

The Fall 277

Chapter 277: Cultivation Cave

Kenzie noticed Zac's preoccupation and walked over next to him in front of the Cosmic Water pond.

"What is that flower?" Kenzie said with interest after seeing Zac's stare.

"A present from Abbot Everlasting Peace," Zac explained. "He gave me a seed from a D-Grade Lotus, I wasn't sure it would germinate. But the effect here is even better than I anticipated. I thought it would take much longer for it to start growing."

"What does it do?" Kenzie said.

Zac hesitated a bit, but in the end he decided to not tell Kenzie about the horrible state that the Abbot was in. He trusted his sister to not tell anyone else about it, but he felt he shouldn't betray the old man's confidence.

"It produces massive amounts of Life-attuned energy. So it can both heal people and prolong life. It's small now, but it will grow a lot bigger later. Sitting on it will probably speed up your cultivation by a large degree when you cultivate later," Zac explained instead.

It was true. The old Abbot had lost a few placements on the ladder the last month, but in the end he had pretty much kept pace with the people on the ladder even though he didn't go to the hunt. The massive number of beasts had boosted the average levels on the ladder by a huge degree, far quicker than the average speed was on earth, yet he held on.

"Jeeves says it contains intricate signs of life," Kenzie said as she looked down on the lotus. "But he needs to upgrade to understand it properly."

"Upgrade?" Zac asked with confusion, finally tearing his eyes away from the small flower.

"Yeah. Jeeves is like a Spirit Tool. He needs to upgrade to keep helping me after I reach E-Grade," Kenzie said, a small frown forming on her face. "But he doesn't know what he needs."

"You didn't find anything from my treasure pile that could help?" Zac asked.

"No, nothing..." Kenzie said with a sigh before looking up at him with steady eyes. "Zac, I still think we should find mom. Especially now with the Great Redeemer."

Zac was about to immediately reject the proposition, but his sister sped up when she saw the frown forming on his face.

"Wait, just listen. If she's really a Technocrat she can help, right? Aren't they some of the most powerful people around?" Kenzie hurriedly explained. "Besides, don't you want to meet her again?"

Zac froze, not really knowing what to think about what Kenzie said. Leandra was no longer a part of his life, so he hadn't even considered her as a solution since he learned about The Great Redeemer. But honestly, what Kenzie said made some sense.

The Technocrats were at least a B-grade force, though Zac guessed that it consisted of lower-grade families and groups as well. But taking care of someone like The Great Redeemer shouldn't be too large

a problem. If their mother had the ability to create something as miraculous as Jeeves, she should possess a lot of other terrifying means as well.

He suddenly remembered the story about the Technocrat who visited the Creators. That man had weapons that could blow up whole planets without breaking a sweat, so creating tools that could kill off a rogue D-grade cultivator shouldn't be a problem.

However, bringing the attention of the Technocrats might bring more trouble than good. Jeeves was too big a cheat. It didn't only fuse technology and cultivation, it even seemed to upgrade every single part about her, from her basic constitution to Class choices.

Such a thing would cause a storm the moment it became known in the multiverse. Everyone would want it for themselves, and not just the technocrats. No one would say no to having a tool that worked like a continuous source of free improvements that made them stand out from the rest cultivators.

"I don't think it's a good idea, there are too many risks involved," Zac eventually said.

Kenzie seemed to gear up for an argument, so Zac quickly started to explain his thoughts.

"Wait, you should have asked around about the technocrats by now so you know what kind of a force mom might belong to. Almost all forces in the multiverse are their enemies. If we start sending out probes through Calrin we have no idea what kind of problems we would attract. I don't even think we have the qualifications to start looking for her or the technocrats at the moment," Zac said with a shake of his head.

"We can't even buy low-tiered goods. Finding someone from a B-grade force? There's no chance we can even afford a scrap of information," Zac continued. "Besides, there are too many things we don't know about mom."

"But that's why we need to start looking," Kenzie retorted. "Don't you want to find some answers?"

"I do, but I don't have anywhere to start. I looked through our house, there was nothing," Zac said. "Besides, we don't know what she was even doing on Earth before the integration. Was she in hiding? From who? Perhaps she fled the technocrats and is no longer part of them. If we start asking around for her we might inadvertently cause her trouble."

The two kept going back and forth for a while, not getting anywhere. Zac could only sigh and somewhat relent in the end.

"I'll try to figure something out, I promise. But we have to be careful. I don't want to have some angry Technocrat flashing over here and blow up Earth just to spite mom or something, alright?" Zac sighed.

"Alright, fine," Kenzie said and sat down to cultivate some distance away.

But Zac saw that she didn't agree, and he could only shake his head as he sat down himself a few meters away from her. He trusted his sister, but the lives of billions of people were at stake. He didn't want to muddy the waters any further by dragging a bunch of Technocrats into the mix, so he made a mental reminder to himself to make sure Calrin didn't do any probes for their mother.

Zac couldn't cultivate, but just sitting in this extremely nourishing environment felt quite nice as well, and Zac was content to just relax for a bit. He hadn't realized it until now, but he had been awake almost non-stop for three days.

He had been frenziedly hunting beasts at the end to beat out the Medhin Princeling for the 3rd position on the Hunter Ladder, and as soon as he got back there were various things to take care of for two straight days. He had even closed a whole incursion without skipping a beat.

But Zac was tired to his bones, and it only took moments until he was deep asleep. It was only 6 hours later he woke up, making it his longest nap for months. He cracked his neck and stood up, and to his surprise he saw that Kenzie was still deep in cultivation.

Energy was slowly swirling around her before it entered her body through all her pores, and Zac was shocked at the amount she was able to absorb. It was so much that he could sense it, and he couldn't help but feel a bit jealous. In just a few seconds enough energy to match a barghest kill entered his sister's body.

Kenzie somehow noticed that Zac had woken up.

"Don't overwork yourself," she said with some worry after seeing his tired state. "You're not alone, you know? There's a lot of people here that can share your burden."

"I know," Zac said with a smile. "I'll leave this place to you. You can bring Emily as well if you think the energy is enough for the two of you, but no one else, not even your two friends. And look after the flower, please."

"Thanks, I'll take care of it. You know, I thought about it. You should make a miasma chamber next to this place," Kenzie said. "Like dig a second pond and turn it into Miasma."

Zac's eyes lit up at her suggestion, but he was unsure about the feasibility. It would be nice to have a Miasma-zone on the island, especially so close to the flower. But he was afraid things would get out of hand in case he put up an Unholy Beacon next to the pond, so he would have to wait a bit before he tried those things out.

"It's not a bad idea," Zac nodded. "But I'll wait until I can make sure I don't ruin this place and the valley above. I'll hopefully do the Inheritance today before heading to Westfort, are you staying here?"

"I'll stay here for a bit more. The cultivation speed here is amazing, but unfortunately I think I would hurt the environment if I stayed here around the clock. The energy needs to be released from the pond to restock the atmosphere," Kenzie said.

After Kenzie mentioned it Zac actually noticed the density of Cosmic Energy in the cave had decreased somewhat, but it was still far and beyond above anything else on the island.

"Well I'm sure you have a handle on it," Zac said as he fiddled a bit with the town shop menu. "I've given you control of the arrays around this place as well, you should be able to come and go as you please now. And don't jump into the water, it'll kill you."

"I know what Cosmic Water is," Kenzie said with a roll of her eyes. "I'm not an idiot. Be careful in there, and tell Ogras not to overdo it. I don't think Brazla will do anything bad, but he refuses to tell me what to expect from the trials."

Zac only coughed, relieved he never mentioned how he jumped into the pond to escape the poison back in the day. He left Kenzie to her devices and headed back to the town. The suns were starting to rise, meaning it was close to 4 am. However, Azh'Rodum was already coming alive, with a lot of miners already heading toward the mineshafts.

Since people were paid a portion of what they mined a lot of people spent most of their time in the tunnels for a week, and then a week on cultivation with help of the crystals they had mined. Zac no longer had full insight into how much the mine yielded, but it was a substantial amount of crystals each day. His small refinement machine had gotten a dozen big brothers that were churning out over a million crystals every week.

A large part of it went to the academy to nurture his army and the young, and another chunk to power the increasingly numerous arrays that helped with everything from protecting the town from the wildlife to farming. He was also providing the whole population with a small allowance to boost everyone's base power, for now. But a lot of it went straight into the town coffers, which essentially was his own private property.

Unfortunately, he had no use for F-grade crystals at the moment, and he didn't possess any means to reliably convert them to higher-grade crystals. Of course, he could sell them for Nexus Coins, but he didn't see the need for it since there wasn't a lot he could do with money at the moment.

Earth essentially had been placed under a trading embargo for strategic resources until they had proven their strength by booting out all the invaders. Calrin could only get a very limited quantity of high-quality goods, and that was only if there was a surplus supply.

He took the teleportation array in Azh'Rodum to the main teleporter in Port Atwood and immediately headed over to the government building. Between Adran and Abby, there was always at least one of them working, and he quickly found the Stargazer looking through a bunch of documents that hovered in front of her.

"Lord Atwood," Abby said as she looked over at him. "What brings you here so early?"

"I wanted to check in on the progress of our projects?" Zac said as he sat down in a chair in front of her.

"I have tasked Mr. Trang to send one of his vessels back to the desert continent to set up a proper base camp," Abby began without missing a beat. "As for the digging operation in the mines, we have hit a bit of a snag."

"Snag how?" Zac asked with surprise.

"There are whole biodomes of subterranean animals the further down we dig. Everything from large white lizards to thousands of vampiric bats," the Stargazer said with some annoyance. "But luckily the beasts are not too strong. I had Alyn send a few companies down the mines to clean them out. It will do them good to fight something else than barghest."

"So how long until you think we reach the bottom of my influence?" Zac said.

“It depends on what else we find in the depths. They are surprisingly full of life, perhaps because we got merged with a subterranean planet? But I would guess at least two weeks,” Abby estimated.

Zac slowly nodded as he mentally planned out his next course of action. It was a bit disappointing to hear about the delay since he had somewhat wanted to head down to the underworld before he put himself against the Undead Incursion.

It felt like the undead might be his strongest enemies apart from the Dominators, and he wanted to reach level 75 before he challenged millions of zombies and the Lich King. Not because he planned to immediately evolve, but rather that he would gain his two ultimate skills upon reaching the max level. Closing the underground incursion first had been his idea to quickly reach level 75.

But there was another opportunity; The inheritance. Perhaps those old powerhouses had left something nice behind that could give him the final push of the F-Grade.

“As for the... beautification around the towers,” Abby added as if reading his mind. “They’re all done. Even that Tool Spirit should be happy with the result.”