

The Fall 268

Chapter 268: Rescue Mission

"Finally," Zac said with a smile.

He had almost started believing they were stuck in some parallel world. The ships he had bought from the Creators were extremely swift, but it had taken months until they finally found the mainland. It also showed just how huge the new planet was. It felt as though their current mass was far larger than just the combination of the four integrated planets.

Perhaps the system had thrown some random landmass into the mix to make the distances larger. But suddenly he gave a start since he finally realized what Adran said.

"What do you mean two opposite directions?" he curiously asked. "Have we rounded the planet?"

"We have found the continent that you humans now refer to as Pangea to the east," Adran explained with a shake of his head. "We have already made the first contact with a few settlements along the shoreline. If needed we will have no problem conquering a pretty large swathe of coastline. We found one government-controlled city but most are small settlements without teleportation arrays."

"But the land in the opposite direction is something else?" Zac asked with interest.

"Yes, though it was further away compared to the main continent. The first one we found one week after you left for the hunt. The second we only found ten days ago. We didn't find any settlements or people on that continent, though we have only begun our exploration recently," Abby explained.

"Along the coastal edge is a lush forest, but after a few hours walk inland there is an impossibly vast desert. The heat there is scorching even to the demons, and there did not seem to be any life as far as we could tell," Abby said. "The cosmic energy was however very dense, so if we could transform the desert it would become great unoccupied land."

"Impossibly large desert?" Zac muttered. "That actually brings me to something else I didn't mention from the hunt."

Next he proceeded to explain his meeting with the molemen in the hunt and the history of their planet.

"If I'm not mistaken the other continent might be the remains of this fourth world. Since it was scorched by their sun for millennia there should have only been unlivable deserts on the surface," Zac said.

"Perhaps the System simply took their uninhabitable land and made a continent out of it. Perhaps merged it with parts of Africa and the middle-east. I haven't really heard anything from those regions since the Integration."

"So why did you not mention this fourth race earlier?" Ogras suddenly asked. "To protect the identity of us demons? I think that ship has sailed now. The existence of the underworld will quickly spread I think."

"No, it's for a different reason. I want a team to dig as far down as possible from our mine. Even below our Nexus Vein if possible. Then place a teleportation array down there."

"You want to connect Port Atwood to the people underground?" Kenzie asked.

"Yes, there are people from the other races down there as well, though most are dead now. They're in pretty dire straits. They're beset by another Incursion that I guess is top-tier. For some reason, the teleporters above the ground can't reach down so we need to dig as well, create a relay-system of teleporters if need be," Zac nodded.

"Why all that effort for those people?" Ogras said with disinterest.

"Not only are there fire golems that seem to be digging toward our planet's core down there, but there's also a huge amount of riches. Most of the top names on the wealth ladders are down there. Nexus Crystals and precious metals are littering the walls," Zac said.

"We need to save those poor people," Ogras said with a completely straight face and Calrin quickly gave his wholehearted support for the plan as well.

Kenzie glared at the two people who only cared about the wealth, before turning back toward Zac with a frown.

"Yes, the reason I want to dig is partly selfish. They are currently loaded with minerals and crystals down there, but they are severely lacking everything else. I want Port Atwood to be the one to reap the benefits before any others. But other forces might try the same. The ratmen are few in number, but I am sure others than I managed to find out about the situation in the underworld," Zac said.

"So it's a race for the wealth beneath us," Calrin muttered.

"Exactly," Zac nodded. "We have an advantage with the mine that is already quite deep, but we can't be lax. I want those teleporters up as soon as possible."

Abby quickly bobbed her head in agreement. She had been vehemently in favor of expanding the power of Port Atwood since she wasn't without ambition herself. But that worked just fine for Zac as well.

"It might be an issue of distance apart from just depth though," the stargazer interjected. "If the ratmen are situated far beneath the other continent the distance might be too far. That continent is even further away than Pangea after all. Perhaps we should also establish a frontier base on the desert continent and try to find them that way."

"That would be even better," Ogras muttered. "If the underworld only can be reached from that other continent we will be able to control every comings and goings. We are right in the middle in-between the two continents, and we would act as a bridge between them. And there wouldn't be much the other forces could do about it until we get higher-graded teleporters."

Zac's eyes lit up from the possibility presented. It was true. The E-Grade teleporters reached far, but they couldn't take Zac to the far edge of Pangea. Judging by the distance Abby and Adran mentioned the distance between the two continents was extremely vast. They would have to transit through Port Atwood.

"Abby, you oversee the project since you can map out the scope of my kingdom. Does my sphere of influence reach downward as well?" Zac asked.

"I will. There is a limit a few kilometers below us. I will find a location at that depth that is far away from energy interference. I will also set it up so that it becomes a proper relay station. Preferably there would be no way to get up to the surface without using our teleporter," the Stargazer said.

"Great, pursue both strategies. Setting up a base on the other continent is a good idea in any case," Zac nodded before turning to Ogras. "Next. Is there something we can make use of in the Mystic Realm?"

"Not sure," Ogras said with a shrug.

"Not sure?" Zac asked with some confusion. "What sort of place is it?"

"Well, It's a pretty odd Mystic Realm," Ogras hesitantly said. "First of all, it's populated."

"What?" Zac said with surprise. "Cultivators?"

Zac wasn't an expert in the subject, but he knew that inhabited Mystic Realms were very rare.

"Indeed, of multiple species, no less," Ogras said. "But that's not the odd thing. The whole Mystic Realm is one enormous construct."

"What?" Zac said with shock. He had never heard of such a thing before. "How big?"

"I can't be sure. Even the person I caught and questioned wasn't sure. But it is many times larger Port Atwood. I found a few gardens that each was at least a fifth the size of this whole island, and they just took up a small corner of the construct," Ogras explained.

Clearly this was news to everyone apart from Kenzie, and they looked over at Ogras with shock.

"The people there have been stuck inside a very long time. Tens of generations. They do not seem to know much of the outside, and they are not really in control of the functions and arrays of the large structure. They are like parasites living inside the body of a large beast," Ogras explained, the others listening in rapt attention.

"How strong are they?" Zac asked with a frown.

He had enough enemies to contend with at the moment, and if these people were too strong he might just as well close the passage and wait until he became stronger.

"I battled two peak F-Grade warriors, one human, and a werewolf. There are at least mid-tier E-Grade warriors there as well, leading the factions. However, energy is limited, and it seems the various factions are partly warring as a means of population control apart from the usual reasons," Ogras explained.

"From what I can tell the structure was once a hidden research facility. It might have connections to technocrats, or they simply had a hand in constructing the thing. But to find out the real purpose we would have to explore further," Ogras said. "The human I captured did not even know how they got there. My personal guess is that their ancestors were caught for experimentation."

Zac slowly nodded, not sure what to do with the news.

"Can we gain any benefits in the short run from there?" Zac asked.

"There are enormous trees, so we would get unlimited timber. The walls are also made from some very durable alloy, perhaps we could strip the walls and take the materials for weapons manufacturing. But apart from that, not much else honestly. But with this Redeemer problem, we could use it as a last-resort escape. We just need to figure out a way to stop the Redeemer from following us," Ogras said.

"But then we'd be stuck inside there?" Zac skeptically asked.

"Yes, but alive. The rift drops us off in a section that the current factions can't access. It's the area with the large gardens. Apparently they were used for plant experimentation and providing air. There are no strong beasts, only a few worms at level 70," Ogras explained.

"The whole place runs on some technocrat technology it seems. The trapped factions have very low access, and can't get to where we arrive. But that same technology provided me with Tier-3 access. According to the human I caught Tier-3 is maintenance access that would allow me to enter any place that maintains the various function of the structure.

"I didn't have time to do much exploration, but it's pretty good apparently. It allows me to visit even more places than the natives who only have limited access in their respective zones," the demon continued. "Perhaps we can find some good things hidden in the unexplored areas of the mystic realm.

"If the Redeemer arrives we could drop off the non-combatants there and hide the passage. It would keep them out of harm's way until the threat was dealt with. If the Redeemer wins they would avoid being harvested at least, and perhaps they can find a way to get out in the future," Ogras said.

"Well it's a decent last-ditch escape, though I am not a fan of getting stuck inside a mystic realm just waiting for The Great Redeemer to break through," Zac mused. "Do you think we could set up some sort of alliance with the natives? Perhaps they possess things of value."

Ogras hesitantly nodded.

"Perhaps. I honestly did not make a great first impression, though they attacked first. But there should be various things they lack, and they might have an abundance of things in there that may be extremely valuable on the outside. That's usually how it goes with Mystic Realms. But as long as we don't have anyone strong enough to counter their elites I think we should avoid them," the demon said.

"We'll keep it on the backburner then since we have a few things that need to be handled first. Apart from getting access to the underworld I have a few more top-priority tasks for the town," Zac said. "First I want the surroundings of The Towers of Myriad Dao to be brought to its proper glory. I want this done within the day. Divert all man-power to this if necessary."

Everyone around the table apart from Ogras and Brazla looked at Zac as though he'd lost his marbles.

"Finally you're speaking some sense," Brazla said with a satisfied nod.

"Of course. Incidentally, in case you need to prepare anything before letting us undertake the Inheritance trials, now would be the time for that. At least two trials will be started within three days," Zac added.

"The Great Brazla has been ready for eons, just come by and display your feeble might," Brazla said with a snort.

“Great. Secondly, I need to index all the treasures I looted. Calrin, my place in an hour. Bring a few trustworthy and knowledgeable people,” Zac said, ending the meeting.

Roughly forty minutes later five Sky Gnomes stood eagerly waiting in his courtyard. Most seemed to be around the same age as Calrin himself, but one of them looked positively ancient.

“These are my most trusted appraisers,” Calrin said as he indicated the three gnomes roughly his own age. “And this is my great uncle Gemidir Thayer, the member of my clan with the most experience in figuring out the functions of odd treasures. I thought he would be an asset as well in case you had some hard-to-appraise items.”

“He’s also a notorious thief,” one of the other Gnomes muttered under his breath as he shielded his Cosmos Sack, drawing a glare from the old man.