

Innkeeper 411

The Innkeeper

Chapter 411: Nap

A million thoughts ran through Mary's mind as she concluded that someone was orchestrating an attack at the Inn, and after concluding that the Inn was in a weakened state, they had increased the severity of their attacks.

Even worse was the fact that they could not conclude how they were able to circumvent the system's maliciousness detector, or who exactly was even behind the attack. This was because everyone involved in breaking the system's rules or attracting the workers' attention seemed to have nothing in common, race included.

Was it some kind of mind control? If that was the case, they had to have been mind controlled before they even entered the Inn, for if someone attempted such a thing while being here the system would detect it. Yet the guests who were acting out had all been here for various lengths of time, some even for a few months already.

If that was the case, the schemer must have been planning things for a while now. In that case, why would they begin now? Was it coincidental, did they notice the slight difference in how Mary was giving out orders due to her mental stress, or did they know something about the Innkeepers actions or whereabouts?

These were all things that Mary could not make conclusions about. It wasn't as if she couldn't think of ways to react to the ongoing situation either, but she had no authority over the system so only Lex could effectively resolve this situation. But Lex was currently completely out of commission, and it was unknown how long it would take for him to recover. The only hope they had was to somehow come up with a way to wake him up. Otherwise, the situation would continue to get worse.

It had only been a few seconds, yet all three situations that occurred had already been resolved. The guest who was stabbed had been admitted into a Recovery Pod while the assailant was ganged up on by numerous guards from the security team, taking him down.

The leopard that had tried to kidnap the worker was... well, Mary would have preferred if it had been captured alive, but the security team was already extremely tense. Watching one of their own being attacked like that, well... let's just say not enough of the leopard was left even for fertilizer.

Ironically, right before its death, the leopard tried to use Beyond the Grave to give up its entire wealth and continue to live at the Inn as a spirit. Unfortunately, the moment it broke the rules, all services had been suspended for it.

The Midnight manor had been dealt with by Qawain. With its aura alone, it eradicated the smoke itself and crippled the person who set off the bomb! The security team rushed to the manor quickly to send everyone into Recovery pods. The fact that guests were getting hurt was already bad enough for the Inn's reputation, but if they allowed a guest to die... although in the grand scheme of things, it would still not hurt the Inn too much, it would seriously affect the Innkeeper, for he really cared about such things.

There was a momentary respite, but by now Mary knew that this was not the end of things. The only way to really deal with this matter would be to wake Lex up.

Her mind raced as she thought of ways to wake him up. For that, it was first important to understand what exactly happened to him. While Mary was merged with the system, and sometimes knew more than Lex about matters related to the system, it was only because the system itself shared such information with her. Without the system volunteering the information, she had no way of discovering things on her own. For example, she could not use the status panel that Lex often used.

If she did, she would have been able to view Lex's status to determine what his actual diagnosis was. Without it, however, she could only speculate based on what she knew.

Lex had fallen into a coma when he sent his consciousness clone away to the Henali assembly. Theoretically, Lex should not have been exhausted at all by the use of the clone since the energy required to keep the clone running was provided by the system, and by the ambient spiritual energy it absorbed.

The only part of Lex that was, in any way, tied to the clone was his consciousness. That should have made it so that Lex would remain safe no matter what happened to his clone. Even if it was destroyed, Lex would, at most, be slightly injured. This was because normally he would suffer from soul damage, but with his unique cultivation, it would bring him no real harm. He would heal from it eventually.

But whatever happened to him had affected him greatly. She had no way of knowing that it was not his soul that suffered damage, but that his spirit was drained so much beyond what he could tolerate, it ended up weakening his body and soul as well. His heartbeat slowed and his brain activity dropped, right up until he was barely a feather's touch away from death.

It was not actual harm he suffered, but that he was just really drained. One might think that a solution to this was just to pump him full of energy, and that would take care of everything. But that was not true, for not only did he need to regain energy, his body needed to digest it, and distribute it to all parts equally.

It was like saying an exhausted mortal should be fed 10,000 calories and that would rejuvenate him. Not only was that not accurate, for his body could only absorb so much food and energy at a given time, alongside which he needed rest to recover, but doing so would probably harm him as well.

Of course, the cultivation world was far from simple. There was no doubt that there were various forms of energy available, some so nourishing that Lex would be able to absorb and digest them immediately.

But for that to happen, Mary would have to first properly diagnose Lex, before making the appropriate arrangements. Unfortunately, even after spending so much time, she was unable to say what was wrong with Lex confidently. She did, however, think of a possible solution that might work. No, it would definitely work - after all, Lex's cultivation level was very low. That made it easy for him to get harmed, yes, but it also made it relatively easy to heal him.

She swept her mind through the Inn and, unfortunately, noticed 7 more issues that had cropped up in the time she was thinking. Unfortunately, they were getting worse. More and more guests were being harmed.

As dire as the situation was, she had to pull Gerard away from his duties, as he was the only one who could go to Lex at the moment.

Gerard, who had previously lost the appearance of an old man due to his evolved bloodline, had regained signs of age just in the past few days. As if the stress of knowing the Innkeeper was incapacitated was not enough, the Inn itself had been going through its darkest time. He was sure that if any of this happened at any other time, the Innkeeper would have solved it in an instant. But now that

they had to take care of the Inn while the Innkeeper himself was not around, they were failing miserably.

It was Mary's oversight to leave him like this, for if she herself had not been so stressed she would have come up with a believable explanation for the Innkeepers condition. Still, the damage that had been done could be remedied later. For now, she had him return to his Recovery pod room.

Gerard trembled slightly as he looked, once again, at the sleeping Innkeeper. He was still dressed in his suit, as remarkable as ever, and seemed to be only sleeping. It was as if the lightest call of his name would rouse him from his slumber, but it was not meant to be.

Or at least, that's what Gerard thought originally. When he heard Mary's instructions he became confused, as that went contrary to what he had originally thought was happening. But...

Gerard reached out and tapped the glass surrounding the Recovery pod a couple of times, before saying, "Excuse me, Mr. World Seed Lotus, I hate to be a bother but there are a few important matters that require the Innkeeper's attention. But, unfortunately, the Innkeeper is taking a nap and I would hate to wake him up prematurely. Would it be possible for you to rejuvenate him, even if only for a short while? I'm sure the Innkeeper would be appreciative once he deals with his tasks."

Gerard held his breath after he finished speaking, waiting for something to happen. The room, however, remained completely silent.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 412: The Lotus

The World Seed Lotus had undergone a subtle evolution. The evolution was not too drastic, as its species had not changed. It was still a World Seed Lotus, just that its minimum possible achievement had changed from a 5 star world to a 6 star world. It had gone up a level while still staying within the definition of World Seed Lotus.

Unfortunately for it, as a result of its upgrade, it would take it much longer to become a world now. Fortunately for it, it did not care. It had spent practically all its life on Lex's back in a semi-dormant state so that was really all it knew. Of course it had strong instincts, and helped Lex numerous times using its abilities, but that did not mean it had magically gained some other knowledge.

This worked heavily in Lex's favor, for the Lotus never realized that Lex was actually very weak. The Lotus never thought too deeply into it either. As far as it was concerned, other than the Sovereign turtle that had first awoken it, Lex was the closest person to it. Now that Lex had done it such a huge favor by giving it the crystal that allowed it to evolve, it felt even closer to him.

The question, then, would be why would it let Lex fall into a near death state if it felt so warmly about him? The answer was simple: it did not even realize anything was wrong. For anything unrelated to world building, or any other stuff where the Lotus' instincts would kick in, the Lotus knew nothing.

Suddenly, though, it was woken from its semi-dormant state. It was not Gerard's smooth, velvety voice that woke it up. No, it was the energy strands the old man released into the Pod that went straight to Lex's back, rousing it.

When it heard Gerard's request, the Lotus felt ecstatic. The sheer warmth and affection it felt for Lex at the moment could not be described with simple words, and just the opportunity to do anything even remotely positive for Lex filled it with excitement.

But while it lacked knowledge about many things, and it was driven by strong emotions to help out Lex did not mean it would do things carelessly. The first thing the Lotus did was check the condition for Lex's body and see if it really did match what the old man had said.

The tattoo on Lex's back warmed up ever so slightly, and a stream of energy entered Lex's body, traveling along his blood stream. There did not seem to be any injuries, but the heartbeat was extremely slow and the body seemed... strained, like a fruit that had been squeezed of all its juice.

Any and all activity had been slowed down to the utmost, even the passive flow of spiritual energy within the body.

The Lotus could not conceive that the Innkeeper had suffered harm, so it came up with its own explanation for the situation.

Once before the Innkeeper had gone through a process during which Lex was remaking his body. Back then the Lotus had provided some help by helping the Innkeeper amalgamate all the precious materials on hand. Now it seemed to the Lotus that the Innkeeper had set a Foundation in its body, but was not

satisfied by how sturdy it was and so weakened it thoroughly without actually destroying it, so that he could slowly strengthen the Foundation to the utmost.

In this case, it made sense that others might assume that the Innkeeper was napping. After all, how could they begin to understand the intricacies of the Innkeepers' plans?

The matter now was that the Innkeeper was required but it would take him a while to strengthen his Foundation at his own pace. In that case, the Lotus could speed things up.

After all, when he grew up the Lotus would set the Foundation for an entire planet. Compared to that, a small human body was nothing.

From within the tattoo an extremely miniscule stream of blue liquid was released and fused with Lex's blood. Through his blood the blue liquid circulated throughout Lex's body, slowly entering and nourishing each and every portion of it.

The liquid was called Hydratia Basal Detrium. It was found only in 6 star worlds, and even then it would be found in miniscule amounts. After all, any of that liquid that was discovered was leftover liquid from when the world was being created. It was not strictly used to build a Foundation for worlds, but instead strengthened the worlds ability to interact with universal laws.

It was only after the blue liquid completely merged with Lex that the Lotus started releasing a warm stream of energy into Lex's body to nourish it, flood it with vitality, and build a Foundation strong enough to rival a planet.

The sequence of events in this situation was very important, for now that Lex had absorbed Hydratia Basal Detrium, and strengthened his Foundation afterwards, the ability to interact with laws easily became a part of Lex's Foundation.

All this took a few minutes, during which Gerard was waiting with gritted teeth. He could not detect any difference in the Innkeeper, but Mary told him to wait patiently. He could not even tell if his attempt had even produced any effects, but until otherwise instructed, he could do nothing.

His nervousness was only exacerbated by his knowledge of everything that was happening outside. By now, things had escalated by another notch, and there was a group of people outright fighting the Inn's security team. Moreover, one by one, their numbers were ever increasing.

Full on panic had started to spread.

But while everyone at the Inn was living through an unreal nightmare, Lex was finally recovering. Previously, he had been in such a state that his mind was, for all intents and purposes, practically stopped working. Now at least it recovered to a level that Lex was able to feel soreness and discomfort throughout his body.

His mind, from being a complete blank, entered a state of deep sleep. Slowly he started to dream, but even in his dreams he saw odd shapes and colors. He felt the gaze of people that should not exist, and he became aware of events that were both happening and impossible at the same time.

His unconscious mind blankly accepted everything, and it was fortunate for him that he was asleep when this was happening, for his conscious mind would have tried to resist this knowledge. It would have been beyond the realms of his comprehension, and he would have tried to explain it using his paltry understanding of the universe at large.

Instead of understanding the universe for what it was, his mind would have forced him to try to project the knowledge through the lens of what he could understand, which would have distorted the information.

But while it seemed like eons passed in the dream, Lex was actually recovering very quickly. At first, his body was only passively taking in the energy that the Lotus provided. But after a few moments, when it regained even a semblance of strength, it began actively sucking in all the energy.

After all, why would it not? This was not spiritual energy that the Lotus was providing. Instead, it was the energy that turned barren meteoric rocks from space into the vibrant, fertile land that would eventually become a part of its world.

A few minutes later, color finally returned to Lex's pale face, and Gerard finally felt relief flood his fragile heart. If it was that simple, he did not know why Mary did not wake up the Innkeeper sooner. Perhaps there was some great secret, or perhaps a huge price to be paid.

What he did not know was that the reason no one asked him to do this earlier was because... Mary simply hadn't thought of it. It could be blamed both on her stressed out mental state, but on a deeper level it showed a lack of readiness by both Lex and herself.

If they had spent time discussing what to do in emergency situations, Lex would have definitely told her how useful the Lotus had been to him. But he was so used to taking care of things himself that it never occurred to him to rely on Mary for anything other than miscellaneous Inn related tasks.

Just as Gerard finally took a step back and sighed in relief, he heard a loud bang. His brow creased as he mentally contacted the Security team to find out what had happened. Unfortunately, the situation was too hectic, and no one was giving him a response.

No matter, a few minutes more and the Innkeeper would be awake and he would deal with whatever it was.

Gerard flicked his head towards the right as panic filled his eyes. He could sense, through his bloodline, a massive surge in energy. Before he could do anything, though, the wall of the room burst through as they were struck by a massive explosion!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 413: Laws

Gerard immediately utilized his bloodline ability as he prepared to absorb the energy from the blast and divert it elsewhere, protecting the Innkeeper and himself safe from harm in the process. Yet the expected shockwave never hit him, and besides the rapidly flowing dust cloud that encompassed him, nothing else approached him either.

The old man did not have time for confusion as he quickly blew the dust away to get a look at what had happened, but was frozen still by what he saw. The Innkeeper, dressed pristinely as ever, stood tall in front of him, showing Gerard only his broad back.

A transparent shield had appeared in front of the Innkeeper, blocking all the debris as well as the shockwave.

Sounds of fighting filled the broken room, as well as tremors from distant explosions, but Gerard was no longer distraught. Instead, endless relief flooded his heart as the greatest pillar of support of the Inn had finally recovered.

If only things were really that simple.

"Gerard, do me a favor," Lex said, his tone exceptionally cold at the moment. "Bring me a cup of Midnight Signature coffee brew to my office, the strongest cup we have."

Before the old man could respond, Lex disappeared. But the unusual thing was, the shield that Lex had used to block all the debris was still active. Gerard thought nothing of it, for he never even considered thinking about the Innkeepers abilities or the scope of them.

Yet the truth was, instead of using some system related ability, due to the strong sense of urgency he felt flood him through his instincts, the moment Lex woke up he teleported and used Talk to the Hand to block the incoming blast. That in itself was not strange, for Lex had strong instincts and an equally impressive reaction time. The strange thing was... he never actually extended his hand to put up the shield.

Talk to the Hand was a technique that put up a wife, invisible shield parallel to the palm of his hand. He had managed to improve the technique previously to merge two of the techniques to strengthen the shield by using both hands. Yet now, he had deployed the technique without using his hands at all. Moreover, this was not a simple explosion that he had so effortlessly blocked.

But all of this would remain unnoticed, for to Gerard they were nothing but normal, while Lex himself was in an abnormal state himself.

Physically speaking, his body had reached its absolute peak due to the rehabilitation and nourishment provided by the Lotus. That should have been more than enough to wake him up and help him recover from his coma. Yet when he woke up, he was immediately afflicted with endless visual and auditory hallucinations.

He felt his mind once again slipping, like it had back at the Henali assembly. In fact, he had to go into his Overdrive state immediately to keep his sanity from being affected.

He had to do all of this the very moment he woke up, while responding to the crisis at the same time, which is why he never realized that the way he used his technique was wrong. Moreover, since Gerard only saw Lex's back, he did not see that Lex's eyes were filled with an endless mix of colors, his pupils completely hidden behind them.

In his Overdrive state Lex immediately estimated that the momentum of the hallucinations affecting him had not reduced at all from when he was in the assembly, which meant based on his past experience he would only stay conscious for about 2 minutes. Yet there was something different. While his mind was still being assaulted with the same pressure, the rate of his exhaustion had reduced somewhat.

This was the effect of the nourishment the Lotus had given him, but he did not know that. He immediately recalled the effect of the Inns coffee, which reinvigorated the mind for an hour, and asked for it before teleporting to his office.

He needed to understand what was happening with himself, but just as important, he needed to understand what the hell was happening at the Inn!

Due to the strain on Lex's mind, he was unable to think clearly, so he had to prioritize what he focused on. As a result, he did not notice at all as his emotions were going haywire, and that the weather of the Inn reflected it.

Dark gray clouds filled the previously clear sky, and along with the darkness, they brought down a pressure on everyone that they had not felt before. The weight everyone was feeling on their chest was not one of anger, or rage at what was happening at the Inn. Honestly speaking, it had barely been a few seconds and Lex did not yet fully understand what was happening, so he had not even had the chance to feel those yet.

No, the pressure they were feeling was a magnification and projection of a mild aura that Lex's body had begun to emit. After all, his body was now mixed with the capability of a 6 star planet to accommodate the laws of the universe into itself in a greater capacity than just as building blocks for its existence.

As if such a change was not enough, his body began absorbing the faintest bit of aura from his hallucinations into itself, manifesting itself as the pressure of the universe. After all, laws were things incalculably distant from Lex at his current level, so let alone control the aura, he should not have been able to perceive it.

In fact, that is exactly what was happening. Since the Foundation which allowed him to accommodate the laws, and the subsequent aura that he was beginning to manifest, were now a part of his body, Lex was as conscious of them as a mortal would be of the individual cells in his body. That was to say, he was completely in the dark about the fact that he was somehow breaking rules that had never even needed to exist because of how impossible his situation was.

It was like a being that existed in the 2nd dimension suddenly being able to influence the 4th dimension, directly skipping the part where he was even able to interact with the 3rd.

Then Lex sat on his office chair and became aware of everything that was happening.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 414: Wrath

Mary did not have time to feel elation at Lex's return for the situation was truly horrible. An all out battle had erupted at the Inn, and the situation was much worse than the invasion of the Raskals, for at that time at least Lex had been conscious and thus took care of everything.

Gerard too was in a state of confusion because... due to the chaotic state of the Inn, he did not know where to get the Innkeeper his coffee!

While all this was happening, Lex finally sat down on his office chair. The chair made him more in synchronization with the Inn than even his Host Attire, so in a single flash he took in everything that was happening.

He was already under great duress, for his hallucinations made it so that everything he saw was blanketed in a layer of strange colors that did not really exist. Since the colors did not exist, and were incomparable to any color he had ever seen, he was under immense mental strain as it was. On top of that, he had entered his Overdrive state to fight against the insanity that was rushing in to claim him.

Step by step, by fighting back, he was once again bringing his body to an exhausted state, once again heading towards the coma from which he had woken up.

While all of this was happening Lex desperately wanted to understand what was happening to him, yet also had to take care of whatever was happening at the Inn.

Suffice to say, when he finally sat down, and the surge of information entered his mind, just in time for him to see countless guests being hurt in a number of battles happening across the Inn, and countless workers who were severely injured... he was unable to control his rage!

Though it may not always seem like it, Lex thought of himself as a rational man. Even at times when anger took control of him, he was able to keep a head clear enough not to do something so drastic. That is why when his tavern was assaulted and insulted by the kids of those nobles back at the Crystal realm, he managed to keep himself from just straight out destroying them like his first impulse stated.

For better or for worse, though, at this moment, Lex lost all his rationale. He was too strained to stop himself. For the first time in his life, the self-control his elder sister Belle had secretly trained him to keep failed.

One moment, Lex had over 70 billion MP stocked up. The next moment, he had 0.

Outside Lex's office, the Inn had become a war zone that stretched all corners as beasts and species of all races fought senselessly. Even the sudden appearance of dark clouds or the mysterious weight pressing against their chests had not been enough to dissuade them.

Until, that is, it suddenly became all too much!

From gray clouds, the sky was suddenly filled with black clouds. Streaks of lightning could be seen swimming through the abyssal clouds, yet instead of the usual white or blue, the lightning instead looked searing red, like lava. But the lightning did not have an opportunity to fall, for instead the pressure that had previously been putting them down changed so drastically, instead of a tinge of fear traveling up their spines, all the miscreants felt fear bloom from within their souls.

Every injured guest and worker were suddenly teleported away, brought directly to the Recovery room, while every other innocent was brought away to safety. Every miscreant, those that had already begun battle and even those that were still hiding and biding their time, was teleported to the entrance of the Inn.

In the darkness filled the Inn, deeper and more malevolent than the worst nightmare, a golden light bloomed and encompassed all those that had gathered at the entrance at the Inn.

Everything was happening too fast for anyone to understand or react, but as if the fear that arose from their very souls was not enough, suddenly they felt chained down by the golden light, as if something had imprisoned them.

So far, only those who had been deemed as enemies of the Inn had been victims to the building oppression, but then suddenly, something changed.

The oppression that appeared now was orders of magnitude beyond anything anyone at the Inn had ever felt.

For the first time ever, the Midnight Inn's protection failed to project its guests from the oppression of an aura. In fact, for the first time ever, the Minor realm in which the Inn was located shuddered, and tore open slightly, revealing the Inn to the rest of the Origin realm in which it resided.

A projection of the Innkeeper appeared in the air, and in the eyes of various people around the Origin realm itself.

He looked like a human, an ordinary man. Yet at the same time, nothing about him was ordinary. His eyes shone with red light and his aura was one that radiated absolute death, as if angering him was the same as angering the universe itself.

The phenomenon was so massive that, in the center of the Origin realm, even the Henali were alarmed, causing them to quickly tap into the laws that would allow them to see what was causing it. Yet all they saw was a vague figure. Instead, what was distinct in the vision, was a small, simple Butter Knife.

"Die!"

The word echoed throughout the Inn, as well as the Origin realm, before the figure threw out the small knife.

Then... there was chaos!

Similar to the way Lex employed Talk to the Hand in a new way, without understanding what he was really doing, Lex used his 1 Minute Butter Knife token to use the strongest version of the Butter Knife to attack in a way he did not even know was possible.

Instead of an enemy, he attacked a line of Karma. He attacked everyone and everything associated with the attack on the Inn. The result... well before he could really see the results, Lex teleported back into a Recovery Pod with a sticky note on it that read 'next time you wake me up, have my coffee ready'.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 415: The universe as my oyster... -eh, as my toast

The 1 Minute Butter Knife token allowed Lex to use the Butter Knife at its full strength for a duration of 1 minute. Perhaps if he had used it as a sword or dagger instead of throwing it, he would have had access to it for the full minute instead of a single attack.

Yet it did not matter, for the damage he did with that single attack was far greater than anything he could have achieved by simply swinging it around.

All those who had attacked the Inn, or were secretly planning on attacking the Inn had been gathered by him in one location - not so that he could attack them but so that they would not cause trouble.

This raised the question of how Lex knew who the people were who intended to cause trouble when even the system failed to detect their malicious intent. The truth was, he was not detecting malicious intent, but his eyes saw them connected by Karma. Of course, Lex had no idea what Karma was, or how it worked.

But in his semi-sane state his subconscious mind was playing as much of an important role as his conscious mind.

Once in that location, they had been subjected to various pressures, auras and, finally, a strange and new formation.

This formation was what sucked up all of Lex's MP down to the last, yet other than a strange ethereal binding sensation it did not seem to do anything else. Lex however, did not care about what these people felt.

He only cared about venting his rage, and so he gave in to his most bestial urge for death and destruction! He used the Butter Knife in the way his instincts told him would be most useful.

But while all the energy for the attack should have come from the Knife itself, something about how he aimed sucked up all the energy out of Lex. So, with the last of his sanity, he teleported back to the Recovery pod, put up the sticky note, requested the Lotus to help him once again, and allowed himself to fall back into a coma.

This all happened instantaneously, and no one noticed it happen, for they were all focused on the fallout from the Innkeepers attack!

If one were to say it was devastating, it would be an underestimation, but if one were to say it underwhelming, they would also not be wrong.

Within the Inn, all the targets simply died. There was no explosion, no torture, no burning or ripping their bodies to shreds. One moment they existed, and the next their very existence was wiped. In fact, even the memory of what they looked like, or who they were, seemed to be erased from existence.

So, to the onlookers, it seemed only like the Innkeeper told the group to die, and then they did. It was that simple.

But the thing was... Lex did not aim for the targets who attacked the Inn. He attacked EVERYONE and EVERYTHING in existence which had something to do with the attack on the Inn.

As such, the energy from the Knife killed all the targets at the Inn with extreme ease and simplicity. Then it had to target the rest of the universe.

But for that, the energy from the attack had to first escape the Inn. The small rip in the fabric of reality that exposed the Midnight Inn from within its Minor realm, to the rest of the Origin realm, suddenly became a bottleneck for the energy to escape!

Earthquakes, airquakes, cracks in reality and the bending of space between the two realms itself all seemed to happen all at once.

The sound of a billion explosions rocked the Inn, and despite the lack of air, carried through the void of space, crushing all meteors and space debris in its path. That was only a result of the energy escaping the Inn.

Once it entered the Origin realm, the energy seemed to gain a life of its own as it ripped a hole in the realm and forced itself into the fabric of reality.

Space itself began to ripple as more and more energy seemed to disappear, forming new tears everywhere! Minor realms began to rain down through the ripples in space, spreading through hundreds of galaxies within mere seconds.

Mortals found it beyond their comprehension, and simply fainted from the overload of what they were watching. Earth immortals, barely counting as immortals, were somewhat about to keep themselves awake if they tried, but never had they felt more insignificant.

Those even stronger than Earth immortals... they were not looking at the dissipating energy or ripples in space. Instead, their eyes looked out into the distance as they traced where the energy flowed to.

Never before had such a scene been witnessed, at least in the Origin realm. Perhaps, they would never get a chance to see it again either. For a short moment, all living entities within a billion nearby galaxies froze as they were affected by the last of the energy that left the Inn.

Then the Minor realm surrounding the Midnight Inn closed once again, as if it was never there, and the energy that defied common sense also seemed to vanish. But those who were strong enough to follow the flow of energy knew it did not vanish. No, instead it was wreaking havoc on an unprecedented scale.

Sitting in his divine palace, Ra, the father of creation, and also Bastet, had his eyes closed as he tried to track down his daughter. She was extremely naughty and purposefully kept destroying his plans all because he sold her into a marriage she didn't want. It was the height of immaturity, in his opinion.

He could not vent his anger on the stupid human race, whom he had passed his daughter to and asked to keep her in a dead zone so she may not escape. After all, the Henali looked upon the humans with great care simply because one of their prized pets was a human.

Instead he found a way to vent on an organization called the Midnight Inn, which had apparently played a part in helping his daughter escape, supposedly.

Honestly speaking he did not give it much thought at all, and simply passed the task to one of his underlings. As a God, he could not be expected to do tedious things such as revenge by himself.

Ra, the God with the body of a human and the head of a hawk, was just as arrogant as he was lazy, and was just as lazy as he was amorous.

But the arrogant God went from being focused on locating his daughter to screaming in fear and anger in a single heartbeat.

A blinding golden light encompassed his fist and he punched forward, clashing against an unknown force. The impact from the explosion destroyed the divine palace. In fact, it destroyed the whole planet where the palace was located.

Yet Ra only seemed to suffer from a burnt hand. Yet the expression on the deity's face was beyond simple anger as it suffered the greatest loss it had faced in its entire existence. It was not his burnt hand that was a loss, but his divinity which seemed to be dwindling. No, this was too dangerous. Though he could not understand what was happening, he had to defend his divinity at all costs.

The God disappeared.

Egypt, Earth

In a rather luxurious apartment, a small group was kneeling and worshipping a picture that looked like a deity with the face of a Hawk. On their knees they hummed and prayed. They were one of the last few remnants of a religion thought lost to the ages.

Suddenly, in their minds, they heard a voice telling them to die. Then... there was nothing, not even dust. They had simply ceased to exist.

Throughout the Origin realm, from small groups to countries to planets to star systems and even galaxies, anything and everything that had any direct affiliation with the sincere worship of Ra suffered from a mysterious and devastating attack.

There was no place safe, no place where they could hide. Wherever the followers of the God existed was exactly the place that became most dangerous for them.

This phenomenon was not slow or gradual, for within a few seconds, billions of years of hard work vanished. Even the religion itself seemed to vanish in some places, alongside tools and records of worship.

Ra began to appear in his temples in person for the first time in eternity, but it was pointless, for he never reached anywhere in time. An utter hopelessness gripped him when he lost more than 50% of his divinity in the blink of an eye, and forced him to make a difficult decision.

For a single second Ra hesitated more, but that single second cost him 8% more divinity, so he lost all hesitation and did something taboo for a deity.

He killed all of his worshipers across the universe himself in an ultimate sacrifice, squeezing their existence of any divinity he could scrounge up, before vanishing himself as well. He did not know what just happened, but he would get his revenge one day.

For now, though, he had to hide before his daughter realized how weak he had become.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 416: Hearth

Just as instantaneously as the energy had appeared, it vanished. People across the realm stopped spontaneously disappearing, and an entire major religion that had once dominated the Origin realm seemed to disappear from existence.

Not everyone realized instantly what happened. Depending on their strength and cultivation, it took them a few hours to a few days to possibly even a few months or years. For most beings, though, the actual purpose of the event, which was quickly being titled as the 'Interstellar wave' eluded them. Instead, they were focused on the secondary repercussions of what happened.

Though the distortions in space stopped as soon as the energy vanished, the effects that they already had were far from over. The movement path of an estimated 1 billion galaxies was severely compromised, and even more were suffering from mild deviations. The few strands of energy that escaped the attack dispersed into the universe and gave birth to a phenomenon of a bountiful harvest. Planets quickly started rising in their star ranks, though quick was only a relative term, and treasures that were so rare they had no names began to form.

A time of rapid growth suddenly overcame the few galaxies that had been the closest in contact with the energy, but while that growth brought with it prosperity, it also brought greed and war. For better or worse, the trajectory of the Origin realm had changed.

A thing to note, however, was that none of the galaxies affected were actually a part of the galaxies that had directly interacted with the Inn so far. For example, these galaxies were so far from the Jotun Empire that, besides their strongest immortals, none of them even felt the energy surge that enveloped the whole realm.

Of course, the Henali were the quickest to understand what happened, and quickly even summarized accurately what had happened.

In the Henali assembly, there was an awkward silence as the Daolords had been stopped midconversation for an announcement. They had no idea what had just occurred because the location of the assembly was special and cut off from the rest of the realm, but they were about to find out.

"There was a clash amongst lords," said the Henali convening the assembly. "We do not know the background of the issue, but it seems that God Ra provoked the new lord known as The Innkeeper. As a result, The Innkeeper retaliated, and Ra's religion had ceased to exist in the realm, and Ra has escaped, hiding his trail."

No more was said, but excitement filled the room. Amana especially was thrilled, and a little flushed. She was extremely grateful to the mysterious Innkeeper and, strangely, feeling a little attracted to him. Daolords almost never clashed, for it was not easy for any of them to get an advantage over another, yet the Innkeeper had reduced Ra to hiding in a single clash.

The Innkeeper must be incredibly powerful, which meant... he would also make a good father. Her blush grew as her thoughts started to race.

Very few Daolords were able to keep their composure, but Ballom was one of them. After all, the Devil's background was not as shallow as everyone else's. Still, it seemed like the Innkeeper was worthy of cooperating with. Since his Inn catered to the whole universe, perhaps he should also invite him to Garvitz, one of the main realms of the Devils.

A few other Daolords also developed an interest in the Midnight Inn. After all, now that the Innkeeper had shown his hand, there was no doubt he was worthy of sending a team to the Henali Champions tourney. It seemed that things would be very interesting this time around.

At the Midnight Inn, all was still. The sky itself had been ripped asunder by the Innkeepers attack, allowing them to glimpse the havoc it wrought onto the universe. Of course, since the system had failed to protect the guests from the aura of the attack, most of them had fainted outright - including the workers.

Mary especially was disoriented, for the System itself had suffered from the attack. A countless barrage of notifications flooded Lex, but unfortunately, he was asleep. This time, though, he would wake up soon as he had already informed the Lotus of the kind of aid he wanted - though Lex himself was disoriented when he gave the instructions, so it was unknown what his exact purpose was.

Still, a few managed to stay awake, and as soon as the rip in the sky healed and the dark clouds over the Inn dispersed, they began working. After all, they had already suffered a huge blow to their credibility. It would be a massive shame if the remaining guests woke up and found themselves on the floor.

Anita summoned an army of undead, still looking beautiful and magnificent instead of ugly and decaying, and had them start working. As the workers began waking up, they helped as well.

Moreover, while the guests who had been here for the chaos had been affected, as the Inn had over time developed some prestige, more and more guests came every few minutes. Soon, the Inn seemed to be returning towards operating normally. Lex hadn't had time to clean up the Inn but the workers quickly began getting to it.

When Mary finally recovered, she breathed a sigh of relief and was just about to begin passing out orders to return things to normal, when a golden beam of light shot through the air right from the grounds where Lex killed all the miscreants.

Mary was too sensitive right now due to everything they had faced, and immediately turned all her attention to the light, ready for another battle. But it was not new enemies that appeared from the beam of light. No, instead a hearth was formed right in the open.

A golden flame lit up in the heart, and began producing a crackling sound, as if logs were being burnt. On the stone, writing started to appear alongside a countdown that was ticking each second.

After ensuring it was nothing bad, Mary scanned the heart. Even though she had no physical body, she shuddered mentally as she read the words and looked on in horror.

It read: here lie the souls of those who deigned to become enemies of the Midnight Inn, serving as timber until their time is up.

The countdown was only about 100 days, but in a way, it was longer than eternity. When one focused on the flames, amidst the burning the flames', faces appeared from time to time. If one focused on the hearth with their spirit sense, the wails and screams of countless souls could be heard, even if ever so slightly.

The souls trapped here were only those that Lex had trapped in the formation, and not all the ones from the entire universe, but even then the number went into the tens of thousands. Moreover, trapping souls was not an easy task. Taking it a step further and trapping thousands of souls, and then torturing them made the formation increasingly expensive.

A majority of Lex's MP went into purchasing the soul trapping formation, and the rest went into maximizing the number of days they could be trapped.

Perhaps it would be a waste of MP to do such a thing, for it had taken a long time for Lex to accumulate so much. But maybe, it would serve him in another way, and the price would end up being worth it.

As it happened, a guest teleported to the Inn, and they appeared right in front of the hearth. Ragnar stepped out of the golden light with a creased brow, clearly under great stress. Things had not been going well for Jotun on the battlefield, but then again, when were things ever simple?

He had come to the Inn to find out if the Innkeeper had returned, as well make a few updates on his assigned guild task. He still did not know that it had been accepted already by someone, and was already in the process of being completed.

As the golden light disappeared and Ragnar got ready to move on, he suddenly noticed that something was unusual about the Inn. He did not need to sweep his spirit sense as just his eyesight was enough to see the damage it had suffered, and the numerous unconscious people on the ground.

Before he could even begin to speculate, however, his attention turned towards the hearth. He was stunned as numerous thoughts ran through his mind, but first he kept checking the hearth. This was because, within the souls trapped in there, he recognized a few. In fact, he did not even need to search for them, as the hearth had some kind of mystical ability to let him know exactly who he knew that had been trapped inside.

He could not believe that soldiers from his regiment would be stupid enough to attack the Inn. It went against common sense. In fact, they should not be participating in any conflict that he did not assign, it was a clear dereliction of duty and betrayal!

He froze, and tasted the word on his lips. Betrayal. Suddenly a few things made sense to him.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 417: Didn't even drink his coffee

Ragnar did not let his emotions show on his face, but his mind was extremely turbulent. As a man who had dedicated his entire life to the human race, one of the things he hated most were demons, devils and other races that for some reason targeted the humans.

But the single thing, without a shred of doubt, that he hated most were humans who betrayed the human race. He understood that there was always conflict and interest, and humans could never completely be peaceful with one another. It was all but natural. Yet there was a difference between fighting other humans due to a conflict of interest, and betraying them to gain benefits from another race.

He knew, unfortunately, that as despicable a thing as this was, it was still prevalent in humans. He just never imagined that he would face it on such a high level.

To be clear, he was not considering some members of his regiment participating in an attack on the Inn as high level interference. No, instead it was the fact that there was even a possibility that a Jorlam had been born in the Pental galaxy that meant there was a high level betrayal.

Moreover, this was not just a betrayal of the human race, but the Henali as well. The battlefield where Ragnar was currently stationed was to fight off invading Fuegan, a duty assigned directly by the Henali. If someone was interfering with that... well, the loss of a single galaxy was far from the worst thing they could end up having happen to them.

Ragnar collected himself, gave one last look at the hearth as well as the countdown on it, listing how long the enemies of the Inn would be tortured, before moving towards the Guild room.

Along the way as he saw the condition of the Inn, it served as a reminder for him that no matter how strong or capable one might be, there would always be those who would challenge them.

Velma woke up in the Recovery room, her hair a mess and her face pale from the shock her body had suffered. Her body was sore, not only from the fighting she had been exposed to, but from the aftermath of an explosion that she had been lucky enough to survive.

She was disoriented at first, but recovered quickly. Then she hopped on her feet and began helping where she could. There were countless injured who needed tending to, and even the ones who recovered needed aid, let alone the number of guests who were unhurt, but still needed tending to. After all, this was an Inn not a hospital, and there was no shortage of regular guests.

She saw a pale looking guest who, according to Nurse Jubilation, was perfectly physically healthy, but kept crying and wailing in fear. But while it was their job, none of the workers or nurses were willing to help him. This was because... the crying man was the person who had challenged the Innkeeper to a fight!

The fact that he hadn't been killed meant that he was never really involved with the attack, he was just an incredibly arrogant man with unfortunate timing. But whatever the case, his greatest misfortune was that he encountered Lex who was in a state of seeking revenge for every petty grievance at the time. Though he had not killed the man who challenged him, but just let him be exposed to the aura released by the Butter Knife while forcing him to stay awake.

Suffice to say the man was extremely traumatized. Eventually, with time, he would recover, but it seemed like his recovery would not be at the Inn, for on one was willing to aid him, except nurse Jubilation who was burdened with responsibility.

Velma was about to go tend to other patients when one of Anita's undead helpers appeared and informed Velma that Anita was requesting her prescience.

Anita was in the Midnight Library, recording the past days' events down by hand - her handwriting the most beautiful calligraphy Velma had ever seen.

"I'm glad to see you are unhurt," said the Lich. "But I think you have more pressing matters currently than helping guests."

"What do you mean?" asked Velma. Though she had recovered somewhat, she was not in her peak state so her thoughts were somewhat slow.

"Why, you have to write a newsletter on the Innkeepers actions of course," she replied, placing a printed picture before her. It showed the silhouette of a man shining alone in the darkness, a single

Butter Knife in his hand. "And don't just write a newsletter this time. There's a new building that the Innkeeper created that lets you enter the Henali portal. Publish his actions for the whole universe to know."

Stars shone in Velma's eyes as she suddenly realized that's exactly what she needed to do. While she was at it, and the Innkeeper was in the limelight, should she create a dating profile for him? After all, she'd never heard of a Mrs. Innkeeper yet.

Lex's sleeping body looked even more withered than the first time it had been out into the Recovery room, but that was to be expected. Not only did his body suffer through the same strain as last time, this time the Lotus was contributing to his condition.

Lex had made a simple request, to step by step make his body's foundation capable of interacting with universal laws physically. Well, he did not phrase it like that, because he did not even know, nor could he comprehend, what the universal laws were. Instead, he asked the Lotus to give him a foundation which could tolerate the immense stress his hallucinations were putting him under, and then allowed the Lotus to examine his body.

The Lotus, however, immediately recognized the influence of laws, and it began to work. The first step was to enhance Lex's blood, for which it would have to first absorb all of his blood. It was an extremely tedious process, but fortunately Lex would be able to survive a few minutes without any blood in his body. After that, the Lotus would give Lex new blood which was carried a lot more than just nutrients and oxygen. Then it could begin on its other changes. It was a little hard to fulfill such a request without any materials on hand, but it would do what it could.

Luthor stood silently in front of the Recovery pod which contained Harry's body. He had never met Harry for his time at the Inn was too short. In fact, not only had he not met a majority of the workers, he had missed out most of the battle that had taken place, simply because he was in training and did not know about it.

To make matters worse, when he did learn about the battle, he had been too pathetically weak to do anything. He could only watch helplessly as the Inn was destroyed around him. Then, when everything seemed to be at its worst, the Innkeeper arrived, like heroes from the legends of old.

His fury was the fury of the universe, and his wrath had rained down swiftly on his enemies, yet the Innkeeper had left just as swiftly. Luthor heard a rumor that the reason the Innkeeper had not helped at first, and had disappeared as quickly as he appeared, was because he was taking care of incredibly important matters.

They were so important, in fact, that the Innkeeper could not even stick around to drink the coffee he had requested from Gerard, apparently.

When Luthor heard such a thing, he had never felt more ashamed in his few weeks long life.

The Innkeeper was working tirelessly to deliver the universe the ultimate hoteling experience, and here they were, unable to even deliver coffee on time.

But no amount of frustration would help, and no amount of anger would suddenly make things better. He needed to spend some time studying, learning how best he could help the Inn. For that, he had discovered a new facility - the Henali portal.

Without saying a single word, Luthor left the Recovery pod and made his way to register for the portal. The universe had bested the Inn today, though it could not best the Innkeeper. But such a day would never come again. A golf cart, an incredibly upgraded golf cart, pulled up besides Luthor as he was walking.

Gerard, who was in the driver's seat, signaled Luthor to get in.

"I've been talking to some of the fellas. Everyone feels the same way. We're too weak."

Luthor said nothing. He had no words left in him right now.

"To be honest, we can't be blamed. We've been trained to be hosts, not fighters. But that doesn't mean we can't change. I remember the little lass Velma told me about a rumor once, about a place that can train people to become strong."

A light flickered in Luthor's eyes, but he still remained silent.

"I don't know if the place is true, but apparently there is a trial you can take to enter. I'm going to start searching for the trial. If you're interested, once I find the trial, you can come as well."

"What's the place called?" Luthor finally asked hoarsely.

"Ventura."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 418: J. F. K. [Bonus]

Origin realm, Blue Planet

On a planet remarkably similar to Earth, but not at all Earth, where all people, regardless of how they were named, were not actual people from Earth, a young boy was running for his life, a dark and mysterious figure chasing behind him. Even if it were not early morning, there would be few people around to save the lad, for the hills he was running in were far from any city or town. Even if he were near a town, rural Massachusetts was such that he could run all day and night and not run into another person.

As if that would have changed anything though. From the day that wretched prophecy came out, the boy's life had been a living hell. Yes, prophecy! For unlike Earth, where cultivators had just become common knowledge, on Blue Planet cultivation had been the norm for a long time.

Deep within the sacred halls of congress, where hidden powers lie dormant, the speaker of the house spoke a prophecy that was not in any way ambiguous or contrived, and directly named him, John Fake Kennedy, a.k.a John F. Kennedy, the chosen one who would bring about world peace and, more importantly, named him as the inheritor for the sacred treasure with the power to control millions of souls, the Super Bowl!

While that sounded well and good, not everyone wanted world peace, as that was not profitable, and even more wanted to steal the Super Bowl. While some were planning to assassinate the boy secretly, there was one warlord who acted openly: Vladimir Kardashian!

Vladimir Kardashian, a public figure, singer and fashion icon, did not care about right or wrong, for he had an army of brainwashed fans who would literally sell their own organs and fight to the death at his behest. With influence like his, even if he were convicted of any crimes, he would at most get a light slap on the wrist. In that case, what did he have to fear? He outright sent his own assistant, Dwayne the boulder, a champion of illegal and underground fighting, to go and crush the young J. Fake K.

Just as the boy was running out of energy, and it seemed like the prophecy would not come to fruition, a golden door appeared directly in the boy's path. It was too close, he did not even have time to stop!

Instinctively, he closed his eyes as he expected to crash, but instead of hitting the mysterious door, he fell forward into a field of grass. Confused, he looked around and found himself in a completely unfamiliar environment.

The air smelled clean and fresh, and the grass was green and vibrant. There were no hills nearby, instead only open plains as well as a road that seemed to lead towards a small town in the distance. Nearby, there was a welcoming hearth lit with a small warm fire and a countdown. In the back of his mind, Fake gave an approving nod to the countdown. It was always smart to set a reminder for when tinder needed to be added to a flame.

Not letting himself be too distracted, Fake quickly turned to look back, but discovered that Dwayne the boulder was nowhere in sight. It seemed like he really had been teleported somewhere.

Fake was not alarmed at this realization. After all, as the child of prophecy, and destined savior of the world, didn't it make sense if he stumbled across countless lucky encounters that not only kept him alive, but made him stronger?

What Fake did not realize was how lucky he really was. The golden door that he stumbled through was a random golden door that spawned through the Inns new Inter-realm feature that would allow golden doors to spawn randomly anywhere in the entire realm. The fact that this door opened on a planet, and then specifically right in front of Fake, was so statistically improbable it could only be described as lucky.

Fake was thoroughly exhausted so he let himself rest a few moments and catch his breath before he got up to explore his new terrain, but he suddenly felt something tickling on his red shell.

He looked down and saw that multiple strains of grass had bound themselves together to make a thick whip, which they were using to attract his attention. He looked down, the grass started angrily moving about as if to tell him to move his massive, fat body for he was crushing the grass.

"Oh sorry," said Fake as he awkwardly moved away. After a few steps, the grass seemed to calm down. Apparently, the patch he stood on had gained sentience, but not all the grass was sentient.

Fake breathed a sigh of relief and wiped his forehead with his red claw. There was nothing unusual about this action, for Fake was not a human, he was a Krab-man. This was due to the fact that Blue Planet had nothing in common with earth, besides a few odd coincidences like names, historical events, geography, art and such.

Yes, Blue Planet was a planet inhabited by Krab-people who were mostly divided. If there was only a single thing in history that had managed to unify the Krab-people of Blue planet throughout their history, it was their lord and savior, MC-Donaalde!

But even that unity lasted only briefly, as soon wars started over the correct pronunciation of 'Donaalde', with most conventional historians going with the original British pronunciation, but modern generations preferring to add their spin to it.

Regardless, this would be a thing of the past once Fake brought about world peace. For now though, he had to get a better understanding of this new place he was in.

As if triggered by his thought, a small projection of another Krab-man appeared before him, and started introducing this place as the Midnight Inn! Apparently it was a hotel, and the best part was he didn't need to pay directly, for the hotel would somehow go and collect the payments themselves so long as he had the necessary wealth located anywhere in the universe.

"Can I get a tour of the place?" Fake asked the projection. "Oh but I'm really tired from running, do you have any vehicles that can pick me up?"

"Not a problem," the projection answered. "A golf cart has been sent your way."

Fake thanked the projection and waited. To be honest, he did not have the energy to run around as he had a very low cultivation level. In fact, despite his cultivation, his strength at the moment was actually below what humans considered as 'mortals' who never cultivated. This was because Krab-people had a lower starting point than even humans.

Soon, Fake saw a small, yet magnificent vehicle, hurtling his way, driven by an unusual looking lady. In fact, the driver was very ordinary but Fake had never seen humans before so she looked strange to him.

But Fake was not racist and did not object to a human guide taking him around the Inn. In fact, they got along pretty well, and became fast friends. Pamela, the golf cart driver, told Fake all kinds of interesting tidbits about the Inn as she drove past all the major attractions. From the village to the massive mountain, to Main street and even the manor, Fake saw it all though it took a few hours to cover everything.

While Fake liked the Inn well enough, his heart truly leaped out of his chest when he saw the lazy river! A relatively small river with gently flowing water, with plastic doughnuts and small rowing boats carrying guests down with the water was extremely attractive to Fake.

So much so, in fact, that he immediately paid to rent a normal room for a couple of nights, for apparently he could not stay at the Inn longer than a certain period if he did not have a room booked or somewhere to stay, and had Pamela drop him off near the river.

Wasting no time, Fake made himself cozy by grabbing an empty plastic doughnut that was floating by, and setting himself in it. He let all his claws dip into the water, and let the doughnut flow on its own along the current.

The sensation of cold water against his hard shell calmed him down, while the gentle ebbing of the water rocked Fake's doughnut, soothing his tense nerves. His life had been way too difficult for a long time, so it was good to finally relax.

Slowly, his eyelids drooped, and Fake fell asleep in the river. For a short while all was well, but unexpectedly, for the first time, one of the Inn's latest features kicked in.

Blend Reality was a feature of the Inn that let portions of the Inn sometimes merge with the worlds the Inn was connected to. The system assured that all guests would stay safe and not accidentally enter a dangerous area, but sometimes blending the Inn and other worlds led to unique experiences that people could enjoy. Moreover, sometimes people from the worlds that were merged could enter the Inn like this.

As it happened, since Fake was asleep, he did not notice that his doughnut had gone from flowing down a river, to floating randomly in a small, secluded oasis. For a while all was well, until the only other person near the oasis suddenly noticed a weird creature right in the center of her water source!

Alysha was startled! This was the first time she saw another living creature since her Desert Farming system teleported her to the middle of nowhere. But, suddenly, the creature disappeared from her view. For a while, the young girl could not decide if what she saw was real, or just another mirage.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 419: Waking up

The Sovereign Galactic turtle carefully carried a man sized parcel wrapped in leaves to the Recovery room and casually strolled in. Without needing any guidance, it entered the Innkeeper's room and, without any hesitation, opened the Innkeepers pod.

Very simply, as if there was nothing unusual about what it was doing, it opened the parcel and let some special, red colored dirt fall into the pod and bury Lex. It paused for a minute, as if unsatisfied with the size of the pod, as it could not fit all the required dirt. Shaking its head, the turtle created a pod of its own made of giant leaves surrounding Lex, and dropped the remaining dirt in it. Then it left.

In truth, the turtle was not pulling off some kind of prank. Through methods unknown, the Lotus had informed the turtle that it required some dirt with extremely specific properties. The turtle was the one who gave Lex the Lotus, so it was already familiar with the plant. Moreover, it never paid too much attention to what the Innkeeper was doing, so it didn't care all that much what the dirt was for.

It was only slightly annoyed, for the dirt had not been easy to make. The turtle had to shred some of the most valuable plants and trees to make fertilizer - along with some of its highest grade normal fertilizer (enemies of the Inn) - and spent a good deal of its own energy to aid the soil in absorbing it.

There were a few more steps involved, but ultimately the turtle only succeeded in making the lowest grade soil that the Lotus asked for, but with its current resources this was all it could manage.

Still, even though this was the bare minimum of the Lotus' requirements, the fact that it met the mark meant it was enough for the Lotus to use.

Inside Lex's leafy pod, the dirt was slowly being absorbed into Lex's body, as the Lotus was using it to nourish, revitalize and strengthen Lex's body. As amazing as the Lotus was, it could only do so much in its infant state. Fortunately for Lex, strengthening Lex's foundation was still within its capabilities.

A few hours later, all the soil had been completely absorbed into Lex's body, leaving no trace that it had ever buried the Innkeeper entirely. A few moments later, Lex opened his eyes.

At first he was disoriented, with no recollection of where he was and what happened. Slowly, as his brain got used to his new body, he started to feel better and his memories returned to him.

But, unfortunately, the return of his memories also brought back memories of the visions he saw, restarting his hallucinations. Somehow, though, the effect they were having was greatly subdued. In fact, so long as he focused, he could somewhat even ignore the effect of the hallucinations without going into his Overdrive state.

With a groan, Lex got off the table, and slowly started recollecting what had happened. He was... attending the Henali assembly? Then what happened? He couldn't remember. Wait... something happened to the Inn.

It was difficult, but eventually Lex recalled the state the Inn was in, and paled considerably. The reason Lex had nearly lost his mind from anger was that, unfortunately, more than one of his workers had died in the attack. It was a harrowing thing to think about, especially since he had put so much effort into securing the Inn. But now, in hindsight, it became evident that he had not done nearly enough.

He would always just rely on hiring security using his event panel and using that as a solution, instead of fixing the inherent problem, which was that his own security was thoroughly lacking.

Lex wasn't one to beat himself up, but now that his attention was brought onto the matter, quite forcefully at that, it seemed that Lex had barely run the Inn at all lately. He would just make a few major decisions, and leave the rest for Mary to handle.

The Inn had expanded much too quickly for him to keep up with, and as a result, he was always running off somewhere to deal with other matters while actually taking care of the Inn was left to someone else.

How many things did the Inn develop lately that he had not thoroughly utilized? The divine temple, the inheritance lounge, the fishing well and so much more. He was reminded that he was the Innkeeper, and the very name simply meant that he had to manage the Inn, not go running around the universe, connecting planets.

So what if people caught onto the fact that the Inn was actually only connected to a handful of planets? He could always continue to expand slowly later.

Lex's mood was already low due to the severe headache, and the tragedy of all that had happened didn't exactly help improve his mood. Lex took a defeated sigh and first checked on his MP.

He had spent all of it on that formation to trap his enemies souls, so in reality he should not have even been able to pay the rent for his own Recovery pod. It was fortunate, however, that with several hundred thousand guests, his MP was always rolling in. Moreover, the income from the Guild room was starting to become significant.

He currently had a mere 35,000 MP. It left a bitter taste in his mouth after having been a billionaire such a short while ago, but he knew he would quickly gain more anyway. Even this 35,000 was reduced, for the moment he woke up Mary asked him for some MP to make a few payments for peoples recovery and Lex approved it.

Even now, it wasn't as if there weren't a million things for him to do, but Mary didn't bother him for anything that wasn't too urgent. Lex too was not in a rush to start, despite knowing that he won't be able to remain awake too long before succumbing to a coma similar to the ones he had been suffering.

The reason was very simple, and since Lex had sat on his seat back at his office he knew already, but...

Lex teleported away, and reappeared before a specific Recovery pod. The room had only one other person besides the patient, a beautiful young human woman with wings on her back. It was Hailey, Harry's wife.

In front of her, in the pod, slept Harry. Though his body had been completely rebuilt, he showed no signs of waking up. Lex already knew the painful reason, but he wouldn't help but look one more time, in the hope that something had changed.

Name: Harry Styles

Age: 18

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: Glamor Sorcerer (dormant)

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Condition: A majority of the patient's soul has been crushed! Only a few remnants of the patient's soul which were buried in his Glamor sorcery tools survived. Without a treasure to regrow the soul, the patient will never recover, and the remaining bits of his soul will slowly diminish.

Remarks: Laughter is the best medicine for the soul, but it probably won't work on him.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 420: Unfettered

Lex said nothing and only looked at the sleeping teenager silently. On the day of his own wedding he had taken a risk, not for his own sake, but for the sake of the Inn, and this was the return that he got.

Standing there, in front of Harry, it would have been very easy for Lex to start feeling pathetic and wallow in his failures. But, for better or for worse, self pity was not in Lex's nature. Looking at Harry,

Lex's mood did not get lower, but instead his thoughts cleared up. Come hell or high water, he would repay Harry.

He also looked at Hailey. When Lex heard news that Harry was getting married he could only think of his own single status, but in truth he had been extremely happy for him. He imagined how wonderful a life this new couple would have, living in the safest, most magical place in the universe.

He owed them both for not being able to deliver on that fantasy. His fists tightened. He owed them.

Lex disappeared once again, having not said a single word. Hailey, who had been sleeping next to the pod, never even knew that the Innkeeper had visited. In a way, it was for the best. Lex did not visit Harry to be seen. He visited to reignite his motivation, with greater focus than ever before. He needed it if he was going to overcome his own shortcomings.

In fact, there was actually a reason why Lex had been behaving so erratically, though he had tried hard not to admit it. He tried to keep himself so helplessly busy, and keep his mind endlessly occupied, so that he would never think about it. But the truth was, deep down inside, he had already realized that something was amiss.

To be specific, on the day his tumor was removed, Lex already noticed an anomaly in his family's behavior. Later on, he got many more hints that everything was not as it seemed, yet he went out of his way to ignore it. Not only did he do his best not to think about them, he kept suppressing all his memories of his life back on Earth so that he would stop recalling the obvious flaws in their behaviors.

But as his cultivation grew, and his mind became more agile, Lex had to work even harder to keep himself occupied, for his mind just kept on picking up clues that he had tried so hard to ignore. As a result, he ended up spending less time on the Inn, for it would not give him the same sense of urgency that being on various planets, exposed to danger did.

But he could not afford to continue on like this any longer, so he had to admit it. His family was keeping secrets from him, and in fact had been behaving in such a way that they made him keep a distance from them while thinking it was his own idea. He felt so clever when he moved to New York to get away from them, and always worked so hard to ensure they would never vacation there. But he knew now that he was just playing the part they wanted.

He felt bitter, he felt disappointed, he felt angry, and much more. But at the end, when all the feelings mixed, the conclusion it reached was that Lex no longer cared. He did not want to go back to Earth and confront them for a truth that would probably be disappointing.

Since they were keeping a distance from him, and keeping secrets, then he felt no need to return to them either. It was a shame about his younger sisters, truly it was for there was a good chance that they had no choice in whatever matter was going on. But no one alive could ever force Belle to do what she didn't want to do, so he knew that she was definitely complicit.

No matter what the secret was, or what the reasoning behind it, since they chose to keep him at an arm's length, he would do the same. It was not an easy decision, and one he had been avoiding for he knew that if he ever confronted the truth this is probably what he would end up doing. But he could no longer afford to be distracted, so this was a truth he had to face, and a decision he had to make.

In a way, since he decided to cut off ties with his family, for now at least, Lex felt a burden ease. As a normal human being who loved his family this was not an easy decision, but whether it already existed, or it had been nurtured during his time as the Innkeeper, Lex had a bit of pride that he wasn't willing to give up. Thus, ultimately, this was the only choice. After all, why should he spend his time caring about the people who tried their best to keep him at a distance when he had people right in front of him who put their lives on the line just for his reputation.

With that burden gone, and his mind unfettered, Lex could finally focus completely on the Inn. The truth was Lex's strongest trait was his mind. Considering the stupidity he had displayed recently, one would not think so, but that was only because Lex usually felt it was a hassle and that it wasn't worth it.

Now, with all distractions gone and an unprecedented focus and will governing his actions, it was finally time to put his intellect to use.

Lex reappeared in his office only to find that Luthor was already standing there, a cup of fresh coffee waiting for him on a tray.

"Welcome back," Luthor said, as he offered the Innkeeper the coffee he had missed last time.

"We have a lot of work to do," was all Lex replied as he picked up the mug and took a sip.

His solemn mask was almost broken as he barely managed to keep himself from grimacing. The coffee was too bitter.