shu was a World Tree. Who would like to fight? If it were for our tree, she would spend all day looking around lazily and spreading her roots through the earth slowly.

So, Liu Shu threw quite a clear "No!" With her energy signals.

Flor's smile faltered. 'Tsk. It didn't work.'

Flor coughed. "I see. If you don't want that, then how about trying to communicate with nearby trees? You are large enough to entangle roots with them and exchange a conversation, right?"

<Willow Strike>

BANG!

Flor was slammed down into the ground by a whip-like branch. Her body became half-buried in the dirt below.

A large [-350] popped above her head, making Flor's eyebrow twitch. 'Strong. As expected of a World Tree, she blew away 10% of my Phoer in one hit.'

Then, she did a quick calculation about how much time it would take to heal that. After learning the number, even her lips started twitching. 'That will take 23 hours to heal if I eat 5 of those Phoer Fruits...'

She was taken by surprise, and Liu Shu also didn't use all her strength, hence the large hit. The damage would've been relatively lower if Flor had defended herself with Aether Mana or Anima's energy.

However, she was confused about why that sentence caused Liu Shu to react so wrongly. 'Aren't roots like the communication organs? Like antennae for ants, or voice for us?'

Of course, she wasn't wrong. However, entangling roots was an intimate act done either between related trees, meaning those who were related to each other, or by their partners.

The act was similar to holding hands.

Thinking as such, you should understand why Liu Shu felt innate embarrassment. Imagine yourself going up to a stranger, holding their hand tightly, and starting up a conversation without any prior warning.

Well, that weird feeling was what Liu Shu just felt.

Meanwhile, Liu Shu was scolding Flor again and again. 'Silly Flor, why would she say something like that? Ah! So silly, and um... Dizzy? No. UGH! Entangling roots with another tree, as if that's something I can do!'

If Flor hadn't plummeted into the ground, she would've probably received one or two more <Willow Strikes>.

Flor coughed a bit of dirt that entered her mouth and moved her mouth and tongue with a grimace. 'This... It was that extract we created for her, right?'

Flor wanted to cry, but she had no tears. "Liu Shu, I'll come back soon. I'll go wash off the dirt."

Then, she flew away toward a nearby lake.

Liu Shu exclaimed. "Ah! Where is she going? She still hasn't told me how to build weapons!"

This time, Clavel arrived from her hunt and happily approached the sulking Liu Shu. "Huh? What happened, little one?"

Although Clavel called her little one, Liu Shu was officially stronger than Clavel, so it wasn't really appropriate. However, since the rose fairy was very close to Liu Shu, she just used a more intimate way of calling her.

Liu Shu saw her first little friend from the rose fairies, and her sulky mood was blown away by the wind. 'Oh, Clavel is here~. Hello~.'

Clavel blinked at the sudden mood swing. "You know... To answer questions, you take your time, but to show emotions, you are as fickle as the wind."

Liu Shu laughed in her mind. Then, Clavel asked. "So, are you doing okay?" Clavel paused and slapped her forehead. "Did I really need to ask a question?"

Meanwhile, Liu Shu, who was suddenly asked how she was doing, began thinking about how to answer. It took around 20 minutes to send two pulses.

Clavel, who had been lying on her back on one of Liu Shu's branches, almost fell from it when she understood them. "What do you mean by <Yes>, <No>!?"

Clavel waved her hand. "Ah, don't worry, don't worry. You are young, so it is natural to act a bit silly sometimes."

Liu Shu just looked at her. She had wanted to say that she had been doing okay, but Flor had yet to tell her how to build weapons. So, she sent a yes at first and then a no.

After not hearing Clavel talk again and just resting in one of her branches, Liu Shu refocused on her things. 'Hm... I want to build something....'

[Do you wish to open the building planner? Yes or no?]

'Oh!'

Liu Shu focused on it for a while and then said. 'No! System, open weapon planner!'

But nothing answered. Liu Shu sulked again, and Clavel ignored her bipolar friend, just choosing to rest on Liu Shu's branch until the mood went away by itself.

And, after 30 minutes, Clavel smirked. 'Now, her sulk is gone~. Perfect.'

'So... I can't build equipment, and I don't want to build a building again soon... What to do?'

She opened her system window to try to do something and gave the Nature gift's skill more love. 'I want to level up this one!'

Her enchanting roots deep into the earth carried nutrients and pure energy, making sure Liu Shu had enough energy for what she wanted to do. For now, she was growing around 1000 flowers every two days at most.

Liu Shu thoughtfully gazed at the smallest regeneration, which was 36.5 Aether Mana per hour. Then, she chose to apply what the fairies taught her in the past. 'I need to use as much as my regeneration, right? Then... I also need to practice with <Enchanted growth>.'

Meanwhile, Flor, who had already cleaned herself in the lake, became thoughtful. 'I need to find something to help her.'

Her eyes moved toward the west, and she grabbed her chin. 'Let's go on a small journey, then.'

Her body was wrapped in wind Aether Mana, and she quickly flew through the forest toward the nearest city to the west, Fortuna City.

It took her around 8 hours of flight to reach the vicinity. Flor was considered a monster, even if she was from an intelligent race, mainly because her system page scaled differently after Level 10. They were small details that separated creatures with potential and intelligence from races with no potential and intelligence.

Flor looked around and saw a group of humans and Sylvans slowly walking into the forest. 'Hm. I should use them.'

Flor followed behind them as they walked deeper into the forest, not knowing that a fearsome Level 12 was staring at their back with a very cold gaze.

"Verdantia, what should we do now? It seems that the plant you wanted isn't here."

Verdantia, the tall and voluptuous woman with green hair and eyes, shook her head. "Don't worry. I'm not in a hurry." Verdantia paused and looked up to the sky. "Moreover, the plant I want is probably not nearby... Huh?"

Whether it was luck or not, this gesture allowed Verdantia to discover a hidden threat, who was observing them with strange, completely red eyes. They were like a pair of rubies embedded in the woman's eye sockets.

While the rest of the people were still unaware, Verdantia saw the doll-sized woman's lips arch and place a finger on her fingers. Verdantia gulped and used her identification skill on Flor.

Race: Rose Fairy Queen.

Level: 12 [0/7440]

Aether Mana Shards: 12432/12432

Phoer Body Shards: 3612/3612

Anima Energy Shards: 5845/5845

Attributes: Aether 89 (75+14), Physique 28 (19+9), Anima 44 (33+11), Willpower 56 (56), Destiny 96 (96)

Verdantia almost screamed in fright. She was currently nothing but a little Level 4 Sylvan. How could she fight a monster like this? She was strong, but not this much!

Even if she wanted to alarm others, the Level 12 creature above them could probably kill her instantly.

Verdantia secretly bit her lips. 'If I were Level 5, I could at least somehow resist, but...'

Sylvans gained a very special skill at Level 5. It was a skill powerful enough to make Sylvans one of the strongest races by far, with little competition at the same level other than other Sylvans or users of precarious ways.

Then, the woman saw Flor pointing to the side. Flor's gestures were enough to tell Verdantia that Flor wanted her to go somewhere alone.

While she was a calm, gentle, and rational woman, she was in a controlled situation where she could act like a strong person appropriately. Now that she was at the mercy of a wild monster, her fate was hanging on a very thin thread.