

Innkeeper 771

The Innkeeper

Chapter 771: One step

Outside the castle-cum-mountainrange, the war was still ongoing, although a few minor details had changed. Instead of the many nobles working together to fight against the forces of the royal family, they were now all fighting together as brothers in arms and members of the same race, all against the icy abominations that had so suddenly appeared. They were surrounded, and though the situation had not become dire yet, anything could happen at any time.

No one understood where these abominations came from, but they understood well what their obsession with the castle was. These... things hated heat, and hated the Frigals who had immense heat inside their bodies. But the greatest source of heat on the entire planet was on the last floor of the dragon's hoard in the castle behind them, and that was attracting the abominations from across the planet.

Of course, none of them felt for even a second that the creatures could succeed in extinguishing the heat source, but even if they wanted to passively let them go by, the creatures would not permit it. After all, even if their bodies had less heat compared to their main target, they could not be ignored.

Just as the battle was reaching its pinnacle, the sound of hundreds of rockets seemed to fill the air. Though Frigals could not see, they used other senses to detect that the sounds were not rockets, but countless ships entering the planet's atmosphere from orbit. They were all aiming for the castle.

But they made one miscalculation in their plans to bypass the battle on the ground and directly enter the castle. The abominations were called as such because they had no fixed shape or identity. The only thing that was fixed was that they seemed to have bodies made of ice. That meant that... all they needed to do was alter their bodies to take flight.

With hundreds of new massive heat sources appearing to aggravate them, the abominations let out howls of fury before they took flight. There were two battlefields now: one in the air and one on the ground.

Although motivation, passion and dedication all burned within his heart, standing up was easier said than done. Will power was one thing, but accomplishing something seemingly impossible required more than something as ethereal as thoughts and prayers. He needed something more.

He hesitated for only a mere second before he made a decision. He could either rely on arrays, a few of which could somewhat help him. Or, he could use his current situation to run his cultivation technique.

Unfortunately, he could not run his cultivation technique and use his spirit energy for other tasks at the same time, so he had to choose. Ultimately, the choice was simple. Arrays could provide him immediate but limited relief. The technique, however, had the potential to use his current situation and adapt to it to give him greater benefits. Maybe he could even develop a resistance to Dragons Might. There was only one way to find out.

With his decision made, he began cultivating while he continued to lift himself up. Lex could not help but release a guttural cry as he pushed himself up right. He felt like he was deadlifting a planet!

His cultivation technique was not hampered at all by his movement or the pressure around him, and in fact ran even smoother in these harsh conditions. Slowly, he could tell that it was already bringing about some changes in him, but he could not spare the thought to observe these changes. He had to use every ounce of willpower, and actual power, to move even a few inches.

Despite the hardship, the ultimate winner was Lex - if one could consider standing up a victory at all. Unfortunately for him, standing up did not give him any release, nor did it make it easier for him.

He looked forward and estimated how far the dragon was. Normally this was not an issue, but at the moment the dragon seemed to occupy his entire mind, so it was difficult for him to pay attention to the gap between them.

In the end, he gave up. What did it matter anyway? How far could it really be? He tried to drag his foot forward, so as to avoid lifting it, but the friction with the ground was too great. It was not possible. Taking in a deep yet painful breath, he lifted his left foot up and stepped forward.

"Fuck!" Lex cursed as he fell down and lost nearly all his progress. How had walking turned into an impossible task?

He had put his foot down incorrectly, causing him to stumble. Moreover, the immense pressure and the horrible angle caused something in his left knee to crack. As someone who generally avoided cursing, not at all due to childhood trauma of getting his rear whapped for doing so, the fact that he cursed so loud spoke of his frustration.

It was not the bone crushing pain that caused Lex the frustration as much as knowing that with an injured knee, another hurdle on his already impossible task was added. With clenched fists, he tolerated the pain as he pushed himself back up again. Fortunately, as a cultivator, he was not subject to the same weaknesses he was back when he was a pure mortal.

Although his knee was injured, he could use the various muscles in his leg to accommodate his weight as well as forcefully divert the pressure on his knee.

Finally, when he pushed himself back up, with unsurpassed focus, Lex once again lifted his leg and took a step. This time he did not mess up, so he was able to divert his weight onto his other leg, and ready himself for his next step.

He looked up at the dragon one more time, which was only a few miles away from him, and realized he needed to speed up. If he took 10 minutes on each step, he'd never make it before the others arrived. Suddenly, he felt like cursing again.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 772: Dominance

Lex had been homeschooled a lot, so he did not know what a traditional P.E. teacher was like. The only thing he had to compare it with was when his dad would put on a tracksuit, grab a whistle and make him and his sisters do odd, random exercises.

Sometimes they would run laps around a random park and other times they'd go swimming. Sometimes, his parents would get creative after watching a martial arts movie, like The Karate Kid or something, and then make them do the same things as in the movie.

All in all, it was not too bad except for the fact that they would not be allowed to stop till they were thoroughly exhausted and drained. In hindsight, maybe it was just a way for parents to exhaust extremely energetic kids to get some rest themselves. If his parents were normal, that would have made sense.

That, however, was irrelevant. What truly mattered was the fact that Lex was having flashbacks to those days of utter exhaustion as he pushed his body beyond its limit to approach the dragon. Each movement, whether it was his hands moving back and forth to maintain balance, or each excruciating part of taking a step, had to be done with the utmost care. It was only under so much extreme pressure that Lex realized how complicated walking actually was.

He had to simultaneously cultivate, and though it had not helped him in any way yet, he was confident it would pay off. After all, with each step he took he was closer to the dragon. That also meant that each step he took increased the might of, well, Dragons Might.

There was a whimpering sound beside him, and Lex could not help but smile. After he had stood up, and regained a dignified stance, he summoned Fenrir. The poor pup was also helpless under the weight of the dragon's oppression, but the aggression buried deep in its bloodline did not allow it to kneel before the dragon. Although it did not have as specific a purpose as Lex, Fenrir too had stood up though it was extremely reluctant to get any closer. Its pride, however, would not allow it to stay back as Lex moved forward.

The reason Lex had summoned it was not because Lex did not want to suffer alone, no. It was to temper the pups will. He had noticed that the more it would hunt, the more it was starting to grow uncontrollably aggressive. It was fine for now, as it always behaved in front of Lex so far, but he thought overcoming a little hardship and realizing that he was not all powerful might be good for the pups growth.

Also, he needed someone to watch as he overcame this hurdle. What was the point of a performance without an audience? Well, there were plenty of reasons for it actually, but who cared?

It had been thirty minutes since Lex began walking, but he had not even covered five hundred feet (150 meters). This was not good because he could sense mild vibrations coming from the castle above. Something was going on, and the longer he took, the greater chances that someone else would show up soon.

His brain was filled with countless ideas for how he could make this task easier. He could use his spatial affinity to get closer, he could summon the Silent Wanderer. Heck, he was certain if he threw a golden key at the dragon hard enough, it would be crushed and send the dragon to the Inn. There, he could conduct this trial in as much time as he needed, and that would also save him enough time to loot the rest of the hoard.

He couldn't help it, Lex had been too focused on searching for loopholes so all these ideas kept coming to him. But he rejected them all. Some things had to be achieved in the moment without the thought of retreat or giving up. Sure, he could attempt the same task inside the Inn without external pressures hurrying him along, but that would defeat the point. He had to do this to prove he was not reliant on the system. Most of all, he had to conquer the dragon that made him taste the floor.

Lex did not even allow himself to enter his Flow state, or any other state. This had to be done purely by him.

Lex was so focused on the task that he did not notice at all when he started exuding his own aura. It only made sense. He was giving it everything he had, so subconsciously he included his aura in that as well.

But while his aura was previously completely suppressed all the way to his skin, under the pressure of Dragons Might and driven by the monumental achievement that was each step, it began to change.

The direction it was changing was not overwhelmingly oppressive, similar to that of Dragons Might, as hospitality was deeply ingrained in him now, and oppressing his guests was never the sign of a good host. But it was gaining authority nonetheless.

It was not the authority of a boss over his subordinates, no. It was more like the authority wielded as a result of one's own person. It was like the respect of a warrior - it was the same in a garden just as much as it was on the battlefield. It was like the confidence of a king - they did not need to prove their worth. It was like a celebrity in front of a massive crowd of fans - they did not need to introduce themselves.

It was all of that and more, and with each passing second it was being refined further. It was filled with an aura of dominance.

Yet how could something that was filled with the air of dominance be suppressed? His aura extended out 1cm from his skin, and for a moment Lex felt the illusion that his step had become easier, even if only a minute amount.

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Chapter 773: Recording

After Lex took another 100 steps, he developed somewhat of a rhythm. The rhythm helped reduce the strain on his mind which was focused on even the subtlest movements he made with his body during this time. The hyper focused state he was in was also one of the reasons he had failed to notice his growing and evolving aura.

What he did notice, however, was that while he had expected each progressive step to grow harder, sometimes it would get easier instead. He could not understand why the strain would reduce, and he didn't have the mental capacity to spare to analyze such a thing.

Now that the strain on his mind had eased up a little, he could focus on the next thing, which was to speed up. He had to be especially careful with this as he did not want a recurrence of him tripping and injuring himself. His task was already hard enough without accumulating more injured joints.

One, almost completely irrelevant, benefit that Lex got from this was that he refined his posture a lot. After all, walking and maintaining balance was a lot easier with proper posture.

With his efforts now refocused, his speed began to increase at a steady pace. But so focused was he, not just with his mind and body, but even with his instincts and everything else that he had at his disposal, that Lex began to miss out on other things he would have normally noticed.

For example, his cultivation technique finally started producing results. Amazingly, cultivation under such immense pressure sped up his cultivation by over a hundredfold! His Golden core started to shrink in size, but that was not a bad thing. It was becoming more compressed and therefore only allowed purer and higher quality energy to enter.

His body also started to undergo a subtle refinement. It was not that he was gaining more strength, but the elasticity of his muscles was increasing. Moreover, the way his muscles connected to one another and his bones were also subtly changing. This would allow him finer control over his strength and allow his body to tolerate more stress with greater ease.

Alongside his sweat, fine black grains of impurities also started to be pushed out of Lex's body. Although Lex had previously undergone cleansings, as he grew in cultivation level and strength, what was considered essential and waste material inside his body also changed.

For example, there were certain minerals and nutrients that his body required to strengthen and hold his body together while he built his Foundation. But once in the Golden Core realm, his strength and level had increased so much that those same materials that once held things together now became sources of instability. Of course, that was only relatively speaking as the body could easily tolerate their negative effects as they were common in all cultivators.

But now, due to the immense pressure his body was cultivating under, they were being pushed out, cleansing his body as it grew stronger.

Another thing that Lex failed to notice was a figure that appeared in the same hall. It was the dwarf, Barley, and much like Lex, he slammed into the ground. But while Lex recovered and moved on, Barley was already in such a poor state that he could barely tolerate the force.

Quickly, or as quickly as he could manage, he dragged himself back out of the hall. But as he sat on the steps, panting and heaving, his sight fell onto Lex.

With his back held up straight, he walked at a steady pace with all the seeming ease in the world, despite being under the immense pressure of the dragon. In front of him, the monstrosity that was a dragon stood calmly, his eyes seemingly focused on the approaching figure.

Although Barley knew that the dragon was dead, or at least it should be, that is not what it seemed like. From where he sat, it seemed like the dragon was crouching down on the ground, his posture docile and his tail safely curled up, and he dared not move as the tiny figure approached him.

It was crazy. It did not make sense. Such a thing was impossible. But the confident gait that Lex had walking forward, his head held up high looking directly at the dragon, his broad strong shoulders that did not seem like they were weighed down by the Dragons Might at all, all combined together to make an image that looked like he had the dragon cowed.

Feeling weak, bitter, and unwilling, Barley pulled out a recording device. This was not just a video recorder, as this device would record everything, from the scents, the sounds, the temperature, and even the pressure of the Dragons Might, inside of it. This way, when someone reviewed the content later, it would be as if they were there in person.

He began recording, and even whispered an introduction.

"My name is Barley Holdinson, and I am on the planet Frigra. My team and I snuck into the great dragon's hoard, but... but this is what we found. I do not know who that person is, but I do know his name... is Lex William."

The video lacked a full explanation, for example the fact that the dragon in the recording was already dead. But he left it that way on purpose. If he couldn't get the dragon's treasure, at least he'd leave here with a video that will make him an overnight sensation on the Henali Portal. He would set a very high price for viewing this recording, and thus set himself up for a lifetime.

As for what this Lex might think of his actions... well, with the whole realm knowing that Lex looted a dragon's hoard he would not live for long. Who cared what he thought? Barley was not being malicious on purpose. He just never even considered things from any other point of view at all.

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Chapter 774: Obsession

Lex's sweat and blood had long since evaporated, leaving no trace behind. His suit was phenomenal, so it would not show sweat stains either. Moreover, Lex's entire back was covered, so nothing of his miserable state was actually shown in Barley's recording.

By now, he didn't even need to waste any energy wiping the sweat off his face, for it would evaporate right on his skin. The dark impurities exiting his body evaporated as well. Oddly enough, however, since they were only considered impurities now that Lex had grown much stronger, after evaporating they didn't release a putrid or horrid smell, but actually smelled fresh and relaxing. After all, his body had been refined by the lotus many times, so even the dirt in his body was valuable now.

All of this combined to create the ultimate scene for Barley's recording, so much so that even the dwarf had not realized it yet.

Time seemed to lose meaning as Lex marched. At some point, without Lex realizing it, the difficulty of his task went from absolutely impossible to only almost completely impossible. The drastic reduction in difficulty was due to various factors, but when they combined together they allowed Lex to finally gather up the energy, and he began to jog.

Every inch of his entire being was aching, but Lex had a smile on his face because his increased speed finally allowed him to feel a bit of wind on his face. Although the wind itself was searing hot, like air coming out of a burning stove, it was still an improvement for Lex.

The pleasant sensation further fueled Lex's motivation, and soon he broke into a run. To be clear, it was not that it had become easier to traverse the area so he was running, but that he was forcing more out of himself. After all, he knew that if he wanted to achieve what he had in mind, the difficulty was going to get much worse.

Although it seemed an eternity, especially to Lex, eventually he reached the dragon!

He slowed down, panting and heaving, as he approached the dragon's face. By now he could no longer rely on his eyes to look at the dragon, even his left eye, for the strain was so great he felt he would go blind if he did. He had to use his spirit sense, and even that suffered from mild burns as it came in contact with the dragon's scales.

He had to lift his face to look up at the dragon properly. Just to reach its lower lip, Lex would have to climb dozens of feet. It was hard to determine the exact size of the dragon, for the Dragons Might was messing with his perception. Even this close, he could not tell just how big it was.

He did not spend any time admiring it, for the hardest task was still in front of him. What he had done so far... was only the warm up. He reached forward and touched the dragon scale, his skin sizzling due to the scales heat, but he didn't withdraw it. There was also the sound of a mighty roar inside his mind that nearly made him fall unconscious, but fortunately it did not last.

He raised his hand till it met the groove of one scale ending and another beginning. There was barely enough space for his fingertips to grip it, but that would have to do. It was at this moment he cursed himself for weighing more than 700 pounds. He knew he would regret that sooner or later.

But he had no time to lament, for the longer he took, the more of his skin burned, literally! He lifted himself up... and fell back to the floor. What 700 pounds? Right now, it felt as if Lex weighed 70,000 pounds! What's more, it was not easy to leverage the entire weight only on his burning fingertips.

Lex blew out air from his nose, dissatisfied with the situation. Then he licked each of his fingertips, moistening them a bit, and began again. This time, he did not fall, and he began to climb slowly and steadily.

Just as he was making steady progress, and he was about to reach the lower lip of the dragon, the crown on his head cracked, and spirit pull began influencing him again, if only a little.

But Lex was a single minded beast now, so did not stop climbing nor did he stop cultivating, even if his thoughts had drifted elsewhere. The only redeeming factor in this situation was that the treasure that was tainted with the dragon's obsession was a little far from the dragon, and so he was not facing spirit pull at its worst.

The Lotus on Lex's back was stimulated, just a bit, by the dragon's aura, but it was too exhausted from healing that strange poison for Lex's system, so it did not wake up.

The castle above Lex trembled, and dust fell from the roof, but he did not notice. He just kept climbing, crossing the lower lip and then the top. Only a little more, and he would reach the snout, which would make his remaining journey easy, at least by comparison. But then, the crown on his head suffered another crack, and Lex got lost even deeper in his thoughts.

The strange thing was, the deeper Lex got lost in his thoughts, the faster he would climb, as if he was instinctively ignoring the copious amounts of pain in his body.

Unbelievably, Lex managed to reach the snout, and stood up on it, his posture perfectly refined. His cultivation technique began circulating even faster, and the effects on his body were noticeable by now.

Lex did not pause for long, and continued to walk, the crown suffering even more cracks. What was strange was that he should have diverted his path as he was influenced by the spirit pull and gone towards the treasure, but instead Lex never changed his path.

Lex had formed an obsession of his own while fighting against the dragon's aura, and now his obsession was competing directly against the dragons.

Finally, he reached the forehead.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 775: Ultimate fertilizer

Although nothing in particular was happening at the lowest level, and Lex was the only one moving about, a strange stillness enveloped the hall the moment he reached the forehead. The pressure of Dragons Might on Lex did not reduce, but at the same time felt as if it had lost its edge.

Barley, the dwarf in the distance, held his breath as he tried to come to terms with what he was seeing. This was beyond anything he had expected. He thought Lex was going to go steal treasure, not blaspheme the dragon like this! The value of his recording just skyrocketed!

Lex slowed down only a bit as an instinctive hesitation filled him, but he overcame it momentarily as he approached the spot he had seen from a distance. In the center of the dragon's forehead, there was a single scale that was elevated above the rest. Unlike the rest of the scales, this one had unusual jagged edges, as if something was once attached to this scale but had been ripped out. All that remained now was a single scale higher than the rest.

Lex stepped on to the dragon and he, who was supposed to have lost lucidity under the effects of the treasure's spirit pull, spoke softly.

"Before lording your might and prestige over me, realize that you are the one sitting under my feet."

Even without a soul, the dragon seemed to have been stimulated by Lex's words and its Dragons Might erupted like a volcano! The inherent pride of a dragon could not be besmirched even in death!

Lex coughed out some blood and immediately shut his eyes, for he felt they were about to pop out of his skull. Tiny rips tore in his skin all over and he began to bleed profusely. A roar that could destroy planets rang inside Lex's mind and shook his very soul, yet Lex's expression did not change at all.

The matter of fact was that Lex really was affected by spirit pull, but his own indomitable will and pride clashed against the dragons. Right now, Lex was not acting consciously, but rather completely, according to his subconscious thoughts and feelings. He really did believe that dragons were not fit to show their might in front of him, at least dead ones.

As if nothing had happened at all, Lex sat cross-legged on the elevated scale and closed his eyes. It was as if he was finding a comfortable position within the gut wrenching, soul-crushing pressure bearing down on him.

A moment later, he began to cultivate once again. A whirlwind of heated spirit energy formed around Lex and began to be absorbed by his body. His aura, which had previously been undergoing a steady growth, exploded with a powerful hunger and began to devour the Dragons Might!

His cultivation technique was revolving at unprecedented speeds and began to immediately change Lex as he was nourished by the special spirit energy within this hall, as well as the unique spirit energy flooding into his body the scale beneath him!

Everything about Lex, at that moment, began to undergo an evolution. His cultivation, which had barely moved from the beginning of the Golden core realm, began to slowly inch upwards. His very position on the Cosmic Ascendance Spectrum began to elevate! His mind, body and soul were beginning to grow stronger rapidly, as if he was being nourished by the dragon itself!

The impurities in his body started to leak out of his body, no longer as fine black grains but in the form of steam! His hair started to take on a brownish tint similar to the dragon's scales underneath him. His skin, which had ripped all over, healed almost immediately, and then began to shed as if he was molting.

Even the Lotus tattoo on his back started to warm up, as if it too was absorbing some of the dragon's energy.

Barley, who was still recording, began to tremble as fear started to creep into his heart. His incredibly sharp senses had picked up on the fact that the Dragons Might affecting him had reduced almost imperceptibly. Yet such a thing was not a cause for celebration, for another, more intimidating aura took its place by the same measure that the Dragons Might reduced.

No matter what he thought of Lex earlier, right now his body was telling him to flee. If the man who dared to absorb a dragon's essence discovered that Barley had been recording him with sinister intentions, he would not be long for this world, especially in his weakened state.

After all, this was not something that had never been done before, albeit never in the method that Lex was using. It had to be known that the aura of a dragon would taint any who dared absorb their essence,

and would become a permanent enemy of the dragons. This was no laughing matter, and no longer something the dwarf dared to be a part of.

He ended the recording and began to retreat while Lex was still busy. He had to leave this planet immediately!

While this was happening, the strain on Lex was slowly and steadily decreasing. This was a result of the decreasing Dragons Might, his increasing aura as well as his own increasing strength. In a few minutes, he already reached the middle of the Golden Core realm.

He also finally woke up and gained full lucidity, as well as all the memories of everything he did recently. He would have shuddered and considered himself lucky that he had not succumbed to the dragon's obsession, but at the moment he was feeling too euphoric to worry.

Although he had endless motivation and dedication when he started out on his endeavor, planning to do something and actually achieving it were two entirely different concepts. He... he had actually crossed the barrier between so many realms and managed to conquer this trial in his path. Given that the dragon was already dead, but even so the challenge had been difficult enough.

He felt an unprecedented thrill and excitement course through his veins. He felt like he was truly alive at this moment, and had achieved something legendary. At the same time he felt an overwhelming urge to go and complete other impossible tasks and test what his limits truly were.

A massive, genuine grin painted his face but even that was not enough to contain his joy. He began laughing freely and loudly, without caring to hold back at all. He was sitting atop a mighty dragon, something he would have not even dared to imagine before. Although he always had faith in his own ability, and preferred to get things himself over just being handed amazing gifts by the system, it was a good feeling to finally prove it.

Once he was done laughing, he quickly resumed his focus on cultivating. He could feel that he had improved too much too quickly, and that he was about to reach his limit. But until that happened, he wanted to get the most out of this chance.

He finally had time to inspect the changes taking place in his body and evaluate his growth. He noticed, for the first time, how his aura was directly competing with Dragons Might, and even slowly absorbing

it! It was transcending the realm where it could only be felt, and entering the realm where he could directly influence the world itself with his aura.

He could feel that his aura would suppress, subdue and overwhelm his foes, while at the same time it would protect, reassure and to a certain degree, reinvigorate his allies. His aura could also protect him from various negative influences, such as minor curses, divination, fate manipulation, mind attacks as well as soul attacks.

But these last few aspects were still weak, and would require further strengthening of his aura to be effective in case of stronger opponents.

His eyes flashed open and the world itself seemed to feel the pressure of his gaze. It was as if, through his gaze, Lex could employ something similar to Dragons Might. After a moment's consideration, he decided to name this ability Domination.

His cultivation finally slowed down and his aura stopped growing. The Dragons Might in the hall could still oppress him greatly, but it was no longer to the point where Lex would collapse at the simplest carelessness.

Lex was not sure what treasure the mystery man referred to when he told Lex to come here, but he was more than satisfied with this opportunity. After all, now that he had cultivated on top of a dragon, he did not plan on cultivating anywhere else.

There was a flash of emotion in Lex's eyes as he summoned a single golden key and stared at it. It was time... to bring the ultimate fertilizer to the Inn. He used the dragon's scale to break the key, teleporting the living carcass of the dragon to the Inn, before he himself teleported away as well.

Although he had to loot, yes, he also had to make sure no one stole his fertilizer from him!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 776: No time

Inside the Inn, the activity levels seemed to have dropped drastically. Many of the guests who were here were actually in hiding, while the rest were on vacation. That was because the entire realm seemed to

be heading towards war. If the higher ups were stressed about it, the ones lower down on the chain of command would clearly be even more worried. They were also much busier.

Although the Midnight Inn was an excellent place, without sufficient money, one could not spend enough time there. As such, it was not really a long term solution to avoiding the conflicts. This caused most of the Inns' usual tenants to be busy working or cultivating, leaving behind only a small percentage of guests.

Even so, dozens if not hundreds of guests came and went at any given time. This was a sight that had become all too common, and no longer aroused any attention among those who frequented the Inn. Only those who were coming to the Inn for the first time were likely to stop and admire the beautiful scenery.

Naturally, as with every norm, there were exceptions. In the clearing where new guests arrived, a single massive guest suddenly appeared. At first, it was only the size of the new guest that attracted attention of all the guests, for at its height point, which was on its back where its wings were folded, the guest was nearly 4000 feet (1220 meters) tall. The length of its body, even with its tail folded up, was also around 4000 feet as well.

It went without saying that the arrival of such a figure would attract the eye of all nearby guests. But that was only just an instinctive reaction that anyone would have. A moment later, once they overcame the enormity of the size of this new guest, and processed who it actually was, they were startled! It was a dragon, and a massive one at that! This was even larger than the previous dragon that had appeared at the Inn before, as a guard.

Moreover, there was one very significant difference between this dragon and the previous one. This dragon... was very active within the Suera Galaxy, and thus was considered a very high level VIP among many forces. Various amounts of information were also available to multiple forces and organizations, depending on their power and authority levels.

Thus a few guests, especially among the devils, immediately recognized it. It would not be inaccurate to say that this dragon was one of the most well known celebrities or prominent figures to appear at the Inn.

Just as some guests were basking in the glory of appearing so near a dragon, all without being crushed by its ferocious Dragons Might, that the dragon disappeared. This did not arouse too much surprise as

no one expected a dragon to ride a golf cart to its destination. The fact that it had appeared in the same location as them when it arrived was already humbling enough for it.

The appearance and subsequent disappearance of the dragon did not arouse too much attention, besides the usual excitement of witnessing one of the overlords of not only this realm but the entire universe. But certain figures who recognized the dragon made a mental note of its appearance.

Lex, who had also teleported to the Inn, would naturally not come over personally to teleport the dragon over. Instead, as soon as he appeared, he used his authority to expand his private meditation room until it was large enough to fit the dragon and teleported it over.

Now, inside the Inn, Lex could finally observe the dragon without the interference of its natural aura, and its massive size was finally revealed to him.

Somehow, with all the mystique removed, the dragon looked even more impressive than when he could not even perceive the size of its existence.

Each of its scales was more beautiful than the most exquisite piece of jade, each curve and groove pleasing to the eye. Its mighty stature and dominating figure produced an ethereal aura of their own, and was independent of its spot on the Cosmic Ascendance Spectrum. That aura belonged solely to itself and was ingrained deep within its bones. Although Lex did not know its history, standing before it he was sure that it had raised many storms in its lifetime.

Yet, oddly enough, its death was extremely mysterious. Lex did not know how much he would believe the words of the creature that had told him how the dragon had died, but even if he believed everything, it left too many questions.

But now was not the time for that. Lex was still on a time crunch, and wanted to explore the depths of the dragons' hoard. But before that, he just had to make sure that nothing would happen to the dragon if he left it here, so he scanned it.

Name: Pelvailin Ur Bahatna Gorgin

Age: 670,809,524

Sex: Male

Cultivation Details: ???

Species: Dragon

Midnight Inn Prestige Level: 1

Bloodline: ???

Condition: An empty vessel, a body without a soul. Unless the soul revives, or a new, suitable soul enters, the body will eventually die.

Remarks: The most valuable item inside a dragon's treasure chest is always the dragon itself!

Lex's eyes gleamed as various ideas crossed his mind. Since this was a living dragon, sort of, if Lex could harvest its benefits besides just absorbing its might and cultivation, then he could raise the power of the Midnight Inn by a massive amount. Although he had not read in detail, even he had come across the random articles on the Henali portal about how some lucky cultivator found a drop of dragon blood, or a random dragon bone, and then used it to become an unrivaled powerhouse in their respective region.

The possibilities were endless. Lex had trouble suppressing his grin and even had the urge to utter the forbidden words 'my precious' as he looked at the dragon. But ultimately he tore away his feverish gaze from the dragon. Now, it was time to loot.

He teleported back to the hall and found himself free falling from a height. It made sense. When he teleported away, he was up in the air above a dragon. But such a fall barely had any effect on him at all.

Now, free of the oppressive aura of Dragons Might, he could move freely. Moreover, he had built a mental resistance to spirit pull, so he had no trouble retaining his lucidity.

The moment his body crashed onto the ground, he burst forward at full speed. The sudden absence of Dragons Might would not go unnoticed and it was only a matter of time before others came to investigate. He was determined to get as much as possible done before he ran into that search party.

First order of business was the treasure that reeked of the dragon's obsession. It was not at all hard to find as Lex could clearly feel its pull, not to mention the massive pedestal that had been built for it.

An oval, rainbow colored jewel that was 30 feet (9.1 meters) across was placed on a red pillow that looked like it was made from the feathers of some mystical being. Even beside the obsession that had gripped the jewel, Lex could feel an ancient and ominous aura leaking from it. Faintly, deep within, he could see the outline of a figure seemingly trapped within.

Soft, silver characters shimmered in the air around it, as if the jewel itself was causing characters to be formed.

Lex could also feel the jewel absorbing an unusual aura from the planet, nourishing itself.

Around the pedestal there were various rows of seats, as if a crowd regularly gathered around it to worship the jewel. In fact, faint traces of divinity could be sensed in the vicinity as well.

It was as if-

Lex could not be bothered to continue observing the jewel for now. The moment he was sure that it was safe, he put the jewel as well as the pillow inside the massive spatial drum on his back. In fact, using nothing but brute strength, Lex ripped the pedestal out of the ground as well, and placed it in there as well. He was sure it was worth a lot.

He immediately took out the black jade that would guide him to the Peronian Jade and made a beeline for the direction it pointed him in. As he ran, he also stored every chair, table, ornament and decoration he came across because they were all leaking thick, heated spirit energy and he was certain they were valuable.

Soon, he found a small sealed room upon following the jades directions. The seal was not to prevent intruders, but to lock in the aura of its contents so Lex had no problem entering.

Inside was a black tree that was, supposedly, made of Peronian Jade. It looked identical to the compass Lex had, and once again gave off an unusual aura that spoke of extreme vicissitudes.

Upon making sure it was safe, Lex put it in his drum as well. He had no time to admire ancient treasures. He only had time to loot!

The Innkeeper

Chapter 777: Pool

While Lex was busy with his looting, within the Milky way a number of small drones explored the vacuum of space. Telescopes, formations and other means to observe the universe at large could only provide the most basic information about space within a galaxy as many various kinds of spiritual energies and other anomalies hid endless secrets.

These drones, sent out by the A.I. once they arrived on Earth, were conducting a survey of nearby space for exactly this reason. After all, unlike other races, the A.I. did not care if the Earth was inside a deadzone. The concentration of spiritual energy mattered little to them. After all, they only cared about valuable materials, and even dead zones could give birth to those. Using the harvest from dead zones, the A.I. could create unique bodies for themselves.

It was while conducting this routine survey, the drone discovered a rogue planet that hadn't been detected on any of its previous scans. Following protocol, it went closer to investigate. As soon as it was in range, it scanned the planet and to its great surprise, discovered that the readings from the planet already existed in its database. This was a known planet, but its location was not where it was supposed to be. After all, Polebitvy was in another galaxy all together! But at this moment, it was right in front of it, disturbingly close to earth!

Immediately it sent back this information for it could be extremely valuable!

Lex did not need his instincts to tell him that there was more than meets the eye regarding the Peronian jade, but he had already signed a contract to give it away so there was no use pondering over it. He would study it a bit more when he had the chance, but for now he stopped thinking about it and exited once more.

The final hall that constituted the dragon's hoard was large and elaborately decorated with immaculate stonework and masonry, with endless jewels, valuable metals and various stones. Although the decorations were many, they all had one thing in common which was that they gave off an unusual, heated spirit energy.

Lex already knew that there were different kinds of spirit energies and that they served different purposes, but for now Lex was too low leveled so to him it was all the same. What was more important to him was that each and every one of those items were valuable, and to a degree, could also act as fertilizers.

But instead of immediately rushing to them, Lex first calmly surveyed the entire hall. Just because Lex was in a rush did not mean he lost his professionalism. All things had to be done efficiently and in the correct order. He would first loot the actual treasures in this hall before turning his attention to other, lesser valuables.

The vast majority of the hall was an open space, which made sense considering the dragon's size. But there were 12 smaller halls and rooms, similar to the one which contained the Peronian jade. This also made sense. After all, there was limited space and not every hall could be massive. Moreover, if even Fenrir could change its size, how would the dragon not be able to?

Speaking of Fenrir... the pup had struggled a lot under the Dragons Might, but it had been too stubborn to retreat as well. Once the pressure from the dragon disappeared, it collapsed. But by the time Lex returned, he was nowhere in sight. Yet, through his connection to the pup, Lex knew exactly where it was. It was doing the same thing as Lex: it was looting!

Lex chuckled, and then swiftly entered the nearest hall. This room was, surprisingly, a small study containing endless books and crystals containing information. Lex swiped them all.

The next room was a kitchen, and had a massive storage treasure filled to the brim with frozen carcasses all radiating a powerful aura. The kitchen also had endless other fresh ingredients. After storing them in his own spatial equipment, Lex had to waste some time returning to the Inn. After all, he could not place one spatial equipment in another's, so what Lex referred to as the 'spatial freezer' had to manually be dropped off. He took the opportunity to empty his equipment as well, before returning to the hoard.

The third room Lex entered had been ransacked already by Fenrir, leaving not a single speck of dust. Lex did not know whether to laugh or cry when he saw this, so he quickly moved to the next room.

This room was a little special, in that its design seemed to fulfill some purpose. Shaped like a dome, the room had a massive pit inside of it filled to the brim with blood. Lex was immediately reminded of what Mary had requested and scanned the blood with his spirit sense for the scale, but encountered an unusual problem. The blood was incredibly thick, and resisted the penetration of Lex's spirit sense. If he wanted to look for the scale she had requested, he would have to get inside.

Or...

He put his hand atop the blood and began sucking it inside his spatial drum! Lex had no interest in taking a literal blood bath, so this was an excellent alternative.

As the blood slowly drained, the immense size of the pit was revealed as even ten feet down, it had not reached the bottom.

Lex was waiting for the pool to end, while at the same time making a mental note to look into what this blood could possibly be used for, when he noticed something in the pool. There was a figure swimming within.

Could it be the baby dragon that Mary had mentioned earlier? Lex wondered warily. It had to be known that even a newborn dragon was in the Earth immortal realm, and was not something he could fight off!

But a moment later, his expression froze. A blood covered wolf was revealed, and looked around wondering where the pool was disappearing to. It was having such a good time swimming.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 778: Ring

"You're going to stink of blood," Lex said with a frown, though Fenrir didn't care about that. In fact, he was distressed that Lex was taking away his pool!

"Woof woof woof!"

"Fine, I'll leave the blood alone. But check the pool if there's a scale inside, I need it."

The pup immediately plunged deep inside the pool, anxious to find the scale lest Lex continues to drain the blood.

A gleam flashed through Lex's eyes. Although Fenrir was sometimes silly, he was actually very intelligent. If it was so attached to the blood, it must be benefiting it greatly somehow. Lex naturally would not covet an opportunity gained by Fenrir, but that did not stop him from contemplating if the blood would be helpful to the other beasts inside the Inn.

He did not think the Galactic Sovereign Turtle needed any help, but Little Blue had been a part of the Inn for a long time. Although Lex did not have too much of a personal connection with it, that did not mean that Lex did not care about it.

A moment later, Fenrir came out of the pool with a remorseful look on its face.

"Woof woof!" the pup said.

There was a scale at the bottom, but it was too heavy for the pup to move. The pup was scared that Lex would drain the pool to get to the scale, so it mentioned that the blood was actually nice and warm and didn't feel bad.

Lex sighed, and then jumped in. The warmth Fenrir mentioned was actually scalding hot, to the extent that even Lex's freshly upgraded body turned red with subtle signs of a mild burn.

The pool was much deeper than Lex expected, and he sank for about 300 feet (91 meters) before he reached the boot.

He naturally could not use his eyes to look around, and his spirit sense wasn't working either so he could only feel around to look for the scale. It was easier to find than expected, for it covered nearly the entire bottom of the pit.

He did not experiment with the weight, despite his curiosity for how much it weighed, and simply placed it within his drum. Nothing unexpected happened, so Lex swam back to the top and exited the pool safely.

He was half expecting his body to absorb the blood or something along those lines, considering that Fenrir was so excited about it, but it had no effect on him.

"Are you sure you want to stay here?" Lex asked with hesitation when he couldn't figure out the benefit of the blood, but Fenrir was adamant. He only nodded, and left the pup up to his devices.

He quickly began going through the remaining halls. He encountered a greenhouse filled with various potted plants. Lex could not put them in his spatial equipment so he had to consider whether it was worth it to waste time teleporting to and back to the Inn every time. After all, for him to return to the Inn was not instantaneous and would take a while.

Ultimately... he decided it was worth it. Anything at this level would be unbelievably valuable. He grabbed as many pots as he could manage and teleported to the Inn, instantly dropped the pots in the greenhouse near the turtle. Before the turtle could even realize what was happening, Lex had already disappeared.

But the time the turtle analyzed the first pot, a dozen more appeared. A tinge of excitement was born in the turtle's eyes as he began to salivate, and looked from one plant to another. From time to time, more pots appeared, stimulating the turtle's heart.

Each and every potted plant he saw was supposed to have gone extinct! That was the information on plants it was inheriting from within its bloodline, so the fact that he saw even a single sample was unbelievable let alone multiple different extinct plants!

He could possibly... bring these plants back from extinction if only the circumstances were right. Ambition suddenly took hold of the young turtle's heart, and the horn on its forehead began to glow without its knowledge.

All of this was unknown to Lex, who took an entire 10 minutes to transport all the plants to the Inn. Without wasting a single breath, he dashed to the next hall, and the one after that, and the one after that.

Despite the amazing auras each of them had, Lex did not pause to study them. He had been hoping that any one of them might turn out to be a system, but unfortunately he was disappointed.

Like that, he made his way to the last hall. But upon entering Lex paused, for the hall was empty. He frowned. He was sure Fenrir had not been here, so where could the contents of the hall have gone.

He used his spirit sense and even tried to listen to his instincts but was not able to discover anything, despite the obvious pedestal that had been prepared for an individual item. Whatever it was, it was gone. Lex turned around and left. Although he was curious, he could not waste time to sate his curiosity.

What he failed to notice was that as soon as he left, a ring made of wood reappeared on the pedestal, as if it had always been there.

With all the rooms and halls explored, there was only one item remaining here that Lex felt was incalculably valuable. It was the massive chandelier hanging far up above. It was not made of glass or crystal, and bore no elaborate stone or metal work. Instead, it seemed to be made entirely of molten rock, held together through some mysterious means. Moreover, it was the primary source for the heated spiritual energy within the hall.

Lex did not need to understand what this spiritual energy was to know it would obviously be valuable, so bent down and jumped up, causing his body to go soaring up into the air as if he could actually fly.

He grabbed the chandelier and pulled it free from the ceiling. That's when things went horribly wrong.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 779: Hunt

From the moment Lex came to this planet he had been suffering from various extreme temperatures. As if that was not enough, the temperatures had an element of spirituality to them so that even Lex could not avoid being affected. From the extreme cold on the surface, to the boiling heat within the dragon's hall, he had weathered it all without much complaint. After all, what was there to complain about being too hot or cold? He spent his entire life as a mortal regulating temperatures.

But there were some extremes that even he could not tolerate. The moment he pulled out the chandelier, as if he pulled out a plug stopping a drain, molten lava started to fall from the hole left behind. Hovering in the air, with nothing to hold onto, Lex could not avoid getting splashed by the unusual gray colored lava.

Lex didn't immediately suffer burns but he could tell that if he were exposed to it too long it was only a matter of time before he was cooked. Remarkably, his suit seemed to be tolerating the lava better than him.

Lex crashed onto the floor, but he didn't remain covered in lava the whole time. He put the lava that had splashed onto him into his spatial drum alongside the chandelier and quickly jumped to the side as soon as he landed. Although this trick had worked once, he could tell that the lava was putting a strain on his drum. If he added anymore, he would cause the drum to collapse.

In the center of the hall, a stream of lava was falling down, forming an expanding puddle. Unless the lava stopped falling in, it was only a matter of time before this hall was filled entirely.

"I'm going up, don't stay here too long," Lex told Fenrir through his spirit sense before rushing up the stairs. Although the first encounter with lava had disturbed him a bit, the situation had not deteriorated fortunately.

How was he supposed to know that what he unplugged was actually the switch for the dragon's regular lava shower? It did not like the cold temperature of the planet, and so regularly washed itself in those flames.

Moreover, since that lava was used to bathe the dragon, it could absolutely not be normal. Perhaps many of the treasures in the hoard might not be as valuable as a drop of that lava, for a dragon would not allow its scales to be tainted with anything impure!

The skin on Lex's face which had suffered the splash of that lava also soon recovered from its blushing state, and looked fresher and more vibrant than ever before.

He quickly climbed up to the floor with various prisons, and then froze. Although Lex had not paid attention to many of the details, even his lack of specific attention resulted in a state where he could recall most things in his environment.

He immediately noticed that a single dwarf was missing. His eyes swayed to the various prisons and discovered nothing amiss, but the disappearance of a body was not normal at all.

Upon being unable to discover anything, Lex skipped over the bodies and went to the next floor. This floor only had prisoners and Lex was not interested in collecting slaves, so all he could do was move on to the next floor.

Although he had no recollection of having passed through the subsequent floors, that did not slow down Lex at all. He was able to hone in on the most valuable treasures on each floor and took them, leaving the rest behind.

He only managed to cover 3 floors like this before he encountered others. Countless Frigals in heavy armor were fighting against elves, dwarves and other races. Normally the Frigals would not be able to come this low due to the Dragons Might, but as the dragon itself had disappeared so had that deterrence. All the Frigals in the vicinity were gripped with fear even greater than that of the impending abomination invasion at the thought of their Lord dying, and so they rushed in to investigate. That's when they found that their castle had already been infiltrated!

The battle was chaotic and bloody, with body parts flying everywhere and screaming echoing in the halls. A mad fervor had gripped everyone, as the Frigals were in a rush to confirm their Lords status while the others wanted to loot.

Amidst all of this... Lex never actually slowed down his looting! He directly ignored the combat and continued to pick out anything and everything he thought was valuable. His actions were noticed by more than just a few, and they all took an opportunity to attack him, but the attacks could not even cause his clothes to crease let alone injure him.

Lex did not even bother to acknowledge the attacks coming his way, except to speed up all his actions. After a few minutes he already got everything he wanted and hurried to the next floor, leaving many who saw him bewildered.

"He came from down below!" one of the elves noticed, and rushed down during the distraction Lex had caused. Like a domino falling, as soon as the first went down, everyone else began to follow.

There were a few, however, who instead chased after Lex. He definitely got the best stuff already seeing as how he came from down below!

As soon as Lex entered the next floor he froze. Of all the things he was expecting to find inside a dragon's hoard, he was not expecting a spaceship collection!

Moreover, all of these ships were much larger than his Silent Wanderer, and seemed better equipped as well.

How the hell was he going to plunder these?

Just as he was admiring one up close, a frozen spike came out from the distance and hit the ship, causing it to tremble. Although the ship did not suffer too much damage, if such a thing continued it would only be a matter of time before it broke.

Lex frowned. Not a single one of these came with a spatial equipment in which they could be stored, and Lex could not fit any of them inside his spatial equipment either. In the end there was only one solution. He would break off the bits that looked the most expensive and have Xeon study them later. Maybe he should also invest in getting a few spaceship engineers.

Lex bolted and entered the spaceship. He knew that the two most valuable things inside a ship were its ammunition and its energy source. He planned on getting plenty of them, and anything else he could get his hands on.

Once again a similar scene reappeared where Lex was being attacked from all angles but he was ignoring all of it. He did not know the reason, but for now only Golden core cultivators had made it down so far. With that being the case, did Lex even need to fight back?

In fact, fighting back would waste more time than just ignoring them, so that's what he did. More or less, his blatant dismissal of all incoming attacks intimidated those around him, and they even began to hesitate. That was, until, a mournful scream was heard throughout the castle, rocking the mountain-range itself.

Even Lex paused, for he felt in that scream for the first time the power of an immortal.

"A human has desecrated the Lord dragon! All Frigals, find and kill the human!" the voice roared, shattering every mirror and glass within the entire mountain range.

Lex's expression changed, but instead of running he just sped up his looting. He didn't know how his actions had been detected, but he could tell that whoever yelled was far away from him, for now at least.

But the reason for his exposure was simple. The two remaining dwarves from the first party were trying to escape, but were too injured to do so with so many guards in their way. Although they had already prepared an escape plan, to make sure things were as chaotic as possible, thus making their escape easier, Barley threw out multiple crystals containing the recording of Lex atop the dragon.

It was only a matter of time before they were discovered. When they were finally discovered, all the Frigals went mad in search of Lex, making it easier for the dwarves to escape. After all, once they saw that the two dwarves were not their targets, they would ignore them. Normally there would have been a fight, but right now they only cared about hunting down Lex.

"Did you manage to complete the mission?" Terrol asked, as he limped along with Barley.

"I couldn't loot the bottom floor, but rest assured, I left traces of Valder dust there. As for what happens next, that's none of our concern. That human might even take the blame for everything as long as we stay hidden."

"What about the others bodies?" Terrol asked, thinking of his former companions.

"Each of them came prepared. In an hour, their bodies will dissolve, leaving no trace."

"I told that human my name, will that be a problem?"

"Only if he escapes here alive."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 780: War zone

A part of Lex wondered why he was even bothering to steal so many spaceship related things when he had no real need for spaceships at all. Was it just because they looked so cool?

No, he was just preparing in advance to avoid issues in the future. After all, who knew when he would need a very cool looking spaceship?

Such justifications were going through Lex's mind as he continued his looting. He was spending longer on the level with the spaceship, but that was only because harvesting the energy sources and ammunition took longer than just grabbing it. Even reaching it required going through special procedures, lest they become tainted or compromised in some way.

During this time, Lex was continuously attacked, which he was ignoring. But there was one fundamental difference now compared to before. Due to the sensitive nature of what he was harvesting, he would create a barrier around himself so the attacks would not accidentally hit the energy sources or volatile ammunition instead.

Oh, and considering the fact that everyone was now hunting for a human, he also used Notorious Anonymity to hide his identity. After all, with various races attacking the castle altogether, he could easily just be some other race that was not well known. Or at least that was the hope.

For what it was worth, his idea seemed to work. No one was targeting him because he was a human. Instead, his complete disregard for any attack targeting him made him the biggest target.

Lex almost considered reevaluating his tactics, but watching the frustration build up in his attackers, Lex felt a subtle sense of satisfaction. He really had to give it up to Geeves. His idea to frustrate his enemies was not bad at all.

But there was one very important factor he had to keep in mind. To return to the Inn, he needed some time to teleport, and he could not be disturbed during that time frame. If he were attacked, his teleportation would be canceled. As such, he needed to have an escape plan in mind, which included getting away from the crowd long enough to teleport away.

Once he had been through most of the ships, Lex reluctantly went up to the next floor. He was unable to actually take away most of the energy sources, as he recognized them to be too unstable to handle the environment inside a spatial treasure.

The next floor, unbelievably, looked more like an antique bottle collection than a dragon's hoard. Hundreds of thousands of glass, jade, plastic, or even metallic bottles were lined up in countless counters. But it was this mundane, unusual even, floor in which the fighting was most brutal and chaotic. A single moment to study the situation revealed why the situation was so different.

Each of those bottles contained medicine. If that were all, perhaps Lex would not have paid any extra attention and would have randomly grabbed some of the pills. After all, his medical knowledge was fairly limited, so he would not know if they were anything special.

But due to the intensity of the fighting, many bottles broke and freed the pills or syrups from their airtight containers. Lex's instincts were immediately attracted to some of the pills as if they could provide endless benefits, though only for the few brief moments before they were destroyed in the chaos. At the same time, it was strongly repulsed by others, as if they were extremely hazardous, even to him.

In fact, due to the fighting and the constant destruction of medicinal bottles, all the ingredients were falling onto the floor and mixing with one another haphazardly. This should not have mattered much beyond the fact that each of these medicines was rare beyond measure in any galaxy, and could not be easily replicated regardless of wealth and power.

But in this instance, the more important reason it mattered was because all the broken pills and syrups and ingredients were mixing and slowly combining to form a very lethal poison.

With treasures in front of him, and a countdown timer in his mind motivating him, Lex burst forward at his full speed, grabbing bottles and entire shelves randomly and putting them in his drum.

Perhaps Charles would be able to identify what these pills were used for. Despite feeling greatly attracted to various pills, Lex did not try eating any at the moment. He had already cultivated as much as his body could tolerate for now, and if these pills were still being targeted by his instincts then they were absolutely phenomenal, and eating them now would only be a waste.

Lex was gathering a lot of loot while also attracting a lot of hate, as seemed the norm by now, when something new finally happened. The entrance to the next floor burst open and an army of abominations came pouring in.

Lex finally laid eyes on one and immediately understood why they were being called as such. With bodies that made no sense, these creatures made of ice attacked anyone near with absolute savagery.

The creatures' bodies looked like blobs of play dough mashed together by children, for the most part. They had tentacles coming out of odd places and hands and legs in inconvenient locations.

All of this should have made them weak, but they were anything but. Their freezing bodies emitted a piercing chill that not only froze the body, but it froze spiritual energy as well.

Those were just the common rabble among the abominations. Some of them seemed to perfectly imitate other Frigals, dwarves or beasts, and could even change shape as they wished or needed.

The greatest threat of all, however, was not their unusual chill or their odd strength, but it was their numbers. Hundreds of them were pouring in from the door, and in fact many of them were trying to enlarge the opening by breaking the door apart so more of them could come in.

Of course, neither their strength nor their chill had any significant effect on Lex, so he originally planned to break through them, but his plans quickly changed. A sense of foreboding filled him all of a sudden and he retreated quickly.

These creatures were not simple at all. In fact, considering the fact that they did not previously exist on the planet, and only appeared recently, they may have something to do with the odd creature that killed the dragon.

Once he had that thought, Lex immediately decided to end his little looting session. As much as he enjoyed it, he was not in dire need of any of it, and it was best to know when to reign in one's greed.

But the situation kept getting worse. The sounds of devastating explosions rocked the castle, accompanied by earth shattering tremors. Lex could not know the situation outside, but it seemed to be deteriorating quickly.

He needed to retreat to somewhere he was no longer under attack so he could teleport out. Unfortunately, everyone else also had thoughts of retreating from the approaching army, so a stampede formed, crowding the tunnels.

As if that was not enough, Lex felt a few incredibly strong spirit senses sweep the area. The Earth immortal who had shouted earlier had arrived, and he was not alone!

"Crap," Lex muttered under his breath and pushed through the crowd, no longer bothering about who blocked his way. The repercussions of trying to be extremely efficient were revealing themselves now, as many of those who had attacked him previously without much success now tried to slow him down - whether it was out of pettiness or simply because Lex just frustrated them too much, he would never find out.

That is because the next moment Lex's instincts suddenly screamed danger, and unable to do much else, he wrapped himself in endless layers of barriers. Something ripped through the ceiling above him and went smashing through the crowd, digging in deeper through the castle floors.

Lex had not been directly under whatever tore through the ceiling, but even still all his barriers broke and he was thrown away to the side. At least he remained unhurt, but the same could not be said for the crowd that had been running with him.

Feeling somewhat shell-shocked, Lex looked up through the hole in the castle. The sky outside was no longer dark as countless ships could be seen flying in the air, bombarding not just the castle but anyone near it.

"What the hell!" Lex exclaimed. It was a literal war zone outside, much more so than even when he came. Without hesitation, Lex jumped into the hole in front of him. No sane person would follow him, and he could the time he needed to teleport away. Unfortunately for him, the icy abominations were not sane by any measure, and they were more than just a few of them.

Pretty soon, an army of abominations could be seen jumping down the hole following Lex.