

The Fall 222

Chapter 222: Herbs and Pills

The other fields held very different types of herbs compared to the first one. The second field he harvested felt blazing hot like he stood in the middle of a desert or on the edge of a volcano. The herb growing there looked like a small bush that grew up to three intensely red fruits.

The third field had dirt that was far heavier than lead, and it took some effort to dig out the odd brown roots from within the ground. But when he managed to extract them they emitted strong energies that reminded Zac of the Divine Crystals, though they seemed more vibrant somehow.

If he had to make a comparison of the two, then the life-attuned energy in the Divine Crystals felt more synthetic, whereas the energy from the root vegetables felt like a genuine article. It was similar to his Lotus Seed, though these roots didn't seem quite as good.

The last field, and the empty one, seemed to once have been a paddy. But there was a crack in the mountain that had created an outlet for the water inside, making the paddy dry out. Perhaps when calamity struck this sect the events inadvertently ruined this field through shockwaves.

Another possibility was that the area was prone to earthquakes. He'd noticed a jagged scar in the ground from the first summit. It didn't look like something that was made from an attack, like the swing of the axe-man in his vision, but rather the movement of a tectonic plate. Perhaps an earthquake had erupted that was strong enough to crack these reinforced mountains.

For the last field, he simply took all the dried mud that lay in the bottom of the paddy, hoping that there would be some dormant seeds inside that could be used to regrow whatever once grew there. It was pretty clear to Zac that the field was based on four different elements, Fire, Ice, Earth, and water.

Why these four specifically Zac didn't know, but if he had to guess the four herbs could combine to a good pill. He didn't think the previous owner of this place would go to the trouble to create four distinct fields and grow the herbs together if they weren't supposed to get mixed into something.

That was the biggest reason he took all the dried mud. He was currently missing one of the ingredients, and whatever the alchemist of this mountain had planned probably needed all four of them.

He was no expert in Spiritual Herbs, but after sensing the energies they contained he would say that each of them was a Top Grade E-Ranked Spirit Herb. Or perhaps they were just extremely high quality Normal E-Ranked herbs that were overflowing with energy due to being left alone for so long.

It made him think of the Mystic Realm back at Port Atwood. If things could grow this spectacular over a couple of thousand of years, who knew what grew inside a pocket of space that might have been isolated for millions of years.

But while the herbs were great, in the end, they couldn't compare to things like the Lotus of Harmony. That thing was D-Graded, and it felt like it was on a completely other level compared to these things he just harvested.

The fact that he was boosted to the top of the gatherer list also was an indicator that the herbs likely weren't just F-Graded. As he walked up the cramped steps to the summit again he looked through the ladder to check what else was going on.

There were a few other notable names on the Gatherer Ladder. Emperor Nenotheop was on the third spot, and there was another of their family, Repubat Medhin, in the top ten. The second spot actually belonged to his world as well, as Starlight held that position.

The fourth position was held by the top champion who resisted the Medhin Empire, Beruv Ylvas. The last names on the top ten ladder were completely unknown to Zac, making him believe they were simply random people who had gotten lucky and gotten their hands on something great.

The Hunter ladder, in turn, was quite different compared to the gatherer list at the moment, but Zac suspected that they would harmonize soon enough.

Killing people didn't bring in a lot of loot at the moment, but that would change after a week or two after people had visited more mountains. But some clearly was actively striving to push themselves on the Hunter ladder, and unfortunately, he saw a name he recognized in the top three; Inevitability.

He had hoped that the System would limit the event to F-grade people, barring the Dominators from entering. That would likely have made him the strongest person inside. But seeing both the Emperor and Inevitability on their respective ladders showed that was just a pipe dream.

Apart from Inevitability, he recognized another of the three strongest Dominators in the top five amongst the hunters, an Anointed who called himself Harbinger. Fortunately, the top name amongst the Dominators, Void's Disciple, wasn't on the list. Perhaps that meant only two of the top 3 names were present at the hunt, which would be a small blessing.

In fact, he two suspected Dominators weren't the only Zhix on the Hunter list, as Zac saw that a good half of the top ten were Zhix going by their names. Of course, a few of them could be Medhin Empire champions, since their names were slightly similar.

That the Zhix would be more interested in killing things than looking through various old ruins for things they considered to be corrupted wasn't much of a surprise to Zac. The problem was how to figure out who were Dominators and who were just battle-crazed insectoids.

Besides, it made sense that the Dominators were more interested in the Hunter ladder compared to the Gatherer ladder at the moment. They were probably the strongest fighters around, and could simply rob others of their treasures later.

But gaining ten levels for the two Dominators was a huge perk. The only good news about the dominators was that they didn't gain any levels while Zac kept improving. Inevitability had only gained one level since the ladders were made public, and the other two hadn't moved at all.

Gaining ten levels in one move would save them years of cultivation.

Another familiar name on the Hunter list was Salvation, clocking in on the 7th spot. Salvation was still shrouded in mystery, and apart from the rumors that Salvation was the one who controlled The Cradle of God nothing was known about him or her.

“Congratulations on reaching the top placement,” Thea succinctly said when Zac finally emerged from the tree. “Quite a few people will probably target you now.”

“Nothing new,” Zac said with a shrug as he took out one of the hard root-like vegetables. “This was the only thing I found that might help against wounds.”

Thea caught the hard vegetable and scrutinized it for a bit.

“It looks a bit like ginseng. It isn’t poisonous, but I don’t know how to eat it. It’s even harder than a rock,” she mumbled.

“Perhaps boil it?” Zac ventured.

“Take a break for dinner?” Thea agreed.

“This place is as good as any. Shouldn’t be too many who can pass that combination of arrays to get here,” Zac said.

Thea nodded as she took out a couple of crystals and a pot. The crystals were the same ones he’d seen the Imp Herald use to create a fire, but it wasn’t something Zac himself used very often. He was a bit lazy so he usually ate dried meat instead to save time.

“Wait,” Zac said as he took out the cauldron he snagged earlier. “Perhaps we can cook the root in this instead? Don’t most cauldrons contain inscriptions that stop the energies from escaping?”

“You want to use an expensive cauldron to boil a magical root?” Thea said, mouth curving slightly upwards. “If an alchemist hears about it he will be enraged.”

“Hey, as long as it works,” Zac said and opened the lid to the cauldron to pour some water inside.

But to his surprise, an enormous gust of energies blasted him right in his face, and Zac absorbed a huge amount of energies in an instant, to the point that it felt like his body would explode. The energies not only canceled out the tired state from using [Hatchetman’s Rage] but even made him gain a level.

Zac almost blanked out from being drowned in the medicinal gust, but he noticed a quick movement of something escaping from the cauldron and snatched it up with lightning-quick movement. It was a small purple pill that tried to fly away by itself somehow, making Zac gape in surprise.

“It’s a Pill with spirituality,” Thea said with shock. “It might actually be the pill that increased your ranking rather than the Cauldron.”

“Spiritual Pill?” Zac curiously asked as he put the feisty pill into one of the best vials he found in the workshop.

“The same pill can have multiple grades. For example, in the tutorial we would be given [Constitution Pills] that would push us toward race evolutions. But depending on how hard missions we undertook there were different ranks, from Low Grade to Peak grade. The better ones held fewer contaminants and stronger effects,” Thea explained.

“As for Spiritual Pills, they’re a tier above Peak Grade Pills. They’re the equivalent of a Blacksmith creating a Spiritual Tool. Its efficacy is far better than normal pills, but Alchemists can only concoct them when the stars align so to speak,” she continued.

Zac looked at the pill that seemed to have calmed down inside the vial. The cloud from earlier was likely just a small taste of the real effect. The fact that just some run-off not only healed him but made him level up was astounding, and he was tempted to swallow the actual pill.

But he forcefully stopped himself, instead deciding to wait for Calrin to take a look at it. The shop keeper had multiple compendiums detailing all kinds of treasures, both natural and man-made, to never miss out on treasures. Perhaps the Sky Gnome could find out what it was.

“How do you know all these things?” Zac suddenly asked as he looked up from the pill. “From what I know I should be the only one with direct access to people with direct knowledge of the multiverse, like the shop owner I brought with me to the Auction.”

Thea hesitated a bit before she explained.

“I received a Library as a quest reward not long ago. It contains thousands and thousands of crystals detailing all kinds of things. Unfortunately, it doesn’t have cultivation manuals or skills, only knowledge. It does have a few interesting expositions about the fundamentals of Dao from various strong people of the multiverse though,” Thea said.

Her explanation was a good reminder that he wasn’t the only one who had gained limited structures on earth. If he could get a Creator Shipyard and a Dao Repository it wasn’t too surprising that other powerhouses could get other things.

It wouldn’t be surprising if the world government and Salvation also had obtained hidden structures that empowered their factions. The fact she got that building might also be an indicator she had either closed an incursion or become a Lord recently, as those were the ways that Zac got his buildings. But he didn’t want to dig into those things at the moment.

“Sounds like a good thing to have,” Zac simply said as he prepared the Cauldron to be used as a pot.

Soon a fire was burning beneath it with a boiling root inside, but the cauldron didn’t release the slightest heat or Cosmic Energy from above. It showed that all the energies from the ginseng were contained inside, not able to escape.

“Do you have any opinions on where to go next?” Zac said as he observed the cauldron.

Thea unhesitantly pointed at a certain mountain to the east in response.

“That one,” she said.

“How did you decide that quickly?” Zac asked surprised.

“I removed the two mountains we came from and chose the remaining close one with the largest castle,” Thea explained as she kept her eyes on the cauldron as hell. “This residence was much bigger than the one on the mountain I started at, and the rewards were far greater as well.”

Zac nodded in agreement, as he had experienced the same thing.

"Others will quickly realize the same thing," Zac said. "We might be in for pretty tough battles at those places."

"Well, we're both top rankers, there are not many who would be a threat," Thea said.

"The dominators are here though," Zac said with a shake of his head and told her what he'd learned from Ibtep since the Auction.

"Both are around level 100 and at the top of the Hunter ladder?" Thea said with a frown. "Do you think they are hunting beasts or people?"

"Anything that moves, but I think they should probably stay down between the mountains, there are fewer things to kill up at the summits. Only a few will have a bunch of people at the same time," Zac guessed. "Besides, everyone needs to go down to change mountains, so the prey would come to them."

"Well, the risk of running into them is pretty slim," Thea said. "And we should be able to stay alive long enough to crush our tokens if it comes down to it."

"Fair enough," Zac said as he lifted the lid of the cauldron.

To the surprise to the both of them the root that once looked like a grubby rock had disappeared, but the water it was cooked in had turned into something that would fit right home at a gourmet dinner. It was a clear soup that smelled absolutely delectable, and Zac couldn't help but swallow after smelling the aroma.

"Well, go ahead," Zac said, trying to ignore his mouth watering even as he spoke.