

## Last System 95

### Chapter 95 - The Drink

We reached the site of the party in just a few minutes of walk from Vaner's mansion. It wasn't that the place was near the dormitory of the disciples, but rather Vaner's mansion was in one of the best locations in the entire sect.

The party itself took place in the main hall of the sect, vacated for this very reason by all the elders that would usually reside and work in there. Yet, even though the biggest building in the entire compound was dedicated just for the purpose of this grandiose meeting, crowds upon crowds of people already spilled to the massive garden that surrounded it.

"It's pretty big," I commented in a half-voice while walking a step behind Terio. On the outside, it was something that the courtesy towards his seniorship required, while it was actually Terio's own idea on how to protect me from the bullies.

"I may not be the most important or the most influential disciple of the sect, but I'm still somewhat recognizable. If you walk behind me, people will know that picking a fight with you means picking a fight with me!" Terio said when he first mentioned the idea.

'Still, walking like that only keeps making my heart hurt,' I thought. Each step that I made in Terio's shadow was a reminder of how much he was willing to do for my sake, even if it wasn't necessary at all.

'I know it's pretty obvious, but I guess that's what having a friend means,' I thought, feeling how my heart tightened a little.

Thankfully, before those kinds of thoughts could make me depressed all over, we finally reached the entrance to the hall and entered the building.

If the party looked crazy from the outside, then the inside turned out to be mind-blowing... For anyone local to this world. In my eyes, it was a pretty average event... That is, for the standards of someone born on earth.

Yet, it didn't take long before people took notice of my presence. In an instant, I could feel the atmosphere of my immediate surroundings change as people started to crack jokes and hurl insults towards me.

'I have to give it to him,' I thought, looking at Terio's back. While people were quick to show just how much they despised me, the degree of their bullying was greatly limited.

"How about we get something to drink?" I offered, already bored by the event to the death. Even though I only entered it a moment earlier, my expectations towards it turned out to be greatly misaligned with reality.

"That's a good idea," Terio nodded his head, leading us deeper into the building.

Soon, we ended up standing in place, a cup of a strange, violet liquid in our hands.

"And this is...?" I asked, raising my eyes at my senior.

"The courtesy of the upper sect," Terio smiled before taking a small sip and closing his eyes. For a few moments, he washed his mouth with the liquid before finally swallowing it. "It's delicious... But it also has great effects on your cultivation," Terio explained. "But it's also extremely hard to come by in the sect, so don't just down it in one go," he advised.

"I see..." I muttered, taking another look at the liquid. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't feel any spiritual energy in it, making it all the harder to believe Terio's words.

Still, I raised the cup to my lips and took a small sip.

Noticing the familiar taste, I almost spat the drink out. Ultimately I still held it in and even swallowed before placing the cup down and trying my best to hide the disgust.

I could recognize this taste even when forced awake at two at night, forcefully fed several different drinks, and then asked to recognize this specific one. It was the taste, a distinctive taste, that all the energy drinks had.

It was the taste of a drink that was tapped with taurine. And I just happened to know what was the simplest and earlier method of synthesizing it.

"You don't like it?" Terio asked, his eyes widening up in surprise.

"I..." For a moment, I thought about telling Terio that what he was drinking had elements extracted from bull's sperm... But ultimately, I decided not to. Seeing how he enjoyed the drink, I didn't have it in me to break the news to him. "That's right, it's a bit too sour for my tastes," I said before passing the cup to my senior.

According to what we were told at the bar, everyone could only get a single cup of this drink. As such, it was a great opportunity for Terio to enjoy the questionable delicacy a little bit longer.

"Anyway, now that we are here, what should we do?" I asked, eager to change the topic.

"For now, I think it would be best to try to find out where the foreign disciples are," Terio advised. "You know, those that wore our robes for the past week," he said before suddenly laughing out. "I hope you didn't expect to meet any deputies here," he added.

"Disciples, deputies... This is quite an elaborate scheme, isn't it?" I said when a sudden question popped out in my head. "But I still don't understand one thing. While it's pretty obvious why the upper sect would like to find promising recruits here, what there for the sect to give them away?" I asked.

"Huh?" Terio almost choked on his drink before a sudden smile appeared on his face. "And how do you think our sect gets all the spirit stones and other cultivation resources?" he posed a rhetorical question, answering my own question with it.

"I see... I muttered, piecing together just how simple yet crafty this scheme was.

"Excuse me," someone said before poking my back with his finger. Turning around, I saw a young man, at least two or three years younger than me, standing with a troubled expression on his face and a tray with two drinks in his hand.

"Brothers, I'm sorry to bother, but could you please take those last two glasses?" he requested, quickly lowering his eyes when I looked at his face. "Everyone seems to have their fill already, but I need to get rid of them to end my shift for today!" he cried out, appealing to our mercy.

While surprised, I couldn't stop the feeling that his behavior... was pretty weird. I looked around, only to notice that all around us, there were people with almost emptied out drinks, people moving towards the bar, and even people raising their hands to attract the attention of the pushboys like him!

In an instant, I raised my guard.

'But wait, isn't this too much of an idiotic approach for it to be a trap?' I thought, shaken by the realization. 'If this really is a trap, is someone severely underestimating my intelligence? Or are they wishing that I would refuse to make trouble for me?' I thought, sending another glance around the place.

Just like I expected, I quickly found out a group of people scattered all over the proximity, all sending glances towards me and averting their eyes in a panic the moment our eyes met.

'Something really is going on,' I realized.

"Arthur?" Terio asked, noticing how tense I became.

'Are they taking me for an idiot? Are they trying to provoke me? Or are they idiots themselves, believing that I wouldn't see through their trap?' I panicky attempted to figure out which was the case.

"Sir, please..." the young man was on the verge of tears. From how his arm was shaking, it was clear that he could no longer hold the glass.

'Wait,' I told myself, instantly forcing all my thoughts back into order. 'So far, Jenne is the most likely to try to scheme against me. And I shouldn't make the mistake of underestimating him,' I thought, forcing a smile to appear on my lips.

"Sure thing," I finally replied, taking up both of the glasses and passing one of them to Terio.

"But I still have yours..." he attempted to protest, only to shut up when he noticed my expression.

"You are free to go," I said to the young man before grabbing Terio's arm and walking away from the place.

The worst that I could do right now was to sit in place and allow whoever was scheming against me to push their plans forward uninterrupted.

In a few moments, I led Terio out of the venue. Still well within everyone's sights yet far away to get some privacy, I looked down at the drink.

From the outside, it appeared to be a simple vine. Yet the doubts continued to rock in my head.

"Cheers?" Terio asked, raising both of his glasses as he tried to get some reaction out of me.

"No," I said, shaking my head. "Don't drink either of them," I ordered with a tense look on my face.

'Is this a trap, or am I overreacting?' I thought, torn by the possibilities.

And then, Vaner's face flashed before my eyes.

Since he appeared to be so happy with my progress, since he stepped in and took me as his disciple, he surely wouldn't allow any kind of stupid schemes like that, would he?

Ever since I became his disciple, I continued to doubt his intentions, even though he never gave me any real chance to do so. And right now, even if just for my own self-satisfaction, I could put my trust in him.

"Let me drink it first," I said, swallowing a mouthful of saliva and downing the entire glass.

It was fruity in taste.

In the distance, a pair of nearly half-meter-long lips raised in a wicked smile.