

Last System 180

Chapter 180 - What Is Dual Cultivation

"That's quite... unusual topic," the Madam said as she looked at me. Her lowered eyelids made her long stare appear thoughtful.

"You might be correct," I nodded my head, "but I fail to notice how is that relevant," I added, angling my head to the side.

A small, ironic smile crept up on my lips.

For a moment, the woman continued to stare at me along her long eyelashes. She then took a deep breath and released it in the form of a sigh as she stretched herself back on her chair.

"The truth is, we don't really know much," Madam pursed her lips as she spoke. "We know what it does, but why?" she asked, shaking her head. "Just a bunch of guesses."

"I'm listening," I replied without hesitation.

In my eyes, the opening to the lecture was nothing more than a bunch of excuses.

She was a goddamn manager of a brothel situated right by the border of a huge sect. If she didn't know how dual cultivation worked, who else would?

"To start it off, the simple rule," the Madam finally started to speak some sense. "The dual cultivation always equals to the higher rank," the woman said as she looked up at the ceiling of the room.

"I know." I nodded my head. "If a weak girl dual cultivates with a strong man, her cultivation will rise. The caveat is," I released a small sigh, "it would come with no benefit for the man," I added.

"Don't forget about the pleasure and relaxation," the Madam was quick to interrupt my words.

I only gave her a slightly annoyed stare in response.

"Right, sorry," she pulled back.

I could tell why she was quite defensive about this topic. It closely related to her business, so she likely developed a habit of dismissing anything that could put her business at risk.

"I also know that dual cultivation works great when the two parties are equal in strength," I said after waiting for a few moments.

Those words actually had a different meaning in this discussion. There was a sign of peace, allowing the middle-aged woman to speak again.

'Since she wants to overreact to that token, let me play my part as well,' I thought.

"We know about two more things," the woman said, raising her hand with two fingers straightened. "First, dual cultivation does not increase the net sum of your spiritual energy."

I didn't expect such a bomb to be dropped so randomly. And from the looks of things, this slut just dropped it in the middle of her speech!

"Secondly, one needs to supplement dual cultivation with a massive amount of cultivation resources and elixirs in order to properly grow," she added, once again providing me with interesting detail.

I was in no way in a position to figure out the exact details of dual cultivation. I had way too little information for that. And even if I could somehow get the dual cultivation skill or job...

The prize of going behind Mia's back to do so made such an option an impossibility for me.

Even if we were away from each other, I wasn't going to go back on my feelings.

'Ever since I proclaimed my love to her, I lost the right to fool around,' I thought, determined to see my promises through.

"Is there anything else?" I asked.

I was eager to go back, sit down and think about what I learned. Even though it wasn't much by any scale, I still felt like I had the chance to make use of it.

"If the difference of strength between two parties is too great, dual cultivation can become predatory," Madam dropped yet another bomb with a deep sigh.

She then sat back and closed her eyes.

The lecture was now clearly over.

"Thanks," I said, standing up from my chair.

"Aren't you going to reveal what you are going to sell me?" she asked when I made some rustling noises while packing up.

I chuckled in response.

"You will see when I get it ready," I said while shaking my head sideways in denial. "Just sit still and prepare for the chaos that will soon ensue," I added, unable to stop myself from another chuckle.

If there was anything different about this world that struck me pretty much...

It was how much more common and accepted the idea of prostitution was.

I didn't know whether it was something caused by the lower level of civilization. Maybe this effect had some ties to the local cultures of the world? Or maybe just the influence of dual cultivation-based sects made sexuality something far removed from taboo?

I didn't know and, frankly speaking, I didn't care about the reason. What was important was how I could exploit it!

"When will it be ready?" the Madam asked as I neared the doors of her office.

"I would like to say two weeks," I replied, taking a moment to think, "but don't take it as a promise. I will only show the product once it's fully done and tested," I added before pushing the doors open and leaving.

The brothel was only the first on the list of places I had to visit.

Walking through the building, I could already see the business coming back to life.

In the short time that I spent in the Madam's office, this place turned from a deserted ruin to a vibrant heart of the local community.

'I guess nice-looking girls will always bring attention, no matter the world,' I thought as I walked through the brothel's corridors.

With how tight some of those passages were, I could hardly avoid rubbing my sides against the exposed parts of the many girls that rushed to their work.

'Still,' I thought, my mind returning to the topic at hand.

With how little time I had today, I couldn't waste the transition moments on just moving around. I had to make the best use of every second that I could find.

'It doesn't make any sense,' I thought, reviewing what I just talked about with the Madam. 'How could dual cultivation be predatory?' I asked myself.

I was trying my absolute hardest to find a pseudo-physical model that could replicate the effects of dual cultivation.

Men cultivated yang energy while women cultivated yin energy. What did that have to do with anything? What was the difference? Weren't we all using the same mana as everyone else, regardless of one's gender?

'Wait, if it's not the kind of energy that differs,' I thought, my foot carrying me out of the brothel. 'Doesn't that mean the yin and yang are nothing more but aspects of that energy?' I suggested. 'A quality of mana, instead of its type?'

On its own, this realization didn't change anything. But, changing the paradigm of my thinking allowed me to change how I looked at the entire landscape of magic.

'If it's a quality of mana,' I thought, directing my steps towards the auction hall, 'how could it work the way it does?'

The second this thought appeared in my eyes, I pictured all sorts of forces and energies that I knew existed. The four fundamental forces that I knew of and the basic interactions that could affect said forces.

'If there is a rule to this madness,' I thought, clenching my hands into fists, 'I will find it.'