

PARAGON OF SIN

Chapter 4 - 4: Competition

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The Scarlet Solaris Sect held disciple competitions to decide the distribution of resources in the sect. It was divided into Outer, Inner, and Core Competitions. However, unlike the Outer and Inner Competitions who had tens of thousands of members, the core disciples only had nine in their ranks.

It was also an opportunity to be promoted to the next class of disciples or obtain rewards. For example, the top ten outer disciples were promoted to the Inner Rank, the top three inner disciples were given a chance to be promoted to Core Rank, and the top core disciple had a chance to enter the Mystic Scarlet Pond for seven days.

The Mystic Scarlet Pond was an area of accumulated Scarlet Qi, which was birthed by the lands and could be used to temper one's innate, natural energies such as Yin, Yang, and the natural elements. It could also help one transform their Heart of Qi into a Heart of Scarlet Qi - an advanced material qi form.

The faint Scarlet Qi of the mountain had less than a thousandth of an effectiveness than the pond. Therefore, a single day of cultivation within was the near-equivalent of three years. It was extraordinary and drew the fierce competition of the sect.

Wei Wuyin had participated in the Outer and Inner Competitions, reaching third place and second respectively. This was why he was capable of claiming his current status as a core disciple. However, the Inner Competition not only required him to reach the top, but defeat a pre-existing core disciple, taking his place.

Therefore, Wei Wuyin had to be wary of the competition of both Inner and Core, as a top ranker could ruthlessly snatch away his status and position.

If he was injured by that assassination attempt, he was certain that his spot would've been taken along with the natural protections that it granted. If someone wished to deal with him at that point, they could do so in a more direct manner if he was an inner disciple.

Swoosh!

Wei Wuyin stood atop his crane as it soared through the skies. The surroundings were filled with people on eagle-like birds, indicating their status as inner disciples. Some of these birds had multiple people riding them leisurely. However, a faint pressure could be felt from the atmosphere.

This was the time that the allocation of power shifted. Amongst the core disciples, each had factions of inner disciples and outer disciples. Much like the core disciples, inner disciples had a limited amount of spots. If a core disciple could take the majority of the inner disciples slots, their faction's strength would be number one and the benefits would be endless.

Fortunately, as each core disciple had their own faction, him included, the distribution of power wasn't monopolized. In fact, even him, the newest disciple, had about seven percent of the inner disciples in his faction. He also had many promising outer disciples.

Cultivation was profoundly difficult. In fact, it was so difficult that many people never break free from Foundation Establishment Realm, or even its first phase - Physique Tempering.

It was so difficult that it was heart-crushing. The amount of resources needed was beyond the level of many disciples' individual capabilities. To solve and alleviate this issue, the core disciples use a group mechanism to earn resources and promote growth.

Wei Wuyin looked at the inner disciples approaching the stadium. His eyes flashed as his spiritual sense analyzed the standard of cultivation. Li Yin, the woman from the Violet Moon Sect, was at the Meridian Awakening, yet Li Yin had been merely an outer disciple of her sect.

To become an inner disciple in the Scarlet Solaris Sect, one of the Nine Great Sects, the minimum requirement was to reach Dantian Establishment, and reaching the Qi Condensation Realm was nearly a guarantee to become one. However, to condense one's Heart of Qi by merging the mind, spirit, matter, and essence was exceptionally difficult.

Therefore, about eighty percent of inner disciples were at the Foundation Establishment Realm, Dantian Establishment Phase. Even with the resources from the sect and time, it only goes to show the struggles one must suffer.

If one wanted to reach the top three in the Inner Disciple Competition, reaching the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow, was the only way. Wei Wuyin placed second in the inner competition only because of that.

The Qi Condensation was divided into Nine Stages and demonstrated their difference by Nine Phases of Qi. The first phase of Qi was Qi Creation Phase, where mind, spirit, matter, and essence were merged to create Metaphysical Qi and a Heart of Qi.

Those at the Dantian Establishment had inhuman levels of strength, but those at the Qi Creation Phase were monsters. They could rip apart boulders of stone with their bare hands, fight full-grown bears and crush their bodies with a single blow. It was terrifying.

The Second Stage of Qi Condensation was the External Flow Phase. By strengthening and condensing one's Qi to its fully developed form, it can flow outside the body in a very elementary way. Such as a shockwave or pulsing wave. This simultaneously gave birth to a unique sensory perception called Spiritual Sense, the sixth sense of a cultivator.

Each stage advancement and each phase's form brought about tremendous benefits to one's physical body and senses, including spiritual sense.

Wei Wuyin had met a fortuitous encounter while hunting the Violet Moon Sect's remnants, obtaining a Steel Essence Source. It was a liquid that had formed from elemental essence, primarily metal, and matured over a thousand years. It was a lucky chance that very few could ever hope for.

Using it, he strengthened his qi and gave birth to the elements - earth, fire, wind, and water - and condensed metal qi as a bonus. Therefore, his qi and physical body held a higher toughness, resilience to temperature, was easier to control, and was more fluid in its activity. With metal qi included, he contained an enhanced durability and sharpness.

The second lucky chance was finding a woman from the Violet Moon Sect who contained an undiscovered Three-Point Yin Body. After using her as a sexual cauldron and gaining her Primal Yin via dual cultivation, he quickly ascended to the Yin Form Phase, the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation.

It was thanks to that he was capable of overcoming the schemes aimed at his life. With his current cultivation, he was already stronger than all the Core

Disciples. Not only did he condense metal qi, but also could give form to his qi.

Only when one reaches this cultivation level does the option to use the full potential of qi arts and spiritual spells become unlocked. It was those qi arts that enabled him to easily kill two assassins skilled in stealth and escape quickly and with relative ease.

Now, with this competition, he was bound to take the spotlight.

As his spiritual sense swept forth, his silver eyes shined as it was bolstered by a spiritual spell, Iron Core Eyes. It allowed one's spiritual sense to pierce deeper and gather more information, including defending against spiritual spells.

He had accumulated a lot of arts and spells before departing for his mission as a precautionary mechanism, which was far more beneficial than he'd originally thought. It was because of his preparations that he could use these arts and spells now. Otherwise, while his cultivation base may have been high, it would be like wielding a claymore without the appropriate skill.

Luckily, the sect did not regulate qi arts and spiritual spells for core disciples; therefore, he was capable of claiming any and all that weren't restricted to the upper echelon members.

"The standard of cultivation has dropped..." Wei Wuyin frowned as he noticed that a few Inner Disciples had just broken through to the Dantian Establishment Phase. It indicated that their ascension was due to the weaker standard of cultivation bases overall.

"Did something happen while I was away?" He mused in his thoughts as he recalled matters Du Ling had informed him of. Nothing in particular stated why the standard had dropped. In fact, it should've increased due to the Violet Moon Sect's destruction. The resources of the sect and combat should've shaved the weaklings and promoted the strong.

And yet...

"Lord Wuyin!" A cold, feminine voice sounded from a distance. It broke Wei Wuyin out of his thoughts and he turned to look.

This was the cold, indifferent woman from the last battlefield. He had ordered her to take care of Li Yin earlier. She was also an Outer Disciple who was a member of his faction. Her name was Su Mei.

She was on an eagle-like bird, being carried along with four other outer disciples with an inner disciple at the lead. Wei Wuyin recognized all of them as subordinates of his. He swiftly analyzed their cultivation bases and was pleasantly surprised.

Su Mei had condensed her qi, reaching the First Stage of Qi Condensation, Qi Creation Phase. Her body not only stored metaphysical qi, but her Heart of Qi allowed her to passively restore her natural energies using the Essence of Heaven and Earth and control her qi.

The others had all reached the Dantian Establishment, even the inner disciple was at this level. No wonder Su Mei was the one that called out to him despite being lower-ranked than the inner disciple. With her cultivation level, she was essentially the leader of this group.

He regarded this young woman in her early-twenties further. She had short black hair and clear black eyes. Her jade-like countenance was extraordinary, but her features were only above average. While she was a beauty, she wasn't a top-tier or even a high-level one. She was just a good-looking woman in her own right.

As for breasts and ass, she was only average sized in both, perhaps even below average.

Su Mei and the rest arrived, hovering below Wei Wuyin's crane, as they paid their respects. Wei Wuyin nodded in acknowledgment.

Wei Wuyin's gaze caused Su Mei to shiver slightly. She had condensed her qi and thus had merged her mind, matter, spirit, and essence, allowing her perception to be enhanced thoroughly. She didn't know how, but she felt Wei Wuyin was looking at her entirety, as if she had no clothes on.

Her cold and indifferent facial expression had a faint blush of red that gave way to a cute flavor to her.

Wei Wuyin noticed and slightly smiled. He was known for being exceptionally handsome with mind-drawing silver eyes and a good figure. However, he

didn't have any interest in sleeping with his subordinates. At least, he hasn't done so yet.

"The Outer Disciple Competition will happen first, so I may as well join you guys. What do you think?" Wei Wuyin asked.

The Outer, Inner, and Core Competitions happen one after the other. The reason had to be because those who reach the top ten in the Outer Disciple Competition can participate in the Inner Disciple Competition. Those in the Inner Disciple Competition's top three would then be able to fight a core disciple, replace them, and then fight for resources.

Usually, the core disciples wouldn't show up until they were required. However, Wei Wuyin wasn't like the typical core disciple, choosing to watch the competition from the beginning. After all, this competition was how he rose in power. It had a special significance.

Su Mei and the rest were surprised, but swiftly regained their expressions. Wei Wuyin was their Faction Leader and contributed heavily to their success and influence, so they would never deny his requests.

He nodded and followed them along the way. As he did so, an inner disciple spoke, "Lord Wei, there's a rumor circulating that you've given form to qi, reaching the fourth stage of Qi Condensation." The young man, who seemed to be in his mid-twenties, informed.

Wei Wuyin's eyes narrowed. He had never revealed his full cultivation base to others, and only while fighting the remnant forces of the Violent Moon Sect did he execute an elementary application of elemental qi. He hadn't even revealed his metal qi yet.

There was no way for that rumor to have started when he had just returned. Which meant it was old. He expected that someone released this information to draw envy to any possible cultivation treasure he may have to explain his rise from Honorary to Core Disciple. While he was away, they could rouse others to act against him.

Someone wished to enlist others to pressure or kill him. It was frustrating, because at that time, it wasn't true and could've cost him his life.

Chu Yan was a knife someone wished to use for this exact reason. He inwardly sighed but didn't reveal any expression except calm indifference. He knew that the young man was also fishing for a reason from him.

While he had subordinates, many, if not all, of them wished to get ahead in the cultivation world and wasn't below betrayal.

"I learned of this matter already." After stating that, he didn't elaborate. The young man didn't dare to press, so he calmly directed the variant eagle as if it was just him being diligent in informing his master of a potentially harmful rumor.

Before long, they soon arrived at a grand stadium.