

### Chapter 31 History of Vegus Minima

Lex had left his apartment with the intention of jogging, but currently he could be found doing pull ups with the widest grin possible. It was still early in the day, around 6 am, so there was no one around to see him, otherwise people would either be extremely wary of his grinning face or would stop and spectate. Why was he grinning? It was because of how amazing he felt doing the pull ups. What's the big deal, he already knew he had become more fit so why was he suddenly so excited about his strength again? The answer was simple: he was doing shirtless pull ups, completely showing off his abs!

In his entire life, although Lex could not have been called fat or obese, he was never nearly fit enough to have visible abs. Now however, they had appeared naturally despite his increased appetite since he started cultivating! He thought he was over his initial excitement of becoming stronger, but that was untrue! Time and time again he would encounter a new situation that would overwhelm him. Currently, he was daydreaming of a montage of himself doing insane things, wearing a leather jacket but with no shirt so he could show off his abs while he listened to epic music. He knew that if anyone saw him it would seem like he was showing off, but so what? He was definitely showing off, and he was definitely doing it on purpose! Ah, it felt good to be able to show off.

"Your two new guests are waking up," said Mary, appearing before him. She was blushing as she tried to keep a straight face, but every few moments she would glance at his body. Suddenly, Lex was more embarrassed than excited.

Lex stopped and coughed, pretending to clear his throat as quickly put his shirt back on.

"Good morning warmup," he mumbled, just loud enough for Mary to hear. She didn't show any reaction, as if it were a matter of fact. The air hung with awkwardness for the few minutes it took Lex to return to the Inn.

In the Recovery Room, Brother Chen and Blane had woken up but they were incredibly groggy. They lay flat on their backs in the Recovery pods, staring up at the ceiling. The pods were filled with dense spirit energy, several times

higher in concentration than the outside, that the pod was using to accelerate the healing process. On their own it may have taken a few more minutes for the two of them to collect themselves and gather their thoughts, but when a man appeared suddenly before them he drew their attention and woke them from their trance.

“Welcome guests, to the Midnight Inn,” Lex spoke with a warm, charismatic voice. “You were quite badly hurt when you arrived, but fortunately we were able to save your lives. It’ll be quite a while though, before you’ve fully recovered.”

“What? How?” Brother Chen asked in confusion, trying to get up. The last thing he remembered was facing the tier 3 zombie when a floating golden door appeared. Before he could get up though, a loud commanding voice filled his ears.

“Be calm!” Lex, who had used some of the power of the Host Attire, put a little bit of pressure on Brother Chen so that he would lie back down, and stop moving. Just the simple attempt at getting up had already torn open some of his newly healed wounds, causing him to start bleeding again.

“Be at ease, we will not hurt you. You must be confused, surely, but I will answer all your questions. Try not to move too much, however, as you have not fully recovered and it would be a shame to delay your complete recovery.”

Brother Chen and Blane both, who were still recovering mentally, realized their physical condition. Under normal circumstances they would have already died, it was best not to push their luck.

“I do not know what happened before, but when you arrived you were being dragged by a rather rude fellow who had no interest in being a guest. Naturally, upon his misbehavior he was punished accordingly.”

Lex spoke in a relaxed voice, but when the two realized that this gentleman in front of them had casually taken care of a tier 3 zombie they were horrified. How strong was he?

“You may not be familiar with the Inn so let me introduce you to it. The Midnight Inn is a refuge for the weary traveler of the universe, a place where you may rest and enjoy before continuing on your journey. It is a place filled with both pleasures and opportunities for you to avail. It is a place where you

can meet friends and comrades from across the universe, and see beyond the only horizon you once knew.

“As for me, you may call me . Your planet, Vegus Minima, is a newly connected one that has access to the Inn, but one of many across the universe. I must congratulate you on being the first guests from your planet to the Inn.”

Both the soldiers froze as they processed what they heard, but quickly Blane's eyes shone with excitement.

“Can you access other planets?” he asked, his voice filled with desperation as well as expectation. “Does that mean you can take us away from Vegus Minima?”

“I'm sorry, we do not provide such a service at the moment. Perhaps in the future it might be a possibility.”

“Please,” Blane pleaded, “our planet is overrun by zombies! People die everyday, we can barely survive!”

Lex felt a tinge of guilt, but he quickly suppressed it. First of all, it was not in his capability to help, but even if it was, God knew how many planets out in the universe were undergoing such crises. If he became so strong that he could govern the universe in his hand maybe he would consider bringing peace across the universe, for now he had to focus on his own survival. Sympathy was good, but not when it put him on a path to self destruction.

“Dear guest, try to understand,” Lex spoke politely yet firmly. “This is an Inn for the heroes of the universe, we provide safety and opportunities for those who are fated – but even so nothing is free. I accepted you as guests under our Pro bono wing, but if you want to avail more benefits from the Inn it will be up to your own capabilities.”

Blane and Brother Chen were both disappointed, but dared not beg the mysterious Innkeeper for help again. He had already helped them tremendously by healing with and curing them from the mutagen – a fact they took for granted Lex was able to do since he could access planets across the universe. Furthermore, they were slightly inspired; when Lex said it was up to their capabilities, it was a polite way of saying that it depended on how deep their pockets were – HE NEEDED MP – but the two mistook his meaning. The fact that he talked about heroes and opportunities in the same breath made

them think he was hinting that the Inn would provide them with a chance to solve the problem, but ultimately they had to solve the problem themselves. No one would do something for others for free, it was already a blessing that he was willing to help them at all.

“We understand,” said Brother Chen. “Thank you for the help you’ve given us, please let us know if there’s any way we can repay you.”

Lex smiled – that was a better attitude. “No need to be so formal, helping guests is my duty. But while I have you here, and since you can’t leave the recovery pod for a short while, why don’t you introduce your planet to me. I can’t help you guys directly, but maybe I can think of a few services that might be helpful to you.”

Their eyes shone with hope, and the two soldiers began introducing their planet to Lex. The history of Vegus Minima was a long one, but the zombie pandemic had occurred from before the two soldiers were even born so they hadn’t received any formal education on it. Despite that, what they knew was plenty for Lex to be amazed at.

Vegus Minima was one of three planets that had been occupied in the Vegus solar system, and was the smallest one. The other was called Vegus Magnum and was the largest, while the world that humans in that solar system had originated from was called Vegus Prime. There was a civilization based on technology, which seemed to be much more advanced than that of Earth. They had no cultivation system in the sense of the cultivation that was followed on Earth; they used to grow their strength via genetic enhancements, and then used spirit energy to further strengthen their genes.

That had since changed as the zombie pandemic made it impossible for the people to manufacture overly complex machinery, as most countries and cities had since been destroyed. The three planets had been disconnected for a long time now, and it was unknown what the situation on the other two planets was. Humans lived a more nomadic life now, forming temporary villages or towns for a few years at most before stronger zombies would notice them. Or at least, that’s how the soldiers had lived their lives. If there was a place with the strength to deter zombies and protect their citizens long term, it was far away from the continent they had lived on. As for how they cultivated, that had also changed.

No longer able to rely on advanced technology, the people now relied on what was called zombie cores, found in the brains of zombies, and used its special

nature to strengthen their bodies. It was still spirit energy, but of a different kind. That was to say, while they could use normal spirit stones to strengthen their bodies as well, it would not have the same effect as using zombie cores. The strength of the zombie cores corresponded to the zombies strength, with tier one, two and three being equivalent to Body Tempering, Qi Training and Foundation respectively.

The two soldiers continued to tell Lex whatever random information they could think of for a few more hours, before ultimately they became too tired and Lex asked them to rest. As he left the Recovery room, his eyes were filled with a capitalist gleam as he thought of all the possibilities.

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## Chapter 32 Guests meet

“By the way,” Lex asked Mary casually as he munched on some homemade – no sorry, Innmade – baked chips. “What are the requirements for a PB Guest (Pro bono guest)?” He needed to calculate how long Chen and Blake would be at the Inn, and if they would have any free time after they left the recovery room or if they would be immediately sent back.

“The most basic necessity I guess is someone who can’t afford the Inns commodities,” she replied, sitting on Lex’s shoulder. “But there are a few conditions. Firstly, no one can be a BP Guest more than once. Secondly, they must have a certain need that the Inn can fulfill. You can’t randomly accept a homeless man as a guest; even though staying at the Inn for a while would solve his homeless problem, once he returned he would not be any better off. This means that anyone who becomes a PB Guest needs to be better off somehow when they leave. As the foremost universal establishment, our services can’t be shallow or without lasting effect. Once a PB Guests’ needs have been met, they can stay for at most one day to rest and prepare before they leave. Thirdly, PB Guests don’t need to use a golden key to enter. If you see someone you think deserves to be a PB guest, you can directly assign them the status and when they should be invited, and the Inn will directly bring

them in at the time you chose. You can only assign PB Guests once a month though, most of the time PB Guests will be chosen directly by the Inn. When and how the Inn will choose, I cannot say.”

Lex nodded, shoving a spoonful of chocolate fudge sundae in his mouth. Where were the chips? He already ate them and had moved on, how long do you expect someone to keep eating the same thing?

“And will they get golden keys upon leaving?”

“Yes of course, any guest who leaves the Inn will get a golden key. How else do you expect to get return customers? At least, until you level up your authority, that is the most reliable method for guests.”

“By the way, since there are two other planets near Vegus Minima that are inhabited, why didn’t they show up on the list when I was using the golden ticket?”

“Each time you use a Golden Ticket the list shown is random. There is no guarantee that you will see all the inhabited planets in an area. However, since you have access to Vegus Minima now, you can directly gain access to the other planets in its solar system by purchasing access via the Midnight Inn Market. The same applies for the planets in Earth’s solar system, but that access is just a little more expensive than you can afford at the moment. For example, let alone Mars, just to gain access to the Moon you would have to spend 10,000MP!”

Lex nodded again, taking a sip from his Oreo shake. The Inn really had some amazing food service. Not being able to afford access to those planets was a minor surprise, because he was expecting not to have enough authority. Either way it was out of reach for now. The question on his mind was how much to invest in his two guests? If they just left with their own golden keys, they may not share the knowledge with others out of greed for keeping the key for themselves. If he gave them a few extra keys, maybe they would distribute them to their confidantes, which would increase the number of guests. Other than that, should he also give them something from the gift shop to act as an incentive? But they were relatively weak, if he invested too much in them and they died once they returned to their world it would be a waste.

His plan was to use them to distribute some keys and invite more people in. When his authority increased he would build an Armory so that he could also

sell weapons, something the people of Vegus Minima dearly needed, as well as a few entertainment establishments so that his guests could blow off some steam and relax. Currently those buildings weren't available to him, not to mention that he did not have MP to spare.

Speaking of increasing his authority, Marlo was taking his sweet time using his key. Taking a few days to prepare made sense, but Lex could not afford it if he took a few weeks to prepare, as that would put him past the Quest deadline. He had just a little more than two weeks before that deadline ended. Lex planned out his next series of actions for a while, before deciding on practicing a bit.

To be honest he would rather relax and play games, but after his experience in Vegus Minima they seemed boring to him. What he really wanted was the adventure and excitement of exploring new planets, but logic told him he should wait till he was a little stronger before returning. Till then, practicing combat and getting used to his strength would be the best use of his time. Furthermore, his hand to hand combat was actually quite terrible. Although he had learnt a few things in Marlo's class, most of them were ways to avoid or trip up his opponents instead of fighting. Marlo's class focused on self defense, and according to Marlo until they entered Qi Training and were able to use spiritual techniques there was no point in focusing too much on fighting and instead focus on escape and evasion.

Still, for those who wanted to do extra work online tutorials were made available by Marlo. The reason why Lex followed Marlo's tutorials instead of others he found online was because his techniques set the foundation for other techniques he would learn at Qi Training. It was good to build a foundation.

As he trained, he did not notice the hours go by as in his mind he was always focused on zombies. He kept imagining fighting them, in one-on-one combat as well as in groups. He had also asked Velma to make recordings of his training so he could watch himself back later, and when he did it became apparent to him that his techniques were quite bad. It was hard to tell when performing them, but the deviation between his moves each time he performed them was huge. It was fortunate that most zombies were not intelligent or he might not have survived. He was unaware of how refined his techniques had become when he had zoned out while actually fighting.

He continued nonstop, until finally Gerard stopped him to tell him his two guests had left the Recovery room.

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“We should learn everything we can about this place,” whispered Chen as he and Blane walked out of the small, circular building.

Around them they saw a large garden, populated with trees few and far between. In the distance he could see a large building, which he assumed was the Inn. The weather was pleasant and the atmosphere was serene. It all seemed quite calm and normal, different from what Chen had assumed when he had met his impressive yet intimidating host. Yet after a few moments, he realized the quiet and peaceful environment was much more impressive than anything else. His entire life Chen had never felt completely safe, even when he was in towns protected by walls and barriers. Yet here, he couldn't help himself from letting his guard down. Here, he felt at peace. Just that feeling of security made this place extremely attractive, let alone anything else they could offer.

“I'd like to bring Iris here,” mumbled Blane as he walked barefoot through the grass. Where his shoes had gone he did not know, but both he and Brother Chen were garbed in a simple cotton tunic and pants. He had none of his gear, and hadn't seen it in the room they had left either, but he wasn't worried – it was unlikely that his things would be stolen. They weren't worth much to begin with anyway.

The two soldiers made their way through the garden towards the Inn, both lost in their own thoughts, when they saw their enigmatic host – – walking towards them with a smile. Behind walked a short, young lady who was dressed similarly, carrying a tray with a couple of glasses on it.

“It's good to see you two recovered,” said in a warm voice. He smiled at them in a welcoming way, but neither of the two soldiers could forget that this was the man who had easily taken down a Tier 3 zombie and this could not treat him lightly.

“Have a drink, it's lemonade,” signaled towards the young lady holding the tray. “I thought you two could use some refreshments as I give you a tour of our humble establishment.”

“Thanks,” the soldiers quickly said as they grabbed the drinks, wary of offending .

“Come, let me take you to the Inn. And please, if you have any questions don’t hesitate to ask.”

The two soldiers hesitated and looked at each other, before Brother Chen spoke up. “How can someone get access to the Inn?” Even if never mentioned it, it seemed obvious that the Inn wasn’t actually in their world, and they had been teleported through the golden door. However, how reliable was it to wait for a floating door? There had to be a better way to come in.

“Some people can access it the way you did, by encountering the golden door. Most people will have to use a golden key. All guests get one when they leave, so you don’t need to worry about not being able to come back. As thanks for answering my questions earlier, I will give you two a spare key each, so you can invite someone else if you wish.” waved his hand and two golden keys presenting themselves before the soldiers, floating in midair – waiting for them to be taken. The two soldiers quickly grabbed the keys and thanked profusely, who only smiled at them in return.

“What do you need to do to be a guest here?” Blane asked, his mind thinking of Iris again.

“You can spend 50MP to reserve a room for a day, and can host one guest with yourself in the room. You don’t have to get a room, and can just simply use our other services such as the gift shop, the recovery room, visit the restaurant – whatever you’d like. However, please be aware that if you visit the Inn and leave without availing any of our services, you won’t receive a golden key upon your return!”

The two soldiers continued to ask Lex questions, and he answered them casually whilst showing them the Inn and introducing things. When the two soldiers discovered Botlam Dew could prevent someone from being infected and turning into a zombie their eyes shone with overwhelming greed – they didn’t do anything though and only made a mental note of its price.

The tour finally concluded and the two soldiers were getting ready to visit the restaurant for their complimentary meal as PB Guests when a thin, middle-aged man entered the lobby from the stairs. He gave the two soldiers a look before turning his attention towards standing next to them.

Lex smiled as he read the name above the man’s head – Falak!

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