

## The Fall 288

### Chapter 288: A Flower of Fire and Ice

“How would some backwater elders catch up to the great Lord of Cycles?” Yrial laughed from his recliner by the pond. “What about it, is your master not amazing? I played those two sects like a fiddle. And that was in the real world where one could actually die.”

The next moment Zac was once again grabbed by an unseen force and placed on a mat not far from the pond.

“I wasn’t actually at risk for dying?” Zac said through grit teeth. “I ran my ass off to avoid getting my soul torn to shreds.”

“Well, there was still danger. If you died inside your soul would be hurt and you would have to trade some of your credits for soul-healing pills,” Yrial said with a smile. “Those things are pretty expensive.”

That quickly calmed Zac down, and he thanked the gods that he hadn’t taken anything for granted in the dreamscape. Clearly, the trial was mostly a veiled attempt to show off his own feats, but it looked like the old ghost was finally about to hold up his end of the bargain.

“What’s credits?” Zac asked, holding back any complaints or comments that might derail Yrial from handing over the inheritance treasures.

“When I needed to create this inheritance I simply threw a bunch of stuff that would be valuable for young cultivators and attached a price according to its value. For passing the first trial you get between 1000 and 10000 credits, depending on how I feel. For also becoming my disciple you get double,” Yrial explained. “What you choose to use those points for is up to you.”

The next moment he fished out a crystal from his sleeve and threw it over to Zac who caught it. Zac knew it was an information crystal from a first look, and he guessed that the stored items were listed inside.

“So how many points do I get?” Zac asked with anticipation

“Well, since you’re my terminal disciple I guess you’ll start at maximum credits, ten thousand,” Yrial said, but he continued before Zac could get excited. “However, I’ll have to detract a thousand points for your face. Being a barbarian is no excuse for skipping proper skincare. I’ll also deduct a thousand for the way you defeated the construct. So eight thousand times two.”

Zac was already starting to become immune to Yrial’s comments about his looks, and he felt that the deduction for how he finished the first trial was fair enough. It still left him with 16 000 credits to spend, and he eagerly infused some Cosmic Energy into the information crystal.

A long list of items lit up in front of him, and he was surprised to see that Yrial had stashed over two hundred items that were exchangeable after finishing the first trial. Most of the items were priced between one to two thousand credits, meaning one would usually walk away with five items or so. However, there were a few items that were much more expensive.

[Ultimate treasure – Lock of hair: 10 000 Credits]

“Lock of hair?” Zac read out loud and looked up at Yrial with confusion. “What’s that?”

“You are my disciple after all! Impeccable taste. That item is a true lock of hair from my real body. Now that I’m dead its value is truly priceless,” Yrial said with a sagely nod.

“Your hair?” Zac exclaimed, not being able to hide his disgust. “What would I do with that?”

Yrial's face immediately scrunched up in anger, and the air around him seemed to freeze for a second before he took a deep breath to calm himself.

“What you would do with that? Gaze upon it in awe and wonder of course. Hair from my head is an item of unlimited artistic beauty, the physical manifestation of perfection. How about it? You would still have a lot of points over if you bought it,” Yrial said with anticipation.

Zac only snorted and kept looking, drawing another glare from Yrial. In reality, the item might not actually be as useless as Yrial described. Yrial was a high or peak C-Grade hegemon when he cut that lock of hair, and Zac suspected its strength would be extraordinary. If he used the hair for crafting he would likely be able to make an extremely sturdy item.

However, he wasn’t keen on wearing an armor made out of human hair, and he had no one who could craft using such high-grade materials. He instead looked for items that could give immediate boosts to his power, or at least assist in the coming battle with the Dominators.

The lock of hair wasn’t the only suspicious item in the list. In fact, almost a quarter of the treasures were vanity items that related to the Lord of Cycles. There was everything from paintings to collections of his poetry. One item was just called ‘My 5th favorite scarf’. But there were a lot of good things inside as well, almost to the point it was shocking.

He did find the soul-mending panacea, costing a whopping 1500 points, more than any of the attribute fruits or even most of the Dao Treasures. However, Zac wasn't surprised since he knew just how troubling soul wounds were. If the wound passed a certain degree the soul would just keep disintegrating, and almost nothing could help. That's why he was so careful about overtaxing his Dao.

There were also over a dozen Spirit Tools, each of them seeming to be of extremely high quality. When he focused on those entries he could see them, and they all emitted a far greater aura compared to the tools he brought back from the Eastern Trigram Sect.

Part of it could be explained with superior craftsmanship, but the biggest reason was the grade of the tools. Zac was shocked to see that all of the Spirit Tools were E-Grade except for a few, making them better than almost any weapon currently on earth. And they weren’t even that expensive.

All of the tools cost around two thousand, apart from the two robes that both cost 3750 credits. One was a robe in the same vein as the robes he received from the system long ago, with the difference of it being a Spirit Tool. It was mostly white though, with details in red and blue.

It was likely something Yrial used until he switched to something better, or perhaps simply something he kept because he liked the colors. It seemed perfect for Zac, but he held back on an impulse buy so that he could go through everything. The other robe was a more gender-neutral robe, that might almost be considered a dress on Earth, so it wasn’t as tempting for Zac.

There was also a Spiritual Ship that seemed far supreme compared to the disk he gained from the Eastern Trigram Sect, but Zac knew he couldn't afford it at the moment. It was a luxury item that he couldn't prioritize as things stood.

"I'm your terminal disciple, why don't you simply give me all of this stuff?" Zac ventured.

"I only made a deduction for your face, but I could also make a deduction for your attitude," Yrial snorted as he once again ran his fingers through the lake. "Don't be greedy."

"Brazla set some ground rules. I needed to put in enough treasures for at least 25 inheritors at F-Grade, 10 at E-Grade, 3 at D-grade, and one C-Grade inheritance. But if you pass the final trial everything is yours," the ghost added after a brief pause.

Zac quickly looked down, afraid to say anything that would make him lose any more credits, and continued to look through the list. Treasures were not the only things on the list, there were also quite a few skills and five cultivation manuals.

There were also almost thirty items that Zac didn't recognize, and he had no idea what they were used for. Some were natural treasures, and a few of them cost well over five thousand points. But they didn't seem to be either Dao Treasures or Attribute fruits, making Zac unsure of their usage.

It was a huge amount compared to the Dao Fruits which only cost between 800 and 2000. But that only meant that they might be extremely good items that would be impossible for Zac to get his hands on normally.

"Could you recommend any items that would suit me?" Zac asked before he decided to throw in some flattery. "You know my situation and you are far more talented and experienced than me."

"I'm not as easily persuaded as that little Tool Spirit," Yrial snorted. "But perhaps if you bought a memento to remember your Dear Master by when you leave, I might be inclined to give a few tips."

Zac grit his teeth, and with great reluctance he bought one of the cheapest ones, a portrait of Yrial sitting in a meadow of flowers, half of which were a fiery red and the other an azure blue. It cost him 500 Credits though, making Zac thoroughly annoyed.

"'A flower of fire and ice'. An excellent choice. I had a great artist create this to commemorate me breaking through to D-Grade. If you hang it in your home you will not only raise the grade of your interiors by multiple levels but meditating on this picture will even help improve elemental Daos," Yrial nodded, clearly looking pleased.

"So, advice?" Zac sighed as he placed the large painting in his Cosmos Sack.

"Well, first of all, you should buy [Eye of Har'Teriam]," Yrial said without hesitation. "It's simply the best thing available, apart from the lock of hair."

Zac quickly looked through the list and found it was the second most expensive item available. This one cost a whopping 9500 credits. Zac's eyes drifted toward all the other treasures he knew would help, but in the end he grit his teeth and bought the thing. From what he could tell the costs were very accurate in relation to value, except for the vanity items.

"So should I eat it immediately?" Zac asked.

"No, wait until you have broken through to E-Grade," Yrial said with a shake of his head.

"I can't use it now?" Zac said with exasperation. "You know how bad the situation is on Earth."

"Well, just flee if it gets too bad," Yrial said without concern. "You can even buy the teleportation token if you feel it's too dangerous."

The token he mentioned was a random-teleportation token that would allow him to go to a random D-Grade world. Zac was honestly contemplating buying it since it only cost 1000 Credits. It would be a final life-line and something that could at least give his sister a chance at survival if everything turned to shit on Earth.

"So, what does this Eye do?" Zac asked.

"It is guaranteed to open one of your hidden nodes, though which one can't be controlled," Yrial said with a smug grin.

Zac whistled in surprise, and he wasn't too miffed about paying through his nose for the item. From all accounts, the hidden nodes were all good things that were like free permanent power boosts. Getting the first one immediately was sure to be helpful, especially if he decided to evolve before turning his attention toward the Dominators.

But clearly Zac's reaction wasn't enough for Yrial, and he tsked unhappily.

"Ugly and stupid. The [Eye of Har'Teriam] is a treasure that never appears on baby worlds, and not something that the System rewards for any quests. It's only found in a few C-Grade Mystic realms containing the remains of a long-collapsed universe," Yrial said. "Your master almost paid with his life to get it."

"If it's so good, why didn't you use it yourself?" Zac skeptically asked.

"You can only use it in E-Grade, and I couldn't sell it. Every time I tried I was almost hunted down and killed by a couple of greedy sects. I had to run for hundreds of years to get away," he muttered, clearly still annoyed by the situation.

"So what makes this item so special?" Zac probed.

"It is one of the few items that can guarantee the opening of a Hidden Node no matter who eats it. Not only that, it will even give you a clue of where your other nodes are hidden, which will make it infinitely easier to burst them open later as well," Yrial huffed.

"Do you know how you normally find where your nodes are hidden? You use your Cultivation Manual and your inner eye to meticulously scour your body. Sometimes it takes a few months, sometimes it takes decades. For most, it never happens because they can't form a resonance with the nodes. It's exceedingly hard, and not even one in a million can open a single node, let alone multiple.

"For you, it would normally be completely impossible. Mortals have no conventional methods to create a resonance with their hidden nodes, so they would never be able to break them open by conventional means.

“As far as I know there are less than 30 treasures for someone like you to have a chance to open your Hidden Nodes, and this is one of the better ones. It’s completely impossible to buy, and can only be found by chance,” Yrial finished his diatribe and took a deep breath for air. “Now, is your master amazing or what?”

"But wait," Zac suddenly said. "With my... Special constitution, do I even have hidden nodes?"

The blustering ghost suddenly froze, and his brows slowly started to contract into a frown.