

The Fall 274

Chapter 274: Final Tally

The more he thought about it the likelier it almost felt to Zac. He might not have an AI that guided him in his cultivation, but there had been several instances where he was fine when he should have died by all accounts.

The most notable instances were the time he jumped into the pond of cosmic water and came out unscathed with an improved race afterward. Next, there was the incident where he killed almost a hundred thousand zombies and absorbed a huge amount of miasma.

That incident should have killed him by all accounts, but instead he emerged with the duplicity core. There were also various times that almost anyone should have died, but he just passed out due to excessive wounds and woke up a bit later. He was like an unkillable tank, even though it was only just recently his Endurance started to become monstrous.

Had his mother somehow fiddled with his constitution to make his body able to endure when it would normally fail?

Zac quickly shook his head and closed the journal. There was no way for him to find out unless he met his mother again. But at least he knew the root of his undead race, and it seemed he was mostly in the clear. There was some elder brother to Mahl who also knew of the Draugr-issue, but there shouldn't be much he could do.

If he was the patriarch of his clan he should be far stronger compared to the Corpse Lord he fought and unable to come here in person. Perhaps he would order some people to find him since Zac killed his brother, but he shouldn't know anything about him becoming a Draugr.

Mahl himself had thought Zac dead until the moment they ran into each other, and just a minute later he was dead. There shouldn't be any loose ends, and if he ever ran into Draugr in the future he could just feign ignorance and say he grew up on an unintegrated world or something.

There was the issue of the missing samples though. According to the notes there should be hundreds of samples remaining, but he couldn't find anything of the sort in the Corpse Lord's cosmos sack. Perhaps he had kept it hidden at a separate spot, which might spell problem. When he assaulted the Undead Incursion he would have to look for them so that there were no loose ends.

The note left from the big brother also made a poignant point about karmic threads. It truly seemed that one needed to be careful when traversing the multi-verse. One couldn't take for granted their actions would go unpunished when doing misdeeds.

"Gemidir," Zac suddenly said as he looked up, drawing the attention of the old Sky Gnome.

"Yes?" he asked when he walked over.

"When you stole things in your youth, weren't you worried about getting tracked down by karmic threads?" Zac asked.

"Stole? This old man remembers no such things," Gemidir started, but changed his tune when Zac's eyes thinned. "Taking treasure I as much knowing which target to hit as taking the right valuables. Find

someone who won't be able to find you. Or just steal things that aren't valuable enough for them to expend enough resources to track you down."

"But karma is truly a bane for most thieves, which why the higher-tiered ones all try to find ways to obscure the heavens and hide from the karmic eyes," Gemidier added.

Zac's eyes lit up since it felt like he had found another direction that was worth following up on. If they could somehow block the Karmic Link between the Dominators and The Great Redeemer they might even be able to protect their planet even without fighting those monsters.

And a quick discussion with the Sky Gnomes proved that it was actually possible. However, he was dismayed to find that arrays that could block out karmic links were prohibitively expensive, and D-Graded arrays at the lowest.

Zac could neither afford them or even set them up even if he had the money. An adept array master, preferably one with insights into Karma, would be needed to make the array worked. That was why Calrin didn't even mention the possibility during the meeting.

There were also treasures that had similar effects, though they only worked on individuals, and not a whole planet like they needed. So it seemed to Zac that he would have to stick with the current plan, at least for the moment.

Since he was done looking through the Corpse Lord's belongings he returned to Kenzie's side to find the Sky Gnomes all work with sullen expressions.

"What's going on?" Zac asked with confusion.

"Your little sister must have been an Imperial Adjudicator in a past life," the old sky gnome said with a hurt look at Kenzie, who only sweetly smiled back at him. "She must have eyes in the back of her head."

"Turns out I'm pretty good at figuring out when they try to sneak some valuables for themselves," Kenzie explained with a smile.

Zac was confused for a second before he realized that her AI might be able to help her out in more ways than one.

"Please help out with the rest as well," Zac said with a smile.

"Fine, but I'm missing a lot of cultivation time. So I'll take a few goodies for myself," Kenzie said.

"No problem. Better yet, I'll show you something good after we're done," Zac agreed.

It was time to take her to his cultivation cave. He needed to check up on his seed in any case. Either the seed should have germinated and stabilized by now, or it would have been absorbed by the pond. In either case, it shouldn't hurt to allow Kenzie to cultivate there by now.

The organization of items took most of the day, and the final tally was shocking to Zac, even though he had been the one to gather everything. Of course, while the wealth that he had accumulated was vast, it was nothing compared to what a D-Grade Sect should possess.

The simple explanation was that the System had adjusted the treasures just like it likely had adjusted the danger. For example, a peak E-Grade Elder should have thousands of high-grade crystals, but he only got his hands on two D-Grade crystals.

And while Ogras never had provided a complete explanation about his Grandfather's wealth, he knew it was far beyond what he gathered the past month. And that was even when he was considered extremely poor for a D-Grade powerhouse. But Zac knew he couldn't get greedy, and he had received far more than he had expected.

The pile that Zac would keep for himself was the smallest, but it was also the most valuable. Its value easily surpassed billions of Nexus Coins, and that was even when there were multiple treasures that even the four sky gnomes were unable to figure out the function of.

Zac already knew about some of the treasures since he picked them up himself during the first two weeks, but there were a lot of happy surprises as well. Most of them seemed to come from Nenothep's pouch, but gems were also extracted from the chaotic mess that Zac snatched from Salvation.

His eyes turned to a neatly stacked pile of jade boxes. Inside them were over a hundred Attribute Fruits. Each of them was only of use at F-Grade and worse quality compared to the ones he bought in the Contribution Store, but it was a huge gain for Zac who had only gotten his hands on two of them so far.

The problem with the fruits wasn't their price, but their scarcity. He had a standing order for them at Calrin's since the start, but the Sky Gnome was completely unable to get his hands on them. It was truly a mountain of treasure that had fallen into his lap.

The huge pile was also proof that the System adjusted the rewards in the hunt. If he got this many there should have been at least a thousand Attribute Fruits spread throughout the hunt. It was far more than what a D-Grade sect should have lying around. Not that they couldn't afford it, but they would use them on their disciples rather have them lying around.

But what was most curious was that he couldn't even remember picking up these boxes. If he knew he had attribute fruits in his possession he would have immediately eaten them rather than left them in his bag.

The only explanation that he could come up with was that the System either added them at the end or made people pick them up but ignore them afterward. Perhaps the System didn't want people who were doomed to die to waste the attribute fruits, so it only made them available after the hunt was over.

"A lot of them, but the real prize are these four," Calrin said and pointed at a few more intricate boxes on the side. "Two Luck and two all-attribute fruits, one of each mid-grade. Unsurprisingly, the last four are worth as much as the rest combined. If you gobble them all up yourself you should reach your limit, though you would a lot of efficiency that way."

Zac nodded, unable to hide his excitement. The limit the Sky Gnome referred to was the limit of how many attributes this type of treasures could provide. There was no strict limit that the system imposed, but the limit was generally 15 to 25 in every attribute.

Some of the differences were based on race, where some races could accommodate more bonus points. Humans were completely unremarkable in that regard, so they were on the lower end of the spectrum. But there was also a pretty large component that simply was having good genes.

Being a mortal and not someone possessing special constitutions and bloodlines, Zac suspected that he might be on the lower end of the scale. Unless his unusual sturdiness also translated into having a higher ceiling for bonus attributes as well.

Unfortunately, it usually didn't work to eat the same fruit over and over. You usually only ate one of each type since the following ones had reduced effect. Eating the same type over and over was extremely extravagant, and something only extremely wealthy scions could afford.

Quite a few of the fruits in the collection were duplicates, so Zac would likely give them to others instead of hoarding them all. He even briefly considered giving all of them to others, apart from the two special fruits. A few bonus attributes might do a lot more good for others than himself.

But in the end, he chose to be a bit greedy. A few points in each attribute might not be a huge boost, but every little bit counted when he was risking his life almost every day. It might allow him to pass the inheritance, or reach a higher floor in the Tower of Eternity.

"How do you suggest I should allocate these?" Zac asked of Calrin.

"Take what you need, and then take a decent amount for your elite. But you should leave some for the Merit Exchange or the store. People understand that some of them goes to the elites, but you need to show that hard work is also rewarded," the Sky Gnome said.

"How do you mean?" Zac asked. "I expect the treasures here will not be leaked to the public."

"We'll keep our word, but no secret stays that way forever, especially if you start handing out treasures to all the elites in Port Atwood. So you need to find a balance. Show the population that hard work will be rewarded and that everyone can become a powerhouse with our help if they struggle enough," Calrin explained.

Zac slowly nodded as it made some sense. Perhaps it would be optimal to give out all the fruits to the people in his inner circle, but it might sow discontent amongst the army or his craftsmen. It might create the image that working hard was meaningless since the leadership would keep everything good to themselves.

Zac wanted a culture where people worked hard to improve themselves, and if putting a few attribute fruits in the Merit Store helped make that happen, it was worth it. These fruits only gave 1-2 attributes each, after all, and spread out over 10 elites it wouldn't make all the difference.

Soon they had split up the attribute fruits so that Zac would gain roughly 10 points in each attribute, then an even 50-50 split amongst the remainders. Zac gave half to Kenzie who would distribute them amongst the warriors.

Kenzie had spent all her time in the Academy lately, so she had a lot better understanding of who was worth nurturing and who wasn't. Zac himself had been too busy with so many things that he almost only interacted with a small group at the top.

A decent amount of them were also earmarked for Emily, who he still hadn't seen since he got back. He had already invested a Fruit of Ascension to nurture a powerhouse from the ground up, so adding a couple of attribute fruits was nothing odd. Zac had asked Kenzie about Emily's situation but she only told him she was fine.

He was curious about her progress during the past month. Her 16th birthday should have taken place roughly two weeks ago, and he wondered if she had gotten her class yet. But when Zac asked his sister about it she only smiled and said that Emily wanted to tell him about it herself.