

## The Fall 1016

### [Chapter 1016 - Being Remembered](#)

Zac's heart beat with anticipation as he picked up the inlaid tome. Unsurprisingly, its pages were filled with the unfamiliar scripts of the First People. Of course, they were no longer unfamiliar, thanks to the seal in his mind.

'Solevur opened her eyes and gazed upon an endless void. She was the first of the first, the originator of all.'

Zac read the first couple of pages and soon realized its contents had nothing to do with Dasorm or his creation. Neither was it a skill or technique. The book was a primer on the First People. Their biology, culture, history, and way of life. Their origin, their feats, and most likely their fall. Zac felt a pang of sorrow and futility upon holding the book. Such a powerful civilization, all but erased by the river of time.

He could feel the pain of seeing millions of years of progress get wiped out in the tome. The desperate desire to leave at least a small mark on the cosmos. How many others like them were there? How many cataclysms had there been that erased all but the inheritance of rarified few who had managed to reach beyond the Dao and brush Eternity?

Zac sighed and put the tome away. He'd read it at a later time. Mostly because he was truly interested after seeing the vision and encountering this great fortune, but also because it might provide some contextual information to his newfound wealth of knowledge. Finally, Zac turned to the crystal. It was a bit of a letdown that the tome didn't contain anything related to cultivation or the Void, but he could tell the crystal wasn't simple.

Picking it up, Zac felt dozens of tendrils burrow into his hand. It was Void Energy, steadily replenishing what he'd just lost to nurture the pick hammer. It wasn't a huge amount though, not even at the level of using a Void Beast core. However, Zac noted with interest the energy within the crystal didn't decrease at all.

Zac tried to scan it a few times but couldn't understand the incredibly complex crystal patterns within. He couldn't even determine whether it was a Natural Treasure or something crafted. However, he did figure out that it really wasn't losing energy to provide him with a steady stream of the Void. It was just like the Remnants.

The crystal was either generating Void Energy out of nowhere or absorbing it from another dimension. Zac thoughtfully looked at the thing for a few seconds before releasing some of his Branch of the Kalpataru. The air crackled a bit from exposure to the 'poison' of the new era, but the crystal had a far more interesting reaction.

It shimmered and gained a golden hue that formed a small bubble around it, and the tendrils of Void Energy suddenly gained a different flavor. They had become attuned, but not with Dao. Zac couldn't be certain, but after practicing the [Void Vajra Sublimation] for years, he was quite confident the Void Energy was imbued with the Void of Life.

Releasing the Branch of the Pale Seal produced a similar effect. The crystal acted like a Mirror, taking in and inverting the Dao Zac showed. The outside environment wouldn't even harm it since it continuously exuded Void Energy and Void of Dao that nullified anything that touched it. As such, there was no need to use it right now, so Zac placed it in a sealing box and stowed it away in a Spatial Ring.

Was the thing perhaps a contingency by the First People? They knew the poison would soon cover the cosmos, so they invented a way for the inheritors to connect to the Void. Thanks to his bloodline, Zac didn't need it for [Cosmic Forge], but it was still an amazing find. Instead, he could use it to drastically strengthen the Void of Life and Death in his Cosmic Core. With this as a foundational item, he would increase the speed with which he'd form the core and improve the result. It might even allow his Cosmic Core to generate Void Energy naturally.

Initially, Zac had planned on using a mix of the [Stone of Celestial Void] and various Void-related items as a base for his core, but this crystal was far superior. It was like a generator that produced both Void and Void of Dao. Conversely, the [Stone of Celestial Void] 'only' contained terrifying amounts of Void Energy and Vigor, making it much more suitable for bloodline improvements.

There was no description or name for the crystal, so Zac named it the [Void Engine]. Zac spent the next couple of minutes trying out various things. The Dao inversion was magical, but it made Zac think of something. He thoughtfully took out the spherical egg he'd picked up from the brazier outside. The egg-like item hummed ominously as he put it closer to the [Void Engine]. Zac had expected as much and quickly moved it away.

The Fate Kernels were created using some simplified theories of the [Void Engine], and it looked like using the two together would unravel the kernel. In other words, he wouldn't be able to use the empty Fate Kernel for himself. Still, Zac fully believed what he'd gained instead was far superior, especially considering there were no guarantees these improved empty kernels would work with his constitution.

[Cosmic Forge] was an amazing gift that would solve many of his problems while increasing his self-sufficiency. However, it would take a long time before its true value showed itself in a way that could either bring in money or improve his combat strength. Conversely, the [Void Engine] would provide almost immediate benefits for his Core Formation.

He was getting close. The [Hollow Core] from the Orom World to hold the nascent nucleus of the Cosmic Core. The [Calamity Core] to instill it with the first breath of Pure Life and Death. And now, he had the [Void Engine] to provide Void Energy and the Void of Dao. The only thing missing was a foundational treasure for Conflict and a boatload of Mana before he was all set.

Zac looked around the empty courtyard, but there was nothing else. The base materials in the structure were actually incredibly mundane now that the star was gone and not worth bothering over. Zac even suspected the building itself wasn't something left behind by the First People. Rather, it had been formed from the energy in the sun, using any random nearby material. It would have been another matter if it had been some sort of interesting Void Material.

Then again, could those materials even be stored in a conventional Spatial Ring?

Since Zac was done with everything, he turned toward the exit and walked out the gates. Not that he had much of a choice. The inheritance space had steadily deteriorated since the firefly sun disappeared.

It probably wouldn't last more than another ten minutes, and Zac didn't want to stay behind when it popped. The dark swirl in the sky was long gone, and the warm sunset drenched the mountain valley in amber luster. The world had returned to normal, but it was still a very different scene that met him compared to when he entered the inheritance.

There were over 50 people in the valley. Zac had expected a few to have arrived by the point he left, using various teleportation treasures. But not this many. There had only been 22 outsiders in the realm when he entered, and some were days away from this location. Others lacked the means to cover vast distances quickly and were forced to use their legs to approach Zac's location.

Furthermore, Zac only recognized six of these people—the others hadn't been here when he activated the inheritance. It was only then he realized the impartment had taken just over three days. More than enough time for the news to spread to a select few and for these people to rush over. Now, most of them were using various means to scan the surroundings or form a resonance, unwilling to give up in case there was more to the huge events that had rocked the Quarry.

Cathey was not present, but he could spot a hooded man standing in a corner with shadows flickering around him. A smile spread across Zac's face upon seeing Ogras. No doubt the demon had already made some money on this crowd. Now, it was time to bring it home.

Zac took out a transparent glass container and put the empty Fate Kernel inside. From there, he took out one of his artisanal axes and carved a set of scripts on the glass. It wasn't an array but rather a copy of the runes of the First People that had covered the large brazier that had disappeared a few days ago. Finally, he filled the container with Void Energy before attaching an isolation array.

It wasn't a perfect solution, but the kernel would hold for at least an hour as long as he kept the container close to his body. After the bait was completed, Zac turned into his Draugr form. There was no need to burn his Human identity right now, and what was some additional notoriety to Arcaz Umbri'Zi? With all preparations complete, Zac donned a bashful smile as he emerged from the shielding bubble with the transparent glass canister floating next to him through telekinesis.

A person appearing out of nowhere at an inheritance site obviously drew attention, and Zac instantly had fifty sets of eyes trained on him.

"It's him! The Draugr from the Calamity!" a shocked exclamation echoed out, and Zac realized he recognized the man.

It was the very same person who'd seen him emerge from the Calamity. Had he been hanging by the teleporters all this time, waiting for an opportunity to present itself?

Zac slowly swept his gaze across the crowd as though it was the first time he saw them. When he reached Ogras, the demon made a small sign indicating everything was okay. Zac inwardly breathed out in relief. Since Cathey was fine, he had no more misgivings about carrying out his plan.

"I see a lot of people came to congratulate me on my fortuitous encounter," Zac smiled. "Thank you, everyone, thank you!"

"Who's here to congratulate you?!" a buff human with at least some orc heritage swore. "What kind of disgusting luck do you have? First the Calamity, and now this?"

"Is that a Fate Kernel?" another person asked before Zac could answer, pointing at the glass case floating to Zac's side.

"It looks just like the ones in the recording," a golemoid confirmed.

"Good observation!" Zac nodded. "As you probably know, there were ten of these, but I can see they're all gone now. Luckily, I just so happened to find two inside the true inheritance. I've used one already, so now I have a spare."

"Name your price," a cold-looking woman wearing an emerald crown said, clearly confident in her wealth.

"Where's the fun in that?" Zac smiled. "The Perennial Vastness is a rare opportunity to meet other talents from across the Multiverse and broaden our horizons. How about this? Challenge me if you weren't lucky enough to take one out of the brazier. I'll give it to anyone who can defeat me."

"Like we didn't know about your winning streak last month," the golemoid scoffed, and a few others nodded in agreement.

"Then how about this. If no one has defeated me by the time I've dueled you all, I'll sell the thing to the highest bidder," Zac countered. "I can tell you right now; the inheritance is picked clean and gone. This is the last piece up for grabs."

Ten people sighed and left, most of them through the mountains where Zac came from. Ten more, including Ogras, were neither confident in defeating him nor winning the auction, but they stepped to the side to spectate. That still left 30 candidates who were ready to offer up some Mana.

Zac didn't think he was invincible, but he had already scanned everyone in the crowd. There were four at the level of the lionman or the earth cultivator he encountered in the Calamity. Another ten or so weren't quite at that level but still impressive, while the rest were no threat at all. Since this was a Green Zone and Zac could pick martial duels, he had some confidence in taking them all out. At worst, he'd lose one or two battles and have to give away the kernel for free.

"Greedy bastard," the buff man from before laughed as he stepped forward. "I like it! Skills or martial?"

"Martial," Zac said as [Love's Bond] appeared on his back. One of the chains snapped up the floating glass case and wound itself around it until it had formed a ball of fetters. "Oh, if anyone tries to steal the Fate Kernel, I'll destroy it. I'll also hunt you down, so you better not appear in orange or red zones in the future."

"We'll make sure your... rules... are followed," the cold woman said.

"Well, then, let's do it," Zac grinned.

Thirty minutes later, Zac stood by himself, panting and covered in surface wounds.

"Whew, alright. Who's next?" Zac said, trying to look exhausted and vulnerable.

He'd like to call it an act, but he really was tired. Some of these people were surprisingly powerful, and they were incredibly motivated. Defeating them all before the Fate Kernel expired took its toll. That cold woman, in particular, had almost won a martial duel, even if she was a mage. Still, Zac had already

gained 2,806 Mana in half an hour, and all of the powerhouses of the crowd were dealt with. It should have been more, but one after another had given up as the minutes passed. Two had left while the rest joined the spectators.

"Well?" Zac said after no one had stepped forward after half a minute.

"It seems you are out of challengers," the barbarian grinned as he looked at the chain ball hungrily.

"Time to honor your agreement."

"Not yet," Zac said with a shake of his head.

"You're going back on your promise?" the cold woman frowned. "You said you'd sell it after you had run out of challenges."

"That's not what I said," Zac grunted as he stood up, his abyssal gaze turning to the spectators. "I said I'll put it to auction after I've dueled everyone present. There are still 15 people present who I haven't dueled. So how can I start the auction now?"

"Are you serious?" the woman frowned.

"Like a heart attack," Zac nodded. "And do remember, there is not a single Fate Kernel left in the Quarry. This is the last chance."

"We'll be on our way, then," one of the weaker spectators muttered as he backed away, but a hulking figure soundlessly appeared right behind him.

"You wanted to watch us get our ass beat and then slink away?" the barbarian grinned as he grabbed the man's shoulder.

"This is a Green Zone!" the man frowned.

"That's true, but we can keep you here until you come to your senses. Nothing illegal about that."

Zac inwardly smiled. What the barbarian said was absolutely true, and it was a reason few solo cultivators wanted to mess with coalitions. They could cause trouble even in Green Zones, though they weren't allowed to kill or rob. They could keep people locked down for months by rotating wardens if motivated. And Zac just so happened to have 22 highly motivated wardens who had already made their move.

An immense emerald array had already sealed off the whole valley. It was the mage who had almost defeated him. She had activated a powerful array that actually utilized Cosmic Crystals. A proper D-grade array. The mage had to be incredibly powerful and talented to use something like that freely. If not, it would destabilize and blow up in her face. It was almost as difficult and draining as using War Regalia in the E-grade.

"No more nonsense," the woman said as the others formed a perimeter around the spectators. "You came here knowing the risks. You had many chances to leave, but you did not. Now, pay the price of Mana or pay a greater one."

"I'll remember anyone who drags their feet," the barbarian added with a growl.

Zac wasn't surprised by their impatience. Three days had already passed, and Zac guessed there would soon be far more people coming this way. These people didn't know Zac could only maintain the Fate Kernel for one hour, so they feared he would drag things out until they'd have to contend with hundreds of people. Honestly, Zac would have preferred to do things that way. It was a shame the inheritance space had started to destabilize.

"Wait!" one of the spectators said, ignoring the glaring looks as he turned to Zac. "You only told those who haven't gotten a Fate Kernel to challenge you. This guy and I already got them."

The man the ratkin pointed to was unsurprisingly Ogras.

Zac looked at the two, seemingly in thought. "Can you prove this?"

"I can!" the man said as a projection appeared. "Everyone knows this shadow guy; he's been selling the information packets and recordings. He also recorded me absorbing my Fate Kernel."

A smile tugged at Zac's lips as he looked back and forth between Ogras and the ratman. Should he extort some Mana from the demon? No, he'd never hear the end of it.

"Fine. My word is my bond," Zac agreed. "But the rest of you better step right up."

And with that, the second harvest began.