

Chapter 7 Regal Embrace

Mo's Blessing disappeared from the list! In the few moments during which Lex read the list and was deciding, someone actually took Mo's Blessing! Was it the being who had it in his collection, or did someone else use it? It didn't matter, Lex suddenly panicked. With one less option, he knew which one he had to choose and after giving the Bangle one last look filled with temptation and longing, he quickly selected Regal Embrace.

Living was the most important, and maybe he could get another chance to get the bangle from the system but for that he'd have to be alive first. Little did he know only a few moments after he selected Regal Embrace, the Bangle of Narn also disappeared from that list!

A stream of information entered Lex's mind and instantly Lex felt the difference. Just the knowledge itself elevated his mind and filled his body with a comfortable feeling. It didn't take long, only a few minutes, and when Lex opened his eyes he was filled with vigor. He had gotten a cultivation method and it truly was an amazing one, not that he had any point of reference. Currently he only had the relevant knowledge on how to start, and the rest of the information would reveal itself to him as he slowly elevated his cultivation. But starting cultivation itself was a huge ordeal Lex must overcome.

Regal Embrace was different from other cultivation techniques and in the information provided it stated clearly how it was different. A normal cultivation technique for humans would begin by tempering the mortal body with spirit energy, a special kind of energy present throughout the universe, and improve its strength and endurance, and this was called the Body Tempering realm. Once the body was tempered sufficiently it would be ready to accept spirit energy inside of it, and that is when the cultivation could truly be considered to have begun.

Once inside the spirit energy would improve body function in everyway and make the cultivator faster and stronger as well as improve the cultivators mental faculties. Each realm would then focus on developing a specific aspect of a cultivator or put them in touch with new, more powerful energies. Regal Embrace, however, was different right from the get go.

The Body Tempering realm was very different whilst cultivating Regal Embrace versus something else as it did not have 9 stages, instead the body would need to undergo 4 special procedures that would affect the body, the spirit and the soul. Every living being had a soul, and their life and death and even cultivation depended on it. Each time a cultivator progresses his or her cultivation realm the soul would be upgraded as well, even if not directly.

Having said that, just because a being has a soul does not mean they have a body and a spirit either. A soul is simply what gives life, but the spirit is what allows the living being to think and make conscious decisions. A being with a soul but no spirit would only simply exist, and any interaction it has with the surrounding universe would just be a result of the characteristics of its soul and nothing else. A spirit is what would guide the soul to take action. Different beings exhibited that differently, for example, both an animal and a plant have spirits. Animals use them to hunt, eat, rest etc. whereas plants use it to grow towards sunlight, search for water with their roots and so on. There are also beings in the universe with just a soul and spirit, and are incorporeal beings.

Last was the body. The body hosts the soul and allows it to interact with the material world, as well as protect beings with weak souls from randomly disintegrating. For example, a regular human soul can only exist for a few moments outside the protection of a body, and would collapse under the pressure of its own existence.

Therefore the Regal Embrace had only 4 stages in Body Tempering. The difference does not end there, as for these 4 realms Lex did not actually need to go through any cultivation. The System would perform the 4 procedures for him, at a cost, of course. The first 3 procedures would alter his body, spirit and soul respectively and the fourth would fuse all three together to form a single unified existence.

Since the focus of Regal Embrace was building the ultimate defense, it focused on all aspects of the cultivator, and once they all joined together, they would become stronger than any of them individually.

Of course, this had both pros and cons. The biggest con was that any injury to his physical body would also injure his spirit and soul, and likewise an injury to the spirit or soul would also affect the other 2. As a result, healing would also take longer and would be harder. The pro, however, is that he would be much harder to injure in the first place. An attack that could normally kill him would only injure him instead, and Lex would much rather be hurt than dead. Furthermore he would automatically be immune to many hazards or dangers,

for example being in the presence of a higher leveled cultivator can sometimes put a lot of pressure on someone's soul if the difference in realms is too great, whereas for Lex pressure on the soul would not really be an issue.

Another thing is that traditionally it is very difficult for a cultivator to improve the spirit or soul, however for Lex they would always grow along with his cultivation. He would have a huge advantage over normal cultivators who normally only focus on one aspect. There were a few other pros and cons, but they were minor and Lex couldn't be bothered with them right now. His only focus was on starting his cultivation.

To start the first procedure, he would have to pay 1500 midnight points, after which the system would begin the first procedure to alter his physical body. What excited him the most was that this would fix tumor problem when he finished all 4 steps! It hadn't even been a full day, and he'd already found the solution!

Without any further hesitation, he paid the 1500 Midnight points and began his first step into the cultivation world! His body disappeared from the Inn and appeared in a white room where he lay naked on a table. Before he had time to process what was happening, a syringe injected something in his arm and instantly he felt his mind relax. His thoughts faded, and he felt himself floating as if in a void, unaware of what was happening to his body, which for him was very fortunate.

Various tubes had begun attaching themselves all over his body, injecting various serums into his blood. His muscles squirmed and his bones cracked and healed constantly. Filth and damaged tissue pushed themselves out of his pores, and his body was slowly built back up. Instead of becoming skinny from all the exertion his body was undergoing, his body began to swell from the newly developing muscle.

The process continued for 8 hours, completely transforming Lex's body internally with minimal external changes. When the tubes fell off his body, he looked slightly more muscular and his posture and bone structure had improved to the optimal state. While he could not have been called fat or even chubby before, his cheeks had gone in and he had developed a sharp jawline. His skin was a lot clearer, and he had lost the few stretch marks he'd developed growing up.

Gradually Lex's mind cleared and he woke up, still on the table in the white room. All the filth and tubes had been cleared, so he saw none of it, but from the moment he woke up he knew he was different. If just his body's strength was measured, or rather his defense, it would be around the 3rd stage of Body Tempering, but that's not what Lex was feeling because he didn't know what 3rd stage Body Tempering should be like. Instead, he was amazed by how incredible he was feeling! He had aches and pain all over his body, but they were so light he never noticed them unless he focused on them, but now they were gone.

Breathing had become so much easier as well as enjoyable than before. It came to the point where he just now realized that although he was not in pain before, his body was struggling just a bit every time he breathed. He had been freed from the burden his body had gradually placed on him without him ever even noticing. Even while just laying down, he felt as if he was indulging in the greatest pleasure. Even without doing anything, he felt alive!

Slowly, ever so slowly, as if his reality was a dream he might stir awake from if he rushed, Lex got off the table and looked down at himself. Although the changes to his appearance weren't drastic, they absolutely weren't negligible. He flexed his muscles and felt the strength in his new body. He felt lighter and stronger than he had ever before.

He pulled up his status to view his changes.

Name: Lex Williams

Age: 23

Sex: Male

Cultivation Level: Regal Embrace Body Tempering Stage 1

Health: Suboptimal (developing brain tumor)

Midnight Points: 1974

Midnight Inn Level: 2

Inventory: Bathroom Slippers, Self Defense Butter Knife, 2 Golden Tickets, Host Attire

Quest: New Quest: As the most renown Inn in the universe, the Midnight Inn does not only host the rich and the powerful! Setup and develop the Pro Bono wing of the Inn and accept your first Pro Bono guest!

Remark: Keep working hard! If you raise your cultivation high enough, one day you'll be able to cast illusions to make yourself look better!

Once again ignoring the remarks, Lex spent a few minutes going over his status and what it meant. Firstly, and most importantly, although his brain tumor wasn't gone, all his other physical ailments had been cured. Second, he had just a little under 2000 midnight points left. It seemed like a lot, but when you considered that 2 of his rooms were booked for the next month severely affecting his ability to earn points during that time, it did not seem like it was enough. Especially when the next upgrade in Regal Embrace cost 5000 points. He also had to use the points wisely to improve the Inn in the best and quickest way that he could think of.

"Mary where am I?" Lex asked finally once he was done organizing his thoughts.

"You're in a special area made for you to undergo the starting process of your cultivation journey. The payment to use it was taken when you paid to start the procedure. You can leave anytime you want, similar to how you use the Host Attire to teleport, however I suggest you acclimatize yourself to your new body and strength. Try walking, running, jumping and a few other basic exercises."

Lex first equipped the Host Attire, quickly remembering he was nude in front of Mary. Then he tried walking and realized his balance was slightly off. His body weight had changed as well as his strength, but his brain was still not used to it. A few laps around the room and he was back to normal. Running again caused him a bit of an issue because he did not expect the length of his strides to be so great, however, he quickly got used to that as well. He did pushups, sit-ups, crunches and anything else he could think of and realized that his fitness had improved drastically. He basically did not need to stop at all while doing those exercises, whereas before, he could have managed a maximum of 20 if his life depended on it.

Lex finally stopped with a grin on his face, clearly very impressed with his improvement. But he did not leave the white room yet, he still had more things he wanted to figure out.

“My Midnight Inn level has reached 2, what does that mean I can do?”

“A host of new features have become available for you. Similar to the Pro Bono wing of the Inn that you learned about from your quest, the Inn has specialized areas that only cater to special guests, some of which you can now set up. Furthermore, you now have the ability to buy more land for the Inn as well as expand the initial Inn building as well. Currently you have 300 acres of land, but you can expand that as you wish and setup different areas with different climates, terrain, features or whatever else you can think of.

“Furthermore, a feature now available to you is building your own residence as well as the residence for 1 staff member that you can recruit. The residences will have special security features that prevent anyone from entering unless invited by you or recruits. Currently, these are the only new features available to you.”

Lex nodded at Mary subconsciously, his thoughts already on his upcoming task. He liked to plan things out before he did them, and now it was time for him to plan. He needed to take another look at the Midnight Store, understand all it offered, and draw up a plan of action.

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