

Innkeeper 461

The Innkeeper

Chapter 461: Golden Key

"But like I said, the true cause and effects of the matter are being investigated," the Henali said, a very serious look adorned its black, rectangular face. Only 6 of its 26 eyes were on its face, framed right above a mouth filled with rows of sharp teeth, while the rest of its eyes were hidden across its body.

Its face was attached to its body through a short, thin neck. The body itself was massive, with a majority of its scales hidden behind the soft cloth robe it had adorned. Eight legs kept it standing, with two sets of four legs protruding from the left and right of its torso. A tail, much longer and thicker than the width of its legs came out from the back of its robe and hung directly over the Henali, making it look like an oversized scorpion without the actual pincers.

"But, regardless of what the result of the investigation may be, it can be confirmed that as of now, the attack on Ra does not seem to have resulted in any long term adverse effects on the Origin realm. In fact, due to the rich nature of the energy that was dispersed into the realm, it has even sped up the growth of the realm. Preliminary investigations reveal that the realm may mature billions of years ahead of schedule."

"So does that mean there will be no punishment?" asked a random Daolord. "Instead, it sounds like there should be a prize for speeding up the maturing process."

The remainder of the Henali assembly awaited the response. It was a rule that Daolords could not casually release their might in the Origin realm, or else they would be punished by the Henali. Even if they had to fight, they would have to ensure that their strength would not adversely affect the realm.

After all, the Origin realm was still not capable of handling the might of Daolords since it technically wasn't capable of giving birth to any Daolords. All the Daolords in this realm were either guests from other realms, or had their strength raised artificially through special means.

"No, regardless of whether the result was good or bad, there will definitely be a punishment. It has just yet to be decided if the one receiving the punishment should be Ra, or the one responsible for the attack. We allow Daolords into our realm so that they can benefit from an immature realm, in exchange for a small fee-

Someone at the assembly scoffed at the mention of the fee being 'small'.

"-but that does not mean we can allow them to interfere with its natural progression. Once might be a lucky event, and if it is let go, it will only encourage others to try the same. In the long run-"

The Henali that was speaking paused when another being suddenly teleported inside the assembly.

The Henali assembly was held in a special arena, cut off from the rest of the Origin realm. It was an extremely secure location under the control of the Henali which allowed them to host many prestigious guests, the various Daolords being amongst them. But the secure nature of the location meant that no one could teleport in or out once the session was called into motion, unless it was an emergency. This assembly had already been interrupted once, an almost unprecedented feat, so that information about the attack on Ra could be shared amongst those attending.

This second interruption... was genuinely unprecedented in the history of the Origin realm!

As soon as the teleportation was finished, another Henali appeared, seemingly perfectly identical to the first. It was a common trait amongst Henali. Those not of the race would have a difficult time distinguishing amongst them based solely on appearance.

"Someone is resonating with the laws of the realm," the newcomer announced loudly.

"What do you mean?" the convener of the assembly asked, bewildered by the statement.

"I mean exactly what I said. Someone... or something is having a breakthrough, and that breakthrough is resonating with the laws of the entire realm!"

"But that's impossible. The realm is not mature enough to birth a Daolord," the convener exclaimed!

"I am not here to argue with you, I am only here to tell you what's happening. The resonance can be felt throughout the entire realm. Its repercussions... cannot be predicted. Attempts to divine the identity of

the entity responsible are being blocked. Whoever is doing this has Destiny level protection to keep them from being divined, which means they've obviously been planning this for eons."

Silence fell across the hall as everyone tried to guess what this meant. Everyone wondered what the identity of the person responsible was. Even Ballom was unsure if he should attribute this latest development to the Innkeeper, for it was just too bizarre. Only one thing was certain. If the being responsible for this was a Fuegan... this could be the buildup for a full on realm war!

Back at the Midnight Inn, the few guests who had recovered, and the new guests who had arrived at the Inn, all were looking up at the sky in awe. There was no sun, no clouds, no sky, only a golden hue that stretched as far as the eye could see!

If it was just a matter of different lighting, everyone may not have been so captivated by it. Instead, the golden hue radiated a majestic aura that not only overwhelmed anyone and everyone exposed to it, it made them feel oddly connected to it, as if the aura had come from within them, but at the same time was something that endlessly surpassed them.

Truth be told, the guests who were exposed, one and all, could not fully comprehend the majesty of the aura, for it far surpassed what their minds were capable of comprehending.

Outside the Inn, in the rest of the Origin realm, however, there were many who could make a few guesses, but even they only saw an obscure golden hue. After all, no matter how much they stretched their spiritual senses, they were too close to it to see the full image.

It would take someone to look at the entire Origin realm all at once to notice that the hue that had enveloped the entire realm... was actually in the shape of a golden key.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 462: Affinities

Unlike energy, which had to travel from one point to another, laws existed everywhere all at once. They were all also irrevocably linked, and reacted to one another. It was impossible to isolate a law, or the effects and presence of a law from other laws. For example, the law of gravity could not be isolated

from the law of time, or the law of heat, or even a seemingly mundane law such as the law of procrastination - which, make no mistake, was a law written in and ingrained into the very fabric of the Origin realm.

But while this was so, the complexities and intricacies of laws far surpassed something that could be explained or comprehended using simple vocabulary. As such, whether it was the Henali, the Daolords, the Gods, the Oracles, the System wielders, the Gifted, or even the Sovereigns, none could comprehend the golden hue that had lit up the realm. Of course, given enough time, maybe it was possible. But even that was a maybe.

For the golden hue was not made up of a single law, nor did it interact with only one law. It was catalyzing something within the existing laws of the realm that could not be detected so easily, prompting even the Henali to request aid from their home realm - a realm that had truly matured and had existed for far longer than the Origin realm.

But the change in laws was only the most direct change the realm suffered due to the golden hue. There were so many other side effects of it, the least of which was that all the places in the realm which had never seen light were now illuminated. Under the golden light of the laws, as well as the aura it radiated, many ancient beings that had long entered slumber awoke, or began to wake up. Many secrets that were hidden in the darkness came to light, and many undiscovered regions presented themselves for all to see.

The longer the hue existed, the more drastic its effects were becoming. But Lex had no knowledge of any of this. He was too preoccupied with his evolving body. His Golden Core was destined to be more complex than a simple one just due to the fact that it was formed not only due to his spirit cultivation, but his body and soul as well.

Ironically, while one would have expected the changes to make the core bigger, it was actually much smaller than most normal cores. Yet its small size did not make it weaker. On the contrary, it stored the same amount of energy it would have anyway, but due to its smaller size, made the energy much more concentrated and thus elevated it to a higher level.

As the process of the formation of his core continued, Lex was simultaneously also experiencing another, innate part of every breakthrough, which was that he was being elevated to a higher life form. The natural hierarchy of his existence in the universe was being raised, for he could now come into contact with a higher level of the universe.

A part of this elevation was his existence being allowed to convert natural spirit energy into one with his own affinity. For Lex, a wielder of Regal Embrace, the affinity he would have normally attained would have been called Regal affinity, according to the cultivation technique itself. Yet it was at this time that a change occurred that was... outside the bounds of control of his cultivation technique.

Due to the dedicated hard work of the Lotus on Lex's back and all the precious materials that were fused into him, his body had gained the ability to physically tolerate, and to some degree influence laws. Since his Golden core was forming from his body, it too gained this attribute.

But it was this additional attribute that caused a divergence in the subsequent result. The energy within Lex's body did not gain Regal affinity, but a fusion of the affinity of the cultivation technique Regal Embrace, as well as Lex's newly gained affinity for laws.

This was something that was not supposed to happen. In the very beginning, when Lex underwent the 4 stages of alteration so that he could cultivate Regal Embrace, his body was purged of any and all affinities it may have inherently had all in preparation for the breakthrough he was going through at the moment.

But the cultivation technique did not account for the fact that Lex would have access to something as inconceivably rare as the World Seed Lotus right in his body, which could easily make additions to his body without causing any harm whatsoever.

The new, unnamed affinity did not in any way impair Lex's breakthrough. In fact, once the golden core was formed, and his body stopped absorbing the laws undergoing a change within the Inn, resulting in the golden hue finally fading, Lex's breakthrough continued in a smooth fashion.

Once the golden core was formed, the vortex of spirit energy around Lex lessened, but did not entirely disappear. For a few more hours, it continued to pour spirit energy into Lex's body, allowing it to upgrade as well so that it could reach a level where it could tolerate his new spirit energy.

Besides the body, it also enhanced Lex's spirit and his soul. A feeling Lex could not accurately describe filled him. It was as if, before this, he had existed merely as a wisp - as something that could easily be blown out of existence. Yet now, he had changed from a wisp into something concrete, something firm and durable.

He also felt another strange sensation. Normally, after one of his breakthroughs, Lex could physically feel himself become much tougher, as if his defense and survivability had increased several folds. Now, however, he was feeling like... it did not matter how immeasurably durable his defense was, for there was nothing strong enough to challenge it to begin with.

He did not feel he had grown stronger. Instead, it felt like the universe around him had become... mundane.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 463: New Abilities

The absurd feelings that enveloped Lex did not last long, and as his body slowly stabilized they dissipated. After all, how could Lex be arrogant enough to feel that the universe was mundane?

But that was not to say that Lex did not feel himself filled with awesome power. He truly felt as if he had surpassed what it meant to be human. The urge of common protagonists to punch a random rock to test out his strength filled him, but there were no rocks available in his meditation room.

That could be fixed easily. He summoned a massive, 20 feet (6 meters) large boulder and placed it right in front of himself. Before acting cool and actually punching it Lex rubbed his hand on it, to feel the cold firm surface. But... things did not go according to plan. As easily as if he was running his hand through running water, his fingers dipped into the rock, causing massive cracks to form across the boulder's surface. He froze, before he tried again.

This time, holding out his index finger, he pressed directly into the boulder. There was a brief moment of resistance, before his finger started digging into the rock in a smooth manner. It was as if Lex was poking a hole in a cake instead of a rock. Cracks spread deeper and wider along the surface of the rock as he pushed his finger in. When his finger had dug in all the way, and his fist touched the surface, Lex continued to push, and it continued to go in as easily.

A single loud 'crack' resonated in the room as the boulder was split into two, with the sides falling to the left and right side respectively.

Lex remained standing still as he tried to grasp his mind around what he had just done, but there was no time for him to calmly gather his thoughts. He had taken a major step along the cultivation pathway, and had evolved into a higher being. How could something as paltry as brute strength be all he gained?

As he was looking at the boulder, his mind still taken aback by his strength, the first of his new abilities revealed itself. His spirit sense emerged from his body and completely wrapped itself around the boulder, so that he was not only looking at it with his eyes, he was observing every fiber of it with his senses.

Every single groove in the rock, every layer in the minerals that composed the rock itself, every shade and pattern, every crack and fissure, all revealed themselves to Lex within his mind.

For a moment he was startled, thinking it was too much information, before he once again froze. No... no it wasn't! The degree of detail with which his spirit sense was feeding him information was immeasurably beyond anything Lex could have withstood before. Having so much information actively in his thoughts all at the same time would have caused him to nearly collapse. His brain would have been working in overdrive, his blood pumping like he was running a marathon, and his spirit energy draining as if through an open faucet to support his mind containing so much information all at the same time. Yet now, he barely felt the amount of detail worthy of notice.

A thought ran through his mind wondering just how complex an array he could create now that his mind was capable of holding so much more information. But it was only a fleeting thought, as his current focus was on his spirit sense. He had no idea how to control it!

It was as if a new limb suddenly appeared on his body, and while it reacted to his subconscious thoughts, consciously he did not know how to maneuver it.

Moreover, from his research, Lex knew that spirit senses could do a lot more than just allow Lex to observe things. It could be used to physically manipulate items as a funnel to channel his energy, to communicate with others secretly and more. He just had to figure out how to do all that.

For now, though, he settled on gaining a better understanding of the observation ability his spirit sense allowed. He continued to observe the boulder wrapped in his spirit sense and began taking in the various details. That's when he noticed the anomaly.

The information he was receiving from his sight, and the information he was receiving from his spirit sense should have provided him with two different streams of information to parse through, but when he actually paid attention... there seemed to be one more.

At first this confused Lex, especially since he was having a difficult time adjusting to having so much information directly streamed into his brain that he could essentially 'see' the item wrapped in his senses. Except, this vision did not come from a single direction, such as a person observing something from a particular angle, but was all-encompassing. The fact that he was not overwhelmed by it was also messing with his thought process. He was just not used to the new capacity his brain allowed.

But then, as if responding to his concern, his brain automatically filtered the information from the different sources into separate categories so that he knew what information he was 'sensing' and what he was seeing.

It was then that he realized that... his vision seemed to be providing him with two different feedbacks. One was looking at everything at surface value, the way normal vision worked, and the other... was looking at something more ethereal.

He... closed his left eye, and discovered that the ethereal vision disappeared, leaving only the boulder in his sight. Then he reopened the left and closed the right, and finally figured out the source of the extra information. The only problem was... he could not understand what he was seeing.

He saw a boulder, but somehow he also saw through it. He saw everything that made it up, and saw the possibilities of how it could interact with its surroundings. He was reading how the rock would behave, react, exist, disappear, and be destroyed in various conditions. It was as if he was reading the rock's personality... if that was possible.

For reasons he couldn't understand, his left eye was feeding him even more information than his spirit senses.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 464: Good news, Bad news

A few hours after the golden hue had disappeared, most of the guests had already completed their breakthroughs and the festival had resumed. Though, the guests seemed more focused on just partying and celebrating than participating in any random activities. This was good, because the next major activity would also be a week later. Even most of the tournaments had ended, as it was expected that this week would be spent in a meditative retreat for anyone who had breakthroughs from one realm to another. In fact, the only reason a majority of the guests had even finished their cultivation was because they were at the Foundation realm or even below. In that case, while a retreat was needed, it did not

take as long. Moreover, once they regained basic control of their bodies and spirit, they could space out their cultivation retreats over a period of time.

Keeping all this in mind, the jubilant mood at the Inn could be understood extremely well. Of course, there was a small portion of guests who were equally depressed at having missed out on such a great opportunity, and some were even angry at the Inn for not giving a longer warning period. After all, a couple of weeks truly was too short a notice period. This is the kind of thing people plan months or even years in advance, depending on the cultivation level.

Among these crowds, there were a pair of young, human siblings who were completely overwhelmed. Plot Device, as the brother was called, had to do his utmost to keep his tears from falling out, while the sister, called Plot Device-2, did not hesitate at all to let her tears flow. Their lives had been too miserable, so much so that they could not believe the wonderful thing that was happening to them. The feeling of relief and joy... it was so rare in their life that they did not know how to express it.

The boy of age 13, and the girl of age 11, had both been born with terrible birth defects that not only kept them in constant pain, but would have prevented them from cultivating when they came of age. If they could not cultivate, they had no chance of ever improving their lives. After all, their parents were long dead in the war.

They too would have been destined for death in the recent raids, had they not been saved by... by... she could only be described as an angel, a holy woman or a saint. Who else would help them?

Then, as if they were being rewarded for a lifetime of bad luck, not only were they saved by her, they had been brought to this Inn via something known as the Pro Bono room. Before they could understand what was happening, a strange change occurred, after which they got extremely sick and fell unconscious. Yet when they woke up, not only was the pain gone, so were all the defects.

Was this heaven? It must be. First, they were blessed by an angel, and then brought directly to heaven.

Unfortunately, this was not heaven, and they could not stay forever. They disappeared, returning to the tent where they had been living previously. Fear filled their heart, as they felt they were about to wake from a good dream. But no such thing happened. The pain continued to elude them.

The flap to the tent opened, and the angelic saint woman appeared once again, though if anyone else saw her they might not agree. She did not have hair of flowing gold, for it had been tied and hidden behind her helmet, nor did she have skin as fair as the pure snow, for it was covered in dirt and sweat and grime. She wore leather armor and not a summer dress, and the air about her was hot and full of battle lust, not delicate and petite.

"What happened? Where did you go?" she asked, suppressing the concern in her voice.

"We went to this magical place called the Midnight Inn!" the sister began. She did not notice the look of recognition that passed through the woman's eyes. The Midnight Inn. She had been there too, once or twice. As she listened more to the children's story, she realized that she had missed out on a great opportunity. She should pay more attention to it in the future.

Over the next few hours, Lex tried to learn how to control his spirit sense. It should not have been so difficult. After all, how hard could it be to manipulate an invisible sense inherently linked to his spirit that could channel information directly to him, and pass through physical objects like they were nothing?

Well, the answer was it was pretty hard. But that was not all. His body was still undergoing the stabilization process from his breakthrough, and the more time he spent, the more new abilities he discovered.

Like spirit sense, he also unlocked something called Soul Sense, as well as an advanced version of the instincts his body afforded him called Intuition. They both were incredibly powerful and diverse, and drastically increased the number of things Lex could do.

But... unfortunately, there was still more awaiting him. When his body finally completely stabilized, he underwent a familiar rush of information from his cultivation technique.

Every time he had a major breakthrough, he would receive information from Regal Embrace about his new realm, what it was normally and how he was different, and what he should do to progress further.

This time, though, he got a lot more information than ever before. As if it were a sentient thing, the technique imparted to him the various details of the effects that each realm had on him, and how they were inevitably linked to the needs of his breakthrough in subsequent realms.

One of the major factors, unsurprisingly, was stability. His cultivation was focused on extreme stability, so as to continuously perfect his defense without eliciting any adverse reactions. Similarly, his Regal affinity was supposed to do the same for his future breakthroughs.

However, Lex achieved something that should have never happened, and his energy took on an unknown affinity. As such... should he attempt to break through to the Nascent realm in the future... there was a 99.99% chance that he would explode, and die!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 465: Calm

Confusion clouded Lex's mind as he repeatedly went over the information provided by his cultivation technique. The Regal affinity was supposed to make spirit energy extremely resilient, meaning its affinity would not be easily overridden and induced stability in whatever it affects. This was supposed to be the bedrock of Lex's breakthrough when he entered the Nascent realm.

This was due to the fact that, normally, when humans cultivate, Nascent is the realm in which their soul finally becomes strong enough and gains the ability to exist without the body. The realm was more complicated than just that, and included many things beyond the simple strengthening of the soul, but in context to Lex, it was a huge issue. After all, another ability of Nascent was to separate the soul from the body according to need, but Lex technically did not have an independent soul anymore.

Thus, since this was the cultivation path that Lex was following, adjustments needed to be made to assure that the breakthrough wouldn't try to separate Lex's soul forcefully, thereby destroying him, since his soul and body were the same now.

The stable nature of Regal affinity would have played a key role in stabilizing his body while the natural process of the breakthrough tried to do the exact opposite.

The very fact that Lex's affinity had changed, regardless of whatever effects his new affinity had, jeopardized his breakthrough, making it likely that he would fail and die. Moreover, this was not a one time issue that needed to be dealt with only once. Even if Lex found some external assistance in helping

to stabilize his body during the breakthrough, the reliance on the nature of Regal affinity was repeated in many more aspects of the cultivation technique from thereon.

What that basically meant was that even if, using external factors, he did breakthrough without dying, meaning availing that 0.01% chance of survival, he would become crippled and unable to actually use his cultivation due to conflicts his affinity created.

Once the confusion elapsed, panic set in. How could this be? No this wasn't supposed to happen? What will he do now?

What-

Lex suddenly closed his eyes and drew in a deep breath. While holding his breath in, Lex clenched his fists tightly and strained all the muscles in his body while standing still. For a few minutes, he stayed like that, before he slowly started letting the air escape his lungs.

One by one, he relaxed his muscles and once he was done, unclenched his fists.

When Lex reopened his eyes, there was no panic or confusion in them any longer. There was only calm.

It was not even confidence, for how could he be confident in tackling a matter that far surpassed his understanding. But he was definitely calm. He had traveled the universe, walked out of hordes of zombies, bathed in lava, killed countless strong enemies, hosted rulers of entire Empires and races at his Inn. He was Lex. It was not so easy to overwhelm him anymore.

Facing this great, seemingly impossible task, Lex set out to think of a solution. But before that, he had to adjust his state perfectly.

After a very, very long time, Lex put on the Bathroom set, which included the Bath robe, Bathroom slippers and the bathroom towel. Individually, all these had various effects, but when worn together, they had a set effect which basically cleansed him internally and externally of all hazardous factors and let him focus on the task at hand. The reason he put this on now was because internal factors also included things such as doubt, anxiety, inner demons, etc.

He could have no distractions during this time. He could not afford to make a mistake regarding such a sensitive issue.

He reviewed all the available information that he had from the very beginning. First, Regal Embrace was a unique cultivation technique, meaning that no one else in the universe had ever practiced it before, nor would they ever do so again. That was not a part of the cultivation techniques description, but a requirement of his reward back then.

He recalled that the Regal Embrace was a part of someone's collection. A certain 'being somewhere in the universe' had it. He had not thought about it again since then, but the insinuation of that information was great. If there was a cultivation technique that blatantly said it had the strongest defense in the entire universe, yet the owner only kept it as a part of his collection, then what did the owner cultivate?

In fact, now that he was recalling the matter, even Mo's blessing, which was described as having the strongest attack in the universe, was also a part of a 'beings' collection. There existed the possibility that these were two different beings, but Lex thought it was unlikely.

Regardless of whatever the being in question cultivated, the fact that it existed in his collection, and was not generated by the system gave Lex a lot of assurance.

That did not mean that he was aiming to search for that being. It just meant that someone somewhere had designed these two cultivation techniques. If there were beings capable of designing his cultivation technique, there were surely beings capable of altering it as well to help him. Moreover, with the Midnight Inn, he was uniquely equipped to search the entire universe for those skilled in created cultivation techniques.

Come to think of it, John himself created spiritual techniques based on his customers' requests. Lex wondered if his system was some kind of academic system, capable of designing techniques. It seemed he would have to put questioning John on his agenda.

Focusing back on the matter at hand, Lex identified a few key things he had to do now. First of all, while he could not break through the realm, he was free to grow within the Golden Core realm, so he would do that.

Next, Lex would begin doing research into cultivation techniques and how they were designed. Other than that, he would also have to begin doing research on people or entities skilled in creating or altering cultivation techniques. How he would ensure their trust once he found someone potentially skilled enough was also an issue he would have to look into.

These were the key things in regards to focusing on regaining his cultivation path. Other than these, Lex also had to spend some time familiarizing himself with his new abilities.

While Regal Embrace gave a brief description of what Soul sense did, Lex did not understand it completely. Intuition, on the other hand, had it in its very nature to allow Lex to understand completely what it did.

Yes, Soul and Spirit senses were extremely cool. In fact, technically speaking, all three abilities were probably different but equal in their potential. But damn was Intuition impressive. Lex already knew it would be his favorite.

It was a much more advanced version of the instincts he had already been using, except that he could freely direct it towards whatever he wanted. Moreover, it made him extremely sensitive to anything at all that had to do with him. If he was sitting in a room of a thousand people, and a single one of them thought of Lex's name, his Intuition would be able to detect it!

The range of his ability was limited, for now, but in all things related to Lex, his Intuition was going to play a huge role.

Primary Realm, Gaia's graveyard

In the center of this zone, which was acknowledged as the largest death zone in the entire universe by some, was a cozy little wooden hut. Well, it was not wood but the flesh of Gaia, but as the originator of the Dao of Wood, it could be considered the same thing.

The hut itself did not seem very impressive and had only one bedroom, one library, one vault and one study. Inside the library sat a being whose name had not been uttered in the entire history of this fledgling universe.

On his small little sofa, made from the skin of the first ever 'dragon' - no, eh, on the sofa made from the comfiest leather, the being sat wrapped in a robe that had definitely not been made from the feathers of the Divine White Heron, drinking from a mug that had could most definitely not have been crafted in the flames of a realm that exploded.

Beside him sat his pet, a common Lynx and completely not the physical manifestation of a realm that had gained sentience.

Yes, all was normal in the library, until the being suddenly frowned in confusion.

"Someone surpassed the Regal heritage? In this universe? How is that even possible?"

The confusion in his eyes turned to intrigue as his eyes moved as if he was reading something written on air.

"Ho ho, this is actually interesting," the being said, sitting up. He put his book down and began reading with fervor, but his eyes were only looking at air.

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Chapter 466: Understanding his powers

As far as Lex's new abilities were concerned, so long as they were on the list of expected abilities gained in the process of cultivating Regal Embrace, the cultivation technique gave Lex information on them.

For Intuition, however, even if the cultivation technique failed to provide him with an explanation, he would have known. After all, it was in the nature of the technique itself to provide Lex with information about anything related to himself.

For example, currently his intuition was telling him that he should thoroughly master controlling his spirit and soul sense before exiting his room, at least in the guise of the Innkeeper. When Lex's thoughts

went to why it was so important he should not appear as the Innkeeper before mastering those abilities, his intuition pointed towards the Host Attire.

While it was not spelling the answer out for him, the hints were big enough. From there Lex could summarize on his own that the Host Attire only granted him complete control of his facial expressions and his body, but that extreme control he had been relying on to maintain his facade would not extend to these two new senses.

Although both the soul and spirit sense were invisible and could not normally be detected, others with spirit and soul senses of their own would be able to detect his if the two touched. At the same time, while Lex was not sure about this, he could venture a guess and say the way emotions such as surprise, anger, happiness, etc. all show up on a person's face, they might show up in the behavior of his senses as well.

For example, if he was startled, his senses might tremble and extend out of his body if he didn't keep them sufficiently suppressed. He could guess this much because even the spirit energy within his body reacted in various ways to his emotions, though those reactions were extremely limited since they were contained within his body.

That was merely one of the simple effects of his intuition. It was simultaneously warning him of various potential avenues of danger, or rather trouble, he had been ignoring, or not giving enough attention to.

The biggest one at the moment was his double identity as Leo. The identity itself was not the problem, but the fact that he wanted to associate that identity with his real identity of Lex, should someone start investigating him. With his name now at the forefront of the Guest registry, he needed to strengthen the relation between Leo and Lex by dropping a few subtle hints.

Then came the issue of why his name was at the top of the list while so many people stronger than him weren't. That was even simpler to resolve. Lex had been using his own name in the Crystal realm and the Midnight tavern, though he had avoided using his last name. He just needed to build a connection between himself there and Leo as well. That way he did not even need to explain his achievement. It would be up to others to use their own imagination about why he appeared in a different realm, and what he did there.

It wasn't as if these were things he had ignored, but apparently he had just not done enough about them to cover his bases. His intuition would help him avoid simple mistakes like that. The best part was,

even this was only a portion of what his intuition could achieve. The ability was truly versatile. So long as it related to his physical body in any way, his intuition would guide him.

Up next was his Soul sense. The basics of it were easy to understand. In the way that spirit energy could interact with the physical plane of existence, and send Lex feedback so that Lex could essentially 'see' everything his spirit sense touched, the soul sense could do the same, but for the soul plane.

A brief description of planes was provided so Lex could understand what they were. Basically all of reality, in every realm across the entire universe, consisted of numerous planes that all existed simultaneously and overlapped one another in the same space, and interacted with one another. Normally, living beings could not differentiate them and so perceived them as a whole. The physical plane was one in which matter existed. The soul plane was another plane in which only souls existed.

This concept... confused Lex, and not just a little. That was to say, for normal people, their body existed in one plane of existence while their soul existed in another plane of existence altogether? But if they were in different planes, why did the soul need the body's support to exist? It... for now he just accepted that because the planes could interact with one another, souls could suffer pressure from the physical plane, or maybe some other plane Lex didn't even know about. But this was still something he would look into further.

Getting back to his soul sense, if it could show Lex the soul plane, then what did it look like? Nothing. It was a void of darkness with himself in the center. This was because the soul sense would not detect anything other than souls, and so if Lex only relied on it for sight, in an area like his meditation room where he was the only living being, he would see nothing else.

Of course, as these things usually go, even soul sense was not so simple, and people could find ways to hide themselves from his senses, but for the most part, he would be able to sense any soul with his soul sense.

That was just the basic feature, and the part that Lex understood. The confusion actually arose when he learnt that he could use his soul sense to interact with souls directly, and not only that. When he practiced and got better, he would be able to influence the characteristics of souls to a limited degree - temporarily!

According to the description, this would help him in fields such as alchemy, medicine, forging and many more.

It would take time and experimentation for him to understand what that really meant. For now... he closed his eyes and wrapped his own body in his soul sense, which admittedly took longer than Lex had hoped. Still, the result was satisfactory. He could see his own 'soul' and deep inside it, he could finally see the treasure within which the system was hidden.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 467: Never give up!

With his soul sense firmly wrapped around his own body, Lex could see his 'soul'. Only, it looked completely identical to his body. Did that mean his physical body existed on the soul plane? Wait, did that mean he could physically touch souls?

A few random thoughts flowed through Lex's brain, but he focused back on the matter at hand. Though his 'soul' looked identical to his body, the difference was he could see through it. But it was not blood or bones he saw, but a small ball of glowing golden light right in his chest.

He did not need to wonder what the glowing orb was, for he knew instinctively it was the treasure that contained his system. He did not try anything, for not only was he extremely dependent on the system, for now, he also had very poor control over his soul sense. He did, however, take his time to observe that small glowing ball.

Such a small thing had so drastically changed his life. It was hard to imagine.

While he was observing it, he also wondered if the reason he could see the system was because it was classified as a 'soul treasure' or if it had a soul of its own. It was not a simple thought, and whichever the answer was would have major insinuations. But, once again, he did not contact Mary to confirm with her. It was pointless.

For now, once he was finally done testing out his soul sense, he turned his attention to his other new abilities. These few would require him to figure out the details on his own, for their appearance was not a planned part of Regal Embrace.

His new affinity, whatever it was called, would undoubtedly be extremely significant for it had not replaced Regal affinity, but had fused with it to turn into something else. So, regardless of what effects it had, it would stay on the same scale as the Regal affinity, at the very least.

Lex could also make a few guesses about what the affinity should be. The Lotus had informed him of the changes it had made to his body and what the cause of the issue was. He did not know what 'laws' actually were, but whatever they were, it was obvious that they were far beyond his level. In essence, they were very powerful.

Since his affinity had changed due to the changes the Lotus had made to his body, he strongly suspected his new affinity would, at least in some regard, have something to do with laws. This was something he'd have to figure out, especially if he wanted to devise a new way to continue to cultivate.

As difficult as it would be, all hope was not lost. At least his intuition would be a great help in this regard.

But while he could at least speculate about his affinity, he was completely clueless about the changes that happened to his left eye. Even his intuition was silent on why his left eye had gained this new ability, though it hinted at the fact that the change had occurred, once again, due to the changes the Lotus had made to his body. So basically, this once again had something to do with laws. Most likely. Probably. Maybe.

After considering those two abilities and thinking of ways he would test them out in the future, he turned his attention to his body. Before his breakthrough, he had already had a massive increase in strength, which had only been compounded now. The good news was, even without him having to consciously practice, his brain was quickly adjusting to new strength. He would still have to fine tune his control, but the chances of him accidentally crushing someone's hand while shaking hands had dropped to an all-time low.

His thought process had sped up once again, and his capacity for multitasking had absolutely exploded. He could easily do multiple tasks at the same time without suffering any loss in his concentration.

He wondered if he had gained anything special as a result of sticking to the 'true path' as it was called in the Crystal realm, meaning cultivating spirit, soul and body at the same time. His intuition told him yes, though he could not figure out what specifically he had gained.

He tried using the techniques he had learned for the Foundation realm. The amount of strength they could display was inherently limited, meaning Lex would have to learn new techniques if he wanted to

fully display the limits of his power. Still, they had become much more powerful than they were previously, and it was much easier to use them as is.

For example, the teleportation technique Lex never got an opportunity to use called the In-Law effect, which originally required him to stay stationary for 3 hours while he primed the technique, now barely took a minute for him to complete. Once he became used to his new realm, the time might even become shorter.

Evisceration, the soul attack that he barely ever used because of how difficult it was to master, seemed to be the only technique that did not suffer a limit on its strength. Not only was it able to display a much greater strength than before, unfortunately the difficulty in using it also increased.

The plus side was, since Lex had grown in his level, even if using the technique caused a backlash, he was more than strong enough to take it without suffering any real harm.

If there was one thing about his breakthrough that Lex didn't like, however, was that it more or less eliminated his hunger. He had more than enough energy in his body to keep himself running even if he didn't eat for weeks. Moreover, since his body had such high energy requirements, which were usually being met by the energy stored within his Golden core, if he wanted to be satiated, the food he would have to eat would have to be much more nutritious than before.

Lex tightened his fists and a firm look appeared in his eyes. He would never give up on eating delicious food. It seemed like it was time to hire an excellent chef. Better yet, it was time to find someone with a cooking system and hire them!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 468: Dread

"I was hired for a special case," said the morose man, the tip of his index finger tracing the rim of his glass. Surrounding him, the usually noisy bar was completely silent as the guests listened to his story with keen interest.

"The fact that I was hired spoke enough of the seriousness of the case to begin with. After all, the best of the best used to come to me to ask for internships. There was no detective better than me, because I was beyond what could be measured. With a 100% case resolution rate, my prices were sky high. The fact that they were willing to pay my dues spoke enough of their desperation."

The man, sporting a thin mustache above his lip, and wearing a brown-colored trench coat, looked down as he shook his head and sighed. His hat sat lonely atop the wooden bar, looking beaten and worn.

"How was I supposed to know that this case would be different?"

The man, who was completely human and in no way anything related to a crustacean, came from a planet called Terra, the geography and history of which were remarkably similar to Earth without any correlation at all. If one distinct difference had to be identified, it was that Terra suffered from a lot more paranormal activity than earth.

"The year was 1966, the place was Chicago, the time was the dead of night and the place was the victim's apartment building, up on the 4th floor of a government housing building. I was alone, for I couldn't have others with me while I investigated, slowing me down. The apartment was a mess. All the furniture was broken, everything was on the floor, the brand new television set was turned on, though one of its legs was broken so it was slumping low. The endless noise of static from the television filled the room, drowning out all other sound. I walked in the stillness of the room, unafraid of the dark, as I reviewed all the evidence.

"I had never seen anything like it. The murder weapon... the murder weapon could not be what the evidence suggested. It was impossible. Most others agreed that the victim had died from the fall, as the broken wall would suggest he had been flung from there while he was still alive. But no, I could tell he was dead long before his body hit the ground.

"Troubled, I continued my search. Canada, Mexico, Brazil, England, China, Japan, I traveled the world hunting down all the victims this serial killer had left behind. But the more I searched, the more troubled I became. It just did not make sense."

At this point the man sighed, and gulped down his drink. His eyes looked out into the distance, as if he could view the memory like a film on a television screen.

"Then one night I found myself in India. There were rumors of the death of a prince, and the signs left behind by the murderer were all too familiar. Well, he wasn't really a prince, but his family lived in a castle, so he may as well have been. My car had broken down, so I was forced to walk the road. I would have reached my destination by morning had I continued, but destiny had other plans.

"In the hot, humid night a strange buzzing sound reached me. I paid it no mind, there were enough flies around me to account for the buzzing. Only, the sound slowly started to grow louder. Still, I was lost in my own thoughts, unaware of the impending danger. It was only when I felt the vibrations in the road beneath my feet that I awoke from my thoughts, but by then, it was too late. I could hear the sounds of the revving engine behind me. The flashing headlights illuminated the road, but all I could see was my life flashing before my eyes. I knew what had happened. The serial killer had come after me. The dreaded mass murderer, known only by his alias, Truck-kun, had finally decided I was too close!

"I turned around to get a good look, but all I saw were two flashing yellow headlights. A truck horn straight from hell sounded out in the night right before Truck-kun smashed into me! But luck was in my corner that night. The horn startled me enough that I fell backwards, and coincidentally, fell through the golden doors of the Midnight Inn. I was saved a hair's breadth, and now I had seen the murderer with my own eyes. It would not escape me in the future. Or at least, that's what I thought."

Silence once again filled the room as everyone listened with bated breaths. This was the key part.

"It was only when I arrived at the Inn, and gained access to the heavenly Henali portal did I realize how wrong I was. Truck-kun was not a mass murderer choosing its victims across the globe. No, instead, the signs of its influence spanned the realm! Galaxies far and wide, planets remote and hidden, none of it mattered. When Truck-kun found a victim it wanted to claim, none could escape it. So far, I am the only one who has looked into the gleaming lights of death and survived. I-"

The man's speech was cut short by the sound of screaming. Someone was yelling something at the top of their lungs, and coming closer! The next moment, the doors burst open and yet another guest of the Inn bent over, panting as hard as possible.

"There's been another murder," he managed to say between long bated breaths. "This time... this time the victim was a Nascent cultivator."

The room full of teenagers and young adults, all fans of comics and novels with unlucky lives, all suddenly had goosebumps. They all fit the pattern for Truck-kun's victims perfectly. They had gathered at the Midnight Inn to discuss ways to elude this monster that exclusively hunted weeps, anime enthusiasts and fantasy fans. But it did not seem like there was a solution. The dreaded Truck-kun could not be stopped!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 469: Chopsticks

Lex spent the next 2 days getting used to the changes in his body. Getting used to his new strength was the easy part, as his brain did most of the work for him. To further refine his control, he used chopsticks to move rice from one bowl to another, one grain at a time. The chopsticks themselves were quite flimsy, and every time he accidentally broke them, he started from the beginning.

This method seemed pretty stupid when considering all the resources available to him, but sometimes it was just about putting in the work. He quickly gained precise control over his strength, not only in both his hands, but his feet as well - though he hadn't used chopsticks to train them.

His dual vision was difficult to get used to, to be honest. It might have been easier if both his eyes had obtained the upgrade, but since they hadn't, he had to keep track of both streams of data consciously. In all honesty, it was something he was completely capable of doing due to his recent improvements, but it was just tedious. It was like constantly being aware of your breathing. One could, of course, consciously take control and maintain the required rhythm, but it was so much easier when it was something being done on autopilot.

In the end, it was not something he overcame. Instead, while browsing all the techniques he got from the Infinity Emporium, Lex found a technique that trains the spirit, allowing him to multitask better. It was like splitting his mind into two, to perform two different tasks without bothering or being affected by the other.

This was something he could already do to some degree due to his new realm, but the difference between being able to do, and training to do it specifically, was huge. Moreover, the moment he started training in the technique, his intuition told him that the effects of this technique would compound. Since it was focused on training the spirit and not the brain, every time the spirit grew stronger, the effect would increase without him making any additional effort.

Currently he could completely focus on 3 different things without suffering any interferences in his concentration or having a drop in his performance.

One of those 3 things was constantly dedicated to his new eyesight, so now he could easily switch between focusing on one stream of information over the other, without really stopping his eyesight.

He had no progress so far as far as discovering what characteristics his affinity had, although he had determined that it wasn't corrosive or hazardous in any way.

What he had not been able to do, however, was train his spirit and soul sense properly. He had attained some initial progress, to the effect of being able to keep his senses from extending out of his body randomly, but not much else.

Unfortunately, the Regal Embrace did not provide him with some kind of training regimen to train those, so Lex had to rely on other resources.

Finally, after spending two days locked up in his room, he came out. But, this time he did not appear as the Innkeeper nor did he appear as Leo. This time, he came out as Lex.

One reason was that he needed to drop a few hints of his identity, though even that he would not do purposefully. He was going to browse the Henali portal for guides on learning how to train his spirit senses.

The portal had both free and paid services, and apparently some kind of hidden authority system, as Lex learned. After all, it was a network available to the entire realm, so how could there not be tiers?

Lex currently only had access to the common tier of the portal, with no idea of how to reach a higher authority. For now, though, it was completely irrelevant to him, since the kind of information he needed could be accessed publicly.

Besides that, there was one more thing he wanted to do that he could only do as Lex. The system wielder who had been following Suzuki, the man Larry had fought, was now spending a lot of time with Larry over the past few days. Lex wanted to make contact personally and learn a little more about him.

He could have spied on him using the system, but his way he wanted to test out if his eyesight could detect the system as well, and that was only something he could do in person.

Moreover, the new group of people Larry had been hanging out with were extremely suspicious. Lex wanted to get to know them better as well. After all, more than once, he had seen Anakin lead people

into the Chamber of Secrets to conduct secret business meetings. Even he could not spy on them in there, for it was strictly forbidden by the system.

With his agenda set, Lex strolled through the Inn as he took in the festive mood. Even if nothing special was happening, everyone was just happy about their breakthroughs.

Lex wasn't able to help the smile that appeared on his face as he enjoyed the positive feedback the Inn kept getting.

Finally, things were going well for once without any problems randomly popping up.

He did not spend too long strolling around, for training still had priority. After registering himself on the portal, he quickly logged on and began searching for guides related to spirit sense and soul sense training.

For spirit sense, he immediately found many guides, both paid and unpaid. For soul sense, however, let alone guides, he couldn't even find a mention of it. He highly doubted that it was such a rare thing that it had never been encountered before. Most likely, this was one of the topics that was hidden behind the secret authorities or tiers mentioned earlier.

Overcoming his disappointment, Lex glanced through one of the free tutorials available. Initially, he found it very informative, but as he continued, a strange look appeared in his eyes. Why was this using chopsticks, too?

The Innkeeper

Chapter 470: Spiritual treasure

While spirit sense was mostly illusory, it could also be used to interact with physical objects. It was not a replacement for physical strength, usually, but still the ability to pick up or somehow manipulate items far away was very useful.

The process of interacting with physical items was broken down into a few simple steps so that beginners could focus on each individual step while they learned. First was, naturally, wrapping the intended item with his spirit sense. Then Lex would channel some spirit energy into his spirit sense, giving it the strength to harden temporarily at certain points, allowing it to touch physical items. Then,

based on his control of his spirit sense, he could use the hardened portion of his sense to grab onto and manipulate the item as needed.

There were countless techniques that allowed cultivators to use spirit sense to gain greater strength than their physical bodies, attack the mind, control weapons, and more. From the Golden core onwards, cultivation became infinitely more complicated because there was so much more that a cultivator could do.

But all of that began with training the spiritual sense itself. Much like hand eye coordination needed to be trained, and to some extent was being trained from birth, so too did the spiritual sense need to be trained.

The first step of training spiritual sense in many videos began the same way, which was to first get an easily available spiritual treasure which was specifically designed to aid in learning how to control spiritual sense. It was just that... the tutorial with the most views and the one that Lex was watching started with not one treasure but two. More specifically, it started with procuring a pair of chopsticks which were also spiritual treasures.

Varying from normal treasures, which to cultivators usually either meant natural resources which could aid in some facet of cultivation, or manmade items which could facilitate the use of spiritual energy, often even enhancing it, spiritual treasures were designed specifically to be used with spiritual sense.

Lex watched the entire tutorial and thoroughly understood the requirements of each step in the training before exiting the portal. One issue with using the Henali portal at the Inn, rather than on a planet that had been connected through the proper procedure, was the lack of a delivery service. No matter how affordable the treasure was, it could not be delivered to the Inn. One reason was that the delivery service probably wouldn't have golden keys to enter the Inn, but even in a situation where the Midnight Inn became so popular that everyone had golden keys, using the portal at the Inn disabled location and tracking. It was literally impossible to enter his location as the Midnight Inn while using the portal.

But all was not lost. One of the features of the ongoing festival were stalls that had been setup, allowing guests to sell items and trinkets from their locale. He would first check that market to see if a spiritual treasure matching his requirements was available. If it wasn't then he would place a request at the Guild room.

At the same time...

Lex pulled out his personal hologram which he, as a 'guest' would have had and said, "can you please forward a message from me to the guest Larry, he's an old friend of mine. Tell him I'll be at the local markets."

The hologram nodded and disappeared. The personal holograms could fulfill many of the guests' simple requests such as this, and weren't just limited to answering questions. It was not a commonly known feature, but with time it was slowly catching on.

More importantly, and more relevant than the additional features of the hologram, by inviting Larry to come to him instead of approaching him while he was at his new group, Lex would avoid any suspicion that he was approaching them for a hidden reason. Not that anyone would have any reason to suspect him to begin with, since there was nothing wrong with two friends meeting, Lex was becoming used to thinking about every situation in layers. By doing this, he eliminated even the possibility that someone would suspect him of his real agenda, which was to scope out the system wielder. After all, Lex only invited Larry. They would not have had any idea that he already knew that they would likely follow him.

Lex hailed a golf cart and made his way to the village where the local market had been set up and began to peruse. He could, of course, find out if what he wanted was available if he scanned the system, but he was also using this opportunity to study his eyesight and try to ascertain the limits of what it could show him.

A short while later, his hologram appeared once again, informing him that Larry was on his way to meet him. Lex smirked. Everything was going according to plan.

Well, at least it was, until Larry and his group closed in, and Lex's intuition immediately started acting, warning him that there was immense danger!

Lex was genuinely alarmed, for he couldn't understand who or what could threaten him while he was at the Inn. But it was not a mortal danger that he faced. Lex was still not experienced enough with his intuition to understand what it was trying to tell him.

Unfortunately he was not able to identify the kind of danger, but he at least narrowed it down to who it was coming from. It was one unassuming member of Larry's group. Lex scanned him to discover his name was Noman Butt, but the system gave him no other important information.

His left eye, however, picked up on something. There were strange, invisible waves coming out of and entering his body, mixing in with the environment around him.

"Lex, you sly fellow, where do you disappear to?" Larry yelled loudly over the noise of the crowd as he closed in, his usual stupid smile painting his face. He was still as excitable and jolly as ever.

Lex was about to give a casual reply, stating that he wasn't busy with anything important, before passing a remark about Larry's own busy schedule. He was about to, but before the words left his mouth, his intuition acted up.

This time, he understood the feeling well. No matter what, he must not lie!

"I've been traveling a lot," Lex said with a smile as he greeted his old friend. Yet behind his bright smile and eager eyes, his mind was already compiling a list of everything he could and couldn't say, if he was unable to lie. After all, he was a man with many secrets.