

CULTIVATION IS CREATION

Chapter 3: The Inner World

The thing about meditation is that it gives you way too much time to think. Sitting cross-legged on my narrow bed, trying to focus on the pulsing light in my chest that apparently represented my spiritual core, my mind kept wandering to increasingly existential questions. Like, was I technically stealing this cultivation potential from the original Ke Yin? Was his soul floating around somewhere, annoyed that some random guy from Earth had hijacked his chance at immortality?

"Focus," I muttered to myself, rolling the Spirit Resonance Bead between my fingers. It had been a week since that first morning assembly, and while I could now reliably sense my core, I hadn't made much progress beyond that. Wei Lin, naturally, was already talking about something called 'core expansion,' while dropping not-so-subtle hints about special techniques his family could teach me—for a price, of course.

The jade bead pulsed with soft blue light in response to my spiritual energy, a rhythm I'd grown familiar with over countless hours of practice. Close your

eyes, regulate your breathing, feel the connection between the bead and the light in your chest...

Something shifted.

The sensation was subtle at first, like a change in air pressure before a storm. The pulsing light that represented my core seemed to... unfold? That's not quite the right word, but spiritual phenomena have a way of defying normal description. It was as if I'd been looking at a point of light head-on all this time, and suddenly shifted perspective to see it had depth.

Warning!

Initiating Inner World Formation Protocol...

The text appeared in my mind like a heads-up display in a video game, glowing blue characters floating in the darkness behind my closed eyes. What the...?

Host detected.

Spiritual Architecture System v1.0 activating...

Analyzing spiritual resonance...

Compatibility check: PASSED

Beginning inner world manifestation...

The point of light exploded outward, or maybe I fell inward—direction gets weird when you're dealing with spiritual spaces. Either way, I suddenly found my consciousness in a vast, dark void. Not the peaceful nothingness of death, but an active emptiness, like a blank canvas waiting for paint.

Inner World Status:

Size: 1 cubic meter

Features: None

Energy Density: 1/100

Current State: Dormant

Would you like to begin the tutorial?

"Uh... yes?" I tried to speak, only to realize I didn't actually have a mouth in here. The thought seemed to be enough, though.

Welcome to your Inner World, cultivator! This space represents your spiritual foundation and will grow as you progress along the path of cultivation. Currently, your inner world is in its most basic state. Features and formations can be added as you gain spiritual energy and insight.

Available Actions:

- *Survey Inner World*
- *Check Status*
- *View Energy Flows*
- *Exit Inner World*

Okay, this was... different. I was pretty sure most cultivators didn't get a video game interface with their inner world. This had to be related to my unique situation—some kind of cosmic tech support for interdimensional travelers?

Did you know this text is from a different site? Read the official version to support the creator.

"Survey Inner World," I thought.

Surveying...

Current Inner World consists of a 1m x 1m x 1m space of unformed spiritual energy. No features or formations present.

Spiritual density: minimal.

Recommend beginning with basic energy circulation to increase density and stability.

A small figure materialized in the void—a boy who looked about ten, dressed in simple blue robes similar to my sect uniform. He had silver hair and oddly luminous blue eyes.

"Greetings, Master! I am Azure, your inner world spirit guide. I was formed from the resonance between your spiritual core and the System's activation. I will assist you in developing and maintaining your inner world!"

Well, that was... surprisingly cute, actually. "Um, hello Azure. I'm Kane. So... you're like a spiritual AI?"

Azure tilted his head. "I don't know what an 'AI' is, Master. I am a manifestation of your inner world's natural organizing principle, shaped by the System's influence. I can help you understand the various metrics and features available to you, and assist with implementing changes to the inner world's structure."

That raised so many questions, but I decided to focus on the practical aspects first. "What should I be doing to develop this space?"

"According to the System's analysis, the most efficient first step would be establishing proper energy circulation," Azure explained, waving his hand to create glowing blue diagrams in the void. "Your current spiritual energy intake is unstructured. By implementing basic circulation patterns, we can increase energy density and begin expanding the available space."

New Task Available: Establish Basic Energy Circulation

Reward: Increased energy efficiency, potential space expansion

Difficulty: Beginner

"The System can provide real-time feedback on your circulation attempts," Azure added helpfully. "Would you like to try?"

I was about to agree when I felt a distant sensation—someone shaking my physical body. Right, I was still supposed to be meditating in my room.

"Exit Inner World," I thought quickly.

Warning: First-time setup not complete.

Continue later?Progress will be saved.

"Yes, yes, save and exit!"

I opened my physical eyes to find Wei Lin standing over me, looking concerned. "Finally! You've been completely unresponsive for almost an hour. Did you reach core condensation already?"

"What? No, I was just... meditating deeply." I tried to sound casual, but my mind was racing. An hour? It had felt like minutes in there.

Wei Lin looked skeptical but didn't push. "Well, you missed dinner. I brought you some congee—can't cultivate on an empty stomach."

"Thanks." I accepted the bowl, trying to process everything that had just happened. A system-assisted inner world with its own spiritual AI companion?

This had to be some kind of cosmic cheat code, though whether it was a benefit or a complication remained to be seen.

"You're developing faster than expected," Wei Lin commented as I ate. "My family has some techniques that could help, you know. Nothing too expensive for a friend..."

I nodded absently, only half listening to his sales pitch. I was more focused on the faint presence I could now feel in my spiritual core—Azure waiting patiently in the newly formed inner world, ready to continue our tutorial whenever I was ready.

This changed everything. The question was... how to keep it secret while taking full advantage of it?

"Actually," I said, cutting off Wei Lin's increasingly elaborate pricing structure, "I think I need to focus on the basics for now. But I appreciate the offer."

He looked mildly disappointed but unsurprised. "Suit yourself. Just remember, resources and connections make all the difference in cultivation. Raw talent only gets you so far."

If he only knew.

That night, after curfew, I sat in meditation again, eager to explore this new development. The transition to my inner world was smoother this time, less disorienting.

Welcome back, Master! Shall we continue the setup process?

Azure materialized, looking exactly as he had before. The void around us seemed a bit more... structured somehow, though still essentially empty.

"Let's do it," I agreed. "Show me how to establish proper energy circulation."

Initiating Basic Circulation Tutorial...Step 1: Visualize energy flow paths...

As Azure began explaining the process, complete with glowing diagrams and real-time feedback, I couldn't help but smile. Maybe dying and being reincarnated wasn't the worst thing that could have happened to me after all.

Of course, that was before I knew about the monthly evaluations, the sect politics, the increasingly dangerous training methods, and the fact that my unique system would attract some very unwanted attention if discovered. But hey, one crisis at a time, right?

At least I had a cute spiritual AI to help me figure it out.

Basic Tutorial Beginning...

Loading...

Please wait...