

## **Innkeeper 791**

The Innkeeper

Chapter 791: Newfound fame

Lex spent a decent amount of time taking out his loot and setting it up in his new museum. He would then use his 'Room creation' feature to alter each room according to the needs of each specific item. For example, he needed a room which would not allow energy to leak for all the items emitting the heated spiritual energy.

For the energy sources of all the ships he needed a room that would block radiation as well as maintain a sterile environment.

More than the energy sources, Lex was particularly careful when setting down the various artillery shells he had picked up, as he no longer even had skin to lose! At the same time, he questioned Pel thoroughly over their use, and discovered that most of these were extremely useful against Earth immortals, and he had even picked up one that could be used against Heaven Immortals!

The power and rarity of these weapons were the reason that Pel had decided to collect them in his previous life. But while they were potent weapons, Lex could not use them easily for he did not even have the means to leave the blast radius once used.

He decided the best use for these would be if his spaceship was equipped with them, but these weapons were not compatible with the Silent Wanderer, and he didn't want to take the massive flying daycare outside of the Inn. The only alternative was to get more ships, or find engineers and start building his own ships.

No matter what, this was a project Lex was determined to work on because it would be a waste to have such powerful weapons but be unable to use them!

At the same time, Pel informed him of various other uses for many of the treasures he already had but did not know what to do with. The knowledge of someone who had lived for millions of years was invaluable, even if Pel could only access a very small percentage of it.

Since Lex had no other urgent tasks coming up in the foreseeable future, he decided to spend the next few months cultivating and refining his plans for the future while strengthening his workers with the knowledge that Pel gave him.

For now, though, Lex had to address a minor issue that he had been hoping to avoid. His soul pact that he had made with the Infinity Emporium began to weigh on him. He could feel a subtle compulsion to deliver the Peronian jade to them now that he had already collected it, and was not urgently in trouble.

There was no real reason to delay delivering it, but he had hoped to at least regrow his skin before he went out again. For a second, he considered rewearing his skin, like a costume, before he discarded the extremely creepy thought. Instead, he just put on his defensive suit, put on a pair of gloves as well as a mask that covered his entire face.

He teleported out to X-142, before promptly entering the emporium.

He had been expecting to see Powell waiting for him, and even considered that the real Powell might be there as well, slightly annoyed over the delay. What he had not been expecting was the nearly worshiping gaze the usual Powell he met gave him, and the amazed look the real Powell, who was also there, gave him.

"I must say, Mr. Lex, when you told me you were raiding a dragon's hoard, I did not expect you to be doing it with the dragon there. I thought you had come across the forgotten cave of a long deceased dragon, or something along those lines at least. But your courage and means... please allow me to applaud you."

Powell actually clapped, but Lex was taken aback by his words. Could he have been spying on Lex? Was there some surveillance mechanism in one of the treasures he had gotten from the emporium?

"How did you know what I did?" asked Lex, the accusation heavily evident in his voice. But his question caught them by surprise.

"Could it be that you do not know? Mr. Lex, a recording of you climbing the dragon has been spread all over the Henali portal. I dare say you are the most famous human in the entire Origin realm right now."

As if to support his words, Powell pulled up the recording that showed Lex struggling under the weight of Dragons Might as he approached Pelvailins corpse.

Without waiting for Lex to ask further questions, Powell elaborated further.

"Although for a short time the recorder managed to hide his identity, he did not have the level of protection you have applied against divination. His identity was eventually discovered, and has become an open secret amongst the upper level of the portal. It's a dwarf called Barley Holdinson. Here, let me share the details with you."

Powell handed Lex a small black device that he had clearly already prepared. Once connected to the portal, the device would reveal all the information stored onto it, similar to a USB.

Lex grabbed the device, but he was struggling to determine how he felt about the situation. He could not accurately conceive what it meant to be the most popular human in the realm, though he guessed the reason his details were hidden was because of the protection of the Inn. Now that he was out, he might once again become susceptible to divination! That could potentially put him in danger.

"I was a little busy recovering from the events," Lex said, as he removed his glove to show Powell his hand. "I did not have time to check the portal, or talk to anyone, so I am not sure what happened. Would you mind telling me... how this video was received?"

Powell nodded understandingly. No matter what, it must not have been easy to escape from that situation. The most mysterious thing was that the dragon, who had been identified, had disappeared.

Only a very few people knew that Pelvailin had also been spotted inside the Midnight Inn, before promptly disappearing again. Although Powell happened to be one of those people, he did not plan on mentioning it. There were certain things even he did not want to get involved in. But he did not mind sharing the rest with Lex.

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Chapter 792: Fan club

Lex was no longer in the front entrance of the Emporium. Instead, he had followed Powell to the back and was now sitting comfortably in what looked like a small guest room. There were very few

furnishings, but it was decorated very tastefully. Lex could feel his mind calm down as in his chair, taking a sip of some tea another Powell, a butler Powell if you will, served him and Powell.

Between the two of them was a projection playing a video, but this time the recording was not of him in the dragon's hall. No, this time the recording was from the point of view of the ship that had been repeatedly targeting him back at Frigra. It went right up until the artillery explosion.

The worst part of it was that at each second of the video there were annotations made thoroughly analyzing Lex, his reaction to the events unfolding and his strengths and weaknesses. This was just one of many such videos that Powell had managed to get his hands on.

His strengths and weaknesses had been thoroughly analyzed, and though many mistakes had been made in the analysis, many of them were also correct.

Once the video ended, another one began playing immediately. This one was a very short video taken by a public security camera on Polebitvy. Lex only appeared in the video for a moment. Even so, someone had found the video and made annotations on it as well. Mainly, it noted down the time and place of this video and commented on, and questioned how Lex was able to travel all the way from Polebitvy to Frigra in such a short period of time.

No recordings of him from any other planets, such as X-142, Vegus Minima or Earth had been discovered yet, but he believed that unless the attention on him dropped significantly, it was only a matter of time before someone realized.

From there, it would not take long until someone associated him with the Midnight Inn. Of course, Lex doubted that even the craziest conspiracy theorist would conclude that Lex was the owner of the Inn, but connections could be made nonetheless.

In fact, now that he was thinking about it, he was sure that a number of Inn regulars would have already recognized him. If that were the case, the connection would have already been made.

Fortunately he had made preparations in advance, and already linked his identity as Lex to the Inn worker Leo. The connection would not be easily discovered, and only be found if someone were trying to purposefully unveil his secrets.

That would cause them to believe that the information they unveiled was legitimate, and not a ruse he had purposefully put in place to hide his actual identity.

His identity as the Innkeeper was safe, for now.

For now, he had two immediate concerns. The first was the massive number of bounties on his head! He was officially a wanted man! It felt both intimidating and very cool at the same time, especially when considering that all the bounties that had been placed on his head were from various dragons!

The second thing he had to worry about... was the Lex Williams fan club! Powell had only mentioned it briefly, but it had over thirty one billion members already, and those were just the ones who signed up on the portal. Moreover, many of the fans were from various races, and especially a few races who had strong contention against dragons!

"Alongside details of Barley Holdinson, the device I gave you also records detailed information on all the dragons who have put bounties on you, as well as all the dragons associated with Pelvailin Ur Bahatna Gorgin. But even I only have limited information on dragons, so what I gave you is barely more than what is publicly available."

Powell made no mention of any remuneration for his efforts, and Lex did not bother mentioning it either. The man was clearly giving him a favor, and Lex needed all the allies he could get at the moment.

"Thank you, that is quite helpful. Do you have any idea what other kind of trouble I can expect from this?"

"What you have to look out for most are people interested in collecting the bounty on your head, or those who want to rob your gains from the dragon's hoard. These are your greatest threats. The chances of you running into a dragon are minimal at best. True dragons are very rare and they disdain doing things secretly. If a dragon is coming towards you, it will do so openly and publicly. That will give you enough time to run away, or make any other preparations you need."

Lex nodded, and collected all the information Powell gave him, before taking out the Peronian jade and handing it over.

"By the way, I will need the best protection you have against divination," he said, hoping to get his hands on some treasures. This was something he would have to pay close attention to.

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On Nibiru, the young Tiffany, who had once been saved/kidnapped by Lex, was watching a recording. In it, she saw a very familiar face belonging to the man she had always thought had died protecting her. She could still remember how he ran away while pulling all the attention of the wolves towards himself, while leaving her to hide in a tree.

It was his heroic sacrifice that had given her courage throughout her life, and allowed her to pursue the goal of freedom for humans on Nibiru. But suddenly, she discovered that the man was alive. Not only that, he was a mighty dragon tamer. He was the hero that the humans on Nibiru needed!

She clenched her fists and decided to immediately go to the Midnight Inn and put up a task to contact him. But before that, she turned her attention to the problem at hand. Surrounding her hideout was a small colony of Vermillion bats, coming to assassinate her. They thought she could not sense them, but they did not know that what awaited them was not their target but death!

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Chapter 793: New plan

While Lex waited for Powell to bring all the items he had requested, he watched the initial recording of him in front of the dragon. He had to admit that while he himself knew of how much he had suffered, from the back it seemed like Lex was casually strolling. At most, it seemed like Lex was savoring the Dragons Might instead of resisting it.

Some parts of the recording seemed like they were edited. For example, the video started off with Barley mid-sentence. Moreover, while the recording showed Lex climbing the dragon, it cut off right before Lex was about to begin cultivating.

Lex narrowed his eyes. At the time his condition was too bad so he really did not have the awareness, or even the ability to check if someone was spying on him. However, he could clearly tell by the timing of when the recording cut off that whoever had filmed it had clearly seen him meditate. Yet despite that, he had not shown it in the recording.

In a way, Lex should be grateful that Barley had not shown it. After all, since the recording even recreated the effects of Dragons Might, then the recording would also show how Lex had been able to absorb a portion of it. If something like that had been revealed then the scale of things would be far from what they currently were.

Lex had reflected on the effects of Domination, and long realized how his own aura was able to absorb that of the dragons. While he was sure this was a result of his nameless cultivation technique, that was not exactly something he could publicize. However, if the recording had been released then the whole realm would have been hunting him down to figure out his secret!

While Lex was spared that, there remained a very real possibility that Barley may release the actual recording, or that he may even lose it. The only way to ensure the matter did not get out of hand was to meet Barley personally.

But finding him was the main issue. Lex would not mind having a long, deep conversation with the dwarf using his fists. After all, if the dwarf was considerate enough to leave out Lex cultivating atop the dragon, he may as well have not released the recording at all.

Or maybe this was just a way for him to get Lex's attention, and in reality the dwarf wanted to blackmail him. Whatever the case, Lex wanted to meet him. But the problem of finding him was the greatest issue at the moment.

Just as he was pondering this particular conundrum, Powell finally entered and brought him the items he had requested. It was a protective treasure that would help him avoid any kind of divination up to a certain standard. A Heaven immortal would have to be personally divining information about him for it to even be a possibility to discover something.

The best part was that it would latch onto his body like a tattoo, and remain there for a few years after which it would dissipate. Afterwards he would need to procure another such treasure, if it was available.

But that was not an issue for him, and he was just glad that the treasure didn't take the form of another piece of jewelry. He was not exactly used to it.

In exchange for the treasure, Lex merely handed over one of the many jewels that emitted heated spiritual energy that he took from Pel's hoard. It was apparently quite valuable, and only formed on planets that dragons actually resided on!

"What about finding a way to contact Barley?" Lex asked. He had asked Powell if the emporium could set up a meeting between them, or locate the dwarf for him. Unfortunately, despite its great reach, the emporium did not partake in this kind of business. However, he did sell information that could help Lex.

"I don't need to give you any more information on Barley, you already have it all. Besides that, the only thing you need is this."

Powell handed him a business card that was, oddly, completely blank. Although it looked unremarkable, Lex had actually paid a hefty amount for this card.

'Why do I feel more and more like a villain?' Lex wondered as he held the card.

"Once you return to Suera, pour spirit energy into the card and you will be greeted by one of the attendants for Hix, the largest operating assassination organization in that galaxy. They have remarkable means to locate your target as long as they are within that galaxy, and you can provide them with sufficient information.

"This is the best I can offer you at the moment. Once you look at the information I've given you, you will realize that finding that dwarf is harder than it seems. In fact, I wouldn't be surprised if he's already been caught by some person or organization who is interested in the particulars of what happened on Frigra. Speaking of which, here is a fresh ore from a planet within the Suera Galaxy, taken away only a few minutes ago. I took care of this matter personally, so you can be assured that there is nothing wrong."

Lex nodded, and took everything Powell offered. He had only two connections to that galaxy, and one was literally a warzone between Henali and the Fuegan, and another was not really a place he dared to return to at the moment. It was almost as if every planet he stepped on experienced a massive trial. As such, he needed access to a new planet in Suera if he had to go and search for the dwarf.

Without spending any more time, Lex exited the emporium and a few moments later, left the planet. However, mere seconds after he disappeared, an unusual rip seemed to open in space and a skull

wearing an ethereal shroud seemed to peek out. Unable to find its target, the skull retreated and the rip closed, unbeknown to all around it.

Lex, who had returned to the Inn, now had an issue on his hands. He did not want to go to any other planet right now, but at the same time he did not want to waste any time looking for Barley. He had not even recovered his skin, which was a major injury that affected both his spirit and his soul.

It was not the best idea to be prancing around on a new planet, especially with his history of getting involved with trouble. But if he waited till his skin healed, it might already be too late, not to mention that the Inn was going to cease accepting new guests within a couple of months.

That also meant that if he was outside the Inn at that time, he would not be able to return. Indecision plagued him, but only for a short time. Even though it went against his original plan, he could not afford to leave this issue unattended. Who knew if it might blow up into something bigger later on. Although he could hide in the Inn and just avoid going out, that was no way to live.

With his decision made, all he needed to do now was plan on how to increase his odds of success as much as possible. At the same time, he had to avoid getting sucked into any problems.

While he had a lot of faith in his own ability to plan for such things, there just happened to be a particular resource inside the Inn that he could take perfect advantage of at the moment.

Making sure none of his skinless body was exposed, Lex teleported over to Main street, where a group of kids seemed to be sitting in a nearby park.

Among them was someone Lex knew well enough: Vera Joel. She was an oracle, and all the kids surrounding her were also either oracles, prophets, diviners or something along those lines. They had come here to attend the event Vera had planned.

Since that was the case, it would almost be wasteful if Lex didn't try to foresee any upcoming trouble he might encounter. Fortunately he had not used the treasure Powell had given him yet so he still had a chance.

As he approached the group, before he even had a chance to say anything, Vera looked at him, then looked at one of the other girls in the group.

"Leslie, it's your chance to shine. Do a good job with this one, and he can give you exactly what you want."

The girl, Leslie, was taken aback by Vera's words, before fixing her gaze onto Lex. She was a human, probably, but had four eyes instead of two. The two, smaller eyes on her forehead, right above her normal eyes, looked like they were blind. Yet, for some odd reason, they fixed their gaze onto Lex's shadow.

"I can foretell your future, but first you have to pay. Also, the price is non-negotiable. If you can't pay, you get nothing."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 794: Lightning vessel

Lex smiled. That's why he liked Vera so much, she was extremely direct. It saved him a lot of time. The only concern he had now was if Leslie would be able to accurately predict the future.

"That depends on what kind of payment you want," Lex stated as he observed the young girl. Besides her four eyes, she looked completely normal, though Lex could not decide if that was a good thing or not. After all, the more special she was, the better her chances of predicting his future, right?

"How much do you know about predicting the future? Not much, I suppose. I don't want you complaining that the price is too high later, so let me tell you a little something. Since the future possibilities are endless, every oracle, diviner, prophet, or basically any profession that deals with looking into the future sets themselves up with extreme restrictions. These restrictions limit the streams of the future they see, thereby increasing their accuracy tremendously.

"Some like to keep their restrictions private, but others advertise their restrictions as it gets them more clients. I specialize in a very specific kind of foretelling that peers into an alternate reality linked to your shadow. The details are irrelevant, but what matters is that I am extremely sensitive to incoming opportunities or dangers."

It sounded like exactly what Lex needed. But the more potent the ability, the higher the cost would be as well, not that he cared about the cost particularly.

"I'm convinced, but you still need to tell me the price first," said Lex. Even if he didn't care, he couldn't let others know that he had the wealth of a dragon.

Leslie looked hesitant, and even turned to look back at Vera, who only nodded encouragingly. Among them all, Vera's ability had the greatest restriction, which is why her predictions were also usually the best. But even then, that did not guarantee 100% the same outcome as the prediction.

She looked at Lex with a hint of guilt in her eyes, but it lasted only a moment before her expression became firm.

"I have 116 sparks leftover from a lightning tribulation within my soul. Until and unless they are removed, I cannot do any forecasts. If you want me to help you, you have to remove those sparks first."

Lex... raised an eyebrow as he looked at Leslie. Why did that not sound so hard? Wait, lightning tribulation? Was Leslie an immortal? She didn't look or feel like one.

"How did you get... sparks of lightning tribulation stuck in your soul?"

"When divining the future, if you look upon something that was meant to remain hidden, then you are punished by the heavens. Do not ask more about this, as this is not a topic that can be easily shared. You may think this price is steep, but I cannot divine anything until those sparks are removed, even if I wanted to."

Leslie felt a little bad offering such a high price to whoever this was. She knew how difficult it was to deal with matters of the soul, and then matters related to lightning tribulations. When both of those matters were combined, the difficulty could be imagined. One of the reasons she was attending this meeting to begin with was to find someone who could help her with this issue, as it was a common one among their professions.

"Sure, I'll do it. Do you want to do it here, or do you want to go somewhere first?" asked Lex, to the surprise of Leslie.

"Don't you need to prepare?" she could not help but ask. Even the others were surprised by how casual Lex sounded. Suddenly, they realized that they may have stumbled upon a great opportunity!

"No, I can do it now. Besides, I'm in a bit of a rush," said Lex. Although he said he did not need to prepare, he did summon the Lightning vessel. The Lightning vessel was a small container in the shape of a thunderbolt that could be used to store a single strand of unique lightning. Although it said a single strand, he assumed he could fit multiple sparks inside to form that strand, right? There was only one way to find out. Though, he still had to be careful, for he did not know how dangerous those sparks really were.

"Alright, we can begin right here. Do you need me to do anything?"

"Stand still," said Lex as he enveloped her with his soul sense and began to locate the sparks.

Unlike Lex, whose soul was merged with his body, others usually did not have a soul in a fixed shape until they entered the Nascent realm. Leslie was clearly not there yet, for her soul was in the form of an unusual blob that filled her body.

Just as she said, there were many sparks inside her soul, with most stuck right at the surface, but a few that reached deeper within.

Lex took off his glove and revealed his very raw hand, startling the crowd, but he didn't care about that. He used Impervious Hands and merged it with his soul sense, allowing it to gain the ability to touch souls.

Slowly, and ever so carefully, he reached out and grabbed the spark that was trapped within her soul. Even with the protection of Impervious Hands, Lex felt his fingers burning as the spark went from zapping her soul to zapping his hand.

Even though he was in pain, he could not react abruptly lest he accidentally hurt Leslie's soul instead. Slowly, he pulled out his hand and stored the single spark inside the Lightning vessel, which gained a soft glow.

He looked at his right hand and saw that a small bit of meat on his index finger and thumb had actually turned to ash! Moreover, around the ash, the remaining meat actually crystalized.

"How the hell did you survive an entire lightning bolt of that?" Lex could not help but ask.

"How the hell can you grab lightning?" Leslie asked back, just as bewildered.

"How the hell are you alive with so many sparks inside your soul?" Lex asked back, as to prove that she was the bigger freak in this situation.

Leslie did not answer, nor did Lex focus on the actual answer, either. Instead, he began the process again. This time, knowing what to expect, Lex was slow to approach the spark but quick to retreat, depositing the spark within the vessel.

The process was painful, extremely painful at that, but simple otherwise. Around them, all the others stood up and stared in shock as Lex casually achieved what normally took massive and expensive formations that relied on rare treasures. Well, casually was pushing it since it did hurt his fingers somewhat. By the time Lex was pulling out the fiftieth spark, he had to shift to his left hand because the bone in his right thumb had become visible.

But, before he started with his left hand, Lex tried something additional. He used Domination as well. He was not familiar with the extent of his abilities' utility, and this was a good opportunity to find out.

When he actually tried again, unbelievably, the spark was unable to hurt Lex as much as before. Lex was intrigued, the others were awed, and Vera could not help but feel incredibly proud. Since she could only see her own future, naturally helping Leslie would benefit herself sometime in the future.

To be more specific, she already knew the identity of this man who had covered his face with a mask. In the future, he would come to her again, and by then their history of having worked well together a few times would already be established. By then, she'd be able to help him find her future husband!

Vera almost burst into maniacal laughter as she thought of her plan, but quickly controlled herself. She had to maintain her dignity.

Eventually, without any unexpected incidents, Lex took out all the sparks. The Lightning vessel, too, was now giving off a bluish-silverish glow, as if it was almost filled to capacity.

He planned on using this lightning to help him improve the tribulation room later on. For now, he turned to look at Leslie, who looked completely bewildered.

"I believe now it's your turn," said Lex, ignoring the smoke coming out of his hands. So in the end, he still ended up burning both hands despite Impervious Hands and Domination.

Waking up from her reverie, Leslie looked at Lex with great admiration.

"Let's go somewhere private. I never do divinations in public," she said.

"I know just the place," Lex said and led her to the Chamber of Secrets. There was literally no place more private within the Inn.

As soon as they entered and got seated, Leslie began using her powers. Her regular eyes lost color, as if she was blind, and her eyes atop her forehead became black, as if they were reflecting endless darkness.

"I see a lot of regret," she said ominously, getting right into the thick of things.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 795: Grave danger... of dehydration!

'Of course there was going to be regret,' Lex thought to himself. 'How could there not be an immense amount of regret? In fact, it was surprising that the first thing she saw was regret, and not grave danger.'

Although Lex was joking, and even poking fun at the usual tarot card readers back in New York who pretended to predict one's future, he took Leslie's words very seriously and listened closely.

Leslie, who had not clarified if she identified as an oracle, or a diviner, or whatever else, seemed to tremble as she continued to stare at his shadow. Her otherwise rosy cheeks became incredibly pale, and her aura diminished noticeably.

"A grave danger is approaching, however the target is not you. Yet at the same time, the target is associated with you. The regret that will plague you is also connected to this approaching danger. There are very few chances to mitigate this danger, and one is already in your possession in the form of a formidable blade. You also..."

Leslie trembled before she could continue her sentence, and coughed out blood. Her knees had lost strength and she nearly fell to the ground, yet Lex was quick enough to capture her.

The woman, who had suddenly become frail, seemed to be in a trance. Her eyes had rolled up and she had lost control of all her body, though for some reason the technique she had been using was still being used. It was as if she was unable to quit, and forced to see things that were harming her.

The fatigue that had gripped her radiated from her body to Lex, trying to weaken him. It was also due to this radiation that Lex became aware that while all seemed normal otherwise, Leslie was actually in grave danger.

Clouds had formed above her, visible and detectable only to her, and they seemed to be threatening her to stop whatever she was doing. The sensation of being given a warning was very prominent, and seeped from her to even Lex.

Yet instead of being intimidated, Lex looked up at the clouds with disdain and anger of his own. He began using Domination and threatened the clouds back with a derisive glare. He did not know why these clouds had come, and why they were warning her, but they better not interfere in his matters.

Fortunately, before the confrontation could continue, Leslie awoke from her trance and ended the technique.

"What... who are you?" she managed to mumble weakly, her body trembling as if she had been caught in a blizzard.

"It does not matter. You do not need to worry about anything, if there are any repercussions from looking at my future, I'll help you avoid them. You've seen what I can do with the lightning, and that is not the limit of my abilities. If those clouds threaten you again, I can help you bear that danger as well."

"No... no need," she said as she stumbled out of his arms and straightened herself. "Those clouds were a warning that I was about to look at things I should not see. It is a form of protection for me, instead of a danger. Although, if I persist in viewing what I should not see, I will be struck by a lightning tribulation.

"Your future is too messy, and you are involved with too many great entities. Let alone me, or even Vera, even the best oracles will have a tough time accurately predicting your future. In fact, I can confidently say that any future that anyone predicts for you will most definitely be wrong. My prediction is the only exception, and that is because it only predicts opportunities and dangers. The final outcome, or even the sequence of events, is irrelevant.

"What I can tell you is that there is a danger that is imminent, and the opportunity to escape it is already with you. Besides that... you should try to lay low for a while. Too many great entities are watching you. But that's not a prediction, just my opinion."

"Alright then, I appreciate your help anyway. You seem to have suffered a bit while using your ability, so have this. It will help you out."

Lex took out a small box and handed it to her. The box contained a very small fruit that he had looted from Pel's kitchen, and was one of many he was keeping with himself. For him, due to his unusual physique, the fruit would serve as a source of energy and reinvigoration. For other, normal humans, it would instantly help them recover from weakness and minor injuries, help them improve their physique, remove simple deformities and filter out impurities.

Without waiting for Leslie's response, or giving her an opportunity to reject, Lex teleported away.

"Hey Pel, what do you think about Leslie's prediction?" Lex asked as he mused over her words. Although they were vague, he had a suspicion about what they could possibly mean.

"If I am not wrong, she should be a mixed race being, half human and half shadow beast. I do not know what is the origin of her technique, but it is true that shadow beasts are very sensitive to potential dangers and opportunities. In fact, they are so sensitive to it that they can even sense dangers that are thousands of years in the future, and even those that might not just affect them, but their future generations as well.

"Most do not even know of the existence of shadow beasts, that is how secretive they are. For a mixed breed with shadow beast heritage to appear, her origin must not be simple. If I had to make a bet, I would trust any prediction she made, assuming she inherited that trait of the shadow beasts."

Lex nodded. He could not guess what the danger she was speaking of was, but it would either have something to do with the dwarf Barley, or the Inn workers at war. Those were the only two things that could possibly be a source of regret that he could think of at the moment.

As for the 'blade' that could help him resolve this threat, Lex also already had a suspicion. He was not prone to collecting or carrying weapons, so there was only one significant blade that he had. That was the single blade of grass he took from Zuri Adisa, which carried the laws of regrowth, refinement, healing and a few more minor supporting laws.

Since he had collected the various items containing laws, Lex had meant to slowly eat them over time and allow his body to absorb them. Not only would this heal his previously broken cultivation technique, but it would make his body stronger while giving him more affinities.

In fact, he really had nibbled on those items once or twice. But for the most part, he had not gotten around to consuming them on a whole. This was mainly because of how busy he was the past few months, and had nothing to do with the explosive diarrhea that accompanied eating such items.

But it seemed like he had put this matter off long enough. Even if he could ignore the others, he definitely needed to consume that blade of grass. The associated laws would help him speed up his recovery. Returning to his peak was most likely strongly associated with whatever problem was coming his way.

He teleported to his penthouse, and summoned the blade of grass. At its very tip there was a small mark where it was evident Lex had nibbled before. Taking in a deep breath, Lex began circulating his technique and took another tiny bite from the blade of grass before teleporting to the restroom.

As disgusting as it was, he also took a bottle of water with him. With what he was about to experience, the gravest danger for him was of becoming dehydrated extremely quickly!

Even with his new, nameless technique, Lex could not consume too much of such items at a time. After all, despite his many advantages, he was far too weak to handle anything related to laws.

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Deep in the cosmic cloud that had long become a battlefield, after a very long time, the ship carrying the Midnight battalion was approaching its next target.

Unlike previously, where they fought on rogue planets that contained Fuegan forces, this next area looked like a massive floating continent. It looked completely out of place, as if some supreme power had hidden it here where no one could find it.

In fact, that was also the opinion of the Henali forces. This time, the battalion was not tasked with an eradication mission, as no living beings had been detected on the continent by the Henali drones which had scanned this place earlier. Instead, they were being sent to thoroughly examine and investigate this space oddity.

They were not the only ones with this mission, as countless others were being sent as well. The only thing the battalion and the other forces had in common, however, was that they were all in the Foundation realm. This deep within the cloud, there were some unusual forces at work that made it almost impossible for stronger cultivators to approach without causing an adverse reaction.

Z, who was getting ready to land, had a frown on his face. For some reason, he could not use his spatial affinity at all.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 796: Talaiya

Eight hours later, Lex crawled out of his bathroom, feeling very weak. Why were the laws inside the blade of grass so much more potent than those inside the Cosmic Elixir?

This was not an assumption he made on his own, but the difference he felt in how deeply the laws affected him. He wondered if he would also develop an affinity for the law of growth, or if the law would just exhibit itself in his body. Whatever the case, he would not be able to eat the entire blade any time soon. It would take a while, possibly even a month!

One benefit, besides the alteration of his body, was that Pel was thoroughly impressed by Lex 'eating' laws, and became even more subservient. This was something he could not achieve even in his previous life.

While his physical fatigue recovered, Lex ate some food although he did not touch anything that he collected from the dragon yet. Even if he had a lot of food for now, it was essentially a limited stock so he was saving it for emergencies.

There was one other task he also wanted to do during this time. Although Leslie had predicted a certain danger and opportunity, he did not plan on living entirely according to a few predictions. After all, Leslie herself said it was difficult to predict his future.

That task was to begin the hunt for Barley! He did not intend to let this matter go so easily, as some secrets needed to be preserved as long as possible!

Making sure that he was covered from head to toe, Lex once again brought the special ticket using the ore that contained the planet's aura. A silver ticket appeared in his hand that he promptly tore, causing a familiar interface to appear before him.

Planets Available:

Planet: Tilaiya

Planet Rating: 3.5 Star

Planet Distance: 399 Sectors

Planet Environment: Dense spiritual energy, rich in resources, moderate climate. Perfect for a beach episode.

'A beach episode while I have no skin? The only thing that would be perfect for is giving children trauma,' thought Lex before selecting the planet and disappearing.

To avoid any problems, Lex was wearing his stealth suit from the get go, and had no intentions of getting involved in any kind of trouble.

Powell had already briefed him on the planet he was about to venture to. Tilaiya belonged to one of the rare neutral organizations in the Origin realm. They would not get involved in anyone else's business, regardless of how evil or good they were, and would stick to themselves. At the same time, they welcome everyone to come and visit their star systems as long as they obey the rules.

Since Lex was teleporting to the planet, instead of going through immigration which was the normal procedure, he would need to immediately report himself to the nearest facilitation center. He did not need to disclose his identity as long as he underwent an inspection that ensured he was not someone who had broken the laws within Tilaiya or an associated territory, so that should not present a problem.

Moreover, Powell himself assured him that even if his identity was known, the Tilaiyan authority would not be interested in his bounty at all, and he would enjoy the same protection and services as anyone else on the planet.

Moreover, Tilaiya was specifically a commerce oriented planet. It had trade ties with many major powers, and was one of the places where people came to dispose of any merchandise they had that was procured through less than official means. In a way, it was an open blackmarket.

This time, Lex really hoped he would manage to avoid trouble. But at the same time, he did not fear encountering a new problem. After all, although every time he got sucked into some unusual problems on each planet he would nearly die, it was quite exhilarating. Moreover, he had confidence in his strength. Even in the face of overwhelmingly strong enemies, Lex had managed to escape and prevail.

So, as long as everything went well, Lex intended to treat this like a shopping vacation with a side of slight assassination. If it didn't, well, then Lex would deal with things as they came.

When he reappeared, Lex found himself standing on a balcony looking out at a beautiful ocean view. The faint smell of salt in the air welcomed him, alongside the soothing sound of waves crashing against a seawall somewhere nearby.

Fresh and vibrant spiritual energy massaged his body, reinvigorating his somewhat tired cells.

The melodious sound of birds singing filled the sky, while the soft hum of a busy city hung in the air around Lex.

This was by far the best welcome he had on any planet he landed on. Just to be sure nothing was amiss, he turned and looked back. He half expected to find himself having landed right in the middle of a crime scene moments before the authorities came bursting in. Yet nothing like that happened. Behind him were a line of food carts, selling various snacks and foods to the pedestrians.

Speaking of whom, just a glance was enough for Lex to see multiple races, many of which he did not recognize. That's when the Fancy contact lenses came in handy, which provided him with all the necessary details at a glance.

Elves and dwarves seemed to be the most common, but there were beasts, fairies, insects, and others... uhh, other things as well.

Lex looked around a couple times, even peering up at the sky as if expecting a meteor to fall down, yet nothing happened.

"How disappointing," he murmured, before he began strolling. He needed to find a facilitation center and register himself before doing anything else. Tilaiya was a very busy planet, and would likely be very important to him in the future. Through the various facilities available here, Lex could begin linking other nearby planets to the Inn as well.

That was not to mention how this planet was linked to countless forces, giving him access to so many more possibilities. As such, it was naturally for the best that no problems popped up here.

Lex took in the sights as he walked around, amazed at the brilliance of a 3.5 star planet. The spiritual energy was thick, yes, but it also contained a vibrance that was almost exciting to feel. If the energy inside Pel's castle was hot, then the energy here was 'fresh'.

Everything seemed to be affected by the energy, and seemed more energetic somehow. The colors of the sky changed subtly with every step he took, and the mood of the pedestrians around him was extremely positive. It was as if everyone here had great mental health just by being here! How was that possible?

The technology on this planet was also very interesting to see. Unlike on earth, where everything was manufactured using various raw materials, on this planet technology seemed to be fused with plants.

Instead of screens, items had a kind of crystal embedded in them which would project out holograms, while each piece of technology was powered by their roots which were buried in the ground, through portable batteries which looked more like fruits than cells, or directly through spiritual energy.

For some odd reason, even though everything was quite alien, using their technology was quite intuitive. In fact, Lex quickly learned that he could interact with many devices and give commands directly using his spirit sense.

Lex did not see any vehicles around, on the ground or in the air, but he was sure there had to be some. Perhaps they were hidden underground.

After finding a few road signs, Lex discovered that he was in a small coastal town, which would explain the lack of tall metropolitan buildings. But even this small coastal town was impressive, as Lex could sense powerful auras everywhere he went. Countless buildings seemed to radiate a powerful aura as well, which reminded Lex of what he had learned about high society in the cultivation world. Even the 'sensation' of their energy and aura was something they paid attention to.

The buildings were beautiful as well, despite the fact that they seemed to deviate from the theme of using plants. They did not look like they were grown, but instead looked like they were sculpted from various majestic rocks. For all he knew, they might as well be.

After an hour or so of walking around, Lex finally found a facilitation center.

"Welcome to the Golden Breezer local facilitation center. How may I help you?" asked a young, energetic girl, who his lenses identified as a member of the Blaze race. She had an elven appearance, meaning she looked like a tall human with pointed ears, with the sole exception that her skin looked like it was made of blue fire.

"Hi, I teleported over to Talaiya, so I wanted to have my arrival registered."

"Oh? But all teleportations have been sealed? How did you get in?" the girl asked, looking genuinely curious.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 797: Hix

Lex did not answer the question, but only smiled at the lady. Of course, as his face was covered by a mask she could not see the smile, so all she saw was that the man stood there silently without answering the question.

"Oh pardon my curiosity, it is not a required question," the girl said, realizing her mistake. As long as the other person did not break any rules, it did not matter what he did. During the registration process, he would automatically be tested to see if he has broken any rules, so if his arrival was problematic, it would be detected then.

"Actually, you may not know this since you just arrived, but the heir to the Tilaiyan Alliance is to be wed in a few days. It is naturally a grand affair, and has attracted a lot of attention. To prevent overcrowding of the planet from tourists and opportunists, the planet has just entered lockdown. The order was just passed a few hours ago, so it's perfectly natural if you arrived before then."

The lady explained.

"Please place your hand on the screen," she asked, as he held out a silver screen in front of him. Lex placed his hand on the chilly screen and let it scan him, but kept his attention on the girl.

"Will the wedding be screened? Since I'm going to be here for a few days, I might as well watch."

"The wedding will naturally be screened, but the first part of the wedding will be open to the public. If you can head over to the capital, Viday, then you can attend as well. Oh, if during your registration you disclose your identity, and your identity is special enough then you might get an invitation to the wedding as well. Speaking of which, you've signed up for registration. Please walk through the silver door to complete the process."

"Thanks," said Lex before proceeding as instructed. He had only been making idle conversation as he had no real intention to watch any wedding, or get involved in any way. In the following room there was

a single seat with a projection crystal in front of it. As soon as Lex sat down, a number of questions appeared in front of him, awaiting his response.

The questions were more facilitation questions than anything else. The first question he got was if he needed any kind of special environment to survive during his visit to Tilaiya. Some examples included being surrounded by toxic or noxious gasses, extreme heat or cold, increased or decreased gravity etc.

A number of those could be provided for free, while a few of them required payment.

Then he was asked if he wanted to disclose his identity. If he did not, then he would be assigned an anonymous identity as many things on Tilaiya were linked to identification, such as bank balance, social credit, reservations, etc.

He was asked some unusual, and unsettling questions, such as if he wanted to create a will for his belongings on Tilaiya. There were certain procedures and forms he needed to fill out if his intention in coming here was to euthanize himself, such as body disposal and preference in burial styles. He was even asked if he had any enemies who he knew were also on the same planet. For the other things the reasoning was beyond Lex's understanding, but by disclosing the identity of your enemies, you would automatically avoid them while on Tilaiya. How that was managed was not disclosed, and Lex could not guess either, but it was basically guaranteed that you would not run into anyone you wanted to avoid as long as you mentioned it first.

His impression of Tilaiya changed a bit as he answered the questions, but to his surprise, by the time he finished answering the questions, his registration was complete. If he was investigated in any way, he did not discover it at all.

When he stepped out, the Blaze girl was patiently waiting for him.

"Welcome to Tilaiya, honored guest. Now that you have registered, there are a few things I need to inform you of. The first thing you should know is that currently your assigned identity has the rank of basic guest. The amenities, services and privileges you enjoy on Tilaiya are directly related to the rank of your identity. The higher your rank, the better the services.

"Your identity rank is determined by the bank balance you maintain associated with your identity. If you maintain a basic balance of 1000 Tilaiyan credits your rank will be raised from basic guest to honored guest, if your balance is at 10,000 credits then the rank will be distinguished guest, and so on.

"There are a few ways in which you can get those credits or maintain the bank balance. The first and simplest is if someone pays you or loans you some credits, they will directly contribute to your balance. Another is to do jobs and complete requests of locals or even the alliance itself. The most common way to accumulate credit is to either transfer it from your original, or other anonymous identities you may have in Tilaiya. Or you can sell or mortgage items. The facilitation center provides a convenient location if you wish to sell any items."

Lex suddenly felt like he was a saint, looking at the final form of a true capitalist. The entire society of Tilaiya seemed to be centered around money, or credit as they called it.

"I want to get some credits, and then rent a place to stay. Where can I do that?"

"Please follow me," she said and led Lex to another part of the building that was a lot busier. There were countless counters, yet each of them was dealing with a client.

"Here you can sell items to get credits, or claim credits from your alternate identities. Do not worry, claiming credit from an alternate identity will not link the two, as the process is done completely anonymously. If you choose to sell an item, then please keep in mind that most items have a fixed price. There is no concept of negotiation in Tilaiya. This works in your favor as well as anyone else's."

After ensuring that Lex did not need any more help, the girl led Lex to a counter with a small line and let him be. The experience somewhat reminded Lex of his youth. He used to travel a lot with his family, and at the airport they always used to go to a similar counter to exchange their foreign currency for whatever was used locally.

The memories ruined Lex's mood a little, as he did not like to think of his family much these days. But he did not let it bother him, and simply sold some spirit stones. 1 normal spirit stone was worth 1 Tilaiyan credit. Lex did not have any context for if that was good or bad, but he had countless spirit stones lying about so he couldn't be bothered to care.

After getting 10,000 credits and becoming a 'distinguished guest', Lex got some help in booking himself a hotel room and then finally exited the facility. He had already asked for directions, so he slowly strolled through the streets, taking in the views as he approached his seaside hotel room.

This really did feel like a vacation, which was not something he was complaining about at all. Once he checked into his room, Lex thoroughly inspected it both with his own senses as well as the Fancy monocle to ensure there were no spying or recording tools.

This was going to be his first time contacting an assassin organization so he felt a little nervous about getting caught. But he felt more excited than anything. This was so interesting, he never would have imagined himself associating with assassins.

Once he was sure that his room was clean, he set up an isolation formation he had bought from the Guild room, and then finally took out the card Powell gave him. He channeled his spirit energy into the card, causing it to suddenly catch fire.

In an instant the card turned to ash, falling through the air. But before the ash could reach the ground it shimmered, and then slowly vanished.

"How mysterious," Lex muttered, enjoying the spectacle. Considering how casual he was feeling, maybe he wasn't nervous after all, just excited.

The air rippled in front of him, and a portion of the room seemed to turn black and white. A masked elven figure appeared within the black and white area and looked at Lex.

"You have used a VIP card to contact Hix. If your task is accepted, it will be carried out with the utmost urgency and given the highest importance. Please share the details of the mission, and hurry. The Reality Filter we're using to communicate will not last longer than a minute. Please note that after you share the details, there will be an evaluation period in which Hix will decide whether to take on the task or not. All payments must also be made in advance in the scenario that the task is accepted."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 798: Invitation

Lex looked at the black and white figure and was quite curious about the effects that followed the man. Was the so-called 'Reality Filter' what he used to come here? Through his spatial affinity, Lex could clearly tell that the figure was not actually in the room with him. Instead, the black and white filter was projecting his presence from another location here.

It was a very safe way of meeting others, which made sense. After all, if assassins openly exposed themselves then they should only expect to be attacked in return.

"Before I begin, I must clarify that I don't actually need anyone assassinated. I just need you to locate someone and share the details of their location and circumstances with me in as much detail as you can."

Lex was not worried about not being able to communicate his entire message to the correspondent as conversing with spirit senses was extremely fast, so a minute was more than enough for them to talk at length.

"That is acceptable, however that will not reduce any charges. You will still be charged as if you are assigning an assassination mission."

"That is acceptable. The target is a dwarf named Barley Holdinson. His last known location is..."

Lex shared all the information given to him by Powell, without holding anything back. It had briefly occurred to Lex that he could also ask the assassins to kidnap Barley if they found him, but he would rather not complicate things further. Once the dwarf was located, Lex would handle the remaining things himself, regardless of what they may be.

Lex himself was not exactly ecstatic that Barley had shared Lex's video online for his own profit, and had not yet decided what the appropriate response should be. It was one of those things that could not be done until he was actually faced with the situation.

Once Lex had given all the information, the figure simply nodded, before responding, "I have recorded all the information given to me by you. Within three days, we will confirm whether or not we are taking this task. If we accept the task, you will need to provide full payment at the time we accept."

"How will you contact me?" Lex asked. He was worried about having his identity traced by Hix, not to mention he would probably need to stay on the planet for them to find him. If he returned to the Inn, then even if they really were tracking him, they would never be able to find him.

"As soon as I leave, the card you used to summon me will be reformed. Within three days, a change will form on the card indicating whether we accept or reject. Once you notice the change, you will have only one day to go to a discreet place and send the payment, once again through the card. In the future, once we complete the task, if it is accepted, we will also contact you through the card.

"Such a method protects both Hix and its clients, as no other trace of our transaction is left. If we decide to reject the task, then the card will be burned and you will need to procure a new card if you want to contact Hix once again. This way, clients can use Hix repeatedly without leaving any transaction history, as there is nothing else connecting us to the client. Even Hix itself will not know who the client is. This, in turn, protects you from prosecution in the future should Hix be compromised."

"Your SOPs are quite professional. I look forward to hearing from you regarding my task."

Once the conversation was concluded the figure disappeared, and the world once again regained color. On the floor, the ashes that had originally disappeared seemed to return, and formed the very card from which they came.

Lex had not even reached down to pick the card up yet, let alone contemplate on the exchange he had just had, when he heard a voice from behind him.

"Lex Williams, you are a very hard man to find."

Surprised but not startled, Lex instantly leaped forward and turned around, ready to face a devastating enemy. After all, to be able to sneak up on him, the opponent must be extremely formidable.

Yet the figure he saw did not seem like it had any intention of attacking him. There was a neat, vertical rip in space, as if sliced open with a knife, hanging in the middle of the room. The rip was being stretched open by two bony hands, revealing a skull garbed in a dark yet ethereal shroud. Around the skull there seemed to be only darkness, and even its eye sockets only revealed the void.

As the hooded figure emerged, its hand disappeared, leaving being a literal floating, cloaked skull.

"Please excuse me if I startled you, that was not my intention. Your various means of protection from divination made it incredibly tedious to locate you."

Even as the figure had entered his room, and was talking to him, Lex could not sense him at all. Neither his instincts nor his spirit seemed to be able to pick up his presence. It was almost as if he was simply hallucinating.

"Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Bacterius. I am here to extend forth an invitation to you in honor of the recognition of your recent feats. I have to say, I'm a bit of a fan - not just of you, but your whole family. I don't think I've ever delivered so many invitations to people from the same nuclear family."

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Damian Arban William, Lex's grandfather, gulped and loosened his collar as he looked at his ancestor, as well as his siblings all of whom were akin to legends, especially the Emperor. Although they had all suppressed their auras, their majesty and prestige still weighed on Damian.

"Please, start from the beginning. We want to hear everything. We'll also require all records you have of your son and his family, regardless of how irrelevant or mundane they may seem," said William.

"My son..." Damian said as he tasted the words on his lips. Their relationship had been very tumultuous from the very start, though he was too embarrassed to admit that.

"From the day he was born, my son was different. He was born with the Sword Saint physique, making him especially suited to swordplay. He learned to wield sword intent at the age of 6, long before he started cultivation. He took four days to cross Body Tempering, around two weeks to cross Qi training and only six months to cross the Foundation realm - though admittedly there was an episode that delayed his advance, so technically he could have been even faster. He-"

"What was the episode?" asked Jotun, interrupting Damian. "Keep in mind we want to hear everything, regardless of how ordinary it may seem."

"Ye- yes, your majesty. At that time, I had not yet become the family head, though I was on the path for it already. As such, I wanted my children to be trained especially for the role as well. Every 20 years, all William family members below the age of 50 can participate in a special trial. The top 15 members who pass that trial all receive the title of Paragon, and become candidates for the family head.

"Although they have to go through many more tests, as well as training in the future to continue to be eligible for the post, that is the first step. My son... had a disagreement with a Paragon, who used his authority to subsequently punish him. Since I did not want to appear partial, I did not interfere. The punishment delayed his breakthrough."

"What was the punishment?" asked Nisar, the head of the Butt family.

"It was nothing too serious. For three months he had to hide his identity and work as an attendant in one of the family businesses."

"Do you have a detailed record of his experiences in those three months?"

"Eh, no I don't, but I can have them arranged."

"Please do that. You may continue with your story."

The brothers were being meticulous, and looking for even the smallest hint of something going awry, or something that would explain the abnormalities of the family so far in the future. But they did not know that they did not need to be so meticulous. The answer was coming.

"All in all, my son was a genius in cultivation and a master of swordsmanship. Everything was going relatively well until... until he went to a planet called Earth for a mission and met... her."

Damian could not help but grimace, despite being on his best behavior.

"What was the mission, who did he meet and... it seems to be you skipped a lot of stuff in between. Please, go step by step. We have all the time in the world."

Damian quickly gathered himself up and began the story from the beginning, detailing the life of the young prodigy that was his son.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 799: Bloodline Resonance

Under the close scrutiny of his ancestor and the other absolute powerhouses, Damian was forced to reveal every excruciating detail about how unpleasant his relationship was between him and his son.

In Damian's defense, he had many children of various ages, due to the fact that he himself was not that young, and his wife was a cultivator as well. The sense of familial bond was very limited between him and his children to begin with, and the fact that he ordered his children about like his subordinates, manipulating their relationship like it gave him control over them made them even more distant.

With his other children this was not much of a problem since none of them were absurdly talented, and even now had not come close to him in power. But Leon, his most talented son and Lex's father, was an entirely different case. He was always rebellious, though not to a problematic amount. It was only when he got to earth that the problem was exacerbated.

William had already heard everything from Damian before, so he did not say anything, but the others listened intently.

"Leon went to Earth to fulfill a mission and deliver a political prisoner there. Since the planet was deprived of spiritual energy, it was an excellent place to hold political prisoners. We also had a few experiments running stored away on that planet which he needed to overlook.

"It was during his time there that he met a mortal woman... by the name of Serene. On that planet, the local calendar recorded the year as 1748, and technology and education were extremely limited.

"All these factors combined together meant that the woman was extremely ignorant and uneducated, without a trace or hint of any knowledge about the cultivation world. I do not know the specifics of what happened... and there's no way to get a record of it either. All I can say is that he spent a couple of decades there, with her, before disappearing.

"Leon's disappearance did not go without notice, as not only did it affect some of my plans, he also lost his own status as Paragon and fell out of the race for family head. Of course, by then I had already gotten my own position, but I was still dissatisfied with him. Given his talent, I fully expected that he would be able to enter the Heavenly Immortal realm, and bring the William family on par with the other three great noble families of the Jotun Empire.

"Alas, it was not meant to be. When he finally reappeared, he was back on Earth. Moreover, it was not just that. He had suppressed his tenets, and entirely discarded his cultivation, dropping back down to a mortal! I thought he had been attacked by an enemy, but later discovered he had done it himself to recultivate from scratch!

"I was beyond furious, but it was already too late. That is when I discovered that he had already married that... that mortal Serene, and they had a child together, Belle. Originally, I was extremely furious, until I discovered that the babe had something special about her, much like Leon himself back then.

"She did not have a unique physique, like Leons. Instead, she was born with the heart of a Valkyrie. I do not know how such a thing was possible, as that was a literal organ from an entirely different race, and one much stronger than humans as well. If it could be adequately nurtured, she could grow to be extremely powerful.

"Angry at my own son, who would not listen to reason, I instead turned my attention to Belle. I marked her, so that I could find her anywhere in the Origin realm, and informed Leon that I would take her away at the age of 8 to begin her training. Through the use of special fruits that could allow her body to strengthen adequately, I would begin her cultivation path early.

"Leon was furious, but as a mortal he could do nothing to me. Eight years later, I returned and discovered my insolent son barely having entered the Qi training realm. After destroying his cultivation it was not easy to cultivate again, so I held no hope from him. I came to take Belle, but discovered another daughter Leon had, little Elizabeth. Just like her father and sister, her body was unique as well. By now, I realized something was amiss, for if it was so easy to produce offsprings with great talents then the William family would never have declined.

"Elizabeth, or Liz as she called herself, had a mythical 100% affinity for the Beast Master path. Although not as common or mainstream as cultivation, Beast Masters could not be underestimated, so I marked her as well and gave the same stipulation. Leon was once again angered, but at Qi training, what could he even do?"

At this point, Damien paused. None of his listeners found his actions unusual or cruel. Training descendants strictly was a common practice among cultivator families. Sending one's kids with their own grandparent could not even be considered cruel, for so many of them were shipped off to boarding schools for centuries without ever even meeting their families. That was just how the dynamic of powerful families worked. Of course, the kids or Leon may not have felt that way. But it was not as if the kids were being harmed in any way. They were just returning to their family to train.

"By then, my relationship with Leon had completely soured, but I was too angry at him for wasting his talents to pay much attention to it. When I returned next, I discovered he had one more daughter, named Moon. Moreover... her speciality was incredibly... unbelievable. Not only could she use her own power to heal souls, she had the potential to assist cultivators in crossing tribulations. At that point I... I let my greed get the better of me.

"Moon's ability was too amazing, and too valuable. She could not be left on Earth at all. I took her and Liz with me immediately. Leon had managed to reach the Golden core realm, somehow, during this time. I should have noticed the anomaly which was his growing strength but... I was too blinded by Moon's ability.

"What I had not realized was that while Leon was recultivating from a mortal, his wife Serene had a higher cultivation all this time. She used some unknown means to create spiritual clones of all her children, so that even if their real bodies were far away, in a way, they had a normal childhood as well, through their clones."

"Is that when the infamous 'Moon incident' took place?" asked Batu. Although they were all asking Damian questions in detail, they had already been briefed by William about the significant details. Clearly the incident with Moon was one such incident.

"Yes. Unfortunately, that is how I came to learn that Serene was not as simple as I had long thought. Although she was having Leon cultivate again from scratch, he had only grown stronger than his peak, not weaker, even at a lower cultivation realm. When the incident with Moon happened, her spiritual clone nearly collapsed. Leon lost his mind in anger, and that is when I found out how absurdly strong he had become.

"Even in his Golden core cultivation, he was able to use his sword intent to rip open a tear in space and cross entire galaxies to reach me. If Serene had not intervened, and the ensuing fight not stopped, it may have resulted in me being critically injured, and Leon dead. Even after the interruption, it was not as if we managed to escape unharmed.

"The last time I saw Leon, he had reached the Nascent realm. That was also the time when I discovered an anomaly in the treasure that records the family tree, as the name Lex Williams had suddenly appeared on it. All this time, and I never knew that he even had a son, let alone that he had grown so much. At that time, I really felt that if I challenged Leon he would be able to kill me, so I didn't push the topic too hard.

"All this time, I was wondering what made Lex so special, that Leon managed to hide his son from the family treasure. It must not have been an easy achievement. But a few weeks ago, when I saw that video of Lex climbing that dragon..."

Damian did not finish his sentence, as the immense stress he felt caused him to rub his forehead. Although he did not know much about this grandson of his, he really hoped that he did not have the same anger problems Leon had.

"Based on the information I have collected on Leon and his children, especially Lex, I may have come to a conclusion about why he especially was hidden from sight," said William very calmly.

"Before I mention my theory to everyone, I would like to emphasize that I strongly believe that Lex Williams has a very strong connection to the Midnight Inn, so no one should think about making any moves against him, for now at least."

William especially looked at his siblings when he said this.

"Some time ago, I experienced an abnormality in my ability Gelid Anima, and actually developed a hint of a bloodline. Such a thing... should not really be possible. But following the pattern of Leon having kids with mythical abilities that have only been recorded in legend, and never witnessed, I discovered one particular ability that could explain what happened to me, given that Lex was nearby at the time. It is called... Bloodline Resonance."

Damian seemed ignorant of what those words meant, but the rest of them were startled.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 800: Pride

"Hey, hey, hey, that's not the kind of stuff you should be saying randomly," said Jotun, although he was more than inclined to believe his brother. After all, analytical deduction was Williams' strong suit, and he had more or less been responsible for developing the Empire's growth strategies. It could not be said to be flawless, but considering the massive scale of the empire, he could not really be blamed.

"It's just a theory. But the thing that I can't decide... is that if he really does have bloodline resonance, should we set our sights on him, or his abnormal parents who are able to achieve such a thing."

"What's bloodline resonance?" Damian could not help but ask, but regretted it immediately. Due to the casual attitude the brothers adopted, he forgot his position and status. The five brothers could not be blamed. They had a good relationship with each other, and had been like this since they were young. They were brothers spending time together, with all their other identities put aside. But did others really have the qualification to treat them casually as well?

The five brothers looked at Damian, and realized that they were not really done questioning him. Although he had described Leon's life so far, now he had to inform them about the three sisters and how they were trained.

"Bloodline resonance... you don't need to worry about it too much. Just think of it as the key... for the human race as a whole to move up on the Cosmic Ascendance Spectrum. It is no wonder he would gain the protection of an entity like the Midnight Inn. I am now beginning to suspect that the name on the top of the Guest Registry really is him, as if he has been using the resonance, then that really is an achievement few can compete with. But these things are none of your concern. Now tell us about Belle..."

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Lex looked at Bacterius and did not drop his guard, but in fact raised it higher instead. That was because he tried to use Targeted Scan on him, but failed. The failure of the system's ability likely meant that Bacterius was not really here, or that he had some means to avoid the system's abilities.

The first option was the most likely, but he could not discount the second either.

"What is the invitation for? What does this have to do with my family?" he asked. It was too suspicious for someone to just appear and start mentioning his family. Moreover, he really was not a fan of how these unbelievably powerful beings just dropped in on him without him being able to detect them.

"The invitation has nothing to do with your family, be assured of that. No one's lineage or background can assure an invitation. Only a display showing strength far outside your own realm is the bare minimum requirement to get such an invitation. It is only the bare minimum requirement, mind you.

"I have already investigated Frigra thoroughly, so I can assure you that your invitation is much higher ranked than the bare minimum. I must say, like father like son. Your old man also dealt with a dragon back when he was in the Golden core realm, though he managed to kidnap it using his own abilities, and then later killed it in secret with his own strength as well. "Your achievement of climbing a soulless corpse falls a little short of that, but then again, you were faced with a Heavenly immortal corpse, while your old man only dealt with an Earth immortal. So it's understandable if there is a difference in performance."

Bacterius seemed to enjoy teasing Lex, giving him only the bare minimum information without extrapolating further. He grinned, and continued telling his story.

"By the way, as this is my job, don't think for a second that I did not do it thoroughly. I also discovered how you resisted an attack from an Earth immortal down in Polebitvy, which is impressive for a Golden core cultivator, but is not enough to fulfill the minimum requirement. Speaking of which, your mother's invitation was only the minimum requirement. Unfortunately, neither your father nor your mother were interested in attending this little event."

Lex pursed his lips as he was forced to listen to information about his family. Since they had kept so many secrets from him, and chose to not involve him in their lives, he had decided to ignore them as well. Now, suddenly receiving so much information about them made him feel uncomfortable - assuming it was all true of course.

"Your sister has a bit of an attitude problem, by the way. I was telling her all this as well and she just attacked me! Just because she was able to kill an Angel and absorb its bloodline to create her own does not mean she can just do whatever she wants."

"I think attacking you might really be the only way to make you get to the point," Lex said, his mood deteriorating. "If you do not want to talk about what this invitation is for, then I suggest you just leave. I don't think I'm much interested in it either."

Against this enigmatic foe, Lex did not hesitate to use Dominate, and noticed something peculiar. Not only could he tell that Dominate was affecting Bacterius, although he was too strong for it to produce any tangible results, he could sense him with his instincts now as well.

So Dominate could work on collaboration with other abilities as well...

"I see impatience is a family trait," Bacterius said, not at all perturbed by Lex's demeanor.

"It's quite simple really. The invitation for a tournament, of sorts. The best, and I mean the absolute best, from the entire realm are being gathered. The purpose of this tournament... is actually to determine if you are qualified to take part in a much larger, much more rewarding tourney.

"Yes, of course, there will be prizes and rewards and many opportunities for you to come in contact with the highest levels in this realm. But the main thing is, you can compete against anyone else who is considered the best, and see how you match up? So, are you interested? I can feel a lot of pride in you. Do you dare... to test that pride?"