

Chapter 4 British Lords or Arab Sheikhs?

Lex's thoughts ran wild for a few minutes before he finally forced himself to calm down. Video games that let him run his imagination wild were always his favorite, which is why he had lost countless hours in games such as Minecraft. But too much freedom, too many options, had its own problem which often led him to start various projects at once without finishing any. But he had learnt from his mistakes and knew it was better to move systematically rather than haphazardly.

His first decision, before he put down a single block of stone, was how he would style his Inn. Obviously presentation was a big part of his Inn and he needed a clear direction to work in. So what shall it be?

Should he style his Inn like a Lords Manor, with towers on his boundary walls, turrets and dormer windows with large stained glasswork visible on the building and regal sculptures dotting the gardens? Or should he go in a different direction and style it like the Palace of an Arab Sheikh, filled with towers with pointed domes and onion arches all around, gold inlaid geometric designs and calligraphy?

Truth be told, despite his grand thoughts he knew next to nothing about architecture or design and anything spectacular he had ever made in video games was achieved through picking designs he liked from online and mixing and matching until he was satisfied. That was also his plan for this, but what should his theme be?

After thinking for a while, he settled on the making something like what he imagined a Lords Manor would look like, not that he knew specifically what that should look like. He'd seen a couple of pictures of Birmingham palace online, maybe that's what he should aim towards. His decision was based on the fact that winter was on the horizon and when he imagined comfort in cold weather that's what he thought of.

With his decision made he got to work. At first he thought he would have to drag and drop items from the panels like he did in games, but discovered that designing using the Interface was much more intuitive than that. With just his

thoughts of how he wanted everything to look like the Inn started to take shape, and when his thoughts went outside the boundaries of what was allowed, or what would cost Midnight Points he would instantly be made aware and he altered his thoughts.

The boundary wall was made of cobblestone though each piece was uniform in size and height. The wall was 12 feet high and 8 feet across, with a walkway on top where supposedly guards would patrol (or guests would come to admire the view). A large arch shaped wooden gate was framed in the center of the front facing wall, with a cobbled road cutting through a garden towards a small manor. Despite Lex's wishes there were no statues in the gardens as those cost Midnight Points, which he wanted to avoid using for the time being.

The road, which was otherwise straight, ended at a roundabout right at the staircase which was the entrance to the manor. The entrance led into a great hall which also served as the lobby. A long wooden bar was placed at the opposite end where the host would primarily greet a guest. Right beside the bar was a staircase which led from the ground floor to the first floor where three guest rooms were found, each furnished with a king-sized bed, a small walk in closet, two side tables, a dresser and some chairs as well as an individual restroom. To the right of the lobby was a room that would serve as the lounge, where guests could relax or mingle, furnished with comfortable wooden furniture most of it facing the fireplace where a fire was perpetually lit, though through some magic it would give off no ash or strong heat, instead it gave off only warmth. On the left of the lobby was the eatery, still maintaining the elegant wooden furnishings but placed in a more casual setting. Beside the staircase was a door which exited towards the back of the manor where the garden was landscaped with a few gentle hills, in contrast to the straight gardens in front, and was dotted with lawn chairs and a couple or large garden swings.

Lex had wanted to add some flora and fauna, such as a few birds, squirrels and trees, but each cost Midnight Points, and though they seemed cheap right now he didn't know what else he would need those points for nor how easy or difficult they were to earn so he controlled himself. Everything the Inn had, in terms of structure and furniture, came free with the Building Permit.

"What do you think Mary?" he asked as he looked down at the Inn. He felt a bit of pride when he thought about how all this was his now.

“The Inn meets the basic requirements to function. It can comfortably meet the basic needs of guests up to Qi Training and is acceptable for guests at the Foundation Realm.”

“What if there’s a guest above Foundation Realm?”

“The host does not have the necessary authority to ask questions pertaining to anything at or above Foundation Realm,” she answered cheerily.

Lex nodded, he expected as much.

Next he pulled out his 2 AI lease certificate and crushed it. The certificate started to glow and split in 2, slowly turning into 2 figures, an old but lean man and a young woman who looked slightly older than Lex. The old man had grey hair and a thick, grey moustache and was dressed in a suit. The woman had her hair tied in a bun and was similarly suited up.

“Greetings Innkeeper, we are your AI assistants. Please advise us,” they spoke in unison.

“What are your names and what can you help me with?” he asked.

“We can manage all tasks you assign us, from cooking, cleaning, entertainment, management, gardening or anything else you can think of. Please note, if you require us to fight you should know that our combat level is below that of the average human child. Should you require us to assail a chicken, we will do so without hesitation and if luck is in our favor may come back alive, for anything else we cannot say. Currently we do not have any names, please guide us,” they replied in unison again.

Lex’s lips twitched. The Midnight Inn was really keen on not providing him with any help in keeping himself safe, wasn’t it? What was he supposed to do if he encountered a violent guest with a high cultivation level? Well, at least he had the Butter Knife.

“Very well, you will be Gerard and you Velma,” he spoke to the old man and young woman respectively. “Velma you should stay in the lobby and receive guests, Gerard you take care of any requests the guests have. I can’t really think of much else so I’ll give you more jobs as they come along.”

Both the AI’s nodded.

“Is there anything else I need to do Mary, or should I just use the golden tickets now?”

“You can use the golden tickets. The first ticket selection is fixed to hosts home world, however for the others you can select a world based on your authority. When choosing a world, the host should keep in mind his current capability when receiving guests. Please note, the host can only use one golden ticket a week.”

Lex nodded again, an instinct by now, and summoned a golden ticket. It was small, the size of his palm, and had Midnight Inn printed in bold black letters. It was a shame that he'd have to wait a week before he could start visiting other worlds as the first one would link the Inn to Earth, but Lex could bare with it. Filled with both traces of excitement and anxiety he tore his first golden ticket in two. The pieces started to shine and disappear like sand slipping through his fingers.

Quest update: Quest Complete! The Host is rewarded with: Midnight Inn Level +1!

Remarks: Your journey has just begun, don't slack off.

New Quest: Receive your first guest!

Lex raised an eye brow at the notification and then asked Mary, “What does the increase in Midnight Inn Level mean?”

“It represents the authority level you have. The higher the Level of the Inn, the more access you have to the various things the System can do for you.”

Lex nodded, it was as he assumed, and took a look at his updated status.

Name: Lex Williams

Age: 23

Sex: Male

Cultivation Level: Mortal

Health: Suboptimal (developing brain tumor, damaged muscles, damaged joints, weakened digestive system, weakened lungs, weakened heart, mild nicotine addiction...*select to display full list*)

Midnight Points: 500

Midnight Inn Level: 1

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

Quest: Receive your first guest!

Remark: Your back has more hair than your chest! Please indulge in some selfcare and don't humiliate the Midnight Inn!

It was done, all he had to do now was wait. In the meantime maybe he should look at all the things he could do with Midnight Points. And try not to focus on the remark!

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