

Chapter 11 Bluebird Office

Lex frowned as he mulled over what Jessica told him. It seemed like he really had underestimated the dangers that came along with cultivation. He thought, similar to the many novels he'd read, once he started cultivating he'd have a huge advantage over everyone and people would admire him wherever he went. Now it seemed like he needed to be more careful. As for joining an organization, it all depended on what the requirements were.

Lex was about to continue asking more questions but the car came to an abrupt stop. Jessica exited and signaled Lex to follow. Much to his surprise, they were at the Empire State Building. As soon as they entered a team of security guards surrounded Lex and escorted him to a private section of the building where they entered an elevator. The thing that caught him off guard was that the list of floors started from 1st and then went directly to the basement, with there being 44 levels of basements.

Jessica pressed B10 and the elevator swiftly began its descent, and stopped just as abruptly. When they came out Lex was once again surprised; clearly Jessica hit the button for B10 and he clearly felt the elevator go down, yet the floor they came out on had windows to a breathtakingly beautiful view of a sea of clouds that surrounded the building, crashing against mountains in the distance. No sign of the city they were just in was visible, and it was as if they had been teleported to another place completely.

"Follow them to the waiting room while I report your situation," said Jessica. "Someone will come and interview you and, if all goes well, complete your registration. Since you're new to the cultivation world I'll have someone send you all the brochures and pamphlets for all the organizations that accept itinerant or lone cultivators."

Before Lex could thank Jessica for her consideration or ask any questions he was 'led politely' to the 'waiting room' and left there alone. It was a small room with a couple of chairs at opposite ends of a small table and a window to the outside with a view.

"You should be careful in what you say," Mary warned him, speaking for the first time since this ordeal started. "If you lie in front of a cultivator with a higher cultivation, they can usually tell that you're lying. That's why I didn't even risk speaking to you earlier. Without the Host Attire to control your expressions Jessica would have immediately noticed you getting distracted while you were talking to me in your head. It would raise her suspicions."

"I'll be careful," he said, suddenly remembering Mary. He was not yet completely used to the system, and all the benefits it offered. "Do you have any advice on what to do?"

"Sorry, all the information I have on Earth is based on your memories and you currently have not unlocked any features of the Midnight Inn that can help you in this predicament. All I can say is that you are lucky that in terms of physical strength, your body is equivalent to a normal Body Tempering stage 1 cultivator. You can use that as an advantage to support your story that you only just broke through. You haven't done anything suspicious so if they investigate you a little they should discover that they have nothing to worry about."

Lex sat down on the chair and began thinking about what to say to his interrogators. If he really was investigated it would easily be discovered that he had received no actual job offer, but he could use his current net worth and his newly developed interest in cultivation to explain why he quit: he needed more time to cultivate!

If they asked to see his cultivation technique he would be in trouble. Although he knew the difference between Regal Embrace and others, he did not know an actual cultivation technique he could give someone. If they asked, he would have to insist on not telling. Saying he got his cultivation technique from a bottle on the beach was a flimsy excuse he made up in the moment, and was difficult to believe though he supposed it was not impossible. If they asked to see it he would say he destroyed it so as to keep it a secret.

Lex was going over other details in his mind, considering different scenarios that he could encounter and how he would face them, when the door finally opened and a middle aged man entered the room. He looked late 30s or early 40s at most, and had a congenial smile on his face.

He unbuttoned his suit and took the chair opposite to Lex before placing a file on the table.

"I must apologize for Jessica's harshness in treating you," the man said, his voice as if talking to a young child. "Although her cultivation is high, she's never really encountered an actual unregistered cultivator or been in any dangerous situation. You know how kids are these days, thinking everything is a conspiracy."

Lex smiled weakly, unsure of how he was supposed to respond. The man, as if understanding Lex's thought, gave out a chuckle and opened the file in front of him.

"Let me start by introducing myself. My name is Hamid, I am the regional manager for cultivator registration. And you are Lex Williams, a new cultivator."

Hamid slid the top page from the folder to Lex for him to observe. It was filled with Lex's private details, from his name, date of birth, family details, total estimated net worth, major life experiences and more. Reading all that information about himself was surreal. Is this what criminals in movies felt like when the government pulled up their entire life history?

"Do not worry, I am not accusing you of any crime. Your history is mostly very clear cut with no records of criminal activity other than the occasional pirating of a movie online, and believe it or not you are not the only person to have accidentally discovered a cultivation technique and practiced it."

"So I'm not in trouble?" Lex finally asked, feeling a bit of relief.

"Mostly," Hamid replied. "Although you have not done anything wrong, you still need to register yourself and your cultivation technique needs to be analyzed. It is not uncommon for people to discover a cultivation technique that seems fine, but is incomplete or causes problems later on. This is mostly for your own benefit, but since there is a precedent of cultivators exploding when trying to cross realms, this is also to ensure public safety."

"How will you check my cultivation technique?" Lex asked, suddenly panicking again. He was not used to such a quick change from relief to panic so many times in one day. Hamid however smiled, as if he knew what Lex was thinking.

"Do not worry, we won't ask to see your cultivation technique. According to Section 7 of the Cultivation Organizations Code of Conduct, unless suspected of terrorism or other extremely dangerous illegal activities, it is prohibited to

forcefully procure a cultivators techniques and skills. Even then there are a great deal of restrictions and requirements. If you follow me, I will show you how we will check. It's a pretty standard check during registration to be honest."

Lex followed Hamid out the room and down the corridor into a long hallway. Wherever they went Lex kept staring out the windows which showed a view of a countryside landscape, wondering if they had somehow teleported out of the city, or rather, how he could get such a teleporter if they did. Teleporting within the Inn was fine, but if he could use it regularly to travel the world that would be amazing. Hamid noticed him looking and chuckled again.

"That's augmented reality," he explained. "It's a mix between technology and spirit formations, to create an atmosphere and make it feel real. No one likes working underground and this is good for morale."

"Oh," Lex exclaimed, suddenly feeling stupid. "I thought we teleported somehow. I was amazed by the cultivation world, though I suppose mixing formations and technology is an amazing accomplishment in itself."

Hamid laughed out loud and slapped Lex on the back, as if he had cracked a hilarious joke. "The cultivation world is different, but don't let your head get pulled into science fiction. Not that I'm saying teleportation isn't real, it probably is, but that's not the kind of stuff people at our cultivation level can be exposed to. When you see something new, assume the simplest explanation is the correct one. The only difference between things such as formations or cultivation and traditional science is the use of spiritual energy.

"Normal people eat nutritious food to improve their health, and normal technology uses electricity and other normal physical traits to operate, whereas cultivators use spiritual energy to improve their bodies and run their formations. In a way, you can consider cultivation a different branch of science, where everything depends on spiritual energy. So for teleportation, it's not to say that it doesn't or can't exist, but rather that it would require a great deal of resources, engineering and spiritual energy beyond what is available to us. Cultivation isn't magic, if that's what you were thinking, and requires a great deal of studying, hard work and understanding.

"But all that is getting too hypothetical for you right now I think," Hamid said, entering a lab full of various machines and a group of doctors walking around in lab coats. "We should just focus on your registration. So Lex, tell me, are you ready to take your first steps into the cultivation world?"

“I am,” Lex answered, his eyes shining brightly. A lot of the things Hamid told him opened his mind and imagination. This was a truly exciting world. He couldn’t wait to explore further.

Somewhere far, far away in a house built on a mountain top, a man was swinging a double sided sword, repeating the same motion time and time again. He was not bulky but his body was packed with muscle, ready to explode with vicious strength. He did not falter, his stance did not weaken and the momentum of each swing did not change. The man was focused. The man was determined. The man improved with each swing, and this improvement was like a drug that he was craving.

His rhythm was suddenly interrupted by the sound of a creaking door, and a young, delicate looking girl entered. She did not look perturbed by the angry glare the man was giving her, and walked up to him as if she was taking a stroll through a park.

“What is it?” the man finally asked gruffly.

“I just got a call from mom. Someone in Bluebird ran a background check on big brother, and it seems they’re getting ready to register him as a cultivator.”

The man’s aura exploded! All the animals for miles around suddenly started fleeing, as if in a stampede, and the sun’s light dimmed, as if the sun itself was afraid to be noticed by the man.

“Investigate,” said the man slowly, the word carrying an unspoken weight.

“I’m already on it. Mom also said you’re not allowed to return to Earth for the time being, so just keep focusing on Neelums Slash.”

The man clenched his empty fist, as if trying to suppress something, but eventually released his fist and returned to his practice. The girl left as if she did not notice his actions, acting completely nonchalant.

If someone looked at the scene from afar, they would not see running monkeys and wolves, nor would they see crows and eagles escaping far away in the skies. Instead, they would see Sabretooth Tigers and Mammoths, they would see Pterodactyls and Dragons, they would see animals long thought extinct or myth, they would see mountains too large to be from Earth and in

the now darkened sky they would see a starry constellation completely distinct from the one visible on Earth. But to the girl and the man it was all too mundane to pay attention to. The man continued to swing and the young girl continued her casual stroll.

Authors Note: I'm adding this here to make sure the people who encounter this chapter get a chance to read this. I've noticed that the family being cultivators has been a point of contention for many readers, but I can assure you that the novel is not going for a cliché "family disregarded him for being a waste" type trope or anything. Maybe the reveal is a little early, but regardless this is something that had to happen for many things to make sense in the future. If you like the novel so far, continue to give it a chance. If you don't, then thanks for giving it a chance so far.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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