

Innkeeper 731

The Innkeeper

Chapter 731: Stop showing off

Back when the A.I. had invaded the Inn, Lex had taken an attack from an immortal head on, and survived. It was an experience he was not eager to repeat, for every bone in his body had been crushed almost into fine powder. Moreover, the only reason he survived was because the robot had lacked something fundamental that other immortals had, which made it weaker.

So, although Lex of course needed recognition for the event, one could also say a lot of luck was at play. If the robot had not been fundamentally weaker, if the force of the attack had not been channeled into the ground through his feet, and if Impervious hand had somehow not taken control of the robots soul, there was a good chance Lex would have died, or at least been seriously injured beyond what he had been already.

That was why, Lex did not dare utter out his plan to once again face an immortal, lest his resolution waver. But, unlike last time, Lex did not intend to take the attack head on. No, this time, Lex only wanted to divert the attack into the otherwise massive army of insects to clear a path for his escape into the formation. That should be easy, right? He only needed to accomplish two impossible feats back to back.

Lex entered the flow state, getting rid of any distracting thoughts and allowing himself to focus on the task at hand. He honed in on any guidance his instincts provided, while at the same time started using all the new advantages he had gained with his new cultivation technique.

He used a familiar array, and summoned the lightning from immortal tribulations to herald his arrival, and attract the attention of an immortal. If he was going to do this, he absolutely could not allow himself to cower or do things half heartedly. Even a hint of weakness, even if it was in his thoughts, or the aura he had accumulated, could result in his failure. Therefore, he had to act as if he already knew he was bound to succeed.

No, he could not act. His success was a foregone conclusion, he just had to act it out now.

There were no clouds in the sky until Lex used his array, or rather, until he repeatedly used the same array. Although his arrays were not delivering the same level of attacks he was used to, he would just go for quantity if he failed in quality.

Like divine judgment, lightning slammed down on the ground, destroying everything in its path. The insects were decimated, and those that were lucky enough to survive the first lightning strike were done in by the second, or the third, or even the fourth.

Behind Lex, Gisele stood with a sword in her hand, a stoic expression on her face. There weren't any good solutions, so they had to go for a bad solution. Since Lex seemed decently confident, she allowed him to lead. Secretly though, she retrieved a small blue orb and clenched it in the fist of her free hand.

As lightning fell, as the earth shook, as the insects wailed, and even as an immortal insect attacked, she did not flinch. If Lex could not handle the situation, she would. But the orb in her fist remained unused.

As the attack descended on them, Lex, with such perfect timing it seemed like he had practiced it a hundred times, reached out with his right hand and, ever so carefully, diverted it to the insects in their path.

He had done it so smoothly it seemed like he barely used any effort, and with the devilish mask hiding his expressions, one could not tell if he was even in any pain, for the mask seemed to be laughing.

Lex kept standing, but the ship they were on seemed to have suffered greatly from just being in the proximity of the attack. It began to slow, and eventually began to fall.

"Follow me," Lex said in a seemingly calm voice. He stepped onto the bow of the ship and then took another step forward, landing perfectly on the ground as the ship itself crashed into the ground.

Gisele, too, had exited the ship calmly, and continued to walk behind Lex. Though, at the speed they were moving at, walking only referred to how casually they moved their legs, not the distance they were covering.

In a few seconds they crossed the macabre red carpet that marked their path and reached the formation. Just as there was hope that they could enter the formation without the need for any fighting, a devastating attack was launched from within the stronghold.

Instantly the nature of the formation changed, and instead of blocking the insects it allowed them to enter, so that the soldiers could fight in a terrain that suited them rather than the enemy.

Amidst the roar of the soldiers' battle cry, and the wailing of a sea of insects, Gisele could have sworn she heard Lex sigh.

Gently, Lex tucked his right hand into his trouser pocket and lifted his left hand.

"Shall we see whose close combat is better?" he asked casually, as if standing in his own backyard.

Gisele rolled her eyes and lifted her sword.

"If you're injured, just follow my lead. No need to try and show off," she said, before beginning her ballet performance.

A few thousand tonnes of insects were falling on top of them now that the formation had changed, and there was no more time for talking. Yet even then, for some reason, she could clearly hear the sound of Lex chuckling?

Injured? Oh Lex was most definitely injured as his right hand, arm, shoulder blade and rib cage were crushed. The muscles in that half of his body were also shredded. If someone poked Lex on his right side at that moment, they would discover that his body was more like jelly than its usual self.

It was in anticipation of such a level of injury that Lex had blocked from his right instead of his left, lest his heart be crushed as well. It was not the injury itself that was the problem for Lex at that moment, as he could control his body using just his spirit energy. No, it was the soul ripping pain that he was in that was overwhelming his senses.

The reason he had so calmly descended from the ship, the reason he so casually walked to the dome formation, and the reason he was doing everything with such serenity was not because he wanted to look cool, but because sudden jerks shot pain all through his body.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 732: Fresh from the fight

The first thing Lex did was to erect an Imperial Shield above himself and Gisele. No matter how strong they were, being crushed by the enormous weight of a mountain of insects was going to kill them.

The next thing he did was analyze the situation. He had not expected the formation to change so suddenly. He was betting on getting inside the formation since he was sure that it would only block out the insects, not the humans. Or else, he would remain at the mercy of the immortal level insect. Though He had diverted one of its attacks, he could not do so again.

As it was, the immortal level insect no longer focused on him for a devastating attack from within the formation had targeted all the immortal level insects. What followed was a fight among immortals, held up in the air above the stronghold. Lex did not doubt that the empire would come out the winner in the competition, as the strength of the empire was not for show.

For all the bravado he had shown earlier, Lex now only had one objective: to reach the center of the stronghold. He would get away from the fighting, and see if there was a cure to the poison to be found. If not, he would get out of there as quickly as possible and go get some sleep.

The serious injury he had suffered was no doubt going to end with him sleeping for at least another month or two, which would seriously hamper his plans. But his plans couldn't keep up reality, he could now only hope that whatever treasure the mystery man wanted him to find had not yet been discovered.

Unfortunately for Lex, even in his current situation, his plans couldn't keep up with reality. Just as he started heading deeper into the stronghold to get away from the battle, Belle informed the Jotun immortal stationed there to hold nothing back and attack with all his strength and resources.

Just above her head was an opportunity so precious, beings from all over the realm were rushing towards here. Every second she wasted was a seconds worth of advantage she gave up!

Orders passed down in a flash, and the Jotun forces finally charged! Though it was a uniform charge, with all forces working in tandem, their speed was not slow at all. Instantly the two forces clashed, and all hell was let loose.

Lex and Gisele were completely surrounded by insects, and as if the pressure they were facing was not enough, the charge by the Jotun forces pushed the insects back, effectively squeezing the two who were caught in the middle.

Lex, who had used Harden to ensure the right side of his body didn't slump, was not really in the state to respond quickly to the oncoming force. Since his arrays, albeit not useless, were not delivering the potency he had come to expect, he had to get creative.

His right hand still in his pocket, Lex lifted his left hand and held out his palm, as if asking the insects to stop. But naturally, Lex was not being so courteous. Instead, he was making use of his extremely alien space affinity.

He had not yet learned to harness its power in any tangible way, unlike his employee Z, but during his brief and rare instances of practice, the one thing he had learnt was what kind of use would bring about undesirable results. Right now, that's exactly what he wanted.

The air in front of his palm started to wrinkle, just a bit, and all the insects who came in the vicinity of the wrinkles slowed down, as if the flow of time itself had altered around them. But that was not the case, instead the already fragile space in Polebitvy had become warped. In some places it had become denser and others it had stretched beyond what was reasonable.

The insects who entered this region experienced the unpleasantness which was having the very space their bodies occupied become fragile. The instability of space did not hurt their physical bodies nearly as much as it tortured their souls, which required absolute stability to exist.

Although Lex had, in one single move, stopped the retreat of the entire army, he instantly paled as he felt his energy reserve deplete drastically. No matter his affinity, playing with space, especially on such a large scale, was not easily sustained.

Lex withdrew his left arm as he mentally prepared himself for a real fight close up. Though he still planned on continuing to use arrays, their current unreliability meant that at any time he might need to defend himself. Even though it was bound to hurt, if it came down to it, he'd fight tooth and nail.

But, just as he mentally prepared himself to face some pain, he felt a connection that had eluded him for a long time, and he could not help but relax.

With his space interference stopped, the few hundred insects which had been affected fell to the ground, but the countless vermind behind them did not pause and rushed towards him like a tidal wave.

Gisele, who had been fighting off the attack from the opposite side, sensed the arrival and prepared herself to rescue Lex, but then suddenly he seemed to vanish in her senses!

Alarmed, she turned to look back, but was not prepared for what she saw.

Although he could not be detected, Lex had not vanished. Instead, he was now astride a massive, white wolf, which similarly could not be detected by her senses.

"Get on," she heard him speak through his spirit sense, and she did not hesitate to comply. Fenrir, who had just ended an extremely long and difficult trial, was ready to meet its friends it had not seen in so long.

Yet what awaited it was not the familiar cozy, and comfy Midnight Inn, but a brutal battlefield.

Strong, fast, and fresh from a fight for the fate of the forest, Fenrir had arrived just in time to save Lex from an uncomfortable amount of pain.

"I'm a little hurt," confided Lex to his trusted companion. "I'll let you deal with this rabble."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 733: Odd encounter

Atop his loyal steed - eh, atop his loyal wolf, Lex was suddenly reminded of the fact that even in his most desperate situation, he really wasn't alone. The nefarious system added all kinds of restrictions to prevent his escape to the Inn during a fight, but there was no such restriction on bringing in members of the Inn.

The moment he felt his connection to Fenrir restored, he did not hesitate to summon him over. Lex could instantly tell that Fenrir had grown much stronger, and from him Lex could feel an aura that was oddly similar to divine energy, though not quite.

The pup was momentarily startled by its sudden arrival in a battlefield, but it did not affect its performance. It had been fighting nonstop until its trial ended, and so it had really honed its instincts. Although a battlefield was a very different environment to fight in from a forest, the pup adapted quickly enough.

With the ferocity that befitted one who had been originally summoned as a protector for the Inn, the pup tore through the horde as if it was paper. Whether it was one insect in front of it or a hundred, its claws felt no difference.

Gisele was genuinely surprised now, and finally a tinge of curiosity awoke within her. Deflecting the blow of an immortal did not make as much of an impression on her as Fenrir did, as she was deeply knowledgeable about beasts, and could tell that Fenrir's origins weren't simple.

Lex, who did not doubt Fenrir's capability at all, was not paying attention to it at all. Instead, all his spirit sense had converged within his body, more specifically his back, as he tried to communicate with the Lotus on his back.

It had been oddly silent for a while now, which suited Lex fine most of the time. But now, he needed its help. Originally Lex never dared to ask the Lotus for things like this, because he was always too worried about maintaining the prestige of the Innkeeper. But now that he was slowly and steadily becoming more powerful, he was a lot less concerned about that - at least as far as the Lotus was concerned.

With time, as he grew stronger, he would have to pretend less and less, as he would eventually completely come into the role of the Innkeeper, and perhaps even surpass it one day. With such a mentality, he did not shy from making use of the Lotus when he could.

"Hey, wake up," he transmitted his voice into the tattoo on his back. The Lotus did not immediately respond so Lex gathered up his energy and focused, doing his best to summon the authority and aura of the Innkeeper he had nurtured on his own, not the one given to him by the Host Attire.

Fenrir, Gisele, and all the immortals in the vicinity noticed the unusual aura gathering down below, but none other than the first two could tell where it was coming from.

"Wake up," his voice echoed, and this time, the Lotus roused from its deep slumber.

"My body is injured," Lex said, his tone unchanging. "Do you think you can speed up its recovery?"

"Yes of course," the baby Lotus responded timidly, and immediately began channeling its aura and circulating around Lex's body, drastically speeding up his recovery.

"Is this kind of thing a burden for you?" Lex asked again, just to be sure.

"No, not really. But I can't spend much time awake. I have already used up a lot of my energy without getting enough rest, if I keep this up it'll be really bad for my growth."

"I understand," Lex said as he felt his body recover. He decided not to bother the Lotus unless it was a real emergency in the future. But with so many allies around him, Lex's confidence grew once again.

Despite how casually Lex was taking it, the battle was actually extremely intense. Too much time had passed already, and Belle decided to end things once and for all, even if she had to pay a price.

The six illusory wings behind her spread, glowing with light so bright it blinded the eyes and spirit sense of all in the area. When the light receded, it took the shape of an armor and sword made entirely of light. Her helmet of light did not even leave any gaps for her eyes, though at her level such things hardly mattered.

When the remaining insects caught sight of her again, she had already critically wounded one immortal, and swiftly moved to injure another. Alarmed, the insects began working together, not harming her but keeping themselves from harm as well.

Feeling frustrated, she held back no more and activated her tenets, which began affecting the environment around them, and made the situation even more dangerous. The entire continent under her suffered an earthquake and the fighting on the ground stopped momentarily, and the scenery in the sky changed.

As if alarmed by the sudden change, all the immortal insects suddenly focused all their attacks on the shining angel in the sky, Belle.

Though she could have avoided it, she allowed herself to be hit as she gathered her strength. Their attacks could not penetrate her armor anyway. Like a comet, she crashed into the ground killing countless insects. Yet that brief departure from battle also gave her the time she needed to prepare her final attack.

She looked up, ready to hone in on her targets, but saw a white wolf standing above her, looking down at her oddly. Atop the wolf sat a man wearing a devilish mask and a woman, also looking down at her.

While her aura should have prevented anyone not immortal from even approaching her, these few all seemed unaffected.

The wolf, as if deciding it was uninterested, turned away and continued to fight the insect horde. Belle, due to her excellent senses, heard the devilish man mumble, "I should really get a pair of sunglasses," while squinting away from the light her body was emitting.

The... odd encounter did not even give her a moment's pause. She had no time to wait, and finally, her full strength was unveiled. Her Valkyrie soul was awakened, and she, as a human, channeled the racial powers of the angels.

She unleashed an attack so bright, for a moment the light from the local star even seemed to dim in comparison, before flying off into the sky. She never meant to kill the insects anyway. Injuring them was more than enough to hold them off until reinforcements arrived.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 734: ACA Lex

It took Lex a few moments to realize what happened. The earth immortal with angel wings had launched a devastating attack that heavily influenced the battle in the humans favor, before disappearing into space. Although her target had been other immortal insects, the collateral damage from her attacks drastically dropped the number of enemies the humans had to fight.

It made life easier for Lex too. With fewer obstructions, Fenrir quickly navigated his way from the very thick of battle towards the center of the stronghold. With the armies well trained coordination, it was only a matter of time before they won the war outright.

With the pressure off him, Lex easily soon exited the battle, though no one seemed to notice the giant wolf as it openly marched through the vacant streets.

"You're leaving the battle?" Gisele questioned, a hint of disapproval in her voice.

"Certain matters require urgent attention," Lex replied, paying her no mind. He had officially brought her to the stronghold, and even helped her escape the fight. If she wished to go back, he would not stop her nor interfere in her matters. His focus was entirely on the cure.

Gisele hesitated, but decided to stick with him. Lex was right. Her priority in the current situation was to check on the kids who had been with her, not the fight.

Lex was beginning to feel that the worst was behind him, when suddenly Gisele coughed. It was not a bad cough, and it did not happen again, but at their level, even a cough was a significant matter.

He was suddenly reminded that she was poisoned, as possibly everyone else in the area as well. Lex and Gisele looked at each, both aware of what the cough meant.

"Let me see if I can slow down the poison," Lex said as he lifted his hand, but waited for her to agree. Considering that Lex's performance was quite remarkable so far, and that he himself had yet to show any signs of suffering from the poison, she nodded.

Lex placed his fingers right below her wrist, as if checking her pulse. But he was not investigating her situation. Instead, he asked the Lotus, "can you check the body of the woman I'm touching? Can you find a cure for the poison in her system?"

"Let me check," the Lotus said, and allowed its energy to travel through Lex's fingers into Gisele's wrist. Gisele, who was being investigated, suddenly stiffened. The spiritual energy which had entered her wrist was beyond overbearing. If she tried to resist in any way, there was a very good chance her meridians themselves might tear.

After a few moments of investigation, the Lotus replied, "yes I can remove the poison, but this poison is incredibly powerful. I'm afraid the moment I finish removing it, I'll fall into a deep sleep."

Lex frowned, and then removed his hand. This was the first time he had encountered something that gave the Lotus some kind of trouble. Whatever the poison's origins were, they absolutely weren't ordinary. For now, it wasn't worth putting the Lotus to sleep to save one person.

Although he said nothing, the frown on his face informed Gisele of whatever she needed to know. She wasn't particularly disappointed, for she didn't expect much. If the poison were so easy to remove, she would have already done it. Little did she know, Lex really had removed the poison from his own body. Although technically, that was a result of his body's own reaction, and was achieved by removing the infected area, such as a piece of his lung or his blood.

"Let's hurry," was all Lex could offer as he spurred Fenrir to pick up the pace.

It had to be mentioned that the poison remained unidentified even by the Fancy contact lenses, and the same could be said for the strange insects. Lex could accept the absence of information of the poison due to how unusual it was, but considering the lenses came from the Emporium, he expected them to have a detailed database of all common and uncommon creatures in the Origin realm at least.

This point was highly suspicious, but Lex could do nothing about it, so he put the matter at the back of his mind.

"I'll get off here, the apartment I left the kids in is in a different direction," said Gisele as she hopped off Fenrir.

"Good luck," offered Lex, before he continued on his way. He was not roaming the stronghold randomly, and was heading towards the main command center in which they even had their teleportation

formations. If he wanted to ask about the poison, he would either need to find a doctor, or someone higher up along the chain of command.

The building, surprisingly, was not unprotected as Lex had expected. There was a heavily armed guard stationed at every corner.

At a glance Lex could easily determine that these were not the usual guards, but instead were probably some of the reinforcements that had teleported over. He didn't know what they were waiting for, but he knew that if he revealed himself they'd probably ask him to reveal his identity.

Fortunately, Lex had an official identity with the Jotun forces. He asked Fenrir to shrink down as they hid beside a nearby building, and Lex dismissed Notorious Anonymity. He even changed out of his suit so that no one would associate him with the crazy devil guy who had diverted an immortals' attack. Gisele was the only one who knew his identity, but he did not really expect her to tattle. Even if she did, he was not too concerned for the nagging feeling his instincts gave him to hide his identity had vanished.

So much movement caused his pain to once again spike, but there was nothing he could do about that. At least the Lotus was healing him, which helped reduce the pain somewhat.

As soon as he neared the main building, the stationed guards noticed him and aimed their weapons at him.

"Identify yourself!" one of the soldiers yelled in an extremely aggressive and hostile voice.

"Auxiliary Combat Aid (ACA) Lex," he yelled back, as he walked back slightly hunched. "I'm severely injured, I need medical aid!"

The guards finally lowered their weapons and approached Lex, but even then, no one seemed to notice the little white pup following behind Lex. Fenrir's abilities had really grown during his time away.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 735: Mysterious healer

Two soldiers slowly approached Lex to ensure he had nothing suspicious planned. Although they knew the ongoing battle was against some foreign race, they were under the highest level lockdown so they had to take every precaution.

"What's the matter with you? You don't look injured," said one of the soldiers.

"It's the bones in my right arm. They're completely crushed. I need to see a doctor," confessed Lex, telling the truth. This was a much quicker way of getting close to the medical professionals than showing up and directly asking for the cure. Besides, he was not sure if more immortals would be showing up. If that were the case, using any kind of coercive means would end badly for him. Not to mention, if he got to experience the medical system of the empire first hand and liked it, there was a lot he could learn.

The soldier scanned Lex with his spirit sense, and was alarmed to see the state Lex was in when he checked his body. Naturally, Lex allowed the scan, otherwise his state would remain undetectable from the outside.

"My god, how are you standing?" the soldier asked in shock, and immediately cleared the way for Lex. It was not long before a floating gurney was brought for Lex to lay down on, and he was quickly brought inside, little Fenrir following them the entire way.

Lex had not yet had time to question the pup about its new abilities, but he was thoroughly impressed by the little he had seen. He remembered that while the pup had always had an advantage in stealth, previously it would still have to stay out of sight to keep that stealth active. Now, the pup was prancing about in plain sight, and all were ignoring him.

During the fight earlier, he had used this to his advantage to wreak havoc among the insects, all without getting targeted even once as none of the insects could detect him at all.

Pretty soon, Lex was brought into an overcrowded room that looked like it had previously been an office, and was now being used as an emergency room. Makeshift beds produced by joining two small tables together, multiple IV drips and overwhelmed medical personnel could be seen everywhere.

Lex was brought to a doctor as well, but after scanning Lex once, he was designated as a non-emergency case and was only given a single painkiller and moved to the side of the room. The outfit was clearly

understaffed as soldiers were running about, using their emergency first aid training to follow the instruction of a few doctors.

The room was not filled with wounded soldiers, but countless civilians who all seemed to be suffering the effects of the poisoning. In such a chaotic situation, no one noticed Lex's spirit sense, which subtly moved about the room and closely listened in on the conversation of various doctors.

He was trying to figure out if they had any cure from their conversations, but that was easier said than done as they only seemed to be giving out orders for how to handle their patients.

His instincts weren't particularly helpful at the moment either, so all he could do was wait. Fenrir too was exploring the place in secret, though Lex did not know what to expect from the pup.

With the battle outside all but taken care of, Lex had enough time to spare until he found out about the state of things. Moreover, now that he was within the main office, he was aware that a stream of reinforcements were constantly teleporting over.

It could not be said that everything was going great, but it was going well enough. Until it suddenly wasn't. Lex frowned when his instincts began warning him of impending danger, and sure enough, soon Lex saw a panicked soldier run through the halls. He found a superior and whispered something in his ears, but Lex heard what was said.

The soldiers who had been affected by the poison were able to hold it off using some of the best medicine the empire could supply, but the strain of combat increased their metabolism, which aggravated the poison's effects. Soldiers had started to faint in the midst of combat.

This was suddenly going from a sure victory to an impending disaster. It was also at that point that Lex found out the state of the poison's cure. There was none.

The empire had no idea what the poison actually was, although apparently someone who could, through some unusual means, delay the effects of the poison had been discovered.

Despite the critical situation, due to the empire's phenomenal training, the soldiers did not fall into too much confusion. With a clear chain of command, someone took over and began giving out orders.

Lex, who was being completely ignored, decided to stop delaying matters. He called back Fenrir, and used the pups abilities to suddenly vanish from sight as he moved towards the mysterious healer that had been discovered.

Any time something inexplicable happened, Lex thought of systems, so he had to investigate this healer no matter what.

Shortly after, Lex followed the soldier outside the building and to a nearby park where hundreds of civilians were lying on beds of leaves. A bunch of kids were running around obeying orders, and in the middle of the park standing atop a monument was a young, fair man wearing a doctor's white coat.

The doctor was extremely skinny and seemed like he would be blown over by a single breeze, yet at the same time he exuded an aura of confidence and stability.

Lex could not help it, and tried to use his Targeted Scan.

Name: Charles Best

Age: ?

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: ?

Species: Human

Remarks: An old soul in a young body, or just a young man pretending to be a stoic.

Lex frowned. The fact that even some information was available meant that the man did not have a system, which was unexpected. Lex stepped away from Fenrir and revealed himself, curious to see what kind of treatment he could get from this mysterious healer.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 736: Quack Doctor

As Lex limped closer to the healer, he could hear in on the conversation the soldiers were having with him.

"...not a barbarian, I am a doctor. If you must stretch things, then at most I am somewhat of a shaman. I absolutely cannot enter the battlefield. If any soldiers require medical attention, you can bring them here."

"The situation does not allow for that..."

"Screw the situation! I'll be no good to you dead, and that's exactly what I'll be if I enter the battlefield. If you're unable to hold the line, then just say that, and instead of finding me, begin evacuations! Now if you'll excuse me, I have patients to attend to!"

Lex frowned. The warning from his instincts was getting dire, and it seemed like the empire was not able to get a handle on the situation. It was strange, though. According to Lex's understanding of the empire, they should be fully capable of reacting to even an emergency such as this.

His mind wandered towards the terrorists, who had been secretly as well as openly orchestrating the situation from behind the scenes. Maybe there was something else at play.

Once Lex reached such a conclusion, he decided to wrap things up here. Although he wanted to help out as much as possible, especially since Alexander had originally asked for his help, one must also know when to retreat.

But... despite the ever increasing danger, Lex was sure he had enough time to test out this doctor first.

"Doctor, please, I need your help," Lex said, attracting the skinny young man's attention. "The bones on my right side are crushed, the pain is overwhelming," he said, though honestly he had to admit, the painkiller given to ripping, to simply making him want to die immediately so that the pain would end. Of course, with his will power as strong as it was, he was not about to do that.

The doctor, ignoring the soldier attempting to be domineering, came towards Lex and without hesitation put his fingers on Lex's neck. An unusual yet warm energy flowed into his body, and for some odd reason, Lex felt like he wouldn't be able to block it even if he had tried.

The doctor did not have any change of expression, but clearly he was alarmed by Lex's state as he abruptly started shouting at his assistants - the small children in the park.

A whirlwind of activity surrounded Lex, and in a few moments, he found himself shirtless and laying on a bed of leaves, freshly laid out just for him.

"Inject 30 CC of Gurling worm venom in the right arm, lather Durbid root sap on his chest, and bring me a fresh bushel of Bailing berries," the doctor commanded as he began injecting his strange energy at various points across Lex's body.

'Does this count as acupuncture?' he wondered as the energy effortlessly pierced his skin, and activated strange reactions across his body. Although Lex was not cultivating, his body started to absorb the ambient spirit energy, and it seemed to be disappearing somewhere unknown within his body.

The kids proved to be competent nurses, as they quickly followed through the doctor's orders, though there was one tiny hiccup. When the kid tried to inject the 'venom' into his arm, the needle broke but Lex's skin remained smooth and flawless. Lex and the kid shared eye contact but said nothing, as the embarrassed kid quickly changed needles.

He tried again, only to fail once again, though admittedly this time the needle only bent and did not break.

"Uh, doctor, sir, we have a problem," the kid said, scratching his head.

The doctor noticed the issue with the needle, and took over. He did not replace the needle, but only coated it with his energy. This time, even Lex was unaware of what the result would be. A moment later, the energy effortlessly entered his arm, yet the needle was still unable to pierce his skin.

This time, Lex and the doctor shared eye contact, and Lex saw genuine surprise.

"How the hell did you even get hurt?" the doctor asked, but then decided that he didn't care. "Here, take this and inject it into your right arm. Do it yourself. I'm just a doctor, not some body builder. Don't make me do such things."

Lex smiled awkwardly, and used his nail to forcefully create a small cut on his right arm before quickly shoving the needle in, and injecting the venom.

The doctor continued to use strange and rare local herbs to treat Lex's body, and the rate at which his body was absorbing spirit energy kept increasing. As strange and unbelievable as it was, Lex felt that the doctor's efforts were contributing nearly as much as the Lotus in healing his body.

After a short while, the doctor told Lex to continue lying down for a short while as he moved to treat his other patients, as his recovery would take a while.

Lex complied, not because he expected to completely heal, but because he wanted to see what the doctor did to treat the poison. Although, regardless of whether he was able to get any results or not, Lex had already decided to hire this Doctor Charles Best to work at the Inn.

For a very long time, he had been looking for a doctor, as he did not want to limit his treatments to just the pods. Although he did not know the extent of Doctor Best's abilities, just that fact that he could speed up Lex's recovery was enough of a reason for him to be hired.

Dr. Best moved towards a new soldier who had been brought in, and though he was bleeding heavily, it was the poison that was truly killing him.

The good doctor had the soldier's shirt removed before... Lex did not know how to respond. The doctor stuck leeches on his chest, and put a small broken piece of chocolate in the soldier's mouth.

The good impression of the doctor which Lex had built up took a nosedive, and Lex began to wonder if he was looking at the fabled quack doctor, who would write any prescription a patient wanted, and did things seemingly randomly.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 737: Retreat

Despite Lex's hesitation towards the doctor's... treatment, he continued to observe him for he was still working. The treatment method continued to remain highly unorthodox for he had a seeming aversion to any processed medication, and instead preferred to use ingredients in their most natural form.

Unexpectedly, the treatment did not take long nor was it too overly complex. In a few minutes, the leeches fell off the man's chest and took on a green tinge, while the soldier's condition improved almost immediately.

Given his current situation, Lex of course could not make an accurate judgment as to the extent of the treatment, but he was satisfied enough with what he had seen. Lex summoned Fenrir, and quickly disappeared from where he lay. As much as he hated to interfere with his healing process, but he had work to do.

He changed into his suit, which automatically cleaned the... lather which Lex had on his chest.

"Find Alexander," he told Fenrir, and described him to the pup. Lex obviously had nothing on him which had Alexander's scent, so he would have to rely on scouring the battlefield instead.

The duo quickly returned to the battlefield, and Lex immediately understood why the situation was getting worse rather than better. Although the original insect army had been diminished drastically by the angel-like immortal, more and more tears were opening up and flooring the ground with even more insects. It was only a matter of time before more immortals also showed up.

Although he expected that the Jotun army should have had the resources to combat this situation, perhaps he was not aware of the whole picture.

It did not take long for them to find Alexander, partly because it was quite easy to spot his six flying blades, and partly because of how openly they were scouring the battlefield with their spirit sense.

Moreover, they found him just in the nick of time, as he too seemed to be suffering greatly from the poison's effects. He was bleeding from his eyes and nose, and was kneeling on a single knee while his swords killed any insect that neared him. He was breathing heavily, and considering if he would be accused of desertion if he escaped to the Inn right at that moment.

"Need a hand?" asked an oddly familiar voice, though in his current state he could not exactly recall who it belonged to. He felt a force yanking him up, and before he knew it, he was atop Fenrir, and all the insects began ignoring him. He saw the face, and instantly a part of his drowsy mind clicked.

"I left a message for you to avoid Polebitvy," he said hoarsely. "I'm glad you ignored it."

"I never got your message, I was here to begin with. I need your help. The situation here is bad, and it's getting worse by the second. There's little hope for evacuation under such a heavy assault, and I don't see reinforcements coming fast enough to change the situation. Everyone needs to escape to the Inn, that's the only hope you have for avoiding a complete wipe out."

Alexander's thoughts were slow, though it was unknown if it was due to the poison or if he had suffered a concussion during the battle. But even so, eventually he caught on to what Lex was saying.

"That decision can only be made by the current commander," he said. "If it was my own squad head, I could have convinced her. But, as you probably saw, Valkyrie left after delivering a devastating attack. She probably has some other mission."

"Do you know who the current commander is?"

"Yes, it's the immortal fighting off the other immortal insects with the formation."

They both paused the conversation and looked up in the sky, where the fight between the remaining immortals was still ongoing, albeit not as intensely as before.

"How about anyone we can actually talk to?"

Alexander tried to think of a solution, but he was not in the best state of mind.

"I can only think of someone else in my squad. Maybe they'll know."

"Lead on, we don't have time to waste."

Due to the fact that they were once again on a manhunt, Alexander described the appearance of his superiors so that they could look. It did not take long before they found the first member of Alexander's squad, but he was already dead.

Finding a second took some time, but fortunately, this one was alive, and even in better condition than Alexander. Though with his cultivation at the Nascent realm, it only made sense that he had fared better.

"Captain Radamei," Alexander yelled, as he tried to get the man's attention. Lex did not want everyone to know about Fenrir's ability so they got off, and the two wounded men fought their way to the Captain.

"We can't go on like this, the situation is not improving! We have to retreat to the Midnight Inn!"

"Music to my ears boy," the captain yelled back, "but the Valkyrie will have our hides if we retreat from battle!"

"Better her than these insects. We have to convince command to retreat, there's no other choice."

"Even if we get them to agree, how can we actually get away?" the burly man asked, dissecting another insect as he did.

Before Alexander could answer, Lex summoned forth a bag full of hundreds of keys.

"You can use this," Lex said, handing the bag to Alexander.

"Will you be alright with him, or do you want to come with me? I have another task to take care of."

"I'll be fine with the captain. Don't worry, desertion or not, I have no intentions of dying here today. I'll go to the Inn if the situation gets worse."

Lex nodded, and separated from the two. He could only hope that whoever was in charge would agree, as the premonition of danger was growing genuinely worrisome now.

Without wasting a second, he quickly got on Fenrir and hurried towards the good doctor, or rather... Doctor Best.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 738: Grandpa

Charles Best was having a spectacularly bad day, which fit perfectly with the horrendous week that he just went through. For reasons he could not completely comprehend, he had reincarnated.

His original identity was that of shaman king from the Dark Elf race, but that was merely the most mundane identity he carried in his previous life. He was a third generation elf, meaning he was only two generations down from the birth of the very first Dark Elf in this realm ever!

As such, when he was born, the Origin realm had only been stable for a little over 10,000 years, with its actual age being near 100 million years, as compared to now when it was already nearing 14 billion years!

As a result, he was privy to certain secrets that remained unknown to most, and had experienced perhaps the most spectacular time for this realm. Any and every realm, upon its inception, was filled with the most potent form of spiritual energy, meaning chaos energy, and was too dangerous for normal species to be born. But that did not mean that no species were born at all.

No, in fact the younger the age of a realm, the more likely it was to give birth to what were categorized as Mythical beings. They usually gave birth to extraordinarily powerful races, though their offsprings scarcely ever reached the level of their primogenitors. Such was the case with elves, and it was similarly the case with dragons, phoenixes and many prominent races.

As the grandchild of a primo, so to speak, Charles had been exposed to knowledge and secrets that the races of today could not even begin to comprehend. So, it was quite ironic that Charles himself could not comprehend the reason for his reincarnation, though he strongly suspected it was related to the cause of his death.

But the greater secrets of the universe be damned, for he was in no position to even consider them at the moment. Reincarnated as a human, a race he had never even heard of before, Charles was put in an extremely weak and frail body. Moreover, the spiritual energy of the realm was no longer able to support the kinds of cultivation techniques he already knew, meaning he would have to rely on the more modern, subpar techniques.

Before he could get his affairs in order, and begin his cultivation, armageddon seemed to have descended on this place. If he did not use certain techniques that relied on external items as fuel to save himself, he would have died immediately when the poison spread.

Had he mentioned that, on this entire forsaken planet, the body he had inhabited was even more pathetic than the rest of his race? For reasons unknown, the prior occupant of this body had not been able to cultivate at all during his life.

At least Charles had a clean slate to begin his cultivation with when he finally picked what he wanted. But the issue now was, the artificial energy he had stored in the containers he had attached to his body was running out. When that happened, he would have no way to protect himself.

He could only hope that by showing off his extensive knowledge of nature, he could be considered valuable enough by the human empire, and be rescued before anything too drastic happened. He had too much to live for. After all, he knew all the great secrets of the Origin realm. He only needed a little bit of strength, and he could begin harvesting treasures that had spent billions of years in the making. His rise would be unstoppable.

Just as Charles was worrying about his survival, daydreaming about his rise, and reminiscing about his past, he became aware of a massive white wolf standing right in front of him, and a human wearing some kind of devilish mask riding atop it.

"Grandpa Fenrir!" he could not help but suddenly exclaim as he fell to his knees, the shock of what he saw completely wiping his mind clear of all thoughts. But then a few seconds passed in awkward silence as neither side spoke, and everyone was wondering what was going on.

Charles woke up, and realized the mistake he had made of letting his instinctual reaction get the better of him. But he also could not be blamed, for who could expect to see a wolf with such a pure bloodline

14 billion years after the origin realm had already been formed. His Grandpa Fenrir was probably already dead, or had long since left the realm.

Charles stood up and coughed to clear his throat, pretending as if his previous actions had never happened.

"How can I help you? Do you also need treatment?" he asked, his expression and tone extremely professional.

But, unfortunately, the devilish man did not play along.

"You recognized Fenrir pretty quickly. Have you seen another wolf with the same bloodline before? But I was under the impression that this bloodline was pretty rare."

It definitely had to be rare, for even though the system had many drawbacks, it never lied when it was concerned with its quest rewards!

"You... you.... You named him Fenrir?" Charles asked, raising a trembling hand and pointing at the devilish man. "Do you know what you're doing?"

Charles suddenly became weak in his legs. He had just been reborn, so why the hell was he encountering so many dangerous situations? The ignorant were truly bold, and dared to do anything.

"Why? Is there a problem with giving it such a name?" the devilish man asked.

His question made sense. Ordinarily, it was not a big deal regardless of what one was named. But that was only if one did not know about the Mythical beings, and their corresponding powers over their bloodlines. If the wolf had been named Fenrir, and nothing amiss had happened to it, there were only a few possibilities Charles could think of.

The first, and safest option was that Grandpa Fenrir truly was dead. The second, and quite a real possibility, was that Grandpa Fenrir had used certain laws to set up conditions for his own reincarnation. The third... Charles suddenly stopped trembling and looked at the devilish man as if trying to guess his

identity. The third possibility was that behind this devilish man was someone even Grandpa Fenrir did not dare to mess with.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 739: A tear in space

Lex had approached Dr. Charles with the intention of creating a strong impression on him, and getting him to take refuge with the Midnight Inn. But, from the very first instant, things had not gone the way he expected. It seemed like even without putting in any effort, the man had been thoroughly dominated. After all, he dropped to his knees and called Fenrir grandpa!

That was a feat Lex had not been able to accomplish even as the Innkeeper, let alone as Lex. But all jokes aside, although Charles did not end up having a system, the man clearly had some secrets and unusual experiences. After all, he had directly called Fenrir by his name, and even addressed him by it.

It was not so surprising that someone could guess Fenrir's name, for Lex had directly named him after his bloodline, but so far Charles was the only one who had had a significant reaction to his pup. Even if Lex was not interested in him for his medical knowledge, his familiarity with his pup's bloodline, and possibly even origin, made it so that he had successfully aroused all of Lex's attention.

"There is no problem with such a name," Charles responded, having once again regained his composure. "It's just not everyday that one takes on the name of a bloodline. It's very unoriginal."

"So are you saying your... grandpa did not do the same?" Lex asked, seeming as if he was completely calm and not in any rush at all. In truth, Lex knew that the sooner they left this planet, the better. The warning level from his instincts were getting very close to the level where Lex would leave without any hesitation.

"I misspoke," Charles responded, refusing to comment on the matter. Some matters were best left unsaid, because he could not come up with a reasonable explanation for his answer. Was he supposed to confess that he knew and had met the real and original Fenrir?

Lex pondered for a minute, but then decided there would be plenty of time to question the good doctor at a later time, as long as he joined the Inn.

"This planet is about to face a great danger, much greater than the one it is currently already facing," said Lex, based completely on his guess. "You can try to evacuate through the empire, but I have a quicker solution for you."

Lex threw a platinum key at the doctor, who caught it immediately. He sensed a familiar aura from the key, but he could not place where exactly he had felt it before. Regardless, the aura it gave off was worth speculating over.

"I work for a place called the Midnight Inn. We cater and host guests from all across the universe. I've seen your medical skill, and I think you're good enough to recruit. If you crush the key, you can take a test to see if you too can become a member of the Inn."

At this point, Lex threw a golden key towards him too.

"But, of course, joining is not mandatory. If you do not wish to join, you can simply leave this place by crushing the golden key. You'll be teleported over to the Midnight Inn, where you'll be able to escape whatever disaster is about to fall here. Of course, if you visit normally, you'll just be an ordinary guest, and you'll have to pay for your stay."

With that, Lex decided to leave. One way or another, Charles was coming to the Inn. Based on his behavior, Lex could see that he lacked the courage to endanger his life for very long. Moreover, although it seemed like Lex gave him the choice of whether to work at the Inn or not, the reality was that that was not the case.

If he visited as a guest, he would only be able to stay for a limited time, as he would eventually run out of MP. Then he would have to return to this planet, and based on how Lex saw things proceeding, it was unlikely the good doctor would want such a result. So, in the end, whether he used the platinum key now, or later, Lex was sure that ultimately he would end up using it.

When he returned to the Inn, Lex finally breathed a sigh of relief as the sensation of impending danger finally disappeared.

"Mary, I have a potential new hire coming in by the name of Charles. If he joins, have him treat all the poison patients. I have no other solution for the poison for now. If there's an emergency that requires my attention, wake me up. Otherwise, just manage things till I wake up."

He passed on a few more instructions before he teleported away to his private Recovery pod, got in, and went to sleep. Although it seemed like he was fine, the amount of pain he had tolerated was truly driving him to the verge of insanity. There was almost nothing that could prevent him from going to sleep, and finally escaping his pain.

An hour or so after Lex appeared, many soldiers also teleported over to the Inn, all in a bad condition. The situation on the planet had truly deteriorated, and it was far worse than anything any of them could have expected. Simply speaking... a massive tear in space had opened up, and had engulfed the entire planet teleporting it away!

Such a scene was unprecedented and completely unheard of, and only the few who had evacuated to the Inn, or used the teleportation formations in advance to escape had survived.

A day later, news finally spread as experts from across the realm approached the area and conducted an investigation. The insects that they had been fighting seemed to have been specifically bred for a single purpose, and surprisingly that purpose was not to fight. Their blood contained an unusual material that rapidly deteriorated the stability of space, considering that space in that area was already vulnerable in the

first place.

It seemed like... to erase his traces, the mastermind behind the 'eco-terrorism' act had decided to remove the entire planet.

Of course, he had further compromised the environment in the process as well, as the massive tear in space was now leaking chaos energy directly into the realm.

As for what would happen next, no one knew. But the situation was far from over, as no one seemed to be able to trace the terrorist 'Jeffery', including the Daolords dispatched by the Henali!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 740: Catch up

13 days after the incident, Lex suddenly woke up in his Recovery pod. Unlike his usual retreats, Lex did not wake up refreshed and well rested, but rather he felt like he was on the verge of dying from

starvation! Although, he had indeed also healed. The Lotus seemed to have gone back to sleep as well, for the warm sensation of the Lotus healing him had already vanished.

Unable to bear the hunger, Lex teleported over some food and immediately began eating while a part of his brain tried to understand what was happening to him. The changes to his body due to the new cultivation technique were many, and he was still only just understanding them. Originally, his hunger could usually be sated just using spiritual energy, but now it seemed like he also needed to replenish his reserves with food, and not just any ordinary food.

The stash he was eating from now was a reserve he had created for himself, and contained extremely energy abundant foods, all procured from the emporium. Even then, this was only barely helping him slowly sate his hunger.

"Mary, what happened while I was asleep? Did Charles join the Inn?"

"Lex... a lot has happened while you slept. Yes, Charles did eventually join the Inn, but only after Polebitvy was completely teleported away, and all his accumulated wealth disappeared, leaving him broke..."

Mary began to inform Lex of all that had happened recently. The state of things had escalated so much that it had transcended just the Pental galaxy, and, oddly enough, the number of guests had ironically dropped. No one was in the mood for a vacation in such a tense time. Everyone was returning to take care of important things that could not be put off.

As it turned out what had happened at Polebitvy was only just the start. Similar terrorist acts were carried out across the entire realm. Countless planets were then similarly teleported away using the same method.

At first, everyone assumed that causing massive tears in space was a way for the terrorist to hide his trail, but once the method was replicated multiple times, many began to suspect that there was still more to the matter than there appeared, and indeed a week later the suspicions were proven true.

Before the tears could completely heal, even under the efforts of Dao Lords, they became points at which the Fuegan infiltrated into the realm. If the Dao Lords wanted, they could have forcefully

destroyed all the infiltrating Fuegan, but that would have further compromised the integrity of space in that region.

The entire realm had entered a state of emergency, and the Henali were finally beginning to take action personally. Only they knew the heavy investments they had put into ensuring the maximum organic growth of this realm, and if external interference ruined that then their losses would be immense!

These too were only the things Mary knew of because she had heard multiple devils discussing the matters openly. Speaking of whom, the devils had become the race to most frequent the Inn these days. If one did not know better, it would seem like the Inn was a devils retreat.

As if all that was not enough...

"Charles has been bothering me every day. He really wants to meet the Innkeeper. According to him, the medical treatments that the Inn offers are too 'subpar' and he wants to change the whole system. Moreover... he... his ideas extend far beyond just the field of medicine...

"Moreover, he's been pestering Fenrir non-stop as well. He has not even spared the Galactic Sovereign turtle, and keeps insisting that the turtle needs to obey him if it wants to maximize its growth.

"As if that was not enough, he thoroughly scolded Lady Anita, and gave her proper instructions on how to raise a baby Cthulhu, saying that the baby was extremely malnourished. In the past few days, he has also prescribed an extensive meal plan personalized to over 700 of the Inns employees, stating that their bodies development is stunted.

"Once he... he actually fought with one of the guests saying that they were doing their bloodline a disservice by becoming obese, and became a personal trainer for that particular devil. Although there were no complaints registered against him for that incident, I have thoroughly reprimanded him for it.

"Moreover, the Inn's mechanic, Xeon, heard that Charles was boasting extensive knowledge about bloodlines and medicine, so he approached him and asked if Charles could help him evolve into a true dragon. Charles agreed, and since then has been running various tests on Xeon. Since it's with Xeons own consent I cannot really stop him, but... I can't help but think he's trying to swindle the poor fellow.

"Those are just... those are just some of the prominent things Charles has done that I thought deserved mentioning. He has been extremely active, so he's done a lot more. He's been spending a lot of time observing the sleeping Mountain-man, though fortunately he hasn't done anything to him yet. But the way he keeps looking at him... it just makes me nervous for some reason."

The tiny floating Mary, who was dressed up in a toga, shivered for a moment, but then regained her composure.

"Other than Charles, there are many matters that need your attention. For one, there is a massive number of devils who wish to meet you and have been asking for appointments. Rocketfellow Rothsfather is also one of them, and he's ready to begin the 5 trillion MP event he mentioned previously, but just wants to speak with you first about a few things.

"John is also back from the Murder grounds, but he's suffered incredibly. His entire cultivation seems to have disappeared and he seems very... destitute. He wants to talk to you.

"Last, but not least, Alexander has left a letter for Lex, as well as a spatial ring. I'm not sure what that's about, but you can ask him whenever you want. Since he teleported over from Polebitvy, and the entire planet disappeared, he kind of got stuck at the Inn, like many other soldiers. Temporarily, they have been shifted to the Minor realm that the empire is in charge of protecting, but finding a way to send those people back somehow is also something you should think about."