

## The Innkeeper

### Chapter 8 Plan

It was 6 in the morning, daylight was slowly creeping up, painting the horizon in a golden hue. A cool breeze was blowing and the soft tweeting of a few birds could be heard in the distance. Lex sat in a garden chair, a cup of hot chocolate in his hand and before him on a table lay a notebook full of scribbles and random notes.

Yesterday when Lex returned to the Inn it was already night. Bastet and Falak had not left either of their rooms nor requested anything either, so there was not much to do. Lex was not tired in the least so immediately began planning what to do. After about 20 minutes of brainstorming he came to the conclusion that the Inn was eerily quiet and still, and he couldn't think in such an environment.

He opened up the Midnight store and immediately bought a couple dozen birds, squirrels and rabbits for a total of 30 MP (Midnight Points). It wasn't much considering how much space he had, but he wanted to be frugal with spending his Midnight Points and this was enough for now. In fact he wouldn't have wasted these points at all and would have preferred to bring small animals from Earth directly but apparently he did not have the authority to do that yet. He then opened the design interface and spent 1 MP to start a gentle, constant breeze for the next 24 hours. Using another 50 MP he bought a few flowering trees and sparsely placed across the back garden. It pained him to spend his points this way but environment mattered and if it was bothering him he couldn't even imagine how his guests would feel, and he absolutely could not afford to annoy his guests.

With that distraction out of the way, he spent the night looking over the Midnight Store, understanding each and every item it sold and asking Mary questions about them in detail. When he finally asked everything he was curious about or get answers to, he set his mind to planning out exactly how to proceed. There were three important tasks ahead of him that he needed to accomplish as soon as possible, at least as he saw it. Firstly he needed to complete the quest as soon as possible and try to get the best result he could manage. Secondly, he needed to buy and setup the Gift Shop. The Gift Shop itself would not provide him with anything, but having the gift shop could allow

him to buy things from the Midnight Store to place in the shop that he could then sell for a profit. It wouldn't immediately get him any profits but that was at least one new possible avenue of income. More importantly, if he found something useful to himself instead of putting it in the Gift Shop he could just keep it for himself, since he was technically the owner of the item. Similarly, if he owned something he could put it in the shop to sell. That feature wouldn't be important for now, but when he had multiple worlds connected, selling interesting things from Earth could be an easy way to earn some Midnight Points. The third thing he needed to do was quit his job!

Even after he'd sold his video game he continued his regular job without telling anyone of his success. It brought some semblance of routine to his life, and it wasn't as if he had much else he would be rather doing so he just went along with it. Furthermore he'd built some friendship with a few of his coworkers and although they weren't too close Lex didn't feel like just leaving them behind.

He'd also jotted down a few more ideas here and there, especially when he looked at his own residence as well as the concept of recruiting someone to work for the Inn. But those were thoughts for later, he should not take on more than he could handle at one time. *innread.com*

He pulled up the Midnight Store and viewed the Pro Bono wing. It cost a sweeping 2500 MP and was out of his reach currently. Ignoring it he turned the page to the Gift Shop and instantly chose to buy it. With that he only had 1541 MP left, but he ignored the pinching feeling in his heart and focused on the Inn. The Manor expanded slightly and a small new room opened up with its entrance in the lobby. There was a small, wooden counter at the far end with a glass case and a few empty shelves. For now the space in the Gift shop was limited and only a few items could be placed in there, but once he expanded it he could add more stuff to it. Currently he only had 2 guests and both of them were from Earth so it was unlikely that he'd be able to sell them anything from Earth. His only choice was to fill it with items from the Midnight Store.

He navigated to the Gift Shop category of the store and took a look. The list of things he could buy currently was small, limited by his authority. There were only 4 items:

Whistle of Bathelona – 120MP

A whistle that that summons a wisp named Bathelona. Wisps are common pets for children in the Jotun System, and Bathelona is no different.

Saturn Cake – 100MP

A mildly sweet cake, a common delicacy in the Jotun System. It causes feeling of euphoria in whoever eats it. If the consumer is below Qi Gathering realm he/she/it will be lost in the feeling of euphoria for a few hours, completely unaware of what's happening to or around them.

Icarus' wings – 150MP

Artificial wings that can be attached to anyone or thing, giving the ability for flight for 6 hours. The wings cannot sustain damage equivalent to Qi Gathering realm.

Botlam Dew – 80MP

Dew collected from plants on Botlam hill. The dew has strong healing properties and can be used on various lifeforms below the Foundation realm. Botlem Dew is extremely poisonous to lesser demons.

All 4 items looked interesting to Lex, and he could think of a few cases where some of them might be useful to himself but currently none of them helped him much. He needed to consider if he should buy all of them and put them in the store, or only one or two for now. Spending 450 MP currently didn't seem worth it for now but he wasn't sure what would or wouldn't attract his guests attention. After all, does a cat need a pet? Or would a cow be interested in flying? Neither of them had ordered any food and it was yet to be seen if they exited for breakfast, so would they be interested in a cake? He could instead use those points to buy a Green House, Recovery Room or Meditation Room. He was struck with confusion again as he didn't know what would attract his guests attention. Being a business owner was stressful, he wasn't sure what would be best for his Inn at the moment.

Lex closed his eyes and took a slow, deep breath. Having too many options confused him. He needed to focus and not get distracted by random thoughts. That's why he'd made a plan. When he opened his eyes they were filled with determination once again and all his thoughts double guessing or doubting himself had disappeared.

He bought one of each item and decisively placed them all in the store, spending a total of 450 MP, leaving with only 1091 MP. He summoned Velma and told her she'd be in charge of Gift Shop should any of his guests come in. He priced all the items at 200 MP each.

"Mary I'm heading back to my apartment, can you let me know if Bastet or Falak leave their rooms. I want to take the opportunity to talk to them a bit."

"Sure, no problem," said the tiny, floating woman who appeared right in front of him. "Anything else?"

"Yes, how exactly should I try to find guests back on Earth? Can I just invite them? How would they enter?"

"Currently there are 3 ways for guests to come to the Inn. The first one is through random doors that will open throughout Earth as long as there are vacancies at the Inn. There is, however, no fixed schedule for those doors opening and it's impossible to predict where they will open. They could open at the bottom of the ocean or in someone's closet, there's just no way of predicting.

"The second way is through golden keys that you can buy from the Midnight Store. You can give them to people or leave them for people to find. It's a one time use item that can bring one person to the Inn. However it is my recommendation that you do not directly give anyone the keys, for your own safety. Currently you are very weak, even with your new upgraded cultivation, and anyone with even the slightest malice could seriously harm you. Even if they do not suspect you are the owner of the Inn, someone could harm you just to learn about how you got access to those keys. Furthermore, the Midnight Inn System was initiated by a spirit treasure that has merged with your soul. Currently it is inseparable, but if anyone kills you the treasure will reveal itself and will be available for anyone to take. This should not be a problem for you on Earth where, based on your memories, people have limited knowledge of the soul and spirit treasures, but in other worlds this is a threat that you should be aware of."

Mary's words gripped Lex's heart with fear. It never even occurred to him that people might want to hurt him if they found out about the System. Not that he had any intention of letting anyone find out, but he needed to be careful.

Not noticing Lex's change of expression Mary continued, "The third way of entering the Inn is to have been a guest once. Anyone who avails any of the

Inns services receives a complimentary golden key with which they can return anytime they want. That golden key is also a one time use item. In the future, as the level of the Inn increases there will be more ways for guests to enter the Inn.

“Please note, currently there is no way to filter who can or cannot enter the Inn. This means anyone with a golden key will be able to enter, even if you do not wish them to, such as in the case of a bad guest or those who have malicious intent. To unlock such a feature you will have to raise the level of the Inn.”

Lex groaned. It felt like raising the level of the Inn would be a common theme in his near future, but there was little he could do about that for now without finding a way to increase his income. Either way, it was now time for him to go. He had a job to quit.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

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