

Last System 69

Chapter 69 - First Phase Of Audit

"Wait, what?" I couldn't help but shiver in shock. "Wasn't the audition supposed to start in one more week?" I asked.

Sure, I could accept it if that was the reality, but wasn't the audition supposed to start a month after the opening test? Even though, in theory, it had nothing to do with Mia and me but was rather focused on the older disciples, I could tell that this would be a time full of tribulations for us.

"The official version starts a week from now," Vaner nodded his head. "But the unofficial one starts today," he added, correcting my view on the matter.

"And what's the damn difference?" I couldn't help but ask.

At this point, I didn't care whether or not my question could reveal how little I knew about this world and place in general. From what I managed to learn over the past week, Vaner was some kind of special persona in the sect. As such, he was the person least likely to dupe me in just because I lacked some sort of basic knowledge.

In a sense, he was a man who valued merit, not standing. That's why I worked so hard all the time.

Because only by bringing in results could I allow myself to be more or less relaxed around my current master.

"Once the official audition begins, the candidates will perform before the official delegations of the higher sects," Vaner said only to shake his head. "But for the next week, this sect will be invaded by loads of disciples from the higher sects," he explained. "In theory, they are supposed to stay low-key and allow their superiors an insight at the real nature of the students that they might get some interest in."

"And the real reason is...?" I asked, easily noticing the part that Vaner omitted.

"And why do you think my expression is so sour?" Vaner answered with a question on his own.

"Anyway, for now, you need to stay low. I know that you are doing that already," Vaner said, raising his hand to stop me from interrupting him, "but right now, it's even more important. Whatever happens, do not let others notice you," the elder ordered.

"That's doable," I nodded my head. It was rare for Vaner to be so direct with something. As such, I could tell just how important this little mission of his was. "It's just that..." I hesitated to open up about something important.

"If your life or Mia's wellbeing will be on the line, you have my approval to do whatever you will deem necessary," Vaner satisfied my request without even hearing it.

Even though we never really got to know each other properly, he appeared to know me better than I expected him to.

"That's great," I nodded my head with genuine gratitude. "Right, on the note of the visitors, who are they?" I asked.

"There are Oloan, Urbi, and Tuxia clans coming, each representing a major sect organized around their main family," Vaner said. "Oloan... is the bread and butter sect, pretty similar to what you can see here," the elder said, waving his hand around as if in an attempt to point at the surrounding area. "Urbi... They are quite authoritarian. They are also known for accepting anyone willing, but I wouldn't advise accepting their invitation," Vaner said, his lips turning into a thin line.

'They accept everyone?' I thought, able to sense that there was a deeper meaning behind it. And since Vaner didn't explain it on his own, was he maybe trying to test me whether I could figure it out myself?

'Even if that's the case, I need a bit more time to think it over,' I decided, raising my eyes at the elder. "What about the Tuxi clan?" I asked, more for the sake of buying myself more time than learning more about the last option.

"That's the sect I came here on behalf of," Vaner revealed out of nowhere something that sounded like a great secret. After all, how could one of the highest elders of the sect actually belong to a different sect?

"Is something like that... allowed?" I asked, trying to make sense of what I had just heard. Depending on Vaner's answer, I would either openly incorporate this information as a part of my knowledge, or I would have to do my absolute best to forget I ever heard it in the first place!

"Don't worry, that's what every major and average sect does," Vaner smiled, noticing the distraught on my face. "The Skyladder sect... You could say, this place exists only to gather and test people's potential, so that the real sects won't bother grooming wastes," Vaner explained.

"I think I get it now," I nodded my head, immersing myself in my thoughts. "Anyway," I suddenly said, dropping the idea as my thoughts returned to their previous task, "what is the Tuxi sect all about?"

"It's a place that is hardest to enter. A place where only merit matters and every talent is properly groomed," Vaner replied with a wide smile revealing just how proud he was of his upbringing.

Given how bad an opinion I had on the Skyladder sect after experiencing the schemes of its upper echelons firsthand, seeing Vaner, one of the main scheming players of the Skyladder sect, talk about the Tuxi sect with such elation on his face...

"If that's the case, then the Urbi sect accepts everyone... Not because they are willing to help them grow, but because they are using them for their own purposes, right?" I suddenly said, moving back to the topic that Vaner intentionally omitted.

"That's right," the elder nodded his head. "If Oloan sect is a traditionally hierarchical place while Tuxi sect is organized around meritocracy, then Urbi sect is an example of a complete tyranny," Vaner explained.

"Won't that make it pretty easy to notice their people lurking around?" I asked, only to twist my lips a little, "I mean, maybe outside of that Oloan sect since you claim them to be so similar," I corrected myself.

"That would be the case if they were the only visitors," Vaner smiled, clearly satisfied with my insights. "Those are the major sects who ditched the idea of focusing on just a single aspect. Outside

of them, there will be more sects coming. Amongst the more important ones, there are smithing sect, sword sect, alchemy sect, religious sect oriented only around cultivation, dual cultivation sect and spear sect," Vaner listed out.

"So they are kind of one-trick, one-purpose sects?" I asked, trying to understand the situation to the best of my ability.

"Yes, and no," Vaner sighed as he turned around and headed towards the doors. "Each of them is pretty strong. They managed to achieve their position by mastering their respective focal points. While they are weaker than the three major sects, they are by no means weak!" he announced, pushing the doors open.

But just as he was about to leave, I finally realized one thing.

"Elder, one last thing!" I shouted after Vaner's back, only to see him turn his head towards me with a small surprise painted all over it.

"What's wrong?" he asked, leaning his head over his shoulder with curiosity.

"Did you just say, dual cultivation sect?"