

## Innkeeper 894

The Innkeeper

Chapter 894: Boulder bath

Lex followed Mateo through the massive laboratory as it woke up from its ancient slumber. There seemed to be a noticeable lag in response, as certain doors opened after half a second, and the lights flickered on just a moment after they had already entered a room.

Lex did not mind, for it was acceptable for such things to be slowed down after such a long period of time. His only concern was what other issues might present when he began to actually use some of these facilities - such as a room designed to support the bonding of a planet!

Just as he was reconsidering his course of action, they reached the aforementioned room. It was... surprisingly mundane. It was square and barely 1000 square feet large (92 square meters). The walls were padded, but besides that the room lacked any other distinguishing feature.

In the very middle was a bathtub that looked like it had been carved out of a boulder and placed here. There was no other furniture there, or anything else for that matter. Lex failed to see how this could be a good room to build a bond, unless bathing had something to do with it.

As it turned out, it did.

"Wear this," the projection said, materializing a skintight gray suit. It had random bulges here and there, with something clearly hidden inside but Lex could not tell what it was. He eyed the projection curiously, but Mateo kept holding it out.

Lex grabbed it and began to undress, quickly changing into the unusual attire. It also came with a mask that was positively unflattering, but Lex put it on anyway.

"When you get in the tub, it will slowly fill with a certain liquid. You don't need to worry, it won't harm you, but you will feel like it will. You will feel a massive pressure weighing you down, but the suit you're wearing will keep you from getting hurt. Once your body is completely submerged, that is when I recommend that you wake up the Lotus and begin your conversation. I strongly suspect that the Lotus will agree once you share the information I have given you.

"The bonding process for the Lotus will be different. Here, take this. It records the technique you can use to maximize your compatibility while the bond forms. The process will be long, and you will get immediate feedback due to the bond. The Lotus will also use your body to absorb the liquid, which will once again put a lot of pressure on you, but do not be alarmed as you will be perfectly safe throughout."

Lex grabbed the memory crystal the projection held out, and scanned it with his spirit sense. The technique was simple enough, and he learnt it after a single reading. He was not sure how intense the pressure Mateo mentioned would be, but Lex was fairly confident in himself. A tiny body though he may have, it did not in any way diminish his strength.

The only thing that left him somewhat concerned... was that Mateo had mentioned that sentimental immortals bonded planets. Was it safe for him to do so while he was in the Golden core?

Lex put those thoughts out of his mind and lay down in the tub, barely occupying 10% of it with his tiny body.

"I am reminding you once again, do not be concerned. It's some pressure, but your suit will protect you. Your mask will allow you to breathe normally. Just relax your mind, and focus on the lotus and the bond. Ignore everything else."

Mateo repeatedly telling him not to be concerned did not raise any flags at all for Lex. After all, it was exactly when there was nothing to be concerned about that one usually said not to worry!

Lex had closed his eyes and focused on his breathing, yet the moment the liquid entered the tub and touched Lex, he knew why Mateo kept reminding him. The liquid, which seemed to seep out of the boulder itself, was piercing cold to the touch, but that was not the issue.

The issue was that as soon as a single drop of it touched his body, Lex felt as if a mountain had been smashed onto him! The liquid was barely touching him, and had not even submerged him yet, but Lex felt a pressure greater than he had ever felt! Even the crushing might of the Void that had turned him into a meatball could not compare to the pressure. Then another drop of liquid touched Lex, and the pressure doubled!

Lex tried to move his body, to determine if he could move at all, and to his great relief found that there was no obstruction in movement. The fact that he could move his body, even after being under such immense pressure, indicated that the effect was psychological rather than physical. After all, he would not be able to move if he really had been under such pressure.

It felt like Lex had been buried deep underground and thousands upon thousands of tonnes of soil and been dumped atop of him. After that a couple of mountains had been dropped on him as well. Maybe a few nuclear and hydrogen bombs were blown up above him as well just for good measure.

Reigning in his thoughts that seemed somewhat panicked after the initial surprise, Lex waited for his body to be submerged so that he could wake up the Lotus.

What he didn't know was that Mateo was flabbergasted upon noticing that Lex could actually move!

This liquid weighed 1000 tonnes per drop, and had the unusual property of affecting gravity of anything it touched. That meant that even if the drop was under Lex, he would feel the pressure as if it was atop him. The weight of his liquid could even be felt in zero gravity areas, such as space, that is how unusual it was.

He had not expected Lex to be able to move under the weight of even one drop, but he seemed fine even after a few of them were touching him!