

Ascension of the Sylvan Cosmos.

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Liu Shu, with her <World Tree Eye> that absorbed information from the entire battlefield, looked at the low-level beasts with pure indifference. Even as she was under attack, she remained unfazed, focusing her attention on enemies of higher levels.

Her ethereal branches swung around like deadly whips, killing left and right and slicing the enemy's numbers much faster than they could ever kill the ants and Rose Fairies.

By now, casualties on one enemy side had risen to a staggering 140, while the number of fallen creatures on Liu Shu's side remained a reassuringly low 17. Of them, 12 were ants, and the rest were Rose Fairies.

As Liu Shu's Aether Mana and Anima Energy rapidly diminished, and her Phoeer Body Shards were sliced off at a slow pace, she pondered her next move. 'All Level 9s and 8s are dead. The Level 7s are also rapidly dwindling; if I continue attacking after the Level 7s, I will likely exhaust my Aether mana and Anima energy before the Level 6s are defeated.'

Her strategic mind was at work, calculating the best course of action.

With a cold, calculating gaze, Liu Shu surveyed the battlefield of the Level 10s. 'I'll use my roots to entangle instead of directly killing them and aid the group. That will be a more efficient use of energy. And I must not forget to eliminate all the flying creatures that are attacking the Rose Fairies.'

Her decisions were crucial, and the battlefield would soon reflect their impact.

Soon, the Level 10s were surprised when the floor below them burst with roots and tried to attach themselves to their legs. They were quick to fight back, and some of them managed to destroy those roots, making Liu Shu feel an incredibly sharp pain.

Her roots were sensitive and full of receptors, so their destruction was uncomfortable and painful. Her ability to withstand punishment on her main body was superb, as her trunk was created to resist nature's whims and man's actions.

To destroy her trunk, a creature would need a lot of effort.

Meanwhile, her roots acted as her receptors toward the world. They were naturally strong, as they would need to pierce through most materials as she grew in size and her roots dug deeper. However, that didn't mean that they were as pain-resistant.

They were sensitive on purpose so that Liu Shu could quickly identify where her roots were being attacked. If she didn't know an attack was happening on her underground, then it could get dangerous really quickly.

While Liu Shu was angered and impressively focused, she was still a youngling who didn't know pain.

She could not resist her roots being ripped to shreds without reaction. Not to mention, those attacks hurt her Phoer Body Shards by a decent chunk, leaving her at around 60% of her initial Phoer Pool.

As Liu Shu's pain-filled aura burst filled the area, many became enraged. However, one particular Sylvan had a thread in her mind snap as an unrivaled fury rushed through her body like an unstoppable inferno. "YOU DARE MAKE HER CRY IN PAIN!? YOU IGNORANT AND FILTHY BEAST SHALL LEARN THE MEANING OF DEATH TODAY!"

BOOOM!

Her aura burst into a fire tornado as she unrooted her feet and charged forward with explosive speed. Her three-and-a-half-meter-tall transformed body lunged forward like a flaming meteor, instantly crossing the distance between them.

The two Level 11s that destroyed Liu Shu's roots were a large magpie-like bird and the Thornstride Froorar. Froorar was fighting tremendously efficiently, giving Cinderielle some trouble. However, in Cinderielle's mind, this kind of fight was much more welcome than her fight with the murderous Rose Fairy Queen.

Meanwhile, the magpie that swooped down to prevent Froorar from being entangled felt extreme danger approaching from the Fire Aether Mana burst. With the quickest reaction it could muster, its wings flapped, trying to retake flight and continue to harass the Sylvan with the Thornstride, but it was too late, the furious Sylvan was right beside it.

A large yet slender hand with fingers that looked made of smooth and beautiful red bark-like skin latched around one of its wings before the magpie could leave the ground completely. "COME DOWN HERE YOU BEAST!"

A terrifying pulling force shot the bird downward, cratering with tremendous force. Cinderielle's over 50 points in Physique were brutal for the creature made for flight, which had finer bones with more fragile structures.

BAM!

The shock of the attack sliced a significant portion of its Phoer Mana Shards, leaving the bird's mind confused as an impossible sharp pain burned throughout its body.

Its wing was broken together with many of its bones, while many of the organs had been ripped open from the impact of the blow. Until now, Cinderielle hadn't managed to land a clean attack on it because she was playing the long run. However, when she felt the painful aura coming from Liu Shu, her desire to burn every single beast down to ashes filled her mind, and she stopped caring about her own safety.

Meanwhile, Froorar, who had been overcome by Cinderielle's sudden speed burst, instantly turned around and jumped at Cinderielle's tall back. 'Since you've dared ignore me, give me your arm!'

His jaw opened wide as the powerful bite attack was released.

CHOMP!

The sharp teeth pierced through the terrifyingly sturdy skin and even cracked the shoulder bone with a sickening sound. However, to Froorar's confusion, Cinderielle didn't react by flinging him away while being filled with pain.

Instead, Froorar could feel his body being closely held by the Sylvan. 'What is she doing!?''

Cinderielle's hoarse and powerful voice spread around once again. "BURN FILTHY CREATURES!"

WHOOOSH!

A pillar of flames surrounded Cinderielle and swallowed all three of them.

The piercing screech of the bird and Froorar's shout echoed around as their bodies were cooked alive under the Flame Sylvan's powerful flames. Froorar's mind instantly activated as pain receptors shook his mind, and his mouth opened wide to release a sharp, painful scream.

Trying to escape, the bird and Froorar fought for their lives, attacking Cinderielle with whatever they could. Their claws, talons, and teeth scratched her continuously, creating serious wounds around her and making her 9000 Phoer Body Shards plummet.

However, Cinderielle's face remained ruthless and murderous as she increased the potency of her flames. "DIE!"

BOOM!

Everything around her was engulfed in flames that swallowed even the sound of the creatures inside.

Soon, the struggles ceased as the flaming vortex of fire disappeared, revealing Cinderielle, who was covered in the ashes of both creatures who had died and were utterly carbonized.

Cinderielle stood there, breathing raggedly as her Phoer Body Shards had been reduced to a little more than 1000. Her transformation was also about to end, as the five minutes had almost gone by. However, she wasn't done yet. Her Aether Mana and Anima energy was still at 4000 points.

Turning around toward the mass of beasts, she rushed forward and picked up her fallen staff, pointing toward several groups where beasts fought Liu Shu's roots. "EXPLODE!"

Fireballs flew across the battlefield, impacting creatures gnawing at Liu Shu's roots. Their explosions weren't large, but they had terrifying piercing power. So, they managed to kill the beasts without hurting Liu Shu, as their insides were cooked by a concentrated explosion.

Cinderielle didn't care and fired indiscriminately, aiming at the beasts and killing around 30 more of them before her transformation ended.

Once her body returned back to normal, her heavy injuries stopped being supported by her transformation's natural regeneration, and she fell to her knees as a spurt of blood left her mouth. Thankfully, she was not critical, but these injuries were almost worse than Flor's neck injury. 'T-This place is going to be my death. I almost died twice in less than a week after arriving here.'

However, there was no regret in her mind, only wicked joy as she looked at the dead creatures. Her orange eyes glowed sinisterly. 'Since you dared to attack my Tiantian, Death is your only way.'

Cinderielle's battlefield was not the only one that ended; Flor also had help from Liu Shu's roots and finally managed to finish off her enemy. The power of the Rose Fairy Queen was profound, as her tier was one above the rest at E- Tier.

With Flor being freed, she first looked toward Liu Shu and inspected the situation. Seeing Liu Shu being attacked by several beasts while helping the rest of the creatures with her branches, her heart ached. 'That little one, she was born not too long ago for a World Tree and she needs to bear a battle like this.'

When looking at those beasts and remembering Liu Shu's cheerful way of calling her, anger rushed toward her head, and her wings buzzed loudly as her body shot toward that area.

With a Level 12 joining the battle, the tides were spectacularly overturned. Flor's presence was like a hurricane of death as her attacks slaughtered at least two creatures each.

Of course, the first thing she did when arriving was kill all the beasts around Liu Shu and then join the battle.

Moreover, as a Level 12, while her focus was on Aether, her Physique stat was more than enough to exchange blows with a Physique-focused Level 9 beast, not to mention the weaker Level 7, 6, and 5s that were left alive.

She was mowing the creatures, and nothing could stop her.

Meanwhile, Ignatia and the four humans were still going at it with the other Level 10s. However, seeing the dire situation, the Level 10s that were still alive couldn't help but grow apprehensive. It was the truth that every enemy was exhausted, but that was their case as well.

While they didn't want to believe it, this war was utterly lost. Because of their increased intelligence as Level 10s, they realized that staying any longer would be dangerous.

With quick judgment, one of them turned and left, prompting the others to follow behind right after. Sadly, these creatures attacked a World Tree, and World Trees didn't like leaving behind anyone alive between those who attacked them.

So, when Liu Shu saw that they were escaping, anger almost blinded her. 'You dare attack me, and now, you FLEE!? DO YOU THINK MY DOMAIN IS YOUR NEST!? SINCE YOU'VE COME, STAY FOREVER! <ROOT MANIPULATION>!'

Around 80% of her remaining Aether Mana and Anima energy flowed through her roots toward that area, nourishing her roots and allowing her to control them. Like earth dragons rushing out of the ground, the several dozen roots in their area burst from the ground with incredible speed and tightly coiled around their bodies.

The beasts struggled, wanting to get free, but the roots around them were much sturdier than before, and their blue energy veins glowed with ethereal light.

Ignatia and the humans didn't lose the chance presented, and all of them went for the kill.

The remaining Aether Mana and Anima energy inside Liu Shu was almost completely depleted from holding the four Level 10s down for a few moments, and right after she saw them die, her <World Tree Eye> instantly shut down as her entire body entered a dormant state out of exhaustion.

Chapter 62. Results of the Battle.

Flor looked around with an exhausted face; her Aether Mana had been reduced to around ten percent, and even keeping herself flying felt extraneous. Most of the remaining Rose Fairies had fallen to the ground out of pure fatigue, while a few had fainted from Aether Mana exhaustion.

The entire battlefield was littered with corpses, making the surroundings smell of blood and insides. It was certainly not a pleasant smell.

That was not the worst part since the garden specially made for baby Rose Fairies had been trampled, leaving almost no intact plant. The sight of the flattened roses in between the many footprints made Flor's stomach churn.

This prompted Flor to stop and look closely at the corpses of the Rose Fairies. Her gaze lingered on their messed-up remains, her mind flashing with many thoughts.

Seeing the faces of a few Rose Fairies she personally interacted with between the dead was not a first for Flor, but seeing so many dead was a first certainly a first.

The wars she had participated in in the past were of a much smaller scale, making her realize how difficult it was to resist outside attacks without numbers and proper strategies.

"Flor."

The voice of the mature and usually playful Ant Queen reached her. However, the tone was much softer than usual as her compound eyes looked her way.

Flor mustered a smile and spoke. "Sorry for all your children. Almost 40 of the 100 that came died."

Ignatia looked at the corpses of the ants and shook her head. "They died protecting who will become our race's protector in the future. This war made me realize how important that Little Tree truly is."

Ignatia remembered the brutality of the tree when slaughtering everything that approached with ruthless efficiency and then imagined it when the tree was double or even triple her current height. A chill ran up her spine. 'Probably not even a developed ant nest can deal with her. The only option would be to throw numbers to die until it is exhausted. Even then...' Ignatia looked at Liu Shu's ternary essences and could see the regeneration slowly ticking and increasing the numbers. '... That kind of regeneration would make any low-level attack useless.'

Flor looked around and nodded. "She is important."

Ignatia, however, heard a different tone in her voice and asked with a gentle smile. "Are you wondering if she is more important or the Rose Fairies that lie dead there?"

Flor paused and sighed. Without answering her question, she flew toward Ignatia and sat on her shoulder. Ignatia looked at her and lifted one of her hands to tickle her belly, earning a slap from Flor. "Stop that."

Ignatia laughed as she retracted her hand. "Sorry, you are just adorable."

Flor sighed and looked at the living group of Rose Fairies. After looking around, she suddenly realized that not all of them were gathered among her high-level Rose Fairies. Her heart sank as she asked. "Where is Aster?"

Ignatia paused and looked over. Her compound eyes could easily discern the facial expression of Clavel and the others, and there was a bit of pain beyond the exhaustion, making her realize what happened. "Flor... Aster..."

Flor quickly left her shoulder and approached Clavel, Zinia, and Amapola. "Amapola, where is Aster?"

Aster was quite a mischievous Rose Fairy, and she was always a bit cynical. However, she took care of many things and often talked with Flor. Therefore, Flor was very fond of the young yet strong Rose Fairy.

Amapola saw Flor approach and flinched, making Flor's gut feeling become increasingly worse. Her voice was calm when she asked. "What happened?"

Amapola opened and closed her mouth, and she finally spoke. "One of the high-level <Cloud Magpie> managed to dodge one of Liu Shu's attacks. Because we were overconfident that Liu Shu wouldn't miss, our attention was on the beasts below..." Amapola struggled as she said. "Our lack of attention got Aster killed. The bird used that chance and sacrificed itself while taking Aster down with it."

Flor took a deep breath. The smell of blood rushed into her lungs while the image of the death-filled battlefield reentered her vision. "Where is her corpse."

Amapola shook her head. "The attack was too much. The corpse is... not recognizable."

Flor nodded and turned around. "Understood. Take care of the fainted Rose Fairies and use Liu Shu's fruits without squandering them. I want every Rose Fairy and Ant to eat five of each of the Phoer, Aether, and Anima berries. We should've enough saved to feed everyone for at least three or four days."

Amapola answered right away. "I'll get with it right away."

Flor waved her hand as she approached Cinderielle. The woman was bleeding quite terribly, but most wounds had closed somewhat, so there was no risk of dying of blood loss.

Cinderielle was lying on the ground, looking at the sky with a blank expression. 'That was... too risky.'

She still remembered how Froorar and the bird attacked her so brutally, opening wounds all around her reinforced body while trying to escape her grip. She wanted to lift her right arm to look at her injuries, but an extremely sharp pain prevented her from moving her shoulder. 'Right, my shoulder bone was fractured by that humanoid Thornstride.'

She could feel resentment coming from him, a lot too. 'That creature... was intelligent. Much more than a common beast.'

Still, for Cinderielle, killing it didn't feel much different from a typical beast. She felt no remorse, only relaxed about being able to kill the creatures that made Liu Shu cry in pain.

Remembering the pain-filled aura of the World Tree, her heart almost burst with anger again. However, she managed to calm down, knowing that everything was over. 'She is okay, and she can recover. Continuing to be angry toward them is not something I should do.'

"Hey."

The very recognizable voice of the Rose Fairy Queen reached Cinderielle, and the Sylvan moved her neck to look toward the direction it came from. "What's wrong?"

Flor flew down and sat by her side. Her dress gently blended with the green grass around her, making her look like another flower in the surroundings, a cold and elegant one. After a while, Flor said. "Thank you."

Cinderielle blinked. "Why?"

Flor looked at her and smiled. "For fighting with us and caring about Liu Shu genuinely. Such a reaction can't come from someone who is faking it."

Seeing the petite creature who had shown nothing but a cold face smile, Cinderielle had to admit that Flor looked pretty, like a masterfully crafted doll. Cinderielle shook her head faintly so as not to worsen her wounds. "How is Tiantian?"

Flor shrugged. "Honestly, I don't know. She has gone dormant after the last Level 10 fell. Her Aether Mana hit zero, while her anima energy was dangerously close to zero, too. Her Phoer is also at around thirty percent. Quite surprising for all the attacks she

received." Flor looked at Cinderielle and smiled. "When you see her trunk, you will not be happy."

Cinderielle asked with a frown. "Is it in that bad of a shape?"

Flor nodded. "Scratched everywhere, with sap flowing all around it. The roots that surfaced are similarly leaking sap and sliced or bitten open in many places. However, even if she is dormant, her body still has some subconscious autonomy, and the surfaced roots are slowly returning to the earth while her entire body heals."

Cinderielle commented. "Isn't this a prime opportunity to inaugurate your caravan plan?"

Flor blinked. "What do you mean?"

Cinderielle said. "Look around you. Do you even need so many dead creatures? Why not sell them after using all those you can and saving a few? Their coats and flesh can go for quite a price. You can also use this as a starting capital. If you add some specialties, the caravan will take off quickly and will be able to buy good equipment. After all, you need to buy the carts and beasts to pull them."

Flor blinked a few times. "That's... an excellent idea."

Ariel's complaining voice and the sound of steps came from their right. "Cinder, be honest. Do you want to overwork me to death for that tree?"

Cinderielle smiled mischievously. "So, what if I want? Since you are in this, you should work your ass off. You've seen it, right? Tiantian's super beautiful and gorgeous appearance as she elegantly and sophisticatedly killed those filthy beasts~."

Ariel snorted at Cinderielle's admiring tone. "The only thing I saw was a ruthless and murderous tree! The way she reaped through the beasts was honestly terrifying. Tell me honestly, what level is she?"

Flor grinned. "Level 4."

Ariel, Robert, Maley, and Doles looked at Flor with wide eyes. The surprise in their eyes could not be concealed at all. Maley stuttered. "W-What level? Level 4?"

Flor stood up while looking up at the, for her, very tall humans and nodded. "Yes. She is a Level 4 World Tree." Then, before they could ask more, she patted her butt and dress and smiled. "I'm going to... clean up the battlefield and give you those beasts we don't need and the promised berries. I could tell that you didn't fight with your all, but I can't blame you as you were tasked to fight Level 10s as Level 9s."

Ariel sighed. "Don't blame me, Flor. I can't lose my people because of this war that had nothing to do with us."

Flor nodded. "As I said, I understand. I am grateful as long as you fight and lend a hand, even if it is just a bit. Your efforts probably saved the life of more than 20 Rose Fairies, and I'm grateful for that."

Flor looked at Cinderielle and spoke. "I have something to tell you. When you are recovered, come find me." Then, she flew away to meet with Ignatia and organize everything.

Ariel opened her mouth but couldn't say anything when she looked at the back of the Rose Fairy Queen. The sound of her wings buzzing as she flew away sounded lethargic.

Robert commented, crossing his arms. "Ariel, I know you were thinking for us, but... We could've used at least a few of those items."

Ariel shook her head. "I know where you are going, but remember that we are working with a monster species. Thankfully, they've turned out to be Rose Fairies, which aren't often indicated as harmful creatures as long as you don't damage flora around you. Moreover, we were even luckier as the species' leader is extremely intelligent for a monster species."

Ariel looked down at Cinderielle and asked with a severe expression. "Cinder. Tell me honestly. Are you really in love with that World Tree? Or do you covet it for another reason?"

Cinderielle looked at Ariel, and her lips arched. "I want that World Tree to be the mother of my children."

Ariel and the other three looked at the Sylvan with a speechless expression.

Chapter 63. Cinderielle's Realization.

After three days of resting, Ignatia finally returned to her nest with the rest of the ants, having dealt with everything she could do around Liu Shu. Despite the unfortunate loss of around 40 of her children, the remaining 60 had experienced a remarkable surge in their strength. This was not just a mere increase in Levels but a breakthrough in tiers, a testament to their resilience and potential.

Still, the remaining 60 weren't stronger than the initial 100 as a unit, so it was nothing to celebrate.

The fairies, too, faced a similar fate. Their losses didn't bring them any closer to compensating for their winnings, leaving them in a state of unfulfilled hope.

Nobody complained, though, and the presence of the humans and Sylvan was greatly welcomed into their community. While they were careful and wary at first, after seeing

them fight with them, many of the youngest Rose Fairies approached with curiosity-filled eyes to see the giants that came to their terrain.

Imagine that suddenly, five humanoids around fifteen meters tall appeared in your city. You would either be terrified at first or in awe and full of curiosity.

Most fairies initially felt the former way, but now that these giants turned out to be helpers during the terrifying beast tide, their way of looking at them had changed.

Ariel couldn't help but be captivated by these enchanting creatures. Standing at a mere 15 to 25 centimeters tall, with the mature Rose Fairies reaching a height of 20 centimeters, they were a sight to behold. Their bodies, slender and delicate, were adorned with a leafy green dress that draped over their chests and waists. Their hair, a vibrant shade of rose red, and their eyes were unlike any he had ever seen.

Unlike a normal eye with a sclera, iris, and pupil, theirs were gem-like and completely red. They had a glossy surface with a darker red circle in the middle that worked as a pupil. It was complicated to see where they were looking for Ariel and the other humans, but once they managed to distinguish the pupil, it became increasingly easier to distinguish where they were looking.

Robert had two young rose fairies clinging to his bear while they giggled, making him feel helpless. Still, he didn't dislike it.

He had worked a long time as an explorer in the past, and the times he fought and killed a Rose Fairy were not few. This situation would naturally not make him feel remorseful, as the Rose Fairies were much more aggressive at those times.

Still, their petite size and cute appearance could even soften the hearts of a battle-hardened warrior like him.

For Robert, becoming a strong adventurer was a dream that was cut short very early. He was relatively quick to reach Level 9 and accumulated enough experience to tackle the Level 10 barrier. Sadly for him, he lacked the innate talent to cross that first barrier.

So, since he was young, Robert has been stuck at Level 9, with his experience, skills, and everything else maxed out and unable to get stronger.

Moreover, as years passed, the time when his stats would start decreasing was approaching. That state, while called aging by some in the profession, was called the deteriorating stage.

Because of the nature of the Ternary Essences, if a, let's say, 70-year-old average human suddenly broke the barrier and reached Level 10, he could've reversed the aging of his body as his strength and stats increased, going back to peak condition for a while longer.

There were treasures, items, potions, and other things that helped people cross the Energy Cycle barriers. Still, they were uncommon and expensive, and more often than not, even if you had the money, most would be reluctant to sell them.

Only the hopeless and without close people would ever sell these treasures. Their rarity and particular use made them one of the most scarce and valuable items worldwide.

Robert picked one of the small fairies clinging to his beard by pinching the back of her dress and lifted her with a smirk. "Hey, little one. Are you having fun?"

The young Rose Fairy froze as the giant human grabbed her, not knowing what to do. Robert laughed and then threw her skyward. "Up!"

"AAAaaahhhh....!!!!"

Robert laughed as the little Level 2 Rose Fairy flew up for more than 20 meters.

"...aaaaaAAAHHH!!"

When she fell back down, Robert extended his hand and cushioned her fall by lowering his arm together with her fall and slowing it down. There wasn't even a notification of Phoe Body Shard damage, showing his absolutely sublime control.

Robert looked at the petite Rose Fairy that was sprawled on his hand while breathing heavily. He burst into loud laughter, making the other one that clung to his beard fall.

Of course, with his reflexes, he quickly caught that one. He asked the one he threw. "How was it, little one? Fun?"

The Rose Fairy blinked several times and then burst into a giggle. "That was fun! Again! Again!"

The other one pulled Robert's clothes and spoke shyly. "M-Me too..."

Robert grinned toothily. "Sure, sure. Up!"

"WAAHHH!! Hahahahaha!!!!"

The mature Rose Fairies looked over and saw them playing around, making the oldest ones gain a rare smile. The laughter of the young ones seemed to revitalize the place as the moody feeling that dominated the area lightened.

During the war, the garden with the Young Rose Fairies had been trampled by the beasts, so many mature Rose Fairies had gone out to get fertilized with plants in the surroundings and lay seeds again in the garden.

Its surroundings were filled with lashes from Liu Shu's several attacks trying to protect that place, which many Rose Fairies noted, but the numbers were too much. Liu Shu was unable to even stop them from reaching her own trunk, not to mention protect that garden by her side.

No one blamed the Young World Tree, in any case. Every Rose Fairy knew that Liu Shu was just a Level 4 being. The fact that she could do so much was already something all of them, with no exceptions, appreciated.

Meanwhile, by Liu Shu's side, Flor and Cinderielle gathered together. Both of them had yet to recover completely, but Flor wanted to speak with Cinderielle as soon as possible.

"Cinderielle, I guess you've realized that I'm wearing an amulet already, right?"

Cinderielle looked at the item on Flor's chest and nodded. "I was thinking about it, yes."

Flor nodded and answered her. "This was made by Liu Shu."

Cinderielle paused and looked at it with wide eyes. "How? That's such delicate work. I can't believe she has this much control over her branches to smelt or design something like this."

Flor shrugged. "I don't care if you believe it; it is the truth. I wanted to speak to you about what we talked about as the initial agreement to exchange. The beasts have been skinned, and the materials are ready to be shipped out. There are quite a lot, so Ariel and the others need to know how to transport it. Ask them to tell me if they need a helping hand, and I'll move a few Rose Fairies."

Cinderielle asked. "Do they have nothing to do?"

Flor shook her head as she leaned her back on Liu Shu's trunk while sitting on one of her branches. "Nothing. The danger has passed, the remaining tribes that are on par with us and live nearby are not aggressive, and the surroundings will become much more peaceful than ever."

Cinderielle asked. "So, what's the point of telling me all of this?"

Flor spoke after thinking about it for a while. "You see, the ability of Liu Shu to create these things comes from books."

Cinderielle was increasingly confused. "Books? Does she know how to read? Can she even see in a usual way? Her sight should be much different from ours, right?"

Flor shook her head. "No, she can eat books." Seeing Cinderielle's look of utter stupefaction, Flor cut her short. "Don't ask me. I'm also clueless. I just know that she ate the books somehow, and then she could do things."

Cinderielle opened her mouth a few times before she could speak. "Do you understand how difficult you are making this to be believable?"

Flor shrugged. "It is the truth; it's up to you whether to believe it or not." Flor shook her head. "Anyway, the reason to explain this is that I want books about anything related to World Trees, Architecture, Woodcrafting, Potions, Gardening... etc."

Cinderielle's eyes flashed as she looked at Flor, and Flor nodded. "You should understand where I'm going with this, right? Plus, a book that teaches World Trees how to communicate should be interesting too." Flor scratched her head. "I don't mind trying to decipher her words, but knowing exactly what she needs is better."

With a smirk, she said to Cinderielle. "You are also eager to talk with her, right? Your reactions since the beginning have been quite suspicious, to be honest."

Cinderielle coughed as many thoughts flashed through her head. "Sure, I'll get a few."

Flor asked. "So, what are the existing crafts that I can get informed about."

Cinderielle slowly explained while placing a finger on her chin. "Hmm... There are woodcrafters and blacksmiths; one works with metals, and the other works with wood. There are Sylvan Architects and normal architects; the first works with trees to change them into residences and many other types of buildings, while the second works with usual building materials."

Flor asked, interrupting. "Do all crafts have the same duality?"

Cinderielle shook her head. "Not at all. But the most important thing is to have it. There are Sylvan cooks, tailors, enhancers, priests, and much more."

Flor commented. "And then, their non-sylvan equivalent, I suppose."

Cinderielle nodded. "Usually, potion makers are not separated. Other works like jewelry, furniture craftsmanship, upholstery, and many more are like potion makers, which don't require to be separated."

Flor was curious, so she continued asking. "And what's the difference between a Sylvan craft and a non-Sylvan craft?"

She easily answered. "One uses nature in a non-consuming way, or at least tries to hurt nature as little as possible. The other uses resources that are harmful to nature."

Flor frowned. "Why would people use the second method."

Cinderielle sighed. "Sylvan crafts, as the name indicates, are usually done by Sylvals. Humans, Beast humans, or any other races that can do them have to have special talents, titles, or passive skills." Cinderielle commented. "While we, Sylvals, could be called the most influential, our numbers are limited due to our race's slow reproductive rate. So, our low numbers make it usually impossible to satiate all races."

Flor made an admiring sound. "Well, here is what I've been wanting to tell you."

Cinderielle nodded, and Flor said. "The books I got for Liu Shu were taken from another Sylvan. A friendly one. I won't tell you the name for now, but she helped us tremendously, and I trust her quite a lot." Flor smirked and teased her. "I even gave her Liu Shu's branch as compensation, hahaha."

However, Flor didn't see the jealous look she was looking forward to; instead, she saw a look of realization followed by a frown. "Hm? What's wrong?"

Cinderielle asked lowly. "A... branch?"

Flor looked at the woman's increasingly gloomy face and felt that something was wrong. "Hey, are you that jealous? I can give you one as well. There are a few in our treasure from cleanups. You saw it, right? After the fight, there were quite a lot of materials from Liu Shu."

However, Cinderielle's face didn't improve, and she asked. "Is the Sylvan called Verdantia?"

Flor was internally stunned. 'They actually know each other? What kind of coincidence is this?'

The Rose Fairy Queen didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

Author Note: Hello, dear. Thanks for reading up until this chapter. If you feel confident, I would like to ask for a small review of how you feel about the novel. That would help me tremendously! Thanks a lot, and I hope you continue to have fun ~.

Chapter 64. [Defender].

Liu Shu rested for a long time.

Liu Shu had endured a grueling battle that tested her in every way. Her body ached, her roots were damaged, and her ternary essences were depleted as she fought to restrain the beast army from trampling everyone.

Throughout the battle, Liu Shu was relentlessly assailed by countless beasts. Despite their lower levels, their tenacity and ceaseless attacks gradually wore down her formidable defense. Yet, she persevered, and in the end, her Phoebe and Anima's Energy were also on the verge of being depleted. Still, the final push to restrain four Level 10 powerhouses was what took her over the limits.

Her recovery was not just swift, but constant, a testament to her incredible self-healing capabilities. After three days, signs of improvement were already visible. However, it took a full three weeks for her to fully awaken, her mental fatigue proving to be her most formidable adversary.

As a World Tree, Liu Shu's mind was a constant whirl of activity. She had to expand her roots, grow the fruits, use her auras to nourish her surroundings, and control where her roots were touching to avoid provoking anything she shouldn't. These tasks, among others, were a part of her unique existence.

Focusing her entire mind on the battle until exhaustion made most of those functions go to a minimum enough for her body to survive. During these three weeks, Liu Shu had been recovering her senses and control over her complicated and increasingly large root net.

She was not wholly unconscious, but her senses were not completely alert. Still, if a dangerous situation occurred around her, she would've been able to wake up after the second day.

Upon awakening, Liu Shu sent a pulse of energy from her <World Tree Heart> throughout her entire body, reassured by the familiar sensations. 'Hehehe, everything is back to normal~. Although, hm.... There are too many corpses buried. It can damage the earth if they...' Her thoughts were interrupted by the discovery of a strange substance around the corpses, aiding the earth in nutrient absorption. 'Oh? What's that~?'

Liu Shu approached it with one of her roots out of curiosity and found a tasty and exciting feeling spreading from it. 'Ohhhh.'

Liu Shu was looking at a substance used to ease the corpses' return to nature. Unlike a body dissolver, the substance increased the activity of bacteria and fungus, allowing the decomposition of the matter to quicken.

Our young World Tree didn't know, but she felt it was good. 'That's a nice... hmm... thingy? Substance? Hehe~, although I don't know what it is, it seems that it is helping.'

Liu Shu giggled, and then she checked something she had been remarkably eager to do. 'Let's see... What's my accumulated experience? If I remember correctly, it was 20 after I upgraded my <Willow Strike>.'

It was an action she was glad she took; after all, her branches worked overtime during all that time, thanks to their ability to create phantom and extendable limbs. 'Attacking from further away is always nice~... Anyways, show me my accumulated experience!'

Accumulated experience: 1138

Liu Shu was stunned as she gazed at that massive number. 'S-System! I think there is a mistake here!' Right after she said it, she couldn't help but lament. 'I shouldn't have said that; I would be rich!'

However, to her pleasant surprise, the system answered positively.

[There are no errors; Tianlian Liu Shu has accumulated 1222 Experience points.]

'Really!?'

[That's correct. Tianlian Liu Shu has accumulated 1222 Experience Points.]

Liu Shu exclaimed in excitement. 'Nice! So much experience? How did I get so much?'

[Do you want to see the last experience gain logs?]

'Yes! Yes! I want to see~.'

[Analyzing experience gain register... Completed. Summarizing into beast Tiers. For further details, please ask the system.]

'Okay~. Thanks a lot, system~. Today, you are not that stingy!'

[...]

[Unfolding registry.]

[A <Rose Fairy Level 12> has used <Royal Pollination> on you. You've gained 16 Experience Points] x24

[<Basic World Energy Gathering> has absorbed 4 Experience Points] x24

[Congratulations on defeating <F Tier Level 5>. You've gained 1 Experience Points.] x14

[Congratulations on defeating <F+ Tier Level 5>. You've gained 4 Experience Points.] x4

[Congratulations on defeating <F Tier Level 6>. You've gained 2 Experience Points.] x22

[Congratulations on defeating <F+ Tier Level 6>. You've gained 7 Experience Points.]
x4

[Congratulations on defeating <F Tier Level 7>. You've gained 3 Experience Points.]
x31

[Congratulations on defeating <F+ Tier Level 7>. You've gained 11 Experience Points.]
x11

[Congratulations on defeating <F Tier Level 8>. You've gained 4 Experience Points.]
x29

[Congratulations on defeating <F+ Tier Level 8>. You've gained 16 Experience Points.]
x9

[Congratulations on defeating <F Tier Level 9>. You've gained 6 Experience Points.]
x16

[Congratulations on defeating <F+ Tier Level 9>. You've gained 22 Experience Points.]
x5

Liu Shu looked at the many messages popping up one after another while exclaiming in awe. 'Ohhh~, so much experience. Did I really kill so many beasts? Let's see... Those are... one, two... Hm... One-hundred-and-forty-five? Wow~. Flor did say that the enemies were above six hundred, so I didn't do too bad~.' Liu Shu paused for a second while becoming thoughtful. 'What about my proficiency levels? Let's check my status window~.'

Name: Tianlian Liu Shu

Titles:

<Awakened>

<World Tree>

<Defender>: You've not only repelled but managed to turn around the tides of a battle with overwhelming odds of defeat by yourself. Your actions, support, and superb battlefield control managed to reduce casualties to a minimum while being the lowest-level participant. All creatures considered allies will gain 10% stats when fighting a defensive battle.

Hidden titles: [9]

Race: World Tree.

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

Level: 4 [0/1900]

Aether Mana Shards: 2962/2962 (+106.7/Hour)

Phoer Body Shards: 3959/3959 (+142.6/Hour)

Anima Energy Shards: 3034/3034 (+109.3/Hour)

Attributes: Aether 59 (28+31), Physique 73 (36+37), Anima 63 (32+31), Willpower 64 (40+24), Destiny 400 (400)

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

Resistance Percentage: Aether Resistance (37), Physique Resistance (42), Spiritual Resistance (38), Mental Resistance (41)

Talents:

<Enchanted Growth (E+ Rank level 1 [7900/18000])>

<Woodcrafter (E Rank Level MAX)>

<Nature's Gift (F+ Rank level 1 [1300/9300])>

<Willow Strike (F --> F+ Rank level MAX --> 2 [7330/9300])>

<Willow Strike Barrage (F Rank level MAX)>

Passive Skills:

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

<World Tree Eye (C Rank level 1 [8540/144000])>

<World Tree Wisdom (SSS Rank Level Max)>

<Root Manipulation (E- Rank Level 1-->2 [15,550/31,200])>

<Charm of the Seedling (F+ Rank Level 1-->3 [24,055/31,200])>:

Accumulated Experience: 1222

Currency: Sylvanium Shards [87], Etherium Shards [0], Ascendium Shards [0], Celestium Shards [0], Cognium Shards [0].

'Ohhhh! So many Level Ups!' Liu Shu smiled happily, but there was one thing that caught her attention. '87 Sylvanium Shards? Why are there so many...? Ah! I forgot that my <Sylvanium Branch> was creating one shard per day! Nice~.'

Liu Shu was thoughtful. 'The books said that creating an item with just Sylvanium is a waste and that mixing it with the rest is the most efficient way to consume it. Although items with just Sylvanium are more powerful than their peers by a very noticeable amount, the number of shards used for one of those items could've been used for three or four other items.'

She continued remembering what the book taught her. 'It also says that working with just Sylvanium is almost as complex as creating an item with all the types of materials at once. Sylvanium is a highly pure material that by itself didn't react appropriately to create anything. However, Liu Shu was confident in her skills.

She knew the average success rates and other statistics in the books, which allowed her to know that, as a World Tree, she was much more skillful than the average person depicted in those manuscripts.

However, Liu Shu was confused about the first reason for not trying to create pure Sylvanium items. 'But... Isn't having one super-strong fighter better than having many smaller ones? If I could've boosted Flor's strength higher than it currently is, this beast tide wouldn't have been a problem in the first place.'

This war taught her that strength in numbers was valuable but limited. Even though her enemies had a lot more numbers, with her strength and Flor and Cinderielle, they managed to slaughter lower-level beasts relatively easily. Of course, Liu Shu understood how perilous the situation had been.

After dealing with the Level 10s, beasts were still attacking her. Even when she wanted to defend herself because her Phoe was getting dangerously low, her mind completely shut off because her Aether Mana hit 0.

She remembered at that time her <World Tree Eye> cutting off as unconsciousness hit her during battle, making her feel afraid.

As she reminisced about that moment, she couldn't help but feel upset. However, those feelings were quick to leave her because of something she saw on her system page. 'Wait... How many titles do I have?'

Her gaze landed on the titles again, and she looked stupefied at the third one. 'W-W-What!? A new title!?' Realization hit her, and she began giggling. 'OHHH! A NEW TITLE! HEHEHEHE.'

'System! Sytem! Syyyyssteeemmmmmmm!!!!'

[Please state your requests].

Liu Shu looked at those dryly stated words and felt her excitement being sucked away. She complained. 'Hey, can't you do anything about your depreeeesing tone?'

[...]

[Unable to comply with the request.]

Liu Shu insisted. 'No, it should be possible! I remember hearing a super nice, super gentle, and and, hmmm, it was a very... familiar? Voice! The voice that told me to take care of those around me! Can't you change to that voice?'

[Unable to comply with the request.]

Liu Shu would've rolled her eyes if she had any. 'Stingy. Stupid. Useless.'

[...]

Liu Shu mentally sighed, imitating the gesture she had seen Flor do often. 'Well, tell me about this new title!'

[Request accepted.]

[The <Defender> title is achieved when successfully defending battle for more than 500 creatures with one side having an overwhelming advantage in general strength and numbers. The struggle must not be staged with the purpose of achieving the title, and the title contender must be the lowest-leveled creature among the creatures fighting on the battlefield.]

Liu Shu exclaimed, excited. 'Ohh! You can tell me how to get titles! Also...' Liu Shu blinked. 'Those conditions are really harsh...'

Titles were extremely powerful. Just a look at <Defender>'s effects would be enough to make people gasp and feel unhealthy amounts of jealousy. So, most of them that gave considerable advantages were almost impossible to get. Only when many coincidences are stacked would a creature be able to get a powerful title.

[Tianlian Liu Shu has misunderstood. The system can only explain how acquired titles were achieved. The system can't and won't give hints about title requirements.]

Additionally, each creature has different requisites for acquiring the matching titles. For example, <Defender> wouldn't have been gained by a non-World-Tree creature even when the above conditions were met.]

Our World Tree looked at that message with disdain and spat. 'As expected, useless. Why would I need to know the requirements after I get it?'

Of course, our sapling completely forgot that she had just asked for it and that her current situation was the answer to that question. However, she was upset, so she just bashed the System again to vent.

[...]

Liu Shu ignored the message and began looking around to see if she had checked everything.

Chapter 65. Acquiring New Knowledge.

It wasn't until three days later that Liu Shu stopped looking through her root system to assess the damages and rebuild it better than it was. Her roots could grow smaller tendrils that absorbed the nutrients around her.

The earth around her, nurtured by the diligent care of the Rose Fairies, was a treasure trove of minerals and nutrients. Their tireless efforts not only increased fertility but also made the surface malleable, facilitating the growth and movement of various plants.

Liu Shu's heart sank as she noticed the absence of the small Rose Fairy Garden that had once thrived by her side. The sight of the barren land, with only new sprouts struggling to grow, filled her with a profound sense of loss. 'Hm... In the end, I couldn't protect them.'

After a moment of contemplation, Liu Shu made a firm decision. She would increase the Astral Mana and Anima Energy directed toward Enchanted Growth, even if it meant doing a bit of a sacrifice on her own energy limits. There was one thing she was particularly concerned about and quickly checked. 'How is the Basic Breakthrough Berry doing?'

A wave of relief and joy washed over Liu Shu as she discovered the Basic Breakthrough Berry, the one that had cost her so much to grow, was still there. She had been extra careful not to disturb the branch it was placed in, even during her rampage. 'Good, good~. My pretty flower is growing up nicely, hehe.'

With everything in order, she finally opened the <World Tree Eye>, allowing the surrounding people to feel a very faint presence enveloping them. The gentle aura of the awakening World Tree enveloped the place with calmness and peace.

Some Rose Fairies felt a weight lifting from their shoulders after she awakened. Liu Shu had slowly become a creature equal to a protector, and just her aura being around allowed many Rose Fairies to feel safer.

Flor rested with her eyes closed on one of her branches, entirely recovered, and smiled without opening her eyes. "Good afternoon, Liu Shu. Did you sleep nicely?"

Liu Shu answered happily. 'I rested perfectly~, I'm back to my perfect shape!'

Naturally, the message was translated as just a "Yes" through her aura, but Flor could detect the enthusiasm she said it with. Laughing lightly, Flor opened her eyes and smiled. "That's phenomenal. Thanks for your hard work during the battle."

Since her survival was involved, Liu Shu didn't mind what she did or take it as work or a duty. So, she said little other than her feelings of appreciation.

Flor sat up while stretching and looked around for a bit. "They are not back yet, hm. Well, we can start with those things first."

Curious about whom she was talking about, she checked her surroundings. She was surprised when she failed to see Cinderielle and the four humans. 'Hm. Are they gone? I somehow felt that she wouldn't separate from me for a while...'

The World Tree felt a bit upset, but she heard Flor speaking. "If you are curious where those five went, they went to get you extra good things."

Liu Shu was confused. 'Good things?'

Flor smirked. "Yes. They are collecting proper books about architecture or whatever the craft is called." With a shrug, she continued. "Naturally, they've already done a journey and got us a bit of money, or well, currency, and added a few interesting books."

Liu Shu's eyes shone when she heard about the books. 'I want them, I want them!'

Flor felt the enthusiasm and found Liu Shu cute. "Well, their titles are [Basic World Tree Communication], [Basic Structural Integrity], [Basic System Introduction], and..." Flor paused, looking at the last book's title with a weird face. "Honestly this one, you could not absorb-."

Liu Shu instantly protested. 'No! I want to learn!'

Flor, who felt like a gong just echoed in her skull, held her aching forehead. 'I hope these headache-inducing messages will stop after she learns the communication skills.'

After that, she commented. "Well, the title of this book is [Flora and Fauna Biology and Relationships: Sylvan Edition]."

Liu Shu looked at that book with confusion. 'Why would I need to learn this?' She couldn't really tell why they would even choose this book.' However, Liu Shu was optimistic. 'Perhaps it is important for my advancement?'

Flor had given it a look, even if she wasn't that good at reading. After all, as a wild creature, her knowledge was as limited as it could be. Flor was not wholly uneducated since some old Rose Fairies passed down a bit of the language through generations, but it wasn't perfect by any means.

'To think that I would be trying to learn how to read a book at my age.' Flor lamented the twists her life was taking.

But, even if she couldn't understand many of the words, she could understand the images depicted in them. 'What is this.... Sylvan fe..., no.' Flor remembered. 'Those letters are read as re, not fe...' With that in mind, she continued reading the sentence, and when she finally did it, she threw the book skyward. "Why would my adorable Liu Shu need to learn about a Sylvan's reproductive organs!? I know you are a pervert who's aiming at Liu Shu, but can you keep it moderate!?"

Flor would've slapped Cinderielle with the book if she had been before herself. 'This pervert Sylvan, aiming for a seedling... Ah.' Flor's body became cold as she looked upward toward where she threw the book. Her eyes widened in fear as she saw the book stuck between Liu Shu's branches and being absorbed.

"W-WAIT! LIU SHU SPIT THAT BOOK OUT!"

But there was nothing like spitting it out. The book disintegrated with the <World Tree Wisdom> skill and absorbed like the other four. Flor realized that the World Tree had stolen them even before she had a chance to give it to her properly. 'Was she so hungry for knowledge or something!? Ahhh, I'm so stupid!'

The Rose Fairy Queen stood there, stunned for a few moments while blaming herself, and then snapped at Liu Shu. "You are always slow and react only after a few minutes or hours, but you were so quick to eat them this time! What happened with thinking about things!? I-I swear that if the next answer to my question takes more than 5 seconds- Hm. That's a bit too quick. 5 minutes! No, that one is short as well. Half an hour!"

Flor stopped her rambling, feeling that she was going nowhere. Lamenting about what that book taught, she prepared herself to instead of blaming Liu Shu for wanting to learn, beat up Cinderielle a bit when she returned. 'Hm, the other day, I almost decapitated her; how about I almost cut her arm this time?' Flor's smile was a bit terrifying. 'Right, if BY ACCIDENT the arm flies off, that's not my problem, right?'

The Rose Fairy Queen looked at the World Tree and sighed. "So. Are you still here? Or have you gone to absorb the books?"

Seeing that Flor had stopped her mad episode, Liu Shu pondered in her mind. 'Hm... She is upset about me absorbing that book. Should I not accept the information?'

After all, the reason Liu Shu hadn't gone to sleep to assimilate the information yet was that the four messages were still hovering in front of her eyes. Thanks to her SSS rank skill, she could easily see the summary of each book.

<[Basic World Tree Communication]>: A book with plenty of basic techniques to communicate with World Trees. It also has plenty of chapters dedicated to helping World Trees communicate with the surroundings.

[Do you want to Absorb the contents of <Basic World Tree Communication>? Yes or No?]

<[Basic Structural Integrity]>: A book with clear guides and techniques about building construction. The book covers both rock and metal buildings and woodcrafted buildings. There are several structure examples, with the last chapters having a catalog of complex and masterfully constructed buildings recorded.

[Do you want to Absorb the contents of <Basic System Introduction>? Yes or No?]

<[Basic System Introduction]>: A guide about all the small sections of the System. It gives essential explanations while also clarifying what is usually best to do, starting with Sylvans, Humans, and Humanoids. It comes with various examples and also a list of how to get some valuable titles (System Note: The title acquisition section is purely speculative.)

[Do you want to Absorb the contents of <Basic System Introduction>? Yes or No?]

<[Flora and Fauna Biology and Relationships: Sylvan Edition]>: A detailed biology book about the Sylvan race and their relationships with typical Flora and Fauna (System Note: World Trees included). The book has plenty of information, and it is complex, allowing the reader to gain a thorough understanding of the Sylvan race.

[Do you want to Absorb the contents of <Flora and Fauna Biology and Relationships: Sylvan Edition>? Yes or No?]

Reading the summaries of each book, Liu Shu was confused about all the fuss Flor was making. 'Why doesn't she want me to learn about this?' The World Tree was honestly confused. All these books felt harmless, even her SSS Rank skill didn't trigger. After all, if she were purposely fed a book with bad intentions, the skill would activate and filter everything that could be damaging knowledge-wise.

The standard to choose what was "Harmful Information" was all that would end up hurting her in the long run. Naturally, as an SSS Rank skill, the ability was anything but simple.

Flor didn't know all this, so she worried that Cinderielle tried to feed Liu Shu a perverted book. Moreover, she misinterpreted the contents because she had the bad luck of opening the book right on one of the few pages related to Sylvan reproduction. After all, reading one page would never allow someone to know what an entire book wanted to speak about.

The Rose Fairy Queen sighed. "Anyways, here I got another of those books with many materials and such. I know you are lacking some materials, but you don't know how to communicate with me. So, let's do this. I will open the book and pass my finger through each material; when you see a material you want, tap the..." Flor looked around and flew up to her branches. "Tap my body with a branch."

Flor sighed. "I wanted to wait to ask after you absorbed the books, but who knows what those books will do..." Flor scratched her head. "I should've been more careful..." Shaking her head, she said. "Well, let's do this. Liu Shu, ready? I want you to pay attention, okay?"

Liu Shu focused and sent her a "ready" message. Flor smiled and began.

It took them the entire afternoon and night, but Flor finally found out which materials Liu Shu needed. After knowing that, the Rose Fairy Queen threw the book and leaned back on Liu Shu's body. "I hope you learn how to speak, Liu Shu." She was so exhausted that she fell asleep right after finishing her sentence.

Liu Shu gazed at Flor gently. She used her skills to move her leafy branches cautiously and cover her in a makeshift blanket and ceiling. She could see the night changing into day by the illumination around her, and she didn't want that to wake up the Rose Fairy Queen. 'Sleep well, Flor.'

Right after that, she looked at the four messages and agreed to all of them. Similar to the first time, her mind was flooded with information and took a hit, making her enter a dormant state once again.