

Innkeeper 741

The Innkeeper

Chapter 741: Timeline

For quite a while, Lex ate while he listened to Mary brief him on all that had happened during his slumber. The deteriorating situation in the Origin realm was obviously not a good thing. Moreover, the fact that the Fuegan were becoming more active as a result of the terrorists' activities was not a good sign.

He had been under the impression that the Henali were on the winning side of the war with the Fuegan, but if these new terrorist acts were any indication, then the war was about to heat up considerably. That was bad news for his 1000 employees participating in the war. Fortunately, so far, they had not suffered a single casualty.

Once he was done eating, he organized his schedule to take care of his most immediate matters first. Ordinarily that would mean meeting with Charles, but Lex was looking forward to meeting the devil who wanted to host a 5 trillion MP event at his Inn.

The timing for such an event was not necessarily the best, considering the realm-wide situation. Moreover, in 6 months, or 5 and a half months now, the Inn would stop accepting new guests. If the event was going to take a long time, which he suspected it was, it would have to be delayed a few years. Lex did not mind, as he had more than enough MP to meet his needs for the moment.

He dressed up in his Host Attire and teleported over to his office, and had Mary invite Rocketfellow in. The devil arrived quite quickly, as if he had been awaiting a summoning to meet the Innkeeper.

"Innkeeper, it has been a while," the stylishly dressed devil said as he tipped his hat.

"I hope your time passed pleasantly," the Innkeeper replied calmly, a warm gentle smile on his face.

"Ah, I'm afraid not," the devil replied, a hint of regret in his voice. "Some of my most recent ventures have all ended in failure. But, those are all small projects, and don't compare for what we have in store ahead. You see, while other matters also occupied me, I have also spent this time preparing to make our own version of Lady Cosmos the best possible. I think you will be quite interested in some of my propositions."

"I'm sure you have prepared an excellent plan," the Innkeeper said, "but before we delve too deeply into these matters, I have to inform you of something, in case it might interfere with your timeline.

"The Midnight Inn is getting ready to undergo some... renovations, so to speak. As a result, in a little over five months, the Inn will stop accepting new guests for the foreseeable future. So, if the event is to occur over a long period of time, you may want to wait till afterwards."

The devil was surprised, and that could clearly be seen as he paused for a moment to reevaluate his thoughts. His excitement tempered just a bit and he leaned back into his chair as he went through some considerations.

"Actually, you know what? This is probably a good thing. This will allow us more time to refine the idea before we make our investment. Let's go over some of my plans and you can tell me what's appropriate..."

The meeting went on a lot longer than Lex anticipated, even though Lex's refusal to have contestants capture slaves and have them fight to the death put a real wrench in the devil's plans. Still, other than his casual cruelty, the devil had many good ideas, and Lex strongly believed that the event would be very successful.

The target audience for the event was Nascent level cultivators, and maybe even some Earth Immortals, both of whom had very long lives. As such, the event itself would also go on for ten years, at the very least, which would also justify the absurd amount of MP being invested in it.

The timeline for the event was pushed forward, which apparently suited the devil perfectly. He left the meeting with a smile, though the moment he teleported out of the Inn, his smile vanished.

"Karen, tell the others! The timeline has been pushed forward! We need to take action within two years! Prepare everything."

"Not an issue. The targets have already been found in the Suera galaxy, and we are in close contact with the Fuegan trying to work out a deal."

Back at the Inn, Lex could not help but groan. Although he was looking forward to the MP, he was not a fan of extremely long business meetings. He didn't know how businessmen back on Earth did it.

"Mary, send in Charles," Lex said after a few moments of allowing himself to be lazy. He had too much to catch up on.

Soon, a young, skinny man dressed in a doctor's coat stepped in. Although Lex did not show it on his face, he was impressed by the doctor's demeanor as he exhibited a calm and collected appearance, even in front of the Innkeeper. It had to be known that for anyone to meet him, they would have to cross his lobby, which was filled with an extremely strong pressure.

Since the pressure would automatically adjust to whoever was crossing, no one could ever have an easy time coming in. Yet this new doctor seemed perfectly fine coming into his office. In fact, it almost seemed like the doctor had already expected such an obstacle in his path. Not to mention how difficult it was for one to remain calm in the presence of the Innkeeper, with no cultivation at all!

Now that he was inside the Inn, Lex naturally scanned Charles, but still did not discover anything suspicious. His age was 17 years old, and he had no cultivation at all. His demeanor and knowledge did not match his credentials, but Lex was not on to judge.

"Doctor, I've heard you're quite dissatisfied with how we run things here," said Lex, maintaining the calm and warm vibe of the Innkeeper.

"I would not say dissatisfied, sir. But I have many ideas I think you will like. Why don't you hear me out?"

The Innkeeper

Chapter 742: Talking

"Have a seat," the Innkeeper said calmly, pointing at the chair in front of him. This Charles definitely had many secrets, and he was now in a much better position to get those secrets out from him. Previously he himself was in too much of a hurry to exit that planet. Now, though, he had plenty of time as well as a superior identity as compared to last time.

"I must say, Charles, you're quite talented. It is not often that I see someone as young as you with such detailed knowledge about medicine, and such a mature bearing to go along with it."

Although Lex was paying a compliment, he was also stating his suspicions. It was unnatural to gain such a thorough understanding in any field without years of study and practice, and Charles was much too young for that. Of course there was always the possibility that he had information transferred to his mind, the way those in the Crystal race transmit information from one generation to another. But even so, comprehending and mastering that knowledge was vastly different from simply attaining it.

Charles gave an oddly endearing smile, as if a child was looking up at his elder. He could not really be blamed. Unlike others, who were greatly intimidated by beings more powerful, Charles felt safe. After all, he grew up in the presence of nearly all the Mythical beings of the Origin realm.

Aizel and Firin, for example, were two of the Mythical beings of the Crystal realm. That meant that those Mythical beings were always at the peak most level that the realm they were in allowed. Of course, they could also choose to unleash their full strength, which would then have them transcend their realm, a path that most of them eventually took.

After hearing about the Innkeepers great reputation, and finally meeting him and feeling his warm and comforting aura, Charles felt as if he had returned to his childhood.

"Forgive me for being unable to say much, senior. My history is closely tied to the fate of my ancestor - I cannot risk it. But I can swear that I bear the Inn no ill will, and all that I do is only to benefit it as much as possible."

"The Midnight Inn does not discriminate against others, as long as they follow the rules of the Inn. So long as you do not harm your peers or the guests out of maliciousness, you can call the Inn your new home."

Although Lex said as much, he was a little peeved at Charles' forthcoming behavior. With him being so open about having secrets, it was nigh impossible to pressure him into revealing things. All he could do now was to have him slowly reveal his secrets of his own volition.

"But, because of that Innkeeper, I can also guarantee that my knowledge is not false. Although what I know might be slightly outdated, some of the things I know are still relevant now. For example, I've taken a look at the Recovery room and Recovery pods. In theory they're excellent, but in actuality they're far from efficient, and are not necessarily the best tool for the job. In simple words, it's like using brute force to heal the body by throwing endless energy at it.

"If, instead, we take a more nature oriented approach, then there are many better ways to heal. Besides, those rooms and pods are not suitable for all races either. I've also studied some of the workers at the Inn.

"Most of them are suffering from odd forms of malnutrition. At first, I was confused, but upon further analysis I discovered that it seemed like many of them had latent skills and talents awaiting to be woken as soon as the right conditions were met. Such a widespread phenomenon among so many different people was strange at first for me, until I realized that they also all bore the signs of cloning and artificial genetic engineering.

"I must say, I have never seen such high quality clones, with perfectly functional organic bodies and independent and complete souls. Not only is the technique used in their manufacture beyond excellent, but the original samples must be from the absolute best of the best. However, pre-existing physical dispositions are causing a conflict with their new, emerging personalities which is resulting in their malnutrition. Many of them need a lifestyle adjustment to properly awaken their talents. If they are left ignored until they are eventually crippled, then their own individual cultivation will suffer as well.

"I've also noticed that the Inn seems to have adopted many younglings such as the Sovereign turtle, who is still naught but a babe, the Cthulhu, the Fen... Fenrir, and many others. It's miraculous how so many varying races are getting together without any issues, but they all also need different environmental factors to ensure they maintain healthy growth in the future. For now, the Inn seems to lack it.

"Also, I've noticed a few sentient plants have been born at the Inn. If you can have the Galactic turtle nurture a World Tree at the Inn, even in its early stages, it will be extremely beneficial to the growth of the plant life here.

"Also, Innkeeper, one of your guests, the Mountain-man, is suffering from severe soul exhaustion. It's almost as if its soul is not strong enough for its body. Whatever the case, he needs to undergo treatment immediately, lest his soul becomes crippled.

"Oh yes, you also have a Drake. Interesting species, I have seen it before. They usually have the potential to undergo evolution into a weak dragon under the right circumstances, so I was..."

Once Charles started to talk, he just kept on going. Most of what he said even made sense, so Lex had no option but to listen to him and wonder if he really was more suited as a doctor rather than as a senior member in the planning division.

Three hours later, Lex had to eventually stop him.

"Let's take a break here for today," the Innkeeper said, standing up. "Since you're a doctor, I want you to follow me as I visit one of our old employees. He's recently been seriously wounded, and lost all his cultivation as a result."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 743: Unusual damage

Many of Charles' ideas were not bad, but they weren't practical either. He could propose stuff like treatment through natural means because he had the knowledge, but with hundreds of thousands of guests visiting the recovery room every day, it was impossible for him to take care of all the guests.

He could begin teaching others his own knowledge, but that too would take years before it yielded any real results. As such, there was no real way to implement all his changes right now. Some of them, however, were not so bad and could be implemented immediately.

For example, the lifestyle adjustment for the Inn workers. He always knew that they weren't 'born' naturally since the Inn created them as and when he wanted, and he could even pick stuff like their bloodlines. Such topics demanded some philosophical questions such as the ethics of cloning, and if what Lex was doing was right or wrong.

The way he saw it, he was doing his best to give them full and extensive lives and treating them as best as he could. He also created a healthy and nurturing environment for them to grow in. For example, while originally all his workers had their own individual rooms they could teleport to, and still do, most of them preferred to go to the Minor realm dedicated only for Inn workers and live in their homes there. They were building their own community, as well as culture and traditions.

Given all of that, it was really hard for Lex to see what he was doing as immoral. But if they were suffering due to improper care as a result of their cloning, then that was something he would take care of immediately.

It made sense, kind of, that many of them had a predisposition to awaken certain talents and skills. After all, some of his most powerful workers had awoken skills completely unrelated to their cultivation techniques. If, by designing a better environment suited to nurture their skills, he could help them, then he would definitely do it!

"How would you treat the Mountain-man?" Lex asked once he teleported himself and Charles over to the Recovery room.

"The problem is the strength of his soul, so that is what I would treat. It would be best if I could get my hands on various soul nurturing herbs, or anything which could influence souls really. Designing a treatment plan for him is not so simple, so I'll need some time to see what resources are available and what I can do."

"Go find Harry, the local barber. He specializes in souls. He may be able to help you with that," the Innkeeper said, before entering John's private room.

The man lay in his Recovery pod, looking pale and extremely weak. Instead of getting better, his situation had deteriorated a lot, though he was finally stable now.

Weakly, he opened his eyes and looked up at the Innkeeper and the stranger, and a light of hope flashed through his eyes. If anyone could help him, it was the Innkeeper. But he didn't say anything yet, as he was unfamiliar with the second man.

"Observe him and see if you can work out a treatment plan for him," Lex said casually, while he used his own spirit sense to scan him. Using the system to get a reading on him revealed errors, as always, so he could only rely on himself to figure out the situation.

Physically speaking, John was fine. Even his core, or what used to be his core, was technically fine. It had now only become empty, as if it could not store any energy inside it at all. The situation was unusual.

Next, Lex used his soul sense to check up on him, and that is when the issue was revealed. John's soul was damaged in a very strange and somehow precise way. His otherwise healthy soul had thin yet jagged cracks spread all across it, as if it was on the verge of breaking. Yet the strange thing was, besides the areas that actually had the cracks on them, the rest of his soul looked extremely healthy, as if nothing was wrong.

"I've seen something like this before," Charles said, as he studied John's body by touching and tapping it in various places. Lex found it really interesting how, despite having no cultivation himself, Charles could harness spiritual energy and use it for his various purposes. This type of control went against conventional cultivation rules.

"This is a result of a fracture of a soul treasure. Normally, even the destruction of such a treasure would not affect the cultivator. But in this case, rather than just storing the treasure in your soul, you must have completely absorbed and merged it with your soul, am I right?"

Although Charles asked the question, he did not pause to hear the answer.

"I'm not sure how something like this happened, but someone has targeted your soul treasure very specifically. They have severely damaged the treasure without affecting your actual soul at all. That is the only reason you are still alive, for your soul is keeping the treasure together from crumbling entirely. But such a state cannot last long. Either a way to remove the treasure needs to be figured out, or the treasure needs to be healed.

"The only thing that I cannot figure out is... why something like this has caused your cultivation to disappear. Especially since you are in the immortal realm, and have established your tenets. It somehow seems like your connection to your own tenets has been severed somehow."

"Thank you Charles, I'll take it from here. You can go meet Harry and figure out a treatment for the Mountain-man. Only when you have a complete treatment will we approach the guest, for it is rude to interrupt guests unnecessarily."

Charles nodded and left, taking one last look at John. He was really confused about his situation and really wanted to ask what the treasure fused with his soul was, but knew better than to do so.

Soon, only the Innkeeper and John were left in the room.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 744: Virus

"Congratulations on emerging from the Murder grounds," said the Innkeeper as he looked down at John, though his warm voice had a hint of admonishment in it.

John smiled weakly, despite his dire situation.

"I know I should not have accepted the challenge. If I had let the Inn handle it, things would have turned out much better. But, at that time, I just didn't like the fact that any random creature off the streets could just challenge me. I guess it's also because I'd spent too much time in such a peaceful environment, and I was itching to let loose."

"And how is that itch now?" he asked, the warmth of his voice sounding ironically quite biting at that moment.

"Quite sore," John admitted.

Lex shook his head and opened the Recovery pod. He used Impervious Hands and channeled his soul sense into it, allowing his hands to gain the ability to touch souls. Gently, and ever so slowly, Lex touched John's soul to get a sense of the situation himself.

As Charles had said, the 'soul treasure' had been attacked, but his understanding of the situation was limited. Systems were far from simple, and Lex found it hard to believe that someone could target a system so directly.

Although if anyone were to do it, it made sense that this group who was specifically targeting systems would be able to. He still did not know as much about them as he would like.

As Lex traced his hands over the cracks, and could sense a very familiar aura from within. The system truly seemed broken, but as far as he knew, systems were capable of healing themselves. Absorbing other systems would speed up the process for sure, but they could rely on just spiritual energy to do the same.

"He targeted your system," the Innkeeper said plainly, though somehow the news did not cause any waves in John's heart. He had already guessed as much by now. Moreover, the Innkeeper was the strongest being he had ever met, so he long stopped trying to keep secrets from him.

"Has your interface completely vanished, or is it still there at least?"

"It gave me a quest before completely disappearing, and draining my cultivation along with it. How am I supposed to complete a quest like this?"

"What was the quest?"

"To heal the system!" John said, though he found the quest to be redundant. He would have done it anyway, or at least tried, had his cultivation not completely disappeared.

"I have said this many times, but one should not put too much trust in a system. There is too much about them that is secret. Systems are able to heal themselves using spirit energy, or you can heal them by absorbing and merging other systems. You can even make your system stronger if you do so, but that may not necessarily be a good thing. After all, systems can completely control your entire life if you do not keep up your guard.

"For example, your system likely absorbed your cultivation to fuel its own repairing process. To it, it hardly matters whether you are its host or someone else. It just wants to regain its previous state as quickly as possible."

"My cultivation was given to me by the system to begin with. I cannot really complain now that it has taken it away," John replied, depression leaking into his voice.

"You can decide what you want to do on your own," the Innkeeper said. "If you wish to repair the system, you can see if you can figure out a way. However, if you wish to be free of it, I can remove it from your body. You will likely have to cultivate again from the beginning, but I don't think you should find that too challenging."

John was silent for a time, before he weakly asked, "can I take my time with the decision?"

"It's up to you. But based on your situation, I don't think you should wait too long. How did he hurt your system like this to begin with?"

"He had many strange devices that seemed to target systems specifically. It kept interfering with all my systems functions. In the end I eventually killed him, and until then I was fine. But as it turned out, he had hidden a device inside his body as well. When his heart stopped beating, his body self-destructed. But, the strange thing was, the explosion did not harm me at all, yet was extremely damaging to my system.

"But even then I was fine since I reacted fast enough. But something unusual happened. It was as if a virus had been introduced in my system, and it began acting really strange and somehow started to harm itself. In the end, the system managed to fix itself, but by then the damage the virus had done was too severe. It gave me the quest and shut down."

Lex only nodded, and then left, giving John time to think about what he wanted to do. Lex, on the other hand, began considering precautions to take if any such people came after him. But, for some reason, he also had a feeling that dealing with his system was not nearly as easy as it was on the weaker systems he had encountered.

As he pondered on this topic, he teleported back to his office and had Mary bring the things Alexander left for him. A letter was very strange, as Alexander could have simply left a video or voice message. But his suspicions seemed to bear no fruit, as he could not discover anything special about the letter.

The only thing left to do was read it, and investigate the spatial ring he had left. After that, he would look into relocating the refugees from Polebitvy, after which he would head out to do his own things. As for the many devils who wanted to meet him, Lex would just use his projection to meet with them. He did not have the time to spare to sit through so many endless meetings.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 745: Letter

The envelope only read 'Lex' and had a smooth texture to it. After concluding that there was nothing amiss with the letter, Lex tore open the pale white packaging and revealed within it an off-white textured paper filled with a very pleasant handwriting. Lex once again found it odd that it was handwritten when it could have easily been printed, but ultimately chalked it all up to a quirk of Alexander's noble upbringing.

'Lex,

Were it that I would be writing to you in better circumstances, I would have thanked you profusely for your help. You not only saved my life, surely, but that of countless others as well, and that deserves no shortage of gratitude, especially since it was not your duty to begin with.

Unfortunately, circumstances are not pleasant so I must end the flattery here. I do not know if you were present during the final moments of Polebitvy, but the situation went drastically out of hand. It quickly became clear to us that there was something amiss with the insects, for towards the end their blood directly started warping and tearing space. The more insects we killed, the more fragile space became.

When the order to retreat came, it was already too late. Only those I had distributed the keys to managed to escape when the night sky itself was torn asunder. What I am about to reveal to you now is confidential, and I have been informed that I will soon have a soul lock placed on me so that if I ever try to reveal it, I will be killed. Fortunately, they have not placed the lock yet, and there is a convenient loophole for me to use.

The soul technique works on my memory, so I am writing this letter to you in the Chamber of Secrets, and once I finish, I will erase the memory of ever revealing it from my memory. That way, you will gain the relevant knowledge, and I will be safe from the consequences of the lock.

The final tear that opened large enough to swallow Polebitvy did not open on its own, but a massive creature the likes of which I have never even imagined was on the other side of the rip, pulling space apart.

It then pushed forth more arms from the tear, and seemed to grab the planet itself, before pulling it within. I, of course, did not stay long enough to see the event happen for myself, but one can imagine.

I do not know what is actually happening, but I know enough to conclude that whatever is happening is far outside the capacity of even the Empire to handle. In this universe, one cannot rely on others for security, or at least not rely on others completely - that is the conclusion I have come to.

My new goal will no longer be to hunt down the terrorists, especially since the empire no longer seems interested, and they claim that others are on the hunt now. Instead, my new focus will be on growing my strength.

I have a confession to make. My family is not originally from earth, and instead we arrived there hundreds of years ago, escaping from an already long forgotten conflict. We brought along various secret heritages, one of which I managed to awake at a very young age, which is the real reason my family so carefully nurtured my growth. That is also why I was able to control six flying swords even before I unlocked my spirit sense!

I am revealing this to you to let you know that while I am pursuing my own path to strength, I have every confidence that you, too, will do the same. However, should you ever find your path blocked, and need a heritage or technique to guide you along higher cultivation realms, my family's library is always open to you.

By the time you read this letter, I will already be inside the mysterious tower that the empire is guarding. That tower has many secrets as well, and can serve as a shortcut for my growth. If you have time, you should try to practice there more as well. Who knows, we might just partner up again someday.

Regards,

Alexander Morrison'

Lex read the letter several times to ensure there was no secret message or code written within that he was missing, but there seemed to be none. Despite that, the information shared in the letter was very significant, and seen through a certain lens, Alexander even risked his life to share it with Lex.

Although it did not directly influence Lex to know that there was a creepy space monster able to tear space and then pull planets in - planets that it grabbed with its hands - it was still good to know. After all, what if one day he had such a guest? What if his guest ate planets for food? What was he supposed to do? Lex did not have any spare planets on hand to feed hungry guests.

On a serious note though, it reinforced Lex's motivation to get the hell out of the Origin realm and get far away from this ridiculous war. As for whether someone was able to find his new realm, and then start a war with him over it, were topics Lex was doing his best not to worry about. After all, there was little he could do in such a situation but fight back.

Taking in a deep breath, Lex calmed himself down and then looked at the spatial ring. Alexander had not mentioned it at all.

He channeled his spirit energy into the ring and discovered only a couple of things. One was a token that had a massive 'M' on it, likely representing the Morrison family. The other was a commendation letter for ACA Lex for discovering the poison early, and warning the empire about it. The letter stated that Lex had proven he had the ability to perform certain tasks where the empire failed, and that his stellar performance would be marked and speak in his favor with the empire in all his future endeavors.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 746: Refugees

Lex observed the two items. The commendation letter and the approval of the empire could possibly be useful in the future. After all, the empire spanned many galaxies so who knew when and where he might encounter their influence. But, at the moment, it served no real purpose.

Similarly, the token served no purpose for him right now, but the gesture it represented was very valuable. Besides possibly giving him access to the Morrison family's library of spiritual techniques, it also served as a token of Alexander's gratitude. That, to him, was worth more than the actual techniques he would likely encounter. After all, his own technique was nothing short of the best in the entire universe!

He smiled, and teleported them away to his study in his own apartment. If he ever needed to use either of the items he would have them, but otherwise they would enter his private collection.

Now it was time to turn his attention to other matters - specifically, the refugees. A quick scan revealed that roughly four thousand people who counted as such refugees could be found at the Inn - including Gisele and two very familiar kids.

There were supposed to be more, but they had already moved into the Minor realm that the empire was in charge of protecting. The ones who were still here were the ones still recovering from the effects of the poison that had infected their bodies.

Charles had been very effective in treating the incredibly dangerous poison for some reason, and his treatment didn't even include chocolate this time - or leeches! In his own words, while he was not too familiar with the human body, he was well versed in the habits and behavior shown by nature, plants,

small animals and insects. He could use just that understanding to manipulate nature in certain ways, and even the most toxic poison was still a part of nature.

He sounded a lot like an elf or a druid to Lex, but as long his methods worked, who was he to question him? As much as Charles wanted to continue to enforce his methods on the remainder of their treatment, he couldn't manage that, alongside all the other numerous tasks he had to perform in the little time he had. Lex slightly suspected the man had ADHD for he was delving into too many unrelated matters. Still, his incredibly high competence in each field made it so that Lex did not mind too much.

Lex explored various options that the system gave him, and even consulted Mary on what he could do. He even considered the possibility of hosting a very specific event, but it was all for naught. The only way for the refugees to escape to another planet was if their prestige level rose and then they chose to teleport to another planet linked to the Inn. Speaking of which, it also needed to be mentioned that the connection to Polebitvy still existed.

That meant that the planet had survived being ripped out of its star system, and whatever else it had been exposed to during its time in its first ever field trip. He sighed and scanned the Inn to search for whichever Jotun officer was in charge of the refugees, and was surprised to find that it was the very senior Alexander had taken him to. The man seemed to have lost a lot of weight in the past two weeks, and looked pale and sick, yet he was still attending to some paperwork. Lex recalled that the man was called Radamei.

Instead of summoning him, Lex teleported over himself, and knocked on the man's door.

"Come in, come in!" he said in a somewhat hoarse voice. It was clear that he had suffered some kind of injury to his throat since he last saw Lex, and his voice had been affected.

"Excuse me for interrupting you, dear guest. I am the Innkeeper, owner of this humble establishment," he introduced himself as he entered his room. There were piles of paper everywhere, and temporarily set up computer screens all over, making the small bedroom appear quite messy.

Radamei was startled, and immediately stood up, revealing various bandages all over his body.

"Innkeeper! It is an honor to meet you! Your Inn has saved a lot of lives! A lot of lives I tell you!"

"Yes, I heard of your plight. It is fortunate that you were able to get your hands on the keys to the Inn. If only command had listened..." Radamei's voice faded out as his thoughts seemed to drift off. Clearly, the man had not yet completely recovered from the trauma he suffered.

Lex could not even blame him. Watching a massive monster grab ahold of your planet and then suck it into a tear must have shaken up a lot of people's minds.

"Unfortunately, there is a small issue," the Innkeeper said softly, waking the man up from his thoughts. "Everyone who escaped is stuck here unless they attain a prestige level and teleport to another planet. Though I wish to help, I cannot break the rules of the Inn, or else how can I expect others to follow?"

"Having a way out is already good enough, not to mention the empire is preparing camps within another Minor realm to relocate everyone. With time, everyone will get a chance to leave eventually."

"I'm glad you have a positive outlook on this matter. The survivors are lucky to have someone like you keeping an eye out for them."

Radamei only shook his head, as if he disagreed, but did not say anything. Clearly the man needed some rest as well, though it did not seem like he would be getting any in the near future.

Lex left the room, and was finally free to do his own tasks, when an idea suddenly came to him. He changed out of his Host Attire and put on his Clark Kent glasses before approaching Charles as Leo. He thought of a good way to test the extent of Charles' unique insight.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 747: Energy crystal

Charles was taking down notes in a notebook he was holding, while looking up at the sleeping Mountain-man. From time to time he would mumble to himself, as if he was speculating about the effectiveness of certain treatments.

It was only when 'Leo' approached him and coughed, as if clearing his throat, that Charles realized that someone had arrived.

"I hope I'm not disturbing you, but I thought I'd introduce myself. My name is Leo, I'm the owner of the Gamer's Den store. It's a pleasure to meet you. I've heard excellent things about your expertise in medicine."

"I still have much to learn," Charles said humbly, though it seemed like he really meant it. The conundrum of how to treat the Mountain-man really had him stumped, as its size was a major factor in every treatment method he could come up with. Ultimately, without any cultivation, his methods were extremely limited.

"Well, now that you're one of us, you can just list down whatever you need to help you grow and the Innkeeper will take care of it. It wouldn't be such a bad idea to start cultivating now, either. After all, the stronger you get, the more your capabilities will grow."

"If the Innkeeper can help, that would be great, but I'm afraid it's not so easy for me to cultivate due to my unique physique. I can't absorb normal spirit energy. I need highly concentrated spirit energy found only in extremely pure Crystals. That's not the same as spirit stones as..."

Before Charles could continue to describe what he needed, Lex was reminded of something and summoned out an energy crystal from his spatial bangle. In the Crystal realm, this was a very valuable energy resource used for cultivation by Earth Immortals and the Crystal race. The energy stored within was even more dense, as well as more pure than even the highest grade spirit stone that Lex had ever seen, not that he really used those for cultivation anymore. After all, the environment at the Inn was more than enough to meet his needs.

Charles, though, was stumped when he saw the crystal in Leo's hand! This was not something he expected to find any time soon, as these energy crystals were only formed in the early years of a realm's life. They were available in limited amounts in any realm, and could not typically be replenished even across the remainder of a realm's lifespan.

"Is this what you need?" Leo asked quite casually, waking Charles from his stupor.

"How... how did you get that? They're unbelievably rare! In fact, they should have all been used up billions of years ago!"

"I wouldn't say they're common, but in one of the realms that the Midnight Inn is connected to, they can be easily accessed by a person with a certain level of connections. At least, that's the case in the one other realm I've been to. It's possible that it's even more common in other realms."

Charles was dumbfounded. When he heard that the Inn catered to guests from across the universe, he took that as more of a spiritual saying or mantra than something literal. How could he imagine that the Inn is actually linked to other realms?

But he quickly suppressed his shock and focused on the matter at hand. If he could get his hands on these crystals, it would be possible for him to quickly raise his cultivation. He was confident of becoming an immortal within a decade, if not sooner. But, the problem right now was that he had no collateral with which he could bargain, and no resources with which he could purchase these crystals.

"How can I get my hands on some of these crystals? With them, I can begin cultivating immediately!"

"Well, the Inn will pay you a salary in MP, and you can use that at the Guild room to request these energy crystals. But that may take you some time, Or... you can get them from me. I don't really need MP as repayment, though. Do you have anything else you can pay me with?"

Charles clenched his fists as he racked his brain, trying to come up with a solution. The only thing of value he had... was his knowledge. Was that something Leo would be interested in?

"The only thing I can pay you with is certain knowledge. Or maybe I can treat you if you're ill."

Lex paused. Both options weren't bad. He wanted to know about Charles' secrets, but at the same time, treatment was also something he was looking forward to.

"We can come up with an arrangement. I do seek treatment, but I'm not entirely sure you're able to address what ails me. If that's the case, you can trade an interesting secret. If I think it's worth it, I'll give you the crystal. Don't worry, I won't be unfair on purpose."

Charles agreed all too quickly. At first, when he had no hope of cultivating anytime soon, he had all the patience in the world. But now that the prize was dangling in front of his eyes, he could scarcely control himself.

What Lex wanted treated were the inscriptions hidden within his body, but he had doubts that Charles could even detect them at his current stage. That's why he was so interested in having Charles cultivate and improve his capabilities.

Feeling fairly confident, Charles inspected Leo's boy and discovered nothing. He did not recognize Leo as Lex despite having treated him before, because the effects of the Clark Kent glasses were quite thorough.

Charles frowned, and investigated for a while longer, before eventually giving up.

"I can't discover anything wrong with you," he admitted, feeling slightly tense.

"In that case, an interesting secret it is. Though I advise you to choose carefully. Revealing a mundane secret, like your current crush, will not really be worth an energy crystal."

Charles felt like Leo was teasing him on purpose. How could he possibly have a crush on anyone? He'd hardly met any elves so far.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 748: Cosmic Dark Age

Charles eyed the energy crystal greedily and his mind raced as he considered various things. He did not know Leo's character, and although he was inclined to believe in a colleague, it was best to be sure.

"What are some topics that interest you? If you provide me with some guidance, I can better choose what to reveal."

What interested him? There were truly too many things, but none of them were topics ordinary folk could come into contact with. But then again, since he was testing Charles to begin with, there was no point in mentioning something simple. He thought for a moment about what topics he had been considering lately.

"I have many random interests, so I'll just list them out. Hmm, these days I've been wondering a lot about how a realm is formed, and what happens after it is created. I've also been wondering... what is 'space' really? If space itself is torn, how can there be something behind it? Hmm, I've also been thinking about deities, and how they come to be. Why do they need worshippers? Can anyone become a deity if they're worshiped enough? Oh yes, I was also wondering where lightning tribulations come from, and why they're the same across multiple realms. Is it a coincidence? I've also..."

"Alright, alright, that's enough," Charles said, before Lex really began listing out all the random thoughts he'd had recently. To Charles, these really could only be random thoughts, for how could they be relevant to someone at Lex's cultivation level? These were extremely high-level concepts that not even immortals had the right to ponder.

Fortunately, Charles was in the unique position to answer not just some of them, but all of them! Of course, he would not so easily reveal these answers, for that would present problems of their own. After all, how could a mortal know the secrets of the heavens?

"I cannot say how a realm is formed, but as luck would have it, I coincidentally learned some information about the early years of a realm's existence," Charles said, as he cleared his throat. He also looked around to ensure they were alone, and once he was satisfied, continued.

"Each realm is different, but what they have in common is that they are born with a massive burst of energy. This initial energy is the purest form of energy in the universe, chaos energy. But because of its potency, it is also too dangerous and is akin to poison to most beings. Only the strongest of immortals, as well as some unique beings, can tolerate this form of energy.

"The first phase of a realm's life is converting that extremely pure and powerful energy into various more tolerable and gentle forms of energy. This period is known as the Cosmic Dark Age, as hardly any life can exist during this time. But any being and anything that is born or formed during this time are exceptionally powerful or valuable. That is because they undergo the tempering of the foremost energy in the universe, so it is only natural."

Charles knew much more, but he stopped speaking at that point. He had already revealed a lot, and surely it was already worth more than just a single energy crystal. Lex had been listening closely. Although he could not confirm if what Charles said was true, the information he had revealed was very important.

If the energy when the new realm was formed was poisonous, how could he host guests? Although he was fairly certain that the system itself would manage to keep guests from being passively harmed by the environment, as it did with cultivators' natural auras, he also had to take precautions. After all, he clearly remembered being told to 'be prepared' when he was told that the new realm would be born in two years' time.

He nodded to Charles, as if saying he accepted this little tidbit of information, and calmly handed in 10 energy crystals. Although he did not have many on hand, he had more than enough to cater to Charles' needs for the moment. After all, Pvarti wasn't the only one who had received a lot of gifts during the wedding.

"If you need more in the future, you can reach out to me. We'll have the same deal," said Lex, before he teleported away. Now that he was done with this, he was heading towards the emporium to pick up a package he had been anticipating for a while.

Cosmic Cloud

A furious battle was taking place in what was once a natural paradise. The burnt and crisp remains of some kind of orchard could still be seen here and there, though mostly all one would see were corpses.

This was a battlefield where the Henali forces had been losing badly, and for once, even the arrival of the Midnight battalion did not change that. But how could it? The battalion consisted only of Foundation level cultivators, but the enemies were the absolute elites of the Golden core realm.

On one side was a massive army that the battalion was reinforcing, and on the other side only a few dozen bipedal beasts, yet the favor of the battle seemed to be on the beasts' side.

More reinforcements were due, but they would have to survive long enough for that to happen.

Fortunately, despite the dire situation, none from the battalion had died, though this time the credit remained solely with their formidable attire.

In the midst of battle, Z made use of his space affinity to disrupt an attacking beast, but for some strange reason, instead of forming a barrier in space, space itself was torn. Though that was not his intention, it seemed to serve the purpose as the beast quickly retreated to avoid the tear.

His allies breathed a sigh of relief and continued the fight, but only Z frowned as he kept looking at the tear that was already healing.

'That was not supposed to happen,' he kept telling himself, as he wondered what had happened.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 749: Silent Wanderer

"Mr. Lex, you have made me wait," Powell complained, though the massive smile on his face did not belie any dissatisfaction.

"I've been too busy lately," Lex said with an exasperated sigh as he approached the familiar counter and leaned on it. Even as he was there now, his projection was at the Inn, having meetings with countless devils who wished to meet him.

Many of the meetings were actually fruitful, as they were about small or targeted events the devils wished to host. Some of them were just about the devils wishing to make themselves known to the Innkeeper and try and expand their connections.

One of them was a wedding proposal by a very beautiful devil, yet Lex had to calmly reject her, stating that he did not wish to distract himself from his work. There were many more useless or actually even infuriating meetings where they tried to scam him or make use of the Inn for malicious purposes, but they were still in the minority.

"Your package arrived long ago. Here you are, a single freshly mined Durril ore straight from Frigra. I can guarantee that it has spent no more than a few days away from that planet, and those days are entirely attributed to your own tardiness."

"Yes, yes, no need for the sales pitch, this suits my needs just fine," said Lex as he took the briefcase Powell handed him and opened it to look at the bright pink ore, only partially revealing itself from the piece of stone it was within.

This ore was extremely valuable across the entire realm, mostly because there were very few mines for them at all. But that's not the reason why Lex had ordered this particular ore. No, he just needed something from the planet Frigra that still contained an aura of the planet. With that, Lex could use the item as a guide to purchase a ticket from the system that targeted that planet specifically.

Like this, he would be able to teleport there with the intention of linking it to the Inn. But Lex did not truly care much for linking the planet as much as he cared about treasure hunting. After all, that planet was a part of the 89 rogue planets that formed the only known 'belt' of rogue planets within the Suera galaxy.

It was only once he had already reached there that he would consider how exactly he was going to determine if his location was correct. If it wasn't... he really had no idea how he was going to look for the relevant place. He was already late as it was.

"Powell, what about my second request?" Lex asked, once he closed the briefcase. As a rich and powerful Innkeeper, it was about time he got himself a respectable interstellar spaceship!

"Haha, of course it is ready. After all, you gave us so much time to prepare. If we weren't able to provide you with a satisfying result, the emporium would lose face!"

With that said, Powell ducked behind the counter, and brought up another briefcase. Within it was a single spatial item fashioned into a necklace. Unlike other spatial equipment, this was a very special one since it was prepared specifically for just one item: the Silent Wanderer!

The Silent Wanderer was a ship produced by Havalier Industries, the same company that made the Silent Night which had triggered Lex's deep desire for a personal spaceship!

The Silent Night was a collectors class ship, and never produced again, but the Silent Wanderer was not bad either. Although it did not boast the same capabilities as its Night variant, it nevertheless qualified as one of the foremost coveted ships in the entire Origin realm!

Lex had to place an order long in advance with the emporium who went through an unknown number of hurdles to have it produced.

"Follow me," Powell said as he led Lex to a hanger, where he activated the spatial necklace and brought out the ship.

The Silent Wanderer was metallic silver in color, yet when flying through space it appeared invisible as it would perfectly blend in with darkness and light alike. It had an incredibly sleek body, and could only support a crew of thirty humans at most!

Yet where it suffered in lack of space, it more than made up for in its speed, armor, fire power and state of the art navigation systems. Although it lacked the complete self navigation system, which would require the addition of an A.I., it was the best one could get besides that.

Inside the ship were four small yet cozy bedrooms, each with its own tiny bath, a kitchen, a large storage room, a main hall and a cockpit. It was fueled by an extremely powerful battery that generated energy by consuming a highly radioactive ore. The battery was so dangerous that there were over 100 fail safes built into it, not to mention an emergency ejection system for the battery in case those fail. The ship could also be piloted using alternative fuels such as spirit stones, but that would limit the ship to less than 1% of its original capabilities.

"If only you accepted MP for payment," Lex softly mumbled as he rubbed his hands against the Silent Wanderers body. This ship was an absolute beauty, but it also came with a hefty price tag.

To pay for it, Lex had to liquidate nearly 39 billion MP via the guild by purchasing the highest quality of spirit stones that the empire would sell to him. Naturally, due to the rush he was in, he suffered a great loss in the conversion rate from MP to actual physical goods, but it was what it was.

One could not fret too much about the details when one was purchasing a spaceship that could travel the distance between Earth and Mars in a few hours.

"This is excellent Powell. Pack it up, and don't forget to throw in the manual. I can't wait to drive this thing!"

The Innkeeper

Chapter 750: Frigra

Powell looked a little reluctant to part with such a magnificent spaceship. The Silent Wanderer was a corvette class ship, meaning it was light and fast, but had enough of an armor and attack capability to survive if it got in a scuffle.

If they ran into pirates or faced aggression from a random group, unless they had armored ships, the Wanderer would come out on top due to how high class it was. Of course, a lot also depended on the pilot. Even the best ship would not bring any decent results if piloted by an amateur.

Powell, as a ship enthusiast, was also a pilot and longed to get his hands on something like the Silent Wanderer, but it was not meant to be. Perhaps in the future such a day would come, but it had not come yet.

Suppressing his sigh, he put the ship back in its spatial equipment. This necklace was especially made on order at Lex's request. After all, he was going to be teleporting to places often, so if he could not carry the ship with him when he did so, it would be pointless. But the ship required a space large and stable enough so that it wouldn't get damaged, as some of its more sensitive equipment could not handle the duress of typical spatial equipment. The battery was especially a point of concern in this regard.

Therefore, the specially designed spatial equipment was an absolute must. If he lost it one day, he would not be able to put the ship in any other random spatial equipment even if it had the capacity for the ship.

Once withdrawn, Lex put the necklace on. He was not one for jewelry, so it was fortunate that the necklace only consisted of a thin silver chain with a flat, rod centerpiece at one end with an engraving of the Silent Wanderer on it. The whole thing was simple enough that Lex could wear it without feeling embarrassed.

He bid Powell farewell and quickly returned to the Inn. He first looked at the manual for the Silent Wanderer - it was equivalent to a 36,000 page PDF. Lex blinked to make sure he saw correctly, and when he received the confirmation, he made a copy and forwarded it to Cirk - the captain of the giant spaceship inside the Inn.

Lex would learn to pilot his own ship, of course, but it wasn't like he could pick it up in a day. It was moments like this that having the endless resources of the Inn on hand came in handy. Although it would still take Cirk some time to learn, he expected it would be a lot faster than Lex.

He then took out the Durril ore, and after a very long time, bought a ticket. Only this time he wasn't buying one of the random planet search tickets, but rather a focused ticket using the ore to lock onto the planet's aura.

Fortunately, despite Lex's delay in collecting the ore, due to the fact that it was sealed in a perfect container, it retained the aura of the planet. When the silver colored ticket appeared in Lex's hand, he mentally reviewed everything he knew about the planet.

The planet was the only one in the belt that had life on it, though the local dominant species were not humans. In fact, there were no humans on the entire planet. Actual on ground information on the planet was limited because it was the territory of a dragon, but the one thing that was certain was that it exported Durril ore in limited quantities.

The planet had no tourism, and only very limited trade ties. Once Lex approached there, he would stand out significantly, so he would have to be discreet and stealthy. He also needed a way to confirm that he was in the correct location, but that would come later.

He tore the ticket and a very familiar interface appeared in front of him.

Planets Available:

Planet: Frigra

Planet Rating: 3 Star

Planet Distance: 384 Sectors

Planet Environment: Frigid cold, perpetual darkness, multiple underground steam vents

'How delightful,' Lex thought to himself before confirming the only planet in the selection, and disappearing.

A moment later, he found himself standing in what looked like a vacant street. For once, it seemed like he had teleported not in the wilderness, but near or in an inhabited area.

There was complete darkness all around him, with the distant stars in the sky as the only source of light. He had to rely on his spirit sense mostly to get an idea of where he was, though admittedly his eyes were well adapted to the darkness as well - not to mention the Fancy Contact lenses.

He was studying his surroundings, and trying to understand where exactly he had teleported to, when he picked up on something. To be specific, it was not his eyes, contact lenses or even spirit sense that detected the change, but his soul sense!

There was originally no one around him, but then he detected a soul pass by. It seemed like the 'soul' detected him at the same time as he felt the presence of the soul, and changed its direction to approach him.

Lex did not reveal that he had already detected the incoming being, and observed to see how the situation progressed. It was approaching him from behind, and even as it came within a few dozen feet of him, Lex could not actually see or hear the approaching entity. 'Was this what others experienced when Fenrir used its stealth?' Lex wondered as the being came even closer, practically only a couple of feet away from him.

Were it not for his soul sense, he would have had no way of knowing there was someone standing right behind him. But then, the being attacked viciously, and when it finally made contact, the being was revealed to Lex's senses.

It seemed Lex needed to be touching it to perceive it.