

Innkeeper 881

The Innkeeper

Chapter 881: Hidden Temple

881 Hidden Temple

A fleet of alliance ships was approaching BGY-987 from a distance. Their arrival had been slowed down because on multiple occasions they encountered territories and planets which, according to their intel, were under their control and progress was good. However, reality was that all alliance forces were being heavily suppressed with all communication cut off.

While there was no overwhelming loss, this anomaly was so massive that a report to the Henali had been dispatched. What conclusion they would draw, and how they would react, was not something the alliance could speculate, but they were sure that there would definitely be some kind of reaction.

The worst of all was that they had not even reached the planet they were supposed to be investigating yet! But it was finally within sight! Or, to be more specific, their ships had locked onto it, and they would reach within the next few hours.

Both the groups leading the fleet, and their superiors at the alliance headquarters, had mentally prepared themselves to face a devastating sight upon their arrival. But their preparation fell short when the ships issued an emergency alert and forcefully exited Hyperdrive without preparation!

The abrupt halt was not well received, as usually entering and exiting Hyperdrive consisted of a few preparatory procedures for the safety of the crew and the ship. A forceful exit such as this one caused the entire fleet to sustain damage in many of their crucial areas, not to mention that the weakest members of the fleet became extremely sick and fell unconscious, with many at the risk of death!

"What the hell just happened?" a captain of one of the ships screamed, but then froze as he looked at the screens in front of him. In front of the ships was a Void, and that was not referring to the Void of space. It was an ever-expanding emptiness that was consuming the space around it.

Let alone this region, but the entire cosmic cloud faced the threat of destruction if it was not controlled.

"Re- report to headquarters! But first, turn this ship around!" the captain yelled, doing his best to control his trembling body. But he couldn't. The Void was growing too quickly, and the repercussions of this would most likely be felt on every single battlefield!

Just as they were turning around, one of the many staff members in the room yelled out, "Wait, I see something in the darkness!"

Lex was completely taken aback by the change, as not only was it instantaneous, but it also was something he had never experienced before. Immediately he halted his cultivation as he could not afford any disruption, but then discovered that the change had not affected him at all!

There was no light in the Void, so he could not see, but he expanded his spirit sense to check on Z and discovered that the teenager was on the verge of death!

Without a moment's thought, Lex let go of Ra and grabbed onto Z, giving him the bathroom slippers so that he could survive in this unusual environment.

In total, Z had been exposed to the dangers of the Void for less than a second, but Lex could already feel that a majority of his bones were broken, and his consciousness was on the verge of fading.

Lex had already decided to let go of everything and immediately return to the Inn, but he had underestimated the pressure that the Void put on him. There was no ambient spiritual energy to aid him, as he felt the weight of an entire planet crush down on his body.

There was no room to think, as his mind was concussed due to the massive crushing force that impacted his skull. For a brief moment, it seemed like Lex's body could withstand the pressure. Then his skin started to tear, and blood started to squirt out of his body.

His bones were cracking within his body, and moving out of place under the influence of the massive pressure. Soon, his bones became the spears that pierced through body, cutting through muscle and organs alike.

The ring on his finger, which contained Pelvailin, began to crack, and his spatial bangle began to tremble. His pants began to disintegrate as his clothes were no obstacle to the weight of the Void.

Giving his Bathroom slippers to Z nearly became the last thing Lex ever did, as his body was torn down and his mind could not cope. Ironically, it was that very act that became his saving grace.

In the endless expanse of pure nothingness, a strange energy appeared and seemed to surround the already unconscious Z. Even though he had been saved from the dangers of the Void, he had already sustained such damage that he was unable to remain awake.

The energy surrounded him and began to pull him in a specific direction. Lex, who had gripped Z tightly, was pulled along.

For an unknown amount of time, the two drifted through the nothingness, with Lex becoming more and more unrecognizable as time went by. Eventually he became nothing more than an indistinct meat mush, though even in such a state his grip on Z never wavered. It was as if, even in this state, he knew that his life depended on holding on.

Eventually, they approached a barrier hidden in the eternal darkness and came to a halt. Another beam of energy emerged and scanned Z once, twice, countless times, as if ascertaining his identity through innumerable ways.

When the beam was done testing his identity, it retreated, and the barrier disappeared, revealing an enormous temple, its width alone spanning a million miles!

Even in the absence of light, the temple was visible from all around, and attracted the attention of Void Dwellers from far and wide. The sight of the temple was not limited to the Void, as even those outside could see its splendor, as was the case with the retreating fleet.

After absorbing Z and Lex within it, the temple began to gather energy, as if preparing for something.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 882: Temple of Fasting

882 Temple of Fasting

It was impossible to hide the news of the temple. Not only was it massive and easily spotted, hovering in between an endlessly growing Void that acted as an impassable trench, it was also actively drawing in energy. Normally this would not have mattered, but the amount of energy it was gathering was so monumentally massive that all the immortals within the Suera galaxy could sense it.

What was the most strange, however, was that the cosmic cloud that had encompassed the entire region began to disappear. This was a notable event because the cosmic cloud was so complicated and seemingly impossible to affect that the Fuegan had taken it as the perfect hiding spot, and the Henali had adhered to its rules and fought within it instead of trying to alter it in any way.

But now, it was disappearing. Moreover, the more energy the temple absorbed, the more of the cosmic cloud disappeared. It was not long before many noticed the correlation, and began to theorize the origin of the temple.

Many immortals surrounded the Void, and attempted to cross it to reach the temple, but it was impossible using ordinary means. Only the Void dwellers could tolerate the unusual environment inside the Void, regardless of how weak they were outside the Void.

The ironic thing about them was that they were much stronger within the Void, but sought to escape it regardless of the price they had to pay. In the present circumstance, that price became death!

The immortals that had surrounded the Void slaughtered the Void Dweller by the droves and used their carcasses to sew together an outfit that could allow them to traverse the daunting nothingness of the Void.

Celestial Immortals showed up to contain the expansion of the Void, for no other source could stop its spread. Unfortunately, they could not reserve it at the moment, though they were not inclined to do so even if they could. The mystery of the temple was too alluring.

Henali representatives showed up in person, though no one knew what they did afterwards. Many guessed that they secretly entered the temple, or that they were studying a method to enter it as it seemed impenetrable, but no one could say for certain.

Days slowly passed, and nearly half the cosmic cloud had disappeared, when a rumor took the Henali portal by storm. Someone unknown claimed to have identified the temple!

The temple was called the Temple of Fasting, and predated the arrival of the Henali in the Origin realm by billions of years. The purpose of the temple was unknown, but the person who spread the rumor claimed that the temple belonged to one of the three original deities of the Origin realm.

Who these three original deities were was no longer known, nor were there any records anywhere in the Origin realm to suggest the presence of any such entities. Either the person who spread the rumor made it all up, or all evidence of such deities was completely hidden across the entire realm!

There were many other theories, of course, but for reasons unknown, this particular theory seemed to gain the most followers. It was as if there was some mystical force, guiding the people into believing such a thing.

More days passed, and the tensions in the region grew. The Fuegan made an appearance. Not the Fuegan forces, or their many allies or servants. No, actual Fuegan appeared and clashed with the Henali in the Void.

More time passed, and the cosmic cloud was close to disappearing completely. Another rumor spread like wildfire, and was spread by the same person as last time. According to him, or her, deities from across the realm were secretly gathering around the temple. It was as if they could sense something extremely valuable within. Moreover, the rumor also stated that once the cosmic cloud disappeared completely, and the temple was fully recharged, it would disappear once again. It was not yet time for its secrets to be revealed.

More and more forces gathered outside, and many tried to gain entry, but none were successful. But they waited. They were hoping that once the temple absorbed enough energy, it would open instead of disappear, as the rumor stated.

Even the Fuegan were unable to gain entry!

That's when another rumor spread. Apparently, the appearance of this temple had something to do with the Midnight Inn. After all, it was the representative of the Inn who alerted the alliance about the anomaly on that planet.

Most of the Origin realm still had not heard of the Midnight Inn, but now they all raced to learn about it. Yet those who already knew of it were left feeling like there may be some truth to the rumors. After all, the golden keys which would always take their guests to the Inn without fail, stopped working!

No one was able to enter the Inn, although those inside could still exit. Although many defended the Inn, saying that for six months already they had announced that the Inn would close in advance, many still speculated, and looked towards the Inn with greed. Only those with something valuable would hide.

But it was pointless. Without the Inn bringing guests in itself, no one knew how to enter, or where to find it. But that only served to increase the mystery surrounding it.

While all of this was happening outside, within the temple, a beaten, battered figure groaned. Lex opened his eyes for the millionth time, but still found himself unable to move. With no alternative, he could only go back to sleep.

After all, during his sleep, his recovery was sped up exponentially. Before he closed his eyes one more time, Lex could not help but be grateful that he had merged with the blade of grass which contained the laws of regeneration. Or else he may have been left there for years, unable to move due to how devastating his condition was.

He had been reduced to a mass of flesh, resembling slime more than a human. It was only his inhuman tenacity which had kept him alive.

His mind, too fatigued, succumbed to sleep once more.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 883: Waking up

883 Waking up

The next time Lex woke up, he was feeling much better, and much worse at the same time. The entire time he was in the Void, he was more or less unconscious, so he did not know what state his body had reached in its final moments.

When he first gained consciousness, Lex actually felt nothing. He felt no pain, but he also could not sense his body. He could not open his eyes, breathe, or do anything else. He would have panicked if his mind hadn't been incredibly groggy.

He vaguely recalled Mary's voice, but he could not recall what she said. His consciousness faded soon. The next time he woke up, although the situation was not much better, he was lucid at least.

He could not feel any spirit energy in his body, or any of his other senses, so he used his spirit sense to explore the situation. That's when he discovered that he... had turned into a pile of goop!

He had turned into a vaguely spherical mush of shredded muscle, skin, fat, crushed bones and everything else that constituted his body! There was nothing about him that resembled a human!

The most alarming thing for him was when he used his spirit sense to investigate his 'body' he found that he did not even have a brain! For a moment, Lex thought he was dead, and had come back as a ghost!

But eventually he realized that his consciousness was still linked to the deformed meat ball he had turned into, and investigated further. While the rest of his body had been thoroughly pulverized, he discovered that at the very center of his being, his Golden core remained intact!

It looked dull, and as if it had suffered some wear, but otherwise was fine! There wasn't even a crack on it! But, beside his core, there were also a few items, and they had not survived unharmed the way his core had.

Pelvailins ring was covered in cracks, and seemed on the verge of breaking. So too was the case with his spatial bangle, though his necklace which carried the Silent Wanderer had fared better.

Nothing else in his possession survived, but Lex was not too disheartened. Unfortunately, search as he might, he could not discover Z anywhere near him.

Before he could converse with Mary, Lex's consciousness faded once again. When he woke up next, his situation was 'much' better. He no longer resembled a goop, and it seemed his body had regained some

semblance of shape. The mass of tissue that made up his body had spread out a bit, resembling the vague outline of a newborn baby. He also felt his meridians being reformed, connected to his Golden core!

He tried to circulate his cultivation technique, but there was not even a single drop of energy in his body. All of it was being absorbed by his core passively and being used to restore his body.

"Mary, are you there?" he asked weakly in his mind.

"Lex! Finally! You're awake! I was so worried!"

"How long have I been like this? What's going on outside? Did the battalion return safely?"

"Everything inside the Inn is very stable, though we only have around one hundred thousand guests still staying, and even they probably won't stay too long. It's been three weeks since the Inn shut down so no new guests are coming in, and things have slowed down.

"The battalion is fine! A majority of them spent only a couple of days resting before they were ready to go. A few of them are still in recovery rooms. It seems like those who have the Anachronistic Ignition bloodline all pushed themselves beyond their limits, and delayed the resulting exhaustion and bodily harm. They are now slowly allowing themselves to sustain it while the Recovery room helps them heal. Everyone else is fine. There are two major things..."

Before Mary could complete her sentence, Lex once again felt his consciousness fading. It seemed the little energy he had accumulated had all been spent in communicating with her.

Lex did not know how much time had passed, but the next time he woke up, he felt that a much longer time had gone by.

His body once again looked somewhat human, and he had reformed much of his muscles and inner organs. His bones were also reforming once again. His meridian network was by far the most recovered, and it even contained slight traces of spirit energy within!

If there was one thing that left Lex feeling a little remorseful... it was that his new body had a total height of 1 foot (30 cm)!

"Mary, how long has it been?" Lex asked, feeling tired even though he had just woken up.

"It's been an entire month since we last talked," said Mary, a hesitation in her voice.

"Lex, before you fall asleep again, there's something really important we need to discuss. It's about Velma and some devils..."

"What is it?" Lex asked, suddenly feeling alarmed. The Midnight Inn and the battalion had been targeted by devils, so he was especially sensitive to matters relating to them at the moment.

"Well... there's a group of devils who... who follow a comic series she writes, apparently. Even though she uses a pseudonym, they discovered her identity. Now, all of them, a total of 33, have come to the Inn and are constantly proposing to her!

"What's worse, she apparently had many hidden admirers. Once they discovered that the devils were trying to marry her, they all began proposing as well. Now, there's about a thousand guests following her around wherever she goes and proposing to marry her! It's.. causing certain problems.

"Velma was considering starting a harem, but fortunately Gerard returned and talked some sense into her, so she is holding off. But her suitors want to start a tournament, and claim that only the winner has the right to court her. But since you have been asleep, they can't officially start an event..."

Lex lost consciousness again.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 884: Baby Lex

884 Baby Lex

The next time Lex woke up, he felt his body was in an even better state, though he still could not control it at all. He tried opening his eyes, but he was completely unable to do so.

After that failure, Lex tried to run his cultivation technique. He was sure that if he could run a few cycles of his technique regularly, he would heal much quicker. Fortunately for him, it seemed that by now his meridians, at least, were completely healed and could withstand the energy coursing through them. Although, admittedly, they did hurt when he started cultivating once again.

As soon as he began cultivating, his body absorbed the energy greedily, as if it had been deprived for a very long time! As the flood of energy rushed into his body, he felt it diffuse into his newly formed muscles and organs, nourishing them. His bones were especially greedy and sucked up as much energy as he could absorb.

After running a couple of cycles, Lex felt exhausted again, and so fell asleep.

This turned into somewhat of a routine where he would wake up, cultivate a bit, and then fall back asleep. He could tell that he was steadily spending less and less time sleeping, and his body was becoming better and better. He lost count of how many times this process repeated itself, with no difference except him feeling slow steady progress in his healing. If he had gone by his old standards, where he would have to sleep for weeks inside the Recovery pod just to heal, then it might have taken Lex years to heal to this extent without the pod.

Eventually there came a time where Lex woke up and felt something significantly different. That was that feeling had returned to him. He could smell the air, feel the breeze, hear the world. Unfortunately, he could also feel pain!

Every inch of his entire body was in unbearable pain, which made Lex regret waking up. It wasn't as if Lex was a stranger to pain, but this time there was nothing he could do about it save to tolerate it.

He instinctively tried to groan, and heard an annoying, piercing cry that almost every human was familiar with. It was the distinctly annoying cry of a baby, wailing endlessly!

Amidst the alarm of the unexpected noise, Lex's body jerked, and he opened his eyes!

The brightness of the light nearly blinded him, and gave him a new pain to deal with, which made him cry out once more!

After a few moments of experiencing various such harrowing events, Lex realized what was happening. He no longer knew how to control his body!

It made sense, in a way. He had a new brain and a new body, kind of. But he was not expecting such an unusual trial.

If there was one thing to be grateful for, it was that this time he had plenty of energy. As such, he did not fall asleep immediately. It gave him plenty of time to experiment and figure out his movements.

It was difficult. It was like suddenly being asked to use chopsticks with your left hand. It was that sense of unfamiliarity, but multiplied and at the same time encompassing his entire body!

But as difficult as it was to relearn the intricacies of movement and coordination with a new body, Lex's superior intellect and mind ensured quick results. In just half an hour, Lex regained enough coordination to flip himself off his back and begin to crawl.

But Lex dared not go anywhere right now. First, he analyzed his surroundings and tried to detect any danger, but found none.

He found himself in a small, rectangular room with four pillars in the middle, forming a square in the center of the room. Outside the pillars, the floor was padded with a few walkways, as if designed for sitting on the floor. Within the pillars was an arena, one step down, made of one massive slab of stone. There were no doors or windows in the room, but it was well lit.

Lex seemed to be alone, for now, and was not in any danger. Just to be safe, Lex did not explore the room just yet.

He touched his spatial bangle and withdrew the blazer of his stealth suit and wore it like an oversized robe. He had no choice, as he had no clothes that fit him.

He also took out some food, spirit stones, spirit liquid, and some ores he had collected to use if ever he needed to reward Pelvailin.

During these past few days, he had tried to communicate with the ring, but received no response. However, he could feel that the spirit within had not died, it was just incredibly weak. He placed the rings on the ore, aware that the ring would absorb them on its own, strengthening itself.

With nothing else to do, he began to eat - and then failed! He could not exert any real strength with his new body yet, and had apparently not grown out his teeth as of yet. As a result, he could not eat anything!

He had no choice but to replace the food with some exceptionally soft spirit fruits he had collected for Kenta to use in his cooking. Although eating was a little difficult, he managed. That's when he realized that his stomach had become a bottomless pit. No matter what he ate, or how much of it he ate, he did not feel full at all! It was as if his body was instantly using it to nourish his body!

As he felt his fatigue returning, he made a small bed for himself of spirit stones, and applied the spirit water to his body the way one applies cologne!

He knew that the key to his recovery was absorbing as much energy as possible, so he was determined to speed up the process as much as he could!

Soon after, the baby sized Lex fell asleep once more.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 885: Evaluation

885 Evaluation

Despite having recovered a lot, the next time Lex woke up, he felt that a great amount of time had passed. Moreover, Lex felt no pain or discomfort at all! It was as if he had recovered completely! Of course, considering the fact that he still had the body of a baby, he did not believe that was the case.

"Mary, how long have I been asleep?" he asked as he inspected his surroundings for any change.

"It's been slightly over six months since the Inn closed off," she responded. "The situation at the Inn has stabilized, and there are barely a few thousand guests left. At first the guests were distressed at the lack of any events, but everyone figured that since the Inn was under renovations, it only made sense. All your pre-planned events have also finished, and so all the security you had hired have also left. The Inn is very quiet these days, comparatively."

"That's not a bad thing. Actually, that's a great thing. Once the Inn forms its own realm, I plan on using the Lockdown token to shut down the Inn for the foreseeable future. We have more than enough MP to survive, so I think it's best if we use this time wisely and grow our strength to avoid being targeted like this," Lex said, voicing the plan he had been thinking of for a while.

The Lockdown token was a token he had received as a reward for ending the invasion when he used the Butter Knife. Its purpose was extremely simple, which was that it would put the Inn in lockdown and prevent any guests from entering. This included through golden keys, the random golden door that opened sometimes, through the pro bono feature and any other way that guests could usually enter from.

Without the threat from the Henali, or any other Daolords, he would close the Inn for the foreseeable future and just cultivate. That would give him time to not only recover but grow stronger, and the same was true for his workers.

Although it was inconceivable for him at the moment, spending even a few hundred years under lockdown was not impossible. After all, the lifespan of a cultivator was exceptionally long. Moreover, he anticipated that the pure and rare energy that he and his workers would have access to when the new realm was formed would boost their cultivation a lot.

His cultivation speed would not be low, and he could possibly even become an Immortal before he decided to open the Inn back up again.

"Anyway, just maintain the status quo for now. Only alert me if something important needs my attention."

Lex turned his attention back to his predicament. It was important that he figure out the amount of strength he had in his current body, so that he could begin to explore. He had been unconscious at the

time, so he had no idea that he had entered the massive temple, pulled along by Z, though he vaguely had some idea.

Mary had naturally heard about the temple through the various guests' discussions. After all, although they were stuck at the Inn, they could use the Henali portal to learn what was happening inside.

But no one had seen them enter the temple, so Mary also did not know that Lex had entered, otherwise she would have mentioned it.

Lex, who had begun to teethe, summoned some food and began to chew as he inspected his body and surroundings.

The room looked the same as before, but Lex looked considerably different. He really did look like a newborn, and his rock-hard body and rippling muscles had been replaced with soft, cuddly baby fat!

Moreover, his blazer had triggered a hidden feature which was to adjust itself to his size, so now he just looked like a baby wearing a suit. While that was a good thing, since he could wear pants now, Lex could not deal with the fact that he looked like a kid on halloween pretending to be a businessman!

If there was one silver lining to the situation, it was that his body, although small, retained his peak strength from before he was injured! In fact, since his cultivation had grown due to absorbing a lot of divine energy, he was at his strongest state ever!

Lex continued to eat as he planned out his next moves. He had to find Z, but at the same time...

Lex opened up his system interface, and from the market bought a blank ticket for 1 million MP!

The use of this ticket was simple. It would begin the binding process of his current location to the Inn. Since he clearly was no longer in the 'Void' and had returned to normal, stable space, it would be good to build another connection, regardless of where he was.

With that activated, Lex finished his meal and went through a round of cultivation. He was hoping that eating and cultivation would somehow restore his height. But, so far, there was no indication of such a thing happening.

He was not too worried about getting his normal body back just yet. He was sure that if nothing else, he could find a reliable way through the Infinity Emporium.

Once he was done, Lex stood up for the first time in months. He still had not mastered controlling his new body yet, so he began to practice. Slowly and steadily he walked on the pathways in the outer section of the room, trying to regain his mastery over his actions.

This process, while simple, took a few hours. But by the end, not only was he once again confident in his movement, but was sure that he was back at his previous level of precision and agility.

His improved intellect and comprehension played a great role in speeding up the process. He put on his ring, necklace and spatial bangle once more. The ring had recovered somewhat, but the bangle and necklace still looked like they needed repairs. Lex was especially careful with his bangle because he could not afford the repercussions of his many missiles exploding if the bangle broke somehow!

During this time, Lex had thoroughly investigated the room besides the arena at its core. He suspected that stepping into the arena might initiate a change, which is why he had left it for until he was completely ready. With nothing else to do, Lex directly stepped onto the arena.

A yellow light scanned his body, from bottom to top, before a monotone voice began an announcement.

"Human male detected.

Bone age: 2 months.

Cultivation: Golden core mid.

Cultivation talent: Primordial!

Special Physique: Empyrean Resonance! Soulforge Unity! (Error: 2 independent physiques detected!)

Bloodline: Mutations detected. Unknown bloodline!

Evaluation: Exceeds expectations. Viable for core disciple status!

Proceeding with the relevant test."

Lex raised an eyebrow as he heard the announcement. He had to say, he was quite impressed with what he heard. Moreover, what was that about him having special physiques? And two of them at that! Moreover, he had a mutated bloodline?

Well, with mysterious parents he supposed it made sense that he was not ordinary. But what surprised him the most was that after all of that, his evaluation was only 'exceeds expectations'? It was not remarkable? Or unbelievable? Lex actually felt somewhat offended at the low evaluation!

Before he could continue to ponder the scale of the evaluations error, a figure teleported into the arena. Lex had to look up at what seemed like a suit of black armor, designed for an ordinary man. It did not look remarkable in any way, except that it was empty and wielded a massive, eight foot (2.4 meters) long sword!

The suit of armor tilted its helmet down, as if to look at the baby in front of it.

Although there was no one inside the armor, Lex felt as if he could sense some kind of condescension from the armor.

It raised its foot, as if to step on Lex, but before he could do anything, a baby appeared in front of it and kicked it on its chestplate!

As if ripping through a piece of paper, the tiny foot tore through the plate and flung the armor across the arena, causing it to drop the sword right there.

Lex, who had not vented his anger as of yet, grabbed the sword that was literally eight times his height, and swung viciously at the armor, slicing it in half!

Lex snorted upon seeing that the armor lost its power, but before long, two more such armors appeared within the arena. This time, they did not belittle the shrimp, mostly because they did not get a chance to.

Lex used the opportunity to both vent his anger, and practice his swordplay against actual opponents.

How dare this stupid place give him such an evaluation and look down on him? He would make sure to set the record straight.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 886: Working with babies...

886 Working with babies...

Fighting could be barbaric, or it could be beautiful. It could be precise and meticulously planned, or it could be completely intuitive. Lex had seen many people whose fighting styles had left an impression on him.

Gisele, for example, was an exceptionally deadly fighter, yet her each and every movement was filled with grace and elegance. Even killing became an art when she did it. She was an unstoppable force, but a very fluid one as well.

Alexander was also someone who had his own distinct fighting style. Every attack, parry, block, or dodge was tinged with the aura of exceptional experience. To even fight with him, one would actually have to be much superior to him in either skill, which was unlikely, or surpass him by a large margin in strength and speed. Only then could an actual 'fight' occur. Otherwise, if anyone were even remotely close to him in ability, his endless experience would result in Alexander ending the fight in just a couple of moves.

Marlo gave one the impression that he would fight like a barbarian, but he was actually a very intelligent fighter. His every move was thoroughly thought out, yet designed to deceive.

Everyone would bring their own personality into their fighting style, regardless of the type of combat they had learned. This was why there was a difference even between two people with a similar level of mastery of the same fighting style.

Lex's fighting style also depicted his mental state at the moment. It was extremely brutal and lethal, yet it was not wasteful at all. It was brutal because it leveraged his absurd physical strength. It was lethal because he only struck at his enemy's weak points. It was efficient because he did not need to attack a single enemy twice!

Like a child on a sugar rush let loose in a playground, Lex bounced from one corner of the arena to another, the massive sword not impeding him in the slightest. He was like a tiny, cute hurricane, leaving only destruction in its wake.

Lex was only getting warmed up when, upon destroying 10 armors at the same time, new ones stopped appearing, giving Lex an unneeded respite.

Lex snorted and studied the arena for any changes while he mentally reviewed his swordsmanship. His new... stature meant that his previous style was ill suited, so he had now gone even farther from manifesting sword intent.

Before he could dissect his technique further, Lex was teleported away, and brought to what looked like a private bedroom. There was a medium sized single bed, a cupboard, a table and a restroom. There was even an open door leading out into a corridor.

Lex, still wielding his massive sword, felt a little discontent at the situation. It seemed like his test was over. Putting the sword in his spatial bangle, Lex ventured out to begin exploring his surroundings.

There was an unnatural silence in the area, so that his every movement caused sounds that echoed across the halls, reaching far and wide. The sound of his steps, his breathing, the rustle of his clothes rubbing against one another, they were all magnified to an unnatural state. This was even considering the fact that he was wearing the stealth suit, which naturally reduced all sounds!

There was definitely something unusual about this place to have such an effect. It was as if it purposefully magnified his presence so that it was impossible to sneak up on anyone.

Yet as he emerged from the room, Lex discovered that the place was completely empty. He strolled down the corridor and saw countless other rooms, but each and every one of them was empty and untouched.

As Lex explored, he spread his spirit sense out as much as possible, but did not discover anything unusual at all. It was as if he was walking through an empty hostel. As he ventured deeper in, he saw other kinds of rooms that looked like they could be classrooms, auditoriums and such.

"Where the hell am I?" Lex could not help but murmur.

"You are definitely not in hell, young man!" a stern voice scolded Lex, and a projection of an unusual being appeared in front of him.

The being was thin and humanoid, wearing a white sleeveless robe with yellow borders. It had grayish-blue skin, unusually long fingers, and an oval face. It had no hair, but the top of its head was unusually shaped, as if its skull itself was forming a hairstyle.

"You are in the Temple of Fasting! This is a divine place where one can improve themselves through trials of fire and blood! Only the most noble and notable figures throughout history were allowed to enter this place. Count your blessings that you are among them."

Lex did not respond immediately, but instead studied the figure for a while. He was not startled by the appearance of the projection. Instead, he was wondering why it had not appeared earlier.

"I only said so because this place seemed so abandoned. Is there no one else here? I had a companion, but I can't seem to find them. Do you know where he might be?"

The figure clicked his tongue as he looked down at Lex with derision, but eventually answered anyway.

"Of course, this place is empty. It has been hidden away, for reasons that you have no business knowing. But even so, a heavy destiny has been placed upon your shoulders, little one. As a companion to a descendant of his majesty, and as someone who has a sufficient evaluation, I must bequeath a task unto you of grave importance. Completing the task will also bring you closer to reuniting with your companion."

"So you know where Z is? I don't mind helping you out, but I need to know the situation first, starting with where Z is, who is his ancestor, and why do you need my help?"

The figure looked like he was about to snap at Lex, but then closed his eyes and took a deep breath.

"This is why I hate working with babies," he muttered under his breath.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 887: The best in the universe

887 The best in the universe

Lex controlled his emotions, though he felt especially triggered upon being called a baby. But he understood that he literally could not blame the projection, for he literally had a bone age of a few months.

"Follow me as I explain things," the projection said, rubbing its forehead. Lex felt the projection was being unnecessarily dramatic. Why was answering a few questions such a hassle?

Nevertheless, as the projection began to walk through the halls, Lex followed.

"The Temple of fasting is a special place, but for certain reasons, I cannot get into the details of it. All I can say is that it was hidden away for good reason. Although being discovered was somewhat unanticipated, it is still acceptable. What was completely unexpected was that the temple sensed your companion was closely related to a very notable figure, and thus brought him in. After all, it is his right!

"But the opening of the temple created a momentary weakness in its otherwise impenetrable defense. Besides you two, who were welcomed in on purpose, a few other entities have also entered. Among them, one is a living curse that is partially sealed, one is a broken law that has gained life, three of them are devils, and the last one is the most problematic. The last one is a divine projection of a Deity!

"Do you understand? Because of you two, the temple is now in serious jeopardy! For both the sake of your entire realm, and the temple, the deity at least needs to be killed immediately! Unfortunately, the temple has no living guards left! I can only rely on you!"

Lex frowned. He recalled sensing a curse being sealed deep within BGY-987, and guessed that is where the living curse came from. He had no idea where the broken law came from, but guessed that the devils were amongst the ones who were trying to hurt him. The devils were the least of their problems, though he could not gauge the danger of the law and curse. But Ra's clone definitely needed to die!

But the issue was...

"Why can you only rely on me? What happened to Z? Moreover, why is Ra a danger to the whole realm?"

"Your companion is currently in a special state, and undergoing an evolution deep within the temple. He cannot be disturbed, so that leaves only you as my option. The devils, the curse and the law are all potential problems as well, but they cannot circumvent the temple's internal defenses. Only the deity has that possibility and is, in fact, doing so! If he reaches deep within the temple, he will mess with things he does not understand. If the Temple of Fasting is compromised, it will attract enemies your realm cannot face."

"That still doesn't answer my question. Why rely on me, and not the devils, or the curse or even the law? Well, for the last two I cannot make a judgment, but I know for a fact that devils are all amiable to deals. They would happily help you out."

"It's not possible. The Temple of fasting is specifically designed solely for humans! It is the ultimate place for humans to train. I dare say that in the entire universe, there is no place more suitable for training for humans than the Temple of Fasting! It is almost impossible for any other race to travel freely through the temple. But, even for humans, there is a system you have to go through to get access to the various areas. I can help you a bit by lowering the difficulty of some tests, but ultimately, you have to gain access to the rest of the temple yourself. It's extremely important that you do not fail. The deity has been making his way to the center of the temple for months now. He is close."

"If you fail, the trouble that the deity causes will result in the doom of the entire realm. The temple will just go and hide somewhere else, but everyone else will be doomed - your companion included! But if you succeed, not only will you save all those lives, you will personally benefit as well. The temple will aid you in your training, and you will grow stronger with each level of the temple you get access to."

A gleam flashed through Lex's cute little eyes as he thought of something. He was not concerned about the difficulty of the temples' tests, as he had every confidence in himself. Moreover, he would have aided the projection in killing Ra, regardless of anything else. But since there were benefits, how could he just let them go?

"How can you aid in my training?" Lex asked as he considered the viability of his plan. Although he did not have a way to prove the projections boast about the temple being the best place for humans to train, it would be useful for him and his workers, even if its results were above average.

The projection turned and gave Lex another derisive look.

"There is nothing the temple cannot train you in. We're here. Step onto the platform and you will be scanned again. Let's see what you need training in. To reach the deity, you will need to pass 7, maybe 8 levels of the temple based on how quickly the deity can move.

"Besides your own skills and talents, one of the things I will have the temple train you in is how to combat deities. I wouldn't want you to catch up, only to be stunned by the aura of the deity."

In a new room that looked much like an auditorium, Lex stepped onto the slightly raised, circular platform the projection was pointing towards. A familiar yellow light scanned him and began announcing his traits, causing the projection to freeze.

Deep within the temple, there was a massive yet unlit room. At the head of this room was a large statue of a being with the upper body of a woman, her countenance majestic and holy, garbed in a resplendent dress, and the lower body of a snake, giving her a blend of ethereal beauty and serpentine grace.

Beside her was a smaller statue of a man dressed like a king, his facial expression depicting strength and wisdom beyond ordinary reach. In front of that statue, Z sat on the ground with his legs crossed, deep in meditation. Oddly enough, the statue looked a lot like Z, only much older.

The Innkeeper

Chapter 888: Second scan

888 Second scan

Lex suppressed the gloating feeling in his heart as he observed the stunned projection. This was nothing to be proud over, as this was only the appropriate reaction one should have when learning about Lex's qualities. It was nothing special.

Although, Lex had to admit that this platform he was standing on was a lot more thorough and gave a more in-depth evaluation of him.

"Human male detected.

Bone age: 2 months.

Cultivation: Golden core mid.

Cultivation talent: Primordial!

Special Physique: Empyrean Resonance! Soulforge Unity! (Error: 2 independent physiques detected!)

Bloodline: Mutations detected. Unknown bloodline!

Affinities: Defense, Law, Space, Regeneration, Healing, Metal, Wood, Nature, Soul, Spirit, Prophecy, Domination, Divinity... Error! Traces of 112 partially formed affinities detected!

Bonds: Newborn Fenrir with 100% bloodline purity, Dragon Treasure spirit, World Seed Lotus (Partial)!

Innate abilities: Eye of Infinite Paths, Mindmeld, Prophetic Intuition, Herculean strength!

Skills: Arrays, Talismans, Formations, Swordsmanship, Close combat, Marksmanship, Aura Suppression, Aura Manipulation, Soul Sense!

Universal Blessings: None.

Curses: None.

Affiliated Divinity: Two distinct incomplete divinity traces detected!

For a further detailed analysis, please attain Core Member status!"

Lex raised an eyebrow as he contemplated everything he heard. There were still things the analysis had not mentioned, such as the inscriptions in his body and, fortunately, the presence of the system hidden within his soul!

But even so, there were many things the scan had revealed about himself that he did not understand. Lately, he had been asking Pelvailin all the questions he had, but this also seemed like a good opportunity to get some answers.

He looked at the frozen projection with schadenfreude and asked, "the previous scan also mentioned many things, but I am not familiar with them all. Do you know what it means? Can you explain it to me?"

Freed from his surprise, the projection gathered himself and looked at Lex in a new light. At least his sense of derision was gone.

"Yes, even if you did not ask, I was going to go over everything systematically so you fully understand everything. You attaining sufficient skill and ability are paramount to killing that deity, so we have to start by capitalizing on your existing skills and abilities before moving onto new ones. Or at least, that was my original plan. That will have to be amended for now.

"Let's start with your bone age. I doubt you need an explanation for that. There is a difference between bone age and soul age, so why are we measuring your bone age? This is because, in humans, the younger the body, the greater its learning capability. If there was no urgency due to the situation, I

would say that you have entered the temple in the best state possible! I would have designed a 100 year training program for you that would have made you more powerful than you can even imagine!

"But we have no time for that. All you need to keep in mind is that everything will be easier for you to understand right now than it will be later on. That is not to say you cannot learn new things at a greater age! Not at all. In fact, the benefits of a greater age are also phenomenal, but just that for your purpose now, your age is perfect!

"Next up is your cultivation. The ideal would have been if you entered as a mortal, but once again that would also only be in the situation where we didn't need to kill a deity. As it is, Golden core will have to suffice. We do not have time to raise your cultivation.

"Then... then comes your cultivation talent."

At this point the projection stopped speaking, and looked at Lex as if he were some kind of monster.

"Your measured cultivation talent has surpassed the genetic and biological limit of your race. It's not as if such a thing has never happened before. It's just that... it's exceedingly rare, and each time was a result of very extraordinary circumstances. With your cultivation talent, I would recommend you do not leave the Temple until become an immortal, at the very least. It would be a shame if you died due to your own weakness in this brutal universe."

The projection paused once again, its thoughts unknown. Eventually, it continued speaking as if it no longer wished to dwell on the topic - it seemed to have brought back bad memories.

"The next is your physique. This is very unusual, as you seem to have 2 different physiques, or possibly even more! But the scanner is having an issue because it's impossible to have more than one physique, as you only have one body! What the scanner is detecting are the associated abilities of each physique.

"Both of them are exceptionally rare, so to see them together is mind-boggling! The first is the Empyrean Resonance. I must say that this is one of the most sought after physiques in the universe in every single race! Unfortunately, its result is not always good for the one who has it. This physique can, under the influence of many factors, cause an evolution through resonance in its race members! That is to say, this physique brings you little to no benefit, but is of great use to the human race!

"If it is ever detected by someone significant enough, it is not an exaggeration to say that you may be captured, and then used to forcefully bring about an evolution in others. The good thing is that you yourself can also benefit from these evolutions, so if you learn how to control it, you can cause yourself to evolve in a direction of your choosing! In essence, you can use your physique to multiply the effects and changes brought about by your cultivation technique!"

The projections' words were like a clap of thunder in his ears and stunned Lex.

What the hell? As if he didn't have enough problems trying to hide the system, now he had to hide the ability of his body as well?

"Then comes the ability of your second physique..."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 889: Training direction

Lex's mind was spinning as he considered the implications of his physique. The projection had spoken about it simply, but he was curious to the scale and extent of the evolution he could cause. What were triggers for such an evolution? Could he specifically target someone, or did it happen randomly? How could he hide this ability, or prevent it from showing?

Did... did his parents know about his physique? But that would still not explain why they kept cultivation a secret from him! Did they... perhaps want to use his physique for themselves? But if they had, they would have kept a closer watch on him, and probably already used it already.

Then again, there was no proof they knew about it at all. Even Lex had no idea about his own physique until right now, so how could they have learnt about it?

"Then comes the ability of your second physique," said the projection, disturbing Lex's thoughts, and restoring his attention to the matter at hand.

"Soulforge Unity is also exceptionally rare, but it has its benefits and drawbacks. If you don't have an appropriate cultivation technique, it could be harmful for you! But if you do, you will almost always be superior to your peers! It basically means your soul has fused with your physical body and spirit.

"Right now, you may already be enjoying some of its benefits, such as increased strength and defense, as well as a higher intellect and memory - basically a boost in performance in all aspects. But you have not even begun to touch upon the true benefits such a physique offers. At the Nascent realm you will unlock a few more abilities, but it truly comes into play at the Immortal level!

"This is one of the few physiques that stays relevant regardless of your level, and actually becomes more effective as you grow stronger. Other physiques gradually weaken in effect as you yourself grow stronger. We can evaluate your cultivation technique later. This is one of the reasons why I said we will have to make do with your Golden core cultivation. If you need to transition to a different one that suits your physique, you will have to recultivate from the beginning."

"No need," Lex said, having already collected himself. It did not matter how dangerous his first physique was as he was going to lock the Inn for the foreseeable future. He did not intend on interacting with others any time soon. He could slowly come up with a solution to his problem.

Moreover, he suspected that his Soulforge Unity physique was originally supposed to be Regal Physique, but since he changed cultivation techniques, it settled into this. What truly intrigued him was when the projection said that he may have even more physiques, but that the scanner could not detect them. This was because typically, one person could only have one physique. Having two or more should result in their fusion, which would more than likely produce an adverse effect rather than a beneficial one.

But due to his cultivation technique, Lex served as an exception to this rule. Or maybe his original physique played a part in it as well. Maybe it helped him evolve in such a way that he could maintain the benefits of multiple physiques without losing them.

"My cultivation technique can cater to the situation with my soul. I will have no problems progressing further."

The projection paused, and studied Lex once more. He knew just how difficult it was to get one's hands on such a technique, since even the temple had only a few of them. It seemed this baby's background was not simple. But then again, considering his companion and his own qualifications, it only made sense.

"The next is your bloodline. The scanner detected mutations within your bloodline, but also that your bloodline is unknown. That is not something unusual. New bloodlines form all the time, and the temple has been hidden for too long. But even so, we have the means to study your bloodline and design the best possible training for it, so you do not need to be concerned on that front.

"Instead, it's the next section that will cause an issue, your affinities. One, two, maybe even three affinities is something you can deal with. But with so many affinities... child, the issue is not even if you can master them anymore. You can ignore them, and study them one by one with time. If a year is not enough then 10, if that is not enough then a 100, if that is not enough then a 1000! As a cultivator, your lifespan will not trouble you, especially once you become an immortal.

"But the issue is... with so many affinities, your tribulation will be magnified for each affinity you contain. As of right now, that's 125 affinities! Your tribulation will be 125 times more difficult than ordinary! I'm not saying it's impossible to overcome, but it will be a huge headache! The reason for the increased difficulty has to do with laws, and is not something you should think about right now. Although it's troublesome, the temple can help you. The reason I'm mentioning this to you is that... I strongly suspect you have a method to gain affinities on your own! If so, I strongly recommend you to stop, at least until you become an immortal first! Each new affinity will increase the difficulty of your tribulation!"

Lex, who was completely ready to feel smug, felt as if a bucket of cold water had been dumped over his head. What was this nonsense? His tribulation would become more difficult for each affinity he had? That was absurd! What kind of rule was this?

"That... that doesn't make sense. How is that fair?" Lex could not help but mutter. He was planning on absorbing more items with laws during the Inn's lockdown. Now his plans had been thwarted.

The projection could not help but click his tongue. The baby could pick up affinities on a whim, but the increased difficulty in the tribulation was the unfair part?

"Nonetheless, your affinities are still useful for you now, especially since you even have one for divinity! This will play a big role in aiding you to kill the deity inside the temple. I plan on focusing your immediate training in this direction. If you have any other affinities you would like to focus on, you can suggest them now, but I recommend that you do not focus on too many. The fewer you focus on, the more time you will be able to give each one."

"Space affinity," Lex said immediately. "Everything aside, I need to increase my mastery of space as much as possible."

Although space would be useful in combat, he needed to improve his mastery of it for other reasons. When going out to save the battalion, he already considered that he may get stuck outside of it. He had

already made plans if such a thing should happen, but the better his mastery of space, the greater confidence he would have in completing his plan.

"Alright, focusing on Divinity and Space is still manageable. By the way, once the matter with the deity is resolved, I would suggest you also focus on Regeneration or Healing. It's not a bad thing to be able to heal or recover quickly. But since we are pressed for time, we can ignore it for now.

"Next up are your innate abilities. These all come to you innately, and can be practiced simultaneously. They will not slow you down, and in fact, the gains you receive will be tremendous for the amount of effort. Herculean strength, especially, seems so ordinary and mundane, but is, in my opinion, one of the best abilities to unlock!

"Prophetic Intuition will also be an incredible asset in combating the deities' more elusive and mystical techniques. Such an ability, should I say that you're lucky or that you're tremendously lucky? If you ever decide to become an oracle, you could casually pick any random divination art and get better results than most! But I don't recommend you go down that path. It comes with too many drawbacks.

"Your skills are quite diverse. I will have to see your proficiency in them before picking which one to focus on, as they could all be beneficial in your hunt. Or, if you have a preference you can mention it yourself."

Lex thought for a minute. While he had many thoughts on the matter, he thought now was a good time to further expand his swordsmanship since it could help him suppress that sword in his soul. Speaking of which, that sword had also not been detected by the scan. Was there a specific reason for that?

"Swordsmanship," he said simply without elaborating.

"Alright, not a problem. Moving on, it's no surprise that you have no Universal Blessing. Those are not so easy to come by. It's also fortunate that you are not suffering from any curses. But your affiliated divinities... they may as well be curses as well."

The Innkeeper

Chapter 890: Half a Deity Slayer

Lex had already realized that everything he had accumulated was not necessarily for the best. He used to think that gaining more affinities was beneficial, and while it was to an extent, the price was similarly steep. The worst part was, Lex had so many affinities that as of right now he could not even capitalize on the benefits they should have provided him.

So now he was stuck with the price without gaining any of the benefits. It was as if he bought a hundred manual cars, the bank had sent him the bill with a deadline, but he did not even know how to move his legs, let alone drive!

To be honest, he was navigating his cultivation without proper or systematic guidance, and he often came in contact with amazing opportunities so he could not be blamed for always trying to grab onto them. But it seemed that, sometimes, it was better to give up those opportunities than latch onto them.

He listened to the projection seriously as he was about to discuss the matter regarding his divinity. He did not know why he put so much faith in the projection - it was as if something deep inside of him did not doubt a single word he said, despite the fact that he kept being looked down on.

"If you were anyone else, I would guide you to the path of divinity. There is a predefined, systematic way in which you can transition from cultivating yourself to cultivating divinity. The benefits you get on the path of divinity are tremendous. Not only can you grow your strength at an incomparable speed, but you can also avoid the traditional tribulations you would have to experience.

"Moreover, compared to the average cultivator, a deity is always more powerful and is a lot more versatile. They are also harder to kill, and have longer lifespans. At a glance, it seems like there are only endless benefits and no drawbacks. But the truth is, to someone incredibly talented, such as yourself, the divinity path is a leash, holding you back from fulfilling your true potential.

"First of all, as a deity, your life-force will be inextricably linked to your believers. That means, regardless of how strong you are, if someone targets your believers and kills them all, and your associated belief vanishes, you are at risk of certain death or, at the very least, a severe drop in power! That's because deities don't absorb energy in the normal way. They absorb divine energy channeled to them through their believers.

"Your growth will also be linked to the growth of your associated belief or beliefs. You will also be inevitably trapping yourself, for a deity can only travel either where his or her belief exists, or in special areas filled with divine energy so that it can sustain their existence.

"Although saying such a thing is being too hopeful, deities also have an upper limit to their growth, after which, regardless of how much their belief grows, they will not grow fundamentally stronger. While that limit is too far from you, and there is no guarantee you will ever even reach it, you at least have the potential to do so.

"Much more importantly, someone with the opportunities that you have definitely has the potential to surpass deities on the same level. There is basically no reason for you to make such a transition.

"But the issue is, there are already two distinct traces of divinity on you, and they are both strong enough to be detected. That means that there are two separate beliefs forming around you or your actions, and that your body has already received some of the associated divine energy and begun to form a shell of your divinity. Fortunately, someone or something seems to have absorbed all the divine energy instead of letting it store in your body.

"Despite having an affinity for divinity, if divine energy harnessed from a specific belief begins to store within your body, it will be like poison in your system. It will directly clash with the spiritual energy in your body, and put you at great risk for cultivation deviation! That is why my suggestion to you will be to remove both of those from your body.

"But worry not. Removing them does not mean you will lose out on benefits. Instead, you'll be able to use them even better than you currently can! The divinity will be moved from you to an iconic or symbolic item, which you can then bond with. The items will continue to grow stronger as the belief grows, and can become exceptionally strong weapons or tools if the belief reaches a sufficient level!

"Speaking of bonds, we have completely skipped discussing your bonds so far. There's a reason for that. Typically, bonded items and creatures don't directly increase your own strength. While you have some... unusual bonds, that seems to be the case for you as well. I would not recommend bonding to too many items or beings until you reach the immortal level.

"However... there are still some things we still need to discuss regarding your bonds. I... you, eh, the bond you have with the World Seed Lotus... That is quite an unusual bond, not to mention it is in a partial state. If we can study it, or if you can explain the details to me, we may be able to use this to give you a major boost quite quickly. It can even help in restraining the deity.

"The same is the case with the Fenrir. Actually, Fenrir's are particularly potent against deities, so if it is strong enough, it could be extremely useful. Though, since the temple is focused on human development, I cannot help you strengthen the Fenrir.

"Actually, if your Dragon Treasure spirit has been close to any real dragons, and has absorbed some of their aura, then that could be useful as well. It's almost like you're already halfway into being a Deity Slayer on your own!"