

## Last System 48

Chapter 48 - Sects Summit

"Those damned kids!" Catius muttered under his nose, walking up the stairs.

Out of all the things that he hated in this god-forsaken sect, the endless stairs one had to climb were near the top.

Step by step, he continued his arduous journey, already feeling the anxiety of running late.

'The meeting started half an hour ago, and I'm still climbing those damned stairs!' he cursed in his thoughts, only years of practice allowing the man to keep his face relatively calm.

In the end, nearly the entirety of the sect was settled. And if any of the inner disciples living on the terraces were to see him walking around furious...

'No, I don't even want to think about it,' Catius gritted his teeth and lowered his face.

The long climb made it hard for him to keep his breath stable. And there was still quite a bit of stairs that he had to cover.

'Worst of all, it's all on Vaner!' Catius tightened his fists, the image of the arrogant elder appearing before his eyes.

Even though the two of them bore the same rank, Catius could only dream about the treatment that his fellow elder received.

He would never stoop so low as to ask himself why was Vaner treated differently than most of the other elders of the sect. Obviously, rather than comparing the way the sect rewarded his efforts with elders of the same experience on the job, he could only compare himself to Vaner.

The man who revolutionized their relations with the Auditors, the one who abolished half of the ages-long traditions.

No, it was Vaner's fault for how badly Catius had it in the job!

'Just who does he think he is,' the old elder tightened his fists when something suddenly attracted his attention.

He stopped in his tracks, despite being already late to the meeting with the patriarch. Looking to the side, he saw a massive gathering of people working like ants to settle some kind of formation around one of the palaces of the upper terraces.

A smile grew on the elder's lips.

'So that's what the meeting is all about,' he thought, his excitement shooting through the roof.

Catius took a fair moment to calm himself down and assume a dignified look on his face. Entering the Main Hall while agitated could easily be taken as an affront to the dignity of his job.

And it was something he couldn't afford in his position.

"Why are you late, elder Catius?" An old man sitting on the throne-like chair at the head of a massive table asked the moment Catius entered the main hall.

To both sides of the man, various other elders sat. The closer one's position to the doors, the lower their standing within the community of the elders.

'Damn this fucker,' Catius cursed inwardly, noticing just how close to the patriarch Vaner was sitting. 'He already advanced to the fifth place?' he thought, surprised by the unexpected change.

"Patriarch, this junior is all at fault," Catius kneeled down and rested his left fist on the floor.

"Spare me the bullshit of formalities," the old man couldn't be bothered by the procedures.

"I was... held up." Catius closed his eyes, focusing all his willpower to stop the shaking of his body. Just the memory of the recent events was enough for his fury to awaken.

"Some disciples caused a massive ruckus. Since they didn't know their places, I set them up straight again," the man explained the reason behind his lateness, not daring to as much as raise his head without spoken permission.

"I hope you didn't overdo it," the old man commented before waving his hand. "You may rise. Take your seat."

Following the order, Catius stood up and walked towards the seat directly opposite the patriarchs. Right at the very end of the table.

This was his atonement. Even though there were at least eleven free chairs left, all closer to the patriarch, Catius humbly imposed this punishment on himself.

Notably, the patriarch didn't veto his decision.

'I hope this will calm the patriarch's anger,' he wished, tightening the fists that he hid underneath the table.

Catius looked up right in time to notice the change on the patriarch's face. From the kind old man who could easily forgive and would always be willing to help, the man suddenly turned into the persona that everyone in the sect respected.

His wrinkles bleached out as his face turned tense. Even his aura turned more vivid, announcing that the topic of the meeting wasn't just a regular one.

"Brothers," the elder nodded his head to the first three seats in the room. "Juniors," he continued, glancing over the rest of the gathered people. "I received the reports that the works over at the palace are progressing as planned. We shall have everything done in time for the visit of the Auditors," the man announced.

A wave of relief washed off the room. Even though the sect wasn't anywhere as united as it was during its founding era, this was the single element of their yearly routine that united all the elders.

The one event that would decide how big of a share of resources their sect would receive from the powers beyond the curtain.

"On that note," the patriarch's face relaxed a little. "How is that Oloan kid doing?"

"Patriarch!" an elder at the seventh seat stood up and bowed to the elder of the entire sect. "His cultivation is progressing smoothly. With all the resources and guidance I allocated to him, he should be breaking through to the Qi gathering stage any time now!"

A slight murmur echoed in the hall.

'Just two weeks, and he is already nearing the breakthrough? That's the Oloan clan for you!' everyone appeared to think when hearing the news.

"That's reassuring," the patriarch nodded his head to one of the highest elders, thanking him for the report.

'That lucky bastard...!' Catus looked at the fellow elder with jealousy brimming in his eyes. 'If only I could guide that Oloan kid, my future would be as bright as the sun!' he thought, swallowing his jealousy down his throat along with his saliva.

Catus shook a little when an idea appeared in his head. A vicious smile grew upon his lips, only to disappear the moment he obediently raised his hand.

"You again?" the patriarch looked at the elder in surprise. "Speak," he allowed.

"Patriarch!" Catus called out, only to bite his tongue. 'Right, he wanted me to ditch the formalities,' he recalled.

The elder swallowed his saliva before raising his head and looking at the patriarch.

"I was held back by one of the disciples serving the heir of the Oloan clan," Catus reported, lowering his head. He then pursed his lips and glued his eyes to the table, unwilling to keep going without the encouragement of the patriarch.

As childish as it was, Catus's age wasn't parallel to the maturity of his ego.

"Hmm..." the patriarch muttered. "Go on."

A vicious look flashed through Catus's hidden eyes.

"Apparently, that disciple started a fight with a pair of two. One of them was a new disciple of the sect, but the other..." Catus made a small pause, raising the tension of the moment, before blurting out, "was a slave that the young Oloan master wanted for himself. A slave.... That one of the elders in this room took for a disciple!"