

# CULTIVATION SYSTEM: STRONGER WITH AGE

## Chapter 1 Vigorous in Old Age

The moon hung among the willow branches.

In an old wooden building within Great Marsh Prefecture, Xia Kingdom, Lin Xuankong, who was lying sideways on a wooden bed, suddenly arched his body and began to cough violently. "COUGH COUGH COUGH!" After more than ten consecutive coughs, he barely managed to catch his breath.

*As an online novel writer, I finally wrote a novel averaging one hundred thousand subscriptions. I was so excited that I posted ten Chapters overnight. Was that wrong? he thought. But how did I end up transmigrating to an ignorant and backward feudal era the moment I closed and opened my eyes? Gravely ill, too, with only a few days left to live!*

The thought had barely formed when the early spring chill assailed him. His throat itched, and another fit of violent coughing seized him. Seeing that sleep was impossible, Lin Xuankong struggled to sit up, draping some clothes over himself as he perched on the edge of the bed.

It had been three days since he transmigrated, and he had already absorbed some of his predecessor's memories. The man had shared his name, Lin Xuankong, had lost all his relatives, and made a living selling flatcakes. His predecessor's constitution had been decent enough, but unfortunately, after catching a severe

cold, his health had deteriorated daily. Then, after indulging in a few too many cups of wine, he had simply died.

Sighing, Lin Xuankong looked at the wooden cabinet by the bed. A large, red papercut character for 'double happiness' was pasted on it. The vibrant red paper, stuck to the old, paint-chipped cabinet, looked strikingly out of place.

Suddenly, the sound of footsteps came from outside the wooden house. Soon, a young woman dressed in green entered, carrying a bowl of medicinal soup. The dim light of the oil lamp illuminated her. She was about sixteen, with a tall, curvaceous figure and a flawlessly beautiful face.

The woman glanced at him. "Drink this medicine. Your cough will ease after you take it."

Lin Xuankong was somewhat surprised. "There's only enough money left at home to buy sorghum flour. Where did the silver coins for medicine come from?"

The woman frowned. "I worked as a maid in the Huang Family for over ten years and secretly saved some broken silver for my dowry."

Hearing this, Lin Xuankong fell silent. This woman was Lii Xiaolan. She had originally been the personal maid to the eldest young miss of the Huang Family in West City. As she matured, her extraordinary beauty caught the eye of Master Huang, who intended to make her his concubine. However, Lady Huang, who came

from a powerful background and was fiercely jealous, vehemently opposed the idea. Master Huang, left with no choice, had to obey his wife and drive Lii Xiaolan out of the Huang Mansion. Unexpectedly, the malicious mistress, still not satisfied, had then forced Lii Xiaolan to marry his destitute, fifty-nine-year-old predecessor.

The wedding had taken place three days ago. His predecessor had been overjoyed, as if Sister Lii had fallen from the heavens. On the wedding day, he had spent all his savings for his coffin to treat the neighbors to a grand feast. Who would have thought that the old man, still recovering from his severe cold and having drunk too much, would die after the guests left, before even reaching the bridal chamber? And that was when Lin Xuankong had transmigrated.

Having learned from his predecessor's fate, Lin Xuankong hadn't dared to get intimate with Lii Xiaolan over the past two days. This old, frail body was simply too weak; he feared he'd die before anything could happen. *Who knows if there's a chance to nurse this body back to health a bit... An old man feeling a spark of youthful vigor—could he truly enjoy the company of his 'pear blossom' of a wife?*

However, Lii Xiaolan's character was truly commendable. To get medicine for him, she had even used her secretly saved dowry and quietly brewed it for him. This made him feel a bit too ashamed to make any advances.

"Tha... Thank you," Lin Xuankong stammered. He had wanted to call her 'wife,' but the word caught in his throat.

"Between us... there's no need for such politeness." A faint trace of resentment and worry flickered in Lii Xiaolan's eyes, but she managed a smile. She brought

the bowl to her lips, blew on the soup gently, and took a small sip. "It's not too hot now. Drink it."

Taking the bowl, Lin Xuankong felt a flicker of caution. He carefully examined the medicinal soup, then secretly shook his head. *For the past two days, while I was bedridden and found it difficult even to get out of bed, this Young Lady has been tirelessly taking care of me. Although she always maintained a certain distance, her kindness was evident. Besides, she tasted the soup herself...*

"GULP." Pinching his nose, he took a mouthful and rested for a moment. Once the medicinal soup entered his stomach, a warm current slowly spread through him, soothing his entire body.

No stomach pain. No dizziness. *I really was being too cautious!* he thought. With a decisive movement, he drank down the remaining large portion of the medicinal soup.

Soon after, the dryness and itchiness in his throat significantly subsided, and even his weak body seemed to regain some strength.

Seeing his complexion improve, the worry in Lii Xiaolan's eyes lessened. She took the bowl, left the room, and headed upstairs. In the three days since their marriage, they had slept separately—he downstairs, she upstairs—except when she was tending to him.

At this moment, Lin Xuankong, sitting by the bed, fell into a daze. As the medicinal soup took effect, a voice suddenly echoed in his ears: "Qi Blood reached five points. Activating the first Talent of the Life Plate." Immediately after, several lines of purple-gold characters appeared in his mind:

Lin Xuankong: Remaining Lifespan: 32 days

Life Plate: [Vigorous in Old Age]

First Talent of the Life Plate: [Old and Wise] Cultivation Speed increases with age. Current age: 59. Cultivation Speed increased fiftyfold.

Qi Blood: 5/100,000

Perceiving these characters, Lin Xuankong's expression shifted. In his past life as an online novel author, he had read countless web novels where 'golden fingers'—special abilities—were practically standard issue for transmigrators.

*It seems drinking that medicinal soup to replenish my Qi Blood triggered this golden finger! he mused. But if this golden finger is real, my current situation is critical. Only 32 days of Lifespan left? He frowned, scrutinizing his body. Judging by my weak legs when I walk, trembling hands when I hold a bowl, frequent urination, and the effort it takes to get out of bed... the Lifespan shown by this golden finger is likely accurate!*

*No, absolutely not! Since I've been given a second chance at life, have coincidentally married a beauty coveted even by esteemed masters, and now possess a golden finger, I absolutely cannot resign myself to fate! I must save myself!*

Lin Xuankong frowned slightly and began to ponder deeply. *If this golden finger is real, my Life Plate's first Talent... a fiftyfold increase in Cultivation Speed... that's absurdly powerful!*

According to his predecessor's memories, Great Marsh Prefecture was part of the Great Xia Dynasty. In this dynasty, the Martial Dao was revered. Officials, powerful clans, and descendants of noble families all pursued it. Martial Dao masters were incredibly formidable, capable of slaying Demons; killing ordinary people was as easy as crushing a chick for them. Lii Xiaolan's former family, the Huang Family, had a legacy of Martial Dao. Master Huang had been a Transcendence Sixth Layer master many years ago, which was how he had become so wealthy and influential, even becoming sworn brothers with the Prefect of Great Marsh Prefecture and enjoying an extraordinary status. Lady Huang also hailed from a prominent Martial Dao family and was rumored to have an even higher Martial Dao Realm; otherwise, Master Huang wouldn't be so afraid of her. Furthermore, the Government Office, Martial Arts Halls, and gangs in Great Marsh Prefecture all had Martial Dao masters overseeing them.

*The Martial Dao is so prevalent in Great Marsh Prefecture, Lin Xuankong thought. If I get the chance to cultivate the Martial Dao, and with my Talent of a fiftyfold increase in Cultivation Speed, I could definitely restore this body! Of course, my body is old and frail; I absolutely cannot cultivate a ferocious type of Martial Dao. Otherwise, if it leads to a depletion of my Qi Blood, I might not even live the full 32 days... I need to find a type of Martial Dao that can nurture my body!*

*The problem is, according to my predecessor's memories, even the cheapest Martial Arts Hall in Great Marsh Prefecture requires a payment of fifty taels of silver just to begin cultivating the Martial Dao! Fifty taels of silver... that's equivalent to about twenty years' income for an ordinary family! How can I possibly earn that much in just ten days or so? If I rely on selling flatcakes, even if I sell tens of thousands of them, I won't be able to save up fifty taels of silver!*

As he frowned in thought, a sudden "BANG! BANG! BANG!" erupted from the main door, followed by a man's coarse voice. "Old Lin, open up! I want to buy some flatcakes!"

*It's almost the Second Watch. Who would come to buy flatcakes at this hour?* Lin Xuankong stood up and walked shakily toward the outer room. He quietly pressed himself near a crack in the door to peek outside. He saw several burly men loitering there. The one banging on the door had a swarthy face, stood a towering eight chi tall, and wore a black, open-fronted short robe. A Hundred-refined Steel Saber hung at his waist, its blade glinting coldly in the moonlight.

A single glance made Lin Xuankong's heart sink. His predecessor had often seen this swarthy, burly man while peddling flatcakes through the streets.

In Great Marsh Prefecture's West City, the most troublesome people, aside from Martial Dao families like the Huang Family and the Government Office, were the wealthy landowners. Yet, even these landowners wouldn't dare offend one particular group: the Black Tiger Gang. Rumor had it that the Black Tiger Gang Leader had already reached the Transcendence Fifth Layer, not much weaker than Master Huang. The Hall Masters under him were also formidable Martial Dao masters. This swarthy man was Zhang Wu, a Late Stage Transcendence First Layer Martial Artist. Due to his considerable strength, he had become a Leader in the Black Tiger Gang, and Wutong Village was part of his territory.

*A big shot in the Black Tiger Gang like Zhang Wu usually feasts on rich meats and fish. Why would he come all the way here to buy mere flatcakes?*

"Old Lin, are you dead? Open the door! I want to buy some flatcakes!" Zhang Wu had a wicked grin on his face as he banged on the door a few more times. His strength was immense; the doorframe shuddered with each blow. A few more, and the door itself might splinter.

Outside, many people in the street had been awakened by the commotion. Quite a few neighbors peeked out from the windows of their wooden houses. However, upon seeing Zhang Wu at the door, their expressions changed instantly, and they quickly withdrew, not even daring to watch. Zhang Wu, a powerful Transcendence First Layer Martial Artist and a bigwig in the Black Tiger Gang, was feared by every one of the several hundred households and over 2,000 people in Wutong Village.

"Fifth Brother, don't tell me Old Lin actually croaked! If so, his new wife is in for a tough time. We ought to help her out!" one of Zhang Wu's men jeered.

"Yeah, yeah! Younger Sister-in-law Lin, hurry and open up! Don't be scared, Fifth Brother will take good care of you!" another chimed in.

"If you don't open up soon, we're breaking in!"

"Don't worry, Younger Sister-in-law Lin, Fifth Brother is real capable! He'll definitely take \*real\* good care of you! HAHAHA!"

The brutish-looking men behind Zhang Wu were clearly drunk. They swayed and roared with laughter, obviously believing Lin Xuankong and his wife were at their mercy.

Lin Xuankong watched their shameless display through the crack in the door, clenching his teeth. *These bastards banging on the door in the middle of the night... it really is because of my beautiful Young Lady! Could someone have seen her when she went to get medicine for me?*

Just then, a soft voice came from behind him. "Open the door. This wooden door won't hold them."

Lin Xuankong frowned at the sound. Turning, he pulled Lii Xiaolan aside and whispered, "Why did you come out? These thugs are clearly here for you!" He thought for a moment, then urged, "Quick, leave through the back door! I'm just a dying pauper; they won't do much to me. If they can't find you, they'll probably leave."

Hearing his words, the faint resentment in Lii Xiaolan's eyes lessened somewhat. She shook her head slightly. "If I hide today, they'll come back tomorrow. If I hide tomorrow, they'll keep coming back. There's no escaping it."

"Then let's leave Great Marsh Prefecture!" Lin Xuankong said decisively.

Lii Xiaolan frowned. "Demons are rampant outside Great Marsh Prefecture. Do you think it's so easy to leave?" With that, she pulled a black gauze veil from her sleeve, covered her face, and walked to the wooden door. She reached out, pulled the latch, and the door opened with a "CREAK!"

The moonlight instantly streamed in, illuminating Lin Xuankong's deeply furrowed brow and Lii Xiaolan, standing resolute in her green dress.