

Innkeeper 451

The Innkeeper

Chapter 451: 1 week

The following week was both extremely long and unbelievably short for Lex. The system took care of so many aspects of each event for Lex that he really had no trouble hosting an event, yet at the same time that ease is what got in the way of making an event perfect. Since Lex, as well as all the workers, were so used to the system doing all the work, they never really put any thought into putting in that extra bit of effort to push them from great to mind blowing.

This time though, Lex wanted to focus on not only all the small details to make it perfect, he had to make sure there were no issues either. Moreover, while a grand spectacle was good to amuse large crowds, he wanted his guests to experience being personally involved as well.

The first thing that was required was the Planning division's research on events in the Origin realm. As it turned out, due to the nature of cultivation, and the longevity that it brings, all events were usually paced out and happened over long periods of time. Moreover, there was a clear period of momentum that the festival would build up during that long time, culminating in the perfect finale.

In an ideal scenario, that grand finale should have been the peak of the festival but for various reasons Lex could not afford to do that. Still, all was not at a loss for Lex still found a way to spin things.

The idea of an event, or a festival focused around cultivation was not new, and while all the events in them had to do with distributing cultivation resources and breakthrough opportunities, in contrast to Lex's event that was full of carnival style activities, they also had a clear pattern Lex could follow.

The higher the cultivation, the longer period each person would spend in retreat after each breakthrough. In that case, a 3 month event was ideal. In fact, it could even be longer depending on cultivation levels. There were precedents for events that lasted years and even decades!

Of course, they also had a long waiting time so that everyone could adequately prepare for them.

So, with that in mind, Lex started designing various abodes for the perfect cultivation retreats. Normally, a meditation room would suffice, but when spending weeks or even months in retreat, it was common

to have a larger area, even a mansion that afforded both an ideal cultivation environment as well as a peaceful and calm ambiance to soothe the mind.

The Planning division brought Lex hundreds of examples, and he began working on them immediately.

One of the more popular options was a cultivation cave, for whatever reason. Built into the side of a mountain, it gave the illusion of a sturdy and secure base where one can retreat without worry. While the interior was well designed for functionality and comfort, from the outside its entrance would be completely hidden.

Not only did Lex design them, he designed multiple iterations of them so that guests could choose whatever layout they preferred.

Next were mansions with thick boundary walls and multiple gardens and courtyards inside, filled with fruit trees and beautiful flowers.

Penthouses were also pretty popular. Lex did not want to build multiple highrises just to build penthouses, so he directly created penthouses in the sky at various levels. Not only were they filled with high tech equipment and luxuries, they could be turned invisible from the outside.

There were dozens more abode styles such as on the ground, underneath the ground, in the water, camouflaged, moving etc. that Lex designed. They also provided Lex with a newer understanding of common cultivators, which was that they were an insecure bunch. He couldn't blame them, he himself was always worried about being attacked as well. Maybe they were not so different.

While doing this, Lex also increased the size of the Inn by a massive 100,000 acres for 1 billion MP! While the newly added land was mostly empty, it was not going to be that way for long!

Lex added rolling hills, plains, plateaus, lakes and more. The massive size of land seemed pretty small when he started adding such massive physical features, but he had to do the bare minimum. That was because, soon, the new Minor realms would finish attaching to the Midnight Inn.

Lex had already checked what the result of that would be. Their physical land would not get added to the Inn, nor would they become domains of the Inn. Instead, an opening to each Minor realm would randomly become available throughout the Inn.

Lex did not know the exact number of Minor realms, but he suspected they should be less than 100,000, right? That way, there would be one opening every few acres, which would be enough for a secret hunt.

While Lex would not be able to control the Minor realms, he would have perfect control over their entrances. Therefore, his plan was to keep them shut and slowly start opening them when he started an event where guests would be allowed to explore the Minor realms, at their own risk of course. But first, they would have to look for the entrances, which Lex planned on hiding!

While he was at it, Lex hid numerous treasures and small rewards all across the Inn's terrain. The last time he did this, Lex could hide naught but bottles of Botlam dew and a few other rewards. Now, however, Lex hid anything and everything available. From weapons to foods to MP packets to special tokens that awarded free stays at the various rooms the Inn had available to more, Lex turned the Inn into a massive treasure horde!

Of course, these treasures he hid a little more carefully. He wouldn't tell anyone about them either. Luck would play a role in deciding who got what.

While doing all of this, Lex had to combat his own progressing cultivation, and it was definitely a battle. It was in those moments where he learned the meaning of desperation.

It reminded him of an old memory, where he needed to use the restroom really badly, but there was none available for another 10 minutes. Each and every second back then had lasted an eternity, so much so that Lex was still traumatized by the event. Now, he was going through another version of that.

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Chapter 452: Decor

The preparations for the festival went far beyond preparing a few abodes and expanding the regions - speaking of which, he allocated a 100 acres flat lands far from all current attractions and gave it exclusively to the Gardener so he could finally complete his landscaping artwork.

Of the numerous other tasks, both minor and significant, that Lex did, decorating the Inn was one which required more of Lex's time than anything. The Inn had to look both festive yet at the same time calming and beautiful.

Making the Inn look mirthful was obviously important, for the festivities would feel incomplete otherwise. Yet, since cultivation was a big theme as well, an environment which soothed the mind was imperative. After all, cultivation, while sometimes comfortable and relaxing, could also be strenuous and overwhelming. As such, it was extremely important to maintain a calm and collected state of mind. While most of that work would obviously be undertaken by the cultivator themselves, creating an environment conducive to the task was the bare minimum one could do.

As such, they decided that dense population areas would be decorated according to the ongoing activities, but the further one got from places such as the village and Main street, the more soothing the environment would be.

This was the area where the Planning division's prowess showed. While Lex would have ended up recreating decor derived from Earthen culture, they incorporated ideas from multiple planets.

Lights were hung up across buildings, though they were not connected through wires or actually connected to the buildings. Using some advanced technology from the Vegus planets, an invisible pathway was laid out over all the buildings along which the colorful lights flowed like water traveling down a stream. Only, they were not limited to just different colors. Beautiful designs and patterns were intricately formed, changing at random as they traveled across the buildings and streets.

Immersive tags were created which would be passed out to the guests, and depending on where they were and what activities they were watching or participating in, they would see different decor and hear different music. Two people standing side by side who were focused on separate events would have differing experiences in every sense!

Recalling some of his education from back at the academy at the Crystal realm, Lex knew that even spirit energy could have different accents or scents, and enhance a person's aura and presence, though usually it was something that had to be consciously cultivated. He integrated that feature into each and every part of the Inn, so each place would genuinely feel unique in every sense.

Moving further away from the crowded areas of the Inn, the kind of decor changed. Instead of lights and music and such designed to entice and invigorate the senses, the focus here was more on nature and natural energies.

Lex was once again limited in his ideas, which included planting blooming cherry blossom and almond trees. Entire fields with trees full of pink and white flowers filled the Inn. Jasmine shrubs were planted in the wild and near winding paths, filling the Inn with their pleasant scent.

The Planning division, who had obviously done their research, took things a step further and gave Lex a list of other flora to add. An entire forest of trees with purple crystal leaves appeared, which grew gems and diamonds instead of fruits.

Massive flowers that were taller than trees with stems thicker than an ordinary man were grown, dotting the landscape. These flowers, which looked awfully similar to sunflowers, grew leaves in a peculiar spiraling design around the stem, acting as a staircase for anyone to climb the top. The natural scent was extremely refreshing and had a natural purifying effect on the environment.

A number of peculiar shrubs were also planted, with yellow and orange-colored leaves instead of green. Yet the color of their leaves was not their peculiarity. No, instead, at night the shrubs would shrink and absorb all their leaves until they formed the shape of a random animal, after which the shrub would relocate.

Furthermore, upon the request of the division, despite Lex's reluctance, he added a number of insects to the Inn. Although previously he had stuck to butterflies, since they were obviously beautiful, this time he added a list of insects which, surprisingly, immediately made the Inn better!

Honey bees and ladybugs Lex was familiar with, but the rest were small and beautiful critters that came from various other planets. They did not look creepy, but instead took the shape of fairies, of flowers, of orbs of light and more.

As if that was not enough, the way they interacted with the plants released a natural accent into the surrounding spiritual energy, hinting at the fact that the Inn was finally developing an ecosystem that was not completely dependent on the system itself.

Of course, none of these plants or insects just randomly appeared. Back when Lex had to bring in animals and trees from Earth, he had to get seeds or bring a few specimens in first before the Inn could replicate them. It was the same now as well, the only difference being the use of the Guild room made it, so he didn't have to source these things himself.

Which was good, because even all of these were just some of the things that went into the preparation for the event. Yet ultimately, through the assistance of the system, the workers and some extra effort on his part, everything went smoothly.

The week finally passed, and only a few hours remained before the event began. A massive crowd had already gathered at the Inn, not that Lex had to cater to them himself.

He was currently focused on keeping his cultivation steady. In his meditation room, a shirtless Lex could be seen balancing his body only on the tip of his middle finger. His body was raised vertically in the air, and beads of sweat rolled down his body as he did continuous push ups with only his finger.

In the background, the camera that was recording him was completely irrelevant, and the tiny spray bottle filled with artificial sweat- eh, the tiny spray bottle filled with water, had absolutely nothing to do with his current actions. Yes, he had merely sprayed water on himself to cool down and not because his incredible, amazing physical prowess made it difficult for him to sweat under normal conditions.

He was merely using physical exercise to keep his body strained and prevent it from breaking through, yes. Lex definitely had not considered starting a calisthenic YouTube page in his free time at all. He really did not have the time for that.

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Chapter 453: One final detail

"Lex, will you come for the opening ceremony?" Mary asked, as she appeared in his meditation room. Although his shirtless state made her feel slightly embarrassed, she had encountered him admiring his abs enough times to learn to ignore it now.

It was not something he could explain to her. As someone who always wanted abs, but had never achieved them, the excitement he felt whenever he saw them was not something that would wane easily. Moreover, after the latest series of 'body sculpting', as Lex called it, carried out by the Lotus, his body looked even more impressive.

The greatest tragedy was that usually he would either be in Leo form or as the Innkeeper, so the universe was deprived of his dashing good looks.

"Not for this," Lex answered as he lowered his body to the ground and finally sat down. "As the Innkeeper, if I make an appearance for every little thing, then it would be considered a waste of my time. I'll make an appearance when I'm about to use the star increase token."

In fact, there was one more reason why Lex was avoiding making a public appearance. Though a lot of time had passed by, he was still not able to adapt to his new physical strength completely. The pushups he was doing earlier were actually a part of his training regime to improve his control over his strength and balance.

If it were a minor issue Lex could still ignore it, but he had accidentally snapped a tree during the last week, and he didn't want to take such a chance with a guest.

"Send Luthor to give the opening speech, he should be able to handle it. I made a small mistake with the timing, so the hired security personnel will only show up once the event actually starts. Make sure to brief them immediately and have them spread out across the Inn. Have someone from the Inn's Security team with them at all times so that if they need to teleport in case of an incident, they can."

Although the event would actually begin today, the first week was more of a soft opening, with the real purpose being to give others enough time to come to the Inn in time for the star increase token to be used.

As such, while no major activity was planned during this time, there were countless small ones.

There would be countless tournaments that would span the week, starting from traditional card games such as poker, to more niche games that involve trading cards. There would also be actual sport competitions, including various sports from earth as well as other planets. Video game and virtual game tournaments were, of course, also being held.

There would also be an art competition, with various fields such as painting, sculpting, gem forging, which was a thing in the universe apparently, and more.

Other than competitions, there would be countless stalls set up across the Inn filled with games and activities. There would also be a number of lucky draws, awarding guests MP prizes and free stays at the

Inn, musical and theatrical performances, local markets which would actually allow guests to set up stalls and, finally, firework competitions.

Of course, they would not be real fireworks, but illusions cast by cultivators. Still, they would be judged for their beauty and performance.

While such events would continue all three months, Lex had planned other larger and more significant events later on to keep things interesting.

This should keep things interesting and keep his early guests satisfied until the main event starts.

While Lex was not making an appearance at this time, it did not mean he would be ignoring the event. He took a quick shower before he dressed up in his Host Attire and teleported to his office.

From his chair his connection to the Inn would be increased, and would allow him to respond to any developing situation immediately.

"By the way, did you think of any good solutions to the teleportation issue?"

That was something he wanted to resolve before the event began, whether he had a perfect solution or not. He could not afford any mistakes when potentially millions of guests were about to arrive at the Inn. He and Mary had exchanged multiple ideas over the course of the past week.

"The best solution, for now, I think is the one we discussed about authorization. When a guest is returning, the Inn should determine if the guest has the authorization to go to the location he is teleporting to. If not, he is teleported to the nearest area that he does have the authorization for."

"It's too vague, what if they get teleported to the vacuum of space? We'd be killing off our guests."

Lex sighed. In fact, there were proper solutions to this, but the issue was that the Inns teleportation ability seemed incredibly powerful, but was actually severely stunted. To teleport to and from anywhere, the system required an anchor. The planets that were connected to the system were

anchors, and any place a guest teleported from automatically became anchors, but anywhere else in the universe was not an anchor.

This was information he received when he previously tried to edit the teleportation ability. Apparently, once the system recovered some more this issue would get easier to resolve. Until then...

Lex wrote a long and as thorough document as he was able detailing a safe way to use the authorization technique Mary previously described. He tried to cover as many possible loopholes as possible that would end up killing or harming the guest or anyone else and provided as many fail safes as possible.

Once he was done, he submitted it to the system and completed his quest. The Inns' teleportation ability had been slightly altered. Hopefully it wouldn't cause any issues.

On the bright side, his latest reward allowed him to upgrade his Butter knife once again.

His last upgrade had converted it into a Fruit Knife and allowed him to one shot golden core cultivators at the Inn. He was looking forward to seeing what the next upgrade would bring.

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Chapter 454: Pacifier

A 10 feet wide, bronze colored watermelon appeared on Lex's desk, as if it was the most ordinary thing in the world. Lex, too, did not show an abnormal reaction to the massive watermelon, and simply summoned the Fruit Knife and dug deep into the watermelon.

The massive watermelon began to glow, as massive, bronze watermelons normally do when they are being absorbed by a magical knife to upgrade itself. The process would take some time so Lex brought his attention back to the Inn.

A scan of the Inn right before the event began showed a little under 1 million guests. Even if not a single extra guest showed up, and he maintained this number of participants for the entire 3 months, Lex would make 4.5 times more MP than he spent on the event just from the room rent. Just that thought put a smile on his face.

The opening ceremony took place at the colosseum in the village and featured Luthor giving a long and meaningful speech. This was already different from how Lex would have done things. Back when he hosted the Midnight Games, not a single one of speeches went longer than a few minutes. Still, that wasn't a bad thing. There are different expectations from different people, so for Luthor to give a long speech that enticed the emotions of those listening was not only a good thing, it was exactly what was expected of him.

The end of the opening ceremony was marked with exploding lights and a musical performance by one of the flocks of musical avian beasts who performed during the Midnight Games.

But, more importantly, it was also marked by an exhibition fight between two Golden Core cultivators which got a much more enthusiastic response.

These included some of the preparations Lex had to make in advance during the past week. Many things the system could take care of, but coordinating the schedules of actual people, it could not. Of course, the system made it very simple to hire them, so he wasn't complaining either.

While keeping up with all the activities, and the guests who were mostly focused in the village at the moment, Lex also checked up on the hired security. Thousands of Golden Core, hundreds of Nascent realm and dozens of Earth immortal humans showed up, and quickly changed into the suit and tie uniform of the Inn. Like previously, there was one cultivator above the Earth immortal realm, but it was not a dragon this time.

Instead, it was a Griffin. The creature had the body, tail and the rear legs of a lion, yet the face and wings of an eagle, with talons instead of front paws. Also, it was massive, with a height of nearly 40 feet, and a wingspan of nearly 200 feet!

The Griffin proudly perched itself on top of the spaceship, and surveyed the area with its head held high.

Lex was genuinely impressed, and even wondered for a moment where these hired guards came from. Perhaps he'd ask them using his Leo persona later, but for now he continued to survey the Inn.

Some familiar faces that he hadn't seen in a while started popping up. Alexander reappeared, though he was seriously injured and went directly into the Recovery pod. Lex did not fail to notice that Alexander's

cultivation had regressed, and he was once again in the Qi training realm. It was unusual and Lex even thought something went wrong, but he did not look upset or alarmed.

He also saw Chen Lee and Lily, as well as Blane and Iris. Chen and Blane were some of Lex's oldest guests, and in fact had arrived at the Inn being dragged in by a zombie. How things had changed in just a single year. Chen and Lily were wealthy from running their business, and Blane had gotten married to his girlfriend Iris. They were having a reunion at the Inn, catching up and sharing details of their new lives.

He saw Golden Hair, the sloth of Nibiru, followed closely by Greens Haven, the deer, and Blood Fang, the wolf. He remembered the massive pressure he had felt the first time he saw them. Back then he couldn't even view their cultivation levels due to his low authority. Now, of course, he could see that they were at the Nascent level, with the sloth being an Earth Immortal.

While scanning the Inn he also discovered Larry, and while he was going to continue scanning the Inn, he heard them having an interesting conversation. Larry was sitting next to a few other guys, planning how to kill someone called Suzuki!

Well, apparently, the other person wanted to kill Larry first, so Larry wanted to kill him before he could get the chance. The problem was the guy in question had a very powerful follower who always obeyed his orders, and it was difficult to find him alone.

Lex noticed how, from time to time, Larry would lick his lips and stare at the spaceship, but did not focus on it too much. Instead, he looked for the person Larry wanted to kill, and actually discovered him at the Inn! He also discovered the-

Lex froze! He had scanned both the man and his follower to learn more about them, but the followers status was showing up with the all too familiar '*&%error%&*' sign! Why was he, as a system wielder, another man's follower?

Before Lex could think of an answer, he once again scanned the entire Inn. Only this time, he was specifically looking for the error message in scans. Other than John and Ming Jie, of whom he already knew, there was another girl with the familiar error message.

Countless ideas flashed through Lex's mind as he thought about what to do, or if he should do anything at all to begin with.

"Mary, send Larry a message through his hologram. Tell him about the Murder Ground, and how he can challenge someone to a one versus one battle to the death there."

A few different ideas had occurred to Lex over why a system wielder would be following a normal person. But regardless of what the answer was, if Larry tried to fight him... Lex did not see great odds for his survival. In that case, a fight directly with the man in the Murder Grounds was the best option, if a confrontation was inevitable.

"Also, Mary, send a message to Velma. I want to know everything about these two people she can discover."

The two people were, of course, Souta, the wielder of the Samurai system, and the girl who was accompanying J.F.K.

While he made a mental note to keep an eye on them, he could not focus on them completely. After all, he had an entire event to monitor.

Oddly enough, the next two to attract Lex's attention were some of his own workers. Anita, the beautiful lich, and Qawain, the sentient sword, had asked for the day off and were on a date. Considering that Lex anticipated additional security, he didn't see any reason why he couldn't give them a break.

So the fact that they were together, and on a date, wasn't what attracted his attention. Instead, it was the fact that behind Anita, a group of her undead were pulling along a massive stroller.

Inside the stroller was a creature Anita was claiming to have adopted, and the member of his own race that Abroar had brought to the Inn.

Even without the need for a scan, Lex recognized the creature, for Lex had been doing research on the more common, as well as the famous races of the Origin realm via the Henali portal. Still, to be sure, he scanned Anita's new adopted child anyway.

Name: None

Age: 03

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: Golden Core equivalent

Species: Cthulhu

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Remarks: Even living nightmares start out as babies.

It was as he thought. The creature was from a race called Cthulhu, the terrors from the great depth of the unknown universe! Before their mysterious disappearance a few hundred thousand years ago, they were responsible for the destruction of hundreds of galaxies. According to rumors, they were so terrifying that if one were to even look at them directly, they would lose their sanity and die from pure fear! Their voice alone, apparently, could cause the souls of those who heard it to wither and die. Instead of food, these beings fed on pain, fear, anguish, desperation and all sorts of negative emotions.

No one knew how or why their presence from the realm disappeared one day, but the fact that it did is still celebrated across the realm! Yet despite their apparent disappearance, one was being raised right here, at the Midnight Inn, adopted by its foster mother, a lich.

Lex could not help but sigh as he wondered if the system would automatically keep guests safe from the horror of the baby's cries, or if he should gift the unusual couple a pacifier capable of pacifying the eldritch horror that was their new child.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 455: Spaceship upgrades

In truth, Lex was not that worried. The system had always been reliable when it came to blocking passive attacks, so neither the sight nor the sound of the baby would cause any insanity. Though Lex could not account for anyone's loss of appetite.

The 'baby' who was fast asleep was a little over 25 feet (7.6 meters) in height. Its humanoid form did nothing to make it more amenable to the eyes, for the scaly tentacles that came out of its face took more than a bit of effort to ignore. The wings that spread out from behind its back might have given it a semblance of cuteness had they not been tipped with points hard and sharp enough to tear through metal.

As if all of that was not enough, then came the smell. Anita, as a new aspiring mother, did not lack for research in raising kids, and while she did her research, she learned of the common practice on earth to powder babies to help prevent rashes. As such, the dichotomy of the horror inducing sight, alongside the welcoming and pleasant smell of baby powder, was enough to confuse and horrify anyone.

Lex shook his head and turned his attention elsewhere. Since this was a festival, there were obviously many who brought their kids along. For those who wanted to keep their children on their own, there was an entire Inn filled with attractions to partake in. Yet Lex did not forget those who only wanted to drop off their kids, or wanted to roam separately from them.

One would think that to cater to such a situation, Lex would have just brought the festivities to the daycare area, yet that was not so. It was too obvious, and too boring. No, Lex had turned the entire spaceship into the new daycare!

The first thing to do was adjust its appearance just a bit. Truth be told, its size was so massive that it was hard for anyone to get a good look at its entire body from so close. Still, that did not mean Lex would ignore that aspect of it.

He did not disgrace the ship by making it colorful or plastering cartoons over it. No, he first cleaned up the ship for signs of wear and use were evident to anyone who paid attention. Once he restored the proper sheen of the silver vessel, in close collaboration with the planning department who cross checked against thousands of other spaceships, he added various weapons, though of course they did not work and existed only for appearances, esthetic curves and overall made it much more appealing to look at.

There was also an upper and lower deck found on top and at the bottom of the ship made of a transparent material like glass, but much more resilient, which Lex improved and made comfortable for anyone who would want to sit and enjoy the view. Of course, there were restaurants and cafes found in every corner as well.

The real changes that Lex made for the kids, however, were inside the ship. The automated, accelerated transport system for the crew of the ship was all too easy to modify using the system and turn into infinite slides and roller coasters of sorts.

The self maintenance and cleaning feature was extremely useful and worked everywhere, so Lex did not hesitate to turn the various portions of the ship into mazes and playgrounds. The antigravity and space combat practice chambers were retrofitted by Lex and turned into an extreme tag zone!

The self-sufficient farms of the ship were kept mostly intact, but Lex made areas where kids could play in the dirt, or try their hand at farming if they wished. There were swimming pools that seemed to never end, all with convenient, underwater breathing equipment readily available, so Lex did not forget to add underwater rides and playgrounds either.

Of course, not all kids were hyperactive and wanted to play all the time, and for them there were cozy areas with toys, food, sofas, beds and more.

The rabbits were in charge of running this new daycare yet again, much to their dismay. Lex, however, thought the idea would work out quite well. And it did.

The reaction to the newly upgraded spaceship/playground was so overwhelming that a multitude of adults wanted to join in as well. Well, so long as they didn't bother the kids, Lex saw no reason to stop them.

It had to be mentioned that the ship's own internal security system was extraordinarily impressive. That, alongside the extra hired security, ensured that the kids would stay the safest in the entire Inn.

Of course, using more of the ship's features increased Lex's expenses. After all, he did not have an appropriate energy source for the ship, and so powered it with MP. Still, since the use was barely 1%, if even, of the ships' capabilities, so the expense was bearable.

The popularity of the spaceship playground that Lex had built was only matched by the popularity of all the festival's activities, if only just. All-in-all the festival seemed to be going incredibly well. As if that was not enough, hardly anyone was causing any problems, so it almost seemed as if security wasn't needed.

Lex just thought his luck was turning up, but it had more to do with the hearth burning the souls of his enemies right at the entrance of the Inn than Lex realized. It was both a warning to any troublemakers, as well as reassurance to guests with security concerns that the Inn was not a place that just anyone could cause problems at.

A few hours passed by and all seemed to be going well when Lex got the news that Larry had decided to challenge Suzuki in the Murder Grounds.

The Murder Grounds were a new feature his Inn gained after Lex killed the man with the Murder system. Its original ability allowed Lex to target anyone so long as they were on a planet connected to the Inn, and teleport both the target and himself to the Murder Ground. Lex had to be physically touching someone to target them for the Murder Ground. Once there, both of them would be trapped there until one killed the other. There was no recourse. But it had gained an additional feature, which allowed Lex to rent the Murder Ground out so that anyone with a feud had a neutral location to resolve it. The concept was the same, and neither party would be able to leave until the other died. In the case of renting it out, entire armies could be brought in instead of just a one versus one.

Of course, when renting, both parties had to consent to using it.

Lex scanned the Inn, and found Larry confronting Suzuki in public. A few people had stopped to watch the drama, though most seemed to be passing them by.

"Oh come now, Mr. Larry. Is there a need to go so far? I told you, we both have much to gain. I have a lead on your family, and you can help me pursue my own goals if you help me with that. Why are you letting rumors spread by some strangers get in between such a lucrative deal?"

"You don't need to give me a speech, you just need to tell me if you accept. You'll never get a chance such as this to fight me again. Of course, the only premise is, you'll have to fight me yourself instead of relying on that lackey of yours."

Larry, naturally, would not make such drastic decisions if he only had to rely on the information given to him by Anakin. It was just that, once Anakin gave him the information about Suzuki, it was easy for Larry to verify it on his own. After all, Larry himself was more than just adept at using computers, and had access to all sorts of networks and databases.

Suzuki finally stopped smiling, and looked at him with a semblance of irritation. This one stupid bounty that he had accepted had taken up months of his time.

Moreover, he saw no other method to resolve it any time soon either for Larry either kept hiding at the Inn or in King Marlo's house. Both were places where he could not afford to make a move.

"Fine, brat. I accept your challenge."

A small, digital window appeared in front of both of them detailing the rules of the Murder Grounds and asking them if they were sure they agreed. After they both selected yes, they received another prompt, asking if they wanted their match to be streamed live!

Without hesitation, both of them selected no!

Suzuki wanted to keep his identity and occupation secret, while Larry had secrets of his own to keep.

After that, both of them were teleported away. Of course, Lex could still view their battle himself, and saw that they had both appeared in a familiar set of ruins. In fact, not only was it familiar, the damage from Lex's battle with the murderer was still there.

The two did not waste time sightseeing and immediately began their battle, and one of them had an immense advantage right from the get go! Lex's eyes widened as he struggled to understand what he was seeing.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 456: It's a party

It was not the fact that Larry was in the Golden Core realm that surprised Lex, although that in itself was an achievement beyond unbelievable. After all, Lex himself had a cheat-like system and access to multiple worlds and realms and beings of unimaginable power, yet he himself was only now about to enter that realm. Yet Larry, who did not have a system and was trapped on earth, except when he was at the Inn, had somehow surpassed his speed. In fact, not only was his speed in reaching the realm remarkable, based on the fight, Lex could tell that his cultivation was not shallow either. He possessed strength that could not be achieved by someone who had only rushed his way through cultivation using resources.

He was also not surprised at the enhancements Suzuki displayed on his body. Sure, he was not expecting that Suzuki's hand was a prosthetic, and that it quickly and conveniently turned into some kind of energy machinegun fueled by spirit energy. The blue light in his eyes and him jumping dozens of feet in the air also insinuated that there might be more technological advancements hidden in his body, or just that he had strange techniques.

No, what surprised Lex was Larry's fighting style. First of all, he was taking all the attacks without any indication of wanting to dodge at all. That was something Lex should be doing, considering his overwhelming confidence in his defense, yet Larry was behaving the same. The barrage of green energy balls that were slamming onto his body had eviscerated his clothes, but did nothing to a single one of his hairs. As if that was not enough, as Larry rushed towards Suzuki, he pulled an entire sword out of his hand! Literally!

Using his right hand he touched his left, and when he pulled his right hand back, a full length sword started coming right out of the palm of his hand. The sword shone with a silver light, and cut through the air with a sharp 'sheen' sound.

Suzuki dodged effortlessly, and more unexpected and bizarre weapons started coming out of his body.

Lex put a popcorn in his mouth - when did that box of popcorn appear even he didn't recall - and watched with great interest. He also compared this fight to his own that had been fought in the very same place. While every single move Larry and Suzuki took was much more destructive, he felt like there was a lot more going on in his own fight. From strange mind tricks to illusory attacks to the weird luck that the murderer had, there was a lot going on that Lex had to overcome. Comparatively, this fight was more straightforward. Even if each attack packed much more strength.

Lex wanted to lament the difficulty of fighting a system wielder, but he knew that he should not underestimate others either. He recalled the numerous abilities and techniques Alexander put on display back at the Midnight Games when he himself was only in the Foundation realm as well. Lex was not ashamed to admit that even now he probably knew fewer techniques than Alexander.

It couldn't be helped, Lex had only been cultivating for a year while everyone else had a huge head start on him.

Soon the pattern of the fight changed from Larry trying to get close and attacking, to Suzuki maintaining a distance and attacking from range. Larry finally suffered an attack which managed to wound him, though not by much.

Still, it was unusual for Larry wasn't bleeding even if his skin had been torn open. Just as Lex was wondering why that was, Larry did the thing that had truly blown Lex's mind. He took out a commemorative coin that Lex had distributed during the Midnight Games, made of a rare metal that was not too valuable, but would preserve the token for a very long time. Then he threw the coin in his mouth and swallowed it! A few moments later, his wound started healing!

Lex was flabbergasted, and finally realized what Aegis would have felt like back in the Crystal realm when he swallowed that energy crystal.

After a while, Lex had to divert his attention from the fight. It was clear that it would go on for a long time, and Lex had to keep an eye on the Inn as well. Not that anything was going horribly wrong, but Lex would rather not wait before something went wrong to give his attention.

Slowly, the hours rolled by. Lex noticed a few guests from the Crystal realm as well, such as the Sentinels or Poliods. He guessed they had come in from the random golden doors that opened up across the realm. He could see the signature wary behavior of new guests from them.

Speaking of the crystal realm, Aegis had already informed him that Zagan had used the platinum key. If he managed to pass the test, the system designed for him, he would soon become a member of the Inn.

Still, Aegis himself had not decided whether or not he wanted to join the Inn yet, and Lex couldn't be bothered by that. What he had been doing was bringing others to the Midnight Inn one by one. That had obviously included the Noel family.

It should not have been such a big concern for Lex. After all, the Midnight tavern had already attracted an unnecessary amount of attention, so even if the Noel family made the connection between the two it did not matter.

No, the real reason Lex was... slightly perturbed by the presence of the Noel family was that their daughter, Greta Noel, and now the recently unaffiliated 'Pvarti Party' had also come to the Inn.

Greta had joined the poker tournament and was a natural at it, although she insisted on playing strip poker! God only knew how she came up with the idea, for it shouldn't have been something that existed in the Crystal realm. Moreover, while the Inn itself was not enforcing the rules of strip poker, the Inn also couldn't stop guests if they decided to take a few articles of clothing off.

So, the previously extremely intense and very popular poker tournament had become even more popular, though there was a distinct lack of tension. How could anyone be tense when a group of old men in their boxers, accompanied by beasts who would shed a portion of their fur every time they lost. On the other side of the table, Greta, who was unnaturally skilled at the game, was over encumbered by the stacks of clothing she had won since, for some reason, she insisted on wearing all her winnings!

She also had people lining up to win her hand in marriage, pending approval from her father, but to prove themselves they had to complete a list of trials that she set.

Lex remembered that he had been warned about Pvarti's sister back in the crystal realm so he had a lot of guards stationed nearby in case she caused problems, but these were not problems he was equipped to handle! She was also selling the right to name one of her fingers through an informal auction. What did that even mean and why was the highest bid already in the hundreds of thousands of MP?

Well, none of it was against the rules so Lex could only look away. But the problem with looking away was that he would end up looking at the 300,000 people long conga line being led by an inebriated Pvarti! Again, it was not against the rules. It was just that it created a logistical problem which was that the unnecessarily long line was blocking numerous roads, buildings and, most importantly, bathrooms!

How did he even build a line this long? The festival hadn't even been going on for a day!

A part of Lex felt he should consider himself lucky that this was the only problem he was having. In fact, he even calmed down. It really was a good thing.

Then his heart dropped as he saw Brandon Morrison, his wife Audrey, as well as Marlo and his wife getting ready to join.

Lex sighed and closed his eyes. Well, it is a festival after all. He shouldn't blame people for partying. And it wasn't as if one can be expected to party within limits. Just as long as they don't start fighting anyone randomly.

Lex decided to look away and focus on something else. He noticed that the number of Devils at the Inn was at an all time high. Oddly enough, despite the bias that Lex had for them, they had never caused Lex any problems. That was contrary to what one would expect from a race that controlled demons and used entire planets as farms for resources that could only be nurtured through death and destruction.

He hoped that wouldn't change now, and that they would continue to ignore the fact that Lex had personally aided in the loss of some of their planet farms!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 457: 20 mil

Despite Lex's numerous concerns, the festival did not devolve into complete chaos with the inclusion of the various maniacal guests. Though Lex did quickly learn that cultivators capacity for partying was much longer and harder than ordinary folk - something he should have expected.

The fact that Lex now had a selection of various drinks due to the addition of the Midnight tavern did not do anything to calm the situation down either. Though Lex was raking in MP, so what was the harm?

Around the night of the second day, the Mystery trial finally finished updating. The process was marked by an unusual phenomenon of golden light shining down from the heavens, right onto the door. Although that was not something Lex had planned, everyone assumed that it was a part of the festival.

The Mystery trial could now accommodate more than one guest at a time, which greatly increased the number of people who could have access to it. Previously, only on average 10 to 11 people could use it during the day due to which, while it was almost always in use, its contribution to the MP income was minimal.

The only other change it underwent was an enhancement on its already existing ability to train peoples best skill. It was something Lex himself had never tried yet, and that made him wonder what his best skill was. He would think about trying it himself once the pressure from his impending breakthrough went down.

Besides the Mystery trial, another thing that attracted a lot of attention was the Guest Registry. Although Lex had claimed that he would ignore it till he felt better, he was taking everything much more

seriously now. As such, while he did not create a separate area for it and left it at the Midnight manor, he spread information about it among his guests via the workers and holograms.

There was just one minor issue that he had not anticipated. Despite thousands of guests already signing it, his name was still on top. Lex had, of course, anticipated the exposure his name would get due to him already signing it, but it never occurred to him that his name might remain on top. After all, while he had quite a few accomplishments under his belt, he was merely 24 years old. With guests who lived well into the thousands of years, as well as cultivators from across the realms, he did not think his achievements would hold any measure.

Unfortunately, no matter who else signed, his name remained firmly on top. It had begun attracting attention, and over the next few days, the identity and achievements of this so-called 'Lex Williams' was called into question. Of course, no one dared to question the Inn. But amongst themselves, they wondered.

Even Marlo, who had signed it, and was currently in the top 10, wondered if this was the same Lex as the one he knew. It seemed unlikely. After all, despite his many other achievements, the only reason Marlo was in the top 10 was because of him achieving a status as a Prime. He had embarked on a new cultivation journey, different from one anyone else he knew had ever faced.

To give a better idea of how great an achievement this was, Brandon Morrison, Alexander's grandfather, and the person who brought the Morrison family to its current height, was not even in the top 10,000 signatories! He literally owned the planet of Mars, yet that achievement could not even get him close to the top.

Lex could not help but think that establishing the Midnight Inn was being counted as his achievement and keeping him on top. If that was the case, he could not see anyone replacing his name any time soon. This... could have some problems.

Besides that, on the 6th day, the battle between Larry and Suzuki finally ended. Larry's condition was... far from ideal. He was missing his left arm, though he still wasn't bleeding. He didn't even go to the Recovery pod, and instead began chomping down on a few metallic items.

This wasn't the first time Lex had seen this peculiarity, to be honest. The first time was when Lex left Larry a golden key, and only a short while later, he suffered from an assassination attempt. Back then, under the guidance of the system, Lex had fed Larry the metal casings of his bullet from the Heavy Harley, since that was the only precious metal he had at the time.

The scope of this ability really bewildered Lex. The craziest thing was that Lex could confirm that Larry was still a human despite his... oddities. He sincerely wondered if he could get the same ability. Not that Lex was weak by any measure, but healing was a persistent issue with him.

While for the moment he had the Lotus to help him in that regard, he did not want to rely on someone else forever.

But that would all come later. As the days passed, Lex's attention was increasingly on the 7th and most important day, at least for himself. He had even made regular appearances as Leo during this time to make sure people see him, but as the end of the first week approached, he stopped doing everything else and focused only on this.

He informed all the security to be extra cautious, and even summoned over 50,000 additional security personnel, only this time they were mortals. This was in case everyone else was forced into a state of breakthrough in their cultivation. The Griffin assured him that it would be fine, but Lex didn't want to take a chance.

After all, during the last week, the number of guests at the Inn had surpassed 20 million! That wasn't even the greatest issue. The most common guest at the Inn was no longer human. Instead, they were Devils. 13 million Devils were inhabiting the Inn at the moment, and it was extremely nerve wracking to know for over 1 million of them, Lex did not have the authority to see their cultivation!

"Everything is going to be just fine," Lex told himself on the dawn of the 7th day.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 458: No big deal

Ragnar stood with his hands behind his back, looking out at the beautiful horizon. The Midnight Inn personified, to him, everything that the human race strived for, and everything he fought to deliver to his brothers and sisters in race. It was peaceful, safe, exciting and accessible.

It was a glimpse of heaven that everyone deserved to experience. But the universe... the universe was not a heavenly place. To be at the Inn right now, to experience this so-called raise in star level which would aid everyone in cultivation, Ragnar had made difficult decisions. The galactic battlefield with the Fuegan needed someone to oversee it always, and if he could not be there, someone else would have to

take his place. But it was a price everyone was happy to pay, even the other generals. After all, Ragnar was the rising star of the empire.

It was difficult to accept such a favor, but for his duty, Ragnar took it. After all, a cultivation retreat for him would not be just a few days. Months was the absolute minimum time he would need.

He had planned on coming to the Inn and stabilizing his mood to ready himself for the impending cultivation retreat. Yet this beautiful piece of heaven did not provide him with the peace he was expecting. Instead, a field of enemies revealed itself.

Devils filled the grounds of the Inn as far as the eye could see, all of them taunting him by keeping their humanoid shape. Devils, for reasons he did not understand, had two forms. One was their original, true form. The other was remarkably close to humans, with only minor additions or changes here and there, in the form of wings, horns, tails etc.

Ragnar had dedicated his life to fighting demons, yet he never forgot that demons were only the Devil's slaves. His greatest wish upon seeing them was to unsheathe his weapon and lay waste to them, even outnumbered as he was. Yet he knew that this was not the place. It was not fear of failure that stayed his hand, but the knowledge that if he made an enemy of the Innkeeper, the human race would lose a valuable ally.

So, he stood silently on a hill, reigning in his volcanic rage, and watched silently as evil incarnate roamed the land freely. One by one, his soldiers also stood behind him, until an entire battalion appeared behind him. They said nothing. They did nothing. But just standing together was enough. It was a show of force. A show of pride.

The devils did not pay much attention to Ragnar, for the most part. They had been extremely well behaved at the Inn. In fact, many of them wished wholeheartedly to become even better friends with the Innkeeper. After all, the access the Inn would give them to the people of the entire universe was far beyond anything they could achieve on their own. And for them, that access meant profits!

There was one, however, who took great interest in teasing the general. Warheil grabbed a lawn chair and sat down directly beside the general, his thin black tail holding a glass of Pina colada so that he could sip it. He didn't even say anything. Just his presence was enough to irritate this fearless human, and he knew it. How funny would he be if this hero of the empire died during a tribulation because he was too irritated to focus?

Not that the empire was too important to the devils. They dealt with multiple realms, so how could a small empire only a few galaxies wide even be worthy of their interest? The empire was only qualified to fight the demons, not them. Even that was naught more than moderate amusement.

Finally, around noon, something changed. A projection of the Innkeeper appeared in front of everyone, alongside a holographic prompt.

It read: 'Would you like to enter a personal cultivation abode before the star rank is raised?'

Ragnar did not immediately respond, and instead turned to look at Warheil.

"After this is over, catch me outside, how about that?" he said, looking the devil straight in the eyes. He had no fear of their racial superiority. Humans may lack their advantages, and have a lower starting point. But there was a ceiling restricting how strong they could grow.

"Certainly," Warheil responded, but Ragnar had already disappeared by then. In the distance, amongst many other soldiers, Alexander watched the small exchange silently.

Lex was not nervous, but the knowledge of how catastrophically bad this could go was at the forefront of his mind. It wasn't like he hadn't had a lot of guests before, but never had he entertained so many who were so powerful.

Moreover, since he couldn't gauge their strengths, he didn't know if they were weaker, equal to or stronger than the Griffin. Fortunately, once they started cultivating, they would not be able to cause any problems.

After mentally preparing himself, Lex sat down in his Meditation room and used the Remote prescience ability to send a projection of himself as the Innkeeper out to everyone. Originally he planned on giving a speech and using the token in public, but suppressing his cultivation was becoming much too difficult. Even the slightest distraction would cause him to lose control and break through, so he decided to do it remotely instead.

"Guests of the Midnight Inn, welcome," said his projection to all. All of the Inns activities and festivities had temporarily stopped, so everyone was looking just at him.

"I'm sure most of you have heard, but for those who haven't, allow me to briefly describe to you what is about to happen. From time to time, I like to raise the level of the Inn. This, in of itself is not a big deal, but many of my guests seem to enjoy the experience, and gain much from it. So, allow me to share this experience with you. And, if you enjoy it, remember to patronize the Inn more often in the future."

He did not elaborate too much, for he wanted to maintain the perception that this was no big deal to him. Yes, no big deal.

After one final scan of the Inn, Lex crushed his 0.5 star rank increase token.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 459: The change

The moment Lex crushed the token, a change took place at the Midnight Inn. A ripple seemed to travel through space itself, bending it as it passed through. The ripple in space caused proverbial knuckle cracks as it caused space to move and return to its original space, though none noticed such a detail, for the sound was at a frequency none at the Inn could hear..

Of course, the cracking sounds were not released randomly. Instead, it was the sound of micro-fissures in the space of the Inn snapping shut after being healed by the ripple. They had been caused by the massive tear that the Inn suffered from due to the attack of the Butter Knife and were left behind because the system had been unable to repair them directly. Yet now, through an indirect result of the rise in star level, the space at the Inn had been repaired.

But while this was one of many ethereal changes that the Inn underwent that nobody noticed, there were a few changes everyone noticed. The most widely noticed change was a ripple of spirit energy that flowed through the Inn - which happened to take place at the same time as the ripple through the Inn.

The stronger cultivators felt the nature of the energy change. It was like a window being opened in a stale room, finally allowing fresh air to flow in. It was the feeling of a cool spring breeze, except that instead of being felt physically on their skin like wind, the energy interacted with their own internal energy and refreshed their minds and bodies.

The weaker cultivators, and even the mortals, however, felt something else entirely. The weaker cultivators felt a rush of energy fill their bodies, making them feel sick and bloated. It was too much too quickly, so much so that they completely lost control over their own energies.

They did not even have time to feel alarm, for the energy immediately began displacing the energy within their own bodies. It did not disperse their cultivation, no. Instead, it changed the very energy that made up their cultivation, improving it, strengthening it.

Across the board, every single one of them immediately felt their cultivation was much stronger and stabler, even if it had not improved yet. Of course, that was still to come. Alexander was amongst them. He had reached the Qi training stage right now, as he was rebuilding his cultivation according to guidance by the Jotun Empire's secret techniques. He was supposed to have been phenomenally strong in his current state even as it was, yet he improved nonetheless.

Mortals, though, went through the most drastic change. Whether it was the guards that Lex had hired, the entourage accompanying more successful people, or the kids in the spaceship who had yet to come of age to cultivate, all of them underwent extreme makeovers.

The wave of spirit energy hit them hard, as if it were a physical sensation, and immediately flooded them with the feeling of nausea.

Jimmy, the kid who discovered the first ever golden key dropped by Lex, and Layla, the daughter of the Governor of Vegus Minima, who were the leaders of their gang of kids, had been playing together when the feeling hit them.

They went pale all of a sudden, and the immense buildup of nausea completely overwhelmed their senses! They dropped to their knees as they lost strength in their limbs and immediately began throwing up.

Partially digested food, blood, puss and strange black materials came out in their vomit, but it also drained them completely from their energies. The kids collapsed, having been knocked unconscious, but the changes to their bodies did not stop just because they were not awake.

Though they suddenly looked frail and starved, the fat on their bones having dissolved, leaving them in a skinny, boney appearance, an unusual strength began to fill them right after they were filled with weakness.

They did not develop muscles as their flesh seemed to fill back into the way it originally was, and their skins retained their softness, yet the strength that was filling their bodies was very real. Many kids who suffered from various inborn diseases and allergies would awake to find them gone. Others who had minor physical and mental defects would discover that they could think clearly, and that their bodies performed better than they ever even dreamed.

The mortals who were adults did not have changes that were as drastic, and they were not knocked unconscious, but they underwent some changes, nonetheless.

Even the normal, common animals that inhabited the Inn underwent a cleansing process

Back when the Inn underwent its first advancement in star ratings, Lex too had been a mortal, but he hadn't undergone any such experience, so he could never have imagined such a thing would happen now. The reason was, back then, the star rating was going from 1 to 1.5. Now it was going from 2 to 2.5. Although both were representing the same numerical change from their respective starting points, the actual change was far from being on the same scale.

The one vine, growing on the cliff side near the pool of lava, also underwent changes, and began growing in the direction of the temple.

While the change in spirit energy was the most obvious, and felt by the most people, it was by no means the most impactful. After all, it had to be remembered that while all the guests at the Inn wrought numerous benefits due to the increase in star rating; it was the Inn itself that was the primary beneficiary!

In the same way that the space itself of the Inn had been strengthened, so too had many other aspects of it. The light itself that shone all around the Inn took on a deeper nature, as if something extra had been added to it. All the greenery took on deeper colors, the ground became firmer - if that made sense - and the air became cleaner.

While all the humans shed visible impurities and unnatural oddities from their bodies, so too did the Inn shed, though its impurities were harder to detect.

The immortals at the Inn could not notice what exactly changed, but nonetheless, they felt that something grand and mysterious had happened. A strange light flashed through Loretta's eyes, the daughter of Ballom, though her thoughts remained a mystery.

Something that the immortals did notice, however, and the thing that was responsible for spontaneously triggering everyone's increase in cultivation, was a ripple through the laws that manifested within the Inn.

Based on their cultivation, they were able to witness a deeper or shallower change in the laws, but they all felt the change to some extent.

A point that had caused much curiosity for the past couple of weeks about the Inn's claim of the increase in star rating was how it would actually aid them in cultivation. Even if there was a wave of pure spiritual energy, it could at most be perceived that it would have some effect on those with a lower cultivation. Yet from the Nascent realm onwards, the nature of cultivation changed and it was no longer about absorbing more or purer spiritual energy. So how then would the change in rating affect them?

The answer was clear now. It was never about the increase in spiritual energy, though a shallow perception of the change may make it appear that way. From the get go, everything was about the laws.

There were other changes that all took place at the same time as well, but neither the mortals, nor the common cultivators nor the immortals noticed, for within a few seconds of the change happening, every living being at the Inn had been occupied by the state of a breakthrough in one way or another.

The Griffin who, due to its strong cultivation, was confident that it would retain its state regardless of what happened, and continue its task, had one of the most severe reactions. Immediately it crushed an unknown token, before retreating to one of the cultivation abodes the Inn offered. In its stead, another being appeared at the Inn to perform its job. The being was covered in a black cloud, so its appearance and race were unknown.

It silently took its place at the peak of the Midnight mountain and surveyed the Inn with its spiritual sense, and took in the odd hush that had fallen over the place.

It was an unusual silence, matched only by the strange stillness that had inhabited the Inn. After all, whether it was the guards, the guests, or the workers, all had retreated to a cultivation abode. The mortals who had experienced the change were still there, but they were currently too exhausted to do anything.

The being in the cloud wondered what had happened. After all, by summoning it to replace it, the Griffin had betrayed its contract, and would have to pay heavy reparations.

Only Mary was left beside the mysterious figure to watch over the Inn, though she was hidden from all.

From a short blissful time, nothing happened at the Inn. Then, the guests who had missed the timing for the change started appearing at the Inn, though they were destined to be disappointed. Not only would they not experience the breakthrough, they would have to wait a bit before some workers got free to help them.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 460: Differing from the norm

For a majority of the guests at the Inn, their change of breakthrough did not last long. From a few minutes in the case of mortals, to a few hours at most ranging from Body tempering to Qi training.

Though the mortals had, overall, gained in strength, they were too exhausted and drained at the moment to do much of anything. Most of them retreated to their rooms to sleep, while a few who had not booked a room had to retreat from the Inn.

The kids on the spaceship had fallen asleep right where they fell. Considering the severe lack of personnel at the Inn, it would have been extremely unsanitary if they remained where they were, for all of them had thrown up right there. Fortunately, the ship's cleaning function was exemplary, and far surpassed something mundane, like vacuuming robots.

In a few minutes, the kids, though still asleep randomly all over the ship, were as clean and spotless as when they arrived at the ship, though it was a shame no one was around to see how it happened.

Soon, the numerous rabbits aboard the ship recovered and began moving the children into the napping stations.

The thousands of mortal guards Lex had hired, under the assumption that they would be the most helpful for he did not imagine that mortals would also be affected, were thoroughly weakened and exhausted. But they quickly injected themselves with stimulants and forced themselves to perform their duties. Though they were all excited about the changes in their body, their job came first.

The quickest to recover after them were the Inns workers, whether they were mortal or cultivators. From the moment of their creation they were inside the Inn, and everything they ate and drank also came from the Inn. They were safe from any pollution and impurities the outside world threatened, and so the changes they went through were less drastic.

Most of them had also been cultivating as well anyway, though not everyone was as adept or successful as Gerard or Z. With this recent upgrade, most had firmly reached the peak of Body tempering, or entered Qi training. It could be imagined how in a few decades at most, all of these workers would become an extremely powerful force, but that was for the future.

Speaking of Gerard and Z, both were undergoing breakthroughs as well, though in ways that were completely unexpected. Instead of raising his cultivation, Gerard's bloodline was experiencing another change. His previous advancement already made it so that he could face Nascent cultivators back in the Qi training realm. It was completely impossible to predict how his latest advancement would affect him.

Z on the other hand was experiencing an epiphany. While he had a minor breakthrough in his cultivation, a majority of the change he experienced was in his mindset. He had been busy contemplating a new, secret ultimate attack when the change happened. As it happened, the change was just the spark of inspiration he needed, launching him into a profound state of discovery and creation, where he could make his ultimate attack according to his desires.

Abroar, the spirit and newest permanent resident of the Inn, also experienced an evolution - one completely unlike he had ever known. It was a shame that he lost all the senses he had with his previous cultivation, or else he could have gained even more.

Whether it was the baby Chthulhu, Antia, Qawain, the Galactic Sovereign turtle, Ragnar and all the rest, everyone was caught up in their own experience.

Yet, oddly enough, even with realms much higher than the Earth Immortal realm, none went through the level of change that Lex was experiencing.

The moment he crushed the token and the change happened, he finally stopped suppressing his breakthrough and let it happen. The result was an instantaneous eruption of spirit energy within his body, which was then, immediately after, replaced by an imperceptibly purer form of energy, before a vortex formed around Lex's body, rapidly absorbing all the surrounding energy.

Lex became a bystander as the process happened, for the force of his breakthrough was so massive, should he try to influence it at all, it would only result in injuring him.

For humans, cultivation up until the Foundation realm had all been about preparing the body for the cultivation journey ahead.

From Body Tempering, which strengthened the body from the inside to sustain the pressure and influence of external spirit energy, to Qi tempering, which pushed the bodies limits over and over again, one Qi strand at a time, until the body was capable of holding steams of energy, until the Foundation realm, which used all the energy to turn the body into a Foundation that can support all future cultivation realms.

These few realms, despite their seemingly weak power, could be said to be the most important cultivation realms a human would go through, because they would directly determine how high a cultivation realm that person could achieve. Even the slightest flaw in any of these realms would drastically affect the peak a human could reach. That was largely one of the reasons Alexander was cultivating once again, as well as the reason Lex's mother had his father cultivate from the beginning again as well.

So, if these three realms could be described as setting the stage for the future, the next three realms of Golden Core, Nascent, and Earth Immortal, could be loosely described as rapidly transforming a cultivators strength and turning them into a higher form of living being. Of course, this was only a loose description as more than just that happened at each successive realm, for they involved far more than just that.

Still, to the common man, the deeper intricacies did not matter, as even the more obvious and immediate changes were enough to consume all that they could conceive. After all, it had to be remembered, on a planet like Earth with incredible weapons of mass destruction, it was still Golden

Core cultivators who were considered the peak of society, and it was the Nascents who controlled the entire planet.

The change that the Golden Core realm brought was that, once the body had a strong enough Foundation to support it, it began to concentrate spirit energy not across the entire body, but in one specific core.

Just because the area that the energy occupied was smaller did not in any way mean that the energy was less in quantity or concentration than the rest of the body. In fact, it was quite the opposite.

The Golden Core, in spite of many misconceptions, was not actually formed of energy, and was instead a container that the body naturally formed during a process that would only occur once during the breakthrough process. Since it only ever happened once, damage to the core was one of the most difficult things to cure within the cultivation journey.

This was because of how unique the Golden core really was. Not only did it store a massive amount of spirit energy that was dozens of times more in quantity than the Foundation realm even as early as just the beginning of the Golden core realm, but further influenced that spirit energy in a way that had only barely begun in the previous realms.

The stored spirit energy took upon any affinities that the cultivator, or cultivation technique imbued, and turned that energy into a unique state owned only by the cultivator. By doing this, it also further evolved it from the most basic and lowest level spiritual energy which could be commonly found across the universe. This was the first step the cultivator truly took towards higher forms of energy than just the common spirit energy.

Of course, due to the nature of this energy being superior to ambient spiritual energy, it made cultivation much more difficult as well. After all, if previously a cultivator took in 2 units of energy from the atmosphere and was able to retain 1 unit of it within his body, allowing the rest to escape back into the atmosphere, now the cultivator would have to absorb anywhere from 10 to 100 units of spiritual energy just to be able to convert it into 1 unit of energy that was kept within his body.

The units mentioned here are any generic measurement, meant only as an example to show the drastic scale of change that occurred.

This was in an ordinary state of events. So then, how was Lex's situation different from the norm, so much so that it eclipsed the change experienced by every other cultivator in the entire realm?

It was simple. Normally the Golden Core was formed naturally by the cultivators body during the breakthrough, and the formation was fueled by the energy being absorbed by the body. But due to the fact that Lex's Foundation, and thus his body, contained physical manifestations of laws, as well as the fact that there was a massive shift in laws taking place at the Inn at the moment of breakthrough, not only was Lex's breakthrough absorbing spiritual energy to fuel the formation of his core, it was also absorbing laws.

This was a change Lex was much too low leveled to influence at all, or even notice for that matter.

The rest of the Inn, as well as the Origin realm, however, definitely noticed.