

## The Innkeeper

### Chapter 5 Bastet

Somewhere on Earth, in a small village surrounded by mostly barren land, a black cat was sitting comfortable on the roof of a shed. The cold night air did not seem to bother it as it looked at the villagers, as if surveying its realm and its people. The villagers were gathered around a bonfire and were mingling with one another in a warm and joyous atmosphere. Life was tough but it was pleasant.

The cat yawned as if relaxing after a hard days work and was ready to proceed with its nap when it suddenly noticed a golden glow beside it. When it turned to look, it saw a floating golden door in the air beside it, and from it the cat felt a warm, inviting aura. Curiosity filled the cats eyes and it slowly got up.

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Lex was sitting comfortably in a lawn chair in the back garden, sipping on a cold lemonade as he looked through the Midnight Store. He had changed from his normal clothes into his Host Attire which, for now, looked like a 3 piece suit. It was surprisingly comfortable and remarkably flattering on his figure, not to mention filled him with incredible power. Actually, Lex didn't know how incredible the power was but using the suit he could teleport anywhere in the Inn with a thought and that was exhilarating! Other than that, the suit also brought him an incredible amount of awareness and Lex was instantly filled with all the knowledge regarding the Inn and everything in it.

The first thing he learnt was that the Inn required a monthly expense of 25 Midnight points, and was a fixed expense that could not be evaded. It included a variety of miscellaneous items required for the Inns use that Lex had completely overlooked such as cutlery, linens for rooms, towels, soaps and shampoos, scents, room service items, general maintenance as well as groceries and various other things that gave Lex a headache. It was extremely fortunate that the Inn covered for these things automatically or Lex would have never even thought of them until it was too late, and he didn't want to imagine the consequences.

He had Velma bring him a lemonade and a snack as he wanted to test her cooking abilities and was extremely satisfied with the results. It was a moment of immense pleasure for him until he received the notification that 1 Midnight Point had been deducted as payment for the food. He was flabbergasted, but fortunately Mary informed him that this payment would cover his food for the rest of the month, as long as he only ate normal food as compared to spirit food. He was also informed the concept and division of spirit food was taken from his understanding of novels, meaning it was food that could aid someone with their cultivation.

Since then he has been browsing the Midnight market to see exactly what it could offer. Many tabs were greyed out but the upgrades to the Inn section was available and had options such as a Gift Shop which cost 325 Midnight Points, a Recovery Room for 500 points, a Greenhouse for 425 points and a Meditation room for a whopping 1200 points! Mary informed him that once he purchased one of these upgrades he would be able to buy more things to fill them up with, which could then be sold to guests. That led to another question that Lex had never considered, how would he collect payments from his guests? Another major thing he overlooked!

This was a bit more complicated. The universe didn't have a unified currency which could be used so the Inn would analyze each guest and judge what form of currency they could pay, such as the mythical spirit stones, but as far as Lex was concerned the amount would always be in Midnight Points. For example if a guest wanted to stay in one of his rooms for one night, Lex would ask him for 50 Midnight Points but he would hear Lex asking him for whatever currency was relevant to him, be it dollars or spirit stones or something else. Furthermore the payment for a guests duration of stay had to be made in advance, while payments made for things the guest purchased such as items or services had to be made at the time of the transaction.

Lex nodded to himself and was just about to start looking at what else he could get from the Midnight market when he suddenly received a notification from the system: a guest has entered the Inn! Please receive the guest.

Lex jumped up from the lawn chair in alarm and quickly summed both Velma and Gerard. Making sure they all looked presentable at a glance he quickly teleported them all to the gate. With a welcoming smile on his face Lex was ready to greet his first guest but was frozen instantly by what he saw.

A white bull was slowly making its way down the main road, with a litter strapped onto its back. A black cat was sitting in the litter, its pose filled with

majesty as it surveyed the land around it. When the bull reached Lex finally the cat looked at Lex up and down, as if inspecting goods, and finally spoke,

“What is this place, that has now availed the honor of my presence?” The cats voice was feminine and sweet to listen to, but filled with power and a demand for respect.

Lex snapped out of his stupor and looked at the cat. Beside its head he could see a few floating words.

Name: Bastest

Power Level: ??? (Too high for host to see)

Species: ???

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: Not yet available

The bull had its' information displayed as well. *innread.com*

Name: Falak

Power Level: ??? (Too high for host to see)

Species: ???

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: Not yet available

What in the world was this? Was this a creature from Earth? A talking cat with a cultivation too high for him to see? On top of that even the bull that the cat was riding was too powerful for him to detect. He did not have a clear idea of what cultivation level would be too high for him to view, but he was sure it was akin to a monster way beyond the Foundation level that his authority extended to. Whatever, a guest was a guest, he should not discriminate as his future guests would be aliens.

“Welcome guest to the Midnight Inn,” Lex said in a calm, confident voice. “The Midnight Inn is a refuge for the weary traveler of the universe, a place where you may rest and enjoy before continuing on your journey. You may call me .”

The cat Bastest stared at Lex for a moment, as if contemplating what it had heard, before it continued asking, "Your Inn brought me from Earth to a new space, Innkeeper, can it also send me to a different space that I wish to visit?"

Lex froze again, unsure of how to answer, but the Host Attire that was completely in tune with the Inn provided him with the answer.

"Unfortunately, we do not provide such transportation services at the moment. Guests must return to the area they came from. This is to avoid letting powerful guests interfere with other worlds, I'm sure a guest as noble as yourself can understand."

Lex's voice was still quite professional, but inwardly he was wondering how a guest could interfere with an entire world.

"Pity, I forgot a necklace at Hozath last time I was there, I was hoping to go and retrieve it. Regardless, show me what amenities you offer. I am quite interested in this place, father has grounded me on Earth for far too long."

"Please, follow me," said Lex as he led the way to the Inn. Internally his emotions were quite a mix of anxiety and excitement, and under normal circumstances he would not have been able to maintain such composure but it seemed assisting him in that regard was a hidden feature of the suit.

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Bastet was quite intrigued by this new area that it had encountered. When she had seen the floating golden door it was just curiosity but as soon as she neared it she was filled with pure spirit energy! She was so excited that she couldn't control her excitement momentarily and caused a massive earthquake. Fortunately she recovered quickly and saved her worshippers. Nonetheless she decided immediately that she had to follow the door, she had spent too long on the spirit barren Earth and this was her chance to escape!

One must understand, it's not that Earth itself did not have spirit energy at all, but that the quality and concentration was too low, and lacked certain qualities that would leave it inconsequential to those of her cultivation. The spirit energy coming from the door was not too high in concentration, but it's quality was much better than Earth, and more importantly did not lack those certain qualities that she needed!

She hastily summoned her butler Falak, who had assumed the appearance of a bull, gathered all her belongings and followed through the door. The door led to what appeared to be a mansion with vast open gardens and a clear blue sky. At first glance it looked a bit empty and quiet, no trees or flowers, no birds or insects, and no people or other lifeforms visible but none of that mattered to Bastet because the air was dense with spirit energy! Though it was a far cry from the density in her fathers palace, it was like heaven after coming from Earth.

She had already started recovering some of her strength, and if she could stay here for a few decades she could fully recover! At that time she would be able to leave Earth on her own!

As she reveled in her thoughts and Falak slowly made his way down the road, three humans appeared in her path, surprising her. She did not feel any movement in the spirit energy around her which meant they appeared using some other means, which intimidated her a bit. She looked over the three humans and discovered two of them to be completely normal while the third, who was a young man, gave off an aura of unquestionable authority, yet at the same time a welcoming friendliness.

After a short exchange the young man explained that this was an Inn, much to Bastets' delight. She decided immediately that she must stay as long as possible!

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