

Last System 49

Chapter 49 - Conflict At The Elders Gathering

As soon as Catius gave his testimony, the entire room turned silent. Yet, this annoying silence didn't fester for long.

"Here is where you are wrong, brother," Vaner stood up from his seat and smiled towards the lowly elder at the end of the table. "I didn't take her as a disciple," he said, a smirk appearing on his lips. "I took her as a direct disciple instead!"

If Catius's report shocked the elders, then Vaner's audacity to top it up like that simply stunned them. Even the patriarch could only look at one of his closest elders with a look of disbelief in his eyes.

'This damned idiot!' Catius celebrated within the confines of his soul. 'I thought he would stay silent or refuse to admit to it. How could he be so dumb to not only admit to it...' Catius's happiness was short-lived. 'If he is willing to admit to it...' he focused all his brainpower on figuring out the gameplan of this hated elder, but he simply saw no way out for him.

'Still... to take a mere slave as a direct disciple, just what was he thinking? Did his arrogance finally brought him to his downfall?' Catius thought, not sure what to think about the situation.

"Catius, you might sit back," the patriarch said, reminding the lowly elder that he was still standing upright.

"Yes, patriarch. I apologize, patriarch. I was just too stunned by the audacity of this man," Catius replied while sitting down.

Obviously, there was no way for him to miss such a great opportunity to strike at Vaner!

"Vaner..." the patriarch called out the man's name, only to hesitate and turn silent for a moment. He then closed his eyes, unwilling to let the others see the conflicted look on his face. "There is a limit to how much I'm willing to let slide," he said, opening his eyes and casting a disappointed look at the elder.

"I granted you nearly complete autonomy in the sect because you always showed results for the actions you took," the patriarch added after a moment of thought. Then, his expression stelled as he stared daggers at the unruly elder. "Explain yourself!"

Finally, everyone in the room started to react to the news.

Some were happy. One of their greatest rivals was about to go down!

Some were disappointed and unhappy. Their ally was about to go down!

But the majority of the elders were simply curious. After all, Vaner already made a name for himself for all the trouble that he caused so far, trouble that somehow always managed to turn into a good thing.

"If we are talking about the same girl," Vaner moved his eyes at Catius only to shake his head and turn his face back to the patriarch, "then she is not a slave."

"According to the Sect regulations, reaching the Qi gathering stage frees one from slavery," he announced before sitting down.

Despite the patriarch not giving him the order or even approval to do so, he sat down. That alone would be enough to have most of the elders of the sect banished.

"In just two weeks?!" This time, even the patriarch became agitated. "HOW?!" he shouted, slamming his fist into the table.

"She has a body of lightning," Vaner replied, leaning back on his chair and inspecting some kind of illusory speck of dirt underneath his perfectly trimmed nails.

The agitation in the hall died down in an instant. Not a single person dared to utter a word... Or rather, not a single person managed to overcome their shock quickly enough to comment on the matter.

"Are you sure?" the patriarch asked, his eyes turning focused.

"As sure as I am that the sun will rise in the east and set in the west tomorrow," Vaner said and nodded his head before turning his face towards the rest of the hall. "You only have yourself to blame for missing such a promising candidate, brothers!" he sneered.

Vaner's ironic smile was only a mask. Underneath it, he desperately calculated the positions of all the elders, trying to figure out the best course of action.

'There is no way in hell I will tell them about Arthur,' he thought, steeling his resolve. 'It's better to throw that girl under the scrutiny of the elders than to let them learn about him,' he decided only to instantly quell the quilt welling up in his soul.

For all his exploits, he never enjoyed exploiting others. And now, he had no other choice but to backstab one of his new disciples just to protect the other.

'Truly, an unpleasant situation,' he thought, stopping the ugly grimace from surfacing on his face.

"I understand why you accepted her, then..." Catius spoke up, finally breaking the silence in the room. "But that doesn't excuse her behavior!" he protested. "Right, she even stood up to that other guy and opposed me! A former slave!" he slammed his hand against the table.

"Even with such a blessing, the auditors won't accept her if she lacks in morals and discipline!" he exclaimed before stealing a glance at the patriarch.

The old man... actually smiled. Returning the glance, he leaned his head and looked at Catius.

"Junior, tell me what exactly happened for you to be late," he ordered.

Catius couldn't stop a vicious smile from surfacing on his lips. This was his moment, the moment when he could strike Vaner... by striking someone he wanted to take under his tutelage.

'It will be a dirty move... But only those who hold nothing back can claim the victory in the end!' he thought, gathering his courage as he opened his mouth and gave the report.

"As you wish, patriarch!"