

## PARAGON OF SIN

### *Chapter 2 - 2: Scarlet Solaris Sect*

In the cultivation world, there was a country and in this country, there was a mountain that radiated a faint scarlet glow. This glow emanated a profound aura that caused all mortals who dared to glance to suffer the palpitation of the heart.

In the mornings, it stood tall and wide, capable of touching the clouds and covering the sun. At night, it was like a scarlet sun giving direction and meaning to the life of its inhabitants.

This mountain was the headquarters of the illustrious Scarlet Solaris Sect.

Around its bends and etched into its body were various buildings giving a sight similar to a long-winding city. One could notice defining lines indicating levels of sorts, and the higher one went, the greater the scarlet glow. At times, birds of legend could be seen soaring about. These were white cranes that stood at several tens of meters in size. On these cranes were people who radiated grand auras going to and fro various areas.

On a particular bird, a young man approached the mountain. He was young, handsome beyond description with silver eyes, jet black hair, and scarlet robes. His physique wasn't particularly large, but one could see ample definition of muscle.

He stood calmly on the crane as the wind battered his figure. Next to him was a young woman. She clutched at the feathers of the crane, attempting to not fall to her death due to a slight mistake. Her knuckles were white and her face was pale in fright.

The inhabitants of the mountain caught sight of the young man, their eyes swirling with thoughts.

"Senior Brother Wei Wuyin! He's returned?" An honorary disciple exclaimed. He was middle-aged, likely having been a part of the sect for a long time yet was incapable of promoting.

"Wei Wuyin? Who's that?" A younger, naive looking young boy asked with curiosity. They were working together, tending the herb farm with dozens of other nearby disciples.

"Haha, you don't know? Well, let me tell you!" The middle-aged man took up a teacher-like expression with a hint of pride and smugness, as if bringing enlightening to the ignorant brought him immense pleasure.

"You haven't been here long so you don't know. Senior Brother Wei Wuyin is one of the nine Core Disciples of our sect! His cultivation is said to have exceeded the Third Stage of Qi Condensation, Elemental Birth, and has given form to Qi!" His excitement was intoxicating as he spoke. The surrounding disciples who were eavesdropping turned towards the middle-aged man and paid rapt attention.

"Really?!"

The young man gasped in wonder, his eyes brilliantly bright. Even if Wei Wuyin wasn't important, the fact that he was capable of ascending to the Third Stage of Qi Condensation made him an incredible figure worthy of admiration.

"Haha! Damn right! Not only that, he's just like you and me. He came from a small clan, broke free from his limitations, and rose from an honorary disciple to a core disciple step by step!" His words were laced with pride. From his eyes, it was as if he lived vicariously through Wei Wuyin.

It wasn't just him. The other disciples who had lived in the sect for long had eyes filled with pride and excitement. They wished to jump through the dragon's gate like Wei Wuyin and become prestigious and extraordinary.

"Didn't you say cultivation without resources was impossible? How did he become a core disciple as an honorary disciple where we receive none?" The young man's mind gave birth to curious questions. In the sect, rank was divided into four disciples: Honorary, Outer, Inner, and Core. Climbing up the ranks was rumored to be as difficult as ascending the Nine Heavens.

A middle-aged woman, who wore common cloth indicating her status as a married woman, interjected, "Cultivation without resources isn't impossible, just incredibly difficult."

In the cultivation world, everyone had a chance to enter the road of cultivation. The world provides the most abundant resource, the Essence of Heaven and

Earth, and allows such. However, unless one entered Qi Condensation, it was impossible to be considered a true cultivator.

The middle-aged man glanced at the woman and snorted, "Cultivation without resources is impossible, and the Essence of Heaven and Earth is a resource." It was clear he had a feud with this woman as he directly contradicted and corrected her.

The middle-aged married woman pursed her lips and kept silent, obviously unwilling to get into an argument.

"Hmph! If you cultivate with just that, entering the Qi Condensation isn't impossible, but what it can provide is limited the further you go. The world of cultivation starts with a singular realm and three phases."

"The realm of Foundation Establishment, divided into the three phases of Physique Tempering, Meridian Awakening, and Dantian Establishment. Only then can one enter the Qi Condensation Realm, gathering external forces with internal power and generating Metaphysical Energy called Qi. One day, I will do the same!" The middle-aged man's excitement reached a peak as, near the end, his voice went up several octaves.

The middle-aged woman rolled her eyes, "Even establishing a foundation is too difficult, and sometimes a century isn't enough to establish one's dantian. Don't let this old fool trick you, cultivation is anything but easy, and he hasn't even finished Physique Tempering in three decades."

"Oh?!" The young man was shocked both internally and externally. Despite being a part of a sect for so many years, he hadn't even broken free of the first phase of cultivation? Recalling the earlier conversations he had with this man, his expression darkened. He had clearly realized he was lied to about various things.

"Hmph!" The middle-aged man flourished his sleeves in annoyance.

Noticing that they went off-topic, the crowd started to get further information on cultivation and Wei Wuyin, but besides some basic rumors and gossip about his earlier years, not much came from it.

It wasn't long before they all went away to perform their respective duties.

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Thud.

The crane landed in a courtyard. Its body was light, so it hadn't made much of a commotion, but the young woman jumped off in fright. It was a blessing to touch the ground again. She even had the urge to kiss the ground in thanks.

Wei Wuyin dismounted from the crane, landing softly unlike the woman. This place had a relatively denser level of Essence of Heaven and Earth than other areas within the sect. It was more suitable for cultivation. It was a benefit of core disciples.

The Scarlet Solaris Sect was worthy of its name. It even contained Scarlet Qi, birth from the Scarlet Spirit Vine that ran through the mountain. This qi defined the Scarlet Solaris Sect and was used in many of its cultivation methods to bolster one's cultivated qi.

The soft pattering of footsteps sounded out from the distance. A set of labored breathing was heard as a middle-aged man with a goatee was revealed. He was chubby in physique with bronze skin and looked a little slovenly.

He smelled of sex, and the belt of his robes wasn't fastened properly. It was obviously done in a rushed manner.

Wei Wuyin didn't mind.

"M-master! You're back!" The middle-aged man exclaimed excitedly. His name was Du Ling. He was Wei Wuyin's butler. Someone who he had known before becoming a disciple of the sect.

"Oh? You've established your Dantian," Wei Wuyin mildly noted. The aura of Du Ling was no longer just a strong physical presence, but a trace of the Essence of Heaven and Earth lingered inside his body. This indicated that he had established his qi center. If he had reached the Meridian Awakening Phase only, the Essence of Heaven and Earth wouldn't linger, but flow naturally inside to outside his body in a complete cycle.

Du Ling was briefly taken aback before nodding his head like a pecking chicken, "Yes, yes! It was thanks to Master's support."

Wei Wuyin slightly nodded. He looked towards the young woman. This woman he had spared was originally a part of the Violet Moon Sect. Her name

was Li Yin. She belonged to some unassuming clan a ways away and was just an outer disciple of the sect.

Her cultivation was nearly similar to Du Ling, who was Dantian Establishment Phase of the Foundation Establishment Realm. In that realm, the Essence of Heaven and Earth would strengthen the body and give one inhuman levels of strength. She, while in the Foundation Establishment Realm, was only at the Meridian Awakening Phase.

"Find her a room. Give her a suitable job in the meantime." He ordered. Du Ling nodded quickly and walked towards Li Yin with a gentle, yet somehow dirty smile.

Li Yin was in a daze. The courtyard's atmosphere had given her a huge shock. She had been in the Violet Moon Sect since she was eight and had never been in any place remotely as comfortable as this one. The dense Essence of Heaven and Earth made her pores celebrate.

Wei Wuyin didn't linger. He left the courtyard and arrived at the entrance of his personal abode. The sound of hushed talks drew his attention. Two women were around the corner speaking of various things.

He frowned. They were Du Ling's women and honorary disciples of the sect. Clutching at his neck wound, he winced slightly and entered, decidedly ignoring the two women.

As he arrived, he was met with a well-maintained, nearly too clean, room with a single bed and a table with a lone chair. Despite its size being several times greater than any room in the building, his room highlighted his liking towards minimalist design. The only two features that stood out were the orderly bookshelves filled with books and scrolls, and a pill cauldron.

The cauldron was verdant green, small in size, and emanated a faint medicinal fragrance. Its state was indicative that it had been often used and treasured.

He laid down on the bed as he felt exhausted in mind and body. Since his meeting with that young man with silver hair and black eyes, his body felt like atlas, being constantly weighed down upon. At first, he thought infection or poison from the bite. However, there was no indication of either and the wound was healing nicely.

In fact, the wound was already faint and healed for the most part.

Having just led a successful mission to eradicate the remnants of the Violet Moon Sect, it was understandable that he was exhausted.

Holding his palm out in front of his face, he couldn't help but sigh. "That one who snuck in an attempt to kill me was in the Third Stage of Qi Condensation, the Elemental Birth. If it wasn't for my recent ascension into the Fourth Stage, I would've likely fallen to Chu Yan's schemes." As he recalled the woman he briefly fancied and later killed including her relentless lover, he clenched his palm into a fist.

The Scarlet Solaris Sect was one of the Five Great Sects of Wu Country, alongside the Aqua Echo Sect, Earthly Titan Sect, Sky Sword Sect, and Jade Lotus Sect. They held enormous power and strength in the Wu Country, enough to summon the wind and rain. Even the royal family would have to give each sect the appropriate amount of face.

The strife between sects was already complicated and filled with all sorts of schemes, but inside was worse. Chu Yan was just a pawn in a bigger scheme. Wei Wuyin's status and background drew many envious and discontented eyes towards him, while others believe he carried a cultivation secret. There were just too many who wished him dead or worse.

"I was given that mission because of Jiu Lang...I'll have to deal with her sooner or later." As he recalled a beauty so great that nations would war at a single word of hers, his eyes flashed with dense, malicious killing intent.

As his mind wandered and forgot the passage of time, a soft knock resounded from outside. "Master, it's Du Ling. I received a letter of invitation for you."

Wei Wuyin took a deep breath. He had just returned to the sect and was given a letter of invitation. It wasn't much of a surprise as to who it originated from. He lifted his tired body up and reached the door. When he touched the door, his eyes flashed.

Immediately, he retreated fiercely backwards. A piercing sword penetrated the door and stabbed towards him. The resulting impact caused the wooden door to explosively shatter into fragments.

Before he could get a good sense of his attacker, a shadow appeared behind him like the looming dread of death. He didn't bother turning around or pressing forward. He formed a handseal and pressed toward the ground.

Elemental Wind Art: Wind Wall!

An explosive boom echoed as chaotic wind flow was born that shrouded his body protectively. The shadow held a sharp weapon of sorts, obviously capable of immense cutting power, as it attempted to slice through the chaotic wind flow, but shockingly found that it couldn't.

With its trajectory disrupted, Wei Wuyin mobilized his cultivation base further. He formed a double-handed seal, and his right leg stepped forward as he breathed towards his initial attacker.

Elemental Fire Art: Serpent's Breath!

A roaring tongue of flame large enough to engulf a human body was expelled directly from his mouth. The form of a serpent could vaguely be seen as rushing heat enshrouded the room. A surprised exclamation echoed as his initial attacker retreated with haste.

His eyes flashed a scarlet light of death as he fiercely pursued. Only after breaking through his own fire art safely did he see the appearance of his attacker. A woman, petite and firm, dressed in black.

"Du Ling's women?" His mind quickly concluded. A chill suffused from his eyes. Both of his attackers were at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, External Flow, and were practiced in stealth methods and the art of assassination. If his qi had yet to give birth to the elements and taken form, he would have suffered severe injuries or even death from those collaborated strikes.

The Elemental Birth Phase of Qi Condensation allowed one's Qi to give birth to the four natural elements: Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water. However, this was in a formless state and uncontrolled. Outside of raw creation, not much else could be done.

Unless one wants to throw random tongues of flames, spurt water at someone, or send out a gust of random wind, it was essentially useless in combat. The most crucial aspect was strengthening one's qi and body using

the four elements, allowing it to be more fluid, tougher, resilient to temperature, and easier to control.

However, the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yin Form, enabled one to harness innate yin energies to give shape to Metaphysical Qi. With that, a wall of wind could be formed, a serpent of fire, and bodies of water. It was a qualitative increase in cultivation that allowed one to be nearly invincible to all those below it.

His enemy hadn't expected his cultivation to increase to that realm, which was notorious for being insidiously difficult for men, who possessed little natural yin energies, to reach, and possess such prowess to boot. This was clear by that exclamation of surprise from a trained assassin. He wouldn't let up, however.

He flicked his palm and a silver saber appeared. A gleam of silver qi, sharp and deadly, formed at its tip. He roared, brandishing it in an attack. A ray of sharp, silver qi expelled from the blade and violently met the shadow.

"Metal qi?!" A voice sounded from behind him in shock. It was understandable as metal qi was outside the four natural qi elements and giving birth to it was exceptionally difficult.

Thud!

A body, now a corpse, fell heavily on the ground. A spray of crimson blood was left on the nearby wall. A glaring evidence of death.

"Ah!" The shadow behind took notice of her partner's death and retreated decisively. Without hesitation, she jumped out of the nearby window causing shattering sounds to resound.

"Since you've come, stay!" Wei Wuyin coldly spat before urging his qi within his body. He kicked off explosively as he turned around and sped forward like a bullet. It wasn't long before a brief clash of metal on metal, blade on blade, sounded and then resounding silence.

A moment later, Wei Wuyin carried a segregated head and headless body through the shattered window. It was of a delicate and beautiful woman with a sliced mask. Her eyes were without focus and direction, even cross-eyed if one looked closely. Her death was sudden and filled with resentment.

"I'm so tired," Wei Wuyin softly muttered as he looked at the shattered cauldron. He dropped the head and body on the ground and took out a transmission crystal. He sent a message to Du Leng. Before long, a chubby man walked through with a shocked and fearful expression. It was obvious that he had heard the commotion but stayed away for his own safety. If his Master couldn't handle it, he would only get in the way.

"Clean this mess up. I'm going to take a bath." Ordering such, he left. Du Leng shivered slightly when he realized the scorch marks, destroyed objects, and corpses. The two bodies were those he was familiar with and had even accompanied him through many late nights.

An expression of guilt and apology surfaced on his face as he realized he was an unwitting accomplice to an assassination attempt. He wanted to curse himself endlessly. Instead, he focused his energy elsewhere, growing calm as a result. Without further hesitation, he started to diligently clean.