

The Fall 250

Chapter 250: Rewards

Even though the situation was pretty confusing to Zac he was at least right in front of someone who could help him get a better picture of what was going on.

“Do all of us Draugr look the same? Or can we have red shining eyes as well?” Zac asked just to make sure that Mhal wasn't a Draugr as well.

“I am not sure, but from what I understand your eyes are unique, and not something other undead possesses. Red shining eyes? The Eternal Clan, another of the five races, might sometimes have red eyes from what I understand. It is part of their blood arts,” Anzonil answered after mulling it over.

“Vampires,” Zac mouthed with surprise, and he quickly asked a few follow-up questions about The Eternal Clan.

From the old man's explanation, it really looked like they were vampires. Were the old stories from earth all true? Would he encounter dragons and werewolves as well in the future? But Zac also knew that the red eyes might just be a coincidence. The Corpse Lord neither felt like a vampire nor used any blood arts, so he was likely of some other origin.

Zac kept asking about the Undead Empire and the Draugr, but it was clear that the Array Spirit wasn't as knowledgeable about the subject as with the Darkness. He didn't even know what the other three races of purebred undead were, though he did remember one of them was of the ghost-type.

He also had no idea what different lineages could mean when Zac asked about that in a slightly roundabout way. Anzonil said that there were many old Clans among the Draugr who were considered nobility. One ancient family, in particular, was seen as the de-facto leader of the race. But most of the Draugr were simply normal cultivators, though still elites of the undead empire.

That the woman in the vision didn't recognize his lineage might simply mean that his form wasn't related to any of the major clans. But perhaps there was more to it that Anzonil simply didn't remember or knew. The old man was an array master after all, not an expert on undead genealogy.

Zac's intuition told him that it wasn't something so simple as him not being of noble birth. The Draugr woman had seemed surprised to not recognize him, which might mean that the secret was larger than that. In the end it came back to the notebook of Mhal. He still couldn't read the undead script, but he would make learning it a priority when he came back.

For now, he had no clues of how to deal with the thing in his head, but the Path of Oblivion the Draugr woman mentioned was the first clue, and perhaps he could find more if he looked into the Draugr. Another potential source of information would be Thea's Library.

It was a gift from the System just like his shipyard and repository, which meant that it was a possibility that it contained knowledge that was out of reach from even a Half-Step D-Grade cultivator. He already knew that Brazla's creator was at least a top tier D-Grade hegemon with many powerful allies.

He also knew that the Creators was a supreme race of golems that was almost as old as the System itself. Unfortunately, it was impossible to learn things from them since they only were interested in

building and selling their ships. But it proved that it wouldn't be a stretch if Thea's library was ripped from some ancient civilization that had access to all kinds of knowledge.

The only issue was how to get access to the library since knowledge was extremely valuable and Henry Marshall was a wily old man. But his rapport with Thea was pretty good, and he thought he had an idea of how to trade for access without really losing anything. So he would need to find her before the trial ended so they could make a deal.

Besides, it would be nice to see her again to make sure she was okay.

"So... Uh... You mentioned some treasures earlier?" Zac finally asked when he felt he had learned all he could from the Array spirit.

"Yes, of course. I apologize, I do not know how long I've been sitting here, so I took the opportunity to make some conversation after all these years," the old man said with a smile.

"I do not know how it works, but I could try bringing you back to my town if you want?" Zac probed.

Zac mainly asked because he felt bad about the fate of the old man and wanted to let him leave these lonely caverns. But having a sapient Array Spirit to control all his arrays would also be a huge boost for Port Atwood.

"Thank you, young man, but this old man's work is not done. The fact that Raval managed to regain his form and communicate for a bit is proof of that," Anzonil smiled.

Zac didn't understand what the old man was getting at until his eyes suddenly widened in understanding.

"You're still running the cleansing array," Zac said with surprise.

"Tens of Thousands of years now," the Array Spirit nodded with a smile.

After thinking it over Zac finally had a decent picture of what was going on. He had initially seen the darkness as some sort of trial by the system, but he now realized that wasn't the case. It was Anzonil who released the accumulated darkness from the cleansing array into the atmosphere, like opening the valves of a dam. The System simply used that fact and made it part of the trial.

He wasn't completely sure why the ghosts only appeared at that time, but perhaps opening the seals also meant that the ghosts were able to sneak out from the caverns for a bit to feed on the dense Cosmic Energy at the summits. They then had to return before the openings down to the caverns closed.

Zac was moved by the old man's resolve. To rip out a piece of his soul and infuse it into the array just for the small hope to heal his disciple was a true show of love and dedication. He wondered how many would go so far in for someone that wasn't even family.

But suddenly he had a troubling thought.

"But why is the other crystal inside the purification array? Wouldn't that make things difficult for you?" Zac asked.

He was afraid that he had somehow ruined the array by taking the splinter of the [Heart of Oblivion], so he asked to make sure.

"It's truly an impediment to my efforts. Raval and I placed it inside the array to check on the effects of our changes into the cleansing array. But things went south too quickly, and I had no time to move it out when it all fell apart," Anzonil sighed.

"I can't get close to it in this current form, and I think that Raval avoids it. I believe the effect of gathering multiple crystals increase your power even further, but the corruption also grows worse. The fact that Raval hasn't touched it in all these years is proof that part of his rationality remains," Anzonil said with a smile.

Zac started to get a sour feeling after hearing the old man's explanation. What would happen if he left without telling the old man what truly transpired in that cave? Anzonil would probably find out soon enough that something had changed in his array, and would perhaps assume that his disciple had consumed the second splinter.

"I guess I should come clean," Zac said with a sigh and spilled the beans, only skipping over the part with the Draugr woman.

"I was wondering if you would tell me," Anzonil said with a sad smile, and the next moment a pillar with a Cosmos Sack rose from the ground next to them. "This old man might just be an Array Spirit now, but I can still sense the changes of energies inside my array. You taking that cursed object wouldn't escape my senses."

Zac could only wryly smile in embarrassment. It seemed that the old man had been testing him once again.

"But you seem in far better shape than my Disciple ever did, so I didn't stress the subject. Respecting other cultivators' secrets is important," Anzonil added.

"I have a few special means. I didn't absorb it like your Disciple. The thing is currently locked away in a separate space," Zac only said, and it was the truth as far as he could tell. "I have no confidence in meddling with such an object with my current power."

"So you came prepared, that is good to hear. But if you would listen to this old man's advice then I urge you to discard any thought of actually using that thing. That object might be able to bring you endless power, but also endless suffering. A moment of carelessness will lead to ruin," Anzonil said with a serious face.

"Thank you. I will not do anything with that thing unless I have full confidence in succeeding. If I ever find a method to control it and help you two in the future I will do my best to find this place again," Zac promised.

Anzonil nodded with a kindly smile before he indicated for Zac to take the Cosmic Sack. Zac looked over at it and knew that it was the promised inheritance. He couldn't help but feel it was a bit anticlimactic when he walked over to pick up the small sack.

"You expected piles of crystals and treasures?" the old man laughed when he saw Zac's blank face.

Zac scratched his cheek in embarrassment. The old man hit bullseye, and Zac had kept throwing glances around the room to find any place that could lead to a treasure trove. He had pictured the inheritance to look somewhat like a dragon's hoard.

But he had to admit that made no sense when there were Cosmos Sacks around, though the imagery wasn't quite as strong this way. He went over to take it after an encouraging nod from the old man, and the moment his finger touched the sack it disintegrated into motes of light that entered his Cosmos Sack.

"What a marvelous sack, I've never seen anything like it," the old man muttered with interest. "The creator must have had extremely deep insight into the Dao of Space to merge separate spatial spaces like that."

"We got it from the system at the start of the hunt. Unfortunately, I do not think we will get to keep it," Zac explained with a smile as he checked the contents of his sack.

He didn't have high hopes since the old man already said that he spent most of his wealth trying to find means to help his disciple, but he still was positively surprised by the things that were added. There was a large stacks of E-Grade Nexus Crystals and even a few that shone with even denser energy. There was also an assortment of crystals of various elements, likely meant as energy sources for arrays.

Apart from that there were a handful of intricate boxes, and Zac knew they were meant to house Spiritual Herbs or Fruits. Between the compounding effects of staying inside a Cosmos Sack and the protective arrays of these boxes, the contents inside would stay fresh almost indefinitely. So even if they had stayed here for thousands of years most of the efficacy of the things inside should remain.

Finally, there were ten information crystals that looked like the one that he found the first day. They were conveniently placed in a stand, and Zac quickly glanced that 8 of them contained information about arrays.

One of them was a copy of the one he owned, but the other seven broached other subjects in the study of arrays. Zac knew just how much information that first crystal contained, and with seven more of them he essentially had a full heritage to nurture powerful array masters.

The final two crystals were on another subject, inscriptions. This was knowledge that was extremely valuable to Port Atwood since inscriptions were a part of almost all craftsman classes. Not just Array Masters could benefit from these two crystals, but everything from blacksmiths to alchemists would as well.

"I would suggest not trying to use the D-Grade crystals while still in F-Grade. It might burn your pathways clean," the old man said. "Then again I guess you rather use Miasma crystals anyway?"

"It is still a great treasure, and I can always trade it," Zac said, not explaining his situation.

He felt the old man was trustworthy, but he wouldn't divulge his situation to anyone apart from his closest circle. You never knew how it might return to bite you in the ass. The fact that Thea knew about it couldn't be helped since he had turned in front of her due to his wounds.

“That’s true. The ten information crystals contain the crystallized knowledge in the art of formations that our Eastern Trigram Sect accumulated over the millennia. I hope that you find a way to learn or give those out to someone worthy so that our knowledge lives on,” Anzonil said.

“I will make sure that this knowledge is not lost,” Zac promised.

He wasn't completely sure whether if he would have time to learn about arrays himself since there were so many things on his plate already. But he was interested in finding a side-profession when things were less hectic, and Arrays was a good option that could help him broaden his skillset.

His current fighting styles were pretty simple and straight forward in both his classes, but adding some arrays into the mix might both catch people unaware and make him more flexible. Some knowledge in arrays was also extremely beneficial while adventuring since he could turn any place into a fortress with the help of some defensive and slaughter arrays.

“Best of luck young Draugr,” Anzonil said as he pointed at Zac. “I hope we will see each other again.”

The next moment Zac was pushed backward like last time, and the next moment he found himself standing on a secluded cliff overlooking the mountains of the Eastern Trigram Sect.

He was finally back on the surface.