

## The Fall 267

### Chapter 267: News

"Is this something common?" Zac finally asked, breaking the subdued silence in the room.

"No. Finding newly integrated planets before the Origin Dao disappears is notoriously hard. It's hard enough to make me wonder you're even in any danger at all," the tool spirit shrugged. "The greatest old monsters in the multiverse could probably do it, but they have no use for baby planets. They rather have their sights on whole galaxies."

The discussion continued a bit on the topic of the Great redeemer, but it appeared that they did not have any more ideas on how to handle the situation. In the end, they decided to simply continue their original approach, closing the incursions of Earth.

Even though the Redeemer was the largest threat Earth faced, it looked like they had some time before he could arrive. The multiverse was extremely vast, and traveling to a newly integrated planet could only be done manually. When that was added to the System's protective obscuring it would at least take a few years before he could arrive, even if the Redeemer set out the moment their planet was integrated.

After the incursions were dealt with they would turn their attention to Salvation and the Dominators. Of course, if they could find Salvation earlier that would be preferable. But there was still no news of where he was physically located, and he had closed his teleporter the moment he was booted out from the hunt. Zac's relentless assault had clearly put the fear of God in him, and he seemed to want to avoid another clash for the time being.

"That's it for the time being," Zac said before he turned to Julia. "Ms. Lombard, I brought you here so that you can provide the information to Thomas Fischer and the others. All the large forces need to be made aware of the threat of Salvation and The Great Redeemer so that we can prepare."

"Provide the information how?" she hesitantly asked.

"The portal to New Washington has already been made private, but I am traveling to the Marshall Clan in three days. I thought I'd bring you since they aren't as isolated as we are here on this island," Zac explained.

Julia hesitated a bit with a slight frown.

"And you're just letting me go like that?" Julia said.

"Yes, The New World Government is not my enemy, The Great Redeemer and the Incursions are. And honestly, they aren't a threat either. If it wasn't for the Dominators lurking in the shadows I would already have made my teleporter public," Zac said.

"If... I wanted to stay here, could I?" Julia suddenly asked, making Zac remember Emily mentioning the huge fight Julia and Emma had got themselves into.

"You can. Tell me your decision before I leave in three days though so I can send a replacement to the government," Zac nodded before he turned back toward the others on the table.

"Calrin, I want you to try to buy an information package about The Great Redeemer, if that's possible," Zac said as he turned to the Sky Gnome.

"Information becomes more expensive the stronger the person. Also, while the information houses track many powerhouses there is no way to track everyone. But I will make an inquiry," Calrin said with a serious face.

Zac nodded before he addressed the whole room again.

"The rest of the meeting will only need the essential personnel," Zac said, and soon less than half of the participants remained.

"The Great Redeemer is a pretty big headache, but on more positive news I come back with a mountain of treasure. It's to the point that we now have the resources to nurture a large number of experts without feeling the pinch. I am therefore opening the craftsman Heritage. I have also found this," Zac as he took out the ten crystals he got from Anzonil.

"As I mentioned we were placed at the ruins of a sect called The Eastern Trigram Sect. It was a low-tiered D-Grade sect focusing on arrays, and this is the complete crystallized knowledge on formations, written by their Supreme Elder. As far as I know, this is the only copy from that place," Zac said.

Brazla snorted disdainfully, but the others looked at the ten crystals with wide eyes.

"Does anyone have an idea of how to utilize this knowledge as effectively as possible?" Zac asked as he looked around.

"It should be locked behind Merit Points, and I believe that the same should go for the Heritages," Abby finally said. "We can portion out the knowledge it contains into packages, with the basic ones being pretty cheap, but the more in-depth and uncommon knowledge having a higher price."

"Wouldn't there be a risk of no one buying it? We are in need of skilled array masters," Zac said.

"Then make sure people know that becoming an array master and helping to maintain the arrays in Port Atwood would yield a lot of Merit Points. Things given freely are not appreciated, but if they need to work hard for it they will cherish it," Abby countered, and Ogras nodded in agreement.

"It will also lock the craftsmen to us all the way until the D-Grade, since they would have to come to us for the follow-up crystals or deeper parts of the craftsman heritage," Abby added. "Otherwise we would risk them leaving for the highest bidder when the world gets more integrated in the future."

Zac had to admit it was a thought out idea, and he immediately decided to go along with it.

"Talk with the Merit Exchange and make adjustments to our current merit program if needed," Zac said. "I want people working toward these things as soon as possible."

Abby bobbed a bit in the air, which was her way of nodding her head. Zac nodded back before he once again focused on the Sky Gnome.

"After this meeting please bring a couple of your best men to my courtyard, we have mountains of loot to go through," Zac said.

Calrin suddenly looked at him like a maiden in love, and it made Zac's hair stand on end.

"While we're here, please update me on what's happened while I was away," Zac said.

"The shapeshifters are dealt with, as you know," Ogras started. "Your human friend they impersonated has recovered, and he is currently farming on one of the satellite islands."

Zac frowned a bit when he heard that, and Ogras quickly continued.

"Don't get worked up, it was on his own request. That Shapeshifter did a number on him, and I think he just wants to live a simple life away from the struggle of the real world," Ogras said with a shrug. "Also... We have put your former lover on that island on your sister's insistence, and she is farming with him. Under supervision of course."

Zac looked over at Kenzie, who seemed ready for an argument.

"It wasn't all her fault. She was drugged, hypnotized, and manipulated. You're a victim, but so is she. Janos has helped her stabilize her mind during the past weeks, and she feels really bad about what happened. So I sent her to the island to stay with her friend," she quickly explained, the words tumbling out of her mouth.

Zac shot a glance over at the illusionist who was also present at the meeting, and he simply nodded slightly to indicate what Kenzie said was true. Ogras only snorted, which drew an angry glare from Kenzie.

"Fine. I'll check in on them later. Anything else?" Zac said after hesitating a bit.

"A monk came a week ago, and warned us that things were getting bad in the Undead Incursion. Their armies are mobilizing for real now, and the monk said that the Abbot believed that they would make a huge push to expand their territory within a month," Adran spoke up, reading from his documents.

Zac thoughtfully nodded. He had already been thinking about tackling the Undead Incursion as soon as possible, and now it seemed they did not have much of a choice. The only problem was the Lich King, and how strong he would be. Was his increase in power from the hunt enough to bring that thing down?

"The monk also spoke about odd rumors that had arrived to their mountain," Adran said.

"What rumors?" Zac asked.

"Three Incursions have disappeared. Just vanished overnight. The human government or the beastmen have no idea what's going on," the administrator said.

"Infighting between incursions?" Zac ventured.

"Unlikely," Ogras said. "They wouldn't likely clash before they clashed for territories. And only the undead incursion has spread to that degree to my knowledge. The other ones should be a few years away from infighting. Right now they should be swallowing up the locals around them, either for enslavement or eradication."

"So who is it?" Zac said.

"The only one I can think of are the Zhix, or rather the Dominators," Ogras said.

"The dominators? Only Void's Disciple was outside the hunt, he did that by himself? Also, why would they wait until now to destroy Incursions?" Zac asked.

"They might have needed to prepare the attacks. If we go by the theory that The Great Redeemer didn't want to create trouble by having his followers destroy incursions we can make some guesses. First, they would have wanted to close the incursions as quickly as possible, before any contact with the homeworld was possible," Ogras said.

"But as far as I know no incursions were closed in the early stage of the Integration. I have the title for the first closing," Zac said.

"We know that the Dominators were a small group before the integration, and most thought them eradicated. We also know how the availability was for teleporters in the beginning. Perhaps they simply didn't have the ability to do it. That left them with a far more risky Plan B," Ogras explained.

"By now the incursions are all stabilized, and communication with the main side is possible. If they assaulted the Incursions the normal way it would be possible to record it in a crystal, allowing the elders of the force to realize who the responsible party by the energy signature," the demon continued.

"So if they would close the incursions now they would need to immediately decimate everyone before they could send any information back home. That tracks with the rumors of incursions 'simply disappearing,'" Zac continued the line of thought. "But why wait until now?"

"With the strongest people in the hunt most settlements have turtled up, avoiding the Incursions," Kenzie ventured. "There would be no local witnesses either."

"Preparing such a blitz would also take time. They would both need to prepare the means to instantly kill everyone before they could send anything back home. Perhaps they also had some sort of interference that messed with the Nexus Hub," Ogras added.

"Also, the only Incursions that disappeared were those we would categorize as low threat. The Undead Incursion wasn't touched for example. Even the Dominators probably aren't confident in destroying those incursions without leaving any trace," Adran finished.

"So they're removing the smaller obstacles, making us focus on the larger threats that they cannot deal with themselves," Zac muttered. "But we don't know for sure it was Void. I'll talk with the Zhix to see how their ladders have changed. Have we heard any other rumors about what the dominators have been doing? I know that Void's Disciple has been up to something."

"We haven't heard anything, but our intelligence network is beyond pathetic," Ogras said with a shrug. "You should ask those people from the Marshall Clan, they should be more informed."

"Fine, but keep your ears to the ground. I have opened many new alliances, so we should start getting visitors soon. Make sure we control the movement of those who arrive. I don't want anyone wandering into my area or our hunting grounds. The barghest is a resource that should be saved for the academy unless people are willing to pay for it," Zac said.

"All procedures should be set up to handle an inflow of visitors. If needed we can also use the Origin Array to look for things out of place occasionally," Adran said. "On the topic of the Barghest, I do believe

we should try to cordon off areas that we can use as hunting grounds for visitors. Their numbers are increasing, and the Beast Tamer we are training is not strong enough to control such a large horde."

"Great, try to set something up, extra income is always welcome, but it's not a top priority. Anything else that has happened while I was gone?" Zac continued.

"We finally found land," Adran said. "In fact, we have found land in two opposite directions."