

## PARAGON OF SIN

### Chapter 8 - 8: Core Disciples

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The Outer Competition ended and soon the Inner Competition had begun. The format for the two competitions were different yet the same. They were both elimination rounds to decide the top three contestants.

The platforms were shifted and connected. What was originally hundreds were now turned into a dozen. The amount of inner disciples in comparison was about one to one hundred.

There were a little over a hundred thousand outer disciples in the sect, but only a thousand inner disciples. In fact, it was only a thousand. Because of how competitions are held and how promotions work, the inner disciples rotate and those who reach the age of fifty each year are immediately inducted as Elders. Then, the outer disciples who either win, earn enough contribution points, or are recommended by elders are promoted to fill the void.

Wei Wuyin had nearly eighty inner disciples under him. If one included the newly added four from the competition, he had a total of eighty-one.

In the crowd, Wei Wuyin watched the ongoing competition and couldn't help but be somewhat shocked. Those of Tao Gui's and Jiu Lang's faction had mostly withdrawn from the competition. This only left seven core disciple factions, and since the two had a total of about twenty percent of inner disciples, the turn-out was massively lower than expected.

Not all inner disciples would participate in the competition, as the threat of death or maiming was a real possibility. Even Wei Wuyin's faction only had about twenty members entering. In fact, about three hundred members had registered in total.

Yet now, only a hundred showed up.

Most of the unaccounted were those who didn't wish to battle under any disadvantage. Their lives were on the line, so facing Wei Wuyin's members

would be a nightmare. If they did attack them, who knew if Elder Ji would save them later? Who knew if he wouldn't place a suppressing qi art on them?

It was unfair, but in life, what was fair? If that was going to be the case, they did not wish to risk the one thing that they couldn't afford to lose.

The competition ended with very little suspense. Elder Ji influenced the competition and the top three members were set. Two of which were a part of Wei Wuyin's faction.

Wei Wuyin stood patiently in his own V.I.P room overlooking the greater area of the colosseum. From his height and view, he could see all things clearly. Beside him was a grey-haired old man with no wrinkles and eyes effusing vitality.

Elder Ji had a stern expression on his face. His mind circulating swiftly as he internally settled on some matters and plans. After the Outer Competition had been brought to a conclusion, he had verbally declared his alliance with Wei Wuyin's faction, solidifying his stance and buying goodwill.

The young man before him had reached the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation and birthed metal qi before the age of thirty, his potential was literally limitless. As a male, someone with the ability to generate innate yang energy, reaching the Fifth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yang Growth, was a hundred times easier than a woman.

If the person before him was a woman, he wouldn't accept this line of thought, as the difficulty to reach the Fifth Stage was unimaginable unless they obtained a treasured object of heaven and earth or slept with an astonishing amount of men in dual cultivation. Not many women would be willing to become the toys of men in such a fashion for so long.

As for men, lone cultivation and dual cultivation was more than enough to reach that phase. He had also reached his cultivation level after thirty years of this type of cultivation. For someone as talented as Wei Wuyin, it'll probably take a lot shorter. As a young man with vibrant yang, what he could accomplish was a lot more than what he himself could as he had already neared a hundred years at the time.

The logic also flowed backwards. The fourth phase was a hundred times easier to reach for women. In fact, the majority of core elders were female,

about seventy percent, and most disciples taken by Elders were female as well.

If Wei Wuyin had never found a woman with a Three-Point Yin Body, the chances of reaching the Fourth Phase without wild debauchery or finding a treasure even greater than the Steel Essence Source of a yin nature, it would likely take him twenty years before forming yin within qi.

Elder Ji smiled. "Yes, Jiu Lang was responsible for your selection to perform the Violet Moon Sect's remnant clearing mission," Elder Ji informed. Wei Wuyin had been certain of the matter, but a verbal confirmation was best. After all, Tao Gui, another core disciple, could be responsible just as well.

"She had also sent those two assassins to your home, had them nest in there for an entire month after learning of your success. We've been keeping a watch on those fake honorary disciples she formed for her so-called legion of assassins, and those two held the highest cultivation level outside of its leader, Elder Nie."

"Because of Elder Nie's actions, the incident was swept under the rug. After all, she's a mistress of a grand elder, her position may be lower than mine, but her sectoral power is astonishing. As she's the aunt of Jiu Lang, it's only expected." Elder Ji explained unapologetically.

Wei Wuyin wasn't surprised by this news. It was this very background of Jiu Lang that she was so terrifying, capable of sending a core disciple on a mission.

In the Scarlet Solaris Sect, there were positions above the core elder, they were grand elder, prime elder, head elder, vice-sect leader, and sect leader. Besides the prime elder position, which is reserved for retired vice-sect and sect leaders, the others are gained by contribution and cultivation.

In fact, all of those positions had the minimum requirements of reaching the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation, False Reality Phase. This phase was considered the hardest phase to enter amongst the Nine Phases, regardless of gender, and was such a huge stopgap that few ever reached it.

The False Reality Phase entailed the perfect synchronization of yin and yang energies, establishing a complete and perfect balance and cycle to produce yin-yang qi. Those who wielded this qi were often given a title to those who obtained it by the mortal people: "God."

While it may sound exaggerated, the concept of yin-yang was beyond profound. It embodied the conceptualization of imagination with qi as its source, giving form from nothing and vitality to form. With the four elemental energies infused within, one could create true water, fire, earth, and wind.

These elements could then interact with the world on the most fundamental level. While Wei Winyu may be able to 'create' fire, in truth, what he did was give appropriate form and direction to fire energy. While it would be crude to say he only created heat with the illusion of fire, it was as such.

If it wasn't, Wei Winyu would've burned down his mansion with his fire qi art. At that level, while the things created have yet to gain permanence, the ability of self-sustaining itself without qi fueling it meant it could burn down forests, drown cities, and create mountains, albeit temporarily.

A cultivator at this phase gives their metaphysical qi the ability to 'create'.

Out of the Nine Phases, this phase was undoubtedly the hardest to overcome.

So for Jiu Lang's aunt, a core elder, to be a mistress to one such cultivator only displayed her current protection level. Even with Elder Ji now backing him, Elder Nie would easily interfere with any attempts to claim Jiu Lang's life. While she may not interfere if things were made difficult for Jiu Lang, like having to withdraw from the Inner Competition, if he made a move openly, it's unlikely he'll be able to stay in the sect.

Regardless of whether he succeeds or fails.

Elder Ji was a smart wily old man so he knew how to pick his battles and place his bets. Wei Wuyin knew that he wished to use his momentum to rise. After all, those who reach the Yang Growth Phase have a lifespan of two hundred years. With at least one hundred and seventy years ahead of him, and his astonishing talent, Wei Wuyin had a great chance of reaching the sixth phase and helping him do the same.

"That's fine. I don't intend to make hasty plans based on rash emotions," Wei Winyu reassured. Elder Ji nodded approvingly. To have your life threatened and still remain calm, it was rare in youths. However, for someone to reach Wei Wuyin's cultivation level, they needed a certain patience.

"What's the Core Disciple Competition going to be?" Wei Wuyin asked. Unlike the Outer and Inner Disciple Competition, which were battle royale elimination style, the Core Disciple Competition was different and focused on trials.

The only exception was The Challenge before the main event where the three inner disciples who placed top three can issue challenges against the nine core disciples to replace them. Only after will the true event occur.

Elder Ji furrowed his brows, "This competition was decided differently than before. For some reason, the sect seemed urgent to have the sect competitions end sooner."

"Usually, the Core Disciple Competition would be a hunt, challenge, or battlefield where points can be accrued and define placements, but this time...it seems the sect leader has changed it."

Wei Wuyin was mildly shocked. Changed? What could the enigmatic sect leader of theirs have in mind? If it was based on a hunt, then his first placement wasn't clear, but if it was a challenge or battlefield, he was certain to obtain first place. After all, hunts used one's own faction strength.

Before, when he had just replaced a core disciple, the competition was a battlefield because he had replaced a core disciple two years ago. Last year, it was a hunt, and he had placed last. His faction was still developing and since no one took an inner disciple position, it was a given.

If it was on faction strength, it'll be difficult to reach first, but third place was likely as his individual strength could rival a core elder.

Elder Ji's expression grew strange, "What I know is that it revolves around a Qi Art or Method. It'll likely test comprehension ability, and regardless if a person replaces a core disciple, it'll remain the same. This is the little we've been told." Elder Ji had a little helplessness in his eyes. He wanted to help Wei Wuyin succeed, but he wouldn't be able to.

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Wei Winyu nodded. If it was based on comprehension, then it'll test intelligence and understanding. Even though his cultivation base was profound, a few of the phases he'd overcome required some comprehension, but most were accumulation and condensation. Only those attempting to ascend the Sixth Stage of Qi Condensation will need to comprehend yin-yang.

As he pondered, an announcer voice echoed.

"All Core Disciple Participants, please come to the main platform for The Challenge."

Wei Wuyin looked outwards and saw an Elder standing with three youths behind him. Those were the three inner disciples who placed top three, two of which belonged to his faction.

A young woman with auburn hair and a tall, lithe frame stood proudly on stage. She radiated a natural grace and her eyes radiated pride. Her name was Li Fei. She was a member of Wei Wuyin's faction and had a cultivation at the First Stage of Qi Condensation, Qi Creation. Her aura was steady and strong.

In comparison, Su Mei's aura was unsteady and the flow of qi had yet to abate into a calmer state. This was a sign that her Heart of Qi had just been created and her body had yet to adapt. However, Li Fei was the complete opposite. With a little bit more, she could ascend to the second phase, allowing her qi to externalize.

The other was a young man with blonde hair and green eyes. His body exuded a regal aura and he seemed to be nobility. As he stood there, it was as if he commanded respect. This was Han Yu.

He was also a part of Wei Wuyin's faction and was one of Wei Wuyin's earlier subordinates during his first few months as a core disciple. He had been a vice captain during the mission against the Violet Moon Sect alongside Chu Yan. His cultivation was also at the First Phase, Qi Creation. His aura was just as steady, but there was a hint of a unique affinity to it that resembled the sea.

Supposedly, Han Yu had a bloodline that could give birth to a unique qi state. In fact, because of this bloodline, his Heart of Qi had already transformed into a Heart of Aquatic Qi.

While its true abilities wouldn't present itself until he reached the Elemental Birth Phase, he could still prematurely use aquatic-based qi arts. He could breathe in water or influence the liquid composition of his body. While it had little effect currently, it would make him a fearsome water elemental cultivator when he comes into his own.

Wei Wuyin had always paid him close attention because of this. At the Elemental Birth Phase, he was bound to be a top-tier inner elder, and if he could give form to his qi, his strength would also be top-tier.

The last person was another woman. Her eyes were dark brown and so was her hair. She had a calm, nearly eerie gaze as she just stared into empty space. She was an oddity as she belonged to no faction. However, Wei Wuyin recognized her.

Her name was Qu Gui. She had a very dark history from what he recalled. Like him, she started as an honorary disciple, but she was allowed entry due to a marriage with an Outer Disciple and not clan connections like him. Supposedly, that disciple died from unknown circumstances but there were malicious rumors.

Because of that connection, not many attempted to recruit her, likely already knowing the full story. However, Wei Wuyin had just joined at the time and was building his faction from nothing. Therefore, he attempted to recruit her.

She had rejected him.

Wei Wuyin could even tell that her eyes looked at him with some prejudice, so he didn't press or take offense. Everyone had their own story, and he didn't intend to force a recruitment.

He sighed softly.

"Then, I'll talk to you later, Elder Ji." Wei Wuyin said this and left.

Elder Ji nodded.

When Wei Winyu arrived on the main platform at the center of the colosseum, he saw several figures standing in odd places facing the Elder in charge, Elder Bai. He was an old, white haired old man at the Fourth Stage of Qi Condensation, Yin Form Phase. His eyes held the distinct lack of vitality, but seemed to birth things from imagination.

Wei Wuyin analyzed the core disciples who arrived. All eight had arrived and he was last. He smiled at this and couldn't help but laugh inwardly.

Tao Gui, who was a muscular giant, stood tall while holding a gigantic warhammer that exceeded his already two and a half meter height. The

warhammer was drenched in gold and flickered with elemental energies of metal. If one stared at it for too long, their eyes would hurt.

Jiu Lang had a calm expression but stole the spotlight from everyone. Her beautiful face and astonishing female assets drew the gazes of nearly all the men in the crowd.

Wei Wuyin looked at her for a moment before looking elsewhere, but his eyes flickered with an enlightened light. "She's reached the Elemental Birth Phase. Interesting."

As he glanced about, he saw the other six, four girls and two guys. There was He Long, a handsome young man with black hair and black eyes. He carried a large arming sword on his back. It, like Tao Gui's weapon, exceeded his natural height. It was diagonally placed for that reason.

Mei Mei, a woman who was actually nearing her fifties, being the longest established core disciple. Despite her make-up and beautification methods, one could still see age in her body.

Her height stood at five feet, five inches, had a petite figure, long brown hair cascading down her back, with a pert nose and light brown eyes. Despite her make-up, she had natural freckles on her face that were faint, but added a down-to-earth allure. The most notable traits of her entirety was her full lips that looked as if they contained the softest touch.

She looked at Wei Wuyin and smiled sweetly. Her cultivation base was still at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation despite her age. Wei Wuyin replied with a smile of his own.

If amongst the factions of core disciples, Wei Wuyin had enemies and allies, then Mei Mei was his ally. In fact, he was formerly a member of her faction when he was an outer and inner disciple. Originally, he saw her as a big sister-like character until one night where she came to his core disciple residence and stayed in his bed.

At that time, their relationship and connection strengthened and Wei Wuyin had a good impression of this woman.

Shu Yang and Shu Yin were twins who stood together. They were similar in height and face, and both were exceptionally good-looking with brown-skin and light brown eyes.



They were twins born from the Shu Clan, a staunch ally of the Scarlet Solaris Sect. Normally, Wei Wuyin would have a good impression of them, but one day, while he engaged in conversation with Shu Yin, he was attacked by Shu Yang.

It was then that he realized that his actions of getting close to Shu Yin, his outstanding appearance, and talent had elicited jealousy and fear from Shu Yang. They had a weird and undefined incestuous relationship. While others in the sect, the majority actually, just assumed Shu Yang was overprotective.

Shu Yang's eyes looked towards him with a little bit of disdain and contempt. Wei Wuyin laughed inwardly at his attitude. In fact, he had nothing against their relationship or him personally. The mortal clans and even royalty often believed in tight bloodlines for purity sake, so familial weddings happened more often than one would expect.

This didn't even include the fact that with strength, power, and desire, came a need for the normally forbidden or hard to obtain. As they were both at the Second Stage of Qi Condensation, it gave them the ability to do whatever they wished.

The last two were the number one and number two in the core disciples ranking in terms of individual strength, with them both reaching the Elemental Birth Phase.

Yan Zhu, a woman who stood ramrod straight and exuded a natural magnificence. She had short black hair and wore light armor that tightly hugged her body. Despite the aura she emitted, she had excellent female assets as well. In her hand was a spear held vertical and proud. She felt like a gate guardian of heaven as she stood there. With her short hair and light armor, she cut a heroic figure.

Wei Wuyin looked at her and sighed helplessly. This woman was bothersome to deal with, so he didn't try to formulate a relationship.

The other was Ling Ya, a beautiful vixen. A dark-skinned woman with dark brown, long hair with white highlights. She wore revealing and thin clothes that left little to the imagination. Her bountiful breasts larger than a baby's head and perfectly round and perky ass were eye-catching, and she was drop-dead gorgeous as she exuded a sexy charm.

Wei Wuyin decided to not even look. This woman cultivated a unique qi art and was just beyond troublesome, more so than Yan Zhu who was fierce and unbending. If you were to be lured to her side, you probably wouldn't even know how you died.

When he arrived, the Elder Bai nodded.

"With all disciples of Core Rank present, let's begin The Challenge!" His words caused the crowd to cheer in anticipation. This was the moment where factions change and power shifted!