

Innkeeper 211

The Innkeeper

Chapter 211: Peacock warriors

A little girl was walking by herself as she explored the Inn. Even though she was currently walking in the plain garden behind the Midnight Manor, this was the most beautiful place she had ever seen. But she was not lost in wonder as she explored this new terrain. No, she was scouting this new and probably dangerous place, no matter what Grandma Noo said. As a 7-year-old, she was already a big girl now, so she had to do her part in keeping her family safe.

Speaking of family, hers was the equivalent of royalty back on Vegus Minima. Grandma Noo told her that her parents were the strongest natives of the planet, and before the arrival of the Jotun forces, they used their own power to protect the largest remaining human sanctuary on the planet.

Although it was a city, it housed nearly 10 million people, all of whom were under her parents' protection for almost 200 years. The little girl, Layla, had grown up hardly ever meeting her parents, since they were always fighting zombies, and spent most of her time under Grandma Noo's care. That care, on a planet such as Vegus Minima, took the form of extreme discipline and training. Not a day in her life had gone by, as far as she could remember, that Grandma Noo didn't strap down and bound a zombie, and then made her kill it.

She had grown up under the constant threat of annihilation, so the sudden change on the planet caught her unaware and she could not cope. Many people told her that she was safe now, and didn't need to worry, but she could not adapt. So she continued her training and maintained her vigilance.

This morning, Grandma Noo told her that her father had been appointed governor of Vegus Minima on behalf of the Jotun Empire, and once things were finally settled, she would be able to live with them soon. Then her Grandma brought her here, in wait for her parents, who were apparently somewhere far away.

But while her Grandma said this place was safe, Layla would not risk anyone's life, and so took it upon herself to scout the area.

She saw a lot of strangely dressed people and strange animals. Though they looked to be non-hostile, she kept her distance, and a dagger neatly tucked into her sleeve. That is when she encountered her first threat, and it was extremely menacing.

It had an oval head, with a beak sharp enough to pierce through a man. Its eyes were hidden in a streak of black feathers, with white streaks surrounding the black like war paint. It had a long, blue neck to give it extreme reach, and the feathers behind its neck had opened up into a massive fan. Dozens of eyes were imprinted on the feathers, all staring at Layla, as if ready to hunt.

Just as she was about to grip her dagger, one of the ladies wearing the Inn uniform approached her.

"This bird is called a peacock. It's extremely gentle and loving, you do not need to be afraid."

"I am not afraid!" Layla quickly said, though her eyes were still focused on this obvious predator.

"My name is Valma. What's your name?" the lady asked with a smile.

Layla, however, did not reply, and eyed Valma suspiciously. Was this lady getting close to her to reach her parents? It was not the first time that had happened, and she would not let her succeed.

Noticing the little girl's wariness, Valma decided to change the topic.

"Are you here with someone? Did you get lost? I can help you find them if you're looking for them."

"No, Grandma Noo knows where I am. She's very strong, so she always knows where I am!" Layla said, her voice carrying an underlying threat. Valma, however, only chuckled when she heard her.

"In that case, do you want me to show you around? If you want, I can ask Little Blue to let you ride on its back."

Before Layla could ask who Little Blue was, Velma pointed towards a baby whale that was flying close to the ground. Behind it, Fenrir chased as quickly as it could. Though Fenrir had a higher cultivation than Little Blue, since the latter was flying, it was much quicker.

At first, the two animals looked extremely scary to Layla, but then she noticed the many flowers sticking out of Fenrir's fur. Little Blue had showered Fenrir in flowers from near the greenhouse, and many of them had gotten stuck. Since then, they had started a game of tag that never ended - mostly because Little Blue would fly out of reach whenever Fenrir got too close.

After watching them for a bit, she admitted that the two animals looked cute. But the thing was... she did not understand what cute was. Instead of thinking about it, it was more of a feeling she had never felt before. She was too confused to respond to Velma.

"I'll just go back to Grandma," she said, deciding this place was too strange.

"Sure," Velma said, and accompanied her back to the manor.

Inside the manor, a middle-aged woman sat leaning back in a chair in the restaurant, smoking a cigar. In front of her sat Hera, who was elaborating on the details of a trade agreement that Will had proposed between the two planets - or more specifically, the two parties from these two planets. Normally Hera would not have brought her son Jimmy with her in such an environment, but fortunately the air in the Inn was very clean, and none of the smoke from the cigar ever made it to her child, who was standing meekly behind her chair.

Just as they were in the middle of their discussion, a little girl ran into the middle-aged woman's arms and whispered, "Grandma Noo, this place is very dangerous. I saw a lot of monsters."

"If it's dangerous, then form a hunting party. We do not shy away from it," Noo said, smiling at her granddaughter. "Look, even that little kid is here, and he's even younger than you."

Layla turned to look at Jimmy, who was peeking at her from behind his mother, and competition flashed in her eyes.

"Hmph, I'm not afraid. I'm just submitting my scouting report," she said stubbornly, before pulling out of her grandmother's arms and eyed the little boy. "Come, you're in my hunting party now," she boldly declared, before pulling Jimmy away to hunt some peacocks!

Hera was hesitant, but eventually she said nothing. It was good that Jimmy finally had a chance to make some friends. On that day, in that backyard, the gallant peacock warriors gathered its first two members.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 212: Support token

Lex sat comfortably in his private room, with his legs stretched out on an ottoman in front of him. A plate of small, wrapped sweets had been waiting for him when he entered the room, some of which he had picked through and they were phenomenal. More and more, Lex was beginning to like this planet for its food, but that may simply be a result of excellent ingredients. After all, this was an agricultural planet so their ingredients must be extremely fresh.

Lex munched on another sweet as he read through the description of his reward for completing the quest to sell something to the Emporium. His quest ranking had ended up being an A, which influenced his reward naturally. But that's where the peculiarity of the Special quest came in, as the system asked him if he had a reward in mind. Lex went through his quests that remained incomplete, and was reminded of one to find someone to help him run a new service.

With that in mind, he asked to find the perfect employee that fit this role. The system could not reward an employee directly, but the reward was still influenced by the request. It directly scanned all the planets connected to the Inn, and provided him with a list of beings most suitable for the job.

The list was very lengthy, with over 100 candidates, and Lex intended to go through the list thoroughly before he made a decision. It was while he was doing this that he got another quest complete notification.

Quest complete: Help Tetsuya avoid calamity by having him retreat to the Inn.

Quest reward: Support token!

Remarks: completed the quest on a technicality, now you're thinking like an entrepreneur!

Lex was confused by the remark, as he could not tell if the system was insulting him or complimenting him.

"Hey Mary, have we received a new guest? His name should be Tetsuya, he might be hurt."

"Yeah, we did," she replied hesitantly. "But he's not just wounded, he's on the verge of death! His cultivation has been scrapped, and he has a massive hole in his chest and a missing arm! Since he had a lot of treasures on his body, and his cultivation level fell below yours, I used those as payments and sent him directly to the ORR (Organic Reconstruction Room). However, since you never set a price for the ORR, it was charged at cost, which is 1000MP per hour."

Lex bolted upright when he heard the news. Tetsuya was pretty strong, as Lex had witnessed himself, as he managed to incapacitate Foundation realm experts with ease. Lex could not imagine how he ended up in such a wounded state. Despite all he had been through, this was the first time someone had used his ORR, which could reconstruct missing or crippled body parts. The only limitation to the ORR was that it was limited by his own cultivation, and could only work on those at his level or below it.

"Alright, keep me updated on his condition."

With that taken care of, Lex leaned back in his chair and wondered if Tetsuya had been implicated because of him. It seemed unlikely, as he had received a quest long before he even decided to enter the arena.

As for being concerned whether he would get dragged into this mess? Lex wasn't worried at all. One of the items Lex had purchased from the Emporium was called the Insincere medallion. Its effect was not perfect, but it was good enough to hide his tracks in a situation where he wasn't being directly followed. The medallion basically hid everything about him as long as he was wearing it. If he left a fingerprint on an item, it would not be his. If he dropped hair, it would not match his DNA. If he was photographed by a surveillance camera, the image that would show up would not be his. Dogs would not be able to track his scent and his footprints would be wrong. Basically, any tracks he left behind would be wrong in some way. Of course, if someone had their eyes on him, and followed him directly, the medallion could do nothing about that. But he felt safe, for now at least.

He looked at his latest quest reward, the Support token, and smiled. It was very useful.

Support token

Select an Inn employee. Once selected, you can summon that employee from the Inn to your location, regardless of where you are in the universe. You can also unsummon the employee.

This token was actually perfect. It was not like he was getting attached or anything... but he had been concerned about leaving Fenrir alone for long periods. Although he left the pup in the care of the turtle, and he had Little Blue to accompany him, Fenrir was still extremely attached to Lex.

As he was a member of the Inn in an official capacity as Protector, this token worked perfectly on him. Lex used the token to bind it to Fenrir, and directly summoned him into the private room.

That was a mistake, as Lex had momentarily forgotten how big the wolf was, not to mention it had been slowly growing bigger as time went by.

The private room was immediately filled by the giant dog that looked confused for a moment, then immediately recognized Lex, and sat down as it tried to rub its massive head against Lex's body. Lex had spent time in front of Fenrir without the Host Attire on when they were staying in the apartment, which is why the pup suffered from no confusion in recognizing him.

Lex scratched the massive pup, unaware of the warm smile that had appeared on his face. Finally, after spending some time consoling the pet, he started preparing to use the binding technique on Fenrir. Technically, Lex himself was too weak to use the technique, so what he got was a primed talisman that would automatically implement the technique when he activated it.

Not wasting any time, Lex activated the talisman, and felt a warmth starting to fill him, and a bright light covered both him and Fenrir.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 213: Never ending job

When Darius woke up in his room, surrounded by medical equipment and nurses, the first and only thing he felt was rage. Absolute freaking rage! He wanted to scream and yell, but he had to contain himself. Although he was spoiled, he was not an idiot.

The one thing he could not do was embarrass his father, so he needed to find out exactly what had happened. He signaled someone to retrieve his personal computer and sent everyone out of the room. In his mailbox, the first thing he saw was the video of Tetsuya's execution.

Immense gratification filled his heart as he watched this old nemesis die. It was a shame he couldn't send this assassin after his step-brother as well, but he was already employed by the Dimitri family, so he was off limits.

He watched the video a few times, then deleted it. This matter was definitely going to be investigated, and he could leave no evidence connecting himself to it. Everyone would suspect him, but as long as there was no evidence, no one would convict him.

That's when he saw the various videos of himself being dragged through the streets by Tetsuya, as well as videos of himself being beaten by that kid he had attacked on the street.

He wanted to explode in anger once again, but he contained himself. He took out a phone and dialed a certain number, which was picked up immediately.

"Are you satisfied with the results?" the person on the other end asked.

"Very, but I have another job for you."

"Unfortunately, we can no longer work together. Our associate who did the previous job has already left the planet, and we have no more resources to spare."

"I did you a favor," Darius said, through gritted teeth.

"And in return, we did you one as well. We are now even. If, in the future, the possibility of working together arises again, we will contact you. Until then, farewell."

The other person shut the phone, further ruining Darius' mood. But at the same time, he understood that they had completed their original deal. There was no reason for them to go above and beyond.

He grit his teeth and decided to take matters into his own hands. He dialed a second number, this time, to a private detective. He needed to know where that brat was staying. What to do about him would come later.

In an office, a uniformed man was filling out some paperwork. His expression was grim, though this wasn't because of any recent incident. He was just always in a grim mood. His door opened and someone entered, and just as the uniformed man was about to scold the person for interrupting him, he noticed who it was and his grim expression changed to that of surprise.

Compared to the uniformed man, the person entering was much younger in appearance. But the matter only went as far as appearance, because unlike everyone else in his family, this person's first name was Dimitri. He was the founder of their family, and though it had been many years since he took part in family matters, his position of authority would never change.

"Ancestor, forgive me for not greeting you. I did not know of your arrival," the uniformed man said as he quickly got up.

"Be at ease child, I don't care for formalities. I just awoke from my cultivation for an important matter. I am truly saddened to hear about your fathers passing, and would normally spend time with you to mourn, but I have urgent matters that need to be taken care of. I am told that you are in-charge of security now."

This was a common occurrence in cultivation families. Higher leveled cultivators would often outlive many of their younger generations who did not have the same level of cultivation talent, and so could not extend their lifespan. To an outsider, this may seem tragic, but the cultivation families were already used to it.

"It is an honor for my father to be remembered by you, ancestor, that is enough. Indeed, after retiring from the Jotun army, I took charge of our family's forces."

"Good. I have received a personal missive from the Jotun Empire. Increase security on all planets by a hundred times and decrease sales by 40% and use whatever is not sold to increase our reserves."

"Did something happen?" the uniformed man asked, his signature grim look on his face.

"I'm not sure. I reached out to a few acquaintances, and everyone was being told to slowly start mobilizing. The few who haven't been informed yet will probably get the call soon."

This was highly unusual. Although the Dimitri family had leased this X-14 system from the Jotun Empire for 10,000 years, after the original lease was signed, they had not been contacted again even once by the empire, and were left to their own devices. Such a missive out of the blue was not a good sign.

"Do not worry too much. While this is unusual, the situation is not grave yet. I've even reached out to all battle fronts, and there is no unusual activity. All we need to worry about is ensuring everything stays normal at our end. Has anything unusual happened on any of the planets recently?"

"There was a terrorist attack in X-142, but I was going to let local authorities investigate it."

"No, go investigate yourself. The timing might just be a coincidence, but since we're mobilizing, we'll leave nothing to chance."

"Understood," the man answered, his voice as grave as possible. When his ancestor departed, the man left his office with the determination to face a fight to the death. His subordinates did not react to his expression, however, as for them this was naught but an ordinary Monday.

A day passed calmly, and Lex finally departed the train at his destination. He had arrived at the Fergen Forest, one of the original and untampered sites of the planet. The trees in this forest were massive, with even the smallest being 200 meters in height and over 50 meters in circumference.

This was the largest natural forest on the planet, and at least the first few miles of it were considered a tourist attraction. Beyond that there was a gray zone where people were encouraged not to enter, and after that began the territories of the wildlife. While the Dimitri family could obviously eradicate all hostile beasts or animals on the planet, they did not as they wanted to maintain the natural ecology of the planet as much as they could manage.

Lex had no interest in going to those dangerous areas though, he was here purely as a tourist.

"What do you think, Fenrir? A beautiful sight, isn't it?" he said, as he walked towards one of the concession stands.

Fenrir, of course, could not respond, even in his thoughts through their shared link. But, because they were now bound, Lex could at least better understand the pup's feelings. What surprised Lex was that the dog had a lot of memories of pain, despite being born only a few minutes before Lex summoned him. Fortunately, those were only vague memories, and Fenrir was quickly overwriting them with new, happy ones.

From the stand, Lex grabbed a map, some snacks for himself as well as some for Fenrir, and then quickly climbed onto the pup's back.

"Let's go," Lex said, and the pup started jogging towards the giant trees. The duo made an unusual sight, but still no one gave him a second look. The trees gave off a pleasant aroma, and the first was rich with all kinds of interesting plants and insects. With the help of the Fancy Monocle, they harvested some of the edible wild fruits, and the two feasted on their harvests.

Towards the night, they followed the map to a designated camping area in the forest that overlooked a waterfall coming out of one of the giant trees. Massive fireflies flew around the forest, giving off purple light that illuminated the campsite like a scene out of a cartoon movie.

A massive bonfire in the middle of the campsite attracted the most crowds, where a group was sitting on the ground playing musical instruments that looked similar to a flute. Lex traded some of his fruits for some barbeque and rented one of the better looking tents since he hadn't brought one of his own.

Fenrir made friends with a massive green colored slime and jumped on it like a trampoline. After a few jumps, he discovered the slime suddenly changed and instead of bouncing off, Fenrir fell right into the

slime. Some of the kids who were watching from nearby laughed, and the pup looked aggrieved when the slime let it out.

Lex chuckled, as he took the time and chatted with the locals. It may have seemed like he was just making friends and enjoying himself, but in actuality, he was doing research. What kind of activities did the citizens of X-142 like? Currently, the answer seemed to overwhelmingly be spending time in nature. He had at least until the rest of the week to find out what that exactly meant, and if there was anything else on the list. Being an Innkeeper was a never ending job.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 214: Execution

Two days after Lex originally checked in, a small group of people entered the Bent Benches tavern. As could be expected, the place was completely devoid of any customers.

"Is anyone here?" one of the men yelled in an annoyed tone.

"Just give me a moment, I'm dealing with something," replied a voice from behind the counter. The group leaned over to see a thin young man, rolled up in the fetal position.

"We're looking for this man, have you seen him?" the first man asked, holding out a picture of Lex.

"Just a few minutes, please, I'll be right with you," the man replied, as he started rocking, his breathing becoming heavier and louder.

"What do you mean, a few minutes? Stand up and answer me brat, you don't know who you're dealing with," the man said as he jumped over the counter and reached to grab the man on the floor. But things did not proceed how they usually did.

The tavern keeper reached out his hand and grabbed, not only the man's neck, but his entire body as his hand had enlarged into a massive claw.

"I said, give me a few minutes," he repeated himself, but his voice was no longer that of a human. It was unfortunate that the man never heard his voice, as his body had been squished within the tavern keeper's claw.

The rest of the group yelled as they retreated in horror at the gory sight they had just witnessed, yet their noise only aggravated the tavern keeper further. His pupils thinned into vertical slits and his face started growing into a massive maw. Green scales started to cover his skin, but before the transformation could continue, a single streak of flame breathed out of his nose burnt the group to a crisp.

With the interference gone, the tavern keeper closed his eyes and started taking deep breaths, slowly transforming back into the shape of a human.

"Take deep breaths," the man kept murmuring to himself, as he continued to calm himself down in peace.

Lex woke up feeling rested and great, as he let out a big yawn while stretching. It was not that he let himself fall asleep and let down his guard, but that with Fenrir nearby it was a lot harder for anyone to sneak up on Lex. Fenrir was not strong in his cultivation, but his senses were unmatched. Not only could he sense living things or fruits or basically anything edible nearby, he could even accurately sense the emotions of those nearby.

Using that ability, Lex had spent the last day getting to know the others at the campsite. In fact...

"Hey Joel, you guys ready?" Lex asked as he walked out of his tent, scratching his head.

"Just about," answered a cat-man, or more accurately a male Neko. "I'm just cooking up breakfast while the rest pack up. We can leave once everyone has eaten."

"Sounds like a plan to me," replied Lex as he watched the group. The group was composed of five guys and four girls... eh, five males and four females. Joel and his girlfriend were Neko, but the rest were from

various other races. They were tourists who came together and formed a tourist group, under the lead of an avian beast that ran a local tourism company.

As Fenrir had identified them as honest and friendly, Lex had joined their group, at least until their next destination. After that, he would decide whether to stay with them or not. After all, there was no better way to understand aliens on vacation other than to join them.

As usual, Lex leapt onto Fenrir's back, and the duo went into the forest hunting for fruit. Lex had tried hunting for actual game, but there didn't seem to be many animals near the tourist areas.

While Fenrir ran, Lex's mind wandered back to what Mary had told him about Tetsuya. He had not had much of a reaction to learning about the Inn, or even that he had been saved despite the seriousness of his wounds. He simply bought a Travel face wash kit, which allowed him to change his appearance for 24 hours, and left the Inn.

Let alone Lex, even Mary was confused by his behavior. But there was nothing either of them could do about it.

After gathering enough fruit, Lex returned to the campsite and shared his harvest with the group. Since he was tagging along, it was only right that he contributed in some way to the group.

After breakfast, they left for their next tourist destination, Heaven Island. This was a popular destination because of the unusual feature that the island was floating! This was not a man-made island, but was one naturally formed. According to the tourist guide, the reason the island floated was because the 'island' was originally a massive asteroid that had unusual magnetic properties.

It floated around constantly in the sky above a large canyon and was completely unable to leave the canyon's boundaries. It was suspected that the canyon emitted a certain spiritual field that prevented the island from falling, but also from moving out of the canyon itself.

After a brief study conducted by the Dimitri family revealed that the island did not contain any extremely rare ores, they renovated the top enough to accommodate plant life, and turned it into a tourist destination.

After extensive study, as well as communication with the locals, Lex learnt that all the planets in the X-14 system had a strong tourism industry going. The reason, as far as Lex could tell, was that since all planets were firmly under the control of the Dimitri family, there was no room for internal strife. The planets were not divided into countries, but zones according to their agricultural produce, and none of the tourist attractions were anywhere near important agricultural lands.

The lack of large-scale internal strife, presence of security and various attractions focused towards different species made the planet's prime location for a booming industry. For example, while Lex was heading towards the Island, he learnt that swamps were a major attraction towards slimes.

Another interesting, and unexpected thing Lex learnt, was that slimes were first-class citizens of the Jotun Empire. Apparently, as far as the brief description on the list provided by the Emporium told, not only were slimes born without a lifespan, meaning they would never die unless killed, they had an unequivocally strong backing, so much so that the Empire allowed them to travel their territory without any intergalactic visas.

This did not match Lex's impression of the squishy, jelly-like beings that could change their bodies to immediately become excellent trampolines, but he decided to accept it. The universe was a strange place, he had to be flexible in this thinking.

The group Lex was with did not travel by train, but by a vehicle called Hover plates. It was literally what it sounded like; it was a large, flat platform that rose into the air and flew in the direction you wanted. Of course, it had several formations on it to control how much wind blew into the tray so the riders wouldn't be bothered, and to prevent them from falling off.

Once they arrived at the Island, they checked into a hotel for two days, after which they would continue on their journey elsewhere. Although Lex didn't have a booking, he spent nearly all the spirit coins he brought with himself to get a room. This was really good for his research. He would take detailed notes about the hotel and reflect on how he could improve the Inn.

Darius was sitting in his room, smoking out of a pipe while he watched a show. It had been a while since he hired someone to look for that kid he had a fight with, and though they didn't reach out to him yet, he was confident in their abilities. After all, he had worked with them before.

Suddenly, however, the door to his room was kicked down and his father entered the room with a look of such fury on his face that Darius had never seen anything close to it. He didn't know what had sparked his father's anger, but he had a strong guess. He had to maintain his innocence.

"Father," he began saying, but before he could continue, he was slapped across the face so hard his body lurched across the room!

Confused, in pain, and panicking, Darius tried to look at his attacker to understand what exactly was happening. That's when he noticed them. There was a group of guards, all wearing the uniform of the Dimitri family's elite forces. At their head stood a middle-aged man wearing office clothes, but there was no doubt for even a second that he was in command.

"Little brat, before you start speaking, it'll be best if you hear me first. I don't care whether you were involved or not in the terrorist attack or not, since you had an enmity with the only victim, you're already on the suspects list. Do you know what that means? It means you've already been sentenced to death, without a trial."

Darius physically felt his stomach lurch, and his heart stop beating for a moment as he listened to the man. No, he couldn't die!

But just as he was about to speak again, the man reached forward and clamped Darius' mouth shut with his hand.

"Whether you did anything or not, you're already guilty. I'll give you one chance to speak, so I better hear something that'll help me trace those terrorists. If I hear something I like, maybe I'll reduce your punishment. Otherwise, I'll personally make sure there's nothing left of you to put into a grave."

With that, the man let go of Darius' mouth and took a step back to let him speak. By now, Darius' mind had almost shut down from fear. He could not think, not even of a way to save himself. His eyes shifted to his dad, but instead of support, he only saw unbridled anger.

After a few moments, when he didn't answer, the man no longer bothered wasting any time with him. He stepped forth and injected some serum into his neck.

A minute later, he asked, "what connection do you have with the terrorists?"

"They reached out to me a few weeks back," Darius answered, his mind completely numbed now, and his eyes vacant. "It was the day Tetsuya broke through to the Foundation realm, and he had beaten me up badly when I tried to ambush him during an academy trip. They offered to kill Tetsuya for me, as long as I did them a favor. I used my connections to distract one of the guards in the space station in the city, the one for people traveling to and from this planet. It was barely for a few minutes, and nothing happened, but they considered the favor done. After that, they didn't contact me again for so long I thought someone was playing a prank on me. Until they sent me a video of them killing Tetsuya."

The man nodded, as if he heard exactly what he expected. He turned to one of the men behind him and said, "interrogate him thoroughly. Get all the information we need. Once you're done, kill him."

Darius did not react, as his mind was still numb, but his father did. Instead of feeling aggrieved, he was instead relieved. If they killed Darius, their anger should be reduced. Or at least, that's what he thought until the middle-aged man turned to him and said, "for raising such a treasonous child, you share in the blame of his crime for not providing a better upbringing. You better start thinking of ways you can help with the investigation, or your execution will be next."

The father fell on his knees. He was doomed.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 215: Track me down

Lex took a long, deep breath and held it in for a moment before he let out a sigh of relaxation. Other than that small brush with near death on his first day, his trip on X-142 had been as different from his trips to other worlds as possible. This was already his 8th day on the planet, and he was expecting the connection to form with the Inn any day now.

He had spent these days traveling and relaxing, and though he ran out of money very quickly, that only made traveling even more interesting. Of course, despite the casual activities, he did not let his guard down again during the entire trip. But when he was lying on a beach chair, being served some kind of fruit juice by a sassy fairy that used her powers to levitate the tray behind her where she went, it was hard not to enjoy the moment.

Often, he could not help but compare the fairy to Mary, since they were similar in size. At least, most of the time. Mary could change the size of her projection to whatever size she wanted, but mostly maintained her tiny stature.

"Hey Lex, we're about to head out. You want to join?" asked a young man.

"Yeah, give me a moment. I'll join you," said Lex as he finally picked himself up. He was on a beach and while he normally wasn't one for sunbathing, this beach was surrounded by a formation that helped in cultivating under direct sunlight. The aid of the formation, along with the ointment he took from the Infinity Emporium, boosted his cultivation speed considerably. He had managed to increase the total number of Qi strands in his body to 32. At 33 strands of Qi, he'd reach the limit of the 3rd level of Qi training, and at 34 he'd officially enter the fourth level. Each level consisted of absorbing 11 strands of Qi, and while growing within each level was easy, relatively speaking, going from one level to the next was always a challenge.

Of course, to onlookers, it merely looked like Lex rubbed himself in sunscreen and spent the day sleeping on the beach chair in his shorts.

He stretched for a bit after getting up, winked to the fairy that had been passing comments on his body all day, and left to convince Fenrir to get out of the water. The same way Lex had been lying on the beach nonstop, Fenrir had been swimming in the ocean, occasionally catching some fish while he was at it.

Getting him out was a greater challenge than Lex expected, and he only agreed when Lex promised to let him hunt something on land as well. It seemed like the pup was developing a knack of hunting.

Once they were ready, Lex joined Teena and Teema, two human twins who were touring the planet during their vacations from what Lex assumed was the equivalent of college. They were 19 years old, and though their cultivation was still in the Body Tempering phase, they were more inclined towards normal life, anyway. They did not have much talent for cultivation, and the little that they did cultivate was under parental pressure - mostly for the health benefits.

Their destination this time was an oasis in the only desert on the planet. They all sat in what looked like a massive jeep, and let the automated driving feature take them towards their destination.

The journey was about six hours long, and halfway through it Lex got the notification that the Inn had successfully been connected to X-142, and he could leave whenever he wanted. Lex smiled. This was his favorite venture to another planet so far!

Yet, when has life been simple and straightforward? On the way to the oasis, once they had already entered the desert, they encountered three vehicles stopped in the middle of nowhere. Smoke was coming out of the farthest one, rising high up into the clear sky like a beacon, and it seemed like the other two had stopped to help.

"Should we check if they need help?" Teena asked, looking at her brother.

"I guess it can't really hurt," Teema replied, shrugging, and input commands to slow down the vehicle.

Since he was just tagging along with them, Lex didn't give any opinion on the matter. He was just waiting till he reached the Oasis, so he could get out of sight and teleport away without arousing any suspicion.

"Hey, is everyone alright?" Teema yelled once they had stopped nearby and jumped out into the sand. Teena was looking for a water bottle in case they needed it, and Lex was also getting ready to disembark and see if he could help, when Fenrir let out a low growl.

Lex was immediately alerted, as for the first time the pup took the initiative to communicate with him through his feelings, and he was communicating only one specific feeling that was slowly getting stronger: danger! Fenrir's ability to sense others emotions was unimpaired by cultivation levels, as Lex had learnt, and was very accurate.

Lex quickly turned and noticed that the crowd that had gathered near the third vehicle were all dressed oddly. Lex had gotten a sense for how people dressed on X-142, and it was mostly very casual. These people, however, seemed to be fully equipped with some kind of tactical equipment.

Suddenly, Fenrir let out a yelp as he ducked low. His communication this time was even more clear: they were much stronger than Lex and Fenrir, and they had decided to kill all of them.

"Teena don't get out of the car," Lex whispered, his tone extremely grave, and without explaining he quickly jumped out and ran to Teema.

"Get in the car and run," Lex told him quickly, before he raised his hand up in the air holding some kind of device.

"If anyone moves, I'll fire the S.O.S beacon!" Lex yelled at the crowd.

"What's going on?" Teema asked, still confused. He had lived his entire life on a planet unmarred by major conflict, and with little to no crime. The fact that others might want to harm him was not something he could even conceive.

Yet while Teema was confused, the crowds clearly understood what was happening. They didn't know what it was that gave away their intentions, or maybe their identity, but they didn't care. They all turned towards Lex, and eyed the device in his hand as if trying to judge if he was lying.

An S.O.S. beacon sent out an emergency distress signal to the nearest city or town, and alerted all emergency services. If Lex fired one off, within 15 minutes max, this place would be swarming with police and rescue forces.

"Teema, there's something very wrong with these people, get in the damn car and drive!" Lex yelled this time, as he did not have the time to explain to the teenager. "Or do you want to be responsible for Teema's death?"

That seemed to get the message across, and the teenager was suddenly afraid. But still, before he retreated, he stopped to ask, "what about you?"

"I'll be fine, I have protective gear. You need to get out of here! Go!"

Although Teema did not understand what was happening, he turned around and ran. The people did not move to pursue Teema, and instead looked at Lex with amusement. In fact, their cavalier attitude told Lex that they didn't even care about the S.O.S anymore. Whoever they were, and whatever they were doing, maybe they had contingency plans in case they got discovered.

"Hey kid, do you know who you're messing with?" one of the men asked, as he slowly started walking towards Lex.

"Don't move or I'll fire the beacon!" Lex yelled, once again.

"Fire the beacon, see if I care," the man said, not slowing down his pace at all.

By now, Teema and Teena had started their vehicle and were already leaving, but Lex noticed one of the people aiming some kind of weapon towards them.

"Aw to hell with it," Lex said, suddenly losing his worried look, his expression turning into a casual smile.

He fired the device in his hand, which was not an S.O.S. beacon, but a regular flare from Earth. He did not know if anyone would see it, but it was no longer his concern.

Without any outward indication, Lex flawlessly entered the state of 'flow' and drew the Heavy Harley, firing a perfectly aimed shot towards the man aiming at the twins' vehicle.

The man did not bother to dodge, as his cultivation was much higher than Lex, and could easily determine that this weapon could not hurt him, but was caught by surprise when the bullet hit his weapon instead of him, throwing off his aim.

"Interesting," the first man, who was walking towards Lex said. "Are you, a 3rd level Qi training cultivator, playing games with us?"

"So what if I am? So what if I'm not? What can you do about it?" Lex replied, his casual voice making it perfectly clear that he was not afraid of the man. At the same time, he fired off a couple more shots, disrupting them from firing at the teenagers. They were quite a distance away by now, but Lex did not know the range of their weapons so maintained the interference.

"You're protecting those kids, but aren't you worried about yourself?"

"Not at all. I'm standing right here, what can you do to me?"

The man, as if aggravated, fired off a brown colored beam from his finger towards Lex, but before it got anywhere near him, a translucent blue energy shield appeared around him and blocked the attack effortlessly.

This was a protective treasure Lex bought from the Emporium, capable of even defending against Nascent level attacks, and the source of Lex's confidence.

"Well well, so you have some protection. But can that protect you forever? Even if we can't break it now, we've already seen what you look like. Aren't you afraid we'll track you down and kill you?"

"Hah!" Lex almost burst into laughter, but had to control himself. "Sure, if you can, then go ahead and track me down!"

Hoping the teenagers were far enough by now, Lex decided to stop tempting fate. He threw out all the explosives he had in his backpack at the man, activated the key he got from the Emporium, summoned all the things he bought, and teleported back to the Inn with all his things.

When the smoke from the various explosions cleared, the man was completely unharmed. In fact, even his clothes were not damaged by the explosions. His eyes, though, wore a grave look as they stared in the place Lex stood before he disappeared.

"Did you get a picture of the brat?" he asked one of his followers.

"Yes, but there seems to be some interference. This image is different from his actual appearance."

The man pursed his lips in annoyance, then put the matter behind him.

"Implement plan C. Moving forward, assume our location and numbers have been revealed, but the Dimitri family still doesn't know our objective, so we can take advantage of that."

"What about the kids who got away?"

"Forget them, since our location has already been exposed, there's no reason to chase them down."

This group of people all seemed to be wearing the same kind of gear as the man who tried to assassinate Tetsuya, but since no one had seen them or the assassin, no one knew that there were dozens of enemies. The Dimitri family was still just hunting down that one terrorist, unaware of the danger that lurked hidden across the planet. After all, this was just one of the various groups that had infiltrated the planet.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 216: Dragonburn Locket

Once Lex returned to his apartment at the Inn, he automatically exited his state of 'flow' and breathed a sigh of relief. Although he had planned to retreat at the first sign of trouble, and had various defensive treasures, facing an uncertain situation still weighed heavily on him. Fortunately, everything went well. He could only hope that Teena and Teema managed to get far enough away.

"I'd like to see you 'track me down'," Lex murmured once he finally relaxed, and chuckled. At worst, he would just not return to that planet, or even that star system. How would they ever find him?

Fenrir, who had also returned to the Inn as Lex dismissed his summoning, came and rubbed his massive face against Lex's body. Part of it was over his worry for Lex, and part of him was still reeling from his first experience with danger. Regardless of his size and heritage, he was still a pup of only a few weeks in age.

After consoling him, Lex turned his attention to all things he had brought with him to the Inn. After a week of rest, he had a lot of work to do, and that was not considering catching up with anything that had happened at the Inn while he was gone.

He directly sent the fertilizer meant for the Delinquent Vine, as well as the hundreds of seeds and saplings he bought directly to the turtle. He told the turtle to plan the more important ones in the greenhouse, and the rest all over the Inn. He wasn't going to turn the entire Inn into a farm, but if a wandering guest encountered a fruit tree and wanted to pick and eat some fruit, they would soon be able to.

He had no use for the various ores and technology he bought for the Emporium, so he added a storeroom to his apartment and placed all the stuff he didn't currently need there. He also stashed all

the spirit stones he bought there, as not only did he not know what to spend them on, he himself could not use them for cultivation yet.

Spirit stones, as with everything else in the universe, it seemed, had different levels as well. The ones available at the Emporium were low, medium level, and very few high leveled ones. Since Lex actually had a lot of credit at the store, and didn't want to leave it there, Lex had a massive amount of spirit stones of low and medium level. It was to the extent that if the Emporium had not employed some kind of shrinking technique and stuffed them all in a special kind of chest that would prevent their aura from leaking, Lex would have been crushed to death just by the spirit stones when he used the key to teleport all his belongings to him from the locker.

Lex took the various files of information he bought and neatly placed them on a shelf in his study room. These were important, and he would go over them when he had the time. Then, Lex turned his attention to the mysterious locket he had bought that even the Emporium could not identify. On a surface level, the only special thing about this locket was that it was indestructible. Yet Lex did not believe it was so simple. Or at least, he hoped not.

Lex had an amazing way of figuring out the locket's speciality. He put it in the gift shop, then read its description.

Dragonburn Locket

A locket that was forged in the fires of a master dragon's firebreath. A dragon can study the locket to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of breathing fire.

Lex raised an eyebrow. The locket was not useful to him personally, but it was not a bad item to leave in the gift shop. The only question was...

"Hey Mary, any idea on how I should price this item? Its description does not mention any realms at all, so I don't know what realm of dragons it's useful for."

"I'm checking your authority, and it seems, yes, you can learn something about dragons from the system, maybe that'll help you. Dragons are a very strong, very proud, and very individualistic race. They do not focus on growing as a civilization, and instead focus more on personal growth, or at most, the growth of their individual clans. On a universal scale, their threat is greatly diminished due to their lack

of unity, but on a one-to-one scale, few species exist that can match, let alone supersede, the might of a pureblooded dragon. Dragons are greatly loved by the laws of the universe, and often, natural treasures will bloom near them. The natural accumulation of treasures around dragons, over time, gave birth to the misconception that dragons love treasures."

"Well, it tells me that dragons are usually rich, but I still don't know how to price the item."

"Well, if you don't know, just pick a random price. It's not like you're suffering any losses either way."

Lex pondered for a moment. Since even the system thought they were rich, or at least had many treasures, it would be alright if overcharged a bit, right? Unsure of what exactly constitutes rich on a universal scale, Lex decided to price the item 10 million MP! If, after a long time, no one bought it, maybe he'd reduce the price.

With that done, Lex turned his attention towards the Inn, finally.

"Alright Mary, give me the updates on what's been happening while I was gone."

"Well, since you connected all the planets from the three star systems, we've had a lot more guests coming in from the golden doors. Some of them decided to stay, most of them left immediately. It seems you might need to improve the welcome message delivered by the holographic assistant. Finally, some of the beasts from the planets around Nibiru have caused trouble. Although the higher cultivation ones seem to already know about the Inn, and haven't caused any trouble, those at lower levels have caused problems a few times."

"Were you able to resolve the problems?"

"For now, yes. But not only do you need to invest in growing the Vine more, you need to look into other forms of security as well. As more and more races come to the Inn, the harder it will be to control them all by simply using the Vine. After all, each race has its own strengths and weaknesses. All it will take is someone good at controlling fire, and the Vine will suffer great damage."

"Yes, I know. I've been thinking of other ways to improve security, you don't need to remind me. That's why I'm only focused on connecting to low-level planets for now, to avoid the chance of stronger guests till we're ready. What else has happened at the Inn?"

"Some people with the skills you were looking for at the Inn showed up. Though they've already left the Inn, you can still look at their information."

"That reminds me, I have a few candidates in mind for certain jobs. Is there any way I can hire them without having to go to them personally?"

"If you'd managed to hire Marlo as a valet, finding people on the various planets was a job that could have been left to him. Currently, you still don't have the ability to reach out to specific people on various planets using the system unless it's through the event panel. As your authority increases, you'll be able to eventually do it. For now, I guess the first person you should consider hiring is someone you can trust with tasks that require visiting the various planets."

Lex had guessed as much, and then took a deep sigh of regret. He had already thought of someone he wanted to hire for the job of collecting news, but to hire him, Lex would have to travel to Vegus Maxima, one of the three inhabited planets in the Vegus system. The situation there should be a lot better with the presence of the Jotun Forces, yet Lex still didn't want to risk it. He'd already seen immortal zombies and extremely strong devils, so he wanted to stay as far away from those planets as possible.

"Anything else I should know about?"

"Oh yeah, Marlo's son finally woke up while you were gone."

That attracted Lex's attention. It need not be said that Marlo was one of the most prominent guests Lex had, and he suspected that this would not change any time soon.

Lex scanned the Inn to find that Marlo, Sophia and Rafael were outside the Recovery room while Rafael was in the ORR, receiving treatment. When Rafael had been brought to the Inn, he was seriously injured, and was not only amputated, he was missing several organs as well. Now, at least his face had fully recovered while the rest of his body was still undergoing treatment. Although Rafael's eyes were open, they were vacant, with no signs of intelligence behind them. Lex expected as much, since his soul was gravely injured. Marlo should still be working on getting something to heal the soul...

Lex paused, because when he checked Rafael's status, he saw something extremely unusual. Once again, feeling like he owed it to Marlo to let him know what was happening due to their relationship, he wore his Host Attire and teleported directly to them.

"I was checking up on the patient, and thought I'd update you," he said with a smile to the couple. "This time, though, I only have good news."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 217: Xeon

Already familiar with the Innkeeper somewhat now, Sophia put a great deal of stock in whatever he had to say, which is why all her attention was now focused on the Innkeeper. She did not find it strange at all that the Innkeeper teleported so abruptly, or that he immediately started speaking without any preamble. Everyone who spent some time at the Inn knew that the Innkeeper had a tendency to appear and disappear as he wished.

Lex observed Rafael's status one more time before he spoke.

Name: Rafael Carter Bravi

Age: 37

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: crippled

Species: Human

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Condition:

Because a majority of the patient's body is newly constructed, or is still undergoing reconstruction, it is taking time for the soul to adjust to the new vessel. However, the soul is being quickly replenished and strengthened by an artifact within the patient's heart. Letting the patient stay in the ORR until the rest of the body undergoes reconstruction is recommended.

Remarks: If it is one's destiny to die, the universe itself cannot stop it. If one is destined to live, then the universe itself will bend itself around you to provide the conditions for you to live.

He felt like he should leave the matter about the artifact out, as he should afford the man some privacy at least. After all, although he himself was not aware, he was also a guest at the Inn. Not to mention, an artifact that not only keeps him from dying for 15 years but also heals the soul was ridiculously rare as far as Lex knew, so the fewer people that knew about it, the better.

"As your son's body is being reconstructed, his soul is also automatically healing itself. Although it's unexpected, it's not unprecedented. So, congratulations. Your son should recover completely soon."

Sophia trembled as heard the news, and couldn't stop tears from falling from her eyes. Despite all the resentment that had built up over the years, she instinctively hugged Marlo and squeezed with all her might as she tried to control her emotions.

"Thank you for the news," was all Marlo said, as he held his wife in his embrace. His voice was just as even as when he was telling Lex his son's story. He was a strong man, in more ways than one.

After checking up on the situation one more time, Lex left to give the couple their privacy. He had many things to take care of.

Xeon was tired. Not physically, although that drain was also there, but his exhaustion was mental. As a preeminent celebrity, exceptional artist, and all-in-all genius in the way of crafting and refining, he never got a moment's rest. Everywhere he went, he would be swarmed by a crowd of admirers, asking for autographs or requesting him to make jewelry or equipment.

For goodness sakes, all he did was craft a crown that made its wear 10,000% more likely to encounter an epiphany under the Nascent realm, and a necklace that absorbed harmful radiation and released it as gentle spirit energy for the wearer to absorb. Was that any reason to overwhelm him? As far as he was concerned, it was not even his best work - visually speaking, of course.

The exhausted drake opened the window of his 30 story castle, but was immediately inundated by the cheers of endless crowds. Immediately, he closed the window again. This is what he got for accidentally being discovered for hiding his identity and helping ordinary people by crafting them Gold grade equipment.

What he wouldn't give to get away from it all. As if an answer to his prayer, a magnificently carved, golden door appeared in front of his eyes, hovering midair. He felt a welcoming call from the door, as if freedom lay just a step away.

He didn't even care how suspicious this was. He needed to get away from all females, and some males, who kept hurling themselves at him in the heat of lust. So, without any planning or precaution, the drake stepped through the door.

Half an hour later, a suspiciously dressed man sneaked into the room where Xeon had left from, and searched. After ensuring the drake was not hiding, the man called someone.

"Team leader, the target has disappeared. He is not at home."

"Continue hiding. If he doesn't reappear in a week, we can only applaud the Dimitri family for being exceptionally cautious."

"Understood," the man replied before retreating into the shadows. He was not here for an assassination, but to kidnap his target. He did not often fail his missions, but in the scenario where the target disappeared, there was nothing he could do except wait and hope for his return.

When Xeon stepped through the door, he received a prompt asking him if he wanted to hide his identity. Although he did not know where he was going, his deepest fear was being recognized once again, so he selected 'Yes' and wore the glasses that appeared in front of him.

The drake found himself standing in front of a manor, surrounded by vast open fields and a clear blue sky. The air was so clean, breathing felt like he was partaking in a delicacy. As a drake, with much sharper senses than many other species like humans, he was extremely sensitive to noise and air pollution. It was also for this reason that he enjoyed the atmosphere at the Inn more than others as well.

This wasn't even considering the concentration and purity of spirit energy in the air, that made him feel like each of his scales absorbing the energy in the air and growing stronger naturally.

Two humans stood in front of the manor, and it seemed like they had been talking before Xeon's arrival, but now he had attracted their attention. He silently lamented in his heart. Such was the burden of a genius. Even with his identity hidden, he became the center of attention. It seemed gold would always shine.

"Welcome guest, to the Midnight Inn. I am the Innkeeper, owner of this humble establishment. You look... tired. Would you like to rest by our lovely and peaceful lake? It is most... relaxing."

Xeon was surprised. Firstly, he was not expecting to arrive at an Inn. Secondly, he did not expect this Innkeeper was so insightful as to be able to immediately guess what he needed.

"Why yes, that sounds lovely," Xeon said happily. "You said this is an Inn? Can you tell me more about it? I desperately need a vacation."

Lex walked side by side with the massive, five feet tall and eight feet long drake, completely undeterred by the sharp contrast in the appearance and personality of his guest. He looked like a living, breathing war machine, with talons so sharp they could pierce through bones like butter and glossy but heavy looking scales. Along his spine and all the way to the edge of his tail ran some kind of exoskeleton, black, with sharp grooves and ridges. His eyes were that of an apex predator and his fangs looked like they had come out of a horror movie.

His personality, however, was like that of a child. Of course, Lex had barely talked with him and so it was too soon to judge, but he had a strong gut feeling about him.

He recalled the drakes status.

Name: Xeon

Age: 112

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: Golden Core

Species: Drake

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Bloodline: Volcanic Drake

Condition:

Suffering from severe mental exhaustion from being worshiped for too long. Rest and relaxation are recommended.

Remarks: It is not without reason that dragons look down on drakes, but some try harder than others to shame their lineage.

As they walked, Lex introduced the Inn to the drake, giving him the usual spiel about catering to the whole universe etc.

The more the drake heard, the happier it became. In the grand scheme of things, his popularity was probably infinitesimal. There was probably no other guest in the entire Inn who knew about him, which meant that he would no longer be endlessly hounded so long as he was here.

He had not even reached the lake yet, and already the drake was feeling good. Lex, however, was thinking about something else. He either had to get Gerard a new vehicle, or he seriously needed to find someone to upgrade it according to his requirements. If more drakes showed up, they could not chauffeured around in a tiny cart as they simply would not fit, and if they had to be walked everywhere, it would take forever.

Speaking of Gerard... Lex had just been talking to him in front of the manor. The old looking man had started showing signs of his age regressing BECAUSE HE WAS ALREADY AT THE PEAK OF QI TRAINING!

Lex wanted to rip his own hair out. Not that he wasn't happy for Gerard, but he was the one with the system, so wasn't he supposed to be the fastest in cultivating? If compared to the standards on Earth, his cultivation was increasing like a rocket. But when compared to Gerard, Lex felt like he was barely moving.

To give reference to Gerards incredible speed of cultivation, it must be remembered that it took Alexander two years to break into the Foundation realm, and he set a world record. Gerard, technically speaking, had barely been cultivating for two months! Not only that, Gerard informed Lex that he felt like his bloodline was about to have a breakthrough, and requested a small break so he could focus on that.

Lex really needed to step up his own game.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 218: Prestige levels

Once they arrived at the lake, Xeon comfortably nestled himself on a massive recliner Lex had designed specifically for beasts, and simply decided to enjoy being around people without being the center of attention. He was intrigued about how people behaved in their free time, and what they normally did. More than the relaxing environment, it was the anonymity that he enjoyed.

Making sure that he did not need anything else, Lex left. During his research on the X-142 planet, the one thing he discovered wasn't that he lacked many of the common features of a luxury resort, such as a

spa or massage clinic. No, what Lex realized was that he had not given enough emphasis to his special features.

He did not need to replicate the facilities of other places; he needed to focus on what made him special and expand it. He looked at his MP, and noticed that he had only made a profit of 12,000 MP in the week he was gone, a result of his various services and items sold in the gift shop. This made his total MP at 4,942,000.

He looked at the various rooms he had, at least the ones provided by the system. He had the Guild room, Meditation room, Mystery trial, which wasn't really a 'room' but it was provided by the system and Lex earned a hefty profit from it, the various recovery rooms and the training room.

The first thing Lex did was upgrade each of the rooms to the maximum he could with his authority, which was the same as his authority: level 4. The mystery trial, of course, was not included in these since Lex could not directly upgrade that.

The next thing he did was to increase the number of rooms. He expanded his recovery room to the size of a proper hospital building, so that it could easily accommodate more patients. He turned the training room on Main street into a high-rise tower, with each floor being a training room. This was the second high rise in the Midnight Inn skyline, but Lex had already come to accept that he would end up having at least one metropolitan area as he expanded.

The guild room was unique in that Lex did not need multiple versions of it, as just a single one could cater to the needs of all his guests. Furthermore, while the other rooms only enhanced the service they provided as they were upgraded or added slight enhancements, such as the training room providing a playback feature of the trainee when they use their techniques, the guild room gained a couple entirely new features.

While Lex found most of the new features barely a moderate improvement, such as allowing guests to post requests to the guild from anywhere in the Inn and a small notification to someone whenever their request was completed, regardless of whether they were in the Inn or not, there was one he found particularly impressive.

A feature offered by the gift shop was that when someone bought an item, they delivered the item in a compressed form of a card, which could then be converted back into the original item whenever the user required. The new feature of the guild was that they commissioned empty such cards called Requisition cards, which the person would have to purchase separately, of course. But these cards could

not be used randomly, as they served a very specific purpose. A person accepting a request that would require the submission of certain materials could take the card, and then absorb the item directly into the card when they were back on the planet they came from. At that point, the card would automatically teleport to the Inn, and submit the material to the guild room.

Since the card had a limit to the amount of material it could absorb, this wasn't a perfect solution for everyone. But it did add an element of convenience. Most importantly, it gave Lex hope that one day the Inn would provide him some way to instantly store any item he wanted in a separate space. The System inventory was too picky in this matter.

The improvement in the meditation room was not anything new, it still helped with cultivation and understanding, just with a stronger effect now. It did not sound phenomenal, but sometimes, that was enough. The Meditation room did not require any bells and whistles, just improving its existing functions was more than enough.

With these things taken care of, Lex was planning on meeting with Harry to see how he could help Harry grow his abilities, but was informed by Mary that Alexander wanted to meet him.

As his first big client, Lex had a special fondness for Alexander, and so did not waste any time in scanning the Inn and appearing near his location. He was with his grandmother, Audrey, and the two of them were sitting alone in one of the secluded viewpoints of the Midnight mountain. Lex immediately sensed that the mood was somewhat unusual, but guessed it had to do with the fact that Helen still had not returned to the Inn after so long.

"Innkeeper," the grandchild and grandmother duo greeted him together. Their tone was formal, as usual, but they carried an air of solemnity about them. Considering the fact that even Audrey was being so serious, this might be about more than just the girl.

"Please, be at ease. What can I do for you?"

Alexander exchanged looks with his grandmother once, before he turned to the Innkeeper and said, "I remember you once mentioned Prestige levels and their perks. With my current spending, I should be around Prestige level 3, right?"

Lex was surprised. To be honest, he completely forgot that prestige was even a thing, other than just a category on the status screen. He scanned Alexander to check his status.

Name: Alexander Morrison

Age: 17

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: Initial Foundation realm

Species: Human

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 3

Remarks: A walking, talking main character without the tragic backstory. Rob him blind, give him something to be sad about.

"Indeed, your current Prestige level is 3," Lex told him, as he quickly checked on the perks each level gave mentally.

Prestige Level 1:

Can receive glasses equipped with Clark Kent effect (only work while at the Inn)

Prestige Level 2:

Can instantly teleport to the Inn from anywhere in the universe once (great for escaping enemies)

Prestige Level 3:

Can travel to one-way a world connected to the Inn (can only be used once every 10 years)

Prestige Level 4:

5% discount on all Inn services, access to special services, allow you to use any Inn service once (every ten years) while not at the Inn (effect of meditation room while cultivation, recovery pod, etc.).

The fourth prestige level was new, and probably unlocked with his increased authority. But since literally not a single person had used their prestige perk, other than the glasses to hide your identity, Lex had not even remembered to check it out.

"Alright, well, I'd like to use the perk awarded to me by my level three Prestige and travel to Vegus Minima."

"Are you sure? It's a one-way trip, meaning you will not be able to return to Earth or Mars. At least, you won't be able to return for the next 10 years, until the perk resets."

"Yes, I'm sure. Whether it's Earth, Mars or even the new Minor realm, my family can handle them fine without my aid. The best way for me to contribute to the family, and speed up my own progress, is to leave and head out on my own."

For a moment, Lex didn't know if he admired Alexander or thought he was idiotic. Leaving the comfort of home and going to face the unknown required a lot of courage. Then again, there were probably millions of people who would literally kill to be in his position, but he was giving it to take risks that may harm him greatly.

"Well, alright then. Are you ready? I can send you off whenever you need."

"Yes, I'm ready," he said, as he picked up a backpack.

"Is there somewhere in particular on the planet you want to go?" Lex asked as he prepared to activate the system. He learnt that being able to pick a location not blocked by protective formations to be

teleported to. Even then, the restriction of the protective formations wasn't because the system couldn't teleport there, but to honor the privacy of the planet's inhabitants. Otherwise, people could directly teleport into bank vaults or secure locations and cause havoc.

"Yes, I've already discussed my arrival with Lieutenant Slag, who will then help me enroll in the army. So, I would like to be teleported to him."

Upon discovering that the system considered that an acceptable target, Lex looked at Alexander one last time, before teleporting the boy away. His life would be drastically different now, but Lex was rooting for him.

Then he turned to look at Audrey and asked, "this was a brave decision."

"Not really," the breathtakingly beautiful woman replied. "His stupid father is too controlling, the boy needs a bit of freedom. Do you know, he still hasn't had a single girlfriend?"

The woman genuinely seemed angry as she said that, before walking away. Try as he might, Lex could find no deep or hidden concern for the boy, disguised in her behavior. She must really want him to start dating.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 219: Younger generation

Once he was done with Alexander, Lex went to check up on Harry. The barber kid was doing exceptionally well. His cheeks had filled out a little and his eyes had vigor that he had lacked when Lex first met him. Lex could not tell heads or tails of his cultivation, but he was confident enough to cut the hair of several Qi training cultivators each day, and that's all that Lex needed to know.

When asked if there was something he needed, he blushed, and after thinking for a few moments, said he didn't need anything. He was thoroughly confused about what he was thinking, but if it was important, he would eventually reach out.

John happened to be in the Mystery trial, so Lex decided to skip meeting him for now. Done with these tasks, Lex returned to his room, rubbed himself down with the ointment he received, and started cultivating.

Using his Leo persona, Lex had previously placed several orders of equipment and ammunition to be delivered at fixed intervals, both to Will and Chen. This way, he wouldn't need to ask them again each time he was done visiting a world, and avoid overlapping the appearance of Leo with the Innkeeper. As far as anyone was concerned, and according to what Leo told Z, Leo had to go to handle some personal affairs and would not appear for a long time.

Once he received his next batch of equipment, he would head out to another planet. X-142 was a very suitable planet for the purpose of attracting clients for the expo in six months, but he would need more. Until then, however, Lex simply focused on his cultivation.

Two days later, Lex had managed to gather a total of 34 strands of Qi and had entered the 4th level of Qi training. He had no intentions of stopping training, however, as the feeling of getting stronger was actually quite addictive.

Until...

"Hey Lex, there's an unusual situation. You might want to pay attention to this."

It was quite rare for Mary to interrupt his cultivation, as she would normally wait for one of his breaks, so the seriousness of the matter was apparent.

Lex concluded his cultivation, stabilizing his absorbed Qi, and got up.

"What's the issue?"

"One of the guests has gotten into an argument with one of the waitresses."

Lex raised an eyebrow and quickly scanned the Inn, found the problem and sighed.

Lex was not surprised that the culprit was one of the teenagers from Troy academy.

"Shut your mouth you stupid skank, I know what you were doing!" hollered a girl ballistically at one of his waitresses. Lex did not have much personal interaction with this waitress, and did not know her name, but that did not mean he would let one of his workers get bullied. But he needed to understand the situation first, so he quietly listened.

"Please, guest, it's nothing like that. You must be misunderstanding..."

"Misunderstand my ass," the overly privileged teenager yelled again. "You were flirting with my boyfriend. I saw how you were ogling him. Keep your skanky claws away from him or I'll make you regret it. You're lucky the principal has strictly banned us from fighting, or I'd be squeezing your head into the ground and shaving it bald."

"I assure you," the waitress replied, panic and desperation in her voice, "I was not making any advances on the guest. He requested some help, and I was only inquiring--"

"Oh, you're calling me a liar? We can just ask Sean. Hey Sean, did you call this skank?"

The screaming girl turned towards her boyfriend. He was standing together with a group of friends, snickering as they whispered amongst themselves. When asked, he quickly denied asking the waitress for anything.

Lex frowned. Since he could review any events happening at the Inn at any time, he quickly rewinded and saw that the boy had indeed asked for the waitress specifically. In fact, when Lex heard some of the remarks the boys were passing when they called her...

Lex's demeanor darkened. He scanned the Inn and found the principal of the academy, who was sitting with a few friends and chatting in a restaurant in Avalon. Lex directly sent his voice and told him to show up at the location of the argument, ensuring the displeasure in his voice was evident.

The principal nearly fell out of his seat when he recognized the voice, but Lex was already not paying attention anymore. As pissed off as he was, he slightly regretted that the screaming brat hadn't actually physically attacked at any time. That would have made the situation simpler to resolve; he could have directly retaliated.

Before the fight could continue any further, and before Lex had to hear anymore screaming, he took a deep breath to stabilize his mood, and teleported over.

"What seems to be the issue here?" he asked as soon as he appeared. His voice was neutral, and did not betray his true feelings, but it was loud and carried clearly to the ears of all who were watching. Many of his workers who were also watching breathed a sigh of relief, and hope twinkled in their eyes. The guests had a different sparkle in their eyes, as they avidly waited to watch the drama unfold.

The screaming girl was not intimidated by the Innkeepers arrival, but instead became excited. She had grown in the lap of luxury, and was used to getting her way, but that did not mean that she was an idiot. She had a clear understanding of businesses, and she understood the extent they would go to to preserve their image.

Her reason for causing a commotion was valid, as the waitress had indeed been overly friendly with her boyfriend, in her opinion, and in such a scenario where she was in the right, along with her background, usually played out pretty much in the manner she wanted. It was unfortunate for her that her experience was limited to Earth where her background actually mattered, and that Lex did not have a boss he needed to appease by maintaining a positive relation with his customers - even the annoying ones.

"This desperate skank here was throwing herself at my boyfriend!" she explained to the Innkeeper in a haughty voice. "Is that the kind of establishment you run here? Interfering in your guests' lives and taking what you want?"

The girl was quite proud of her accusation, and just waiting for the Innkeeper to start appeasing her.

Lex looked at his waitress, who was staring back at him with hesitation and fear in her eyes.

"What happened?" he asked her, his voice noticeably softer.

"The... the guest... kept asking... me to bring things... for his friends. I was only... doing what the guest wanted," she replied, trying hard to keep herself from stuttering.

"Lies! She's lying! She kept flirting with--"

"Stop," Lex said, his voice rippling through the air and freezing the screaming girl.

He waved his hand, and a screen appeared in the air in front of everyone, displaying the events as they played out. Everyone watched, including the aggrieved waitress, as the boys kept taunting and flirting with the waitress. Something Lex didn't catch the first time, but noticed this time, was that one of the boys even tried to pinch her, and winked at her when she managed to avoid it.

The situation was clear to everyone who watched it, and the screaming girl blushed with her fists clenched as she watched. It was evident that her boyfriend was the one harassing the waitress, but she couldn't accept it.

But the situation was escalating, as their principal had also run over by now, and immediately panicked when he saw what the screen displayed. Unaware of what actually occurred, he thought it was the horrendous behavior of the boys that agitated the Innkeeper.

"I think it's obvious what really happened," Lex said, as he looked at the girl. To be honest, he really wanted to punish her in some way, but at the same time didn't want to go as far as to use violence.

He controlled the agitation in his heart and suppressed his rising anger as he turned to the principal.

"This is an establishment that takes care of its guests, but never at the expense of my staff. As this is the first time something like this has happened, I will let it go by simply banning the girl and those boys. Should it happen again, the repercussions won't be as simple as a ban."

"My gravest apologies Innkeeper," the principal began, wiping the actual sweat off his forehead. "I promise you, something like..."

"I disagree!" the girl screamed loudly, cutting the principal off, as she glared at the Innkeeper. Not only had the Innkeeper ignored her, and dictated a 'punishment' for her to her principal, just the fact that he had exposed her and humiliated her in public drove her insane. Normally, she really knew what lines not to cross, but as a spoiled child experiencing anything but adoration and support, the logical part of her brain was overridden by her erupting anger! Of course, she was angry at her boyfriend, soon to be ex-boyfriend as well for shamelessly flirting with other girls. Currently, however, she was still focused on the waitress and the Innkeeper.

"Just because she didn't say anything doesn't mean she's not guilty! It's her fault for flaunting herself in front of all those boys! And you! Do you feel proud, bullying a little girl? Since this is a problem between me and her, you should let us handle it ourselves! If you're shameless enough to interfere in a fight between the younger generation, don't be surprised when the same happens to one of your workers in the future!"

The principal nearly fainted as he heard the girl screaming, and almost already accepted today as the date for his funeral. Lex, however, turned to look at her, his neutral appearance turning grim, his anger beginning to seethe.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 220: A hero straight out of an anime

"Before you do anything, someone sent you a message I think you should listen to," Mary suddenly interrupted Lex's thoughts, before directly playing the message. Considering the current situation, Lex knew Mary would only interrupt him if it was important, and indeed it was.

Firstly, her timely interruption woke Lex from his stupor. He realized that he had once again become furious, the same way he had on X-142, though obviously not at the same level. It was strange, Lex never had any anger issues in his life prior to this. But then again, he lived a life where he never really encountered any bullying or blatant antagonization. Fortunately, once he realized that, he quickly calmed down. Secondly, the message provided him with a way to resolve this situation without having to resort to violence. Well, without directly having to resort to violence.

Before he said anything, though, he scanned the audacious girl.

Name: Heidi

Age:18

Sex: Female

Cultivation Details: Qi training level 3

Species: Human

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Remarks: She reeks of a girl with Daddy issues. Her boyfriend could either be extremely fortunate, or extremely unfortunate - there is no third option.

With nothing special in her status worthy of note, in Lex's mind this matter was no longer worthy of his attention. So far, he had avoided trouble at his Inn due to the clear intimidating reputation he had established, but there would always be people who were not guided by logic. In fact, there were likely more of those out there than the logical type, it was just that Lex had the good fortune of avoiding most of them so far.

Normally, Lex would address others as 'dear guest' to make them feel comfortable and respected, but this time, he could not be bothered.

"Heidi, this is the Midnight Inn. We take pride in our service to any and all guests who honor decorum, but for those who display impropriety, we have no patience. This is not a feud between the 'younger generation'. It is simply you mistreating one of my staff, and me not standing for it. It is already a testament to my good temper that I even bothered to provide an explanation for my decision, let alone the light punishment I declared."

The Innkeeper's expression was only mildly perturbed, but all who were watching felt the pressure of his words. It was like a suffocating feeling, pressing down on one's chest, keeping them from breathing. For a moment, some were truly afraid of what would happen next, and were ready to escape at a moment's notice.

It just so happened that Ragnar, the General in charge of the Jotun forces in the Vegus system, happened to come to the Inn just in time to witness these things. He had originally come to the Inn because he needed to consult the Innkeeper on certain matters, but decided it was best to wait till the situation was resolved.

"Since you are from an underdeveloped planet, it makes sense that you cannot understand that being served by my employees is a privilege and an honor, but it is not my place to explain these things to you.

Originally, since you were sensible enough not to actually try to harm my employee, I was simply going to send you back to your planet and end this farce. Yet it seems your words have struck a nerve with someone, and so, I will indeed let the 'younger generation' handle it."

Heidi, who was originally furious, was now flushed with embarrassment and wild jealousy. She accused him of bullying and tried to discredit him in public since she was so used to being around people who cared more for face than anything else, but the glaring indifference in his eyes let her know that if she had not harassed one of his employees, she would never enter his eyes for the rest of his life. His apathy for her was only matched by his concern for his employee. When was the last time someone had cared like that for her?

Before she could think much further, however, someone came and stepped in front of her. He was one of the more renowned workers at the Inn, Z. Not only did he have a crowd of mothers wanting to spoil him, and the odd girl finding his shyness cute, but he was extremely popular amongst Lex's employees as well.

While they all had unique personalities, most of Lex's workers had an air of naivety to them, and it was only with Z's incessant guidance that they took care of themselves somewhat. Of course, he still would not show his concern openly. With everyone's first paycheck of 100 MP, he had them buy phones, and he shared all his concerns over a discord server for the Inn employees only.

Right now, though, he did not look like a shy geek who spent all his time in front of a screen. Currently, he was looking up at Heidi (he was shorter than her) with his arms folded and a look of disgust on his face. No one could tell at all that he practiced this look in the mirror every time he saw an awesome anime protagonist.

"For insulting big sister Pamela, I could diss you so long and hard, it would put shame to every diss track in history. But I don't have time to waste on the likes of you, I'm right in the middle of watching Overlady, so how about we get right to it. I challenge you to a fight in the arena. If I win, apologize to sister Pamela. If you win, I'll apologize on sisters behalf and give you all the MP I have."

Internally, Z snickered. He only had 1 MP left.

Heidi suddenly realized that a massive crowd had gathered, and now they were all watching her. Not only were there numerous guests, slowly more and more of the Inns workers had started to gather. This was the first time any of them faced such a situation, and as a tightknit community, they were all extremely concerned for Pamela.

Even with her inflated ego, anger and embarrassment clouding her mind, she started feeling pressure under the gaze of the enormous crowd, and was thinking of what she could do. But before she could think of anything, Z spoke once again.

"Of course, since the whole matter started with you guys taking advantage of sister Pamela, you must join in the challenge as well." He was, of course, looking at Sean and his friends. "Naturally, I'll take you all on together. Don't worry, I know this is too unfair a fight for you guys, so I'll only use one hand."

As soon as Z said those words, the crowd erupted in murmurs. Lex felt his heart drop, but he did not let it show on his face. He wasn't even sure if this was the same Z who never moved from in front of the TV screen. He had never seen him jog, let alone fight, and now he was handicapping himself. If he failed, Lex wouldn't know where to bury his face from embarrassment.

Heidi, on the other hand, suddenly saw hope. Like she knew how to escalate situations, she recognized the current one very well. This kid was trying to show off in front of some girl, she herself had experienced such things a hundred times. She had to take advantage of the situation before the kids' heads cooled down. She would vent all her frustrations on him!

"I've really seen it all," she yelled, making sure all the crowd heard her voice clearly. "The Innkeeper of the famous Midnight Inn likes to bully little girls, and the rest of you like to force us into fights! I'm not as barbarish as you, but that doesn't mean I'm afraid of you! Come on Sean, let's go! Or is the only thing you can do is ogle at dirty skanks? And you, little kid, don't cry when you lose! I'll have you beg for an apology for every dirty look that ugly wench threw at my boyfriend."

By calling out her boyfriend, she put the pressure on him to join her in the fight alongside her. She really needed him and his friends as she herself... could not fight at all! They were living in the 21st century, with her prestigious background when would she ever need to fight? Her cultivation realm was only to prolong her youth and keep up with her siblings.

Word of the fight spread across the Inn almost immediately, and almost all the guests showed up to the arena to watch the fight! There had been a few matches here regularly since Marlo and Brandon had their duel, and it had become one of the most popular spots and always hosted a crowd, either supporting a fighter or just enjoying the match.

None of that could compare, however, with the massive crowd that was gathering now. Not only because of all the guests, but because after asking special permission, all the workers across the Inn came here to show their support for Z.

Every one of them seemed to take the feeble looking kids win for granted. Only Lex was worried inside, though one would not be able to tell by looking at him.